

The Political Transition in Hungary, 1989-90

By Csaba Békés and Melinda Kalmár

Marking the tenth anniversary of the political transition in Hungary, historians and political scientists launched several large scale projects to locate, assess, and publish documents pertaining to the historical events of 1989-1990. In June 1999, three principal Hungarian scholarly enterprises, the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the Hungarian Program of the Project on Openness in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, and the newly founded Cold War History Research Center in Budapest—together with the National Security Archive and CWIHP—organized an international conference in Budapest on the transition from Communism.

The Hungarian partners in this multi-national effort focused on three important sources: first, on the records of the former ruling Communist Party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP). Critical to the endeavor was the preparation of transcripts of the tape recordings of key HSWP meetings, since written minutes of the Politburo meetings were kept only up to 1982. Transcripts were completed for all of 1989 (and some of 1988), and more than 5,000 pages of this extraordinarily significant historical material is being gradually declassified and opened for research¹. A second crucial task was the collection of the minutes and memoranda of the meetings of Hungarian leaders with CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and other Soviet officials, as well as the records of their conversations with other Soviet bloc and Western officials.²

The third, similarly massive project involved the editing and publication of the minutes of the Opposition Roundtable and the National Roundtable that accompanied the transition from one-party rule to democratic pluralism in 1989.³ The series, consisting of eight volumes, contains the negotiations among the emerging opposition parties as they co-ordinated their policies toward the HSWP, as well as all the minutes of the tripartite talks held between June and September 1989. The talks, in fact, acted as a national constituent assembly, working out the procedure and the legal framework of the political transition, eventually resulting in free multi-party elections in March 1990.

Thorough investigation of these new materials—as well as those becoming available in Russia, the United States and other East-Central European countries—will be necessary to understand and assess more fully the transition process in Hungary. The selection of documents published below exemplifies the richness of the new materials and allows a glimpse at the complexity of the events of 1989/90.⁴

DOCUMENT No. 1

Minutes of the Meeting of the HSWP CC Political Committee, 31 January 1989

[On 23 June 1988, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Central Committee established a committee to analyze Hungary's political, economic and social development during the preceding thirty years. The panel, headed by Imre Pozsgay,⁵ a politburo member and minister of state, included party officials and social scientists. After several months of examining pertinent archival documents, the Historical Subcommittee (one of four working groups) completed and discussed its final report at its meeting on 27 January 1989. Most sensation-ally, the report described what occurred in 1956 in Hungary as not a "counterrevolution" (as Moscow and the regime it installed in Budapest headed by János Kádár had long insisted) but a people's uprising. This very point was announced by Imre Pozsgay in an interview on both the morning news program and the next day, on the most popular political journal of Hungarian Radio, "168 hours," without any prior consultation with the political leadership. The issue triggered a serious crisis in the Party and eventually served as a very important catalyst in the transition process. The following excerpt reflects the first reaction of the Politburo members.]

(EXCERPT)

Imre Pozsgay: With regard to the specific issue, the subcommittee, headed by Iván T. Berend,⁶ had a debate Friday morning, on the basis of a 102-page report.

I had no chance to read the document before the debate because it has just been given to me. Nevertheless, let me point out only one aspect of the debate, namely that six members of the Central Committee were present, and the leaders of two Party institutions. There was no argument about the incriminating assessment; on the contrary, the conclusion was drawn that a minimal public consensus—I merely interpret this, as I have no right to borrow others' words—so, a minimal public consensus does not harm the identity of the Party, nor does it shatter the personal identity of those who tied their lives, career and behavior specifically to this struggle. Nonetheless, it can lead to social reconciliation and national consensus on certain bitter and still all too distressing issues, such as the whole situation since 1948-49, and especially its peak—or nadir, as others believe—the crisis and tragedy of 1956. The committee unanimously agreed on this issue. And finally

we also agreed that this document, even before it is discussed by the Central Committee, has to be publicized, so that scholarly opinion, supported by wide masses of the Party, can be used to create a political direction. These were the fundamentals and basic motives of the committee. In a way it is an answer to the numerous questions, in fact asked from many sides, as to why the Central Committee did not discuss the issue first. According to the earlier procedure, this would indeed have been the way of handling such questions. However, I am convinced that this procedure is the very reason why the Party has been hoisted on its own petard, when it came to discussing similar issues.

As regards further connections and problems that the issue raises: Certainly, or rather undoubtedly, the ensuing political effect—even if it has the minimal consensus I have just referred to—is expected to become a bone of contention within the Party, something that divides people and induces political polemics, although it will not hurt even those who have won the Honor for the Socialist Fatherland for their sacrifices. The committee has been aware of this fact from the very beginning, knowing that we cannot get around this debate, that it has to happen, so in a way the cup of sorrows must be drunk. (...)

Mihály Jassó:⁷ The vast majority is dumbfounded, and not because they have heard the results of the scholarly research from the Historical Subcommittee, but because they feel that a pillar of the institutionalized

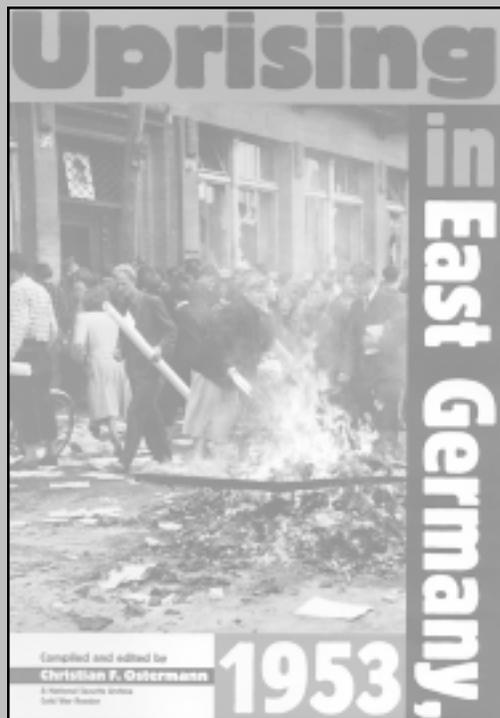
political system is about to be uprooted. Party members feel that our political system is somehow based on 1956. And now they have the impression that this foundation is being pulled out from under them. They think that this slice of the past—1956—has to be assessed with subtle differentiation. But now this assessment shows no sign of differentiation either. Figuratively speaking, they used to make a fine cabinet with an axe, and now they are trying to do the same. [sic] I don't intend to be too poetic but I'm coming from the office where I got phone calls and letters today, asking what we are going to call the monument on Köztársaság Square? Who sacrificed their lives there? Defenders of the people's power? Resistance fighters of the people's uprising, or their opponents? It is all confused. What shall we call the Mezo Imre Street? And so on. Because perhaps it was a people's uprising that started the whole thing but it led to something else. Given that, we need at least a subtle, differentiated assessment of the whole period. The present one is not differentiated at all. This is another extreme assessment that sets people far apart. If we start a debate on the issue, which is now, of course, unavoidable, I think it will only result in separating some of the party membership. It is a crude simplification but if we segregate party members into two groups on the basis of this, there would be "pro-uprising" and "pro-counter-revolution" members. Obviously I refer to the underlying political content. Perhaps we cannot avoid the debate, but I am not sure that it has to be induced so

A National Security Archive Reader

Uprising in East Germany, 1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain

Compiled and edited by Christian F. Ostermann
(Central European University Press, 2001)

"The 1953 uprising in East Germany is an insufficiently appreciated turning point, marking as it did the first popular rebellion against Communist rule. It was, in this sense, the beginning of the end. This excellent collection of documents pulls together what's been learned about this event since the Cold War did in fact end three and a half decades later, in a manner foreshadowed by what had happened in 1953. It is an indispensable new source for the study of Cold War history." -John Lewis Gaddis, Yale University



radically at once. (...)

Rezső Nyers⁸ The problem is greater, and we have to widen its scope. Is 1956 really the foundation of the Hungarian communist movement? If 1956 is our foundation, I will not expect the movement to hold out very long, because it is a weak foundation indeed. Our decisions and historical assessment of 1956 were driven by the spirit of the time and not without controversies. While things were going smoothly, people tolerated all this, but when times are hard, the same people seem discontent with what they tolerated before. Therefore we should not consider 1956 as a foundation. 1956 was a tragic event, a moment that manifested the prevailing crisis, and today we have to conclude that in fact 1956 signified a more serious crisis than we thought at the time, or even in 1957. We belittled the problem, but now we all agree—and I think there is a consensus about it in the Party—that it was the materialization of a historical mistake. (...)

Consequently, I have to point out that it would be a serious mistake—especially for the future of the Party—to tie our policy to the 1956 bandwagon.

We have to conclude, having read the document—I have read the document and the material of the Committee debate as well—that Pozsgay's statement and the exposé of the Committee show a unanimous approach. They are in accord. Which does not justify how the statement was publicized. I am still of the opinion that it was disadvantageous, hasty and inaccurate. I hold to my opinion, even though there is no fundamental controversy between the standpoint of the Committee and that of Pozsgay.

As to whether it was a “people's uprising” or “counter-revolution,” my opinion is that a definition without controversy is impossible on this issue. Personally, I think that it was a people's uprising; our declaration in December 1956 acknowledged it in the first paragraph, labeling it as the rightful discontent of the people. I do maintain, though, that hostile enemies gradually joined in, and they could have turned the wheel of history backwards, so the danger of counter-revolution was imminent. As to our opinion on 1956, I argue against the far-fetched criticism of Imre Nagy⁹ and his circle, and the significance of revisionism. ... I declare with communist honesty, it was a mistake. It is not true that the revisionist group around Imre Nagy had such a vital role in the events ... At that time, I myself accepted this interpretation. However, we become smarter, and now we see what went on. We now realize that the mistakes were more serious. We realize that it was wrong to think that between 1953 and 1956 Rákosi¹⁰ was a dime and Imre Nagy was a dozen, so to speak. In that debate, well, Imre Nagy was right. It is a matter of honesty, if someone thinks it over and believes that it is so, one should speak out forthrightly. And I do speak out. Imre Nagy was not a counter-revolutionary, he was not. If a Party ever, with their own... [unintelligible—*Ed.*] One just has to read his speeches. Where the hell do we find counter-revolutionary ideas with Imre Nagy?

Nowhere, absolutely nowhere! And these are matters of honor. Rather, he was a sectarian. If he was still among us now unchanged, he would be more of a Stalinist. His role in the 1956 events remains debatable, it cannot be clarified. The Soviets were mucking around, which we swept under the carpet. Even today we cannot see the truth. I already know, however, that the Soviets had a lion's share in the decision. János Kádár¹¹ and the Politburo of the time took full responsibility, for which I respect them. However, they are far from being the only ones to blame. Their responsibility is without question, because it cannot be accepted either that a decision was made in Moscow, or that it was executed here. Unfortunately, though, I have to emphasize again that we won't be able to come to terms with the question of 1956. Legally Imre Nagy was culpable, because he breached the law. It is not too moral, at a time when everybody is breaching the law—I was breaching it, and so was János Kádár—the lawbreakers themselves accuse and convict the weaker one on the basis of the sectarian law. These are not righteous things. All the same, those who did not live in that situation are unable to imagine how it was—and this is the dramatic aspect. I think, if we leave it as the focus of political debates, it would result in the serious weakening and a crisis of values of the communist movement. Consequently, we have to put history right; it can be corrected. Roughly according to the opinion of the committee, it can be corrected, but let me emphasize that the word “counter-revolution” should not be replaced with a single term, and it has to be decided who makes the correction. I think it is now time for us to try and come to some kind of political consensus. We cannot let the undulations of political life shatter the tenuously forming unity and co-operation of the Party and its leadership, so that other players take over while we eventually fall apart. I also mean that Pozsgay should not become the victim of this affair either. Yet Pozsgay should show more discipline and more mutual responsibility as well.

All in all, we should not let ourselves confront each other to an extreme. What do I think the possible action to take is? I believe that the Central Committee should be summoned and presented the material of the committee. The Pozsgay affair should not be presented on its own; it would be an impossible trial that wouldn't lead to anything. I think that the documents of the subcommittee have to be submitted for debate, and only then could it be discussed whether what he did was wise or not, and what action has to be taken in order to settle the debate. At the same time, principle issues of daily politics should be presented to the Central Committee, such as what should be done now in the question of the single-party system and the multi-party system. Things have passed over our heads. I cannot see another option other than that we accept the multiparty system. But we need to debate all this. And if we decide against the multi-party system, then that will be our decision, and everybody decides according to his conscience whether he takes the political responsibility for his decision. I do admit sincerely, I would take

responsibility for both, even if I do not agree with the decision. It can be done intelligently. Retreat, however, is the worst thing one can do, it can only lead to our defeat. We have to do it sooner or later, anyway. (...)

All in all, I say that we take seriously the compilation of the committee, and consider their report worthy of being presented to the Central Committee. We suggest to the Central Committee that we publicize the documents of the committee. We'll see if the Central Committee will accept the suggestion. (...)

In fact, the most serious and sensitive issue of our policy is quite palpable here, namely how we relate to the Kádár era, to the Kádár regime. In my opinion, it would be a mistake for reformers to entirely do away with the Kádár regime. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to canonize the policy of the Kádár regime and battle to the last man standing in defense of what we have created since 1956. Some in the Party have a leaning towards the latter view, while others are ready to prove and expose the mistakes. Neither of these should be embraced. We have to try to solve the problem rationally. If relevant circles, or the dominant circle of the Central Committee put the issue on the agenda, a consensus is possible. We should start working on activity programs, preparing for the multiparty system. We need these projects for creating a stabilization program that addresses today's conditions, as well as more specific government programs. (...)

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL)* [Hungarian National Archives, Budapest], M-KS- 288-5/1050 o.e. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]



DOCUMENT No. 2
Record of Conversation between
President M. S. Gorbachev
and Miklós Németh¹²,
Member of the HSWP CC Politburo,
Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the
People's Republic of Hungary,
Moscow,
3 March 1989

[The meeting between M.S. Gorbachev and Miklós Németh, one of the leading reformers and technocrats in the Hungarian leadership, was the first top-level personal consultation between the two countries' leaders following the crucial decisions of the HSWP CC on 10-11 February 1989 to re-evaluate the events of 1956 as a people's uprising and announce the introduction of the multiparty system in the country. The following part of the discussion reflects the determination and the hope of both leaders that the much needed transformation of the political

structure and the economy could and should be realized within the framework of a reformed socialist system.]

(EXCERPT)

M. S. Gorbachev congratulates Németh on the occasion of his appointment as Prime Minister, and asks him how long he has been in office.

M. Németh: For almost a hundred days. I am often asked whether I am thinking about reviewing and sizing up what I have done so far. I usually answer that I have no time for that. Even if I make an assessment, it is for the Central Committee or the parliament. One has to be critical of one's own activities.

M. S. Gorbachev: True enough. In the single-party system self-criticism, is supposed to be an important issue. Possibly the most significant condition is how successfully the leading role of the Party is achieved. On the other hand, our mistakes and shortcomings are all rooted in the lack of criticism. Naturally, I am not only talking about the management, the top layer of party leaders, but I mean it on a larger scale—the whole of the Party. During the Stalin regime, from 1934 to his death, there were only two party congresses.

M. Németh: In the days when Lenin was at the helm, there were endless debates and a clear political line was formed all the same.

M. S. Gorbachev: Yes, because there were entirely different conditions both in the Party and in the country. Now we are opening the way towards socialist pluralism. The multiplicity of opinions is not a tragedy for the society; on the contrary, it is a real advantage. Of course, there are some who want to exhibit democracy for their own selfish objectives, but it can be dealt with, it is merely a question of struggle. [Boris] Yeltsin has now a peculiar position in the Central Committee. His is a typically leftist, rather obnoxious position, which can nevertheless find a favorable reception among the public. We have to put up with several problems that directly concern people's lives, and those who cry out loud enough about these can reap a dividend. The majority of people cannot be blamed for this, as they are hoping that a man like him will one day be able to do something for them. Besides, it is important that they learn on their own the difference between a demagogue and a serious politician. There is nothing flattering I can say about a member of the Central Committee who gambles at the expectations, while he knows very well that the party program is aiming at the quickest possible way of satisfying these expectations.

M. Németh: It happens quite often with us. There are always a few members of parliament who rise to speak from such a demagogic position.

M. S. Gorbachev: The main thing is to be honest and truthful in the Central Committee, in the parliament, and among the people as well, and to have a clear conscience. Otherwise the personality will break down, and downfall is unavoidable.

M. Németh: What we consider the most important task for the time being is creating a majority within the Central Committee that can be joined around a unified program.

M. S. Gorbachev: This, of course does not rule out the possibility of the existence of some kind of left-wing or right-wing views.

M. Németh: Yes, the only important thing is that the center be strong.

M. S. Gorbachev: We are for a majority that relies on democratic development. We would like to revitalize the role of the councils, agitate the activity of MPs, and assure complete publicity. Without these, the real power of the workers does not exist. See what we had before in the past: masses of the people were alienated from property, politics, and culture. Yet the principal goal of socialism is overcoming alienation and putting man in the focus of attention.

M. Németh: I see no difference between pluralism in a single-party system and in a multi-party system. You are absolutely right: if there is freedom of thought and a unified program according to which people behave, everything goes on as it should. In May 1988 we laid the foundations for such a practice in the course of the Party Conference. Nonetheless, there were certain illusions.

M. S. Gorbachev: Experience showed us that nothing could be achieved at the first trial. We have to get back to the accepted agreements and decisions, polish them, make them more precise, and then move on.

M. Németh: Yes, the conditions are changing. Theoretically what you said in Kiev is important for us. Every socialist country is developing in its idiosyncratic way, and their leaders are above all accountable to their own people. Whether it be one party or more—life will show which solution is more effective. Within our conditions, state and party have become the same. This affected the development of the country in a most unfavorable way. We should not eradicate everything with one stroke, because what we achieved is worth noting.

M. S. Gorbachev: I believe that Pozsgay's statements are quite extremist¹³ in this respect. The events of 1956 indeed started with the dissatisfaction of the people. Later, however, the events escalated into a counterrevolution and bloodshed. This cannot be overlooked.

M. Németh: Most important of all, these questions should not cause division in the society. Some say that we need to look at history in the same way, because otherwise there will be no unity in society at all. In reality, however, unity in interpreting the past does not exist. The main thing is that we have unity with regard to the present situation and in the policy to follow.

M. S. Gorbachev: Indeed, every generation is responsible for the present, first and foremost.

M. Németh: I am convinced that the organic interrelation and conformity of the economy and politics in fundamental issues is indispensable. A principal question is that of pace. We Hungarians started economic reform long ago, while leaving the political institutions intact. Since last May, we have witnessed a rapid development and transformation of the political system. A new election system, the reorganization of parliament, and other measures followed one another in such a rapid succession, the wheels of the machine are turning with such dizzying speed that it could pose a potential danger to society if this process interrupted economic development.

Nobody actually doubts that a democratic constitutional state is unavoidable for a successful people's economy to function. Having only that, though, without a productive economy, then political transformations will happen in a void, *l'art pour l'art*. Pozsgay says that there is nothing wrong with politics superseding the economy. We, on the contrary, think that harmonization of the two is needed. We support and develop economic institutions, in parallel with changes in the political sphere. We will act with responsibility.

M. S. Gorbachev: You have touched upon an important issue. The process of renewal is gradually spreading over the entire socialist bloc, and adds to the political culture and historical experiences of all these countries according to the local conditions. The most important for all of them, however, is turning towards the people and revitalizing the socialist system. While listening to you, our own situation came to my mind. Of course, it is difficult to achieve total synchronicity between politics and the economy, but at least we have to try. You might remember what Lenin used to say: "We Bolsheviks have conquered Russia, so now we have to learn how to govern it." They rushed ahead in politics, which was in itself normal at the time. But you are right: if we fail to utilize the political drives and motivations to create a healthy economy, the people will unavoidably become discontented.

(...)

[Source: Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Moscow. Document obtained by Magdolna Baráth, Budapest. Translated by Csaba Farkas. Parts of this document were published in the briefing book for the conference, "The End of Cold War in Europe, 1989: 'New Thinking' and New Evidence," Musgrove, St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 1-3 May 1998.]

DOCUMENT No. 3
Memorandum of Conversation between
M.S. Gorbachev and
HSWP General Secretary Károly Grósz,¹⁴
Moscow, 23-24 March 1989

[On 22 March 1989, the parties and organizations of the emerging non-communist Hungarian opposition established a consultative forum, called the "Opposition Roundtable." Up to this point, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party had used the tactic of dealing separately with "alternative" organizations. Now the danger of having to negotiate with a unified opposition became increasingly likely. The Party's leadership also worried about an impending economic crisis possibly resulting in the destabilization of the political scene. These concerns were infused in Károly Grósz's presentation on the internal political situation.

Gorbachev's "dialectic" approach to the issue of how to evaluate 1956 is remarkable: while stressing that this must be decided by the Hungarian leadership alone by examining the facts, he declared that a recent thorough investigation of the past by the Soviet leadership had undoubtedly proven that what had happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was a counter-revolution. Similarly ambiguous were the warnings of the Soviet leader concerning the tolerable scope of the political transition in Hungary. He emphasized that "the limit [...] is the safekeeping of socialism and assurance of stability," however, he also clearly declared that "today we have to preclude the possibility of repeated foreign intervention into the internal affairs of socialist countries."

The timing of the conversation is also noteworthy from Gorbachev's perspective; it occurred on the eve of the legislative elections in the Soviet Union—the freest since the 1917 Revolution. The 26 March vote would elevate reformers (such as Yeltsin) and nationalists (especially in the Baltics) to a strong position to challenge the communist order, and Gorbachev may already have felt pressured by the impending balloting.]

(EXCERPT)

HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY
 CENTRAL COMMITTEE
 TOP SECRET
 Made in 2 copies
 Inf/1371/1989
REPORT

for members of the Political Committee
 [29 March 1989]

(...)

Comrade Grósz informed the negotiators about the Hungarian situation. He said that the events in Hungary have accelerated lately. Their direction is according to our intentions, while their pace is somewhat disconcerting. Comrade Grósz emphasized that we wish to retain political power and find a solution to our problems by political means, avoiding armed conflict.

We have a good chance for reaching our goals. People are afraid of a possible armed conflict.¹⁵ Workers, peasants and professionals want to work and live in peace and security, safeguarding their property. (...)

Another major concern is the history of the last thirty years. We have to face our past, hard and painful as it is, as the acting participants are still alive. On the other hand, by drawing the necessary conclusions, we might dishearten certain layers of our policy's active supporters from the Party. Lack of self-confidence is palpable enough in the Party anyway. (...)

Comrade Gorbachev agreed that the Western world does not want instability in Eastern Europe, including Hungary as well, because in the present situation it would be adverse to its interests. Nonetheless, it is quite apparent that they [the Western countries] intend to facilitate the realization and strengthening of a development that suits their own political ideas.

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized: "The estimation of the 1956 events is entirely up to you." You have to stand on a firm ground; you have to examine what really happened then and there. The Soviet leadership has recently analyzed the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia, and they continue to maintain that what happened there was a counter-revolution, with all the idiosyncratic traits of such an event. There were different periods within the Czechoslovak events, but the Dubček regime was unable to prevent openly counter-revolutionary forces from gaining ground through them. (...)

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that we clearly have to draw boundaries, thinking about others and ourselves at the same time. Democracy is much needed, and interests have to be harmonized. The limit, however, is the safekeeping of socialism and assurance of stability.

Comrade Grósz emphasized that when referring to 1956, we adhere to the original evaluation that the Party endorsed in December 1956. The process is described in three consecutive words: student protest, [people's] uprising, and counter-revolution.

Comrade Gorbachev agreed with the above. He emphasized that today we have to preclude the possibility of repeated foreign intervention into the internal affairs of socialist countries. (...)

[Source: MOL M-KS-288-11/4458 ö.e.. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]

DOCUMENT No. 4
Agreement about the Commencement of
Substantial Political Negotiations between the
Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party,
the Members of the Opposition Roundtable
and the Organizations of the Third Side,
10 June 1989

[Between March and June the crucial question of the transition was whether the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party [HSWP] was willing to accept eventually the fact that it would have to negotiate with a unified opposition represented by the Opposition Roundtable [ORT]. Although the HSWP leadership tried to do everything it could to prevent this, by the beginning of June it gave up its previous position. However, the opposition parties had to make a serious concession too, since it was a precondition of the HSWP in agreeing to start official negotiations on the political transition with the ORT that the talks should be tripartite. The "third side" included mass organizations and civil associations, all of which were supporters of the HSWP and/or represented left-wing political ideas.

The agreement published below was signed at the first plenary meeting of the National Roundtable talks. The document, which put on record the legal framework and the conditions of the subsequent tripartite negotiations which lasted until 18 September. At the next meeting, on 21 June, two intermediate-level committees were established for political and for social-economic issues, each having six working subcommittees in which the bulk of the legal work leading to the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Hungary was carried out.]

AGREEMENT

About the Commencement of Substantial Political Negotiations between the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Members of the Opposition Roundtable and the Organizations of the Third Side, 10 June 1989

I

The necessity to help the nation out of a serious political and economic crisis, and the democratic transformation of the conditions of power appropriate the dialogue between all the political circles that feel responsible for the future. Handling the crisis and creating a multiparty system is only possible with the agreement of the democratic forces. It presupposes that mutual objectives and aims are taken into account, that all participants are willing to make an agreement, and it necessitates trust and self-restraint.

The fate of the nation can be improved by respecting the requirements of the constitution and firmly rejecting violence. It is in our mutual interest that social

conflicts are solved according to the generally agreed norms of European political culture: with public consent. The transition from a single-party system to representational democracy and constitutional government can only be realized by free elections. Well-functioning representative bodies and a firm, consistent government that is trusted by the people are needed to stop the worsening social and economic crisis. The peaceful political transition and the relief of aggravated economic and social tension can only be realized by mutual agreement. An array of historical examples warn us that common problems can only be solved with consensus. All civil organizations and movements have to take part side by side in the hard and contradictory process of transition.

On the basis of these facts and conditions, organizations of the Opposition Roundtable, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Left Wing Alternative Union; the Patriotic People's Front; the Hungarian Democratic Youth Association; the Association of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and Anti-Fascists; the National Council of Hungarian Women; the joint delegation of the Ferenc Münnich Society; and the National Council of Trade Unions express their wish to commence substantial political negotiations. The equal negotiators accept the following governing principles for the talks:

—the basis of power is the sovereignty of the people; none of the political forces can monopolize it and declare themselves the sole repository of the people's will, and none can aspire to unconstitutionally curtail political rights;

—the will of the public has to be expressed without preceding limitations, in the course of free elections, the result of which is binding for everyone, and from which no political organization that complies with the requirements of the constitution can be excluded;

—handling the crisis, ensuring a democratic transition and resolving political conflicts is only possible in a peaceful way, avoiding violence; none of the civil organizations can have direct control over military forces;

—an important condition of the successful and constructive political negotiations is that the nation and [the parties'] interests are considered and respected; a further condition is mutual and anticipatory confidence;

—only mutually acceptable conditions can be the basis of co-operation and agreement;

—when determining the participants of negotiations and their legal standing, exclusion of a political nature is unacceptable, although the functioning of the negotiation process must be considered;

—the objective of negotiations is the formation of political agreements that can be accompanied by the necessary government measures and bills, together

with the deadline for their realization; the negotiations themselves, however, do not directly exercise functions of constitutional law;

—during the course of negotiations the parties refrain from all unilateral steps that would obliterate the goal of negotiations; legislation cannot precede political agreement;

—all negotiating partners will have the political agreements accepted in their own organizations, and represent them in public as well, while assisting the enforcement of the agreements by every possible political means.

II.

Three parties take part in the political conciliation talks, with the intent of reaching political agreements.

- a) The Opposition Roundtable (Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friendship Society; Alliance of Young Democrats; Independent Smallholders' and Farmers' Civic Party; Christian Democratic People's Party; Hungarian Democratic Forum; Hungarian People's Party; Hungarian Social Democratic Party; Alliance of Free Democrats; and the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions as observer);
- b) Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party;
- c) The following civil organizations and movements: Left Wing Alternative Union; the Patriotic People's Front; Hungarian Democratic Youth Association; the Association of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and Anti-Fascists; the National Council of Hungarian Women; the Ferenc Münnich Society and the National Council of Trade Unions.

All three negotiating partners are endowed with equal rights in forming a consensus. A speaker represents each of the three parties, who [will] express the opinions of the negotiating parties. Civil associations and movements listed under point c) above, whose participation in substantial negotiations was agreed by the Opposition Roundtable as a compromise during preparatory talks, do express that they support the intention of both the Hungarian Social Workers' Party and the Opposition Roundtable to conduct a constructive dialogue and reach an agreement. They intend to take an active part in the negotiation process.

The Opposition Roundtable determines the number and composition of their delegates. Civil associations and movements listed under point c) above decide among themselves about the method of reconciliation and the method of joint representation of their disputable issues.

1. Representatives of the participating organizations are endowed with a written mandate, which contains their right to make agreements. They present their mandate to the president of the plenary session.

2. The fourth side of the negotiating table can be reserved for observers. Observers have the right to submit their proposed remarks in writing to the president of the meeting, who informs the negotiating parties about the observation.

3. The negotiating parties put on the agenda of conciliatory talks the following issues:

- defining the rules and principles of realizing a democratic political transition;
- strategic tasks for overcoming the impending economic and social crisis.

Final definition of individual issues, based on specific interests, is the task of substantial negotiations.

1. The statutes and working order of the political conciliatory talks are as follows:

- a) Substantial negotiations are conducted in plenary sessions and in committees. The opening plenary session is scheduled on 13 June 1989 (Tuesday) in the Hunters' Hall of Parliament. The Speaker of the House presides over the whole meeting. Representatives of all three negotiating parties are given equal time to speak. In the course of the opening plenary session, negotiating partners issue a declaration of intent. Then they form working committees.
- b) Agreements are prepared by working committees, according to specific issues on the agenda. Statutes of the plenary session logically refer to committee sessions as well. Working committees can form sub-committees—with the participation of experts.

Preparing bills for legislation must involve governmental bodies as well. In the course of political conciliatory talks, some propositions may be opened to public debate. Final documents are ratified by the plenary session. Propositions of the working committees can only be submitted to the plenary session when heads of delegations have signed them. The approved documents are signed by the heads of the delegations who then take care of their publication. Every session is recorded in the minutes, which have to be publicized in case the negotiations are interrupted.

- c) Coming to an agreement is our mutual interest, based on the principle of consensus. Should discord persist in a particular detail, consensus can be reached nevertheless, provided that the dissenting negotiating partner admits that it does not concern the general principle of the agreement.
- d) Plenary sessions are open to the press. Working committees, however, will operate behind closed doors. It has to be assured that [the public] receives

regular and substantial information about the negotiation process. From time to time, negotiating parties will issue a joint communiqué to the Hungarian Telegraphic Agency. Separate statements can only be issued if negotiations break off or a common declaration cannot be agreed on. Nevertheless, this does not concern the right of the parties to express their opinions about the content of certain issues on the agenda.

- e) The parties think it necessary that expenses of the negotiations are covered by the state budget. Handling of documents, photocopying, postage, the costs of organizing meetings, and the wages of possible experts are included in the expenses.

Representing the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party:
György Fejtő
Secretary of the Central Committee

Representing the Opposition Roundtable:

Dr. Zsolt Zétényi¹⁶
Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Friendship Society

Dr. László Kövér
Alliance of Young Democrats

Péter Hardi
Independent Smallholders' and Farmers' Civic Party

György Szokolczai
Christian Democratic Party

Dr. László Sólyom
Hungarian Democratic Forum

Csaba Varga
Hungarian People's Party

Tibor Baranyai
Hungarian Social Democratic Party

Dr. Péter Tölgyessy
Alliance of Free Democrats

Imre Kerényi
Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions, as
observer

Representing the Left Wing Alternative Union; the Patriotic People's Front; the Hungarian Democratic Youth Association; the Association of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and Anti-Fascists; the National Council of Hungarian Women; the joint delegation of the Ferenc Münnich Society and the National Council of Trade Unions:

Csaba Kemény

Left Wing Alternative Union

Dr. István Kukorelli
People's Patriotic Front

Ferenc Gyurcsány
Hungarian Democratic Youth Association

Imre Kerekes
Association of Hungarian Resistance Fighters and
Anti-Fascists

Mrs. Soós Dr. Mária Dobos
National Council of Hungarian Women

Ferenc Berényi
Ferenc Münnich Society

Mrs. Kósa & Dr. Magda Kovács
National Council of Trade Unions

[Source: Published in Ellenzéki kerekasztal. Portrévázlatok. [Opposition Roundtable. Political Portraits. Ed. and interviews by Anna Richter] (Budapest: Ötlet Kft, 1990), pp. 294-300. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]



DOCUMENT No. 5
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party [HSWP]
CC Political Executive Committee,¹⁷
24 July 1989

[The end of July brought a definite hardening in the position of the HSWP at the National Roundtable talks. This was obvious in the Communists unexpected refusal to sign an agreement on party law, although it had already been accepted by the experts.

The opposition attributed the harder line to a change in personnel at the top of the HSWP delegation, when Imre Pozsgay's position was taken over by the less flexible György Fejtő.¹⁸ At the 27 July meeting of the National Roundtable, Fejtő made it clear that the HSWP was not willing to give a full account of all of its property, emphasizing that the greater part of it had been acquired legitimately and therefore this issue should not be discussed at the tripartite talks. The HSWP's uncompromising stand on reaching agreement on the de-politicization of the armed services, and concerning the withdrawal of party organizations from work places, finally led to the suspension of the tripartite negotiations. The talks were not resumed until 24 August, when the HSWP delegation was headed again by Pozsgay. Fejtő's speech at the 24 July meeting of the HSWP Political

Executive Committee, published below, provides insight into the making of this new, less flexible and more intransigent policy towards the opposition.]

(EXCERPT)

György Fejtő: We are in a complicated situation now, but still, we have to make up our minds. In many questions, especially when it comes to specific details, we have made quite some progress. However, in a series of fundamental and cardinal questions the antagonism seems irreconcilable; apparently the date of the general elections is one of these controversial issues. So, with a flexible negotiating strategy, namely that we give in to certain demands but stand our ground firmly in other issues, we cannot resolve the prevailing antagonism for the time being. Yet time is pushing us. Technically, we have some three or four weeks left to work out the legal conditions of the parliamentary elections in late autumn.¹⁹ Three or four weeks, that's all we have. On the other hand, this more or less open, hesitant, obstructive behavior is physically impeding the process of calling elections. That's why we have to come to a decision, on the basis of the previous issue on the agenda, as to what to do in the face of the present economic situation and the international financial conditions. Because either we accept the fact that we cannot make a compromise in this case, while emphasizing that the ongoing negotiation process should not be jeopardized—it is another question, though, whether the danger holds only for the elections—or, alternatively, we come up with overt reasoning and publicize in due time what the rationale is behind advancing the date of elections. In the latter case we should look to make compromises on other issues instead of this one. Undoubtedly, we jeopardize the success of negotiations; what is more, we even risk their termination. The later we express our intention to call earlier elections, the bigger the danger is.

Rezső Nyers: The only reason to hasten negotiations is to advance the elections? I believe that even if we called elections for next spring, we should speed things up all the same, shouldn't we?

György Fejtő: It is a markedly different situation if we want to submit the fundamental laws to parliament in mid-September rather than in December. The meaning of hastening things now depends on whether we show the magnanimous gesture of government—abolishing these laws—in a very broad sense, or the government makes it clear that, even though they are curious how political negotiations will end, they want to submit the bills at the next session anyway, so that nothing can change the date of election.

Rezső Nyers: I have one question—otherwise I completely agree that we hasten the process and the government keep to their schedule, with the one compromise of September. But why does it have to be connected with elections in November?

György Fejtő: Because we have no other plausible reason for speeding things up. (...)

György Fejtő: Yes, but we have to get back to the unfortunately irrevocable question, that we should decide in a very short time, to what extent the elections of this year are important for us. As long as there is no decision on this issue, we cannot follow a clear and unequivocal line in the negotiations. I can imagine that we might lose this, so let me point out that despite all appearances there is no covert reason that would make it important for me. Yet we cannot carry on the negotiations under such pressure without knowing how important this issue is for our own Party.

Rezső Nyers: Comrade Fejtő, it is very important for us. Under one condition, that is if they pass these fundamental laws in September, then the November elections are 100 percent to our advantage. If they do not vote for the bill in September, then nothing is good enough for us. Absolutely nothing. This is the decisive factor. So, I am totally and immediately for the November elections, if these three issues are accepted. Or at least two of the three. Three would be most expedient, though.

György Fejtő: You mean if they accept it? It is still a bone of contention. There are and will be several disputable issues.

It is definite that the documents can only be submitted in September with much controversy. This is part of the negotiation strategy. We shouldered responsibility for negotiating these bills. However, the HSWP cannot take responsibility for striking a deal with those powers. We will not be able to come to terms; it is the Parliament's task to ask for a decision, making known and objectively presenting the opposing views. In the present state of negotiations it is an illusion that in these questions—whether it be the party law or election law—a total agreement and final consensus can be reached. An illusion. Possibly we should reduce the number of points that induce confrontation—and there are a lot, at the moment. Just to mention one example: so far, when it came to the party law, the opposition has put in the minutes at every single meeting that the HSWP is not willing to give consent to proposing the bill to parliament if either the assessment or the redistribution of their total property is on the agenda. I think it is absolutely impossible that such a position would be acceptable for us right before the elections. I can't tell when they might take a U-turn on this issue. They will only relinquish if there is a final deadline, by which the negotiations should be completed, otherwise we can stand up, wash our hands and say that the agreement has fallen through but we are not the ones to blame. So that's why entirely clear statements are needed, saying that there is a set schedule and deadline for negotiations; the delegates of the HSWP are unable to do this.

(...)

[Source: MOL M-KS-288-5/1072 ö.e. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]

DOCUMENT No. 6
Memorandum of Conversation between
President Mikhail Gorbachev,
President Rezső Nyers, and
General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist
Workers' Party (HSWP), Károly Grósz,
Moscow, 24-25 July 1989

[This Hungarian-Soviet summit was the last such meeting preceding the important events of the fall of 1989: the free exit of the East Germans via Hungary to the West in September, the dissolution of the HSWP, the declaration of the Hungarian Republic, and the plans for free elections. While both sides were still intent on stressing that what was occurring in Hungary was aimed at working out a framework of democratic socialism, it is clear from the memorandum that both sides already had serious doubts about the possible outcome of the process.]

The treatment of the issue of Soviet troop withdrawal deserves special attention. During the March visit of Károly Grósz to Moscow it had been the Soviets' condition that such an agreement should be kept secret. Now Gorbachev easily agreed to make such a deal public, obviously hoping that such a concession would strengthen the eroding position of the HSWP.]

(EXCERPT)

Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
 TOP SECRET!
 Central Committee
 Inf/1451/1989
 REPORT
 to the Political Executive Committee

Invited by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, Comrades Rezső Nyers and Károly Grósz visited the Soviet Union on 24 and 25 July 1989. They took part in a two-hour negotiation with Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. The Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party invited the delegates for dinner, with the participation of several Soviet leaders. Comrades Nyers and Grósz negotiated with leaders of the Soviet-Hungarian Friendship Society. Comrade Nyers met Soviet social scientists; Comrade Grósz met leading officials of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

I.

Comrade Nyers described the situation of Hungary and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. He said that the party is preparing for a working congress.²⁰ Decisions have not yet been made on every issue but is quite definite

that internal issues of the Party will be on the agenda. The set task of the congress is to achieve the unity of the Party. Comrade Nyers pointed out that the Party is already getting spirited, [and] new platforms are being formed. The basic concept of the congress is democratic socialism, self-government, parliamentary democracy, and economic democracy. Comrade Nyers emphasized that property reform was considered the primary element of reform. We wish to democratize public property, indeed making it available for the public. We are considering a new system that utilizes the available capital more efficiently. We are planning to increase the ratio of private capital in the economy, and the introduction of foreign capital.

Comrade Nyers mentioned the experiences of parliamentary by-elections.²¹ He emphasized that one should not jump to immediate conclusions from the results. We consider the elections neither a success nor a complete failure. The present state of paralysis within the Party, however, has become apparent. He referred to the fact that in one constituency the opposition united their forces in the campaign against the HSWP, but this is not expected to be a general trend when it comes to the general elections. Comrade Nyers stressed that there are three factors that can defeat the Party. First: the past, if we let ourselves be smeared with it. Secondly: the disintegration of the Party. The third factor that can defeat us is the paralysis of the Party rank-and-file.

Talking about Hungary, Comrade Gorbachev said that the Hungarian events were being followed with much interest in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Communist Party leadership refers to our policy with understanding. In the course of the negotiations, they understood our intention to find our way on the road to democratic socialism. At the same time, Comrade Gorbachev posed several questions with regard to the situation in Hungary and the policy of the HSWP. Among other things, he inquired about our orientation in foreign policy, the role of private property and foreign capital, the experiences with by-elections, the goals of the Party Congress, and the unity of the Party. Comrade Gorbachev put special emphasis on the fact that the Soviet leaders interpreted the mass sympathy towards the HSWP evident at the 14 July 1989 funeral of János Kádár²² as an important political resource to rely on.

(...)

IV.

In the course of the visit, several issues concerning the bilateral relationship were discussed. Negotiators mutually agreed that we should widen the scope of relations between the HSWP and the CPSU, and increase the exchange of experiences. In this way the recently aggravated laxity that has been hindering the co-operation of Soviet and Hungarian party organizations can be effectively eradicated. Hungarian negotiators suggested that the CPSU and other Soviet social organizations develop collaborative relationships with

Hungarian democratic organizations and newly-forming parties as well.²³

The negotiations proved that it is our mutual intention to maintain the friendship of the Hungarian and Soviet nations, to create a new basis for reinforcing the friendship movement, winning over the best professionals and the youth for the friendship between the two nations.

In the course of negotiations, Hungarian and Soviet leaders examined the most urgent issues regarding the stationing of Soviet troops in Hungary. Comrade Nyers reminded the negotiators that at their March meeting in Moscow,²⁴ comrades Grósz and Gorbachev had agreed in principle that troops would continue to be withdrawn. At that time the Soviet negotiators had asked that this agreement should not be publicized. This time comrade Nyers suggested that the March agreement should be confirmed, the question of withdrawing Soviet troops further considered and publicized in one way or another. Speaking for the Soviet leadership, comrade Gorbachev agreed with the idea. His suggestion was that, when dealing with the issue, one should start from what the Soviet press release says about the subject: "In the course of negotiations, the issue of Soviet troops stationed in Hungary came up, and the parties decided that steps will be made to reduce further the number of Soviet troops in accordance with the European disarmament process and with the progress of the Vienna talks." Comrades Nyers and Grósz agreed with the suggestion.

In the course of negotiations we reaffirmed our mutual political intent to seek out opportunities for establishing a new basis for Hungarian-Soviet economic cooperation. Comrade Nyers indicated that the Hungarian government was presently working on a new fiscal system, and it was possible that the proposals would be submitted [as early as] this autumn.

The HSWP leader emphasized that the situation of the Hungarian minority in the Sub-Carpathian region²⁵ was improving, which was of great importance for us in terms of both domestic and foreign affairs. Comrade Gorbachev indicated that they [the Soviet government] were determined to head in this direction.

Another subject raised [in the discussion] were the many Hungarian soldiers who died in action on the Soviet front or in POW²⁶ camps in World War II. Hungarian public opinion was exerting pressure for the memory of these victims to be preserved in due fashion. Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that the Soviet Union was ready to cooperate in this field as well. [He] said that it was virtually impossible to find mass graves on battlefields now. However, they [the Soviets] were ready to specify those cemeteries where Hungarian prisoners of war were buried. They would preserve the tombs; memorial monuments could be installed, and Hungarian citizens could visit these sites. The same practice was working well with the Federal Republic of Germany.

(...)

[Source: MOL, M-KS 288 - 11/4461. ö.e. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]



DOCUMENT No. 7
Record of Conversation between
Representatives of the Opposition Roundtable
and Boris Stukalin,
Soviet Ambassador in Budapest,
18 August 1989

[At their meeting on 27 July, the representatives of the Opposition Roundtable (ORT) decided—at the initiative of József Antall²⁸—to widen the scope of the ORT's negotiating partners and initiate meetings with the chairmen and the secretaries of the parliamentary committees, Deputy Prime Minister Péter Meggyesi and Soviet Ambassador in Budapest, Boris Stukalin.²⁹

Fidesz Press, the organ of the Young Democrats, gave the following account of the meeting and of Viktor Orbán's presentation (the AYD leader who had given a speech at Imre Nagy's reburial in June and who in 1998 would become Hungary's prime minister) calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary: "Since 1956 we have known that the Soviet ambassador in Budapest plays a key role in Moscow's assessment of the situation in Hungary, yet at the meeting no really important issues were discussed, it was rather of exploratory character. The different organizations presented their position tactfully, giving broad outlines only, taking the liberty to deal with foreign policy only cautiously. The atmosphere became hot, however, when one of the Fidesz representatives took the floor: the Soviet side 'eyed the game,' the famous political opponent³⁰ for several minutes. Nevertheless, they listened with poker face to Orbán who stated that he was pessimistic concerning the National Roundtable talks because the HSWP had renewed itself only in words, remaining uncompromising on concrete issue (workers militia, Party organs at working places, the property of the Party)."³¹

(EXCERPT: Speech by Viktor Orbán,²⁷ Representative of the Alliance of Young Democrats [AYD])

(...)

Viktor Orbán: Allow me to add just a few remarks to the question of what we think about the possibility of the negotiations eventually ending with success. We believe that the very opportunity of meeting you here today precipitates the prospect of making a successful agreement with the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Our organization, inasmuch as it is primarily comprised of

young people, considers it a particular privilege to have the chance of meeting representatives of Soviet diplomatic bodies. We intend to utilize this opportunity, which has never been granted to us before, to hand over a memorandum next week that informs representatives of the Soviet Union about the political ideas of the Alliance of Young Democrats.

Certainly you are familiar with the fact that the issue of revealing the so-called historical white spots is just as important in Hungary as it is in the Soviet Union. Questions and views concerning our past and relations with the Soviet Union, or rather their sudden change, concerns our generation most of all. This is due to the fact that not long ago we were taught exactly the opposite of what even the Soviet Union has lately—and repeatedly—expressed in this respect.

Perhaps this experience explains the skepticism of our generation when it comes to the possible outcome of the negotiations, as compared to the attitude of the previous speakers. Consequently, our generation—that is we, who represent our organization at the Roundtable in the negotiations with the [Hungarian Socialist Workers] Party—we are of the opinion that one should only look at the facts when assessing the intentions of the Party and the political prospects. That is why we observe with considerable apprehension that the Party... the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has made hardly any progress on the most important concrete issues.

Let me mention a few examples. Naturally, similarly to the previous speakers, I speak with the hope that this opinion will change over time. I must note, however, that the Party, among other things, has not yet made any concessions on the issue of ending party organizations at workplaces. Neither has the HSWP conceded on the question of abolishing the workers' militia that all representatives at the Roundtable consider unconstitutional. No progress was made to guarantee that the political monopoly of the Party in the army and the police force is eliminated once and for all, so that politics and state service are separated within the armed forces. The Opposition Roundtable made specific suggestions on the issue, which have all been rejected so far. I appeal to you: what else could people of my generation and members of my organization think other than that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party aims at preserving these armed corps and armed forces, the last resort of power in Eastern Europe, intact and unaffected by the opposition. We, Young Democrats, are much worried about this intent. For according to our political assessment, the main issue is not the elections here; we are quite optimistic about the elections. We consider the recent by-elections as a public opinion poll of some sort, on the basis of which we expect an overwhelming victory by the opposition. The question for us Young Democrats, though, is rather what will happen

afterwards? What will happen if the HSWP, which, in our estimation and according to the analysis of the recent results, will lose the general elections, still retains authority over all the armed forces, and is the only one to have political bodies at workplaces.

Consequently, we believe that the question of stability, the stability of the transition, and the solution of that issue is in the hands of the HSWP. Should the Party act according to their purportedly democratic conviction on the questions I have raised, the period of transition after the elections will not suffer from instability whatsoever. The ultimate cause of our pessimism is that the HSWP has shown no sign during the last month of heading in that direction.

Thank you.

Boris Stukalin: May I ask you about something that you mentioned in your speech: the memorandum that you wish to present to us next week? What is it about, what are the main issues that it is concerned with?

Viktor Orbán: We think that the Alliance of Young Democrats has often been branded by the Hungarian press as an anti-Soviet organization. We had the opportunity to express our opinion on the issue, and we repeatedly stated that we do not consider ourselves anti-Soviet but that we have principled views. We have never encouraged aggression towards the Soviet Union, never incited people to any kind of rebellion against the Soviet people, [and] never invited anyone to infringe on the rights of the Soviet state. We think that this opportunity—sitting at the negotiating table with a representative of the Soviet diplomatic corps—gives us the chance of informing you in an articulate written memorandum about our principled opinions on all these issues—which basically determine the general and foreign policy of the Alliance of Young Democrats. In the memorandum we wish to state our standing and suggestions in terms of what changes we think necessary in Hungarian foreign policy.

Let me point out, though, that this is strictly our opinion, bearing in mind that the Opposition Roundtable never intended to form an unanimous consensus in issues of foreign policy, therefore the organizations around this table represent a considerably wide range of [ideas about] foreign policy. Some of them hold opinions that are closer to yours, while others have views that diverge much further—ours is probably among the latter. Nonetheless, we strongly hope that these issues will be clarified in the memorandum.³²

(...)

[Source: Fekete Doboz Archívuma, Budapest, EKA-NKA Gyűjtemény (Archive of the Black Box Video Studio, Opposition Roundtable—National Roundtable Collection), Casette 27-28. Translated by Csaba Farkas.]

Csaba Békés is the Research Coordinator of the 1956 Institute and the Director of the new Cold War History Research Center in Budapest. He is working on a book on Hungary and the Cold War, 1945-1989. He is the author of *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and World Politics, CWIHP Working Paper No. 16* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1996).

Melinda Kalmár is a freelance researcher working on a monograph on the transformation of Communist ideology in Hungary, 1948-1989. Her most recent book is *Ennivaló és hozomány. A kora kádárizmus ideológiája. [Eats and dowry. Ideology in the early Kádár era, 1956-1963]* (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, Budapest, 1997.)

¹ Several excerpts of the HSWP Politburo meetings in 1989 were made available for the participants of the international conference held in Budapest on 10-12 June 1999, see: Csaba Békés, Malcolm Bryne, Melinda Kalmár, Zoltán Ripp, Miklós Vörös, eds., *Political Transition in Hungary 1989-1990*; the documents were collected and compiled by Magdolna Baráth, Csaba Békés, Melinda Kalmár, Gusztáv Kecskés, Zoltán Ripp, Béla Révész, Éva Ständeisky, Mikós Vörös, Budapest, 1999 (The manuscript is to be published by Central European University Press in Budapest.)

² Many minutes of Gorbachev's talks are published in: *The End of Cold War in Europe, 1989. New Thinking and New Evidence. A Compendium of Declassified Documents Prepared for a Critical Oral History Conference* organized by the National Security Archive, Washington, D.C., Musgrove, Georgia, 1-3 May 1998. For recently published Hungarian and Russian sources on Gorbachev's policy towards Hungary see: Magdolna Baráth, János M. Rainer, eds., *Gorbacsov tárgyalásai magyar vezetőkkel, Dokumentumok az egykori SZKP és MSZMP archívumaiból, 1985-1990* [Gorbachev's talks with Hungarian leaders. Documents from the archives of the former CPSU and HSWP, 1985-1990] (1956-os Intézet, Budapest, 2000).

³ See András Bozóki, Márta Elbert, Melinda Kalmár, Béla Révész, Erzsébet Ripp, Zoltán Ripp, eds., *A rendszerváltás forгатókönyve. Kerekasztal-tárgyalások 1989-ben.* [The Script of the Political Transition. The Roundtable Talks in 1989], vols. 1-8, Magvető (vols. 1-4) Budapest, 1999, Új Mandátum (Vols. 5-8) Budapest, 2000.

⁴ For the first and still the only complex work on the transition based on the use of (the then available) archival sources see: Rudolf L. Tökés *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution. Economic Reform, Social Change and Political Succession, 1957-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For an English language volume of essays on the transition see Béla Király ed., András Bozóki associate ed., *Lawful Revolution in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). For a recently published, archive-based collection of essays see Vol. 7. of the series:

The Script of the Political Transition. The Roundtable Talks in 1989. An English language version of this volume will be published by Central European University Press in Budapest in 2001. A bibliography about the transition in Hungary containing some 260 books and more than 500 articles has been compiled by the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest (www.coldwar.hu), see: *Political Transition in Hungary 1989-1990*.

⁵ Imre Pozsgay, 1980-1982 Minister of Culture, 1982-1988 General Secretary of the Patriotic Peoples' Front, 1980-1989 member of HSWP CC and 1988-1989 member of HSWP Politburo, 1989-1990 Minister of State; head of the HSWP delegation at the negotiations of the National Roundtable in 1989, and his party's nominee for the post of the President of the Republic. 1989-1990 member of the Presidium of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP), May-November 1990 HSP Vice President. After leaving the HSP in 1990, he founded the National Democratic Alliance. Since 1997 he has been a political adviser of the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

⁶ T. Iván Berend, historian. From 1985-1990 President, Hungarian Academy of Sciences; 1988-1989 member of the HSWP CC; 1989-1990 Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Council of Ministers. In 1990, he became a professor at the University of California.

⁷ Mihály Jassó, 1988-1989 member of the HSWP CC, 1989 member of the HSWP Politburo, from 1989 head of the Budapest branch of HSWP.

⁸ Rezső Nyers, 1957-1989 member of the HSWP CC, 1960 - 1962 Minister of Finance, 1962 - 1974 Secretary of the HSWP CC, 1966-1974 member of the HSWP Politburo. Main proponent in the leadership of the so-called New Economic Mechanism introduced in 1968. As a result of the anti reform campaign at the beginning of the seventies he was expelled from the leadership. 1974-1981 head of the Institute of Economic Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1980 - 1988 its advisor. In 1988, he was one of the founders of the "New March Front," 1988 - 1989 Minister of State, member of the HSWP Politburo. From June to October, 1989 President of the HSWP, from October 1989 to May 1990 President of the Hungarian Socialist Party.

⁹ Imre Nagy, 1953-1955 and in October-November 1956 Prime Minister. In June 1958, executed for his role in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

¹⁰ Mátyás Rákosi, from 1945 to 1956 leader of the Hungarian Communist Party and the Hungarian Workers' Party. Dismissed in July 1956, he spent the rest of his life in exile in the Soviet Union.

¹¹ János Kádár, from 4 November 1956 to May, 1988, First Secretary of the HSWP.

¹² Miklós Németh, 1981-1986 member of department of economic policy of the HSWP CC, later deputy head and head of department. 1987-1988 Secretary of the HSWP CC in charge of economic policy, 1987-1989 member of the HSWP CC, 1988 - 1989 member of the HSWP Politburo, 1989-1990 President of the Council of Ministers, October-December 1989, presidium member of the Hungarian

Socialist Party. Resigned from this post in December, 1988-1991 Member of Parliament for the HSWP, then HSP. From 1991 to 2000 Vice President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

¹³ See document 1.

¹⁴ Károly Grósz, 1984-1987 First Secretary of the Budapest branch of HSWP, 1987-1988 Prime Minister, May 1988-October 1989 HSWP General Secretary.

¹⁵ In fact at the time there was no serious concern among society about a possible armed conflict in Hungary. This reference reflects rather the worry of the party leadership concerning the unpredictable attitude of the armed services, including the workers' militia, towards the unexpectedly fast and radical political changes.

¹⁶ Biographies of all representatives of the tripartite negotiations were published in the briefing book of the conference; "Political Transition in Hungary, 1989-1990," held in Budapest in June 1999. A copy is accessible for researchers at the CWIHP and National Security Archive (<http://nsarchive.org>).

¹⁷ On 23-24 June 1989 the HSWP CC established a 21-member Political Executive Committee replacing the former Political Committee.

¹⁸ Pozsgay went on vacation in mid-July. György Fejti, 1980-1984 First Secretary of the Communist Youth Federation CC, 1984-1987 First Secretary of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén Committee of the HSWP, 1987-1989 Secretary of the HSWP CC, 1980-1989 member of the CC. In 1989 member of the HSWP's delegation at the National Roundtable.

¹⁹ The HSWP considered early elections advantageous assuming that the opposition parties would lack sufficient time to publicise their programs. However, elections were eventually held in March 1990.

²⁰ The HSWP's 14th Congress was held on 6-10 October 1989. During the Congress, the party dissolved itself and on 7 October a new party, the Hungarian Socialist Party, was formed.

²¹ On 22 July 1989, parliamentary by-elections were held in four constituencies, but the first round brought a final result in only one of them, where the opposition parties formed a coalition and won. The second round of the elections was held on 5 August when candidates of the Hungarian Democratic Forum acquired two of the seats while in one constituency the election was void.

²² The aging János Kádár, of the HSWP after its conference in May 1988 Honorary Party President, died on 6 July; his funeral was held on 14 July 1989 with the participation of several tens of thousand people.

²³ It is more than interesting that just a few days after the return of the two HSWP leaders from Moscow, on 27 July representative József Antall, Hungarian Democratic Forum, made a proposal at the Opposition Roundtable meeting to invite the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest and inform him about the opposition's ideas. This move confirms the likelihood that secret communications existed between the HSWP and some opposition representatives

as it was commonly believed (but never proved) at the time. See document 7.

²⁴ See document 3.

²⁵ Editor's Note: According to the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement of 29 June 1945, Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia and thirteen communities from Slovakia became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. A large Hungarian minority lived in this region, in particular in the territories contiguous with Hungary.

²⁶ Editor's Note: Prisoner of War.

²⁷ Viktor Orbán, graduate of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest (1987), founder of István Bibó Special College and the journal *Századvég* [Fin de siècle], in March 1988 one of the founders and spokesman of *Fidesz* (Alliance of Young Democrats), representative of his party at the negotiations of the Opposition Roundtable, since 1993 President of *Fidesz* (after April 1995 called the *Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party*), after 1992 one of the vice presidents of the Liberal International, since July 1998 Prime Minister of the Hungarian Republic.

²⁸ József Antall, historian, in 1956 participant in the re-organisation of the Independent Smallholders' Party, one of the founding fathers of the Christian Youth Association. Temporarily arrested and later dismissed from his job because of his revolutionary activity, 1984 - 1990 director general in Semmelweis Museum of Medical History, among the founding fathers of Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), in 1989 member of the Central Committee, then member of the presidium, since October 1989 president of the HDF, participant at the Opposition Roundtable and at the National Roundtable negotiations, from 23 May 1990 to his death Prime Minister of the Hungarian Republic.

²⁹ See note 23.

³⁰ Viktor Orbán became generally known in Hungary and abroad by his speech delivered at the reburial ceremony of Imre Nagy and his associates on Heroes Square in Budapest on 16 June 1989. While all the other speakers were cautiously seeking to avoid raising controversial issues, Orbán sharply called upon the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Hungary.

³¹ [Mónika] Vig: "Viktor Orbán and the Soviet ambassador," *Fidesz Press*, 5 September 1989.

³² On the basis of the available documentary evidence this promise seems to have been an improvisation of Viktor Orbán since no such memorandum was presented to the Soviet Embassy subsequently.

**HUNGARIAN SECRET POLICE MEMORANDUM,
“ENSURING THE SECURITY OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE BURIAL OF IMRE
NAGY AND HIS ASSOCIATES [ON 16 JUNE 1989],”
MAY 1989**

(EXCERPT)

[Editor’s Note: In an essay entitled “The New National Alliance,” published in Hittel Dénes Csegey in mid-January 1989, the reassessment of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and its suppression by Soviet troops—“finding a worthy place for it in the memory of the nations”—is described as “one of the fundamental issues and standards of the Hungarian democratic transition.” Indeed, the historical place of the 1956 Revolution—and its leader, the reform communist prime minister Imre Nagy—permeated the national discourse during 1988-89 in Hungary. Political attitudes and actions of regime and opposition crystallized around the issue re-evaluating this pivotal event in Hungary’s postwar history.

One crucial moment in this process occurred with the government-approved reburial of Imre Nagy and his associates who had been arrested and executed in the wake of the Revolution’s bloody suppression. Demands for a reburial of Nagy had surfaced increasingly since the 30th anniversary of the leader’s execution on 16 June 1988, when the regime prevented public commemorations with tear gas, batons and arrests. Instead, a symbolic gravestone was inaugurated on the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris for Imre Nagy, Gesa Losonczy, Pál Maléter, Miklós Gimes, József Szilágyi and others executed after the 1956 Revolution. Six months later the regime gave permission for the exhumation and reburial of the remains of Nagy and his associates; the exhumation began in March. Fretting that the funeral would turn into an “extremist” political event, the regime took widespread security precautions, as detailed in the following document.. The 16 June 1989 funeral ceremonies on Heroes’ Square and Rákoskeresztúr New Public Cemetery in Budapest, in the course of which hundreds of thousands of people paid tribute to Imre Nagy and his associates, passed peacefully. During the internationally televised event, Victor Orbán, co-founder of the oppositional Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESz) demanded in the name of the young people of Hungary the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Observing the reburial from across the city, the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party Politburo only resolved that a firm response should be given to the perceived anti-Soviet and anti-Communist statements made at the funeral.

The following excerpt from the state security’s operation plan for the Nagy reburial, discovered by Hungarian researcher Janos Kenedi (Institute for the History of the 1956 Revolution, Budapest), reveals the regime’s widespread security measures in an efforts to stay in control of this event which, symbolically, marked the beginning of its demise.]

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
Directorate III/III

TOP SECRET
Until destroyed!

Approved:
Dr Istvan Horvath
Police Maj. Gen.
Minister of the Interior

Agreed:
Ferenc Pallagi
Deputy Minister

Subject: Ensuring the security of preparations for the burial of Imre Nagy and his associates

Operative Plan of Action

On the basis of the permission [given by] the Government of the Hungarian People’s Republic and the decision of [Nagy’s] relatives, the burial of Imre Nagy and his four associates will take place on 16 June, 1989, in the New Central Cemetery in Budapest.

The family members as well as The Committee for Historical Justice wish to ensure the character of the event

as an act of respect, [but] recognize at the same time that a political aspect will inevitably arise, they will make efforts to keep it—as much as possible—within limits.

As opposed to them, certain extremist social groups—mainly SzDSz [Alliance of Free Democrats], FIDESz [League of Young Democrats] and the Republican Circle are attempting to turn the ceremony into a political demonstration. (...)

The main direction of the activity of the state security service must be to support with all force and means at its disposal the character of the event as one of respect, commemoration and rehabilitation, while preventing, halting, limiting, detouring and influencing in a positive direction all extremist attempts which may be expected from both sides.

Accordingly, it should make special efforts:

- To obtain, analyze and evaluate the ideas of Hungarian émigré groups and the various internal alternative groups regarding the funeral. To provide up-to-date information to the political leadership, and to work out proposals for political and government action.
- To work out and carry out combinations and active measures abroad and at home, orienting [action] toward the tribute-paying line of thought, placing rehabilitation and the paying of final respects [at] the fore. Pushing back and deflecting every initiative to the contrary.
- To initiate operations of misinformation emphasizing that the events may be taken advantage of by extremist groups to stage provocations, which could lead to a halting of the process of democratization and to restoration.
- To initiate measures in the foreign affairs arena, through our network of contacts, mainly toward the US State Department and the US Embassy in Budapest, calling attention to the fact that any action of extremist adventurism may disrupt increasingly broadening and strengthening Hungarian-American relations, and would negatively affect our initiatives toward a pluralistic social order.
- In matters involving games,¹ to convey information to the hostile special services suggesting that a course of events contrary to the intentions of the authorities may lead to a strengthening of the forces urging restoration [i.e., an abandonment of the current relative liberalism].
- To control the activity of politicians, businessmen, press correspondents and camera crews arriving from abroad.
- To investigate and reveal analyses and assessments by officials of foreign representations operating in Hungary concerning the funeral as well as to find out about any eventual effort to influence the events.
- Deliberately use the Hungarian mass media—Hungarian Television, Hungarian Radio, the government and independent press—to spread the suggestion that it will be a proof of the maturity of the nation if the events of 16 June proceed in an orderly manner.
- To spread, through our system of contacts, information influencing the political mood in the desired direction, emphasizing that the current leadership is making positive moves and initiatives, which [is the] reason [why] it would be highly undesirable if extremist forces provoked restoration [of the former order] by their actions on 16 June or 23 October. [...]

In order to co-ordinate state security efforts, an operative committee has been set up consisting of appointed leaders [from] Directorate III/I, III/II and III/III [from] the Interior Ministry which will have regular weekly meetings—at 4:00 PM every Monday—until the funeral. Memoranda will be made of these meetings, which will be submitted to the leadership of the Ministry.

For the operative control of the funeral of Imre Nagy on 16 June 1989, the following related measures are being planned:

IM (Interior Ministry) Directorate III/I:

In the field of intelligence gathering it will mobilize the operative forces at its disposal abroad, and will make efforts to provide continuous information on:

- the plans and activities of Hungarians living in the West regarding the events, and their general attitude and mood;
- it will pay special attention to the discovery and acquisition of information regarding the preparations, plans and activities at home of the Hungarian groups and émigré political personalities travelling to Hungary for the event; (...)

It will analyze and provide up-to-date reports on views and opinions observed in church, especially Vatican circles. It will take steps to win the support of church circles with the purpose of moderating domestic tendencies.

In the area of the employment of contacts (agents, social, official) it will aid, by consistent positive influence:

- the loyalty of external émigré public opinion and that of the incoming groups, emphasizing the tribute-paying and mourning character of the events and playing down their demonstrative elements.
- Through cover organizations and diplomatic channels, it will influence the political and official circles of the receiving countries in a positive manner, in line with our interests.

IM Directorate III/II

- To inform, through official and informal channels, the government organs of the NATO countries—especially the USA and Federal Republic of Germany—that certain extremist forces want to exploit the funeral to disrupt and prevent the paying of respect, and for adventurism political action, endangering thereby the increasingly vigorous process of democratization.
- To influence diplomats, journalists, trade and business specialists of the capitalist countries accredited to Hungary through “friendly conversations” in [such] a direction that, using their own means, they should make efforts to prevent the exploitation of the funeral for the purposes of political demonstration.
- Persuading the émigré politicians—especially Bela Kiraly and Sandor Kopacsi—to declare themselves in support of the memorial character of the funeral through the press and TV.(...)

Use of the channel of operative games:

- Contact code name [henceforth cn.] “Hedgehogcactus”², employed in Game cn. “Tarot”, will send—in a coded letter—the following information to the CIA center: “Certain extremist groups are planning to exploit the funeral of Imre Nagy for anti-government disruption. In such a case, the authorities are expected to act harshly. The IM has been put on special alert.”
- Contact agent (henceforth C.A.) cn. “Muddygrass”, employed in Game cn. “Tarot”, [who] will verbally inform the officer of the BND [the West German Federal Intelligence Service] about the information regarding preparations for the funeral of Imre Nagy. Will talk about the plans of the extremist groups intending to disrupt the funeral and the expected reaction of the authorities. Emphasizes that he believes a conflict would have a negative impact on the process of democratic evolution.

Via the network

- C.A. cn. “Red Thorn” will remind US diplomat cn. “Stone Rose” in a personal conversation that he saw [US] Ambassador [Mark] Palmer on TV among the marchers at the 15 March celebration. Personally he is very pleased with the wholehearted sympathy of the Americans for the Hungarian cause and that they support the democratization process by their participation, but at the same time he is worried about the funeral of Imre Nagy. He has information from university circles that some extremist groups, in violation of the memorial character of the funeral, intend to provoke a political demonstration. He believes that such a step might seriously endanger the process of democratization. It might provoke a violent action from the authorities.

The notions defined in the basic concept will be passed on:

- Via Agent cn. “Agave”, a person in close contact with the Austrian Embassy in Budapest, to the Austrian government.

- Via Occasional Operative Contact cn. “Candleflower” to the “friendly” contact between the US and British diplomats.
- Via S.A. cn. “Stonecrop” to British Press Attaché Stoneman. [...]
- Via S.A. cn. “Coralberry” to the press attaché of the French Embassy in Budapest and to French Intelligence.
- S.A. cn. “Cactus” will arrange that a camera crew of Hungarian Television interview Bela Kiraly (USA) and Sandor Kopacsi (Canada) on the preparations for Imre Nagy’s funeral. The report should emphasize the memorial character of the funeral and both persons should be made to condemn any attempt to take advantage of the funeral for political purposes.

IM Directorate III/III

(...)

Department 1:

- (...) follows continuously the attempts of the organizers of the funeral and the organizers of the planned demonstrations to build contacts with the Church, takes the steps necessary to halt, prevent, and to influence these.

Department 2:

- (...) follows by technical and network means the development of the position of FIDESz.
- Through S.As, cn. “Balsam” and “Flamingo Flower”, it will strengthen the anti-demonstration position.
- Via S.A. cn. “May”, it will leak the divisions within FIDESz regarding the issue to the press.
- It will keep the presidents of DEMISz [Hungarian Democratic Youth Organization] and MISzOT [National Alliance of Hungarian Youth Organizations] continuously informed on the developments (...).

Department 3:

- (...) obtains information (...) on the ideas of the TIB [Committee for Historical Justice] and the relatives.
- Wishes to influence, using its operative positions, the activities of the TIB and some alternative groups so that no political demonstration take place after the funeral.
- Among those operating in various alternative groups S.As cn. “Knotweed,” “Passion Flower”, “Rhododendron”, “Agave”, and “Sword-Flag” will be instructed to exert an influence on their environment, as a result of which they will abandon the idea of initiating, or participating in, a political demonstration.
- A special action plan is to be made for the employment of the services of S.A. cn. “Crown Imperial” inside the TIB (...)
- S.A. cn. “Inca Lilly” will be employed on the basis of a special action plan in order to discover and influence the plans of Imre Mecs in connection with the above. (...)

Department 4:

- S.A. cn. “Calla” will follow the co-ordination meetings of SzDSz in connection with the demonstration. In selecting the scene for the mass rally, he will argue in favor of holding it in the cemetery. If other sites are suggested, he will vote in favor of the less important ones. (...)
- S.A. cn. “Friesia” will obtain information from Sandor Szilagyi at the meetings of the Shelter Committee about the conferences, the planned sites and the manner of organization. At the sessions of the board of the Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society he will find out about the plans concerning participation of the organization.
- S.A. cn. “Lady’s Mantle” as a leader of the (...) district group of SzDSz, will represent the position of “the relatives” in the group, influence the members and Ferenc Koszeg³ in that direction. If he is invited, he will accept to become an organizer (...)
- S.A. cn. “Bellflower” will explore the plans and ideas of the MDF [Hungarian Democratic Forum] and its participation in the mass rally.
- (...)

Departments III/III-4 and 6 will, in close co-operation, discover the travel and participation plans of Gyorgy Krasso and Zoltan Zsille.⁴

Department 5:

- In the period preceding the funeral: It will collect information through network persons, official and social

contacts for the Hungarian National News Agency (MTI) and print media on the preparation and planned moves of the various alternative organizations with special regard to information received by the National Press Service from the (OS.)⁵

- With the help of S.A. cn. “Sage” and S.A. “Torch”, it will collect information on the intentions of the leadership and members of the Openness Club. They will be instructed to initiate an appeal for calm on behalf of the Club regarding the funeral.
- With the help of S.A. cn. “Autumn Crocus” and S.A. “Bride’s Eye”(…), it will plant articles appealing for peace and calm in the newspapers Reform and Unio.
- Through S.A. cn. “Bride’s Eye”, it will initiate the publication of articles suggesting national reconciliation and keeping calm in the daily Magyar Nemzet.
- Through the Foreign Relations Department of Hungarian Radio, it will obtain information on the foreign radio correspondents registering [to cover the event], and, in close cooperation with Department II/II-12, will check them [out].
- Will Instruct Secret Officer (henceforward S.O.) I-87 to provide as much information as is available to him on the progress of activities within Hungarian Television (program planning, live broadcasts, etc.) involving the funeral.
- Will instruct S.A. cn. “Artichoke” to provide information, as far as possible, on broadcasts planned by MR PAF [Hungarian Radio, Editors of Political Broadcasts] involving the events [..]

I request approval for the execution of the measures contained in the Plan of Action.
Budapest, May “...” 1989

[Source: Janos Kenedi, Kis allambiztonsagi olvasokonyv [*A Concise State Security Reader*], 2 vols. (Budapest: Magveto, 1996). Translation from *The Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 146 (Summer 1997), pp. 72-77.]

¹ The term had a two fold meaning: 1) indirect influencing through 2 or 3 persons; 2) intelligence or counter-intelligence operation, the imparting of misinformation to an institution, e.g. through a letter or report.

² The names of agents and games are fictitious, in accordance with the data protection law in force in Hungary—note of *The Hungarian Quarterly* editors.

³ Ferec Koszeg: One of the editors of the dissident magazine *Beszelo*, a leading SzDSz politician—*THQ*.

⁴ Gyorgy Krasso, Zoltan Zsille: prominent dissidents who returned from exile in 1989—*THQ*.

⁵ OS: National Press Service a private initiative news agency founded in 1989 to break the monopoly of MTI, the National News Agency

Announcing the Establishment of
The Cold War History Research Center
BUDAPEST

Hidegháború-történeti Kutatóközpont

Dr. Csaba Bekes, Director

Dohány u. 74, H-1074 Budapest, Hungary

Tel: (+361) 322 4026, 322 3222

Fax: (+361) 322 3084

E-mail: bek11339@helka.iif.hu

Web: <http://coldwar.hu>

Poland 1986-1989: From “Cooptation” to “Negotiated Revolution”

By Paweł Machcewicz

The documents published below are among those gathered by historians from the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences for the international conference “Poland 1986-1989. The End of the System,” held at Miedzeszyn near Warsaw on 21-23 October 1999 and co-organized with the National Security Archive at George Washington University and the Cold War International History Project.¹ They come from several archives: those of the Polish Senate (*Archiwum Biura Informacji i Dokumentacji Senackiej*), where a great portion of the “Solidarity” documents from 1988-1989 were deposited; the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University, where several leaders of the Polish Communist Party (PUWP) deposited their papers; and private collections of former Solidarity activists Andrzej Paczkowski, Andrzej Stelmachowski, and Stanisław Stomma. With the exception of Document No. 8,² these documents have never been published. The “Solidarity” documents, dealing with the preparation of key decisions by the opposition which led to the removal of communists from power, are unique. To date, no comparable Polish materials have been published in English.³

The selection below covers some of the most important issues and events from 1986 to 1989 relating to the end of communist rule in Poland. The first document is a September 1986 letter from Lech Wałęsa (chairman of the “Solidarity” trade union movement, banned by authorities after the imposition of martial law in December 1981) to the Council of State, following the government’s announcement of an amnesty for political prisoners. In his letter, Wałęsa offers to open a dialogue with the authorities. Documents 2 and 3 chronicle the talks between the authorities and circles close to both the Episcopate and Lech Wałęsa concerning the participation of independent forces in the Consultative Council created by the Chairman of the Council of State, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski. The creation of that consultative body with very limited powers (in December 1986) was the first half-measure by the authorities to broaden the scope of social dialogue within the political system created by the martial law declaration. In the end, none of the mainstream opposition representatives (centered around Wałęsa) cooperated with the Council which assured its failure. Paczkowski argues convincingly that the authorities’ strategy during that period was one of “cooptation,” i.e. of attempting to include opposition representatives in façade institutions (instead of opening any real or substantive negotiations) which would (had they succeeded) have legitimized the Jaruzelski regime.

The next document (No. 4) presages change in that

strategy, due to the catastrophic economic situation and the authorities’ growing awareness of the political deadlock in which they found themselves. A report prepared by three experts (government spokesman Jerzy Urban; CC Secretary Stanisław Ciosek; and high-level Interior Ministry official Gen. Władysław Pożoga) for the party and government leadership helps explain why in 1988 the regime decided to seek a new understanding with the opposition. Document No. 5 presents the authorities’ offer to cooperate with the opposition in the first half of 1988 (after the first wave of workers’ strikes in April and May) when they still believed that it might be possible to make the opposition share responsibility (“a pro-reform coalition” or an “anti-crisis pact”) without restructuring the system or restoring any form of legality to “Solidarity.”

The subsequent documents (nos. 6-12) illustrate the positions and beliefs held by the opposition circles around Wałęsa during the many long months of negotiations, which eventually led to the establishment of the “Roundtable” on 6 February 1989. Documents 13 and 14 present arguments of the Working Group of the “Solidarity” National Council from the period of its legal existence in the years 1980-1981 charging Wałęsa and his advisers with using undemocratic practices and usurping the right to speak on behalf of the whole Union. The Working Group also contests some elements of the negotiation strategy with the authorities. These differences of opinion within the “Solidarity” camp foreshadowed the subsequent internal conflicts after the “Roundtable” deliberations ended, particularly after the formation of Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s government that summer.

Document No. 15 is an internal PUWP summary of an April 1989 meeting between Jaruzelski and Gorbachev in Moscow at which the Polish leader reported to his Soviet counterpart on the results of the “Roundtable.” The last four documents illustrate debates within the “Solidarity” camp on the most important issues during the critical months between the elections (4 June 1989) and the formation of the “Solidarity government:” the parliamentary elections (No. 16), the presidency of Jaruzelski (No. 17), and finally the formation of the government (Nos. 18 and 19). It is worth noting that as late as 1 August 1989 (less than two weeks before Mazowiecki’s designation as prime minister of the coalition government), most leading “Solidarity” politicians considered participation in the government, much less taking over the premiership, as premature and even highly risky. Mazowiecki himself warned that such a step would provoke a very negative reaction from those groups that constituted the backbone of communist power. (“There are the remaining centers of

power and they will let themselves be known. We are not yet at a stage where parliamentary relations decide.”) He also reminded members of the opposition that “from the opposition-Solidarity side there is no program and within three months this would become dramatically clear.”

In recent history there are very few examples of such great and startling events that occur with such rapidity as to outpace the expectations and prognostications of even the most sagacious actors and observers. However, what in the summer of 1989 had appeared to be the beginning of a long-term set of negotiations with the communists who were still in control of the main instruments of power, had, by the early fall, transformed into the speedy dissolution of the communist system in Poland, and subsequently throughout all of Central and Eastern Europe.



DOCUMENT No. 1

Letter of Lech Wałęsa to the Council of State, 2 October 1986

The Council of State
of the People’s Republic of Poland
in Warsaw

Acting on the basis of a mandate given to me in democratic elections at the First Congress of delegates of the NSZZ [National Commission of the Independent Sovereign Trade Union] “Solidarity” in 1981, as chairman of that Union, led by an opinion expressed by the leaders of national and regional authorities:

—taking into consideration an unusually important decision of the PRL [Polish People’s Republic] authorities relating to the release of political prisoners,⁴ including a group of NSZZ “Solidarity” activists, which creates a new socio-political situation, allowing for an honest dialogue of all important social forces in Poland;

—motivated by my concern about further economic development of our country and having in mind the concentration of all Poles around the task of economic reform as a task of particular importance, in the absence of which we are faced with economic regression and backwardness, particularly in relation to the developed countries;

—drawing conclusions from the attitude of millions of working people, who over the last four years didn’t find a place for themselves in the present trade unions, remained faithful to the ideals of “Solidarity” and wished to get involved together with them in active work for the good of the Motherland within the framework of a socio-

trade union organization, which they could recognize as their own;

I am calling on the Council of State to take measures, which—consistent with binding legislation—would enable the realization of the principle of union pluralism, finally putting an end to the martial law legislation which constrains the development of trade unionism.

At the same time—for the sake of social peace and the need to concentrate all social forces on [the task of] getting out of the crisis—I declare readiness to respect the constitutional order, as well as the law of 8 October 1982 on trade unions.⁵ True, the provisions of this law are far from our expectations, but they nevertheless create possibilities of working and respecting the principles of the freedom of trade unions and union pluralism, and only temporary regulations are blocking the realization of those principles. It is high time to put an end to those temporary regulations and to lead to the normalization of social relations in the area of trade unionism. This is [within] the competence of the Council of State.

I trust that the Council of State will wish to take advantage of that competence and use—perhaps this unique chance—to strengthen social peace and activation of all social forces for the good of our country.

[signed] Lech Wałęsa

Submitted to the Council of State on 2 October 1986.

[Source: *Institute of Political Studies (Polish Academy of Sciences), Warsaw. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.*]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Note on Proposals for Meetings between Chairman of the Council of State and Repre- sentatives of Opinion Making Social Groups, October 1986

A note on a proposal
for meetings of Chairman of the Council of State
with individuals representing opinion-making
social circles who do not have contacts with
the highest state authorities.⁶

I. The amnesty act has created a new situation in

Poland and created possibilities for a broader social dialogue. It is very much needed due to the many unsolved problems and the deteriorating social and economic situation—despite some normalization. Among these problems one should include the following: 1) a sense of lack of prospects and any chances for the future for many people, particularly the youth; 2) the lack of credibility of the authorities, frequently connected with deep aversion to them; 3) [problems] stemming from economic and technical development, or even some regress vis-a-vis the developed countries.

Getting out of the crisis and moving [into] recovery, and particularly undertaking efforts to reform and achieve economic equilibrium, requires, in the first place, changes in peoples' attitudes. Such changes will not be achieved in a sufficiently broad scale without:

- a) conviction, in the sense of effort and sacrifice,
- b) an understanding of the government's policies,
- c) approval of such policies.

So far, signs of any such changes are lacking, and in this respect the situation is getting worse.

II. Taking the initiative [to arrange] meetings with Chairman of the Council of State could be an important factor on the road toward a broadly defined understanding and renewal, if it is conceived:

- 1) as one factor harmonized with other measures contributing to renewal, understanding, and social cooperation, and particularly a change of [the political] climate and human attitudes. Consideration of this initiative apart from the specific social situation and other measures is doomed to failure;
- 2) as a factor in the increasing rationalization of political and economic decisions. However, one needs to note that: a) in observing the work of the state organs one doesn't detect any particular interest in a dialogue with different social groups, and b) experiences of the Consultative Economic Council or the Socio-Economic Council at the *Sejm* [Polish Parliament] have not been encouraging so far;
- 3) as a factor in strengthening the government's position through some kind of legitimacy, as these meetings can and should be recognized as a form of support and cooperation from social circles. It will have an effect both inside and outside, but it will be durable only when these meetings will not be a façade and of temporary character;
- 4) as a factor of dialogue and mediation, particularly in difficult situations.

III. For the dialogue conducted at these meetings to bring about the desired results, it has to:

- 1) meet decisively the postulates of the Polish Episcopate and broad social circles relating to the freedom of association. The question of trade union pluralism⁷ is meeting with particular opposition [by the government]. In the long run, however, one cannot imagine social development without the implementation of this postulate. Right now broad social circles do not have legal opportunities for social activity and expression—[a lack] of which will unavoidably lead to tensions and conflicts. Thus, opening broader opportunities to form socio-cultural associations is becoming indispensable. Catholics will attempt to form professional, agricultural, intellectual, youth or women's associations, acting on the basis of Catholic social teachings, charitable associations and institutions, as well as those preventing social pathology;
- 2) adopt the principle of philosophical neutrality in the school and educational system and accept the principle of philosophical pluralism in scientific and cultural circles;
- 3) invite to those meetings not only publicly known people, but, above all, people who are representative of their [social] groups. In this way opinions and considerations of those circles could be directly presented and defended. This postulate should not contradict the conditions of factual dialogue and limits on the number of participants;
- 4) assure the truly independent character of invited participants, among whom, besides people connected with the Catholic Church, should be properly chosen representatives of other independent circles.

IV. Proceeding to the organization of the above meetings and the possible formation of a consultative body, the following questions should be resolved:

- 1) What is the real motive for organizing these meetings and forming a consultative body?⁸
- 2) What are going to be the tasks and powers of that body?
- 3) Should this body be created by Gen. Jaruzelski as Chairman of the Council of State, or by the Council of State [as a whole]?
- 4) What will be the composition (what social circles and proportions), the manner of appointment, and the size of this body?
- 5) In what way will the society be informed about the work of this body and the opinions of its members?
- 6) Will it be possible to adopt the principle that people who are not representing official political structures and the state organs also be invited?
- 7) Is there a possibility to hold proper consultations with Lech Wałęsa on the participation of people from the "Solidarity" circles?
- 8) Would the state authorities, before the final decision on meetings and setting up the consultative body, publicly take a positive position on the proposal

to expand activities for social associations?

9) Is it possible to calm philosophical conflicts in schools in connection with the study of religions and atheization, as well as with philosophical diversification of teachers in the school system?

[Source: Stanisław Stomma Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 3
Memorandum of Conversation,
18 October 1986

Pro memoria

for H.E. rev. Abp. Bronisław Dąbrowski⁹ about a conversation in the Belvedere held on 18 October 1986 by A. Święcicki,¹⁰ J. Turowicz,¹¹ and A. Wielowieyski¹² with Vice Chairman of the Council of State, K. Barcikowski,¹³ member of the Council of State K. Secomski,¹⁴ and Secretary of the CC PUWP, St. Ciosek,¹⁵ concerning a Social Consultative Council.

The conversation started at about 9 a.m. and lasted three and a half hours. K. Barcikowski referred to questions which he had received from the Episcopate. He expressed their mutual lack of trust. The proposal [for the Council] is new and startling. It would be the only means to get involved in difficult decisions. Participation in [the proposed Council] is a matter of citizenship, a duty. Its composition [is] well balanced: 30-40 people [would be involved] for certain (but there are proposals to expand that list and to invite other people on an ad hoc basis). Of the Catholics from the circles close to the Episcopate, 8-10 people [would be active]. Besides representatives of the [ruling] party and other parties,¹⁶ non-party people, including those not connected with the authorities (but not extremists, who are re-activating the “S[olidarity]” structures) [would also actively participate].

The proposed Consultative Council is meant to increase trust and develop recommendations, which the Chairman of the Council of State (Gen. Jaruzelski) would pass on to the proper state organs as important proposals. Its effectiveness will depend on the authority [that it can command]. There will be a place for the opinions of its members, and the circles to which they belong. The Consultative Council has to work out some consensus.

The Consultative Council would be set up by the Chairman of the Council of State personally and not by the Council of State as such, which has too narrow a range of responsibilities and competence.

A possible range of activities of the Council [is] building: 1) social understanding, 2) functioning of the State, 3) conditions for economic progress, 4) scientific-technical progress, 5) development of socialist democracy, 6) current and prospective social policy, 7) environmental protection, 8) improvement of the moral condition of society; as well as other important matters.

The creation of approximately ten similar “citizens’ convents”¹⁷ for larger agglomerations or several *voivodships* [districts] and also the appointment of a Citizens’ Rights Ombudsman is expected.¹⁸

K. Barcikowski, referring to a note he received at the beginning of the meeting from A. Wielowieyski, said that there is some skepticism toward these proposed bodies, but that he was sure that a “façade counts too.” Criticism towards consultative bodies is incorrect, anyway, as they are actively operating.

Taking a position on particular points of the “Note”

—he called into question an assertion that union pluralism is indispensable for the longer term;

—he expressed surprise that Catholics would aim at forming associations and said that the authorities might take a position on this matter, but only if all the interested parties would first take a position toward the proposed Council (ref. to question 8);

—in schools one can see an aversion shown by Catholics (question 9);

—[he said that] the demand that the Council be representative creates the impression that it was to be made according to a “prescription;”

—[he noted that] the question of informing public opinion about the workings of the Council requires further thought; certainly discretion will be needed (question 5);

—[he questioned if] the participation in the Council, of people connected with the authorities (e.g. with the Party) mean that only people opposed to the authorities should be in the Council? (to question 6—it would be an issue to raise);

—[he said that] consultations with Wałęsa are not being foreseen without [Wałęsa] fulfilling conditions which the government’s spokesman talked [about] (on TV), i.e. cutting himself off from other “S” leaders;

He thought the note was one-sided.

Subsequently a mutual clarification of positions took place.

A. Wielowieyski stated that the configuration of social forces is very unfavorable to efforts to overcome the crisis due to the fact that the majority of society is passive, has no confidence and is skeptical towards the authorities. The greatest need is to create a self-identity—that is how he explained the need for pluralism and having the proper representation of other social groups—identity indispensable for improving the climate and for the defense of the needs of those groups.

A. Świącicki talked about gradual realization of the principle of pluralism. He pointed to: 1) a need to create an educational environment, 2) pressure for secularization in schools (study of religions and verification of teachers) is stimulating a fighting attitude among the clergy, and 3) representation of particular segments of society in the Consultative Council should match the prestige and significance of people proposed (there are indications that people who are invited are not representative of those social segments.)

He emphasized several times that Catholic associations were better educationally, since they were more independent than the parishes, but they could be formed only as local organizations.

J. Turowicz pointed out that “normalization” is perceived negatively by society and seen as a means of reinforcing the totalitarian system. The need to reform the system was broadly felt. He did not think that Catholics should be in majority in the Council, but he questioned the way the extremists were being defined (e.g. Mazowiecki¹⁹ or Geremek²⁰ are counted as part of that group, but these are, after all, reasonable and moderate people).

As far as the names of people for the Council from the government side [are concerned], these could not be compromised names. He repeated arguments about a possible ineffectiveness and ostentatiousness of the Council, and also about the need for school neutrality.

Towards the end of the discussion he emphasized that social pluralism is a fact, and that the institutions in which society could broadly participate could not be licensed exclusively. He also raised the possibility of a role not only for Catholic associations, but for the others too (e. g. he mentioned D and P).²¹

A. Wielowieyski, referring to K. Barcikowski’s words about social organizations, mentioned, among other things, a particular feeling of helplessness on the part of peasants towards the political and economic apparatus governing the countryside (agricultural and mechanical associations),²² associations in which even heads of the

communities are helpless.

K. Barcikowski referring to the above-mentioned matter said (without denying the fact) [that] this would not be easy to fix soon.

—took an unwilling position toward the creation of associations; said the parishes are acting legally, with the authorities’ consent, while there had been talk at the Joint Commission about associations,²³ long ago; says that the more the Church gets, the more it wants (there was unwillingness, but not a decisive refusal);

—he evaluated Wałęsa critically;

—he did not exclude altogether union pluralism in the future though it was inadmissible [now];

—it was difficult to commit to cooperation with people, who were declaring [their] hostility;

—defended pro-governmental social organizations (they were “alive”[active, not moribund]);

—expressed regret that in 1956 religion was not left in schools; since the Church had created its own network of religious teaching, and the “state secular school” was just a response to that network and it had to defend itself against the Church;

—you were making a mistake, you wanted to sell us an “angel” (some kind of an ideal society, which doesn’t exist), your promises will eventually shrink, the Church doesn’t have influence on attitudes toward work; however, towards the end of the discussion, to an argument that the Church nevertheless has had influence on moderation and non-violence within society, he did not oppose it, but said that, after all, both sides have been temperate;

—he emphasized that, after all, all proposals from this talk would have to be approved by the party;

—we appreciated you very much, but we can dispense with your advise, we announced amnesty for political reasons, but we would not have done it if it would have complicated the situation in the country;

—the amnesty had moved the intelligentsia circles tremendously, but for the workers it did not mean much;

—you were maximalists; I did not see a rapprochement; my opinion was authoritative. I did not exclude further talks, but our proposals were not going to change much, we would not come up with concessions because we did not have to. Both sides had been involved, and if it did not work, the country will have to pay for it;

—haste is not in our interest.

Stanisław Ciosek

—recalled the negative results of pluralism in 1980/1981 and rejected it, arguing that the whole world has a totalitarian system;

—the curve of social expectations was declining, and no revolts or tragedies were going to happen now;

—he said he knew the report “5 Years After August [1980],”²⁴ prepared by “Solidarity’s” advisers, but we knew it even better, and that was why we wanted to do something together with you to prevent [Poland from] becoming a colony of a stronger state.

K. Secomski spoke briefly and didn’t bring up anything of importance.

Done by:

Andrzej Wielowieyski

[Source: *Stanisław Stomma Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.*]



DOCUMENT No. 4
[Polish Government] Report,
“A Synthesis of the Domestic Situation
and the West’s Activity,”
28 August 1987

Warsaw, 28 August 1987

A synthesis of the domestic situation of the country
and the West’s activity

The moods in social segments against the background
of the economic situation

—Generally, anxiety is rising due to the prolonged economic crisis. The opinion is spreading that the economy instead of improving is getting worse. As a result, an ever greater dissonance arises between the so-called official optimism of the authorities (“after all, it’s better [now]”) and the feeling of society.

—Criticism directed at the authorities is rising because of

the “slow, inept and inconsistent” introduction of economic reform.

—Social dissatisfaction is growing because of the rising costs of living. The opinion is spreading that the government has only one “prescription,” i.e. price increases. Against this background the mood of dissatisfaction is strongest among the workers.

—[The] belief is growing that the reform has not reached the workplaces, [there is] a lack of any improvement in management and organization of work.

—Confirmations of the above moods are [the following factors:]

a) in the period January-July 1987, there were 234 collective forms of protest, i.e. more than in the same period last year;

b) a total of 3,353 people participated in work stoppages, while only 1,729 people participated in such stoppages last year;

c) the role of workplace union organizations in inspiring conflicts that threaten work stoppages is rising.

—Disappointment and frustration is deepening within the intelligentsia, which placed great hope in the reform for overcoming technical and “civilizational” backwardness, and thus in their own social “promotion” and improvement in their standard of living.

—Characteristic of these circles, [which] otherwise stand far removed from the opposition, is the opinion that the “government is strong when it comes to keeping itself in power, but weak and helpless in fighting the wrongs which lead to economic anarchy and the demoralization of society.”

—Consecutive liberalization measures, such as consent to create several associations, publication of the journal *Res Publica*²⁵, re-issuing of *Ład*,²⁶ or Czyrek’s meeting in the Warsaw KIK,²⁷ have little resonance within society and render little help in improving the “reputation” of the government. One can put forth the thesis that their reception is larger in narrow circles of the so-called moderate opposition and in some circles in the West than in the broader public opinion at home.

—Reaction to the Social Consultative Council, which at the beginning was very positive, is deteriorating. The opinion that the Council has not lived up to expectations, and that it is a “couch” [*Kanapowe*, meaning: composed of a few individuals who can fit on one couch] device, is gaining [ground]. It is pointed out that only about a dozen

members in the Council are active, while the majority is silent or has nothing to say. Even a report submitted in the Council by Prof. Szczepański on resolving the crisis didn't produce any significant response (except in some circles of the so-called moderate opposition and among some Western correspondents).

—These unfavorable trends are not being compensated [for] by active Polish foreign policy and [its] undeniable successes in overcoming barriers of isolation and restoration of Poland to its proper place in the world [after the sanctions imposed by the West following the December 1981 martial law crackdown]. These successes are being noticed and even present an element of surprise in the West, where the “originality” or “national character” of the so-called Jaruzelski Plan is being stressed. The development of political relations with the West is also observed carefully by the internal enemy, causing it irritation and apprehension that the opposition might be left on its own. But for the “average” citizen, foreign policy is something remote, without an effect on the domestic situation of the country and the standard of living of the society, and, what is worse—an impression is created that the authorities are concentrating their efforts on building an “external” image, neglecting the basic questions of citizens' daily lives.

Generalizing, one can say that:

- 1) confidence in the authorities and readiness to cooperate in the reconstruction of the country is declining at a very fast rate, which is caused mainly by the ineffectiveness of actions [taken] in the economic sphere. Liberalization measures undertaken so far are not able to stem this process;
- 2) Against this background, one can also clearly note the declining prestige of the First Secretary of the CC PUPW;
- 3) A state of discontent is growing ([among] workers and intelligentsia groups, and partly in the villages) and it is gradually, but systematically accumulating.

The situation in the camp of the political adversary.

—A seeming decline of activities “on the outside:” fewer leaflets, new initiatives or provocative appeals. Also, the planned ceremonies of the “August Anniversary”²⁸ are less impressive and aggressive in content and form than in previous years;

—The adversary admits that in terms of organization it is at a standstill, and in its political and propaganda interaction it made mistakes and found itself on the defensive vis-à-vis the government (see our campaign around US financial support for “Solidarity”);

—However, a number of symptoms indicate that as far as the adversary is concerned, it is the “calm before the storm.” For the adversary says that:

- a) each action by the authorities in the economic sphere will be favorable to the opposition (failing to implement it or the incomplete realization of economic reform will cause stagnation or regression, and as a result rising social dissatisfaction, but a similar result can be brought about by full implementation of reform, as it will result in a temporary decline in purchasing power, layoffs, etc.);
- b) government policies are approaching bankruptcy, and it must come to the next crisis;
- c) the government has already entered into the next curve and is losing control over the development of events;
- d) the government is becoming more and more susceptible to social pressure;

—Based on these premises, the adversary has come to the conclusion that it does not have to bother much—it is enough to sustain a mood of justified anger and wait and join, at the right moment, the eruption of dissatisfaction, as in 1980;

—the adversary has already undertaken specific preparations in this direction:

- a) energetic steps are being taken to increase and institutionalize financial grants from the West. These steps, for the time being, have succeeded in the US Congress granting “Solidarity” US\$1 million;
- b) under consideration is the reorganization of top leadership bodies, their transformation into a sort of Staff “capable of taking operational decisions and coordinating actions;”
- c) communication systems between the underground and diversion centers and “Solidarity” structures in the West and among particular regions are being perfected;
- d) a network of alarm communication is being set up in case of a general strike;
- e) under consideration is the strengthening of the infrastructure and training for the illegal structures in the regions;
- f) printing facilities are maintained in full readiness (fully loaded with equipment, the underground is

unable to “absorb” the machines transferred from the West);

—a peculiar kind of “detonator” may turn out to be terrorist actions planned by the extremists, preparations for which are advancing;²⁹

—obviously, all areas of activity of the adversary so far are still valid, thus:

a) criticism of the system and the authorities for economic ineptitude, falling behind the Soviet “*perestroika*,” for halfway liberalization measures—most often through interviews of opposition leaders to the Western media and in contacts with representatives of foreign governments and embassies;

b) disruptive activities in relations with the West, through repeated demands that the essential condition for changing the Western attitude toward Poland on questions of trade and credit should be the restoration of trade union pluralism and ensuring legal activities for the opposition;

c) strengthening the so-called second circulation publishing;

d) attempts at rebuilding illegal structures at workplaces.

Activities of the Western special services and centers of diversion

—Activities of the intelligence services are directed mostly at reconnaissance:

a) the state of the economy, the decisiveness of government in implementing reforms, differences of positions in this regard within the top leadership and mid-level *Aktyin* [party activists], as well as the implementation of reforms (from the “top” to the workplace);

b) possibilities of eruptions on a larger scale.

—Assuming such a course of developments, the “spectacle” with American donations for “Solidarity” was arranged on purpose. The point was, among others, to show “who is the master here” and as a result to subordinate even more strongly the illegal structures in the country to the power centers in the West, and in fact to the special services in the US.

—This operation turned out to be a success: the underground (with few exceptions) agrees to be a US instrument. The adversary is so sure of its power in the underground that it steadily extends [the underground’s] range

of tasks:

a) an ever wider realization of demands in the area of economic intelligence;

b) identification of the Security Services functionaries (names and addresses) and preparations for provocation against our apparatus (this scheme is known from previous crises);

c) inspiring terrorist actions.

—At the same time the process of upgrading the opposition leaders as “trustworthy and legally elected representatives of the society” is continuing (e.g. many recent invitations for Wałęsa to foreign events, contacts by Western officials with the leadership of the opposition). The purpose of these measures is quite clearly the re-creation of the opposition leadership elite from the years 1980-1981 in case a similar situation arises.

—Activities coordinated within NATO by the US, aimed at strengthening the position of the Church (contacts with Glemp³⁰ and other representatives of the hierarchy, new inspirations involving the Church in the matters of foundations), are also continuing.

—Activities aimed at strengthening the American presence in Poland on a larger scale are being intensified:

a) independent of official visits, there are more and more visits of politicians and experts, which the Americans themselves define as study travels (what in practice is tantamount to the realization of intelligence demands);

b) the Americans are strengthening their influence among politically active, opinion-shaping circles, which is confirmed by, inter alia, their current fellowship programs. They are most clearly taking an interest in young people, [who are] outstanding in their field, as their aim is to generate a new pro-American leadership elite.

—Similar activities are directed at the centers of ideological diversion.

Changes in evaluations of the economic situation in Poland formulated in the West

—Already in the first months of this year, Western intelligence and governmental experts’ evaluations presented rather positive opinions about a “spirit of change” in Poland and on theoretical assumptions of the reform. Opinions were expressed that if the authorities “introduce proper structures, mechanisms and institutions

enabling effective introduction of the second stage of economic reform,” then Poland “will have a chance for economic development”;

—In Western estimates from this period, one can see that at least some forces in the West have identified their interests with the reform course in Poland. Hence, [there have been] all sorts of “encouragement,” and sometimes pressure, to speed up, deepen, [and] expand the reform process (both in the economy and in the superstructure);

—However, in mid-1987 one can observe increasing criticism in the evaluations and prognoses for the Polish economy made by the Western intelligence services and government experts. These assessments are sometimes extended to the whole domestic situation. For example:

a) intelligence specialists and congressional experts in the US [state]:

- The results of the reform so far are disappointing. So far there is nothing which would indicate that in the near future the authorities will be able to stabilize the economic situation. One should even assume a growing socio-political destabilization.

- Straightening out the mess is dragging on, and as a result Poland may fall into an even more turbulent state than before.

- The inactivity of the authorities may have an exponential effect in the form of increased confrontation and isolation.

- If the government does not take immediate and decisive measures, it may lose an opportunity to escape this labyrinth of difficulties.

b) NATO experts:

- The economic situation is very complex and the opposition’s activity is resulting in a situation for the authorities that is no less dangerous than it was in 1980.

c) A new element is that experts from neutral countries are formulating similarly drastic assessments. For example, the Swedes [note]:

- The reform policy is losing speed, and paralysis in the government’s activities is increasingly visible.

- The danger of an economic and societal crash is approaching.

- Poland is becoming a keg of gunpowder.

- Such evaluations may result in a fundamental change in the position of the West [with their] slowing down political normalization and gradual reconstruction of economic relations with Poland. One proof of this may be [in the] deliberations among the diplomats of NATO countries in Warsaw:

a) Is it worth it to support reform efforts in Poland since the reform cause is losing, and maybe it has already been lost[?]

b) Is it worth it to still invest in the present team[?]

c) It is not by accident that the embassies of NATO countries are currently conducting investigations [into] organizing people, who “lost hope in the possibility of the PUWP improving the situation” and [into] a possible organizing by those people into a new party (association), which “would support [the] PUWP on the basic line, but would use different methods.”³¹

[Source: *Andrzej Paczkowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.*]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Speech by Józef Czyrek, 11 May 1988

A speech by Mr. Józef Czyrek at a founding meeting of the Polish Club of International Relations, held on 11 May 1988

1. Together with our host, Professor Aleksander Gieysztor,³² we have envisioned the founding of a Polish Club of International Relations.³³ The talks conducted on this matter and today’s meeting confirm a positive response to this initiative. I am convinced that outstanding representatives of different circles and orientations will join in the activities of the Club, which we want to base on the recognition of pluralism and understanding.

2. We have stated in a joint letter with Prof. Gieysztor that Poland’s position among the nations of the world demands broad social support, dialogue and public evaluation. This would be the major objective of the Polish Club of International Relations. I want to repeat: *social support, dialogue and public evaluation*. This is the

essence of how we see the activity of the Club.

3. This assumes a wide representation of points of view and opinions, lively and unrestrained discourse on all questions of Polish foreign policy, relations in Europe and the world, aiming at a consensus through dialogue. We assume that the Club will act on the basis of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic and will be led by the Polish *raison d'état*. However, within the framework of the Constitution and the principles of *raison d'état* there is a wide area for an exchange of views and the drawing of conclusions. I want to express conviction that in the Club's activities we should strive toward the broadest understanding and consensus. After all, there is no doubt that we are led—above all differences of views—by the good of Poland, the good of our nation, of our motherland.

4. Proposals to create this kind of social body have been suggested by different circles for some time. We are now taking this initiative not without reason. We look at the creation of the Club and its activity as one of the important elements building national understanding. Poland needs it as much as [it needs] air. Recent developments not only do not undermine such a need, quite to the contrary—they fully emphasize its importance.

5. We are holding our meeting on a day of very important Sejm deliberations. They fully confirm the will for the implementation of the II [second] stage of economic reform, and very important resolutions are being taken, which are intended to speed up its introduction and increase its impact. The Sejm also confirms its unwavering will to continue and expand political reforms. I think personally that from the process of renewal we will come to a deep reconstruction, to a significant widening of the Polish model of socialism in economic, social and political life. Led by this desire is Chairman of the Council of State Wojciech Jaruzelski, and—contrary to various opinions—he has broad backing, both within the ruling coalition and various patriotic forces, as well as from within our party.

6. In various discussions, including those held within our party, the idea of building some kind of pro-reform coalition or anti-crisis pact is being put forward. There is no doubt that Poland needs this kind of coalition very badly. I am personally convinced that we should strive towards it, build it not for a distant future, but rather for the near one.

7. I am stressing this basic objective because we see, together with Professors Gieysztor and other co-authors of that initiative [discussed above in number 6], such activity as a basic task of the Club. Consensus on the questions of foreign policy, to which the Club should contribute, is as important as consensus on the questions of internal economic, social and political reforms. In fact there can be

no deeper national understanding without a harmony of positions on key international questions for the country. It is important in all countries and in ours in particular.

Foreign policy is certainly the area, which is evoking, relatively, the smallest [number of] controversies. There is a broad understanding of the correctness of the alliance with the USSR and other socialist states as the basis for the territorial integrity and security of Poland. There is also broad support for the unambiguously peaceful purposes of our foreign policy, and particularly [for] active participation in building joint security in Europe and constructively shaping East-West relations, including the need for positive developments in relations with Western countries. We fully appreciate the significance of international law, including human rights, the weight of regional and global problems in the natural environment, the necessity of expanding cultural exchanges and the elimination of all barriers to economic cooperation.

There is no doubt that the purposes of Polish foreign policy are consistent with the national interests of Poland. However, there is also no doubt, that both within the area of objectives and of the ways of their realization, a broad social dialogue is needed. We would like the Club that we are about to set up to serve well such a dialogue, an elaboration—as I have already pointed out—of mutual understanding and consensus on these matters.

8. In our times the significance of the phenomenon which is being called public diplomacy, is growing. This form of diplomacy, engaging various social forces and affecting the shape of foreign opinion on one's country, is one of the great platforms of international contacts. It's even more important, the more representative and the more socially and morally authoritative the persons are participating in it. We are convinced that we can gather many such personalities in the proposed Club. And today's meeting also confirms it.

Based on an idea of national understanding, we would like to see the proposed Club gather people of practically all patriotic orientations. We see it as place for people who, as a result of their present or past activity, have contributed significantly to the development of Polish relations with the abroad. We see in it people, who, from different philosophical or political outlooks, participate or want to participate in expanding contacts with abroad. People from very different circles, of divergent opinions, but ready to get involved in building national understanding.

9. It is our conviction [that] the Club, in addition to its other purposes, should also serve in shaping political culture. It should act on its principles and at the same time make a significant contribution in the deepening of society. We think that this understanding will gain support, because one cannot build a national understanding without political culture.

10. Together with Prof. Gieysztor and other co-authors of the initiative we are deeply convinced that the Club should have a social character. Thus, we do not want to tie it to any state institution, nor to any existing social organization. We see it as an autonomous social body set up on the basis of the law on associations and self-governing principles of activity. We think that this formula is the best one and will gain support of both the personalities gathered here, as well as many other persons to whom we have appealed for participation. The draft statute of the Club is based on such principles, with a significant contribution by Prof. Manfred Lachs, for which I thank him wholeheartedly. This draft will be submitted here for discussion. We also want to submit for discussion a draft list of people, to whom we have turned for participation in the Club's activities.

11. In the end I want to thank wholeheartedly Prof. Aleksander Gieysztor for his co-participation in this initiative and for hosting today's meeting. I hope that the beautiful Castle of which Prof. Gieysztor is so admirably in charge, will be the Club's headquarters.

[Source: *Andrzej Stelmachowski Papers*; translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENTS No. 6
Report on a Working Conference
[of Opposition Leaders],
1 September 1988

A report from a working conference

At a meeting held on 1 September 1988, chaired by Prof. Andrzej Stelmachowski,³⁴ there was a discussion on preparations to a possible "Roundtable." Participants in the discussion were: B. Geremek, P. Czarotorski,³⁵ M. Król,³⁶ H. Wujec,³⁷ A. Michnik,³⁸ J. Kuroń,³⁹ S. Grabska,⁴⁰ K. Śliwiński,⁴¹ T. Gruszecki,⁴² R. Bugaj,⁴³ J. Moskwa,⁴⁴ A. Wielowieyski, K. Wójcicki,⁴⁵ H. Bortnowska,⁴⁶ Z. Grzelak.⁴⁷

Differences of opinion among the participants concerned mostly the degree of to which emphasis should be placed on the [legal] registration of "Solidarity" as opposed to the preparation of broader topics of possible future talks. Attention was drawn to the danger of too wide a range of topics, which might water down the cause of

"Solidarity." In this connection it has been agreed that it is necessary to prepare a detailed schedule of negotiations, in which the question of "Solidarity" would be awarded the first place.

Another matter discussed was the status of social participants in the "Roundtable" discussions. It has been acknowledged that it has to be precisely defined.

In the course of the meeting M. Król submitted a report on his talk with Minister Kiszczak,⁴⁸ and P. Czarotorski described the situation in Silesia.

As a result of the discussion it has been agreed:

1. The point of departure for the preparations for the talks is a document submitted by L. Wałęsa on 25 August 1988, in which three major areas for talks have been formulated: unions, pluralism of associations, and economic and political reforms;⁴⁹

2. The date for the meeting of the so-called Group of 60 was set for 9 October 1988 in Gdańsk (still to be agreed with L. Wałęsa);⁵⁰

3. The formation of topical groups, which were to prepare papers for the Gdańsk meeting, as well as for future talks conducted by L. Wałęsa. The following groups have been set up:

- a group for trade union matters (Kuroń, Merkel,⁵¹ Malanowski,⁵² Wujec, Rosner,⁵³ Milczanowski⁵⁴);

- a group for economic questions (Wielowieyski, Gruszecki, Bugaj—with an invitation to G. Janowski⁵⁵ for agricultural matters);

- a group for pluralism of associations (Geremek, Szaniawski,⁵⁶ Paszyński,⁵⁷ Bratkowski⁵⁸ and possibly M. Król—future systemic questions).

It has been agreed that further topical groups should be established, which would cooperate with a group of "Solidarity" advisors. Among other things, the question of youth and generational differences should be brought up.

The question of contacts, the press and other media was entrusted to J. Moskwa, and the preparation of papers for discussion in Gdańsk—to K. Wójcicki.

[Source: *Andrzej Stelmachowski Papers*. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]

DOCUMENT No. 7
Memorandum by Lech Wałęsa,
“On Starting the Roundtable Talks,”
4 September 1988

On starting the [Roundtable] talks

Right now we can begin to discuss the topics for negotiations, which I presented in my statement of 26 August.⁵⁹ I think that in the beginning of next week talks should be concerned with two questions:

1) implementation of the promise made by the authorities that there would be no repression toward striking workers, and that those [repressive measures] have been applied, will be annulled,

2) union pluralism and within its framework the legalization of NSZZ⁶⁰ “Solidarity”, consistent with the postulate of the striking crews.

I think that the first stage of implementing the principle of the “Roundtable” as a process should be a factual discussion of the above topics and preliminary decisions. The composition of the meeting should initially be trilateral,⁶¹ as was our meeting on 31 August.⁶² I am going to present personal proposals separately.

A positive consideration of the above mentioned questions will allow for a broader debate on economic and political reforms in our country.

Gdańsk, 4 September 1988

[signed ⁶³]

[Source: Andrzej Stelmachowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 8
Report from Andrzej Stelmachowski
to Lech Wałęsa,
6 September 1988

6 September 1988

Mr. Chairman
 Lech Wałęsa

Gdańsk

A report

Yesterday, i.e. on 5 September, I met with Secretary J. Czyrek. The conversation lasted from 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., and then for another 10 minutes [we talked] in connection with the need for intervention on behalf of workers dismissed from their jobs or called up for military service as a penalty [for participation in strikes].

At the beginning [of the meeting] I handed him your note of 4 September, and the second one from “Solidarity RI” relating to agriculture [in] which I have agreed with them on my trip to Częstochowa for a harvest festival. To begin with, the Secretary was delighted that we are proposing to start the “Roundtable” in [a] reasonable, not too accelerated time limit. He also said that he had been expecting a second Kiszczak-Wałęsa meeting to discuss the agenda, a list of participants and an agenda, while it would appear from your note⁶⁴ that such meeting is not planned. I responded to this that, of course, a Kiszczak-Wałęsa meeting is always possible if we both agree on what needs to be done.

In that case the secretary has revealed his vision of the “Roundtable.” He sees it as follows:

1) An exchange of views on the proposed changes in: a) the socio-political system, b) the economic system;

2) Work procedure and methods of coming to conclusions. He sees the sequence of work [as follows:]
 1/ Discussion of the democratization process, leading to the creation of a joint election platform and reaching an understanding on restructuring the most important state structures: the Sejm, the government, the chief of state (i.e., a “presidential system”);

2/ Discussion of pluralism of associations (so that its implementation could be achieved by the year’s end);

3/ Discussion of a trade union model. He emphasized, however: “we stand on the position of the trade union law.”⁶⁵

He added: We won’t quarrel about the sequence of the points.

As can be seen from the above, the sequence of his points is exactly the reverse of ours. Therefore, I put up a [a bit of an objection], explaining that “political and legal empowering is the necessary premise of further phases, as

it is difficult to undertake obligations towards anyone without having a legal existence.”

To this the secretary “put his cards on the table” stating that in deciding on the legalization of “Solidarity” the authorities would like to know how the “S” sees its place in the political system. They would like to see “S” as a constructive factor, and not one undermining the system. They do not demand that “S” should get actively involved in the system as it exists today, but they would like to see its co-participation and co-responsibility in the reformed system.

I expressed fear that unleashing a wide-ranging debate on reforming the political system will water down the whole question.

After a longer exchange of views he recognized that besides “a large table,” “smaller tables,” including a “union” one, could also be established. He insisted, however, that reform questions should at least be considered together with the union matters.

In view of my fears that the “large table” debates may be less specific, he has revealed still another proposal. Thus, they would like to set up temporarily a body like a “Council for National Understanding,” which would be entrusted with preparing the reform of the Sejm, government, etc. He asked if “S” would enter into such a council. I in turn inquired how such a council would be chosen: by nomination or by delegation by particular organizations. He responded that it would be through delegation (in this respect it would greatly differ from the Consultative Council) and resolutions would be taken through an “understanding” and not by a “vote.” Such a council would have about 50 persons.

I responded I could not decide this for the “S” authorities, but that I personally thought such participation might be possible, obviously already from the position of a legalized organization.

Then we moved on to the composition of the “Table” and the possibility of a “union table.” I said that for the time being we don’t have any proposals regarding the “Table,” while at the “union table” there would be 7-8 people, including about 5 worker activists and about 2-3 people from a team of “advisors” (I did not mention names). He responded by saying that on their side also there would have to be workers and that people from the OPZZ cannot be excluded.⁶⁶ He also asked if the strikers would be included in the “S” delegation. I responded that yes, that, for Lech, people who are “dynamic” are right now more important than those who already belong to “Solidarity’s ZBOWiD.”⁶⁷ I appealed to him not to interfere, as far as possible, into the composition of the other side; we are ready to accept people even from the “party’s concrete”⁶⁸ (at which he smiled and said this would be an exaggeration, as he would like to lead [the talks] to a positive conclusion).

As far as the “Large Table” is concerned, he mentioned several names such as Kozakiewicz,⁶⁹

Kostrzewski⁷⁰ (President of Polish Academy of Sciences), Stomma,⁷¹ Przeclawska,⁷² Marcin Król, etc. I acknowledged it.

As far as setting the date for starting the debates, it would be next week (according to your note). I merely said that I did not like the figure 13, thus it would be either 12th or 14th. He said he did not have aversion to the 13th, but since a meeting of the Politburo is scheduled on that day, that day would be out of question anyway.

So much for your information. To sum it up—we are faced with a dilemma as to whether to agree to parallel debates at both tables: the “big one” and several small ones, including the “union” one, or not. If so, then we should invite to the “large table” people from the “Group of 60,” invited for Sunday⁷³ (besides the “unionists”).

There is also the question whether the Kiszczak-Lech debate should be renewed to complete these things, or whether I should do it with Czyrek.

Before leaving the CC building I made a phone call to Rev. Urszulik⁷⁴ (I had an earlier appointment, but due to the late hour I wanted to cancel it). Then attorney Ambroziak,⁷⁵ who was there, broke the news to me about a call-up of the military in Gdańsk and Stalowa Wola and about the layoffs of 28 people from the Northern Shipyard in Gdańsk. Therefore, I returned back to Secretary Czyrek and intervened. He promised to take up this matter.

Since Urszulik was urging me to come over (he sent a car), I drove to the Secretary of the Episcopate, where I met, with Rev. Orszulik, Abp. Stroba⁷⁶ and Bp. J. Dąbrowski. I reported to them on my conversation with Czyrek.

They were of the opinion to agree to both a “large” and “small” table.

While writing this note (at 9:50 a.m.) I got a call from Czyrek, who told me the following:

1) Call-ups to the military are not a new event, but implementation of earlier instructions dating back to the strike period. He pointed out that it has to do with “short” mobilization exercises, 5 days, 10 days, 14 days at most.

2) He promised to explore the question of layoffs in the Northern Shipyard in conversation with the first secretary in Gdańsk, who is expected to arrive today for a Politburo meeting.

I pressed [him] to eliminate as fast as possible the above mentioned measures, emphasizing the harmfulness of using the military for penal purposes (Minister Czyrek

was against using this term).

Secretary Czyrek said that Gen. Kiszczak would be inclined to begin the “Roundtable” on the coming Wednesday (14th) or Thursday (15th).

With warm wishes to all of
you,

P.S.

Please set up a fast telephone communication with Lech (i.e. specific hours and telephone number).

[Source: Andrzej Stelmachowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec.]



DOCUMENT No. 9
Note by Lech Wałęsa Regarding
Further Procedure of Talks,
[not dated]

A note regarding further procedures of talks

The organization of the “Roundtable” talks has not been, as yet, precisely defined. Preliminary arrangements are needed very quickly. In particular, I am expecting a response to the following questions:

- 1) How large a team is going to participate in the general debates of the Roundtable?
- 2) What persons and representatives of what organizations have been invited or are going to be invited?
- 3) What is the preliminary estimate of the duration of the Roundtable (what is meant here is the time estimate of the “first session,” ending with decisions)?
- 4) How large are the working groups going to be?

From my part I am already proposing to define the agenda for the working groups, namely (in brackets I give the names of my plenipotentiaries for the particular teams)

- 1/ Union pluralism (T. Mazowiecki)
- 2/ Economic questions (A. Wielowieyski)
- 3/ Social pluralism (K. Szaniawski)
- 4/ Political reform (B. Geremek)
- 5/ Law and the judicial system (J. Olszewski)⁷⁷
- 6/ Agriculture and agricultural union (A. Stelmachowski)
- 7/ Mining questions (A. Pietrzyk).⁷⁸

Following these preliminary explanations it will be possible to set the date of the first meeting.

[signed by **Lech Wałęsa**]

[Source: Andrzej Stelmachowski Papers; . Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 10
Letter from Andrzej Stelmachowski
to Lech Wałęsa,
1 October 1988

1 October 1988

Tel. 33-96-11

Mr. Lech Wałęsa
Chairman of NSZZ
“Solidarity”

in Gdańsk

Dear Chief:

On 20 September I held another talk with Secretary J. Czyrek. In the beginning, according to the instructions, I protested the arrest of the 17 students who make up the National Council of the Independent Student Union (NZS),⁷⁹ expressing hope that the next meeting of this kind would not be disturbed, even more so because at stake here is a selection of delegates to the “Roundtable.” I also intervened on behalf of two members of the Striking Committee at Stalowa Wola, who still have not been re-admitted to their jobs, drawing his attention to the fact that the recommendation to re-admit about 200 miners to their jobs in Silesia also have not been implemented.

Secretary Czyrek promised to take care of these matters: he would go personally to Silesia to settle things and also for his part to prepare a “miners’ table.” At the same time he has raised far-reaching grievances towards Onyszkiewicz⁸⁰ because of his appearance before a U.S. Congressional Committee, that is before the body of a foreign state (it was indeed a great blunder).

As far as the “Roundtable” talks are concerned, we have agreed on the following:

- 1) The main “Roundtable” will number 50-70 people.
- 2) Individual teams will have about 20 people each, and their compositions may change as the need arises.
- 3) There will be 5 teams (union, systemic-political, economic, social pluralism and agriculture), and an additional sixth “table” will be operating in Katowice (on mining and matters related to that region⁸¹). Secretary Czyrek didn’t agree to set up a separate table for dealing

with law and order, but agreed to discuss these matters at the systemic-political "table."

4) On the governmental side, representatives of the Party and allied parties will be invited but also large social organizations, such as NOT,⁸² PTE,⁸³ agricultural circles, leaders of self-governmental and cooperative organizations, etc., but more on a personal rather than an institutional basis.

5) It has been decided that "Solidarity's" representation will be as large as the party-government representation, including the "allies;" however, there will be a third category of "miscellaneous," comprised of well-known personalities who are not directly connected to either side. Here Church representatives will be included.

6) As far as the duration of the "Roundtable" talks is concerned, there is a proposal to start them on 17 October and finish before 11 November. If everything goes well, there would be a great ceremonious ending, combined with the 70th anniversary of regained independence.

7) The "Roundtable" will make only the most important decisions and will form a Council for National Understanding, which would receive proper powers from the Sejm and would prepare legislative drafts necessary for the introduction of political reform, as well as essential elements of economic reform.

In connection with this, we allowed ourselves to conduct a number of consultations, as a result of which we have prepared together with Bronisław, Tadeusz and Henryk⁸⁴ draft lists of participants with a kind request for approval or correction.

The list of the "Roundtable" contains both a proposal of people comprising the "S" delegation, as well as those supported for a "bargain" with the government side. I would also like to reserve the right of "exchanging" from our side some people if the need arises.

I would also like to propose for the future the openness of deliberations, so that the public can be properly informed.

I am requesting your approval of the above arrangements, and particularly the date of starting the talks and the list of participants.

Shaking your hand,
[signed]

[Source: A. Stelmachowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]

DOCUMENT No. 11
Letter from A. Stelmachowski
to Józef Glemp, Primate of Poland,
24 October 1988

24 October 1988

His Eminence
Józef Cardinal Glemp
Primate of Poland
in Gniezno

Your Eminence,

In view of the prospect of Your Eminence's talks with Gen. W. Jaruzelski, I feel it is my duty to inform you about a crisis which has arisen in connection with the "Roundtable" negotiations and the prospect of [their] breakdown at the very start.

First I am going to describe the difficulties which we have encountered:

a) Contrary to the impressions we received from preliminary talks held on 31 August and 15 and 16 September that the authorities were ready to come forward towards "Solidarity's" position, an acute press campaign has been intensified (particularly in "Trybuna Ludu"), in which it is incessantly repeated that the "Roundtable" cannot lead to the re-legalization of "Solidarity." This campaign, conducted through the central party daily, gives an impression that the authorities not only do not attempt to convince their own "hardliners" on matters which were to be discussed at the "Roundtable," but that since that time they themselves have hardened their position, creating a general impression that now, after setting up the Rakowski government,⁸⁵ they are less interested in the "Roundtable."

b) Despite arrangements agreed upon with Mr. Czyrek, that each side decides on the composition of its delegation to the "Roundtable," we have encountered an attempt to interfere with the list presented by Mr. Wałęsa. Nine persons were called into question. They are: Jan Józef Szczepański,⁸⁶ Andrzej Szczepkowski,⁸⁷ Stefan Bratkowski, Zbigniew Romaszewski,⁸⁸ Henryk Wujec, Jan Józef Lipski,⁸⁹ Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Jacek Kuroń, and Adam Michnik. Now the opposition relates to the two latter ones. Lech Wałęsa takes the position that the principle of mutual non-interference into the composition of delegations should not be violated. However, in a letter that he sent over a week ago to Gen. Kiszczak he stated that he would see to it that the whole "Solidarity" delegation will abide by all arrangements and prove the will for a sincere and honest dialogue.

c) An objection has been raised that "Solidarity" representatives had been meeting with the extreme opposition circles, such as the KPN,⁹⁰ "Fighting Solidarity,"⁹¹ and others. This charge is biased and exaggerated on purpose.⁹² That meeting was not directed against the

“Roundtable,” but was aimed at making sure that those groups would not undermine the idea of the “Roundtable” meeting and the position which “Solidarity” intends to take at it. It is also a fact that “Solidarity” representatives at that meeting were rather under attack.

Another charge that was raised was that [we are responsible for the] street disturbances in Gdańsk, which took place on Sunday, 16 October, when ZOMO⁹³ made it impossible for a group of demonstrating youth to pass through from the Saint Brigid church to the NMP.⁹⁴ Such events, which were also influenced by ZOMO’s attitude, testify not so much of “inspirations” from the “Solidarity” side, but rather of radicalization of the young generation.

Procedural difficulties and charges put forward by the authorities are—it seems—of a fallacious nature. The real obstacles are as follows:

1) The question of goals of the “Roundtable.” Mr. Czyrek has formulated them (in personal conversation with me) as an attempt to form a Council for National Understanding,⁹⁵ which would deal with all controversial problems. In our opinion the “Roundtable” should adopt guiding resolutions on major questions and the proposed Council for National Understanding should deal with the implementation of those resolutions and technical matters, if need be.

2) The question of union pluralism. The prospects of settling this question are more than unclear. The press campaign, as I have indicated, has been aiming for some time at questioning union pluralism. The most important element here is a statement by General Jaruzelski himself, published in today’s press, in which three premises for the implementation of such pluralism are being defined. The most distressing one is economic, which the General has defined as: “[The] achievement of indispensable, fundamental economic equilibrium, so that some kind of spontaneous social pressures [*licytacja roszczeń*, claim bidding] would not endanger a highly complex reform process.” This means sticking to the theory that economic reform can be realized without social support (in any case a meaningful number of workers), and union pluralism is a sort of luxury, which should be realized later on.

3) The question of social pluralism. Last week Mr. Czyrek questioned the advisability of setting up a team for social pluralism (despite the fact that earlier such a team had been envisaged) explaining that some social organizations like the Polish Literary Union, Union of Artists, or the Journalists’ Union of the Polish People’s Republic do not want to sit at the same table with representatives of the previous regime’s creative unions. Admittedly, he later expressed willingness to reactivate the government-church negotiating group, which had been preparing a draft law on associations, with the possibility of some enlargement of its composition. However, an important question arises, which is whether the reserve shown [by some of the social organizations such as the Polish Literary Union, Union of Artists, and the Journalists’ Union of the Polish People’s Republic] will adversely affect the drafting of the pro-

jected law on associations.

4) The question of post-strike repression. Some time ago the Church representatives became guarantors of job restitution for all those who had been dismissed from work for their participation in the August strikes. At a meeting on 15 September, General Kiszczak very solemnly promised to withdraw all repression. That promise has brought about positive effects on the Seacoast (in Gdańsk and Szczecin), while in Silesia jobs have not been restored to 114 miners, and in Stalowa Wola to 2 people. A communique of the press bureau and the Episcopate on this question was confiscated by the censorship office last week and it has not appeared in the national mass media.

In this situation I would be extremely grateful to your Eminence for an explanation of the essential prospects for the realization of both “pluralisms” (trade union and social). The whole thing can be reduced to the question: “Are the reforms (economic and political) to be realized jointly with an empowered society, which also means with ‘Solidarity’—or without it?” If the prospects are not encouraging, I don’t see the purpose of further preparatory talks, which would only serve narrow purposes, instead of [those of] the society.

With expressions of a son’s devotion,

[signed by Andrzej Stelmachowski]

[Source: A. Stelmachowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 12
Letter from A. Stelmachowski
to Lech Wałęsa,
20 January 1989

20 January 1989

Mr. Lech Wałęsa
 Chairman of NSZZ
 “Solidarity”

Gdańsk

Dear Chief,

Since I have to stay in Warsaw on Saturday due to the ongoing state-church talks, I am taking this opportunity to convey to you (also for possible use at a KKW⁹⁶ meeting) the following suggestions and conclusions:

1. I think that an important matter is to set up a not-

too-large team to work out draft statutes for “Solidarity,” which would adapt our Union to the law on trade unions. Particularly important is to work out a pattern for workplace organizations, operating with uniform statutes at workplace levels [that] would allow [one] to preserve the unity of the Union. Of course, the drafts should also include higher bodies, including the central one. I think that Lech Kaczyński⁹⁷ should be chairman of such team as a professional and also living on the spot in Gdańsk.

2. I think it is high time to break away from the secrecy of the Union structure, particularly at workplace levels (except for publishing and financial matters). The Union should create open structures as much as possible.

3. I would also like to express my opinion on an unpopular and personally for you irritating matter. Namely, I think that in view of the chance of “Solidarity’s” legalization an attempt should be made to unite all “Solidarity members,” who still consider themselves members of the Union. Thus, I am in favor of the last year’s scheme of A. Celiński,⁹⁸ i.e. to convene a “*sejmik*,” at which both members of the National Commission,⁹⁹ remaining in the country, as well as members of structures created during the martial law period, and finally representatives of the newly-created structures (strike committees from 1988 and organizing committees, founding committees) should participate. Personally, I think that representatives of the newly-created structures should have at least half of the delegates.

4. I think that the CC resolution on union pluralism¹⁰⁰ provides a basis to undertake the “Roundtable” talks, but based on our experience from last fall I would advise against a large body. I think a small leading group (a sort of presidium) should be selected, which should participate in the meetings of particular teams with changing composition, depending on the questions under discussion.

5. I am informing [you] that on 17 January there was a hearing in the Main Administrative Court on the “Social Foundation for Workers’ Solidarity,” of which you are a benefactor. The NSA¹⁰¹ has annulled the decision of the Ministry of Health and Public Welfare, in which the Ministry had demanded unfounded statutory changes. I hope that after that verdict the Ministry will not resist approval of the statute. In the next few days I will resume new efforts in this matter.

With warm greetings,
[signed by A.
Stelmachowski]

[Source: A. Stelmachowski Paper. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]

DOCUMENT No. 13
Letter from Andrzej Słowik to
“Roundtable” Chair Władysław Findeisen,
12 February 1989

The Working Group of the National Commission of NSZZ
“Solidarity”¹⁰²

Lodz, 12 February 1989

Mr. Professor
Władysław Findeisen¹⁰³
Chairman of the “Roundtable”
Chairman of the Social Council of the Archbishop of Poland

Dear Professor,

We want to share with you the following remarks, concerns and anxieties:

As members of the National Commission elected by the First National Congress of Delegates of the NSZZ “Solidarity,” we feel responsible for the mandate entrusted to us by the electorate and voluntarily accepted by us.

This responsibility and honor has been forcing us to conduct social actions for the benefit of the Union, the working people and the Motherland, interrupted only by periods of arrests, internment or prison. We are conducting them with faith in the victory of good and [the belief] that sooner or later Poles will be able to overcome prejudices, anxieties, to forgive injustice, and to jointly begin building in our country law and order, based on truth, justice, freedom and love. We can be relieved of responsibility for the fate of the Union and its activity only by an act equivalent to the one that entrusted us with this responsibility. But of citizens’ responsibility toward Motherland—nobody can [be relieved]. Hence our concerns and anxieties.

The once great social hopes placed in the current talks of the “Roundtable” have now apparently faded—particularly among the working class—as the importance of these talks is not any longer a sufficient argument to stem the spontaneous eruption of strikes.

To some degree it is a result of uncertainty regarding intentions, arising for different reasons. The initial public enthusiasm following the announcement of the talks (in the beginning of September) burned out in an excessively long wait for their start.

Additional disappointments in some socially active circles is caused by an incomplete representation of the so-called social side, which cannot always be justified by categorical refusal of participation of that or another group or circle. The conviction prevails that not all significant groups or organizations have received such an offer.

Moreover, the NSZZ “Solidarity” delegation is not fully representative. It does not include many authentic activists of the Union (signatories of the August 1980 Agreements,¹⁰⁴ elected members of the National Commis-

sion and its Presidium, and still active leaders of the regional structures), who, not questioning either the need of reaching an understanding with or a statutory function for Lech Wałęsa, think that the Union is not someone's private or group property, [but] that it had been created as a democratic and pluralistic organization, obeying its own voluntarily adopted rights—and it should stay as such.

The "Solidarity's" delegation represents only one group, and even if it is now a group in control of the main spheres of the Union's life, it is still only one group, and it is difficult to expect that other groups would feel bound by an agreement on which they will have (from the very beginning) no influence whatsoever.

An understanding which has a chance to be national, may be perceived in important public circles as being particularistic. If the PRL [People's Republic of Poland] authorities were inclined toward a policy of confrontation, then controversies within the "Solidarity" would certainly be to their advantage. (However, experience is teaching us that in a confrontation the Union consolidates.) With regard to a course toward an understanding, matters look rather different. Will an additional secret agreement for the defense of a particularistic understanding be concluded, and will the parties to such agreement be co-sponsoring a policy of repression toward its opponents, whom they had not even heard earlier? For us it is hard to imagine, though such fears also exist.

Even more serious is another apprehension—a fear that incomplete representation at the "Table" and hence a limited focus on the [actual] situation will mean that particular arrangements (or even parts of them) will be so far below social aspirations that with a verbal acceptance they will, in fact, be rejected by the society.

Please, excuse this frankness. It is dictated by the sense of responsibility and concern about the future of our Fatherland. We trust we shall be properly understood. This is already the last moment when these and other dangers (not articulated here) can be prevented through supplementing the "Table." But it needs to be done before the final decisions are taken. Perhaps an expansion and diversification of the delegation's composition will cause greater difficulties in negotiations, perhaps even part of the common record will be questioned—but it is probably better that controversies take place at the Table *before* concluding the agreement than outside of the Table after its conclusion.

We are submitting to you the readiness of the Working Group of the National Commission of NSZZ "Solidarity" to send our delegation to the negotiations.

With the authorization of the
Working Group of National
Commission

Andrzej Słowik¹⁰⁵
[signed]

[Source: A. Stelmachowski Papers, Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 14
Papers of the Working Group of the
National Commission of NSZZ "Solidarity,"
25 February 1989

Jerzy Kropiwnicki¹⁰⁶
ul. Jasna 2 m. 9
91-350 Łódź

Professor
Andrzej Stelmachowski

Dear Professor,

I would like to kindly ask you to act as an intermediary in passing the enclosed documents to Lech Wałęsa. I am compelled to turn to you as I want to be sure that they will reach him and will be treated seriously. Experiences of sending [documents] by other methods are not encouraging.

I would also like you to know their content.
I apologize for this unusual request.

With best regards,
J. Kropiwnicki
[signed]

[Attachment No. 1]

Working Group Lodz, 25 February 1989
of the National Commission
of NSZZ "Solidarność"

A Statement on the "re-legalization"
and [versus] "legalization" of the NSZZ "Solidarity"

1. The Working Group of the National Commission of the NSZZ "Solidarity" states with satisfaction, that during the past few months a far-reaching rapprochement between the advisory bodies to Lech Wałęsa, which have a dominating influence on the policy of Chairman of the National Committee and aspire to a leadership role of "Solidarity" by the National Commission on the one hand, and the Working Group of the Commission on the other, has taken place.

In the fall of 1987 and still in spring 1988 (before the outbreak of the April-May strikes), leading representatives of that political orientation, Jacek Kuroń (see, e.g. "The landscape after a battle")¹⁰⁷ and Andrzej Celiński (see an interview for "Newsweek" of 23 November 1987) have

clearly stated that they consider the history of “Solidarity” as a trade union over.

The strikes of 1988 have proved that the Working Group of the National Commission was right to maintain consistently, from the beginning (i.e. from 1985) the position that “Solidarity” is first of all and has to remain a trade union.

In the fall of 1988, Lech Wałęsa’s advisers and the National Executive Commission (KKW¹⁰⁸) adopted a position close to that of the Working Group (GR KK).

In December of that year, a significant political event—the preliminary institutionalization of the socio-political movement in the form of the Citizens’ Committee as a separate institution—took place. The creation of the Citizens’ Committee, which all leading representatives of the same political orientation as Lech Wałęsa and the KKW joined as members, will undoubtedly facilitate the realization of their political ambitions on a more suitable platform for this purpose than the trade union one. At the same time, it offers a chance to restore the pluralistic character of the NSZZ “Solidarity.”

Still controversial is the question of [the] relationship [of Solidarity] to the law of 8 October 1982, which Lech Wałęsa’s advisers adopted as a basis for negotiations with the authorities of the People’s Republic of Poland.

The subsequent rapprochement to the GR KK took place when the negotiators on behalf of Lech Wałęsa and KKW adopted the position that:

1. The Union has to be registered as a whole (and with its original name), and as one set up separately in each work place.
2. It has to have a territorial, and not a branch structure.

It remains controversial as to whether it is to be registered as a new Union, or restored as a legal entity existing continuously since 1980.

It appears, based on the pronouncements of Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki to the mass media, that the “social-solidarity side” at the “Roundtable” had assumed that it ought to be registered as a new union (so-called legalization).

The Working Group of the National Commission is of the opinion that the indispensable condition of both a lasting understanding (or a lasting compromise) with the PRL authorities and the restoration of unity in “Solidarity” is [based on] the restoration of registration to the existing union (its “re-legalization”).¹⁰⁹

2. The Working Group of the National Commission is of the opinion that “forming the Union anew” will come in conflict with social aspirations, and may even lead to a breakdown of the Union.

a) Many Union activists and members have experienced all sorts of repression—prison, arrest, physical violence (some lost their life), dismissal from a job, unemployment, monetary penalties, constraints in their

professional career, all for their struggle in defense of the existing Union. For them it is inadmissible to [consider] giving away at the table all that they [had] defended and suffered for, and without even asking for their opinion.

b) For many, the adoption of the law of 8 October 1982 as a basis for restoring normal Union activity would mean some sort of legitimization of martial law. It is different to avoid this question “for the benefit of the cause” than to prejudge it (even indirectly) in a way inconsistent with convictions of a great majority of society.

c) A “renewed formation” of the Union closes the possibility of revindication of the property taken over by the PRL authorities. Many people think that the Union may give up on its claims, but those rights have to be recognized.

d) Founding the Union as a “new one” will make it difficult or simply impossible to rehabilitate the members who were sentenced or to restore to work those who were dismissed for their defense of “Solidarity.” Many of them are ready to give up on seeking someone else’s guilt, but not from recognition of their own innocence.

3. “Legalization,” that is a renewed formation of the Union (even on the basis of the previous Statute of 1981) would mean recognition that the NSZZ “Solidarity” was really disbanded on 8 October 1982. This “dissolution” has been recognized neither by the Union, nor by the MOP,¹¹⁰ nor by trade unions in the democratic countries. The World Federation of Labor and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, guided by the principles of international law, have carried out the affiliation of the NSZZ “Solidarity” as an existing trade union (though deprived of domestic registration). In this way they have confirmed a universal norm that the union exists based on the will of its members, and not by the grace of the authorities.

Giving up the demand for restoring registration of the union existing continuously since 1980, the NSZZ “Solidarity” would probably be the first trade union in the world, associated in those bodies, which had recognized the right of state authorities to dissolve trade unions. It would be a dangerous precedent both in political and moral meaning. Dissolution of the NSZZ “Solidarity” could be done only by a National Conference of the existing Union, elected according to its Statute and Electoral Law of 1981—and not a “solidarity-social party,” the National Executive Committee (KKW), or even a founding conference of a new Union.

Let’s keep in mind that organizations that had been suspended or dissolved inconsistently with their own statutes (the last example: the Labor Party—SP, “dissolved” long ago by its own Head Council and “united” with the Democratic Party—SD), are being reclaimed today.

4. The Working Group of the National Commission appeals:

- to the “solidarity-social side” not to take decisions at

the Roundtable, which are reserved for the statutory authorities of the NSZZ “Solidarity.”

- to the leaders and sympathizers of the Union not to give away at the table what thousands of Union activists and members did not give up during the martial law period and multiple repressions,

- and in particular to Lech Wałęsa, Zbigniew Bujak,¹¹¹ Władysław Frasyniuk¹¹² and Antoni Tokarczuk¹¹³—as chairman of the KK¹¹⁴ and members of [the] KK Pre-sidium—not to be unfaithful to their oath of loyalty to the Statute of the NSZZ “Solidarity.”

- to Lech Wałęsa, to remember that he has entrusted our Union to the protection of Our Lady of Częstochowa,

- to all others to be aware of their responsibility towards the society, the nation, God and history.

5. The Working Group is of the opinion that for the sake of our nation an understanding with the PRL authorities is indispensable; it will be real if it is based on respect for the inalienable and unalterable employee, citizen and human rights.

6. The Working Group is of the opinion that for the benefit of our nation, unity of the NSZZ “Solidarity” is indispensable. Its basis can only be respect for its Statute and union rights, a Statute [embodying the], democratic and pluralistic character of our Union.

[signed]
J. Kropiwnicki

[Attachment No. 2]

Working Group Lodz, 25 February 1989
of the National Commission
of NSZZ “Solidarność”

A Position on Workers’ Self-Government

1. The Working Group of the National Commission is warning the “solidarity-social” side against treating workers’ self-government as an objective, the only appropriate form of managing the so-called all-social or state property. The concept of replacing the state bureaucracy with workers’ self-government remains, within the socialist thought, as a postulate of “real socialization of the means of production.” For non-socialist political orientations this concept may be unacceptable.

2. Building the economic system based on workers’ self-government, the essence of which boils down to bestowing the right of management of productions assets to an imprecisely defined owner, toward whom the management, not being owners in any other sense than symbolic, should feel responsible, would be an experiment on an unheard of scale, a solution without any useful patterns and experiments whatsoever.

3. A self-governmental solution can be, at most, some form of temporary instrument in the elimination of the

nomenklatura from the economy.

4. Target solutions ought to be sought in those areas where there is maximal connection between work and ownership. The first step ought to be the abolition of hitherto indivisible state property. The second one [ought to be] dissemination of property—that is bestowing the rights of property to particular work places, their conversion into joint-stock companies and enfranchisement of the nation through employees’ shareholding. The sphere of state management in industry should be limited to an absolute minimum. In the area of energy and communications, the scope of public ownership should be defined on the basis of the experiences of the developed countries of Western Europe. Commerce should be gradually privatized (both retail and wholesale).

5. Experience teaches that all forms of collective property, in which individual participation is not secured by the alleged owners, are being treated as “nobody’s property” and in the best case [scenarios] are becoming some form of bureaucratic property (in the case of communist countries—the *nomenklatura*’s property).

For conformity,
[signed]
J. Kropiwnicki

[Source: A. Stelmachowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 15 Report on a Working Visit of Wojciech Jaruzelski to Moscow, 9 May 1989

For a Politburo meeting

Sent out to Politburo members, associate members and CC secretaries

9 May 1989
9.V.1989 L.dz. KS/619/89 to point “3”

Report
on a Working Visit of Wojciech Jaruzelski in Moscow

Confidential

On 28 April 1989, the First Secretary of the CC PUWP, Chairman of the Council of State of the Polish People’s Republic, Wojciech Jaruzelski, paid a working visit to Moscow at the invitation of the First Secretary of the CC CPSU, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Mikhail Gorbachev.

In the course of the talk, lasting over three and a half

hours, both leaders devoted their utmost attention to the problems of the transformation being conducted broadly in both countries.

Wojciech Jaruzelski gave information on the measures undertaken by the PUWP in the realization of socialist renewal in Poland, including the significance of the X Plenum of the Central Committee, [and] on the preparations to the National Conference of Delegates to the X Party Congress. He also informed [Gorbachev] about the significance and results of the “Roundtable,” which have opened up prospects for an understanding of different social and political forces in Poland. He explained difficult problems of the country and the means to their solution. He emphasized the significance of the further development of Polish-Soviet relations in all areas.

Mikhail Gorbachev stated that despite a variety of forms and methods of renewal of the socialist system used by the fraternal parties, this process has a common guiding principle—democratization, aspirations to create conditions for real participation of working people in running the economy and in solving political questions.

He also stated that *perestroika* in the USSR has reached such a stage, and transformations in all spheres of life have reached such depth, that the Party is expected to double its effort in the realization of these unusually difficult tasks. As was said at the last CC CPSU Plenum, the Soviet people have spoken once again in the recently-held elections [26 March 1989] for *perestroika* and have demanded its steadfast, consistent introduction.

Mikhail Gorbachev also stated that the Soviet economy is coping with complicated problems related to the shift to new methods of economic activity, monetary regulations, [and] shortages in inventories of goods.

Despite these difficulties, they did not give a thought—Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized—to hampering changes. That is why it is so important to ensure the widest possible democracy and at the same time discipline, openness and responsibility, pluralism of outlooks and consistency in activity, solving of urgent current problems and activity designed for the future.

Wojciech Jaruzelski and Mikhail Gorbachev expressed satisfaction about the development of relations between the two parties and states. They stressed mutual interest in the promotion of economic contacts, the need to work out a complex model based on sound economic considerations, and the principle of economic accounting of enterprises with a view to creating a joint socialist market.

Both leaders praised very highly the realization of tasks defined in the Polish-Soviet declaration on cooperation in the field of ideology, and also in the joint Polish-Soviet statement and stipulations adopted during last year’s visit of Mikhail Gorbachev in Poland.

As a result of these stipulations, among others, an agreement on an exchange of youth between Poland and the Soviet Union has been prepared, and the work of a joint group of scholars, researching the so-called “white

spots” in the history of Polish-Soviet relations, is being continued.¹¹⁵

It has been acknowledged that in the near future a joint document will be published in the Polish and Soviet press, prepared by scholars, dealing with the period preceding the outbreak and beginnings of World War II.¹¹⁶ Research on other problems is coming to an end. It has been stated that these efforts should be sped up, so that the bilateral commission of scholars¹¹⁷ and other respective organizations can present their assessments and conclusions regarding all the “white spots,” and particularly with regard to Katyn.¹¹⁸

In the course of the conversation the questions of international policy were brought up and views were exchanged on other areas of world policy.

At the end of the talk Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized the invariable faithfulness of the CPSU and the Soviet people to Soviet-Polish friendship and also sent to Wojciech Jaruzelski, the communists and all people of Poland best wishes for success in solving the tasks of socialist renewal.

[Source: Hoover Institution Archive. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP]



DOCUMENT No. 16
Information on a Meeting of the Chairmen
of the Regional Citizens’ Committees¹¹⁹
held in the Citizens’ Committee in Warsaw,
at 6 Fredra St.,
12 June 1989

Participating in the meeting were chairmen or representatives of 46 regional committees and Prof. Bronisław Geremek, editor Andrzej Wielowieyski, Jacek Kuroń, Jarosław Śleszyński.¹²⁰ The meeting was chaired by Henryk Wujec.

The debates concentrated on three basic issues:

1. Preparations for the second round of elections.¹²¹

Professor Geremek, in his brief introduction, and the chairmen of the Citizens’ Committees, in their speeches, have raised the following issues:

The elections were a huge, startling success, particularly if one considers the conditions under which the election campaign had been run. Even in places where victory in the first round has not been achieved, there is a great chance that in the second round all of [our] candidates will squeeze in.¹²²

Fears were expressed that in the second round electoral attendance may be very low, which is dangerous, because electoral attendance of the coalition may be relatively high.

The *voivodships* have declared assistance to their

neighboring regions, in which our candidates will be fighting for mandates in the second round. Thus, Poznań will be helping Piła (delegating two people from its staff, printing 20 thousand posters and leaflets). Piła will also be helped by Włocławek and Szczecin. Piotrków, Kielce and Lublin came up with an initiative to help Radom.

Some *voivodships* had already successfully supported candidates from outside of the Citizens' Committee in the first round. In others, decisions regarding possible support for the coalition's candidates varied: some of them have already decided for which candidate they will vote, others are hesitating, afraid of being suspected of collaboration, in some cases one cannot find any suitable candidate. H. Wujec stated that the Committee leaves it up to the regions to support particular candidates, provided that it is done from the bottom and cautiously, without concluding contracts, supporting people who guarantee reliability.

2. The question of a national list.¹²³

The participants raised the issue that in their regions there had been numerous voices of anxiety and resentment due to "delegating" to the government side the decision regarding the re-election of candidates from the national list. Concern by our side about the fate of that list was premature, clumsy, it was stated point-blank that it had been a political mistake.

Explanations have been submitted by B. Geremek, A. Wielowieyski and Jacek Kuroń. It looks as if the situation which has arisen—the necessity to keep the contract on the distribution of mandates that was concluded at the Roundtable—from the legal point of view had no clean solution. In the meantime the huge electoral success has resulted in other, more radical demands [being made] by society as well as growing impatience due to a gradual realization of the democratic process.

3. The future of the Citizens' Committees

The participants drew attention to the fact that during the elections a huge amount of human capital had been created, which numbered in the hundreds of thousands, organized spontaneously and from the bottom up, verified in action. What is more, these masses of activists have organized themselves on their own in the areas that had been void in this respect earlier—in small towns and communities.

This capital must not be wasted. It has been noted that [these people] are potential activists for the regional self-governing bodies, in the future members of the Sejm senatorial teams, now in the process of organization, keeping communication offices of deputies and senators [in contact with] the voters.

Regional delegates expressed anxiety over potential strains between the Citizens' Committees and regional Solidarity bodies. Voices were heard that creation of the committees had weakened Solidarity, depriving it of some of its leaders. In the union movement mostly workers are gathered, while the intelligentsia has crossed over to the citizens' committees (a voice from Katowice). On the other hand the citizens' movement is enriching Solidarity

ideologically and expands its tasks. Citizens' Committees form a platform for cooperation of different groupings: Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia, *Dziekania*, workers' "S," and "S" of individual peasants, youth movements. It has been noted that this constitutes their strength, creating an integrated platform for the opposition, at the same time, their variety would be an obstacle to a possible transformation of that movement into an association or a party.

An overwhelming majority of the participants was in favor of keeping the Citizens' Committees. In this connection attention was drawn to the necessity of working out a legal framework for their existence, their organizational structure after the elections and, most importantly, their financial basis.

It has been decided not to take any hasty organizational decisions in the near future, instead, keeping a form of understanding of organizations, initiating talks with the authorities regarding an extension of activities of the Citizens' Committees (officially they are to end their activity on 18 June 1989), and coming up immediately with various territorial initiatives of the National Councils.¹²⁴ The shape of the Committees in the future need not be the same. [...]

[Source: Archives of the Bureau of Senate Information and Documentation. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 17 Minutes from a Meeting of the Presidium of the Citizens' Parliamentary Club,¹²⁵ 15 July 1989

Present: B. Geremek, O. Krzyżanowska¹²⁶, Z. Kuratowska¹²⁷, J. Amroziak, A. Celiński, K. Kozłowski¹²⁸, J. Rokita¹²⁹, A. Stelmachowski, J. Ślisz¹³⁰, A. Balazs¹³¹, E. Wende¹³², J. Kuroń, G. Janowski.

The agenda:

1. A report by A. Stelmachowski on his visit with Gen. Jaruzelski
2. The Club's meeting of 10 July
3. Preparations for a meeting with Gen. Jaruzelski¹³³
4. A Statute of the National Assembly and election of a president
5. Structure and composition of Commissions
6. Miscellaneous matters.

A. Stelmachowski: On Thursday, Gen. Jaruzelski paid me a visit, and later on, Minister Czyrek. The talk with Jaruzelski lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes. We raised the

following:

- The question of presidency: the thing is that despite his personal unwillingness, he feels obliged to run for it. He is referring to three elements:

- A clear stand by the body of generals, the MON¹³⁴ and the Council for National Defense.¹³⁵

- Some outside reactions are unmistakable: statements at the [Warsaw Pact] Political Committee at Bucharest,¹³⁶ and some wordings by President Bush.¹³⁷

- The position of the majority of colleagues at the Plenum.

Due to these pressures he has been forced to revise his position. An obstacle—Solidarity is explicitly in favor of Kiszczak.¹³⁸ It would be good if support for Kiszczak could be revised. To meet Solidarity half-way—he is proposing a different solution than a hearing in a Sejm debate—he will appear in different Clubs with Kiszczak. Since it is rather unusual, he will ask for the formula that he comes at the invitation of the OKP.¹³⁹ And also that it should be without the presence of journalists.

- In Bucharest, Gorbachev asked Jaruzelski if it would not be proper for Wałęsa to come to Moscow. If we would oppose it, he would not pursue it further.

- He showed anxiety over the agricultural situation. He asked if the situation is so dire. Would a transition to the market economy improve this situation? The meeting with Czyrek headed in a similar direction. He said that the question of the presidency is becoming more and more urgent, that one must keep in mind the possibility of provocations. In this context he informed me about the death of Rev. Zych.¹⁴⁰ He asked about [...words missing] of the government. A great coalition is desirable. We exchanged views [... words missing] conclusions. Wałęsa is saying in public statements that he would like to go to Moscow. Gorbachev said in Paris [...words missing] arrival is fine, but he does not want to see him come under a formula of union invitation—could Wałęsa come as a social leader, a Noble Prize laureate. It would be a mixed invitation by the Parliament and the Peace Council.¹⁴¹

A. Wielowieyski: Has Jacek Kuron given a report about his talk with Prof. Orzechowski?¹⁴² The two of us [Wielowieyski and Kuron] gave him a formal invitation for Jaruzelski. He argued they had agreed that voting in other Clubs is going to be open. ZSL¹⁴³ will be voting for Jaruzelski, and so will SD.¹⁴⁴ However, they can obtain only a slight majority, thus there is some anxiety.

J. Ślisz: According to my information, 9 SL¹⁴⁵ deputies will be voting for neither candidate.

A. Stelmachowski: Kozakiewicz is predicting that 25 SD deputies will be voting against.

Wende: Can we afford not to take a position?

Ziółkowski:¹⁴⁶ Orzechowski said he would like to meet on state matters.

J.M. Rokita: I spoke with Janowski—he cannot imagine that his party might be against it. He has 6 “rebels.”

B. Geremek: This has been a brief overview of the situation, tomorrow is the Club meeting at 10 a.m. What is the agenda?

A. Wielowieyski: The Commission matters—at least information on the work of the Extraordinary Commission. Item 2, the National Assembly:¹⁴⁷

1. Statute of the National Assembly.

2. Matters relating to the election of a president.

3. A meeting with the General [Jaruzelski] at 3 p.m.

We have not received a response as to whether Wałęsa will be coming; the General asked for a meeting with him half an hour earlier.

How do we imagine that meeting will take place? For how long is he coming?

J. Kuroń: As long as necessary, he is at our disposal. At the meeting there are going to be only parliamentary deputies and a recording clerk.

E. Wende: If absence of the press is required by the guest, we are not going to vote on this in the Club.

Z. Kuratowska: We have the right to present our position: the guest does not wish to have the press, we have invited him.

B. Geremek: If there are protests from the floor about the press, we will vote on it.

E. Wende: There may be a surprise given that the deputies will demand openness and the press.

J. Ślisz: We have invited him, he just asked to have it without the press, as is the case in other Clubs, we have agreed to it.

B. Geremek: We should ask if the Club wishes to meet with the General. [...]

B. Geremek: We are asking whether to invite Gen. Jaruzelski, assuming that a press conference will follow the meeting, but no journalists at the meeting.

Will questions be asked from the floor, or handed over on a slip of paper and signed?

K. Kozłowski: A few questions should be prepared at the beginning.

B. Geremek: A few words of welcome should be in order. Next we expect answers from the candidate to several basic questions. We give him a chance with the first question: Stalinism, with the second one—martial law—we deprive him of such a chance. The third question relates to an agenda of democratic reforms. I would set such agenda pragmatically: 1. access to TV, 2. territorial self-government, 3. the courts, 4. on his model of the state running in the transition period. The opposition is demanding an Extraordinary Commission, which would have an insight into the workings of the government.

A. Wielowieyski: Confirmation of democratic elections after four years!

E. Wende: Should the questions from the floor not be given on a slip of paper to the chairman?

Then, it would be possible to look at them and request withdrawal. There might be a question—how many AK [*Armia Krajowa*- Polish “Home Army” during World War II] members has he murdered?

J. Ślisz: Questions should be asked from the floor.

J. Kuroń: Questions from the floor are better. Even that question about AK members can be put, provided that the form of the question is proper. This should be said clearly.

G. Janowski: What do we want to achieve by a question on the Economic Council—he is open for anything anyway.

B. Geremek: In our conversations, the words were used that this is a takeover of the government. The thing is that he is a candidate who should be engaged.

G. Janowski: Questions from the floor should be with only a brief explanation, and not some sort of historical-political reports.

A. Stelmachowski: This is the reason why I think questions should be put on paper, otherwise they will talk and talk.

G. Janowski: He has time for us, it is not an every-day opportunity, let them talk.

A. Wielowieyski: That is nonsense, it is Jaruzelski who is to talk.

J.M. Rokita: If the questions are to be on paper, then the burden of selection and ordering will rest with the Presidium.

B. Geremek: Then there will be resentment, as each type of selection will stir up suspicions.

J. Ślisz: In the ZSL there were direct questions, then selection is automatic.

J.M. Rokita: When he gets questions from the floor, it gives him an opportunity to better present himself to the people asking questions.

G. Janowski: Do you want to facilitate him?

J.M. Rokita: Yes, I do this time!

J. Ziółkowski: On the agenda there are no questions about the nomenklatura. Such questions should necessarily be raised. An interaction is important—face to face. The culture of formulating questions is very important. In this circle there is great sensitivity for admonition. To depend on their responsibility!

A voice from the floor: That iss too much!

B. Geremek: Should we limit [time] to 1 minute. It is enough—1 to 2 minutes.

J. Ziółkowski: We may appeal to ask factual questions.

O. Krzyżanowska: There will be a question on how he sees the role of the Party.

E. Wende: In what form will Kiszczak be there?

J. Kuroń: Orzechowski said that there would be only one candidate—Jaruzelski.

Thus, can we ask him questions?

— [unidentified speaker:] Only if he would be a

candidate.

J. Kuroń: It’s not obvious that such a meeting is a man-to-man fight. [...] Here it is not so, as 260 are besetting a single one. We absolutely need to talk about culture.

B. Geremek: There are things about which the Presidium cannot talk. I think in the first part of the meeting there will be a discussion and this problem will emerge. It has been decided that questions will be asked directly. We are not saying how long the meeting is going to last, we do not set any time limit, unless the meeting starts dragging on.

The Statute of the National Assembly and Election of the President

B. Geremek: We assume that we have to have a discussion:

- on the form of voting;

- on the statute of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly will most likely meet on Wednesday.

A. Stelmachowski: Kozakiewicz says it will certainly be on Wednesday, but it will probably be necessary to call the National Assembly on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the statute. The question is whether the voting should be open or secret. The General was inclined to recognize a secret vote, but Czyrek vehemently opposed it.

B. Geremek: Discussion on the statute—how awful. Urban¹⁴⁸ will exploit it, as there is a clear tendency toward deprecating parliamentary institutions. A statute of the National Assembly is going to be proposed by the Coalition, we will introduce amendments. Only a vote for or against. Then comes voting, either they accept or reject it.

J.M. Rokita: But there is going to be a polemic from the Coalition’s side.

B. Geremek: The Speaker of the Sejm doesn’t have the right to refuse to give the floor to someone. In our Club we will submit for a vote the proposed statute.

A. Celiński: The Extraordinary Commission hasn’t come to an understanding, it decided there would be a discussion on this problem; a debate or so, open—not open. It’s about to meet tomorrow and will present positions to the Clubs.

A. Stelmachowski: We give up on the debate.

O. Krzyżanowska: That question was to be taken up at the Seniors’ Convent on Monday.

Z. Kuratowska: Let’s have a discussion on the statute on Tuesday morning.

A. Stelmachowski: Or tomorrow, time permitting.

B. Geremek: Let’s vote on it tomorrow:

-secret or open

-debate or no debate.

K. Kozłowski: There must be a discussion in the Club on where a secret vote leads us, and where the open one does.

J. Kuroń: Nobody will agree to a debate. If there is a debate, we will denigrate him [the President].

Are we anxious to have the President denigrated?

E. Wende: The question of behaving on the floor. Are we supposed to save Jaruzelski's presidency?

K. Kozłowski: I would go even further, for an open vote, without debate, without leaving and without demonstration—we are serious people.

A. Wielowieyski: Should I present the numbers? They may be short 15 to 21 votes—they are “in a flap,” they are stretched to the limit. Everyone who doesn't do anything is giving Jaruzelski half a vote.¹⁴⁹

J. Kuroń: We have to be aware of what the President's case means—the peasants won't get markets [for their goods], physicians won't get a raise, the government stays on, we are entering into a terrible mess. Consequences of demonstrating our morality are falling upon the society.

B. Geremek: Not electing a PUWP member would settle the question of physicians. The election can be repeated. General Jaruzelski wants to be elected in the first round and probably this will happen. If it doesn't happen, it's not a drama. All will reflect [on the situation], and it will be repeated.

A. Balazs: The Club has decided it will not vote for Gen Jaruzelski. If Jaruzelski convinces us at that meeting, will we be voting for him?

J. Kuroń: Everybody votes as he likes, consistent with the will of the electorate. That's what has been decided.

O. Krzyżanowska: The behavior of the SD and ZSL is new. We thought that they would elect him. But right now our position begins to be decisive.

J.M. Rokita: There may be a statutory crisis if there is only one candidate, as the statute says that the candidate who gets the least [number of votes]—drops out. There has to be either a recess in the debates, or new candidates need to be submitted.

J. Kuroń: That discussion will start in the National Assembly.

J. Ślisz: He won't pass the first time, he won't pass the second time. One needs to be prepared for a new situation.

E. Wende: Can we change that provision?

B. Geremek: First we need to introduce statutory changes to avoid changing them in the process.

G. Janowski: We have to submit our own candidate.

J. Kuroń: Then we would enter into a war with them.

G. Janowski: People have placed great confidence in us. At pre-election meetings they were telling me “a spanking from a parent's hand isn't painful.” We are handing everything over to bureaucrats' hands. We say: we are not ready. Why not?—there is Geremek, Trzeciakowski¹⁵⁰ ... Let's keep in mind that in the third voting we will have to submit our candidate.

J. Kuroń: I argued in the Club in favor of taking over the government. A set-up in which [we] have the presidency but not the government would be fatal. It would mean taking responsibility for their government. For me a prerequisite of a functioning government, which sooner or later we will get, is their having the presidency. Our

president is not going to have such prerogatives, he will be a figurehead. Besides, it's a total, confrontational change.

A. Celiński: We need to close this discussion. This is not the place for it.

A. Wielowieyski: We are not going to say anything more during this discussion.

J. Ślisz: And what if a candidate drops out in the third voting?

A. Wielowieyski: Then the coalition will put forward someone new, I don't imagine that someone from our side would agree to run.

J. M. Rokita: We may talk with members at the Club on what to do in case of such a crisis.

E. Wende: The presidential crisis may be much more serious than was the case with the national electoral list. We have to be aware of it. In my heart I am with Mr. Gabriel's voters, but we have to make decisions thinking occasionally for them.

G. Janowski: People think better than we do.

A. Wielowieyski: We have decided that we have to inform Club members rather clearly of what may happen and how they should behave.¹⁵¹

B. Geremek: Lech Wałęsa is pondering if he should meet with Jaruzelski. He wants to come for the National Assembly, but in what role? He should be in Warsaw, but probably not in the Sejm.

A. Stelmachowski: He may play his role tomorrow, but not on Wednesday.

B. Geremek: The Sejm session will probably take place on the 20th. The question of retiring the government—will there be a debate on this? Bugaj has submitted a motion for a report—will there be a discussion then?

O. Krzyżanowska: If the government is resigning there is no reason for a debate. There will be a discussion at the Senior Convent if that decision is subjected to a vote.

B. Geremek: When a new prime minister presents his cabinet there will be an occasion to evaluate the resigning government. In other words, we are against the report and against the debate.

The Structure and Composition of the [Sejm] Commissions.

J. Ambroziak: He is reporting on their proposals, which are at variance with ours.

1. Creation of a Commission on Trade and Services.
2. Taking forestry away from the Environmental Protection [Commission] and placing it in the Commission for Agriculture.
3. Economic policy, including budget and finance.
4. Combining social policy, health and physical culture.
5. Creating a separate Commission for Economic Cooperation with Abroad (we wanted to have it in the industry).

They didn't want minorities—they may submit it for a general debate.

A. Wielowieyski: What has been gained is progress. We need to fight for the separation of health and social policy, give up on minorities (as it will become anyway a question of German minorities—the Silesians). Housing construction has been omitted, it should be added to the Commission on Industry.

B. Geremek: There is no reason to return back to that discussion, we will defend [our position] at the plenary session. On matters of divergences there will be brief statements of our deputies. [...]

[Source: Archives of the Bureau of Senate Information and Documentation. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 18
Minutes of the Meeting of the Presidium of
the Citizens' Parliamentary Club,
1 August 1989, 8 p.m.

Present: J. Kuroń, K. Kozłowski, A. Stelmachowski, Z. Kuratowska, T. Mazowiecki, B. Geremek, J. Ambroziak, A. Wielowieyski, H. Wujec, A. Balazs, J.M. Rokita, O. Krzyżanowska, J. Ślisz, J. Ziółkowski, A. Michnik, E. Wende.

B. Geremek: I will remind you of the things that have taken place within the last few days and hours. I had a meeting with Gen. Kiszczak at 2 p.m. It turns out that, at a Politburo meeting, out of four candidates submitted for the position of prime minister only one is left—Rakowski. Baka¹⁵² and Malinowski¹⁵³ have declined. Kiszczak is not willing either, but he thinks it's his duty. He asked about the position of our Club. The Club decided to vote against [him] or to abstain. Wałęsa took the position: "I supported Gen. Kiszczak for president of the Polish People's Republic, I refuse to support him for prime minister." He asked me to inform the OKP about it.

Kiszczak had a very difficult meeting with the PUWP Club yesterday, when it was deciding about the discipline [in party line bloc] voting. Today only 120 members showed up, which means that 50 have deserted [the PUWP Club].

From the other Clubs the figures are changing. At one point, half of the ZSL and half of SD were against. Today it's even worse—the whole ZSL is against [him], and from the SD only 4 persons [are in favor of him]. He lacks 80-70 [sic] people to ensure his [Kiszczak's] election.

Meetings of all three Clubs are going on, debating separately. The leaders have arrived, debates are stormy.

ZSL has come up with a proposal to form a government with the OKP. They think that the opposition should

form the government. Bentkowski¹⁵⁴ argues that the ZSL is decidedly against the candidacy of Kiszczak. He has contacts with the PUWP—there is a group of young PUWP parliamentary delegates who would like to meet jointly with [me], B. Geremek. If I meet with them, it would be an attempt to interfere with the coalition. They have to ask for it themselves.

Today it is to be decided whether General Jaruzelski will withdraw the letter proposing Kiszczak [for Prime Minister].

Bentkowski says [ZSL] cannot form a government with the PUWP. They are ready to do it with us.

[ZSL] is asking if we would leave the three main ministries with the PUWP if we were to form a government. This is an indispensable guarantee of a peaceful transfer of power.

When PUWP proposed a coalition with them, ZSL was offered 4 ministries and a vice premier. They were not expecting this from the opposition. They put forward their proposal not for the sake of bargaining, but because there is no other way out of the crisis in the country. If we would recognize this, they [ZSL] would be satisfied with 2 ministries. At 6 p.m. there was a meeting with Orzechowski. Based on that conversation, the situation is at a critical point, the President's motion is suspended.

On the other hand Bentkowski was still presenting doubts as to whether to enter into coalition with the PUWP. I admitted he was right—we know what cooperation with the PUWP did to the ZSL. They didn't perceive it as arrogance. To be sure, after that conversation Jacek Kuroń critically summed it up for me: we will take power if PUWP makes better conditions in the country for us.

We have to take into consideration quite unexpected solutions. Our whole Club is opposed, and yet they have to have a majority.

If Kiszczak won't get through, then [perhaps] another candidate—Sekuła.¹⁵⁵ Club meetings are stormy, sharp with mutual accusations. Party leaders are convincing their Clubs to [decide in favor of] the coalition with PUWP.

We may very well dream that this is a parliamentary democracy and that the majority decides. But the dream may be cut off and reality will let us know where we are. We have to see the situation clearly.

J. Kuroń: Is it true that the Senate has issued some sort of statement relating to the annulment of the President's election?

A. Stelmachowski: Such motion has come in from Senator Leszek Piotrowski¹⁵⁶—I sent it out to the proper commission.

A. Wielowieyski: What is the motive of those 41 PUWP [members] who have not come to the meeting with Kiszczak?

J. Ślisz: I spoke with Bąk¹⁵⁷—a peasant, for them a membership card is not important, they want Bronisław [Geremek]. As far as Bentkowski is concerned, they would like to have Olesiak¹⁵⁸ in the government. Approximately 40 deputies are not going to vote for Kiszczak.

A. Balazs: Bentkowski said that Sekuła's candidacy also won't get through.

J. Ślisz: From a talk with Świtka¹⁵⁹—we would have support of SD deputies.

J. Ambroziak: As of 8 p.m. the information is as follows:

PUWP—12 deputies are against Kiszczak

ZSL—60 deputies are against [Kiszczak]

SD—the whole is in favor [of Kiszczak for Prime Minister].

Pax¹⁶⁰, UChS¹⁶¹—in favor [of Kiszczak for Prime Minister].

A. Michnik: Will the Club be in favor of not being involved in it?

J. Ślisz: The ZSL was asking if we would be ready to propose a prime minister. We need to think about this.

A. Balazs - If we put forward our candidate for prime minister, the whole ZSL will be for him.

A. Stelmachowski: To sum it up, the situation is as follows:

- some consensus is emerging to vote against Kiszczak.

- are we to vote negatively against each PUWP candidate?

- do we see the possibility of forming our own government with small concessions?

T. Mazowiecki: My position is known to all of you. When I was invited to the Council, I went, putting aside any other considerations. Since the moment I have learned about Kiszczak's candidacy, I have been trying to form an opinion on this matter.

- I think that the Club's decision to vote against Kiszczak is not good. I do not share the position of our Chairman, who is sending out this news by telex. SIS¹⁶² communicated this news yesterday evening.

- My political assessment is the following: if such a strong man is being proposed, then the power is being shifted towards the line of the parliament-government. It's going to be a strong government, a situation will emerge, which will stabilize the process which has already begun. There is no need for the Club to vote against, it may abstain. I am afraid that the situation with the national list may repeat itself—first we are booming radicals, but then we withdraw. If we are not reaching for power ourselves, we should permit the other side to do it.

- As far as the ZSL proposal is concerned, one ought to remember that the ZSL doesn't have access to the proper centers of power. I would not bet on this combination. There are other centers of power, which will let themselves be known. We are not at a stage, at which parliamentary relations decide.

I am opposed to Adam's¹⁶³ concept also for the reason that on the opposition-Solidarity side there is no program and within three months that would become dramatically clear.

I think that the most proper position on the question of prime minister is a neutral one. But if we were faced

with a situation of the state crisis, then some talks about a great coalition might be possible, but not us in coalition with the ZSL.

I think that the moment is very serious. The public would not tolerate a situation in which first they see advances, and then withdrawals.

A. Celiński: [...] I exclude the possibility of a great coalition.

The nearest option is something that took place in Spain¹⁶⁴—a government stands somewhere aside, it gains support from the ZSL, part of the Party, our Club can be convinced.

J. M. Rokita: I get the impression that a Kiszczak government, after all, would not be strong in a situation where it wouldn't have support of a strong majority in the Sejm.

It would be a government in which we would constantly have to be hypocrites. In the long run it would be a trap for us.

Coalition with the ZSL is absurd. It would mean a clash of opinions from the beginning—that reforms are being introduced with a strong power center, the PUWP. Technically such coalition cannot be realized in defiance of the power centers.

In case there is a government of a purely communist coalition, the reforms will be coming from them, they will be throwing them upon us, but they will not strike at the system, as markets would do. They will be lumping together various ideas and we would think there is no other alternative. It will be a consolidation of the system.

It is necessary that we have at least part of the political initiatives. Something that is called a great coalition is a matter of time. It will come, it may be delayed, or accelerated. So, we should not be confusing people.

E. Wende: (to Mazowiecki) Do you take into consideration a situation in which the President will not recommend Kiszczak but Geremek?

T. Mazowiecki: It is possible, but we don't have such a situation. At this moment there are back-corner talks with the ZSL.

There are two ways out:

A better one—a Kiszczak government, the strongest one from the other side. A big offensive, execution of legal reforms, great stability.

The second one—a great coalition with the PUWP.

A. Balazs: It's a pity that such a discussion was not held prior to the presidential election. The situation that arose was the fault of both the Presidium and the Club. It would be very unfortunate if it were to repeat itself.

We have no chance for a coalition government, it would be short-lived and tragic for us because of the economic situation and the fact that we don't have the people.

But the opposition certainly has a candidate for prime minister, as people from other parties see it. There are also people on the other side whom we might be able to put

forward, e.g. Kwaśniewski.¹⁶⁵

A. Wielowieyski: Two arguments can be added against the coalition:

- We should not be wasting our social capital by entering into a small coalition. I see no gain from it.
- The Big Brother has other methods of conducting politics. Depriving the PUWP of power would be a blow to Gorbachev. The result—a mortal poisoning of our life, impossibility of realizing anything.

It is apparent that we will have to support one government or the other. We must get them to understand that another candidate would get our support. Though Kiszczak is not bad.

[Break]

J. Ziółkowski: We are observing a great acceleration of the political process. *Pacta sunt servanda*—this has been our principle. The fact that Jaruzelski is president is good, it is a stabilizing factor. There is a great weakness of power, a rebellion with the Party itself. There is a dissension within the coalition, the ZSL is bending over backward, in the SD [the situation] must be likewise—as it is improbable to have complete silence after those noisy declarations about a crown in the eagle, etc. There are two possibilities:

- a great coalition-us and the PUWP.
- a small coalition-us, the ZSL and other smaller groups.

One of the elements of the situation is tremendous social impatience. Adam [Michnik] has had a sense of this impatience—[they say] so much is in your hands, and you don't react.

The new configuration means a strong triumvirate,¹⁶⁶ unusually tight. A strong Kiszczak, about whom there was talk here, is too strong. [...]

We have to approach Kiszczak negatively. [...] This is a configuration in which we have a minimal possibility of maneuver.

What can we do? Coalition with the ZSL is dangerous, as we cannot steer this process. A small coalition is on their good grace or the lack of it. In the end there are not too many of those contestants.

Only a great coalition is acceptable—a Government of National Salvation.

J. Kuroń: That triangle is not a solution under any circumstance. Abstaining from voting—impossible, in any case we would lose the steering wheel, the Club would kick us out through the window.

The first variant: the strikes take off, which will start costing money. Anarchy will follow. Someone will have to bring stability. When a fire bursts, Jaruzelski will call on us to form a government.

With each day our situation is becoming increasingly difficult. Empty shelves are being played out against us, as it was in 1981. And our statements are in the Sejm.

If they [PUWP] are battered in the ZSL, SD—then in

which groups do they find support? In the SD they are still trying to steer, but are saying that this cannot go on.

Stabilization is an illusion. If we remain passive, we will lose—then we will have to take it over in a worse situation and with less social confidence [then even currently exists]. As long as we don't make a decision—we are not going to have a program.

Could it be a government of a great coalition? Initially it was supposed to be such a government: for us two, three ministries. What "Solidarity" has to give social confidence, less likely [perhaps the] possibility of obtaining a moratorium on debts.

The government should be ours, i.e. formed by us. We should vote against all of Kiszczak's candidates.

H. Wujec: a PUWP government means a continuing crisis, waiting for a change. Now those price increases, people see it clearly. We are delaying solutions.

The only chance is a broadly based Government of National Salvation. It would have to represent a new line, new spirit, have a different social perception. Can we do it? We have to search already for programs, people. We have to keep in mind that everything moves quickly.

J. Ślisz: We need to form a government that is a great coalition—in which we should be the dominant force. How do we let the other side know that they should propose letting us have the position of prime minister? The coming 24 hours have to decide.

J. Stelmachowski: I agree with the diagnoses, but I don't agree with the conclusions. The strategy is to wait until an auspicious moment. If the economic diagnosis is bad, it would be a folly to take over the government until such time as the "Solidarity" is the only way out. If we are expecting a deterioration [of the situation], we should not assume responsibility for it. They are not so weak and it's not the parliament that decides. We need to be against Kiszczak; a strong PUWP government is not in our interest. It would be ill-perceived abroad—two generals in top positions. It was rightly pointed out as a jamming phenomenon. We should be voting against, but I would not vote against any candidate put forward by the General.

A. Michnik: I have been listening with some surprise to what the Senate Marshal was telling us. It's something from the area of games, we don't have time for it. I am afraid that in a little while we will have to leave that parliament, called off by people from the queues.

From my point of view, neither Kiszczak nor anyone else will change anything. This configuration is sentenced to death. Do you know what will be left of the PUWP—only trash will be left. There is a 60 percent probability that our talk is an academic discussion, but if Kiszczak doesn't get through—I propose Mazowiecki, Stelmachowski and others. We have such an international constellation, a historical moment, when we can catch something. We should not use an argument that there is no program—as no one in the world has that recipe, e.g. what should Russia or Yugoslavia do?

We are doomed for one [program]—a sharp, sudden

entrance into the market. To say this a year ago would have been a lot, we need to keep this in mind when we say that something is impossible.

There is no one who would defend a coalition with the ZSL. It's falling apart. We are not attacking frontally, rather we propose something, e.g. Kwaśniewski for vice premier, someone who will pull over the reformist elements.

O. Krzyżanowska: Tomorrow we need to vote almost ostentatiously. Our government will be in a much worse situation, as the Union is inclined to press demands and we will be calling for belt-tightening. If we don't preserve the ethos of the Union and the opposition—the future election will be lost. Our hands are tied by the Union. Perhaps it will be our prime minister, but not our government.

K. Kozłowski: The situation is difficult, we should speak up strongly against Kiszczak and Sekuła. Maybe in the end they will come up with something that will be acceptable and we will abstain from the vote. Perhaps in a few weeks they may desperately seize upon some combination, which will be acceptable. If they cannot come up with anything, then a government of National Salvation will appear to be a solution. If this happens, we will not join into a coalition but we salvage Poland: we then must have prime minister and demand tolerable names. A crisis situation, a Geremek or Lech government. The first thing that our new prime minister would have to do is to talk with the MON. History teaches that invasions, martial laws are threatening when the power structure is falling apart. We are close to this. I don't know which general, but one of them will do it.

Tomorrow vote against [Kiszczak for prime minister], press ahead, see what can come out of it. Do not reject the option of a tolerable government, [if it is] partly a non-party one. Otherwise, press for hard terms into the government.

E. Wende: If this government fails the country, will there be an economic chance to get out of it? We must clearly say—no, it won't be better. So, will our prime minister have better or worse chances of rescuing the country?

Z. Kuratowska: We have to vote against. Sekuła doesn't have a chance. We cannot wait any longer. What kind of professionals are they? It's very hard to find them. Are we supposed to leave the country? The ovation at Powązki was a kind of an opinion poll[!] They were telling Brzezinski¹⁶⁷—we are ready to wait out this situation if you [the US government] are going to decide.

J. Ślisz: In the corridor there are gentlemen from the ZSL and PUWP, they want to come here and talk.

(A brief consultation and the conclusion that this should not be discussed at the meeting. B. Geremek and A. Michnik are going for talks). [Recess]

B. Geremek: According to the latest news the situation is as follows:

PUWP—12 against [Kiszczak] (despite party discipline and threats)

ZSL—21 against
SD —?

It looks as though the solution is still that Kiszczak will form the government.

In justifying our position we will argue that we are against the continuation of the present rule. We are not in a position to extend credit to the teams which have been in power so far. We are accepting a diagnosis that under the present international situation our taking over the government is impossible. But potentially we are ready to do it.

A government of a great coalition came out of Jaruzelski's mouth: "you are coming into our government." If we are taking over, we form the government, we see in it a place for representatives of different social forces. It is a government formed by the opposition. It is an anti-*nomenklatura* government. That is how our position can be presented.

We reject a government [of] General Kiszczak plus Solidarity. If there is a chance to form a Government of National Salvation, which would have a chance of gaining public trust. If such a possibility doesn't exist, then we will perform a controlling function to see that aspirations expressed in the election are met.

T. Mazowiecki: I don't see a difference between the conceptions of government; from the general point of view each of them is a coalition government.

B. Geremek: It is a government formed by the "S" on the basis of a coalition. We are leaving the undemocratic system and the main problem is the structure of power.

A. Stelmachowski: It is the model that Hitler gave to Hindenburg—he just wanted the ministry of internal affairs and the chancellery.

T. Mazowiecki: This is a government proposed by us, but it still is a great coalition government.

B. Geremek: Lech Wałęsa has two possibilities:
- he will form that government
- or someone else will.

If we would get to the next stage (a 1 percent probability), if the president would talk with us, that is how I would present the proposal of Wałęsa's government.

A. Balazs: We need to allow the possibility that they will form a government and wait for their overthrow. Within three months they will be completely finished in terms of propaganda. They are in the ultimate situation. This is a very difficult situation for us, too. We need to find some alternative solution.

B. Geremek: I told Kiszczak that his candidacy is not good, that someone else would be better. He has recognized this argument.¹⁶⁸

B. Geremek: The motion on an Extraordinary Commission has not passed. It has the backing of half of the ZSL, half of SD and a little in the PUWP, it has a chance of passage.

The following team will be needed: 1. R. Bugaj
2. J. Osiatyński¹⁶⁹

3. G. Staniszevska¹⁷⁰
4. the Peasants will fill in
5. the Peasants will fill in
6. K. Dowgałó¹⁷¹
7. J. Łopuszański¹⁷²

M. Rokita: Najder¹⁷³ is thanking [us], asking to take care of his dispossession of Polish citizenship.

A. Ballazs: a 10 day vacation break is needed, right now it's a harvest time.

[Source: Archives of the Bureau of Senate Information and Documentation. Translated by Jan Chowanec for CWIHP.]



DOCUMENT No. 19
Minutes of a Meeting of the Presidium
of the Citizens' Parliamentary Club,
16 August 1989, 11:30 p.m.

Present: A. Balazs, G. Janowski, J. Ślisz, J. Rokita, E. Wende, O. Krzyżanowska, A. Stelmachowski, A. Celiński, J. Kuroń, J. Ambroziak, T. Mazowiecki, B. Geremek, L. Wałęsa, K. Kozłowski, A. Wielowieyski, H. Wujec, A. Michnik, J. Kaczyński, L. Kaczyński.

B. Geremek: Today I received an invitation to have a conversation with Gen. Jaruzelski. I responded that first I wanted to meet with Chairman Wałęsa, whom I had not seen for a few days. There have been important meetings recently: a meeting of Primate Glemp with [Soviet] Ambassador Vladimir Borovikov and the second meeting of Glemp with Jaruzelski.

The time-table for the next few days [is:] today or tomorrow the Sejm is to vote on a resolution on the [1968] intervention in Czechoslovakia. It's a controversial matter. Tomorrow L. Wałęsa is meeting: at 9 a.m. with

Malinowski
 at 10 a.m. with Józwiak¹⁷⁴
 at 12 with Jaruzelski

K. Kozłowski: The PUWP wants to do everything to eliminate Lech Wałęsa. There will be a compromise candidate—Kwaśniewski.

B. Geremek: Is it possible that they will appoint Wałęsa?

E. Wende: Orzechowski has very clear plans regarding two ministries.

A. Stelmachowski: With bargaining there will be more!

L. Wałęsa: Generally we are reporting that a new coalition has been set up. It will select the most suitable candidate for prime minister. For the time being we don't say who that will be.

E. Wende: He is referring to information from the PUWP circles, we should not exaggerate, there are warnings.

J. Kaczyński: The question of two ministries has been stated clearly in talks. With the preservation of the president's prerogatives, this needs to be stated once again. The compromise has to be reached on their side.

A. Stelmachowski: The government here in Poland has never had the position of a true government, the disposition centers have always been somewhere aside (Pilsudski¹⁷⁵—the Chief Inspectorate). We need to return back to the main political decisions reached at Magdalenka.

L. Wałęsa: We have learned that there is always someone above the authorities and above the law.

A. Michnik: How do you perceive the position of the PUWP?

L. Wałęsa: We need to create a new coalition, which will stand up to the PUWP. How to form a government to secure both freedom and be tolerant.

B. Geremek: The main thing is that the PUWP doesn't form the government.

L. Wałęsa: and doesn't impose it!

A. Balazs: I have a suggestion that the "S" RI should not be treated by PUWP like ZSL is.

B. Geremek: Do you foresee a meeting with our Club after your meetings tomorrow?

L. Wałęsa: It's not me who wants to be prime minister. I have my three candidates.¹⁷⁶ If this proposition doesn't break down, I will be asking you to form the government.

B. Geremek: Does anyone have any comments?

A. Michnik: I think that if you listen to their argument, it means that you are going into their paws. Królewski¹⁷⁷ and Malinowski were stubbornly sticking to this coalition, which means they were doing it with Jaruzelski's approval. We need to form a government with the masters, not with the lackeys.

T. Mazowiecki: This would lead to a series of talks of the type of a new Magdalenka with the masters, talks with the actual disposers of power, i.e. with the military and the police.

A. Michnik: You are not going to make a real government with the ZSL and the SD. The PUWP can be broken down.

B. Geremek: The present phase—with the assistance of the ZSL and SD—is an attempt to break down PUWP's monopoly.¹⁷⁸

[Source: Archives of the Bureau of Senate Information and Documentation; translated by Jan Chowanec for CWIHP.]

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Dr. Pawel Machcewicz is a former CWIHP fellow and now research director of the Institute of National Remem-

brance in Warsaw. He is author of the prize-winning 1956: *Polski rok* (1993) and a co-organizer of the conference "Poland, 1986-1989: The End of the System," held in Miedzeszyn-Warsaw, 21-23 October 1999.

¹The conference was modeled after an earlier conference held at Jachranka, concerning to "Solidarity" and the martial law period ("Poland 1980-1982. Internal crisis, International Dimensions," Jachranka, 8-10 November 1997), which was organized by the Institute of Political Studies in conjunction with the same American partners. The conference format was also similar (*critical oral history*), which, in our opinion, fully stood the test at Jachranka, bringing forth new facts and new positions. It was a joint debate of scholars—historians, political scientists, sociologists—with politicians, participants and actors in those events, people taking important political decisions or close to the decision making centers. As at Jachranka, debates took place both on the internal processes in Poland, and on external influences (on the one hand those of Moscow and other countries of the Soviet bloc, on the other, Washington and Western Europe), and the significance of Polish developments of setting in motion democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe. The conference covered the period from the amnesty of September 1986, giving an opening for the opposition to public activity, to the formation of the Mazowiecki government in September 1989, closing an essential part of a "negotiated take-over of power," or a "negotiated revolution," as it has been called. Conference participants included many of the most important actors, such as Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, leader of the Communist Party and from July 1989 president of Poland, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who headed the first non-communist government in the Soviet bloc.

²See Tomasz Tabako, *The Strajk 88* (Wwa: Niezal. Ofic. Wydawn. Nowa, 1992).

³The most important Polish-language collection is "The Last Year of Power, 1988-1989", published by "Aneks" of London in the series *Tajne Dokumenty* [Secret Documents] (London: Aneks, 1994), edited by Stanisław Perzkowski and containing CC PUWP Politburo and Secretariat documents. Two very important collections of documents were published by Krzysztof Dubiński, Assistant to the Minister of Internal Affairs, and Czesław Kiszczak, who had participated in all confidential meetings at Magdalenka near Warsaw. Government and opposition representatives had been preparing the "Roundtable" at Magdalenka and finding solutions to the most important controversies appearing during the course of official meetings ("Magdalenka - transakcja epoki. Notatki z poufnych spotkań Kiszczak-Wałęsa," (Warszawa: Sylwa, 1990); "Okrągły stół" (A Roundtable), (Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Promocyjna, 1999). Also impressive is a collection of documents illustrating the Church's dialogue with the government.

Besides the consecutive volume published by the London "Aneks" (*Państwo - Kościół 1980-1989* [The State-Church 1980-1989], London-Warszawa, 1993), these are mostly items prepared by Peter Raina ("Rozmowy z władzami PRL, Arcybiskup Dąbrowski w służbie kościoła i narodu" [Talks with the authorities of the Polish People's Republic, Archbishop Dąbrowski in the service of the church and the people], vol. II: 1982-1989, (Warszawa: K.S. Polska, 1985); ("Droga do 'Okrągłego Stołu.' Zakulisowe rozmowy przygotowawcze" [The Road to the Roundtable. Preparatory talks behind the scene], Warszawa 1989). One should also mention the most important items dealing with "the end of communism" in Poland. First of all, the work of Jan Skórzyński *Ugoda i rewolucja. Władza i opozycja 1985-1989* [Conciliation and Revolution. The Authority and the Opposition 1985-1989] (Warszawa: Presspublica, 1995). "The Roundtable" and the process of the takeover of power by the opposition is also discussed by Antoni Dudek in the first part of his book "Pierwsze lata III Rzeczypospolitej" [The First Years of the III Polish Republic] (Warszawa: Presspublica, 1997). A very interesting analysis of transformation from communism to democracy is presented by Andrzej Paczkowski in his paper "Polska 1986-1989: od kooptacji do negocjacji" [Poland 1986-1989: from cooptation to negotiations] (published in 1997 by the Institute of Political Studies as a working paper, and then in the book "Od sfałszowanego zwycięstwa do prawdziwej klęski" [From a fraudulent victory to the real defeat] (Kraków: Wydawn. Literackie, 1999).

⁴ By the terms of an 11 September 1986 decision by Minister of Internal Affairs Czesław Kiszczak, all political prisoners were freed.

⁵ A law passed by the Sejm on 8 October 1982 dissolved the NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁶ The note was expressing the position of the Episcopate and was handed over to CC PUWP Secretary Kazimierz Barcikowski in October 1986.

⁷ A watchword of trade union pluralism practically meant the legalization of the independent self-governing trade union (NSZZ) "Solidarity", which had been active underground following the 8 October 1982 law dissolving the Union.

⁸ It refers to the Consultative Council appointed by the Chairman of the Council of State, set up on 6 December 1986.

⁹ Archbishop Bronisław Dąbrowski, archbishop of Warsaw, in 1969-1993 secretary general of the Episcopate of Poland, from 1970-1989 delegate of the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland on relations with the government of Poland; chief negotiator of the church side in confidential talks with the PUWP (more detailed information on many people mentioned in the documents can be found in "Kto był kim in the years 1986-1989" [Who was who in 1986-1989], a paper prepared by Inka Słodkowska and published in the briefing book for the conference "Poland 1986-1989: End of the System").

¹⁰ Andrzej Świącicki, president of the Warsaw Club of Catholic Intelligentsia (KIK), forced by Club members to resign this function following his acceptance of Gen. Jaruzelski's invitation to participate on the Consultative Council.

¹¹ Jerzy Turowicz, chief editor of "Tygodnik Powszechny" since 1945, member of the Citizens' Committee (KO) appointed by the Chairman of the NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant.

¹² Andrzej Wielowieyski, secretary of the Warsaw KIK, advisor to the Episcopate of Poland, from 1983 advisor to Lech Wałęsa; member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant and from June 1989 senator and vice marshal of the Senate.

¹³ Kazimierz Barcikowski, PUWP Politburo member, deputy chairman of the Council of State, from 1980 chairman of the Joint Commission of Government and Episcopate.

¹⁴ Kazimierz Secomski, economist, member of the Council of State, member of the Consultative Council appointed by the Chairman of the Council of State.

¹⁵ Stanisław Ciosek, CC PUWP secretary and Politburo member (from December 1988), 1988-1989 National Council of Patriotic Movement for National Renewal secretary general; "Roundtable" participant.

¹⁶ It refers to the PUWP's so-called "allied parties."

¹⁷ Never brought into existence.

¹⁸ A Spokesman for Citizens' Rights was appointed in 1987. He/she was to be an institution to which people could appeal in cases of conflicts with the state authorities. Prof. Ewa Łętowska became the first Spokeswoman.

¹⁹ Tadeusz Mazowiecki, chief editor of the Catholic monthly *Więź*, and in 1981 of the weekly magazine *Solidarność*, one of Wałęsa's closest advisors; "Roundtable" participant (co-chairman of a team for trade union pluralism, from August 1989 prime minister).

²⁰ Bronisław Geremek, a historian, one of Wałęsa's closest advisors, from 1988 an informal leader of the NSZZ "Solidarity" Citizens' Committee; "Roundtable" participant (co-chairman of a team on political reforms, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm, chairman of the Citizens' Parliamentary Club (OKP), formed by "Solidarity" deputies and senators).

²¹ Konwersatorium "Doświadczenie i Przyszłość" [Experience and the Future], a discussion forum created by intellectual circles maintaining contacts with both the opposition and government.

²² Agricultural circles and "Samopomoc Chłopska" [Peasants' Self-support]—peasants' co-operatives controlled by the government.

²³ A Joint Commission of Government and Episcopate—a forum for negotiating and finding solutions on disputed questions between the authorities and the Church.

²⁴ "Raport—Polska 5 lat po Sierpniu" [Poland - 5 years after August] - an assessment of the political and social situation in Poland, announced in 1985 by a group

of people concentrated around Wałęsa, published in "the second circulation" (this was the term used for illegal publications, printed and circulated by the opposition circles).

²⁵ *Res Publica* - a monthly published in the "second circulation." In June 1987, the authorities in an unprecedented move, gave permission to its legal publication.

²⁶ *Ład* [An Order] - a weekly published by a group of Catholics (Polish Catholic-Social Union) cooperating with the authorities.

²⁷ Józef Czyrek, a CC PUWP Politburo member and secretary, co-chairman of the National Council of PRON; in 1987-1988 initiated and conducted talks with the opposition Catholic intellectual and Church representatives; the meeting mentioned in the document was held on 11 July 1987.

²⁸ Refers to the anniversary of the 31 August 1980 signing of an understanding between the authorities and the Inter-factory Striking Committee in Gdańsk, which opened the way for the birth of NSZZ "Solidarity."

²⁹ There were no "terrorist" actions; also nothing is known of any preparation to this kind of actions.

³⁰ Cardinal Józef Glemp, from 1981 archbishop metropolitan of Gniezno and Warsaw, Primate of Poland, chairman of the Episcopate of Poland.

³¹ A "new" workers' party was not created until the end of the PUWP rule. In the second half of the 1980s, in pro-reform circles on the margins of PUWP, ideas were put forth to bring into being a second Marxist party, which would compete with the PUWP, thus introducing democratic dynamics into the communist system without undermining its fundamentals.

³² Aleksander Gieysztor, a distinguished historian-medievalist, director of the Royal Castle in Warsaw, in 1988-1989 participated in a number of meetings between government representatives and opposition circles.

³³ The Polish Club of International Relations did not play any important role in subsequent events, but its creation—and particularly the speech by J. Czyrek—was one of the stages in seeking an understanding between government and opposition circles.

³⁴ Andrzej Stelmachowski, an advisor to the Episcopate and Wałęsa, from 1987 president of the Warsaw KIK, member of the Citizens' Committee appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", in the years 1987-1989, as a plenipotentiary of L. Wałęsa, conducted confidential talks with the authorities, which led to the "Roundtable;" from 1989 a senator and marshal of the Senate.

³⁵ Paweł Czarторыcki, a member of the Warsaw KIK leadership, member of the Citizens' Committee appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant.

³⁶ Marcin Król, editor-in-chief of the monthly magazine *Res Publica*, member of the KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

³⁷ Henryk Wujec, an active member of the Warsaw KIK, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity", from

1988 secretary of the KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a deputy to the Sejm, secretary of the National Committee for Reconciliation (OKP).

³⁸ Adam Michnik, in the 1970s an activist of the Committee for Workers' Defense (KOR), from 1980 an advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant from May 1989 editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm.

³⁹ Jacek Kuroń, in the 1970s a leading KOR activist, from 1980 an advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity", member of the KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm.

⁴⁰ Stanisława Grabska, vice-president of the Warsaw KIK, member of the KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" member.

⁴¹ Krzysztof Śliwiński, member of the Warsaw KIK leadership, member of the KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁴² Tomasz Gruszecki, an economist, from 1980 an advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁴³ Ryszard Bugaj, an economist, in the 1970s cooperated with KOR, from 1980 an advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity", member of the KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm.

⁴⁴ Jacek Moskwa, a journalist, (supporting) secretary of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁴⁵ Kazimierz Wójcicki, a journalist, secretary (assistant) of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁴⁶ Halina Bortnowska, editorial member of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁴⁷ Janusz Grzelak, a psychologist, from 1980 activist of NSZZ "Solidarity", participant of the "Roundtable."

⁴⁸ Czesław Kiszczak, CC PUPW Politburo member, minister of internal affairs, chief initiator of the "Roundtable", in August 1989 nominated for Prime Minister, however unsuccessful in formulating the government due to "Solidarity's" refusal to participate.

⁴⁹ "Oświadczenie w sprawie dialogu" [A statement on dialogue] of 25 August 1988, published in *Tabako. Strajk 88* (Warszawa, 1992), pp. 248-250.

⁵⁰ A group of Lech Wałęsa's advisors, who in December 1988 formed a Citizens' Committee of Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity" (political representation of the "Solidarity" camp just on the eve of "Roundtable" deliberations).

⁵¹ Jacek Merkel, "Solidarity" activist from Gdańsk, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity" "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a deputy to the Sejm.

⁵² Andrzej Malanowski, a lawyer, scholar at the University of Warsaw, activist of the Polish Socialist Party (an opposition group activist from 1987).

⁵³ Andrzej Rosner, a historian, chief of the "second-circulation" publication "Krag" [Circle].

⁵⁴ Andrzej Milczanowski, a lawyer, "Solidarity" activist from Szczecin, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant.

⁵⁵ Gabriel Janowski, an activist of the "Solidarity" of Individual Peasants (RI), member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant.

⁵⁶ Klemens Szaniawski, philosophy professor, chairman of the Committee for an Understanding of Creative and Scholarly Associations, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁵⁷ Aleksander Paszyński, journalist, businessman, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator, Minister of Construction and Space Economy in the Mazowiecki government.

⁵⁸ Stefan Bratkowski, a journalist, in the years 1980-1981 leader of a grass-roots reformist movement within the PUPW, president of the Polish Journalists' Association, member of KO of the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁵⁹ It concerns a "Statement of the Dialogue" of 25 August 1988, submitted to the authorities on 26 September 1988. See footnote 16 in document No. 6.

⁶⁰ Niezależne Stowarzyszenie Związków Zawodowych, the Independent Association of Trade Unions.

⁶¹ It means representatives of the authorities, "Solidarity" and the Church.

⁶² On 31 August 1988 a meeting occurred in Warsaw, with Cz. Kiszczak, S. Ciosek, L. Wałęsa and archbishop J. Dąbrowski participating.

⁶³ Illegible signature of Lech Wałęsa.

⁶⁴ See preceding document.

⁶⁵ The trade union statute 8 October 1982, which outlawed "Solidarity."

⁶⁶ Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych [The All-Polish Association of Trade Unions]—closely connected with the authorities.

⁶⁷ Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Democrację [The Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy] - a veteran organization. Here it implies "Solidarity" veterans from the 1980-1981 period.

⁶⁸ The Party's hardline conservatives.

⁶⁹ Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, member of ZSL, member of the National Council of PRON, "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm, Sejm's Speaker.

⁷⁰ Jan Karol Kostrzewski, a physician, professor of the Medical Academy, president of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

⁷¹ Stanisław Stomma, a lawyer, since 1945 an editorial member of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, in 1956-57 one of the organizers of the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia, in 1957-1976 a deputy to the Sejm within the Catholic group of ZNAK, 1981-1985 chairman of the Social Council by the Primate of Poland (an advisory body to the Primate),

1984-1989 president of the Club of Political Thought "Dziekania" (a moderate right discussion forum), member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", from June 1989 a senator.

⁷² Anna Przećławska, professor of pedagogics, member of the National Council of PRON, "Roundtable" participant.

⁷³ A group of Wałęsa's advisors.

⁷⁴ Rev. Bishop Alojzy Orszulik, in the years 1958-1993 director of the Episcopate's Press Office, 1989-1994 assistant secretary of the Episcopate, member-secretary of the Joint Commission of Government and Episcopate; during the martial law period a liaison between Wałęsa and the Episcopate, in the years 1988-1989 a participant on behalf of the Church in confidential talks with the PUWP which led to the "Roundtable."

⁷⁵ Jacek Ambroziak, legal advisor in the Secretariat of the Episcopate of Poland, "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm, minister-chief of the Prime Minister's Office (Council of Ministers) in the Mazowiecki government.

⁷⁶ Rev. Archbishop Jerzy Stroba, archbishop-metropolitan of Poznań, member of the Main Council of the Episcopate of Poland, member of the Joint Commission of Government and Episcopate.

⁷⁷ Jan Olszewski, from 1980 an advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity" and the Episcopate of Poland, defense counsel in court trials of "Solidarity" activists, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity."

⁷⁸ Alojzy Pietrzyk, an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" from Upper Silesia, one of the strike leaders from 1988

⁷⁹ An Independent Association of Students, founded in 1981, outlawed under the martial law.

⁸⁰ Janusz Onyszkiewicz, a "Solidarity" activist from 1981, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participants, from June 1989 deputy to the Sejm.

⁸¹ That "Table" in Katowice was never set up.

⁸² Naczelna Organizacja Techniczna [Chief Technical Organization].

⁸³ Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne [Polish Economic Society].

⁸⁴ Bronisław Geremek, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Henryk Wujec

⁸⁵ Mieczysław Rakowski, CC Politburo member, from June to December 1988 CC PUWP secretary, from September 1988 to August 1989 Prime Minister, from July 1989 CC PUWP first secretary.

⁸⁶ Jan Józef Szczepański, a writer, in the years 1980-1983 president of the Polish Literary Union, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant.

⁸⁷ Andrzej Szczepkowski, an actor, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", from June 1989 a senator.

⁸⁸ Zbigniew Romaszewski, KOR member, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity", member of KO ap-

pointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

⁸⁹ Jan Józef Lipski, KOR member, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity", member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", from June 1989 a senator.

⁹⁰ Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej [Confederation for an Independent Poland]—a radical opposition group, proclaiming goals of independence (led by Leszek Moczulski).

⁹¹ A radical group (led by Kornel Morawiecki), which in the second half of the 1980s departed from the main "Solidarity" movement.

⁹² A meeting of the representatives of the main "Solidarity" stream with the outside-solidarity opposition groups took place on 13 October 1988.

⁹³ Motorized Battalions of Citizens' Militia—a special formation used for breaking up demonstrations.

⁹⁴ The church of Our Lady in the old section of Gdańsk [NMP= *Najświętszej Marii Panny*, Virgin Mary].

⁹⁵ The Council for National Understanding eventually was not created. Instead, a Conciliatory Commission with narrower powers was set up, which was to take care that decisions of the "Roundtable" were implemented.

⁹⁶ Krajowa Komisja Wykonawcza [National Executive Commission] - the executive body of NSZZ "Solidarity", set up in October 1987.

⁹⁷ Lech Kaczyński, a lawyer, co-worker of KOR, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity", member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

⁹⁸ Andrzej Celiński, KOR member, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity", from 1987 secretary of KKW, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

⁹⁹ Komisja Krajowa (KK) - the top executive body of NSZZ "Solidarity" set up at the first National Congress of Delegates in December 1981.

¹⁰⁰ The CC PUWP Xth plenary meeting adopted a resolution in January 1989, allowing for union pluralism, thus opening up the road for legalization of "Solidarity."

¹⁰¹ NSA - Naczelny Sąd Administracyjny [the Main Administrative Court].

¹⁰² The Working Group of the National Commission (GR KK) of NSZZ "Solidarity" - an opposition group against Lech Wałęsa and his group of "Solidarity" leaders and activists from the years 1980-1981. It charged Wałęsa with undemocratic practices in steering the Union, monopolizing negotiations with the authorities and of being too soft towards the latter.

¹⁰³ Władysław Findesein, a physics professor, chairman of the Social Council by the Primate of Poland, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity", "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

¹⁰⁴ An understanding signed between representatives

of the striking plants and the authorities in Szczecin on 30 August 1980, in Gdańsk on 31 August 1980, and in Jestrzebie on 3 September 1980.

¹⁰⁵ Andrzej Słowik, in the years 1980-1981 chairman of the Board of the Regional NSZZ "Solidarity" in Łódź, in the martial law period an activist of the underground "Solidarity", from 1987 member of the Working Group of the National Council of NSZZ "Solidarity."

¹⁰⁶ Jerzy Kropiwnicki, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" in Łódź, member of KK NSZZ "Solidarity", from 1987 of GR KK NSZZ "Solidarity."

¹⁰⁷ An article by Jacek Kuroń "The Landscape after a Battle" was published in the underground *Tygodnik Mazowsze* of 2 September 1987.

¹⁰⁸ Krajowa Komisja Wykonawcza

¹⁰⁹ It had been agreed even before the opening of the "Roundtable" that the NSZZ "Solidarity" would be legalized on the basis of the existing law on trade unions (thus, there was no talk about "relegalization" as proposed in the formula of GR KK). It was a concession by the Lech Wałęsa camp, who had also gained an important concession from the authorities: NSZZ "Solidarity" was to be registered at once as a national organization, and not through registrations of subsequent factory units as desired by the PUWP negotiators.

¹¹⁰ Międzynarodowa Organizacja Pracy [International Labor Organization].

¹¹¹ Zbigniew Bujak, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity in Warsaw", in 1980-1981 chairman of the "Mazowsze" region, one of the leaders of the underground "Solidarity," member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant.

¹¹² Władysław Frasyński, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" in Wrocław, in 1981 chairman of the Lower Silesia region, one of the leaders of the underground "Solidarity", member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participants.

¹¹³ Antoni Tokarczuk, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" in Bydgoszcz, one of the leaders of the underground "Solidarity," member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participants, from June 1989 on a senator.

¹¹⁴ Komisja Krajowa, Cracow Committee.

¹¹⁵ "White spots"—controversial questions in Polish-Soviet relations, passed over in silenced or forged by the official propaganda and historiography.

¹¹⁶ For the USSR, WWII did not "start" until 22 June 1941.

¹¹⁷ In April 1987 the Polish and Soviet governments created a Joint Commission of Historians, which was to investigate "white spots" in their relations.

¹¹⁸ The place where the NKVD in 1940 murdered several thousand Polish officers, who had been taken prisoners of war in September 1939.

¹¹⁹ On 7 April 1989 the KKW decided to entrust the management of the election campaign to the Sejm and

Senate to the KO of the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity." Under its aegis, citizens' committees popped up all over the country, whose main task was to manage the election campaign for "Solidarity" candidates.

¹²⁰ Jarosław Śleszyński, manager of the cultural section of the Warsaw KIK, "Roundtable" participants.

¹²¹ The first round of elections took place on 4 June 1989, the second on 18 June 1989.

¹²² In the first round "Solidarity" candidates gained 160 of the 161 possible seats in the Sejm (within the 35% of seats allocated to candidates outside of the PUWP and its "allied parties"). In the election to the Senate "Solidarity" candidates gained 92 seats out of the 100 possible (as opposed to the lower chamber of parliament, elections to the Senate were held according to fully democratic procedures). In the second round "Solidarity" gained the last missing seat in the Sejm (thus, gaining 161 seats for 161 possible), as well as the next 7 seats in the Senate (in total 99 of 100 possible).

¹²³ On the national (central) list the authorities placed 35 leading PUWP activists and "allied party" candidates. Only two of them gained more than 50% of votes, which in view of the electoral law meant that 33 seats would not be filled. That would obviously undermine a precise parity of mandates, agreed upon at the "Roundtable", depriving the PUWP and its allies a secure majority in the Sejm. In this situation the KO of the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity" agreed to modify the electoral law to shift the 33 mandates from the national list to the regional ones. In the second round the candidates of the PUWP and the "allied parties" could fight for them. The agreement for changing the electoral law between the I and II round of elections was considered by many observers as inconsistent with the law. It also provoked voices of protest within the "Solidarity" camp.

¹²⁴ The territorial authorities.

¹²⁵ On 23 June 1989, deputies and senators of "Solidarity" formed a Citizens' Parliamentary Club (OKP).

¹²⁶ Olga Krzyżanowska, a physician, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity," from June 1989 a deputy to the Sejm.

¹²⁷ Zofia Kuratowska, a physician, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

¹²⁸ Krzysztof Kozłowski, deputy editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity," member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

¹²⁹ Jan Maria Rokita, an activist of NZZ and NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a deputy to the Sejm.

¹³⁰ Józef Ślisz, an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" RI [Rolników Indywidualnych - individual Peasants], member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator and deputy speaker of the Senate.

¹³¹ Artur Balazs, an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" RI,

member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ “Solidarity” RI, “Roundtable” participant, from June 1989 a deputy to the Sejm, a minister without portfolio in the Mazowiecki government.

¹³² Edward Wende, a lawyer, defense attorney in political trials, member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ “Solidarity,” from June 1989 a senator.

¹³³ Wojciech Jaruzelski met with the Citizens’ Parliamentary Club on 17 July 1989.

¹³⁴ Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej [Ministry of National Defense].

¹³⁵ Rada Obrony Narodowej [National Defense Council], a body composed of top generals.

¹³⁶ The Advisory Political Committee of the Warsaw

Pact met on 7-8 July. It stated that Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski should take the position of president of Poland.

¹³⁷ President George Bush paid an official visit to Poland on 9-11 July 1989. He gave support to the candidacy of Wojciech Jaruzelski for the position of president.

¹³⁸ At the beginning of July 1989, Lech Wałęsa declared his support for the candidacy of Kiszcak for president several times.

¹³⁹ Ogólnokrajowy Komitet Porozumiewawczy.

¹⁴⁰ Rev. Sylwester Zych, linked with the “Solidarity” circles had been murdered by “unknown” criminals. The suspicion fell on those of the party “baton” and Security Services, who wanted to torpedo an understanding between the authorities and the opposition.

FIRST DECLASSIFICATION OF EISENHOWER’S INSTRUCTIONS PREDELEGATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS USE

In April 2001, President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s top secret instructions that delegated nuclear-launch authority to military commanders and the Secretary of Defense under specific emergency conditions, were declassified for the first time. The US Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP) declassified this document and several related ones in response to an appeal by National Security Archive senior analyst William Burr, director of the Archive’s nuclear documentation project. President Eisenhower began making decisions for advance authorization of nuclear weapons use (“predelegation”) in the mid-1950s when he approved instructions for the use of nuclear weapons for the air defense of U.S. territory. Soon he came to support broader instructions that would allow specified commanders to react quickly to other kinds of attacks. By early 1959, two years after he had issued an authorization requesting instructions, Eisenhower approved, subject to later revision, “Instructions for the Expenditure of Nuclear Weapons in Accordance with the President Authorization Dated May 22, 1957.” This and other documents show that authorized commanders—including US Commander-in-Chief, Europe; Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic; and Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Air Command—could “expend” nuclear weapons “when the urgency of time and circumstances clearly does not permit a specific decision by the president.” According to the documents, top commanders could not use nuclear weapons in response to “minor” incidents but only when Soviet or Chinese forces launched air or surface attacks against “major” US forces in international waters or foreign territories “with the evident intention of rendering them militarily ineffective.” In the event of a nuclear attack on the United States, the instructions authorized the Secretary of Defense or top commanders to order retaliatory action if they were unable to communicate with the president or his successors. Eisenhower apparently had confidence that his commanders would not break discipline but he closely monitored the drafting of the instructions so they would not be misinterpreted as “giving license” for nuclear weapons use. National Security Archive staff first requested the “Instructions” in 1993 under the mandatory review provisions of Executive Order 12356, although other requesters had begun pursuing them in 1989. Declassification took over ten years because the “Instructions” were among the deepest US military policy secrets of the Cold War. The documents have are published online at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB45>.

¹⁴¹ Wałęsa's visit to Moscow did not occur at that point.

¹⁴² Marian Orzechowski, a Politburo member, CC PUWP secretary, from June 1989 a deputy to the Sejm and leader of the PUWP Parliamentary Club.

¹⁴³ Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe, the People's Party.

¹⁴⁴ Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, the Democratic Party.

¹⁴⁵ Stronnictwo Ludowe.

¹⁴⁶ Janusz Ziółkowski, a sociology professor, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity," member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

¹⁴⁷ National Assembly (the joint Sejm and Senate) elected the president.

¹⁴⁸ Jerzy Urban, the government press spokesman.

¹⁴⁹ By abstaining or giving an invalid vote, it reduced the majority needed to elect the president.

¹⁵⁰ Witold Trzeciakowski, an economist, advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity," member of KO appointed by the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity," "Roundtable" participant, minister without portfolio in the Mazowiecki government, chairman of the Economic Council.

¹⁵¹ The OKP ultimately did not adopt a motion on voting discipline in the presidential election, leaving the decision up to its members. On 19 July Gen. Jaruzelski won the election by the majority of one vote. 7 OKP members deliberately turned in invalid votes, thus enabling Jaruzelski's election.

¹⁵² Władysław Baka, an economist, Politburo member, deputy chairman of the Council of State.

¹⁵³ Roman Malinowski, president of the Main Committee of ZSL, together with L. Wałęsa and J. Józwiak from SD was a signatory of a statement of 17 August 1989 on the formation of the "Solidarity"-ZSL-SD coalition.

¹⁵⁴ Aleksander Bentkowski, a defense attorney, ZSL activist, Justice Minister in the Mazowiecki government.

¹⁵⁵ Ireneusz Sekuła, from October 1988 to August 1989 vice premier in the Mazowiecki government, chairman of the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers, PUWP "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a Sejm deputy.

¹⁵⁶ Leszek Piotrowski, a defense attorney, advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity" in Upper Silesia, "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a senator.

¹⁵⁷ Józef Bąk, a peasant, from June 1989 a Sejm deputy (no party affiliation).

¹⁵⁸ Kazimierz Olesiak, member of ZSL leadership, from October 1988 to August 1989 vice premier in the M. Rakowski government, "Roundtable" participant.

¹⁵⁹ Jan Eugeniusz Świtka, an SD activist, from June 1989 a Sejm deputy.

¹⁶⁰ PAX—a "satellite" Catholic group toward the PUWP.

¹⁶¹ Unia Chrześcijańsko-Społeczna [A Christian-Social Union]—a Catholic "satellite" group toward

PUWP.

¹⁶² SIS—Serwis Informacyjny of "Solidarity."

¹⁶³ Adam Michnik. On 3 July 1989, Michnik published an article in *Gazeta Wyborcza* titled, "Your president, Our premier," postulating the formation of the government by the "Solidarity" camp.

¹⁶⁴ Refers to the democratic transformation in Spain after the death of Franco in 1975.

¹⁶⁵ Aleksander Kwaśniewski, an activist of PUWP and the youth movement, in 1988-1989 an minister and chairman of the Socio-Political Committee of the Council of Ministers, "Roundtable" participant, from January 1989 chairman of the Polish Social Democratic Party, since 1995 president.

¹⁶⁶ The Triumvirate: President Wojciech Jaruzelski, Premier Czesław Kiszczak, CC PUWP First Secretary Mieczysław Rakowski.

¹⁶⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to President Carter.

¹⁶⁸ On 2 August 1989 the Sejm entrusted formation of government to Czesław Kiszczak. OKP deputies voted against that resolution. Eventually Kiszczak failed to form a government.

¹⁶⁹ Jerzy Osiatyński, an economist, from 1981 advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity", from June 1989 a Sejm deputy, head of the Central Planning Office in the Mazowiecki government.

¹⁷⁰ Grażyna Staniszevska, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" in Sub-Beskidy area, "Roundtable" participant, from June 1989 a Sejm deputy.

¹⁷¹ Krzysztof Dowgła, from 1980 an activist of NSZZ "Solidarity" in Gdańsk, from June 1989 a Sejm deputy.

¹⁷² Jan Łopuszański, a lawyer, from 1981 an advisor to NSZZ "Solidarity," from June 1989 a Sejm deputy.

¹⁷³ Zdzisław Najder, a literary historian, in the years 1982-1987 director of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe in Munich. Charged with spying and sentenced to death (in absentia) by a court in the Polish People's Republic.

¹⁷⁴ Jerzy Józwiak, a lawyer, chairman of the Central Committee of SD, together with L. Wałęsa and R. Malinowski from ZSL was a signatory of a statement of 17 August 1989 on the "Solidarity" - ZSL - SD coalition.

¹⁷⁵ Józef Piłsudski, a marshal, Chief of State in the years 1919-1921, after a military putsch in May 1926 he actually ruled Poland till his death in 1935. He had never been president nor— with the exception of a brief period (1926-1928 and in 1930)—prime minister, but he held the function of Chief Inspector of Military Forces.

¹⁷⁶ Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Bronisław Geremek, Jacek Kuroń.

¹⁷⁷ Bogdan Królewski, member of the ZSL leadership.

¹⁷⁸ On 19 August Tadeusz Mazowiecki was designated by president Jaruzelski to the position of prime minister, and on 24 August that mission was entrusted to him by the Sejm.

Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After Historic Conference Sheds New Documents and Oral History

On 22-24 March 2001, an international conference, “Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After,” brought together former officials from the Kennedy Administration, the CIA, and Brigade 2506 members, and their counterparts in the Cuban military and government of Fidel Castro, to discuss one of the most infamous episodes in the Cold War—the April 1961 invasion at the Bay of Pigs. National Security Archive Senior Analyst Peter Kornbluh, director of the Archive’s Cuba Docu-



Fidel Castro receives copies of the Cold War International History Bulletin from Christian Ostermann

The US delegation included Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Richard Goodwin, two former advisors to President John F. Kennedy; two retired CIA covert operatives, Robert Reynolds, chief of the Miami station in 1960-61, and Samuel Halpern, the executive officer on Operation Mongoose; and five members of the 2506 Brigade, including two former presidents of the Brigade’s Veterans Association, Alfredo Duran and Robert Carballo; and a small group of historians. The meeting was organized by the Universidad de La Habana, Centro de Estudios sobre Estados Unidos, Instituto de Historia de Cuba, Centro de Investigaciones Historicas de la Seguridad del Estado; Centro de Estudios sobre America, and co-sponsored by The National Security Archive at George Washington University, a longstanding CWIHP partner. *On the occasion of the conference, the Cuban government released some 480 pages of declassified Cuban documents relating to the invasion, including Cuban intelligence reports on US preparations and Fidel Castro’s directives during the battle, records that, according to Kornbluh, “shed substantial light on Cuba’s ability to repel the invasion.”* One of the Cuban documents, for example, a January 1961 report on the CIA’s clandestine training camps in Central America and Florida, shows that Cuban intelligence analysts estimated there were as many as 6,000 CIA “mercenaries” training at a camp in Guatemala, overestimating by far the agency’s 1,400-man invasion force. National Security Archive and CWIHP plan to translate and publish the documents. For further information on the conference, contact Peter Kornbluh (National Security Archive, 202-994-7000) or the CWIHP. Additional information is also available on the Archive’s website <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/bayofpigs> or on the CWIHP website (<http://cwihip.si.edu>).

mentation who organized the US delegation for the conference, called the meeting “an historical, and historic, event,” organized to produce “new documents, details, and interpretations” of events before, during and after the 3-day battle at the Bay of Pigs. The meeting was planned “in the spirit of historical exploration,” according to Thomas Blanton, executive director of the National Security Archive. Given the continuing tension in U.S.-Cuban relations, he noted, “it is imperative to learn the lessons of this conflict so as not to repeat the past, and this kind of serious scholarly discussion—with actors, witnesses, experts and declassified evidence—gets us beyond rancor to dialogue.” The Cuban delegation was led by Cuban president Fidel Castro, who was accompanied by a number of current and former military commanders, political advisers and scholars.

The Fall of the Wall: The Unintended Self-Dissolution of East Germany's Ruling Regime

By **Hans-Hermann Hertle**

East Germany's sudden collapse like a house of cards in fall 1989 caught both the political and academic worlds by surprise.¹ The decisive moment of the collapse was undoubtedly the fall of the Berlin Wall during the night of 9 November 1989. After the initial political upheavals in Poland and Hungary, it served as the turning point for the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe and accelerated the deterioration of the Soviet empire. Indeed, the Soviet Union collapsed within two years. Along with the demolition of the "Iron Curtain" in May and the opening of the border between Hungary and Austria for GDR citizens in September 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall stands as a symbol of the end of the Cold War,² the end of the division of Germany and of the continent of Europe.³

Political events of this magnitude have always been the preferred stuff of which legends and myths are made of. The fall of the Berlin Wall quickly developed into "one of the biggest paternity disputes ever"⁴ among the political actors of that time, and it is not surprising that the course of and background to the events during the night of 9 November 1989 still continue to produce legends.

Was the fall of the Berlin Wall the result of a decision or intentional action by the SED leadership, as leading Politburo members claimed shortly after the fact?⁵ Was it really, as some academics argue, "a last desperate move to restabilize the country,"⁶ "a last desperate effort to ride the tiger, control the anger and the ebullience, that had challenged the government"⁷? Or was it, as disappointed supporters of the GDR civil rights movement suspected, the last revenge of the SED, designed to rob the civil rights movement of its revolution?⁸ Did Mikhail Gorbachev or Eduard Shevardnadze order the SED leadership to open the Berlin Wall,⁹ or was Moscow completely surprised by the events in Berlin? Were the Germans granted unity by a historical mistake, "a spectacular blunder,"¹⁰ or "a mixture of common sense and bungling"¹¹? Did four officers from the Ministry for State Security (MfS, or Stasi) and the Interior Ministry, the authors of the new travel regulation presented at the fateful November 9 press conference, trick the entire SED leadership?¹² And if the MfS was involved, could the fall of the Wall have been the Stasi's "opus magnum," as supporters of conspiracy theories want us to believe?¹³ The fall of the Wall—a final conspiracy of the MfS against the SED state?

Sociology and political science did not predict the collapse of the GDR, other Eastern bloc regimes, or even of the Soviet Union itself.¹⁴ Since 1990, post-mortem analysis of the communist system has taken place, but this is problematic methodologically. The Sovietologist Bohdan Harasymiw said, "Now that it has happened (...) the collapse of communism is being everywhere foreseen in

retrospect to have been inevitable." He labeled this thinking "whatever happened, had to have happened," or, more ironically, "the marvelous advantage which historians have over political scientists."¹⁵ Resistance scholar Peter Steinbach commented that historians occasionally forget very quickly "that they are only able to offer insightful interpretations of the changes because they know how unpredictable circumstances have resolved themselves."¹⁶

In the case of 9 November 1989, reconstruction of the details graphically demonstrates that history is an open process. In addition, it also leads to the paradoxical realization that the details of central historical events can only be understood when they are placed in their historical context, thereby losing their sense of predetermination.¹⁷

The mistaken conclusion of what Reinhard Bendix calls "retrospective determinism"—to view events "as if everything had to come about as it ultimately did come about,"¹⁸—as well as the opposing view, which seeks to grasp historical change as a random accumulation of "historical accidents,"¹⁹ can only be avoided by connecting structural history (*Strukturgeschichte*) and the history of events (*Ereignisgeschichte*), as will be attempted to a certain extent in the following essay. This paper focuses on the conditions and modalities of specific decision-making situations in 1989, through the reconstruction of the intended and actual course of events. It also examines the contingencies which helped to bring about the fall of the Wall, removing one of the most important underpinnings of the SED state. The analysis will primarily concentrate on the central decision-making bodies of the party and state apparatus, their perceptions of the problems, and their actions.²⁰

The paper is based on the documentary evidence from the relevant East German archives, specifically the SED Archive, as well as the archives for the Council of Ministers, the MfS, and Ministry of the Interior. The archival sources are supplemented by approximately 200 interviews with the "main actors" from both German states, the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain, and France, who were involved in the political and military decision-making process.²¹

It is generally accepted that developments and changes in the politics and economics of East Germany can only be analyzed within the framework of the political and economic relations "triangle" linking the Soviet Union, the Federal Republic, and the GDR. In addition, relations between the superpowers, i.e. the international context, cannot be ignored.²²

The internal and external conditions that contributed to the rapid collapse of the GDR after the fall of the Wall

developed during the ostensibly stable Honecker Era (1971-1989), gradually corroding the pillars upon which the political system was based. The Soviet empire had been in decline for at least a decade, the GDR economy was on the brink of ruin, the “leading role” of the party was exhausted, the SED leadership had become senile, the party cadre was worn down by years of crisis management, the ideology had become a hollow shell, and the security police were politically disoriented. Structural factors of the crisis restricted the range of possible decisions and options for action available to the SED leadership in the fall of 1989, but did not predetermine the actual course of events. The two most important factors were the exhaustion of the Soviet global strategy and the economic decline of the GDR.

The existence of the GDR as a state was, above all, legitimated by an outside force. The state’s existence was based on the military, economic, and political guarantee provided by the Soviet Union as well as the USSR’s imperial claim and will to power. The signs that the Soviet global strategy had run its course had increased since the early-1980s, and the superpower was increasingly unable to provide the necessary means of support for its empire.²³

Mikhail Gorbachev himself made it perfectly clear that the economic problems in his country had forced him to introduce political reforms after he took power in the Soviet Union in 1985, and affected its relationship with the satellite countries.²⁴ The Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) General Secretary first distanced himself from the Brezhnev Doctrine in November 1986 at a meeting of the party leaders of the COMECON [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance] member countries. He proclaimed “the independence of each party, its right to make sovereign decisions about the problems of development in its country, its responsibility to its own people” as unalterable principles of the relations among the socialist states.²⁵ It was not his intention at that time to dissolve the alliance; rather, the new principles of independence and autonomy of the national parties, equal standing in relations (with the USSR), and voluntary cooperation were designed to place the socialist community on a more solid basis. Gorbachev was still convinced in 1989, according to his closest foreign policy advisor, that “he would be able to reduce the confrontation [with the West] and retain competing socio-political systems.”²⁶

After 1986, it became increasingly clear that, due to the economic crisis, the Soviet leadership was forced to agree to Western demands at the East-West talks in Vienna. The United States and its alliance members made progress in disarmament negotiations, expansion of trade and economic aid contingent upon Soviet compromises on human rights. To the disgust of the SED leadership, Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze demonstrated their desire to create “peaceful and positive conditions abroad for domestic political reforms” in the Soviet Union without consulting with their allies.²⁷

Furthermore, in the opinion of the SED leadership, these far-reaching compromises on human rights issues would come at the expense of the Soviets’ allies.

Conversely, SED General Secretary Erich Honecker’s state visit to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in September 1987, something the CPSU had blocked for years, fueled the Soviet leadership’s fears of a German-German *rapprochement* and detente behind their backs. Finally, sources inside the SED Politburo fully informed Moscow about the GDR’s desolate economic situation and its financial dependency on the West, especially the Federal Republic.²⁸ The German-German summit accelerated a change in Soviet policy toward Germany (*Deutschlandpolitik*) and served as an important turning point in the relations among Moscow-East Berlin-Bonn. The Soviet-West German relationship began to flourish. The German-German relationship on the other hand, stagnated.²⁹

The wide-ranging declaration of intent in the German-German “Joint Communiqué” of September 1987, particularly the creation of a mixed commission for further development of economic relations, proved to be a farce within a few months.³⁰ Rather than increasing, German-German trade decreased in 1987 and 1988. One last aspect that still flourished was the SED’s policy of using human beings as bargaining chips. In May 1988, the Federal Republic increased its lump sum payment from DM 525 million to DM 860 million for the 1990-1999 period in return for the GDR’s easing of travel restrictions for East Germans visiting the West. In all other respects, however, Bonn restricted its relations with East Berlin to the minimum that was diplomatically necessary and, above all, non-binding.

In the course of 1988, Moscow and East Berlin each grew increasingly uneasy about the other’s intentions. At the conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) follow-up meeting in Vienna in January 1989, the signatory states pledged to observe the right of every individual “to travel from any country, including his own, and the unrestricted (right) to return to his country.” The GDR had signed similar international agreements many times before without ever putting them into effect domestically. But in Vienna, initially under steady pressure from the Soviets, it agreed to guarantee this right by law and to allow observation of its implementation.³¹ Soviet foreign policy forced domestic political obligations on East Berlin that, if implemented, would threaten at least the stability, if not the existence, of the GDR by softening its rigid isolation from the outside world.

The main source of domestic instability for the SED regime was the desolate state of the economy. In 1971, together with the CPSU, the SED had changed its economic strategy to the so-called “policy of main tasks,” which was memorably formulated in 1975 as the “unity of economic and social policy.”³² The SED leadership’s promise of welfare-state measures—such as a housing-construction

program, increases in salaries and pensions, an improved supply of consumer goods, as well as numerous social policy initiatives—was not based on sound economics, but on opportunistic political and legitimacy-oriented considerations. The latter stemmed from the inner condition of the regime, which it always considered to be precarious, as well as from the experience of the Prague Spring in 1968 and the workers' unrest in Poland in 1970. The "unity of economic and social policy" sought to "compensate for the lack of legitimacy by providing consumer goods and social security."³³

It quickly became apparent that this "real socialist" welfare program could not be supported by the GDR's economy, not least because of the changing international economic conditions. The (social-)political stabilization measures subverted the economy's productive capacity. Increasing the consumption quota burdened the economy's vitality and occurred at the expense of economic revitalization: the investment quota was lowered, the production capacity reduced, infrastructure decayed, buildings deteriorated, ecological exploitation occurred to an unprecedented degree. The changing terms of trade within the Soviet bloc to the advantage of the raw material supplier (the Soviet Union), and the deficit caused by the COMECON exchange of goods were compensated for by investment and consumer goods imports from the West, financed by credit. The debt spiral set in motion by such policies had been an object of concern and discussion at the highest levels of the SED since 1975, but the policy had not been changed despite the increasing severity of the crisis.³⁴

Transfer payments from the Federal Republic, especially the billion-mark loans in 1983 and 1984, had helped to cover the decreasing economic support from the Soviet Union (reduction in the delivery of crude oil beginning in 1982, or delivery for Western currency) and other shortages, and maintain the GDR's credit ratings in international financial markets. These payments, however, could not help the GDR master the heightening foreign and domestic economic crises that began in the mid-1980s. The German-German sense of a common bond sharpened, strengthened by "humanitarian gestures" like expanding travel opportunities for GDR citizens. This in turn resulted in further instability.

The proclaimed "unity of economic and social policy" changed the nature of the legitimacy of the party. The universalistic, humanistic utopia of the communist society as an association of free and equal individuals was reduced, via the technocratic promises of reform of the New Economic System, to a profane socialism based on consumption as the daily task.³⁵ The idea of socialism merged with the fulfillment of welfare-state goals, with the result that the revocation or even the failure of the latter would have to be considered the end of socialism itself. The unity of economic and social policy, as then Central Committee Secretary for Security Issues Egon Krenz told a small group of Politburo members in May 1989, "has to be

carried forward, because this *is* after all socialism in the GDR."³⁶ Consequently, the innovative development of alternatives was precluded at any level of government. Years of crisis management wore out the economic cadre and led to deep distress within the party bureaucracy in the second half of the 1980s.

All domestic and foreign political symptoms of the crisis intensified in the first half of 1989. On 16 May 1989, Gerhard Schürer, the head of the GDR State Planning Commission, told a small circle of SED leaders that the GDR's debt to the West was increasing by 500 million Valutamarks (VM)³⁷ a month, and that, if things continued along these lines, the GDR would be insolvent by 1991. The spending reductions that had already been introduced had to be complemented "by a number of economic measures related to consumption."³⁸ But fearing political repercussions, the Politburo did not dare lower the population's standard of living just five months before the 40th anniversary of the GDR.

At the Bucharest summit of the Warsaw Pact in July 1989, the Soviet Union officially revoked the "Brezhnev Doctrine" of limited sovereignty for the alliance's members. Their future relations were to be developed, as the concluding document put it, "on the basis of equality, independence and the right of each country to arrive at its own political position, strategy, and tactics without interference from an outside party."³⁹ The Soviet guarantee of existence for the communist governments was thereby placed in question—Moscow's allies could no longer count on military support in the event of internal unrest. After the communist parties in Poland and Hungary started down the path of democratic reforms designed to construct multi-party democracies, the SED was confronted with the necessity of legitimizing its rule to its "people" on its own.

After learning from media reports that the barbed wire along the Hungarian-Austrian border was being removed in early May 1989, growing numbers of GDR citizens, above all youth, began to travel to Hungary in the beginning of the summer vacation period in the hope of fleeing across the Hungarian-Austrian border to the Federal Republic. East Germans seeking to leave the GDR occupied the West German embassies in Prague and Budapest, as well as the FRG's permanent representation in East Berlin.

Effective 12 June 1989, Hungary agreed to abide by the Geneva Convention on Refugees. Three months later the Hungarian government decided to give priority to its international agreements and treaties over solidarity with the GDR. Following a secret agreement with Bonn, they opened the border to Austria for GDR citizens on 10 September. In return, the Federal Republic gave Hungary credit in the amount of DM 500 million and promised to make up the losses that Hungary might suffer from retaliatory measures by the GDR.⁴⁰ Tens of thousands of East Germans traveled to the Federal Republic via Austria in the days and weeks that followed. The GDR experienced its largest wave of departures since the construction of the

Berlin Wall in 1961.

This mass exodus demonstrated the weakness of the SED leadership on this issue and undermined the regime's authority in an unprecedented manner. The exodus was a necessary precondition for the founding of new opposition groups, and ultimately, the mass demonstrations. The dual movement of mass exodus and mass protest started the process of collapse in the GDR.

The SED leadership's options were increasingly reduced to the alternatives of either introducing—with uncertain results—political reforms, or constructing a “second Wall” between the GDR and its socialist neighbors Czechoslovakia and Poland and putting down the demonstrations by force.⁴¹ Closing the border to the ČSSR on 3 October 1989 to those without visas, the use of violence against demonstrators before and after the state celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of the GDR on 7 October, and the preparations for forcibly preventing the Monday demonstration in Leipzig on 9 October pointed to the leadership's preference for the second alternative. But in the end, too many people took to the streets, and the heavily armed forces of the state capitulated to the 70,000 peaceful demonstrators.⁴² After 9 October, the strategy of employing violence moved from the forefront to the background, although the possibility of announcing a state of martial law remained an unspoken option among members of the Politburo. Hence, the non-violent resolution of the crisis was not a matter of course in the aftermath of 9 October.

The essential structures of the system itself exacerbated the crisis once cracks had occurred. The party-state was guided, oriented and controlled from above, not integrated from below. The Party's mass organizations reached deep into society and functioned as information-gathering and early-warning systems for the party leadership, but did not possess their own decision-making capacity, let alone a capacity for addressing conflict or solving disputes. The state-controlled economy transformed every economic challenge into a challenge to the state, just as the union between Party and State transformed every criticism into a criticism of the Party. The centralized and personalized decision-making structure directed criticism via the local and district representatives to the top of the system: the Politburo and the Central Committee. The protests by the population, as well as the mood of party members, put the Party and State leadership for the first time in the history of the GDR under such enormous pressure that it had to respond directly through far-reaching personnel changes. The palace revolution against Erich Honecker on 17 October and the dismissal of Günter Mittag and Joachim Herrmann as SED Central Committee Secretaries of Economics and Agitation and Propaganda, respectively, was followed by the 7 November resignation of the Council of Ministers and the 8 November resignation of the entire Politburo.

The resignations not only compounded the Party's

loss of authority in the eyes of the population, but also increased the instability of the centralized leadership structure, since the nomenclature system was based on ties of personal loyalty and carefully developed cooptation rules. Gaining stability and coherence among the leadership would have taken much more time (as the relatively calculated and limited replacement of Honecker's predecessor Walter Ulbricht in 1971 had shown) than the leadership had to regain control under the circumstances.

Although Honecker had succeeded in restabilizing the power of the Party when he took power in 1971, his fall in autumn 1989 had the opposite effect. The change at the top of the party at a time when it had lost control of the masses only accelerated the decay of power. SED members lost their faith in the ability of the party leadership to control the situation; the loss of authority by the SED leadership over the party members was yet another factor in the crisis, adding to the problems that resulted from its loss of authority over the population.

It was not only short-term foreign and domestic political pressures that led to restraints on the unconditional use of police and military force; economic realities in particular argued against the compatibility of a hard-line approach and the demands of long-term stabilization.

By the end of October 1989, the GDR's debt had increased to the point that the country's leading economists considered drastic changes in the economic and social policy necessary, accompanied by a reduction in the standard of living by 25 to 30 percent. However, out of fear of a further loss of power, they considered such an austerity policy impossible. Violent repression of the protests would have ruined the SED's last resort, suggested by the economists in the Politburo on 31 October 1989. They argued that in order to guarantee the solvency of the state, it was absolutely necessary “to negotiate with the FRG government about financial assistance in the measure of two to three billion VM beyond the current limits.”⁴³ While that would increase the debt, it would win time and avoid a possible diktat by the International Monetary Fund. In order to make West Germany's conservative-liberal government more amenable to an increase in the GDR's line of credit, the FRG should be told, albeit expressly ruling out any idea of reunification and the creation of a confederation, “that through this and other programs of economic and scientific-technical cooperation between the FRG and the GDR, conditions could be created even in this century which would make the border between the two German states, as it exists now, superfluous.”⁴⁴

If it had been the original intention of Schürer and his co-authors to open discussion of a possible confederation in light of the threatening bankruptcy, their effort was carefully disguised. Out of consideration for those Politburo members whose primary orientation was toward the Soviet Union, Krenz had pushed Schürer to exclude

any reference to reunification or confederation from the draft, to avoid a discussion of these issues. In the version adopted by the Politburo, the passage in the draft that “put the currently existing form of the border” on the table was eliminated.⁴⁵ The editing alone could not eliminate the fact that the leading economists had suggested using the Wall as a bargaining chip with the FRG government for new loans, as a final resort to guarantee the GDR’s political and economic survival.

Justifying his draft in the Politburo, planning chief Gerhard Schürer explicitly emphasized his idea of trading the Wall for money: “On the last page, we go as far as to address high politics—the form of the state border. We want to make it clear how far considerations should reach. These suggestions should bring to your attention that we could now extract economic advantages from the FRG for such ideas.” He continued, warning that “if the demands are made first from the streets or even from the factories, it would once again eliminate the possibility of us taking the initiative.”⁴⁶

Schürer’s fears have to be seen against the background of the growing protest movement against the SED which, by the end of October, had swept the entire country, including small and middle-sized cities. The MfS had registered a total of 140,000 participants in 24 demonstrations in the week of 16–22 October; the following week, 540,000 people participated in 145 demonstrations, and from 30 October to 4 November, some 1,400,000 people marched in 210 demonstrations. Their main demands were free elections, recognition of opposition groups, and freedom to travel. In addition, the number of applications to leave the GDR increased by 1,000 per week, reaching a total of 188,180 by 29 October.⁴⁷

The issue of travel and permanent exit connected the GDR’s foreign, domestic, and economic problems at the beginning of November. When he took over power on 18 October 1989, SED General Secretary Egon Krenz had promised expanded travel opportunities; a new law was to take effect in December. But the Ministry for State Security dragged its feet on the issue, since it feared that hundreds of thousands would leave the GDR. The State Planning Commission raised the objection that no funds were available to provide those traveling with foreign currency.

One day after the Politburo discussion of the debt crisis, on 1 November, Egon Krenz reported in Moscow on the desolate situation in the GDR to USSR General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.⁴⁸ But Gorbachev made it clear to Krenz that he could not count on economic help from Moscow, due to the Soviet Union’s own economic crisis. Gorbachev’s advice was essentially that the government had to tell its already dissatisfied populace, which was leaving by the tens of thousands, in as positive a manner as possible that it had been living beyond its means and had to adjust its expectations to a more modest level. If Krenz did not want to accept this logic, with its uncalculable results for the political stability of the GDR,

then his only remaining option was to follow the economists’ recommendation and discreetly attempt to expand German-German cooperation as quickly as possible.

Hence Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, who had been responsible for secret negotiations with the FRG for years, was sent to Bonn on 6 November with the assignment of negotiating informally with CDU Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble and Minister of the Chancellery Rudolf Seiters a comprehensive expansion of German-German relations. The central issue in the negotiations was the GDR’s hope for loans totaling DM 12–13 billion. The most pressing request Schalck made was that the FRG government participate, in the short-term run, in the financing of the tourist traffic expected with the adoption of the travel law. The aid requested amounted to DM 3.8 billion, based on estimates of DM 300 for some 12.5 million tourists per year.⁴⁹

The FRG government displayed a willingness to discuss the issues, but made increased economic cooperation contingent upon political conditions. Seiters told Schalck in confidence on 7 November that if the SED relinquished its monopoly of power, allowed independent parties, and guaranteed free elections,⁵⁰ Chancellor Helmut Kohl was prepared, as he announced the next day during a *Bundestag* debate on the state of the nation, “to speak about a completely new dimension of our economic assistance.”⁵¹ Due to the Chancellor’s forthcoming state visit to Poland, the SED’s negotiation channels in Bonn were blocked until 14 November.

Thus the SED leadership was ahead of its people in its secret orientation toward the Federal Republic. The chants of “we are one people” and “Germany, united fatherland” would not dominate the demonstrations until the second half of November. The Party’s goal was admittedly the opposite of that of protesters: the SED leadership intended to stabilize its rule with Bonn’s help, while the demonstrators sought to eliminate the SED state and bring about German unity under democratic conditions.

On 6 November, the SED leadership published the promised draft travel law. Fearing a “hemorrhaging of the GDR,” the party and ministerial bureaucracy limited the total travel time to thirty days a year. The draft also provided for denial clauses that were not clearly defined, and therefore left plenty of room for arbitrary decisions by the authorities. The announcement that those traveling would only be given DM 15 once a year in exchange for GDR marks 15 demonstrated the GDR’s chronic shortage of Western currency and proved to be the straw that broke the camel’s back. Instead of reducing the political pressure, the draft legislation spurred even more criticism during the large demonstrations taking place that same day in a number of cities. At first, the demonstrators chanted sarcastically “Around the world in thirty days—without money,” and then demanded “Visa free to Shanghai,”⁵² “We don’t need laws, the Wall must go,” and, ultimately, “The SED has to go!”

As early as 1 November, the threat of strikes in southern districts had forced the SED to remove the ban on travel to the ČSSR. The Prague embassy of the Federal Republic immediately filled with a new crowd of GDR citizens eager to depart for West Germany. Under pressure from the ČSSR, the SED leadership decided to allow its citizens to travel to the FRG via the ČSSR as of 4 November. With this move, the Wall was cracked open not only via the detour through Hungary, but also through its direct neighbor, the ČSSR. Within the first few days, fifty thousand GDR citizens used this path to leave the country. The ČSSR objected strenuously to the mass migration through its country, and gave the SED the ultimatum to solve its own problems!

A majority of the Politburo on the morning of 7 November still considered immediate implementation of the entire travel law inappropriate, given, for one thing, the ongoing negotiations with the FRG about financial assistance. As a result, the ministerial bureaucracy was given the task of drafting a bill for the early promulgation of that part of the travel law dealing with permanent exit.⁵³ Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer reported these limited plans to the Soviet ambassador, Vyacheslav Kochemasov, on the same day, and asked for Soviet approval.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the four ministerial bureaucrats' (officers from the MfS and the Interior Ministry) charged with redrafting the bill felt that their assignment had not been thoroughly thought through. After all, doing what they had been charged to do, these officials argued, would privilege those who were seeking permanent exit as opposed to those who were only interested in short visits and who wanted to return to the GDR. Thus it would have forced everybody to apply for permanent exit. Acting out of loyalty to the government and a desire to uphold the state, the officers revised the draft to fit what they perceived as the needs of the situation, expanding the regulation of shorter visits to the West. These changes, however, went beyond the plans that had been presented to the Soviet Union for approval just two days earlier.

At no time did the officers intend to grant complete freedom to travel as further clauses in the draft made clear. Private trips had to be applied for, as had been the case before, and only those who possessed a passport for travel could get a visa. Only four million GDR citizens had passports; all others, it was calculated, would have to apply for a passport first and then would have to wait at least another four weeks for a visa. These regulations thus effectively blocked the immediate departure of the majority of GDR citizens. The officers decided to place a media ban on the release of the information until 4 a.m. on 10 November, hoping that a release of the information by the GDR media at this early hour would not attract as much public attention. The local offices of the Interior Ministry and MfS and the border patrols were to be instructed about the new regulations and had until that morning to prepare for the mass exodus.

The officers' draft, including the prepared press

release, was presented to the Security Department of the Central Committee and the ministries participating—the MfS, the Interior Ministry and the Foreign Ministry—for approval around mid-day. In the course of the Central Committee meeting (which had begun the day before), or to be more exact, during a “smoking break,” several members of the Politburo approved the draft. The draft was then submitted to the Council of Ministers in a “fast track procedure” (*Umlaufverfahren*), which was designed to guarantee a quick decision—by 6:00 p.m.⁵⁵

One copy of the draft went to Egon Krenz. Around 4:00 p.m., he read the proposed regulation to 216 Central Committee members and added, “No matter what we do in this situation, we’ll be making the wrong move.”⁵⁶ The Central Committee showed approval for the measure nonetheless. At this point, the travel regulation was nothing more than a “proposal,” as Krenz emphasized, or a draft. The Council of Ministers had not yet made a formal decision. Krenz, however, spontaneously told the government spokesman to release the news “immediately,” thereby canceling the gag order in passing.

This decision could have been corrected since government spokesman Wolfgang Meyer had been informed about the blackout and its background. But Krenz's next decision could not be reversed. He handed the draft and the press release to Politburo member Günter Schabowski, who was serving as party spokesman on that day, and told him to release the information during an international press conference scheduled for 6 p.m. that evening. This interference by the Party in the government's procedures led to the collapse of all of the MfS and the Interior Ministry careful preparations for the new travel regulations.

Without checking, Schabowski added the draft for the Council of Ministers to his papers. He had not been present when the Politburo confirmed the draft travel regulation that afternoon, nor had he been present when Krenz read the travel draft to the Central Committee. He therefore was not familiar at all with the text. Around 7 p.m., during the press conference, carried live by GDR television, Schabowski announced the new travel regulations. It was possible to apply for permanent exit and private travel to the West “without presenting [the heretofore necessary] requirements,” and GDR officials would issue approval certificates “on short notice.”

Journalists asked when the regulations would go into effect. Schabowski appeared a bit lost, since “this issue had never been discussed with me before,” as he later said. He scratched his head and glanced at the announcement again, his eyes not catching the final sentence that stated that the press release should be made public no earlier than 10 November. Rather, he noticed the words “immediately,” and “without delay” at the beginning of the document. Thus, he responded concisely: “Immediately, without delay!”⁵⁷

Tom Brokaw, anchorman for the American television

station NBC, who did not have any advance knowledge of the announcement,⁵⁸ succeeded in organizing an exclusive interview with Schabowski immediately after the press conference.⁵⁹ Brokaw believed that the broken phrases that the interpreter cobbled into English meant that the border would be opened. In the second floor of the press center, he now hoped to extract a clear, unmistakable statement from Schabowski. Hence Brokaw and his team of reporters were even more surprised at Schabowski's improvised and uncertain answers, which gave the interview a surrealistic atmosphere.⁶⁰ According to Brokaw and his colleague Marc Kusnetz, Schabowski asked his assistant to show him the text once more in the course of the conversation:⁶¹

Brokaw: "Mr. Schabowski, do I understand correctly? Citizens of the GDR can leave through any checkpoint that they choose for personal reasons. They no longer have to go through a third country?"

Schabowski: "They are not further forced to leave GDR by transit through another country."

Brokaw: "It is possible for them to go through the Wall at some point?"

Schabowski: "It is possible for them to go through the border."

Brokaw: "Freedom to travel?"

Schabowski: "Yes. Of course. It is not [a] question of tourism. It is a permission to leave GDR."⁶²

In spite of the information gleaned from consulting his "notes" again, Schabowski's confusion could not have been greater. On one hand, he confirmed that the new regulations meant the freedom to travel; on the other hand, he emphasized in the next sentence that it was not a matter of tourism, but the ability to leave the GDR, meaning permanent exit. "When I sat down with him for an interview, he was still learning about the policy," Brokaw noted before airing the interview.⁶³

A short time after his exclusive interview, Brokaw stood in front of the Berlin Wall at the Brandenburg Gate. NBC had opened a direct line to New York the day before, and Brokaw reported live to America from the historic stage that was, at that point, nearly empty. "Tom Brokaw at the Berlin Wall. This is a historic night. The East German government has just declared that East German citizens will be able to cross the Wall from tomorrow morning forward—without restrictions."⁶⁴ Brokaw had boiled down Schabowski's convoluted answers to the shortest possible—and correct—statement. He had grasped correctly when the new regulation would come into effect ("as of tomorrow morning"), and left open the question whether the right to cross the border included the right to return to the GDR.

The German public was not as correctly informed as the American one. Schabowski's announcement was the lead story in both the East and West German nightly news broadcasts that aired after the press conference, between 7 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Western press services—including West

German television—interpreted the contradiction-laden statements from Schabowski to mean an immediate "opening of the border." The Associated Press headline from 7:05 p.m. read "GDR opens borders," and the German Press Agency released the "sensational information" at 7:41 p.m. that "the GDR border is open." The climax of these instances of reporting leading events was the late news from the West German public station First German Television (ADR). Anchorman Hanns Joachim Friedrichs announced that "the gates in the Berlin Wall stand wide open," while a live shot immediately following the announcement showed the still-closed border, a picture that was quickly declared an exception. The media suggested to an audience of millions in East and West a reality which had yet to come about. The distribution of this false image of reality contributed significantly to transforming the announced events into reality. It was the television reports in particular that mobilized ever greater numbers of Berliners to go to the border crossings.

Without any information on the new policy or orders from the military leadership, the GDR border patrols stationed at the Berlin border crossings faced growing crowds that wanted to test the alleged immediate freedom to travel. Initial inquiries by the border patrols to their superiors did not yield any results, since during the evening only deputies, or deputies of deputies, were available. They, in turn, could not reach their superiors because the meeting of the Central Committee had been extended to 8:45 p.m. without notice. The highest echelons of the party and the government were therefore unaware of the press conference, the media reaction it had engendered, and the gathering storm on the border crossings.

The crowds were the heaviest at the Bornholmer Strasse crossing, located in Berlin's densely populated Prenzlauer Berg district. At first, the border guards reacted by telling the gathering crowds to wait until tomorrow. To relieve some of the pressure, they allowed certain individuals to exit, but they placed an "invalid" stamp in their identification cards. Without knowing it, the first East Berliners who crossed Bornholmer Bridge into West Berlin had been deprived of their citizenship by this maneuver to "let off steam."

When the Central Committee meeting finally ended and the higher levels of the party hierarchy were available to formally make decisions, they were shocked by the news. But they had already missed the time for corrective action. The room for maneuvers that would not destroy the plans for the coming days had been reduced to a minimum. The dynamic of the events, constantly accelerated by the live reports of the Western media, overtook the decision-making process. In contrast, the exchange of information between the SED leadership, the MfS, Interior and Defense ministries moved like a merry-go-round; the decisions that were ultimately made were based on information that no longer was up-to-date.

The maneuver "to let off steam," rather than reducing the pressure at the border crossings, had raised it to the

boiling point instead. Passport controllers and border soldiers at the Bornholmer Strasse crossing, fearing for their lives, made the decision on their own to cease all controls at 11:30 p.m. “We’re opening the floodgates now!” announced the chief officer of passport control, and the barriers were raised. The border guards gave way to the pressure from the crowds until midnight at most of the border crossings in the inner city, allowing East Berliners to cross without papers. The same thing happened until 1:00 a.m. at the border control points around Berlin and on other parts of the German-German border. Thousands of Berliners crossed the fortifications and the Wall at the Brandenburg Gate, and then strolled for several hours around Pariser Platz. Dances of joy erupted along the Wall; the symbol of the division of Germany had fallen.

The governing apparatus in East Berlin, Bonn, and in the capital cities of the Four Powers were caught by surprise. In a matter of hours, the East Germans had overpowered the armed forces of the GDR and outmaneuvered the cleverest border regime system in the world. US President George Bush managed to utter in a first reaction that he was “very pleased,” but appeared pensive and reserved.⁶⁵ British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spoke of a “victory for freedom,” but was very concerned about a possible destabilization of Gorbachev’s position and the prospects for German reunification.⁶⁶ French President François Mitterrand described the fall of the Wall as a “joyous event” and “progress for freedom in Europe.”⁶⁷ Internally, however, he reacted with horror. Gorbachev could never accept this development, he believed; the Germans were risking a world war without realizing it.⁶⁸ Chancellor Helmut Kohl learned of the events in Berlin during his state visit to Poland. Cut off from his most important information channels, the chancellor felt “like [he was] on another planet” in Warsaw.⁶⁹ He interrupted his visit the next day and returned to Bonn via Berlin. The politicians in the Western capitals looked to Moscow with anticipation: How would the Soviet Union react?

While the fall of the Wall occurred during prime time television in the United States, because of the time difference, Moscow was at a disadvantage. It was two hours later there than in Berlin. When the border crossings were “flooded” and East Germans were dancing on the Wall, the Soviet leadership was sound asleep. Mikhail Gorbachev reported that “I learned what had happened during the night of 9 November on the morning of 10 November from a report from the ambassador. I asked him what the GDR leadership had done, and he started to explain the situation and told me about Schabowski’s press conference. He informed me that they had opened all border crossings along the Wall. I told him that they had taken the proper action, and asked that he inform them of that.”⁷⁰

The CPSU Politburo met a few hours later. As then Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, remembered:

“Before the meeting, a phone conversation took place between Mikhail Gorbachev and myself. We had made contact as usual, whenever we had to discuss such important issues [...] We spoke about different options, and we only rejected one possibility from the beginning, that of the use of force [...] The events were the result of a mass movement that could not be held back by any government.”⁷¹ While the question of whether to recreate the former *status quo* was not debated by the high-level politicians, such discussions occurred in the military. But, Shevardnadze said, “the Soviet Army was very disciplined and would not have done anything without a specific order. If we had used force to close the Wall, we would have started a spiral of violence that would have started World War III.” Gorbachev, according to Shevardnadze, therefore strongly recommended to the East German leadership that “they not shed blood under any circumstances.”⁷²

Since military intervention was not to be part of the equation, the Soviets’ political room for maneuver in reaction to the fall of the Wall was also very limited. Gorbachev’s conclusion was “that politics must now be guided by the people’s will.”⁷³ The conclusion he drew from the situation was “We had to adapt policies to the situation at hand.”⁷⁴ Adapting policies to the situation at hand first required an analysis and definition of the situation. To criticize the obvious incompetence of the SED leadership at this point, or to expose Krenz as a “fool” or a “dead man on vacation” in this situation, as Central Committee staffer Nikolai Portugalov later did,⁷⁵ would only weaken the GDR further and increase the Soviet Union’s problems. Therefore, according to Portugalov, Gorbachev gave orders to back Krenz.⁷⁶ Foreign Minister Shevardnadze explained to the press that the Soviet Union viewed the “events in the GDR entirely as an affair of the new leadership and its people, and wished them much success.” He praised the “border and travel regulations” as a “correct, clever, and wise decision.”⁷⁷

In the late afternoon and evening, Gorbachev sent verbal messages to Chancellor Kohl as well as François Mitterrand, Margaret Thatcher, and George Bush. The message to Kohl, passed from the Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Yuli Kvisinski, to Horst Teltschik, the advisor to the chancellor, reached the chancellor during a rally in West Berlin.⁷⁸ Gorbachev asked the chancellor “in the spirit of openness and realism” to take “the necessary and pressing measures to assure that a complication and destabilization of the situation is not permitted.”⁷⁹

With reference to what he considered the “correct and far-reaching decision of the new GDR leadership,” Gorbachev immediately informed Bush, Mitterrand and Thatcher about his message to Kohl. He expressed his concern about a possible “destabilization of the situation not only in the center of Europe but also beyond” if the “postwar realities, meaning the existence of two German states” were called into question. Gorbachev added that the Soviet ambassador in East Berlin had been told to make

contact with the representatives of the three Western Powers in West Berlin in order to work together to assure that “the events do not take an undesirable path.”⁸⁰

Even during the rally in Berlin, Teitschik and Kohl puzzled over whether Gorbachev’s message was “a request based on concern” about renewed spontaneous breakthroughs in the Wall or rather “a veiled threat.”⁸¹ Upon his return to the chancellor in Bonn, Teitschik received a call from Brent Scowcroft around midnight. The National Security Advisor to the US President informed him about the verbal message from Gorbachev to Bush. For Teitschik, the interesting part of the message was Scowcroft’s confidential notification “that Gorbachev had ordered the SED leadership to guarantee a ‘peaceful transition’ in the GDR.”⁸² This news solved the puzzle for the chancellor and his advisor: “There would not be a repetition of 17 June [1953]. Gorbachev’s message, which he also passed on to George Bush, was the request to work together to assure that politics did not allow events to spin out of control.”⁸³

The restrained reaction of President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker sent the clear message to Moscow that US foreign policy welcomed the changes in East and Central Europe, but was not hoping for instability or to gain advantage at Soviet expense.⁸⁴

After conversations with Thatcher, Bush, Krenz, and Mitterrand,⁸⁵ Kohl called the Soviet party chief midday on 11 November. He assured Gorbachev that he “rejected any form of radicalization and [...] did not wish to see any destabilization of the situation in the GDR.” Gorbachev forcefully asked the chancellor to give the reforms in the GDR time to develop. “Under no circumstances,” according to Gorbachev, “should the developments be forced in an unforeseen direction, turned toward chaos [...] And I hope, that you will use your authority, your political clout, and your influence to keep others in line, as the time and its demands require.”⁸⁶ Kohl and Teitschik both breathed a sigh of relief after this call. Teitschik wrote in his journal: “No threat, no warning, just the request to be circumspect. Now I am absolutely sure that there will not be a violent return to the *status quo ante*.”⁸⁷

The early hopes of the SED leaders to regain control of the Wall and restore order the next day or the day after were not fulfilled. The crowds in Berlin and at the German-German border over the weekend were huge. For reasons unknown, elite units of the GDR army were still placed on higher alert at midday on 10 November, and the entire MfS was called on duty until further notice—but neither were deployed. The fall of the Wall proved to be irreversible.

The historical reconstruction of the political decisions and actions that led to the fall of the Wall eliminates explanations that portray the event as a planned action by the SED leadership, a masterminded plot to oust the party and the state leadership, or even as the “opus magnum” of the MfS.

The fall of the Wall can be analyzed as a classic case of an unintentional result of social action, a concept

developed by Robert Merton.⁸⁸ In particular, Merton’s category of a self-fulfilling prophecy can be applied to the circumstances surrounding the fall of the Wall.⁸⁹ Merton made use of the well-known “Thomas theory:” “When people define situations as real, they become real in their consequences.” People do not react only to the objective aspects of a situation, Merton explains, “but also, and often primarily, they react to the meaning that the situation has for them.” Once they had given a situation a meaning, he continued, it determined “their subsequent actions, and some results of these actions.”⁹⁰

On the evening of 9 November, it was the media that decisively influenced the “definition of the situation” as a result of the uncoordinated decisions by the SED leaders and the dissynchronization of the leadership structures. The restrictive details of the planned travel regulations were not covered up by the press agencies and the television reports, but were very quickly pushed into the background by the far-reaching and heavily symbolic interpretations.

The interpretations publicized by the Western media (“GDR opens border”), incorrect assumptions (“The border is open”), and “false” images of reality (“The gates of the Wall stand wide open!”) ultimately caused the action that allowed the assumed event and the “false” image of reality to become fact. Those television viewers who actually had only wanted to be a part of the event and therefore had hurried to the border crossings and the Brandenburg Gate actually brought about the event they thought had already happened. A fiction spread by the media took hold of the masses and thereby became reality.

The prerequisite for that occurrence was admittedly that “real existing” reality, meaning the political and military leadership of the GDR, border soldiers, passport controllers, and the people’s police did not stand in the way of these actions. The most important condition for the peaceful outcome of the storming of the Wall was, again, that the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev—after the democratic upheavals in Poland and Hungary—kept the 350,000 Soviet soldiers in the GDR in their barracks and accepted the fall of the Wall without military intervention. It is certain that they did not anticipate that the “pearl of the Soviet empire” would be lost in less than a year.

The fall of the Wall, however, created a completely new situation. With the end of the forced detention provided by the Wall, the SED government lost control of “its” citizens over night. The lack of legitimacy became obvious and led to the dissolution of the SED state. Hans Modrow, newly elected chairman of the Council of Ministers, was deprived of his most important negotiating tool with the FRG government for the billion-mark loans needed to stabilize the GDR’s economy—the people had destroyed the last real collateral in the GDR by breaking through the Wall.⁹¹ The people nullified Modrow’s idea of at least allowing free elections and relinquishing the party’s leadership claim in the GDR constitution in return for emergency loans from the FRG government. The mass demonstrations against the

government continued during the second half of November and forced these concessions even before the negotiations with Bonn could be completed.

Even before the fall of the Wall, the choruses of “Germany—united fatherland” were heard at demonstrations, but they were submerged in the volume of slogans. After 9 November, the choruses changed quickly: instead of “We are *the* people,” demonstrators chanted “We are *one* people.” Banners with “Germany—united fatherland,” as well as black-red-golden flags without the GDR emblem, were soon the prevalent image of demonstrations throughout the country. Leaders of citizens’ movements, authors, artists, and intellectuals, who had until then considered themselves the spokespersons and protectors of the demonstrators, distanced themselves from these new slogans. Their attempts to play on anxieties about a sell-out of “our material and moral values” and to propagate the GDR’s independence from the FRG as a “socialist alternative” to the Federal Republic, however, failed,⁹² and ended with a marginalization of the civil rights movement’s *avant garde*.

Movement into the FRG again rose dramatically: more than 120,000 people left the GDR from 10 November to the end of 1989; in all of 1989, 343,854 left; in January 1990, 73,729 left; in February, 63,893 left, and in March, the total was 46,241. Under the continued pressure of the demonstrations and increasingly from the SED membership, the central party structures disintegrated—the Politburo, Central Committee Secretariat, and the Central Committee dissolved themselves. The Party’s ability to direct the mass organizations also collapsed, as did the cadre nomenclature system. Without the guiding central point of the Party, the state government structures crumbled.

After the fall of the Wall and the end of the SED, which later reconstituted itself as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the Soviet Union was the last guarantee for the GDR’s existence as a state. At first, the Soviet leadership energetically opposed all tendencies toward unification by both German states. But the USSR’s internal problems—increasing nationality conflicts, severe economic and supply crises, threatening insolvency to the West, and the signs of deterioration of the Warsaw Pact—and the unstoppable deterioration of the SED’s power accelerated the recognition in January 1990 that the GDR could no longer be saved.⁹³ Gorbachev agreed to unification in principle with Modrow, Baker, and, on 10 February, finally, with Kohl. The first free parliamentary elections on 18 March 1990, from which the CDU-lead “Alliance for Germany” emerged as the strongest force with 48.1% of the vote, finally presented an unambiguous statement by the East Germans in support of a rapid path to a currency, economic, and social union⁹⁴ and to German unity.

The self-dissolution of the SED state after the collapse of the ruling system marked the German special path (*Sonderweg*) to the end of communist one-party rule in

Central and Eastern Europe. The reference to the German nation-state, however, was “not a new expression of a nationalistic consciousness,” as Rainer Lepsius has correctly pointed out. Rather, the nation-state was “the existing frame of reference,”⁹⁵ which had retained its normative claim to validity throughout the years of the division of Germany.



DOCUMENT No. 1
Memorandum of Conversation Between
Egon Krenz, Secretary General of the
Socialist Unity Party (SED),
and Mikhail S. Gorbachev,
Secretary General of the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU),
1 November 1989

Top Secret

To all members and candidates of the Politburo
 [1 December 1989]
 signed Egon Krenz

Berlin, 1 November 1989

After the extremely friendly welcome, Comrade Egon Krenz pointed out that he had read in *Pravda* about the slogans by the CC CPSU on the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of the October Revolution. He had been touched in particular by the slogan “Greetings to October, greetings to the socialist countries”.

Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev expressed his pleasure about the fact that Comrade Krenz had come to Moscow even before the October [Revolution] festivities. This symbolized that both parties and countries were striving to implement the ideals of the October Revolution.

He sincerely welcomed Comrade Krenz to Moscow on behalf of all comrades of the Politburo of the CC CPSU and of the leadership of the Soviet Union as well as in his own name. Despite an extremely tight schedule, they had tried to make arrangements in order to free up this day for extensive conversations with Comrade Krenz. He [Gorbachev] was hoping in particular for vivid information on developments in the GDR. Although information about them had come in, the report by Comrade Krenz would be of extraordinary importance for him. Even the most extensive information needed to be evaluated thoroughly, and who could do this more precisely than the comrades from the GDR?

Presently, the entire world was witnessing that the SED had embarked on a course of fast changes. But the events were moving very fast as well, and one should not

fall behind. This had been the long-standing experience of the Soviet Union. Comrade Gorbachev pointed out that he had already said in Berlin [on 7 October 1989] that one must not miss the time for changes. A dialogue with society was necessary. There was no other way for a leading party to act. On the one hand, it [the Party] had to take the time to analyze the situation thoroughly and work out its political orientation. On the other hand, life was developing with its own dynamism, and one had to prevent a knot of problems from being created that could not be sorted out.

Comrade Gorbachev recommended not to be deterred by the complicated problems. From his own experience he knew that comrades were at times depressed because even after several years of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union there were still such great problems to resolve. He then always told them that the Party itself had wanted *perestroika*. It had involved the mass of people in politics. If now some processes were not running as expected, if there were stormy and emotionally charged arguments, then one would had to cope with that, too, and not become afraid of one's own people.

He did not mean to say that *perestroika* had been fully achieved in the Soviet Union. The horse was saddled but the ride was not over. One could still be thrown off. On the other hand, much experience had already been gained, which had great significance. Now the phase of intensified work for the continuation of *perestroika* was beginning in the Soviet Union.

The people and the Party in the GDR were presently also facing profound changes. He wished Comrade Krenz success for this. The Soviet Union would, of course, stand at the side of the comrades in the GDR in this process. This had never been in question, not even as problems emerged which should actually have been discussed openly. There had never been any doubt for the Soviet Union and the CPSU that the German Democratic Republic was its closest friend and ally. Second to the people of the GDR, the Soviet people were probably the one wishing the GDR the most success in its endeavor. In this vein he wished to welcome Comrade Krenz to his visit in Moscow.

Comrade Egon Krenz expressed his thanks for the welcome and communicated cordial greetings from the comrades of the Politburo of the CC SED. He appreciated that Comrade Gorbachev had so quickly found time for this talk. He also thanked him for his visit to Berlin on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the GDR, and in particular for his conversation with the entire Politburo of the CC SED, which had moved ahead many things. This applied above all to the remark that one cannot be late [in adapting to changes], otherwise one will be punished by life [*daß man nicht zu spät kommen darf, sonst werde man vom Leben bestraft werden*].

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that he had actually been speaking about himself.

Comrade Krenz explained that this remark by Comrade Gorbachev and his entire appearance had met great

resonance within the Politburo. It had initiated the process of discussing the future policy of the Party.

The SED could state rightfully that it had made great strides since its last party convention. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the GDR, one could draw the balance that a lot of good and lasting things had been done for the people. One could also build upon a good foundation.

The population, however, resented the Party for having the mass media in particular create a world of illusion that did not coincide with the practical experience of the people and their everyday life. That caused a break of confidence between Party and people. This was actually the worst thing that could happen to a party.

Some say that the cause for this is to be found in the fact that the party leadership misjudged the domestic political situation in the last three months. It proved to be speechless when so many people left the GDR. This was a tough accusation. In addition, besides political mistakes, important psychological mistakes were also made in this difficult situation: In the newspapers it was stated that we did not weep any tears after these people left. This deeply hurt the feelings of many mothers and fathers, relatives, friends and comrades of these people whose leaving caused them great pains.

Despite these facts the Politburo of the CC of the SED agreed that the political crisis in which the GDR currently found itself had not just begun this summer. Many problems had been accumulating for a long time.

Today one can say that the main reason [for this situation] was the mistaken approach of the XI SED Party Congress, which was not based on a realistic estimate of the situation. The solution of economic questions was derived from subjective opinions that failed to reflect the opinions prevalent in the Party and the population. Incorrect conclusions were drawn from important international developments—in the Soviet Union, in other socialist countries—as well as from the domestic developments in the GDR.

Comrade Krenz asked not to be misunderstood; if one had an ally and wanted to go through thick and thin with him, one could not just state this friendship in declarations and communiqués and one should not distance oneself when it came to the solution of concrete economic and other questions. But one had to stand together as friends and solve the emerging problems together.

He saw a great problem in the fact that young as well as older people had reservations about the development of socialism in the GDR since they suddenly felt that, on the basic questions of the evolution of socialism, the Soviet Union and the GDR were not seeing eye to eye any longer. This was the GDR's problem; the barriers had been build on its part. The people today, however, were educated and smart. They perceived very well that while the right words were used, the deeds did not follow suit.

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that the people in the GDR also received information from the Soviet Union

which they evaluated independently. They were also informed from the West and drew their conclusions.

Comrade Krenz stated that they in the GDR had unfortunately left many questions regarding *perestroika* in the Soviet Union to the judgment of the enemy and failed to have a dialogue with the people about it. This happened despite the fact that Comrade Gorbachev had advised Comrade Erich Honecker at one of their first meetings to deal with the opinions which had appeared in Soviet publications and with which he disagreed.

Comrade Krenz pointed out that the prohibition of [the Soviet magazine] *Sputnik* in the GDR had led to a situation in which the enemy could raise questions about the GDR citizens's right of access to information. The comrades and citizens outside the Party who complained about it were not primarily concerned about the contents of *Sputnik*. The problem was that the GDR leadership on the one hand was watching as the population was receiving broadcasts from the Western TV stations every evening for many hours, but, on the other hand, prohibited the reading of a Soviet newspaper. This was an important turning-point in the political thinking of GDR citizens. After the 9th Plenum of the CC of the SED [on 18 October 1989], one of the first steps to be ordered therefore was the return of *Sputnik* onto the list of permitted newspapers.

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that the GDR still has the right to criticize statements by Soviet news media with which it disagreed. You could read the most diverse things in Soviet newspapers nowadays; hardly anything could shock him in this regard. As an example he mentioned that a newspaper from a Baltic republic had recently cited a well-known Soviet economist to the effect that a conspiracy was being prepared in Moscow.

Comrade Krenz agreed that when the newspapers at home raise critical questions, one could quickly enter into a dialogue. Today one could hear among the GDR citizens that the [GDR TV show] "Aktuelle Kamera" was now already more interesting than Western TV [shows].

Comrade Krenz emphasized that despite all the imperfections and problems in the GDR and in face of the fact that there was still no coherent concept for the future developments, one thing had been achieved after all: The problems of the GDR were now not being brought into the GDR from the West, but were discussed in our country [by ourselves].

This was very important, Comrade Gorbachev interjected.

Comrade Krenz explained that even though he knew that Comrade Gorbachev was well informed about the developments since he personally had had many extensive conversations with [Soviet] Ambassador [Vyacheslav] Kochemassov, he nevertheless wanted to say that the road to the 9th Plenum of the CC of the SED had been very complicated.

When Comrade Krenz returned from his trip to China,⁹⁶ he decided to act. After consultation with Comrade Willi Stoph [Deputy Chairman of the Council of State] it was

agreed that he would propose a declaration by the Politburo on the current problems of the situation in the GDR. The draft of this declaration was basically very watered-down, since it was initially intended just to overcome the situation of paralysis together with Comrade Erich Honecker. Therefore they were willing to agree to a number of compromises.

Comrade Krenz handed the draft resolution to Comrade Honecker who later called him and stated the following:

1. If Comrade Krenz introduced the resolution in the Politburo, he [Honecker] would consider this as a move against him personally. He himself had never undertaken anything against Comrades Wilhelm Pieck [former GDR president (1949-1960)] and Walter Ulbricht [former SED First Secretary (1953-1971)]. Comrade Krenz commented that this was not the truth but had been stated [by Honecker] in this way.

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that he himself remembered Comrade Ulbricht's affair still very well.⁹⁷

2. Comrade Honecker declared that if Comrade Krenz introduced the resolution in the Politburo, he would divide the leadership of the Party. Comrade Honecker would try to prevent this resolution from being adopted.

3. If Comrade Krenz introduced this resolution in the Politburo, he would have to expect that the cadre decisions, which would sooner or later be introduced in the Politburo, would look different from those that had been planned. He was thereby referring to Krenz personally.

Comrade Krenz introduced the draft resolution in the Politburo against the will of Comrade Honecker. Comrade Honecker, who chaired the session, stated this fact explicitly. After a long discussion all other members of the Politburo, with the exception of one comrade, spoke out in favor of the declaration. On the evening of the first day of this two-day Politburo session, the attempt was made to constitute a commission composed of Comrades Günter Mittag [SED CC Secretary for Economics] and Joachim Herrmann [SED CC Secretary for Propaganda], along with Comrade Krenz. The objective was to water down the resolution even more. At the demand of Comrade Krenz, Comrade Günter Schabowski was involved in the work of the commission. Both fought together for the adoption of the resolution, which was eventually achieved.

Comrade Gorbachev remarked in this regard that, politically, this was all clear to him. In human terms, however, he viewed this development as a great personal tragedy for Comrade Honecker. He had always had a good personal relationship with him, and there had been no problems in this area. He had, however, noticed with surprise certain changes in Comrade Honecker within the last years. Had he [Honecker] made some basic policy changes two or three years ago at his own initiative, such deficits and difficulties as they currently existed would have been neither necessary nor possible. Comrade Erich Honecker obviously considered himself No. 1 in socialism, if not in the world. He did not really perceive any more

what was actually going on.

Comrade Krenz explained that he had personally been very much affected by this development since he had been close to Comrade Erich Honecker throughout much of his life.

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that this had also caused a certain amount of speculation in the West. But they should not be afraid of this.

Comrade Krenz went on to say that the change of Comrade Honecker had occurred in 1985 when Comrade Gorbachev was elected as secretary general of the CC of the CPSU. Suddenly, Comrade Honecker saw himself confronted with a young dynamic leader who approached new questions in very unconventional ways. Until that time he had viewed himself in that role. Slowly he lost his sense of reality. The worst thing was that he relied less and less on the collective and more and more on Comrade Günter Mittag.

Comrade Gorbachev asked about the role of Comrade Joachim Herrmann.

Comrade Krenz explained that Comrade Herrmann had, for the most part, followed orders by Comrade Honecker without his own input. Comrade Mittag, by contrast, had manipulated Comrade Honecker, created mistrust toward other members of the Politburo, and influenced tactical as well as strategic decisions by Comrade Honecker in selfish ways.

Comrade Krenz reported that the Politburo had discussed an analysis of the economic situation yesterday. Prior to the meeting they had requested to get an untarnished picture of the real situation of the GDR economy. Such an analysis had never before been discussed in the Politburo.

Comrade Gorbachev pointed out that he had found himself in the same situation. He had also had no knowledge about the state budget when he became secretary general. As early as during the tenure of Comrade [Yuri] Andropov [CPSU General Secretary from 1982 to 1984], he and Comrade [Nikolay] Ryzhkov [President of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union (1985 to 1990)] had been tasked to analyze the situation of the economy since it was felt that something was rotten there. But when they tried to find out the full truth they were ordered to back off. Today it was clear to him why this had happened. Basically a national budget no longer existed. They were still coping with the consequences today.

Comrade Krenz explained that they had begun the 9th Plenum on the premise that they would face up to the truth. But if he stated the truth about the state of the economy before the CC, this could cause a shock with bad consequences.

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that they had known about the real state of the GDR economy in the Soviet Union. They also were informed about the relations with the FRG and about the problems that were arising in that respect. The Soviet Union had always tried to fulfill its obligations towards the GDR. Apart from the fact that 2

million tons of oil [deliveries] had to be canceled due to great domestic problems, they had always understood that the GDR could not function without the help of Soviet Union. This support was the internationalist responsibility of the Soviet Union. They had wondered at the same time, however, why, given this situation, the GDR [leaders] was constantly lecturing about GDR successes. This was particularly hard to take since they knew about the real situation in the GDR. Comrade Gorbachev said that he once tried to talk to Comrade Honecker about the GDR debt. This had been curtly repudiated by him [Honecker] as such problems would not exist [in the GDR]. Comrade Honecker apparently thought he was the savior of his homeland. The entire development was a great personal tragedy for him.

Since he held such a high office, this [personal tragedy] turned into a political tragedy. Comrade Gorbachev emphasized he had tried to maintain a good personal relationship until the end. This had not been easy as he was aware of Comrade Honecker's statements and real opinion. He had, however, tolerated this since other things were more important.

Comrade Krenz emphasized that one had to take into consideration that many comrades had been aware of the problems for a long time. They, however, remained silent to maintain the unity and cohesion of the Party. He had distinctly realized for the first time in the Politburo session on 31 October 1989, how much of an impediment the [otherwise] correct principle of unity and cohesion could become in certain situations when problems are not faced frankly and honestly.

Comrade Gorbachev expressed his conviction that if Comrade Honecker had not been so blind and had not relied exclusively on Comrade Mittag, but had also consulted with Comrade Krenz or Comrade Stoph, things might have developed differently. He had particularly felt badly for Comrade Stoph because he had effectively been very much humiliated by Comrade Honecker.

Comrade Gorbachev remarked that he had been struck particularly badly by the way Comrade [Hans] Modrow [SED leader in Saxony] had been treated.

Comrade Krenz related on this point that he had actually received an order as early as two years ago to depose Comrade Modrow. Back then the artists at two Dresden theaters had demanded to implement *perestroika* in the GDR, too. Comrade Honecker was on vacation during that time. He called Comrade Krenz on the phone and ordered him to go to Dresden. There he was to lead the discussion with the objective of deposing Comrade Modrow. Comrade Krenz went to Dresden and had a very frank talk with Comrade Modrow. They found a tactical solution to the effect that Comrade Modrow was to be criticized but not dismissed from his office.

Comrade Gorbachev said that Comrade Krenz had addressed a very deep and important issue, namely that a mere formal unity within the Party was to be avoided. Unity had to be created based on a variety of opinions [and] respect for the opinion of others. Problems always

arose when a leader tried to maintain his position at any price and merely expected his [comrades] to agree. In the Soviet Union, they had watched Comrade Honecker enlarging the Politburo further in order to be able to play one comrade against another in this large committee. This had not been right.

Comrade Gorbachev reported that nowadays everybody was speaking their minds freely within the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU. If anybody would get to listen in, he would conclude that the Party was on the brink of collapse. But this was not the case. Even staffers of the comrades who participate in the sessions are at times allowed to speak up.

Comrade Krenz interjected that for such a procedure a lot of time was necessary.

Comrade Gorbachev explained that the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU took the time for this. Sometimes he would like to put an end to the long debates, but then would bite his tongue and made sure that the conclusions he drew would not offend the comrades. He would push through the line that he considered correct, but always in consideration of the opinions of the other comrades. This had created an entirely new situation. This way prevented them from making major mistakes.

Comrade [Georgy] Shakhnazarov, personal assistant of Comrade Gorbachev, who participated in the talks, added that policy would not be implemented by administrative means, but by argument and persuasion.

Comrade Krenz expressed his view that he had never experienced the Politburo of the CC of the SED [to be] as emotional as recently.

Comrade Gorbachev interjected that such controversial sessions, lasting for more than two days, had also taken place in the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU—once during a discussion on the letter of Nina Andreeva,⁹⁸ and another time during the debate on the long-term economic orientation.

Comrade Krenz explained that while the Soviet comrades were well-informed about the political and economic situation, he still wanted to describe the current economic situation since it was strangling the hands of the SED leadership in making urgently necessary political decisions. [...]

On the GDR balance of payments, Comrade Krenz provided the following information: Until the end of 1989, the foreign debt would grow to USD 26.5 billion, that is, 49 billion valuta [West German] mark.

The balance in convertible foreign exchange at the end of 1989 would look like this:

Income: USD 5.9 billion

Expenses: USD 18 billion

The deficit thus ran at about USD 12.1 billion. This meant that they had to take on new loans. It was likely that this imbalance would increase further.

Astonished, Comrade Gorbachev asked whether these numbers were exact. He had not imagined the situation to be so precarious.

Comrade Krenz explained that the GDR had to take on new loans in order to pay of old debts. Currently, they had to spend USD 4.5 billion on interest payments alone, which equaled 62 percent of the annual export profits in foreign currency.

Comrade Krenz emphasized that the high foreign debt was created above all because they had to take on loans at very high interests during the time of the Western financial blockade of the socialist countries. The situation grew particularly precarious due to simultaneously emerging new demands on the economy and new expectations by the population that could not be satisfied. The state of the balance of payments was currently not known in the GDR. If one would go on realistically and base the standard of living exclusively on the own production, one would have to lower it [the living standard] by 30 percent immediately. But this was not feasible politically.

Comrade Gorbachev gave the following advice on the issue based on his experience: Comrade Krenz and the SED leadership generally had to find a way to tell the population that it had lived beyond their means in the last few years. Comrade Krenz could not yet be held personally responsible for this. But it was increasingly necessary to tell the full truth. First one needed time for a comprehensive analysis. But later full information [of the population] was unavoidable, since otherwise Comrade Krenz would be blamed himself for the growing difficulties. Slowly the population had to already get used to this idea today. [...]

[Comrade Krenz] stated that he also agreed with the remarks by Comrade Gorbachev on the relationship with the FRG. He asked [Gorbachev] to explain more clearly what role the USSR ascribed to the FRG and the GDR in the all-European house. This was of great significance for the development of relations between the GDR and the FRG. He went on to explain that there was an important difference between the GDR and other socialist countries. The GDR was, in a certain sense, the child of the Soviet Union, and one had to acknowledge one's paternity with regard to one's children.

Comrade Gorbachev agreed with this and made reference to a conversation between Comrade Yakovlev and [former US National Security Advisor to President Carter] Zbigniew Brzezinski. They had, among other things, discussed whether one could imagine a situation in which the reunification of Germany could become a reality. Brzezinski emphasized that to him this would be the collapse.

Comrade Gorbachev welcomed Comrade Krenz bringing up this question. The GDR, the Soviet Union, and the other socialist countries had thus far followed a correct course on this question. This [course] had led to the recognition of the existence of two German states, to the international recognition of the GDR, to its active role in the world, to the conclusion of the [1970] Moscow Treaty, and other treaties, and ultimately to the [1975] Helsinki Conference.

In recent talks with [British Prime Minister] Margaret

Thatcher, [French President] François Mitterrand, [Polish leader Gen. Wojciech] Jaruzelski and [Italian Prime Minister Giulio] Andreotti, it had become clear that all these politicians presumed the preservation of the postwar realities, including the existence of two German states. They all viewed the question of German unity as extremely explosive in the current situation. Nor did they want the Warsaw Pact and NATO to dissolve, and therefore they favored Poland's and Hungary's remaining in the Warsaw Pact. The balance of power in Europe was not to be disturbed since nobody knew what repercussions this would have.

Even the US had thus far taken a similar attitude. However, currently many discussions among the FRG's allies were taking place. One sympathized in words with the FRG's concerns about a divided Germany. There were some nuances in the USA in this regard which would still have to be analyzed.

Comrade Shakhnazarov interjected that those statements were probably all made for domestic consumption.

Comrade Gorbachev agreed and emphasized that in practice the US was continuing its old policy. To his mind, the best policy now was to continue the current line. [Former West German Chancellor] Willy Brandt was of the same opinion. He had declared that for him the disappearance of the GDR would be a spectacular defeat for Social Democracy since it considered the GDR as a great achievement of socialism. While he distanced himself from the communists, he nevertheless considered Social Democracy as a branch of the labor movement and continued to cling to the socialist idea. [Egon] Bahr [West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) leader] had expressed this openly [and] with much clarity.

For the socialist countries, Comrade Gorbachev emphasized, the best thing was to emphasize that the current situation was a result of history. Nobody could ignore, however, that manifold human contacts existed between the two German states. These [contacts] could not be prevented; one had to keep them under control and steer them in the right direction. For this reason it was necessary to make some changes in policy to gain the understanding of the populace. Comrade Gorbachev offered that they could consult with the Soviet comrades about this question.

It would be very damaging to reduce or even sever the relations between the GDR and the FRG. In this connection, he [Gorbachev] wanted to point out the following factors:

1. It was important to improve coordination of the relations in the triangle GDR—FRG—Soviet Union. He had also talked about this with Comrade Honecker. The Soviet Union knew from other sources how relations between the GDR and the FRG were developing. They even knew within three days what had been discussed in the National Security Council of the United States. On the other hand, the US was also well-informed about developments in the

Soviet Union. Such after all was the situation. Therefore it was completely unnecessary to keep secrets from close allies.

Comrade Gorbachev pointed out that years ago there had been a joint office which coordinated the relations of the GDR and the Soviet Union with the FRG. At the time, it had been headed by Comrades Mittag and [Nikolai] Tikhonov [Chairman of the Council of Ministers, 1980-85]. It had silently ceased its activities, but it had to be revived.

Comrade Krenz mentioned that Comrade Honecker had been pleased that he could decide on trips to the FRG or China on his own. He very much favored finding ways at the working level through which common policies towards the FRG and West Berlin would be better coordinated. Comrade Gorbachev recommended discussing this question in the Politburo of the SED CC or in an even smaller circle.

2. It was also important to consider the relationships within this triangle very carefully. The Soviet Union was trying to bring the FRG as a partner into a closer relationship. Then the GDR would also be in a more favorable position within this triangle. Efforts in this direction were being made in the FRG. [The FRG] was ready to cooperate with the Soviet Union on a broad set of issues, but expected that the Soviet Union would lend support with regard to reunification. There was talk that the key to this lay in Moscow. The Americans stated this as well. This was a very convenient excuse for them. In their talks with the FRG, they spoke of their support for reunification, but always pointed to Moscow's key role. Moscow was to be handed the "black Peter."⁹⁹ On the other hand, the US was not pleased by the rapprochement between Bonn and Moscow in the economic and political field. In practical terms, not much had happened thus far. And one should not rush anything in this area either because the FRG representatives needed time.

For the GDR it was important to maintain and continually develop its relationship with the FRG. One had to be careful to prevent the ideological enemy from gaining positions—which he could exploit. Thus the GDR would continue to receive raw materials from the Soviet Union, and at the same time cautiously develop its relationship with the FRG, avoiding a total embrace by the FRG.

3. It was important for the GDR to develop its relations with other nations besides the FRG. Here, too, they could work closely with the Soviet Union. Hungary and Poland were already very active in this field. They, after all, had no choice in this matter. It was often asked what the USSR would do in this situation. But it could do very little in economic terms. It was an absurdity to think that the Soviet Union could support 40 million Poles. The root of the problem lay with [former Polish leader Edward] Gierek who had taken on loans totaling US\$ 48 billion. Meanwhile the Polish comrades had already paid back US\$ 52 billion and still owed US\$ 49 billion.

In 1987 Comrade [Hungarian leader János] Kádár was given an ultimatum by the I[international] M[onetary]

F[und]; in case of non-compliance with the numerous demands a suspension of the loans was threatened.

Comrade Krenz pointed out that this was not our way.

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that such problems also existed in the GDR-FRG relationship. One was aware in the Soviet Union that GDR microelectronics were based to a large degree on Western components. Comrade Krenz remarked that [State Security Chief] Comrade [Erich] Mielke and his department were partly responsible for this. Moreover, Soviet components were also used. As a result, one had to collaborate more closely today. But it had to be a balanced collaboration with clearly set priorities.

Summing up, Comrade Gorbachev remarked that one had to continue the current policy, which had brought about success. The GDR and its people could be proud of that.

There was no reason to speculate how the German Question would eventually be resolved. The current realities had to be taken into consideration. This was most important.

If the tendency of rapprochement in Europe would continue for several decades, if the processes of integration would develop regardless of social systems, but in recognition of independent developments of politics and culture, development, and traditions, and if the exchange of intellectual and material goods evolved further, then the issue might present itself in a different light some day. But today this was not a problem of actual policy. The established line had to be continued in the current political situation. Comrade Gorbachev asked Comrade Krenz to communicate this to the comrades in the Politburo. There was an understanding about this between the Soviet Union and its former partners from the era of the Anti-Hitler Coalition.

Comrade Krenz pointed out that this policy had to be secured in ideological terms. Comrade Honecker posed the well known five-demands of Gera in the early 1980s.¹⁰⁰ On the one hand, the GDR had concluded numerous mutually beneficial treaties with the FRG since then; the FRG, on the other hand, had not shown any movement on any of these five demands. This had led to certain mistaken assumptions within the GDR. Since many prominent GDR representatives traveled to the FRG, average citizens were also demanding this right. There was a lot of talk about universal human values, but that had created a general German problem. Therefore the issue of de-ideologizing the FRG-GDR relationship was a very difficult question. The issue posed itself differently in relationships between other countries. De-ideologizing relations would mean abandoning the defense of socialism. Questions like the wall or the border regime with the GDR would arise anew. The GDR found itself in the difficult situation of having to defend these somehow anachronistic, but nevertheless necessary things.

Comrade Gorbachev expressed his opinion that this all had to be reconsidered. The time was ripe for this. If the GDR could not find a solution which allowed people to

visit their relatives, then this would be a very dissatisfying state of affairs for GDR society. The GDR would be threatened by new ultimatums. It had to take the initiative in its own hands. The Soviet Union was ready to talk about such measures. The GDR would have a better feel for what had to be done. It was certainly necessary to take some concrete steps which, however, had to be linked constantly with certain obligations and actions by the other side. It was time to exert greater pressure on Chancellor Kohl, now that he had established contacts with Comrade Gorbachev and Comrade Krenz. In the FRG, the national question was heavily exploited in politics. There were people in the government parties who wanted to get rid of Kohl. He, however, had put his bets on the nationalist issue. There were even more extreme demands from the right wing. The CDU [*Bundestag*] delegate [Jürgen] Todenhöfer had issued a letter to the US and Soviet Union demanding the immediate reunification of Germany. There was wild speculation about this subject in the FRG.

Comrade Krenz explained the envisioned measures to be taken by the GDR with regard to this set of issues:

1. The GDR will try to prevent any use of firearms along the border. The border guards had been instructed accordingly. They would only fire if there was acute danger to the life and health of the border guards.

2. The draft of a new travel law had been adopted by the Politburo and had been sent to the Council of Ministers, which would put it up for public discussion. [The draft law] was to be adopted by the *Volkskammer* [GDR Parliament] before Christmas.

According to this law, every GDR citizen had the opportunity to receive a passport and a visa for travel to all countries. The circle of those who would be excluded from this for security reasons would be kept very limited.

3. Unfortunately, the GDR was unable to provide travelers with sufficient foreign exchange. One could not continue to live over one's means. The publication of the travel law would be accompanied by a commentary which would explain that the foreign exchange generated by the FRG citizens travelling to the GDR would not be sufficient to provide GDR travelers with foreign currency.

Comrade Gorbachev suggested that one option would be the gradual achievement of convertibility of the GDR mark. This would be an incentive for workers to work harder, to strive for higher productivity and quality, by means of which such goals would be obtained.

Comrade Krenz explained further steps by the SED leadership over the next few days and weeks. On 8 November 1989, the 10th Plenum of the CC would be convened. It was to find an answer to the question of the GDR's future. If there was no serious answer to this question, the party leadership would continue to come under criticism by the CC.

Comrade Gorbachev repeated that the international reaction about the speech by Comrade Krenz before the *Volkskammer* in particular had been very positive.

Following his speech at the 9th Plenum of the SED CC, skepticism had been pervasive. The reaction had been very cautious. Now it was important to deepen the positive impression further.

Comrade Krenz pointed out that the instructions given to the Soviet ambassadors in various countries had contributed much in this regard.

Comrade Gorbachev informed [Krenz] that he had received positive responses from all the important statesmen to which he had turned.

Comrade Krenz reported that he had received congratulatory telegrams from them all, including Chancellor Kohl. He had had a brief phone conversation with the latter. Kohl pointed out his constant contact with Comrade Gorbachev and recommended that this would also be done with Comrade Krenz. Comrade Krenz responded that it was always better to speak with each other than to talk about each other. Kohl immediately brought up concrete proposals with regard to transit traffic, environmental issues, relations with West Berlin, etc [...] Comrade Krenz agreed to explore all concrete questions with the Chancellor's representative. Kohl above all wanted to speak about questions on which agreement was possible, not about those on which both sides disagreed. Comrade Krenz pointed out to Kohl explicitly that both the GDR and the FRG had their own interests. He [Kohl] had to expect that he [Krenz] would represent GDR interests more consistently than had heretofore been the case. Kohl had been very excited during the conversation. He frequently did not finish his sentences.

Comrade Gorbachev stated that Kohl was not an intellectual heavyweight, but rather a petit-bourgeois type. It was these classes that understood him best. But he was nevertheless a talented and stubborn politician. After all, even Reagan had been popular and had stayed in power relatively long. This also applied to Kohl.

Comrade Krenz predicted that the 10th Plenum of the SED CC would be a very stormy session. Many comrades were preparing for it and wanted to take the floor. The discussion had not been officially prepared. The times of deference toward the Politburo were over. The question was sharply raised as to the responsibility of the Politburo collective for the current situation. This also concerned his own personal responsibility. He hoped that they would find a smart answer to the question.

The Plenum was to adopt an action program. The reason was that the 7th and 8th Plenums of the CC had been overtaken by the events. The envisioned action program was to briefly outline the direction of future work. They would try to answer the question as to what constituted a better, more modern and attractive socialism, which socialist values had to be defended and which ones were questionable.

The Plenum would discuss radical economic reforms. The government would obtain the task to formulate the main directions. It was clear that the answer had to be found in socialism, not in the free market.

The second question concerned the broad development of socialist democracy. A series of new laws were in preparation. Elections posed a big problem. It had already been stated that we would use all experiences of previous elections and wanted to prepare a new election law. One would deal with constitutional issues, such as freedom of the press, *glasnost*, and freedom and dignity of the individual. The issues of the leading role of the Party under the new conditions had to be discussed. They had to further develop criticism and self-criticism in order to avoid subjectivism. The changes ranged as far as the proposal to set a term limit on the official tenure of the office of general secretary and other high officials.

Comrade Krenz informed [Gorbachev] that the Plenum would also deal with cadre issues. Those who had asked for relief from their functions included Comrades Mielke, [Politburo member Alfred] Neumann, [Politburo member and chairman of the SED *Volkskammer* faction Erich] Mückenberger, [Council of State member Kurt] Hager, and [Politburo member and foreign policy expert Hermann] Axen. Comrade [President of the *Volkskammer* and Politburo member Horst] Sindermann justified his intention to stay in office until the Party Convention. But the demands from the Party [rank-and-file] went even further.

Comrade Gorbachev had a very high opinion of Comrade Stoph. He had been in a difficult situation in recent years. He had maintained his dignity when he was forced into a corner by Comrade Mittag. He had consistently taken a very principled position in decisive situations. One must not throw all old comrades into one pot.

Comrade Krenz expressed his regret about the case of Comrade [Free German Union League (FDGB) Harry] Tisch. He was now forced to resign. The reason was that he had made a major political mistake during a TV broadcast. He had blamed responsibility for the current situation above all on the lower functionaries. According to him, the union officials had not fulfilled their duties because they had listened too much to the party secretaries in the factories. This had evoked great outrage among the union members. In the Politburo they agreed not to decide the matter here in order not to diminish the independence of the unions. For now the FDGB leadership had postponed its decision on this issue until 17 November. But even that was not accepted by many union members. There was even talk about the possibility of a split of the union if Comrade Tisch did not resign. Meanwhile Comrade Krenz had received a call to the effect that Comrade Tisch would resign immediately.

On the subject of the still on-going demonstrations, Comrade Krenz stated that the situation was not easy. The composition of the demonstrators was diverse. Some real enemies were working among them. A large part were dissatisfied [citizens] or fellow-travelers. The SED leadership was determined to resolve political problems by political means. The demonstrations would be legalized, and there would be no police action against them.

The situation, however, was developing according to its own dynamics. For the weekend, a large demonstration with possibly half a million participants was planned in Berlin. It had been initiated by artists and some of their associations.

Comrade Gorbachev provided the following information in this regard: Prior to his visit, he had received a letter from the GDR League of Culture through Raissa Maximovna Gorbachev in her function in the Soviet Culture Fond. [The letter] described the situation in the GDR and pointed out that the League of Culture would address an appeal to the GDR people if they had not received a response from the Party leadership by the time of the anniversary of the [GDR].

Comrade Krenz confirmed that if Erich Honecker had given a different kind of speech on the occasion of the anniversary [of the GDR], the situation might have taken a different course. With regard to the demonstration, the Politburo had decided to call on party members to participate. Comrade Schabowski would be among the 17 speakers in order to prevent the opposition from remaining among itself at this demonstration. They wanted to do everything to assure a peaceful event but had to take certain precautionary measures. One measure was to prevent the masses from attempting to break through the Wall. This would be bad because the police would have to be deployed and certain elements of martial law would have to be introduced. But such a development was not very likely, but one had to be prepared.

They expected the following slogans at the demonstration:

- Naming those responsible for the current situation
- Resignation of the senior Politburo members
- Changes in the composition of the government
- Travel opportunities
- Changes in the status of the union and the youth organization
- New electoral law
- Recognition of the opposition
- Abolishment of privileges
- Freedom of the press and thought
- Improvement of the living standard and continual production.

They were currently trying to avoid any criminalization of the demonstrators and to proceed very carefully. The question of recognizing the [opposition movement] "*Neues Forum*" had not yet been determined. So far they were unable to evaluate fully their political orientation. One had to avoid any developments similar to that of Solidarity in Poland.

Comrade Gorbachev shared Soviet experiences on these questions from the first phase of *perestroika*. Back then, many informal organizations and other movements were created. The leadership had watched them with skepticism. Good and bad [movements] were thrown into one pot. That way time was lost in certain republics. They

failed to integrate these movements into the activities of the Party, which in turn created polarization. Some of these forces developed into an opposition against the policy of *perestroika* and represented separatist, nationalist and anti-socialist views.

One should not waste any time with regard to these questions. Anti-socialist and criminal elements were one thing. But one could not generally consider the people as the enemy. If it rose against [the political leadership], one had to consider what political changes had to be made so that it accorded with the interests of the people and socialism. One should not miss the [right] point in time so that such movements would get on the other side of the barricades. The Party should not shy away from such problems, it had to work with these forces. They were now doing this in the Soviet Union, but it was already very late. These organizations had brought about their own leaders and worked out their own principles.

Where anti-Sovietism was involved, communists had no business being there. But for the most part they [these opposition groups] were concerned workers who worried about numerous neglected questions.

Comrade Krenz confirmed that the SED would approach the problem in this manner. But this would be a long process.

With regard to the remarks by Comrade Gorbachev, Comrade Krenz asked to check if the exchange of experience with the CC departments of the CPSU on a number of questions, with regard to which the Soviet Union had already accumulated many years of experience, could be expanded. This related to the fields of party organizations, security questions, and others. Generally, the exchange of know-how between the departments of the Central Committee should be intensified again.

Comrade Gorbachev welcomed this suggestion.

Comrade Krenz stated that the SED would again send cadres from training to Soviet party schools in the near future.

Comrade Krenz pointed out some currently unresolved problems in the field of economic cooperation. They included:

- an improved usage of the ferry connection Mukran-Klaipeda, which was of great significance for imports and exports;
- mutual improvements in living up to contractual obligations;
- examination of the possibility of a further increase in natural gas deliveries from the USSR, which the GDR would greatly appreciate;
- an agreement on further deliveries of the "Lada" automobile to the GDR, given that at the moment questions about the supply of consumer goods for the population, among others with cars, play a crucial role in the debate. This was a result of the extraordinary high savings in the GDR and the enormous budget deficit. Liquidity among the

population was very high. Add to this a systematic demand of goods, in particular by Polish citizens.

Comrade Gorbachev confirmed this in the case of the Soviet Union as well.

Comrade Krenz emphasized that, for the SED, the decisive issue was to restore the harmony [of hearts] with the CPSU and the USSR which was vital for us. The Soviet side had always been ready for this, but on our side there had been certain impediments. He wanted to declare on behalf of the Politburo of the CC of the SED that both parties should return to the method of frankly and honestly raising all questions of concern. The calls for “Gorbi, Gorbi” during the demonstrations in Berlin had shown that it was impossible to destroy the good relationship of the young people and the GDR entire population with the Soviet Union, even if the leadership had failed in this respect.

Comrade Gorbachev reported that the greatest difficulty for him in participating in the 40th anniversary of the GDR had been that he had been aware of the mood, and that he had felt very uncomfortable standing at Erich Honecker’s side.

Comrade Krenz interjected that he had even been accused of organizing this mood, especially among the young people. But it was simply a free expression of the attitude of the people.

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that the visit of Comrade Krenz so shortly after his election was extraordinarily important for mutual agreement at the beginning of a new era. The point was to demonstrate jointly that they stood with each other, that the development in the Soviet Union was close to the one in the GDR, and vice versa. This was also important for the other socialist countries and for the entire world. In the FRG they were also interested in what Gorbachev and Krenz had agreed upon.

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that he, in principle, shared all of the thoughts Comrade Krenz had expressed. They were dictated by the actual situation. For the SED it was now very important not to lose the initiative. The processes were developing very dynamically and could accelerate in pace. The party leadership had to react accordingly. It would be a great tragedy if the development would gain in spontaneity or lose its political orientation. This would create a situation, in which there was no other resort. Then it might be possible that mistaken slogans would dominate the situation and the situation could be exploited by other forces. Comrade Gorbachev pointed out that he had made his own experiences in this respect. Due to the hesitation by the [Soviet] leadership some problems had increased sharply; this concerned above all the economy. Comrade Krenz had emphasized correctly that the next plenum had to give an evaluation of the difficult situation. This evaluation had to be balanced but decisive. Comrade Gorbachev recalled in this context the January 1987 Plenum of the CC of the CPSU. There it was stated for

the first time that the Party would take responsibility for the current situation. Simultaneously, a concrete program of *perestroika* was proposed. It was possible that the development in the GDR could take different stages. But for the reputation of the secretary general it was extraordinarily important that he approached the problems with great responsibility and great respect for the truth. Otherwise nobody would believe him.

Comrade Krenz interjected that there already was criticism of the fact that comrade Honecker’s resignation had been explained in terms of bad health.

In Comrade Gorbachev’s opinion, here as well further explanations were necessary.

Comrade Gorbachev commented as correct to indicate at the plenum first outlines of the policy of the next era and adopt a respective action program. A detailed plan was not yet to be made public since this might make the secretary general seem hypocritical as he obviously was not taking the time to study and consider thoroughly proposals and recommendations from all sides. But the main directions of the action program were already becoming evident—more socialism, renewal, democratization. One would carry on what had been good and useful in the past. This, for example, concerned the social orientation of the GDR economy, which had always been its strong suit. This should not be abandoned. This was an asset of the GDR.

In the field of cadre policy, decisive changes were certainly imminent at the plenum. As an old communist, Comrade Mielke certainly wanted to set an example for others with his resignation. This made it possible for Comrade Krenz to separate cadre questions from the substantive question of *perestroika*. Certainly there was no question of a collective resignation of the Politburo or the cabinet but profound changes in the leadership were by no doubt necessary. The plenum had to take the first step. He recommended to elect a few intelligent and innovative figures from the CC to the Politburo and to adopt prominent representatives of culture and academia as members or candidates of the CC as well. This would increase the reputation of the bodies. With regard to Comrade Honecker, he could certainly still be defended within the plenum but it was questionable whether that was still feasible with regard to the people. The people had risen and today stated their opinion frankly. Therefore they had to respond not only to the Plenum of the CC but also to the people. In this respect as well it was necessary not to miss the signs of the times. Society would continue to pose the question of responsibility for the situation, and for this reason profound leadership changes were due, too.

Despite determined policy changes, a complete negation of the past was to be avoided. This would also be disrespectful of the people who had made the previous achievements of the GDR. One also had to find a form of dialectical negation whereby one kept the good that contributed to the strengthening of socialism and added as new what life produced.

Comrade Gorbachev emphasized that Comrade Krenz

had the reputation of being a man of courage. A secretary general could not avoid the problems either but had to face them; he had to act in consideration of the concrete situation and accurately assess changes in society. Coming up with new ideas and implementing them—all this was expected from a secretary general.

Comrade Gorbachev expressed his full agreement with Comrade Krenz on relations with the FRG. It was necessary to revitalize cooperation and coordination between the GDR and the Soviet Union. Each of them was well aware of the other's relations with the FRG. One therefore ought not to make a secret out of it but cooperate and take advantage of it. The FRG, too, had the necessary information and was very interested in cooperating. Comrade Krenz was right in thinking that the parties should increasingly be put in control of cooperation. He therefore welcomed the proposal to intensify again the exchange of experience between the departments of the Central Committees. The same applied to the CC secretaries.

The working-level and close contacts in this field were, however, most important. The joint work of the academies of social sciences ought to be strengthened as well. In this connection, Comrade Gorbachev inquired about the fate of Comrade [Otto] Reinhold. He had always been viewed as working especially closely with Comrade Honecker.

Comrade Krenz stated that Comrade Reinhold had also changed his mind [*Wende vollzogen*]. This had practically happened overnight. He was criticized for a remark he made in a TV discussion during which he apologized for previous statements that had been specifically ascribed to him.

Comrade Gorbachev remarked jokingly that Comrade Otto Reinhold had written about the 10 deviations from Marxism-Leninism by Comrade Gorbachev.

Comrade Krenz also informed about the fate of Comrade Hans Albrecht, the former first secretary of the district leadership in Suhl. He did not cope with his work any longer. In addition, there existed resentment in the CC about an unprecedented statement by him about the secretary general of the CPSU CC. He had remarked at the last CC Plenum that Comrade Gorbachev had not performed in a class-conscious manner during his last visit to the FRG. Comrade Albrecht would no longer be serving as first secretary of the district leadership already in the coming days.

Comrade Gorbachev explained that it was now necessary to revive creative Marxism, socialism in a Leninist way, the humanistic and democratic socialism in which man really felt that this was his society and not an elite society. This process was not easy to implement. Of this he had become aware during his visit to Cuba. There had been a tense atmosphere initially. He himself, however, had explained that *perestroika* resulted from the development of the Soviet Union, and was necessary for the solution of Soviet problems. The question of whether socialism in the Soviet Union would succeed or fail was of importance for the entire world, including Cuba. The Soviet

Union on the other hand welcomed all measures, which the C[ommunist] P[arty of] Cuba thought necessary under its conditions. They trusted its responsibility and its competence. It was important, Comrade Gorbachev explained, that revolutionary *perestroika* could not be forced upon anybody. Even in the GDR the situation had to develop to this point, which now made the process very difficult and painful.

Comrade Gorbachev pointed out that he had always exercised the greatest restraint towards the comrades in the GDR. The objective had been to avoid any ill feeling in the relationship, even though they were well aware of the situation in the GDR. They had been patient because they understood that the Party and all of society had to mature first before making these changes.

Today the important thing in the socialist countries was that each of them had to think on its own. On the other hand there were certain criteria and main characteristics for socialism in all countries.

Comrade Gorbachev reported at the conclusion of his conversation on domestic problems in the Soviet Union. He related that he would continue that same day discussions with leading economists. Very controversial debates on the future development of the Soviet Union were currently taking place in all fields. Some demanded the re-introduction of private property of the means of production, and the employment of capitalistic methods; others demanded the admission of more political parties. There were arguments about whether the Soviet Union ought to continue as a federation or confederation. In the economic field in particular, these debates were increasingly of a principled [ideological] character.

There were already comrades who had a different idea about the economic development and attempted to force capitalistic prescriptions upon the CPSU out of disappointment over previous failures. The workers had realized this immediately and reacted with demands to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. There were also calls for a return to the old administrative command system. This would, however, be a great tragedy for the Soviet Union.

The current arguments illustrated clearly that *perestroika* was a true revolution. Comrade Gorbachev expressed with great determination, however, that he would not let the confrontation develop to the point of civil war or bloodshed. The situation, however, was very tense, and they were dealing with a true political battle. Therefore it was necessary to prove that socialism was capable of constant development, of perfection, and full realization of its potential. It was a weakness of socialism that changes in the leadership could lead to severe shake-ups at any time. The reason for this was that the people were not involved in the decisions [and] that the democratic mechanisms were not fully working. They had to be put in full action. It was important to further consolidate society, to mobilize its creative forces, and to achieve clarity on the kind of socialist society they wanted to build. All concrete proposals and constructive ideas were welcome. A current

problem in the Soviet Union was the debate with those who seriously called for a return to private ownership of the means of production. For this purpose some had even come up with quotes from Marx and Lenin by which they attempted to prove that private property did not have to mean exploitation. To their minds, the main problem was the character of power by which private property could be put to use for or against the people.

Comrade Gorbachev pointed out that there could well exist forms of private property—in manufacture, in the countryside—as it, for example, was the case in the GDR. But this was not individual property. These minor forms were, however, not a major problem for a socialist society. There existed, however, forces in the Soviet Union that wanted to go much further. Comrade Gorbachev predicted that the GDR would also face such discussions, even more so since the capitalist example was so close geographically. In addition, the FRG was a very wealthy capitalist country the existence of which would be ever present in the political debates.

Comrade Krenz expressed that his decision to act had been made when he realized during the conversation between Comrade Gorbachev with the Politburo of the SED CC that Comrade Honecker did not comprehend the statements by Comrade Gorbachev, or did not want to understand them.

Comrade Gorbachev stated that he had had the impression during that conversation that he was throwing peas against a wall. He did not hold any grudge against Comrade Honecker but was only sad that he had not initiated this change of course himself two or three years ago. This period could have been the highpoint of his life. After all, the GDR had achieved very much under his leadership. All this had been achieved together with the Party and the people. Under no circumstances should this [fact] therefore be denied. That would be disrespectful of the people who then would have basically lived in vain. This development had to be viewed in dialectical terms. The progress of society, the prologue for the future, and the great potential had to be considered, as well as the factors that had recently slowed down the development of society.

Comrade Krenz agreed and expressed his thanks in cordial terms for the extensive and profound conversation.

[Source: Stiftung "Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv" (SAPMO-BA), Berlin DY30/JIV2/SA/3255. Document obtained by Christian F. Ostermann and Vladislav Zubok and translated for CWHIP by Christian F. Ostermann.]

DOCUMENT No. 2
Cover Note from Alexander Schalck to Egon Krenz,
6 November 1989¹⁰¹

WITH ATTACHMENT,

“Notes on an Informal Conversation between Comrade Alexander Schalck and Minister of the Chancellery Rudolf Seiters and CDU Board Member Wolfgang Schäuble on 6 November 1989”¹⁰²

Dear Comrade Krenz!

I enclose the notes on the conversations with Federal Minister Seiters and CDU Board member Schäuble.

Seiters will, in the course of this evening have an opportunity, together with Schäuble, to inform the Chancellor [about the conversation]. If this should already result in useful items, he [Seiters] will inform me on 7 November 1989, by phone.

I ask for acknowledgement and determination of further steps.

On the basis of the authority currently given to me for the informal negotiations with the government of the FRG, I ask you cordially that you agree that I should not take part in any public discussions (including television) in order to prevent any informally discussed options from being leaked to the public by potential mishaps on my part. Should these negotiations reach a conclusion, I will, of course, be further available to the media, pending your permission.

With socialist greetings
[Schalck's signature]

ATTACHMENT

Notes on an informal conversation between
Comrade Alexander Schalck and Federal Minister and Chief
of the Chancellery, Rudolf Seiters,
and CDU Board member Wolfgang Schäuble,
6 November 1989

Continuing the informal conversation of 24 October 1989, I first repeated the GDR's basic positions on further political and economic cooperation with the government of the FRG and the West Berlin Senate. I emphasized that the GDR was prepared, in implementing the obligations accepted in the CSCE process, to renew societal development. I also emphasized that the SED was prepared to cooperate constructively with the other democratic parties in a manner that served socialism and the interests of the GDR.

Within the framework of the decision to develop laws to guarantee the rule of law, the criminal code of the GDR will be amended to expand personal freedom, freedom of expression, and other issues to meet the new requirements.

To secure tourist and visitor traffic, the GDR is prepared to implement generous regulations for travel between the capital of the GDR and West Berlin via newly opened border crossings.

The implementation of these measures will create significant financial and material costs.

It is assumed that the FRG will cover these expenses to a great extent.

It was pointed out that the GDR is prepared to develop economic cooperation, including new forms like joint ventures and capital sharing in certain branches and sectors. It is assumed that the FRG government will take over the necessary loans in the cases of smaller and mid-sized businesses.

The GDR would be prepared to take out long-term loans up to ten billion VE, backed by collateral [*objektgebunden*] in the next two years that would be financed by the new [economic] capacity that will be created. It is assumed that repayment of the loans will begin after full production begins, and the loans are to be paid out over a period of at least ten years.

Further, the GDR sees the necessity of discussing additional lines of credit in hard currencies beginning in 1991 and totaling DM 2-3 billion to meet the demands connected with the new level of cooperation in a number of areas.

In light of the planned visit by Federal Minister Seiters to the GDR on 30 November 1989 and his official conversations with the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Egon Krenz, as well as with Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer, Seiters was informed that the GDR is prepared to make binding commitments in a "protocol of understanding" about the extension of trade and economic relations, further negotiations on the issue of environmental protection, negotiations over the further development of postal and long-distance phone connections, and other plans.

Seiters was asked, in reference to the discussions of 24 October 1989, to give the FRG government's position on the most pressing issue of the moment: the possibility that his government would take over part of the additional expenses the GDR would incur in connection with its planned expansion of tourist and visitor traffic within the framework of the new travel law.

Seiters thanked me for the presentation and stated that these decisions were of great importance to the government of the Federal Republic.

Seiters presented the following thoughts on my proposal that GDR citizens travelling abroad be given the possibility to exchange DM 300 once a year at an exchange rate of DM 1 = East Mark 4.4:

—With the precondition that the minimum exchange requirement be lifted, a travel fund could be established with

foreign currency by the FRG (with 12.5 million travelers, the account would be worth approximately DM 3.8 billion). The FRG's previous annual payment of DM 100 "greeting money" per person would be eliminated. The DM 400 million that the GDR has received in the minimum exchange would also be paid off through the travel fund.

—The amount exchanged by GDR citizens for travel currency (with 12.5 million travelers, approximately DM 16.7 billion yearly) will be earmarked for a fund that the FRG and GDR will control jointly. The FRG thinks these funds should be used for the construction of border crossings, environmental protection measures, or for other projects that are of interest to both sides, such as transportation or postal and long-distance services.

The FRG also assumes that the necessary number of border crossings between the capital of the GDR and West Berlin will be constructed and opened. Provisional measures will be part of the construction, which can then be expanded in stages.

These measures are to guarantee an orderly border-crossing procedure for the increased tourist, visitor and transit traffic.

The FRG's position is that the contributions from the exchanged funds for travel will finance the construction.

The questions associated with the cost of train travel (between the FRG and the GDR/Berlin) can be addressed later.

Seiters stated openly that the domestic political passage and justification of the proposed positions by the GDR would necessarily have certain political consequences.

In this context, he mentioned the possibility for all [East German] citizens who had left the country legally or illegally to return to the GDR, so that all GDR citizens, with the exception of individual cases to be documented, could return to the GDR for visits.

He did not make a secret of the fact that a number of responsible politicians in the governing coalition had reservations after the "Saturday Meeting" in Berlin.

Seiters also made it clear that under no circumstances could he give a final answer immediately, and his comments were to be understood only as his own expression of the first contours of ideas.

Schäuble, clearly acting under careful instructions from the Chancellor, made it clear that a great deal depends on the speech by the General Secretary at the tenth meeting of the SED Central Committee. This speech had to make it clear that the turn toward renewal was credible, that the announced reforms were clear, and that trustworthy people not tainted by their positions in the previous administration would be responsible for their implementation.

Article 1 of the GDR Constitution, which establishes the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist Party, poses a fundamental problem in this context.

Schäuble strongly recommended that the SED, to allow a peaceful transition to a societal development born by all political, societal and religious organizations, make it clear

that it is prepared to change the GDR Constitution to correspond to the current state of societal development and the obligations it accepted under the CSCE treaty. This amendment of the Constitution should transform the leading role of the SED into a constructive, consensus-building cooperation among all democratic forces in the interests of socialism and the GDR.

Schäuble recommended that we give representatives of the Church an important role in the GDR.

In reference to the state border to West Berlin, constructed on 13 August 1961 to protect the GDR, Schäuble also proposed making this border more passable, in accordance with the CSCE process, through the construction of new border crossings.

Schäuble made it clear again that all economic and financial decisions by the FRG government assumed that the GDR would lower its subsidies decisively.

Schäuble also said that many politicians in the FRG did not understand the reticent stance on providing information about the events on 7-8 October 1989. In his opinion, the GDR would be well advised, and it would be in their interests, to name the security officer directly responsible and announce the measures taken.

[He mentioned that] there are occasionally attacks in the FRG that are being investigated.

If the GDR does not take action, the topic will be played up again by certain forces.

Further consideration by the FRG government was necessary for the other issues involved in developing [further] cooperation, particularly in the economic sector and on the question of [extending further] credits. The FRG was not yet in the position to make concrete suggestions for future binding agreements.

The reserved attitude of the FRG government was clear, and it wants to wait until the results of the tenth meeting [of the SED Central Committee] to resume negotiations.

In conclusion, Schäuble again strongly recommended that General Secretary Egon Krenz deal with the aforementioned issues in his speech. If that were not the case, Chancellor Kohl would not be in a position to justify financial assistance from FRG taxes [for the GDR] to the parliament.

[Source: Published in Hans-Hermann Hertle, Der Fall der Mauer. Die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates, 2nd edition, (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999), pp. 483-486. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]

DOCUMENT No. 3

Letter from Alexander Schalck to Egon Krenz, 7 November 1989¹⁰³

Dear Comrade Krenz!

After my conversation yesterday with Seiters and Schäuble, Federal Minister Seiters informed me today of the results. The Chancellor transmits the Chairman of the GDR State Council the following:

The course of yesterday's demonstration in Leipzig and the spontaneous exits from the GDR to the FRG which have occurred in the last few hours have produced public demands in the FRG, and increasingly in certain circles of the SPD, for the Chairman of the [GDR] State Council to declare publicly that the GDR is prepared to guarantee that opposition groups will be permitted and affirm that free elections will be held within a period to be announced if the GDR wants to receive material and financial assistance from the FRG. This applies also to the financial arrangements regarding travel [by East Germans to the West].

It should be noted that this path is only possible if the SED relinquishes its claim to absolute power. [The Party] should be prepared to work on equal terms, and in consensus, with all societal forces, churches and religious communities to discuss a true renewal, with the goal of achieving democratic socialism, and with the understanding [that they are] to be prepared to carry out any resulting decisions.

Under these conditions, the Chancellor thinks a great deal can be achieved and every option can be explored.

Federal Minister Seiters is authorized to be available for further informal discussions.

I ask that you take note of this.

With socialist greetings,
[Alexander Schalck]

[Source: Published in Hans-Hermann Hertle, Der Fall der Mauer: Die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates, 2nd edition (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999), pp. 486-87. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Minutes No. 49 of the Meeting of the SED Politburo, 7 November 1989

[EXCERPTS]

Information by Comrade O. Fischer on the situation regarding GDR citizens departing via the ČSSR.

Report compiled by:

O. Fischer

1. Comrade O. Fischer will make a suggestion, in agreement with Comrades F. Dickel and E. Mielke, for the SED Central Committee which allows for this part of the travel law that deals with permanent exit to be put into effect immediately through an executive order [*Durchführungsbestimmung*].
2. Comrade O. Fischer will inform the USSR's Ambassador to the GDR Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Comrade V[yacheslav I.] Kochemassov, and the Czechoslovaks about the proposal and the Politburo's position. At the same time, consultations with the FRG are to be carried out.
3. The mass media should use their influence to help that GDR citizens do not leave their country. They should inform about people who have returned. Responsible: Comrade G. Schabowski.
4. Comrade G. Schabowski is assigned to discuss this problem with the representatives of the bloc parties [Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats] in order to reach a joint position.

[Source: SAPMO-BA, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2358. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]



DOCUMENT No. 5
Memorandum of Conversation between
Comrade Oskar Fischer and the
Soviet Ambassador V[yacheslav] I.
Kochemassov,
7 November 1989, at 11:45 a.m.¹⁰⁴

The conversation took place at the request of the Minister, Comrade Fischer.

I

Comrade Oskar Fischer stated that the Politburo had discussed the problem of exits by GDR citizens, and the connected problems in the ČSSR (blocking of the border crossings...). [It was the GDR's duty] to relieve the Czechoslovak comrades. The GDR/FRG border would not be opened, because this would have uncontrollable effects. For the same reason, the border to the ČSSR could not be closed.

The following measures were planned:

1. The media campaign aimed at inducing GDR citizens to remain in their country will be intensified. It was being attempted to co-opt certain people (personalities) to join the campaign. At the same time, returnees from the FRG should also be effectively used in this

campaign.

2. The campaign against the FRG's "duty to take care of [the East Germans]" will also be intensified. In this effort the support of our allies is desirable. Our ambassadors in Western Europe have been instructed to work along the same lines.

3. The [implementation of the] part of the travel law that deals with permanent exit of GDR citizens will be put in effect in advance.

4. It is to be discussed with the ČSSR as to whether including its border crossings to Bavaria [Brambach-Vojlanov] as an exit route would bring relief. At the same time the ČSSR would be asked as to whether it could close the border with the GDR. That would mean, however, punishing well-intentioned GDR citizens. If the GDR were to close [its border], a power struggle would ensue.

5. The GDR will inform Bonn about what they can expect as far as GDR citizens traveling to the FRG are concerned. It will demand forcefully that the FRG oppose the entry of GDR citizens. We will take them at their word.

6. Comrade Schabowski will inform the bloc parties about these things today, and Comrade Jarowinsky will talk to the representatives of the churches.

7. Comrade Ziebart will be informed by the Minister immediately, since he has an appointment today in Prague at 1:15 p.m. with Comrade Lenart.

II

Comrade Gorbachev's opinion as to the larger picture as well as to our plans for the travel law is very important to Comrade Krenz. The GDR would appreciate the support of the USSR.

Comrade Kochemassov thanked Comrade Fischer for the information. As an additional measure, he suggested including the former allies (USA, Britain, France) in order to prompt them to put pressure on the FRG.

Comrade Fischer agreed.

Comrade Kochemassov assured [Comrade Fischer] that the request would be forwarded to Moscow at once and promised a prompt response.

[Source: BA, Berlin, DC-20 4933. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]

DOCUMENT No. 6
Material for the Session/For Circulation
in the Council of Ministers,
Draft: Temporary Transition Rules for Travel
and Permanent Exit from the
GDR, Berlin,
9 November 1989

Material for the meeting
 For Circulation in the Council of Ministers
 Berlin, 9 November 1989
Members of the Council of Ministers

It is requested that the attached draft resolution Temporary Transition Rules for Travel and Permanent Exit VVS b2-937/89 by the GDR Chairman of the Council of Ministers be approved through circulation today, Thursday, 9 November 1989, by 6:00 p.m.

[Harry] Moebis¹⁰⁵

Material for the meeting
 Secret
 Council of Ministers Circular b2-937/89
 [11/9/89]
 [40th] copy 4 pages
 V 1204/89

Title of the draft:
 Temporary—Transition
 Rules for Travel and
 Permanent Exit from the GDR

Draft presented by:
 Chairman of the Council of Ministers

signed: Willi Stoph

Berlin, 9 November 1989

Draft Resolution

The attached resolution on the temporary transition rules for travel and permanent exit from the GDR is approved.

Draft Resolution

To change the situation with regard to the permanent exit of GDR citizens to the FRG via the ČSSR, it has been determined that:

1. The decree from 30 November 1988 about travel abroad of GDR citizens will no longer be applied until the new travel law comes into force.
2. Starting immediately, the following temporary transition regulations for travel abroad and permanent exits from the GDR are in effect:
 - a) Applications by private individuals for travel abroad

- b) The responsible departments of passport and registration control in the People's Police district offices in the GDR are instructed to issue visas for permanent exit without delays and without presentation of the existing requirements for permanent exit. It is still possible to apply for permanent exit in the departments for internal affairs [of the local district or city councils].
 - c) Permanent exits are possible via all GDR border crossings to the FRG and (West) Berlin.
 - d) The temporary practice of issuing (travel) authorizations through GDR consulates and permanent exit with only a GDR personal identity card via third countries ceases.
3. The attached press release explaining the temporary transition regulation will be issued on 10 November.

Responsible: Government spokesman of the GDR
Council of Ministers

Press release

Berlin (ADN)¹⁰⁶

As the Press Office of the Ministry of the Interior has announced, the GDR Council of Ministers has decided that the following *temporary transition regulation* for travel abroad and permanent exit from the GDR will be effective until a corresponding law is put into effect by the *Volkskammer*:

- 1) Applications by private individuals for travel abroad can now be made without the previously existing requirements (of demonstrating a need to travel or proving familial relationships). The travel authorizations will be issued within a short period of time. Grounds for denial will only be applied in particularly exceptional cases.
- 2) The responsible departments of passport and registration control in the People's Police district offices in the GDR are instructed to issue visas for permanent exit without delays and without presentation of the existing requirements for permanent exit. It is still possible to apply for permanent exit in the departments for internal affairs [of the local district or city councils].
- 3) Permanent exits are possible via all GDR border crossings to the FRG and (West) Berlin.
- 4) This decision revokes the temporary practice of issuing (travel) authorizations through GDR consulates and permanent exit with only a GDR personal identity card via third countries ceases.

[Source: *Bundesbeauftragter für die Unterlagen der Staatssicherheit (BstU), Central Archive, MfS Working Group Nieber 553, sheets 15-19. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.*]

DOCUMENT No. 7
Transcript of the Tenth Session of the
SED Central Committee,
9 November 1989,
from 3:47 p.m. - 3:55 p.m.

[EXCERPTS]

Krenz: Comrades! Before Günther¹⁰⁷ speaks, I have to digress from the agenda once more. You are aware that there is a problem that wears on us all: the question of exit [from the GDR]. The Czechoslovak comrades are increasingly finding it a burden, as our Hungarian comrades did earlier. And, whatever we do in this situation, it will be a move in the wrong direction. If we close the border to the ČSSR, then we are basically punishing the upstanding citizens of the GDR, who would not be able to travel, and in this way put pressure on us. Even that would not have led to our gaining control of the situation, since the Permanent Mission of the FRG has already informed us that they have finished with renovations. That means that when they open the building, we will face the same problem again.

And, Comrade Willi Stoph, as acting Chairman of the Council of Ministers, drafted a decree which I would like to read to you here and now. Although the draft has been approved by the Politburo, it has such an impact that I wanted to consult the Central Committee.

Decision to change the situation for permanent exit of GDR citizens to the FRG via the ČSSR.

It is decreed:

1. The decree of 30 November 1988 about travel abroad for GDR citizens will no longer be applied until the new travel law comes into force.
2. Starting immediately, the following temporary transition regulation for travel abroad and permanent exits from the GDR are in effect:
 - a) Applications for travel abroad by private individuals can now be made without the previously existing requirements (of demonstrating a need to travel or proving familial relationships). The travel authorizations will be issued on short notice. Grounds for denial will only be applied in particularly exceptional cases.
 - b) The responsible departments of passport and registration control in the police county offices [VPKÄ] in the GDR are instructed to issue visas for permanent exit without delays and without presentation of the existing requirements for permanent exit. It is still possible to apply for permanent exit in the departments for internal affairs.
 - c) Permanent exits are possible via all GDR border crossings to the FRG and (West) Berlin.
 - d) The temporary practice of issuing (travel)

authorizations through GDR consulates and permanent exit with only a GDR personal identity card via third countries ceases.

3. The attached press release explaining the temporary transition regulation will be issued on 10 November.

The press release reads as follows: “As the Press Office of the Ministry of the Interior has announced, the GDR Council of Ministers has decided that the following temporary transition regulation for travel abroad and permanent exit from the GDR will be effective until a corresponding law is put into force by the *Volkskammer*.”

Then follow the four points that I do not need to read to you again.

I said that however way we do this, it will turn out bad. But it is the only solution that saves us from the problems of having to do everything through third countries, which does not further the international prestige of the GDR. Comrade Hoffmann?¹³

Hoffmann: Comrade Krenz, could we avoid this word “temporary”? It creates a constant pressure, as if people didn’t have any time left and had to get away as soon as possible. Wouldn’t it be possible—I don’t know the entire text—to avoid that or work around it?

Krenz: Yes, we could write: “According to the *Volkskammer*’s decision, the following transition regulation” and simply take out “temporary.” Transition regulation, after all, means temporary.

Dickel:¹⁰⁹ Until the travel law comes into effect.

Krenz: So, until the travel law comes into effect, the following things are valid, OK?

(noise)

Krenz: Agreed? (noise) Comrade Dickel, do you foresee any difficulties? It’s correct as it is, isn’t it? [noise, Chair rings bell]

Dickel: As far as the announcement is concerned—(shout: louder!) it perhaps would make sense for the Press Office of the Council of Ministers to make the announcement rather than the Ministry of the Interior, although we will actually carry out the decree, since it is a decree from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

Krenz: I would suggest that the government spokesman make the announcement right away. (shouting) What? (noise)

Banaschak:¹¹⁰ Isn’t it dangerous to adopt such a passage, “temporary”? ... (shouts: louder!) If we adopt such a passage, one that contains “temporary” or “transition solution,” couldn’t that have the effect that people aren’t sure what will come next... (noise, shouts: They just said that! Further noise, shouts)

Krenz: Therefore, we will say that we will avoid “temporary” as well as “transition rule” and say: until the travel law, which is to be passed by the *Volkskammer*, comes into effect, this and that is decreed. Agreed, Comrades? (shouts: yes!) Good, thank you very much. Günther Jahn, you have the floor.

(Quietly, to his neighbor at the presidium table, with the microphone turned off): It is always good to do something like that. (Loudly, with microphone turned on): After Günther Jahn, Günter Sieber will take the floor.

[Source: SAPMO-BA, tape Y 1/TD 738, transcribed in Hans-Hermann Hertle and Gerd-Rüdiger Stephan (eds.), *Das Ende der SED: Die letzten Tage des Zentralkomitees*, 4th edition, (Berlin: Dietz, 1999), pp. 303-306. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]



DOCUMENT No. 8
Günter Schabowski's Press Conference in the
GDR International Press Center,
9 November 1989,
6:53-7:01 p.m.¹¹¹

Question: My name is Ricardo Ehrman, representing the Italian press agency ANSA. Mr. Schabowski, you spoke about mistakes. Don't you believe that it was a big mistake to introduce this travel law several days ago?

Schabowski: No, I don't believe so. (Um) We know about this tendency in the population, this need of the population, to travel or to leave the GDR. And (um) we have ideas about what we have to bring about, (such as) all the things I mentioned before, or sought to mention in my response to the question from the TASS correspondent, namely a complex renewal of the society (um) and thereby achieve that many of these elements... (um) that people do not feel compelled to solve their personal problems in this way.

Those are quite a number of steps, as I said, and (um) we can't start them all at once. There are series of steps, and the chance, through expanding travel possibilities ... the chance, through legalizing exit and making it easier to leave, to free the people from a (um) let us say psychological pressure... Many of these steps took place without adequate consideration. We know that through conversations, through the need to return to the GDR, (um) through conversations with people who find themselves in an unbelievably complicated situation in the FRG because the FRG is having a great deal of trouble providing shelter for these refugees.

So, the absorptive capacity of the FRG is essentially exhausted. There are already more than, or less than provisional (um), that these people have to count on, if they are put up there. (um). Shelter is the minimum for constructing an existence. Finding work is decisive, essential...

Beil: (softly) ... integration...

Schabowski: ...yes, and the necessary integration into the society, which cannot happen when one is living in a tent or an emergency shelter, or is hanging around unemployed.

So, we want... through a number of changes, including the travel law, to [create] the chance, the sovereign decision of the citizens to travel wherever they want. (um) We are naturally (um) concerned that the possibilities of this travel regulation—it is still not in effect, it's only a draft.

A decision was made today, as far as I know (looking toward Labs and Banaschak in hope of confirmation). A recommendation from the Politburo was taken up that we take a passage from the [draft of] travel regulation and put it into effect, that, (um)—as it is called, for better or worse—that regulates permanent exit, leaving the Republic. Since we find it (um) unacceptable that this movement is taking place (um) across the territory of an allied state, (um) which is not an easy burden for that country to bear. Therefore (um), we have decided today (um) to implement a regulation that allows every citizen of the German Democratic Republic (um) to (um) leave the GDR through any of the border crossings.

Question: (many voices) When does that go into effect?... Without a passport? Without a passport? (no, no)—When is that in effect?... (confusion, voices...) At what point does the regulation take effect?

Schabowski: What?

Question: At once? When...

Schabowski: (... scratches his head) You see, comrades, I was informed today (puts on his glasses as he speaks further), that such an announcement had been (um) distributed earlier today. You should actually have it already. So, (reading very quickly from the paper):

- 1) "Applications for travel abroad by private individuals can now be made without the previously existing requirements (of demonstrating a need to travel or proving familial relationships). The travel authorizations will be issued within a short time. Grounds for denial will only be applied in particular exceptional cases. The responsible departments of passport and registration control in the People's Police district offices in the GDR are instructed to issue visas for permanent exit without delays and without presentation of the existing requirements for permanent exit."

Question: With a passport?

Schabowski: (um...)(reads:) "Permanent exit is possible via all GDR border crossings to the FRG.¹¹² These changes replace the temporary practice of issuing [travel] authorizations through GDR consulates and permanent exit with a GDR personal identity card via third countries."

(Looks up) (um) I cannot answer the question about passports at this point. (Looks questioningly at Labs and Banaschak.) That is also a technical question. I don't know, the passports have to ... so that everyone has a passport, they first have to be distributed. But we want to...

Banaschak: The substance of the announcement is decisive...

Schabowski: ... is the ...

Question: When does it come into effect?

Schabowski: (Looks through his papers...) That comes into effect, according to my information, immediately, without delay (looking through his papers further).

Labs: (quietly) ...without delay.

Beil: (quietly) That has to be decided by the Council of Ministers.

Question: (...Many voices...) You only said the FRG, is the regulation also valid for West Berlin?

Schabowski: (reading aloud quickly) “As the Press Office of the Ministry ... the Council of Ministers decided that until the *Volkskammer* implements a corresponding law, this transition regulation will be in effect.”

Question: Does this also apply for West Berlin? You only mentioned the FRG.

Schabowski: (shrugs his shoulders, frowns, looks at his papers) So ... (pause), um hmmm (reads aloud): “Permanent exit can take place via all border crossings from the GDR to the FRG and West Berlin, respectively.”

Question: Another question also: does that mean that effective immediately, GDR citizens—Christoph Janowski, Voice of America—does that mean that effective immediately, all GDR citizens cannot emigrate via Czechoslovakia or Poland?

Schabowski: No, that is not addressed at all. We hope instead that the movement will (um) regulate itself in this manner, as we are trying to.

Question: (many voices, incomprehensible question)

Schabowski: I haven’t heard anything to the contrary.

Question: (many voices, incomprehensible)

Schabowski: I haven’t heard anything to the contrary.

Question: (many voices, incomprehensible)

Schabowski: I haven’t heard anything to the contrary. I’m expressing myself so carefully because I’m not up to date on this question, but just before I came over here I was given this information. (Several journalists hurry from the room.)

Frage: Mr. Schabowski, what is going to happen to the Berlin Wall now?

Schabowski: It has been brought to my attention that it is 7:00 p.m.. That has to be the last question. Thank you for your understanding.

(um...) What will happen to the Berlin Wall? Information has already been provided in connection with travel activities. (um) The issue of travel, (um) the ability to cross the Wall from our side, ... hasn’t been answered yet and exclusively the question in the sense...., so this, I’ll put it this way, fortified state border of the GDR.... (um) We have always said that there have to be several other factors (um) taken into consideration. And they deal with the complex of questions that Comrade Krenz, in his talk in the—addressed in view of the relations between the GDR and the FRG, in ditto light of the (um) necessity of continuing the process of assuring peace with new initiatives.

And (um) surely the debate about these questions (um) will be positively influenced if the FRG and NATO also agree to and implement disarmament measures in a similar manner

to that of the GDR and other socialist countries. Thank you very much.

[Source: Author’s transcript of television broadcast. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]



DOCUMENT No. 9
Verbal Message from Mikhail Gorbachev
to Helmut Kohl,
10 November 1989¹¹³

As you, of course, know, the GDR leadership made the decision to allow the citizens of East Germany unrestricted travel to West Berlin and the FRG. It is understandable, that this decision was not an easy one for the new leadership of the GDR. At the same time, the decision underlines the fact that deep and fundamental changes are taking place in East Germany. The leadership is acting in a concerted and dynamic manner in the interests of its people, and they are opening a dialog with various groups and levels of society.

Statements from the FRG made against this political and psychological background, designed to stimulate a denial of the existence of two German states and encourage emotional reactions, can have no other goal than destabilizing the situation in the GDR and subverting the ongoing processes of democratization and the renewal of all areas of society.

We have received notice that a meeting will take place today in West Berlin, in which official representatives of the FRG and West Berlin will participate. A meeting is planned in the capital of the GDR at the same time.

With the current situation of *de facto* open borders and huge numbers of people moving in both directions, a chaotic situation could easily develop that might have unforeseen consequences.

In light of the time pressure and the seriousness of the situation, I thought it necessary to ask you, in the spirit of openness and realism, to take the extremely pressing steps necessary to prevent a complication and destabilization of the situation.

[Source: SAPMO–BA, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]

DOCUMENT No. 10
Verbal Message from Mikhail Gorbachev
to François Mitterrand, Margaret Thatcher
and George Bush,
10 November 1989

In light of the rather extreme situation currently taking place in the GDR, its capital city, and in West Berlin, and in reference to what I consider the correct and forward-looking decision by the new East German leadership, I have just sent a verbal message to Chancellor Kohl. I consider it necessary to inform you of the contents of the message as well.

According to our information, a meeting is taking place today in West Berlin in which official representatives of the FRG and West Berlin will participate. A parallel meeting is planned in East Berlin. With the current situation of *de facto* open borders and huge numbers of people moving in both directions, a chaotic situation could easily develop that might have unforeseen consequences.

I have appealed to Chancellor Kohl to take the extremely pressing steps necessary to prevent a complication and destabilization of the situation.

Our ambassador in Berlin was instructed to contact the representatives of the governments of the three Allied powers in West Berlin. I hope that you will also contact your representatives so that the events do not take an undesirable turn.

In general, I would like to emphasize that deep and fundamental changes are currently taking place in East Germany. If statements are made in the FRG, however, that seek to generate emotional denials of the postwar realities, meaning the existence of two German states, the appearance of such political extremism cannot be viewed as anything other than attempts to destabilize the situation in the GDR and subvert the ongoing processes of democratization and the renewal of all areas of society. Looking forward, this would bring about not only the destabilization of the situation in Central Europe, but also in other parts of the world.

I would like to express my hope that you receive this news with understanding.

[Source: SAPMO-BA, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant.]



DOCUMENT No. 11
Information about the Content of a Telephone
Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev
and Helmut Kohl,
11 November 1989¹⁴

The conversation took place on 11 November on the Chancellor's initiative.

The Chancellor said he wanted to respond to the verbal message from Mikhail Gorbachev, which he had received at the beginning of the meeting in West Berlin the previous day.

Helmut Kohl stated that the FRG welcomed the beginning of reforms in the GDR and hoped that they could be carried out in a calm atmosphere. He said: "I reject any radicalization and do not wish to see any destabilization of the situation in the GDR."

The Chancellor admitted that the majority of East German citizens that had crossed the borders to the FRG in the last few days did not want to stay in West Germany forever. He also assured him [Gorbachev] that the leadership of the FRG did not seek this either. Kohl said a mass resettlement to the FRG would be an absurd development. "We want the Germans to build their futures in their current homes." Kohl informed him [Gorbachev] that he was preparing for a meeting with Krenz at the end of November. In this context he mentioned that, given the current conditions in East Germany, the new GDR leadership should work dynamically to implement the reforms.

Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized that the current profound changes in the world would take different forms and occur within varying shape and intensities in different countries. It was necessary for all sides to maintain stability and to take a balanced approach.

[Gorbachev:] Overall, the basis for mutual understanding was improving. We were growing closer, which was very important.

As far as the GDR is concerned, the current leadership has a far-reaching program. All those questions, though, have to be worked through carefully, which required time.

I understand that all Europeans, and not only they, are following the events in the GDR. This is a very important point in world politics. But it is also a fact that the FRG and the Soviet Union, for historical reasons as well as due to the character of their current relationship, also have a greater interest in this development.

Naturally, every change is accompanied by a certain degree of instability. When I speak of maintaining stability, I mean that all sides should think through their actions very carefully.

I believe, Mr. Chancellor, that we are currently experiencing a historic change to different relationships and a different world. We should not allow careless actions to damage this change. Under no circumstances should the developments be forced in an unpredictable direction, which could lead to chaos. That would not be desirable under any circumstances.

Therefore I take very seriously what you told me during our conversation. I hope that you will use your authority, your political weight and your influence to keep others within the boundaries required to meet the demands of the time.

Kohl agreed with Gorbachev's statements. According to

him, the FRG government had discussed this question in this spirit.

The Chancellor emphasized his interest in maintaining contact, including with regard to the situation in the GDR.

[Source: SAPMO-BA, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, pp. 12-19. Translated for CWIHP by Howard Sargeant]

Dr. Hans-Hermann Hertle is a research fellow with the Center for Contemporary History Research Potsdam and an expert consultant for the Bundestag Commission on Social and Political Change in the New Laender.

¹ The paper is based on the following works by the author: Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer: Die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates*, 2nd edition (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999); *Chronik des Mauerfalls*, 8th edition (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999); Hans-Hermann Hertle and Gerd-Rüdiger Stephan, eds., *Das Ende der SED. Die letzten Tage des Zentralkomitees*, 4th edition (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999); Hans-Hermann Hertle/Kathrin Elsner, *Mein 9. November. Der Tag, an dem die Mauer fiel* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1999).

² See Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994); John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

³ For the international aspects of German unification, see the seminal work by Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1995); also see Werner Weidenfeld (with Peter Wagner and Elke Bruck), *Außenpolitik für die deutsche Einheit: Die Entscheidungsjahre 1989/90* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998); Karl Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung* (Bergisch-Gladbach: Bastei-Lübbe, 1991); and Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (New York: Oxford Press, 1994).

⁴ Mary E. Sarotte, "Elite Intransigence and the End of the Berlin Wall," *German Politics* 2:2 (August 1993), p. 270.

⁵ See Egon Krenz, *Wenn Mauern fallen* (Wien: Neff, 1990); idem, "Anmerkungen zur Öffnung der Berliner Mauer im Herbst 1989," *Osteuropa* 4 (1992), pp. 365-369; Günter Schabowski, *Das Politbüro* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990); idem, *Der Absturz* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1991).

⁶ James A. McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 199. Similar arguments may be found in Frank A. Ninkovich, *Germany and the United States: The Transformation of the German Question since 1945* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), p. 163, and Catherine McArdle Kelleher, "The New Germany. An Overview," in Paul B. Stares (ed.), *The New Germany and the New Europe* (Washington: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 16.

⁷ Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 161.

⁸ See Friedrich Schorlemmer, "Frieden vor Einheit sagen," in Peter Neumann (ed.), *Träumen verboten. Aktuelle Stellungnahmen aus der DDR* (Göttingen: Lamuv, 1990), p. 54.

⁹ See *Sunday Times*, 19 November 1989; Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union 1983-1990* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991), p. 363; Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston/Toronto/London: Little, Brown, 1993), p. 134; Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 468.

¹⁰ Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989* (Oxford: New York, 1995), p. 259.

¹¹ Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name* (New York: Vintage Books 1993), p. 345.

¹² See Cordt Schnibben, "Diesmal sterbe ich, Schwester," *Der Spiegel*, No. 42, 8 October 1990, pp. 102-109; Friedrich Kurz, *Die sieben Mythen der Wiedervereinigung* (München: Ehrenwirth, 1991), pp. 165-191.

¹³ See, e.g., Henryk Broder, "Eine schöne Revolution," *Die Zeit*, No. 3, 16 January 1992.

¹⁴ Even Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of the few analysts who predicted the end of communism, considered the GDR a stable state. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure. The Birth and Death of Communism in the 20th Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1989).

¹⁵ Bohdan Harasymiw, *Soviet Communist Party Officials: A Study in Organizational Roles and Change* (Nova Science Publishers, 1996), p. IX.

¹⁶ Peter Steinbach, "Deutsche Systemumbrüche im 20. Jahrhundert," *Das Ende der SED: Die letzten Tage des Zentralkomitees*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), p. 258.

¹⁸ Reinhard Bendix, *Freiheit und historisches Schicksal* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), p. 65.

¹⁹ For an example, see Claus Offe, "Wohlstand, Nation, Republik" in Hans Joas and Martin Kohli, eds., *Der Zusammenbruch der DDR* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 296.

²⁰ In the following presentation, aspects of the relationship among the party's leadership, its functionaries, and its members, the analysis of security policy, the development of ideology, the political behavior of the population in the years prior to 1989, and the genesis and policies of the reform and citizen movements will not be emphasized.

²¹ The documents of the government of the Federal Republic, in contrast to the readily available documents of the GDR, still fall under the usual restriction that they not

be released for thirty years. A selection of relevant documents is printed in *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik. Deutsche Einheit 1989/90*, compiled by Hans Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hofmann (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998).

²² Mary E. Sarotte demonstrates the knowledge gained by taking the international context of apparently exclusive German-German relations into consideration in her exemplary study on the international context of the basic treaty negotiations (1969-1973) in *Deutschland Archiv* 6 (1997), pp. 901-911. For her complete study, see Mary E. Sarotte, *The East German Ruling Regime and Ostpolitik in the Context of Superpower Détente, 1969-1973*, New Haven, 1999, dissertation ms.

²³ For an analysis of the decline of the Soviet Union, see Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998).

²⁴ See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Erinnerungen* (Munich: Goldmann, 1996).

²⁵ *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv* (SAPMO-BArch), DY 30/IV2/1/658; see Daniel Küchenmeister, ed., *Honecker-Gorbatschow: Vieraugengespräche* (Berlin: Dietz, 1993), pp. 14-15.

²⁶ Anatoli Tschernajew, *Die letzten Jahre einer Weltmacht: Der Kreml von innen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche

Verlags-Anstalt, 1993), p. 245.

²⁷ Eduard Schewardnadse, *Die Zukunft gehört der Freiheit* (Hamburg: Reinbek, 1991), p. 106.

²⁸ See Hans-Hermann Hertle, "Der Sturz Erich Honeckers: Zur Rekonstruktion eines innerparteilichen Machtkampfes," in Klaus-Dietmar Henke, Peter Steinbach and Johannes Tuchel (eds.), *Widerstand und Opposition in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), pp. 327-346.

²⁹ For a representation of the Federal Republic's *Deutschlandpolitik* in the 1980s, see Karl-Rudolf Korte, *Deutschlandpolitik in Helmut Kohls Kanzlerschaft. Regierungsstil und Entscheidungen 1982-1989*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998).

³⁰ The communiqué is printed in *Ein Erfolg der Politik der Vernunft und des Realismus* (East Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1987), pp. 37-38.

³¹ Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Conference. Vienna, 15 January 1989," *Deutschland Archiv* 4 (1989), pp. 467-69.

³² The seventh SED Party Convention in 1971 proclaimed the "increasing of the people's material and cultural standard of living on the basis of a high rate of development of socialist production, increasing the effectiveness of scientific-technical progress and increased work productivity as the main task."

³³ M. Rainer Lepsius, "Die Bundesrepublik—ein neuer Nationalstaat?," *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 1 (1994),

Excerpt from the Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, 11 October 1989

Wednesday, 11 October 1989

I have read the record of conversation of M.S. [Gorbachev] with Honecker in Berlin. I spoke with him [Gorbachev] about this. [Georgy] Shakhnazarov was present. M.S. [Gorbachev] called Honecker an "asshole" [*mudak*]. He, Gorbachev added, could have said to his [East German] lieutenants: I have undergone four operations, I am 78 years old, the stormy time requires too much strength, let me go, I have done my job. Then he might have kept his place in history.

Shakh[nazarov] and I voiced our doubts that even if he had done so he would have kept his place in history. 2-3 years ago it might have been possible. Today he has already been cursed by his people... The Politburo [of the SED] is in session for the second day in Berlin. [Honecker's future successor Egon] Krenz has promised "to raise a question" about changes to our Ambassador [Vyacheslav Kochemassov] for transmittal to Gorbachev. Honecker warned him: [If you do it] you will become my enemy.

However, Krenz seems to have taken the step. What is about to happen?

[Source: Notes of Anatoly Chernyaev, Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, f. 2, op. 2. Translated by Vladislav Zubok (The National Security Archive).]

p. 10.

³⁴ On this issue, see Theo Pirker, M. Rainer Lepsius, Rainer Weinert and Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Plan als Befehl und Fiktion: Wirtschaftsführung in der DDR* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995).

³⁵ See Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1992).

³⁶ Heinz Klopfer, *Persönliche Notizen über die Beratung beim Generalsekretär des ZK der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Erich Honecker*, Berlin, 16 May 1989, p. 42.

³⁷ The Valutamark (VM) was the currency the GDR used for foreign trade with the West. One VM corresponded to one (West German) DM.

³⁸ "Darlegungen Gerhard Schürers zur Zahlungsbilanz mit dem nichtsozialistischen Wirtschaftsgebiet," 16 May 1989, BA, Berlin Branch, E-1-56321.

³⁹ "Communiqué of the Meeting of the Political Advisory Committee of the Member States of the Warsaw Pact," 7-8 July 1989 in Bucharest, *Europa-Archiv* 20 (1989), p. 599; see also Thomas Blanton, "When did the Cold War end?" *CWIHP Bulletin* 10 (March 1998), pp. 184-7.

⁴⁰ Stephen Szabo, *The Diplomacy of German Unification* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992); Helmut Kohl, *Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit* (Berlin: Propyläen 1996), p. 74.

⁴¹ See Hannes Adomeit, "Gorbachev and German Unification," *Problems of Communism*, no. 4 (1990), p. 6.

⁴² Tobias Hollitzer, "Heute entscheidet es sich: Entweder die oder wir." Zum 9. Oktober in Leipzig, in *Horch und Guck* 2 (1998), p. 23-37; Elizabeth Pond, *Beyond the Wall: Germany's Road to Unification* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1993), p. 111-129; Ekkehard Kuhn, *Der Tag der Entscheidung: Leipzig, 9 October 1989* (Berlin-Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1992).

⁴³ Gerhard Schürer, Gerhard Beil, Alexander Schalck, Ernst Höfner and Arno Donda *Vorlage für das Politbüro des Zentralkomitees der SED, Betreff: Analyse der ökonomischen Lage der DDR mit Schlußfolgerungen*, 27 October 1989, SAPMO-BA, DY 30/J IV 2/2A/3252.

⁴⁴ Gerhard Schürer's comments: "We had the idea of bringing the continued existence of the Wall into the discussion. That is the first official document from the former GDR that, to my knowledge, dared bring up the Wall for discussion. Up to this time, Honecker's saying, 'The Wall will stand another hundred years!' was still the official line."

It was clear to me that the GDR's sovereignty could only be maintained in a restricted manner, since it was clear to me that if the FRG was going to give us 8-10 billion, the money would come with political demands attached. As economists, we could no longer have such an illusion because we knew that there was no other possible way out. The only way out was for us to gain access to capital for investments in new technology. If we were not able to do

this, annexation was the only possible result." (Author's conversation with Gerhard Schürer, 21 February 1992.)

⁴⁵ Compare the final version of the Politbüro draft, SAPMO-BA, ZPA-SED, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2356, with the original draft in SAPMO-BA, ZPA-SED, DY 30/J IV 2/2A/3252.

⁴⁶ Gerhard Schürer, Explanatory section of the draft "Analyse der ökonomischen Lage der DDR mit Schlußfolgerungen" (speech text), Berlin, 31 October 1989, p. 9.

⁴⁷ If not stated otherwise, sources and notes for the following section can be found in Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer*, pp. 143-44.

⁴⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Comrade Egon Krenz, General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR Council of State, with Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, 1 November 1989 in Moscow, Berlin, 1 November 1989, SAPMO-BA, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/329 (Document No. 1).

⁴⁹ Alexander Schalck's notes on his informal conversation with Wolfgang Schäuble and Rudolf Seiters is documented in Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer*, p. 483-85. (Document No. 2).

⁵⁰ Letter from Alexander Schalck to Egon Krenz, 7 November 1989 (Document No. 3).

⁵¹ *Deutscher Bundestag*, 11th Electoral Period, 173rd Meeting, 8 November 1989, Stenographic Report, p. 13017.

⁵² In German, the chant rhymes, "Visa frei bis Shanghai."

⁵³ See Document No. 4.

⁵⁴ See Document No. 5.

⁵⁵ See Document No. 6.

⁵⁶ Tenth meeting of the Central Committee of the SED, 9 November 1989 (transcription of a recording), documented in Hans-Hermann Hertle and Gerd-Rüdiger Stephan, eds., *Das Ende der SED*, p. 305 (Document No. 7).

⁵⁷ See Document No. 8.

⁵⁸ Tom Brokaw: "I would like to tell you that I knew that the Wall would come down. That was not the case. I did think that there would be a very interesting and important political story. So I went to Berlin simply to be in the midst of that story." (Author's interview with Tom Brokaw, 4 November 1998.)

⁵⁹ Michael E. Geisler, "Mehrfach gebrochene Mauer-schau: 1989-1990 in den US-Medien," in Rainer Bohn, Knut Hickethier and Eggo Müller, eds., *Mauer-Show: Das Ende der DDR, die deutsche Einheit und die Medien* (Berlin: Sigma, 1992), pp. 260-61.

⁶⁰ Author's interview with Michelle Neubert (NBC), 11 July 1995.

⁶¹ See the portrayal by Marc Kusnetz in Robert Goldberg and Gerald Jay Goldberg, *Anchors: Brokaw, Jennings, Rather and the Evening News* (Secaucus, NJ: Carol Publishing Group, 1990), p. 262, as well as Peter Ross Range, *When Walls Come Tumbling Down: Covering The*

East German Revolution, (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center, 1991), p. 7.

⁶²NBC Nightly News, Thursday, 9 November 1989, Title: "Berlin Wall is opened for unrestricted travel for the first time since its construction 28 years ago." Hit time: 7:01:47 (NBC News Archives, New York).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ A camera crew from the German television station SFB captured this scene with Tom Brokaw. The interview with Schabowski was aired on the NBC evening news shortly after 7:00 p.m. EST on 9 November 1989 (10 November, 1:00 a.m. in Berlin).

⁶⁵ George Bush: "I felt emotional about it. But I did not want to overplay the hand of the United States of America. I did not want at that critical moment for us to gloat, to stick my fingers in Mr. Gorbachev's eyes, which would have been the worst thing you could possibly do. So, restraint was called for." (Author's interview with George Bush, 2 July 1998.) See "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters on the Relaxation of East German Border Controls," 9 November 1989, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, George Bush, 1989*, Book II: July 1 to December 31, 1989 (GPO: Washington, 1990), pp. 1488-1490. See also George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), pp. 148-151.

⁶⁶ Margaret Thatcher, on BBC Radio 4, 10 November 1989, 2:00 p.m. For the British Prime Minister's approach, also see Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), pp. 792-794, and Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests: Reflections on Foreign Policy under Margaret Thatcher and John Major*, (London: John Murray, 1997), pp. 102-104.

⁶⁷ Francois Mitterrand, *France 1*, 10 November 1989, 6:00 p.m.

⁶⁸ See Jacques Attali, *Verbatim*, vol. III, (Paris: Fayard 1995, p. 337.

⁶⁹ Author's interview with Helmut Kohl, 25 November 1998.

⁷⁰ Author's interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, 8 December 1998.

⁷¹ Author's interview with Eduard Shevardnadze, 18 December 1998.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Author's interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, 8 December 1998.

⁷⁴ "Schön, ich gab die DDR weg." Interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, *Der Spiegel* (2 October 1995), p. 72.

⁷⁵ Nikolai Portugalov, in: Ekkehard Kuhn, *Gorbatschow und die deutsche Einheit* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1993), pp. 65, 70.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 70.

⁷⁷ ADN, 10 November 1989, 6:45 p.m.

⁷⁸ See Yuli A. Kvizinski, *Vor dem Sturm: Erinnerungen eines Diplomaten* (Berlin: Siedler, 1993), p. 15.

⁷⁹ Verbal message from Mikhail Gorbachev to Helmut Kohl, 10 November 1989, in SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/

2.039/319, sheets 15/16 (Document No. 9).

⁸⁰ Verbal message from Mikhail Gorbachev to President François Mitterrand, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and President George Bush, 10 November 1989, in SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, sheets 20/21 (Document No. 10).

⁸¹ Helmut Kohl: "I took Gorbachev's message very seriously. I also believe that this request was fateful for the following days. We now know that GDR State Security and parts of the SED leadership were sending their Soviet friends very threatening scenarios. They told them that order had broken down completely and that Soviet facilities and possibly the troops could be caught up in the chaos, and that their security—that was Gorbachev's concern—could no longer be guaranteed. The KGB had passed on such information from the Stasi to Gorbachev.

I now know from my later conversations with Gorbachev just how decisive this moment was, that he rather believed us than the KGB. Developments certainly would have taken a different path if Gorbachev had, to put it sharply, turned the military loose on 10 November 1989, as the Soviet leadership had in June 1953. That would have had terrible consequences.

We informed Gorbachev that his fears were groundless, that there was no upheaval, but that the people simply wanted to come together, that the mood remained upbeat and things were taking place peacefully. In this decisive hour, Mikhail Gorbachev believed me." (Author's interview with Helmut Kohl, 25 November 1998); Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991), p. 20.

⁸² Ibid., p. 23.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ "We wanted to welcome the change diplomatically, almost clinically—and try as best we could not to be overly emotional, so that Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and other Soviets who saw our reaction would not feel, as the President put it, 'that we were sticking our thumb in their eye'." James A. Baker, with Thomas A. Defrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy. Revolution, War and Peace* (New York: Putnam, 1995), p. 164.

⁸⁵ The chancellery's notes on the phone conversation are documented in Hans Jürgen Küsters and Daniel Hofmann, eds., *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit 1989/90* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1998), pp. 505-507.

⁸⁶ Information about the contents of the phone conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl on 11 November 1989, SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/2.039/319, sheets 17-19 (Document No. 11). Also see Teltschik, *329 Tage*, p. 27.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁸ See Robert K. Merton, "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," *American Sociological Review* 1 (1936), pp. 894-904.

⁸⁹ Robert K. Merton, "Die Self-Fulfilling-Prophecy," *Soziologische Theorie und soziale Struktur* (Berlin: de

Gruyter, 1995), pp. 399-413.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 399.

⁹¹ See M. Rainer Lepsius, "Die Bundesrepublik - ein neuer Nationalstaat?," *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 1 (1994), p. 10.

⁹² See the statement of the "Neues Forum" of 12 November 1989, "Die Mauer ist gefallen", *Die ersten Texte des Neuen Forum* edited for the state press agency for New Forum, (East Berlin: Tribüne Druckerei, 1990), pp. 20-21, as well as the proclamation "Für unser Land," dated 26 November but published on 28 November 1989 (see *Neues Deutschland*, 29 November 1989).

⁹³ See the detailed account in Rafael Biermann, *Zwischen Kreml und Kanzleramt: Wie Moskau mit der deutschen Einheit rang* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1997).

⁹⁴ Also see Dieter Grosser, *Das Wagnis der Wirtschafts-, Währungs und Sozialunion: Politische Zwänge im Konflikt mit ökonomischen Regeln* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998).

⁹⁵ See Lepsius, "Die Bundesrepublik—ein neuer Nationalstaat?," p. 10.

⁹⁶ From 25 September to 2 October 1989, Krenz participated in the ceremonies on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

⁹⁷ On Ulbricht's 1971 ouster, see Mary E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente and Ostpolitik, 1963-1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

⁹⁸ On the Nina Andreeva affair, see Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 168, 172-74.

⁹⁹ Reference to a German card game. The "black Peter" is a card you want to avoid holding at the end of the game.

¹⁰⁰ Reference to Honecker's hardline 13 October 1980 speech in Gera, in which the East German leader had demanded, among other things, the Western recognition of GDR citizenship.

¹⁰¹ Krenz's handwritten note on the address: "Kr. 7 November, 1989."

¹⁰² The note bears a handwritten comment from Krenz on the first page: "Comrade Schalck. 1) Thank you! 2) Please send me relevant material for talks with Seiters. 12 November/Kr"

¹⁰³ Krenz signed off on this letter with his initials "Kr."

¹⁰⁴ The document does not bear a registration stamp and is signed with Stoph's handwritten abbreviation "St."

¹⁰⁵ Head of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers since 7 November 1989.

¹⁰⁶ Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst, the official GDR press agency.

¹⁰⁷ Günther Jahn, the First Secretary of the SED District leadership of Potsdam, was next on the list of speakers.

¹⁰⁸ Hans-Joachim Hoffmann, born 1929, from 1973 to 1989 the GDR Minister of Culture and from 1976 to 1989/90, he was a member of the SED Central Committee and a Representative in the GDR Parliament. Hoffmann died in 1994.

¹⁰⁹ Friedrich Dickel, Army General, successor to Karl Maron as Minister of the Interior and the head of the People's Police, member of the SED Central Committee and delegate in the GDR Parliament, member of the National Defense Council.

¹¹⁰ Professor Dr. Manfred Banaschak, editor-in-chief of the SED theoretical journal "Einheit" [Unity].

¹¹¹ Author's transcript from the television recording. Schabowski was accompanied to the press conference by three other members of the Central Committee: Professor Manfred Banaschak, Helga Labs, Chair of the Teachers' and Instructors' Union, and Foreign Trade Minister Gerhard Beil.

¹¹² Schabowski at this point at first skipped the words: "and (West) Berlin, respectively," but this point brought a second question. See below.

¹¹³ The Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Yuli Kvizinski, presented the verbal message from Gorbachev to Kohl's advisor Horst Teltschik during the program in front of the Schöneberg Town Hall in Berlin. See Yuli Kvizinski, *Vor dem Sturm* (Berlin: Siedler, 1993), p. 15; see also Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage*. The SED leadership received the written version of this message from the Soviet embassy in East Berlin with the date of 13 November 1989.

¹¹⁴ The document is, like documents 10 and 11, information sent from the Soviet embassy in East Berlin to the SED General Secretary. According to Horst Teltschik, the phone conversation took place around 12:00 p.m. See Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage*, pp. 27-28.

