



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# The Martial Law Was Inevitable on December 1981 in Poland?

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### Abstract:

On 1980-1981 the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) endured a significant crisis. It could not cope to the increase popularity of “Solidarity” movement, the first independent trade union in a Soviet Bloc countries, which quickly becomes a social movement, a symbol of hope and an embodiment of the struggle against communism and Soviet domination which demands the reforms from the government. Solidarity Movement will cause serious damage to the image and the power of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). The Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) was undermined even inside by the appearance of the horizontal structures, the comrades who joined the Solidarity Movement though they did not leave the party. The Party was divided by internal fights. Poland’s economy had fall. The Soviet Union interests were deeply affected and it threat with armed intervention. In the leadership of the government and in the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) are placed in key positions people in uniform prepared to act within Poland and who are loyal to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union chose to act through these men to regaining the control on Poland and the rehabilitation of Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). On December 13, 1981, the Martial Law introduced by General Wojciech Jaruzelski stopped the opposition in order to gain more authority in Poland. Thousands of members of the Solidarity Movement were imprisoned overnight. Introduction of Martial Law seem to be premeditated by Soviet Union. But could Poland avoid the martial law?

**Keywords:** *Poland, Jaruzelski, Solidarity, Martial Law.*

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In my opinion the introduction of martial law in December 1981 in Poland was inevitable. More I think that it was premeditated by Soviet Union. Short time after activity legalization of Solidarity movement, the Soviet Union failed to bring the leadership people trained to operate inside Poland but who are loyal to Soviet interests in the state apparatus and in the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). In support of this point of view I consider the social and political conditions in Poland in 1980-1981 and the Soviet interests - to reform the Soviet Union and the entire communist bloc - which were put in danger the Solidarity Movement that was born in Poland in 1980. The first argument that comes to support the introduction of martial law in December 1981 in Poland was inevitable is the rise and the activity legalization of the Polish Solidarity Movement, a trade union, which quickly becomes a social movement, a symbol of hope and an embodiment of the struggle against communism and Soviet domination. The Solidarity Movement also wins the support of Catholic Church. A second argument is related to this fact is that the inevitably rise of Solidarity Movement caused serious damage to the image and the power of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). The Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) was undermined even inside by the appearance of the horizontal structures - the comrades who joined the Solidarity Movement though they did not leave the party. They will contest the orders of the political leadership so the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) becomes weak. A third argument that supports my point of view is that the Soviet interests deeply affected by the Solidarity Movement must be defended. It was chosen the solution of the Soviet reformers - a skillful game played under Soviet domination in Poland - the entering in the political arena - first as defense minister and then as prime minister and secretary general of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) – of the General Wojciech Jaruzelski a close of Yuri Andropov. All the time the crisis in Poland was under the total control of Soviet Union. The Polish inquiry was the main point of discussion at a number of meetings of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A lot of the documents associated with the Polish incidents have now been declassified.

The first argument that comes to support the introduction of martial law in December 1981 in Poland was inevitable is the rise and the activity legalization of the Polish Solidarity Movement - a trade union, which quickly becomes a social movement, a symbol of hope and an embodiment of the struggle against communism and Soviet domination. The Solidarity Movement also wins the support of Catholic Church. In July-August 1980 by the union of the old dissident groups appears the Solidarity Movement. A lot of strikes broke out all over Poland. In Gdańsk, Lech Walesa's team, although reaching an agreement on local issues, refused to cancel the strike until and other strikers from other cities will not get the satisfaction of solving their problems. “The strikes of summer 1980 were triggered by the latest attempt on the part of the government – announced on 1 July – to increase the prices of foodstuffs and fuel. The strikes which followed affected about 140 enterprises by the end of the month, including the Gdańskshipyard.” (Ramet, 2017: 173)

The political leadership of Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) realized that the political monopoly of the communist party is attacked by a concerted action across the country. In this situation, the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) had two alternatives -

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either to reach an agreement with the strikers or either to make use of force. As the strikes continued, the party realized that it would have to negotiate with the workers, and reach an agreement with the strikers. "Negotiations began on 23 august 1980, simultaneously in Gdańsk to Szczecin. So difficult were these talks that Cardinal Wyszyński decided to offer his assistance and thus, during the night of 27/28 august 1980, he sent his personal emissary, Dr. Romuald Kukołowicz, to meet with the Politburo and present his offer to form a mediation commission under his authority." (Ramet, 2017: 173)

In August 31, 1980 at Gdansk, between the strikers and the political leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) take place an understanding that it will mark a fundamental change in the political order. The strikers received in addition to the guaranteeing the right to strike, the freedom of opinion and access to the media also the recognition of the national and independent trade unions, which translates as a disloyalty of the Polish United Workers' Party towards the Marxism-Leninism thought. The Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) viewed this result as a great defeat and it was clear this fact because, on 6 September 1980, Edward Gierek was stripped of his post as party leader and expelled from the Politburo. On the same day, Stanislaw Kania, was elected to take power as Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) first Secretary.

Legally registered Solidarity Movement becomes stronger. Quickly it becomes a social movement, a symbol of hope and an embodiment of the struggle against communism and Soviet domination.

On September 3, 1980 the Report of Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union revealed the position of the Soviet leadership in regard to the agreements reached in August 31, 1980 at Gdansk between the Polish Government and the Inter-factory Strike Committee (Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy, MKS) and expresses the Soviet leadership concerns with the consequences of the agreements on the role of the Party in Polish society (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1980a: 2). According to the Report, the agreements between the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) and the so-called "United Strike Committees" (ZKS) in Gdansk and Szczeci are classified by the Soviet leadership as legalizing the anti-socialist opposition in Poland. More the report mentioned that "the opposition intends to continue the struggle to achieve its aims" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1980a: 3), and "the compromise that has been achieved will be only temporary in nature" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1980: 3). It suggested that the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) had to go on the defensive and prepare a counterattack to reestablishment of its influence and authority among the working.

"It is necessary to give overriding significance to the consolidation of the leading role of the party in society. The current political crisis has sharply weakened the influence and authority of the party among the working class. In such circumstances one must adopt all necessary measures for its organizational and ideological cohesion and for the reestablishment of its influence and authority." (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1980a: 3)

Worryingly, point 5 of the report referred to the strengthening of the socialist legal order through the use of state structures, and as a concrete recommendation it

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requested that: “pay greater attention to the army and devote special attention to the military-political preparation of soldiers. Use the opportunity to attract army command personnel to perform party-economic work as well” (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1980a: 5).

On September 17, 1980, representatives of thirty-five independent trade unions from all over Poland met at the Hotel Morski in Gdańsk to discuss future plans and actions. The group officially adopted the name Solidarity (Solidarność) as the title of the consolidated trade union, which represented three million workers in 3,500 Polish factories. Lech Wałęsa was elected president of the trade union.

Workers from various other sectors of work in Poland, students, journalists, writers, filmmakers, historians, doctors, engineers, architects, economists learned about the actions of shipyard workers and organized themselves in a similar way. Thus, farmers in Rzeszów, Poland, organized themselves under the name of Rural Solidarity. The students organized and formed the Independent Student Union. Poland has become more vocal about the economic, social and political problems. The situation was unprecedented, because since the end of World War II, the authoritarian climate imposed by the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) had blocked any dialogue.

Surprisingly, after the summer movements of 1980, on October 22 in the same year, a proposal regarding the introduction of the martial law for reasons related to the security of the Polish state appears. “The document breaks down the powers granted to the government through martial law, and notes that the powers of some government organs will need to be broadened.” (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1980b:1)

The Solidarity Movement also wins the support of Catholic Church. “The Church also benefited, with Catholic newspapers and magazines being allowed to increase their print runs. And there is direct cooperation between the Church and Solidarity, with advisers participating in the work of the trade union. In April 1981, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, hitherto chief editor of the Catholic periodical *Więź*, took over the editorship of *Tygodnik Solidarność*, the weekly news organ of Solidarity.” (Ramet, 2017: 174)

In May 1981, Poland suffered two hard blows - the death of the Cardinal Wyszyński (supporter of the Solidarity Movement) and the attempt on the life of the Pope John Paul II. Wyszyński's successor Josef Glemp was a man divided between the demands of the communist regime and the needs of his congregation.

Even in 1981 Solidarity movement continues to fight for his goals, but without noticing the preparations that were made for suppress of its activity. It is a period of political relaxation accompanied by economic hardship. In autumn of 1981, the political climate was damaged. As the control of general Jaruzelski in the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) becomes stronger, it was trying to discredit the leaders of Solidarity Movement. This will happen on December 4, 1981, when intelligence services records a meeting between Walesa and the other strikers at arms factory in Radom. The records will be spoofed and used as evidence. It's a matter of days until the declaration of martial law and arresting the leaders of Solidarity Movement.

A second argument is related to this fact is that the inevitably rise of Solidarity Movement caused serious damage to the image and the power of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). The Polish United

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Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) was undermined even inside by the appearance of the horizontal structures - the comrades who joined the Solidarity Movement though they did not leave the party. They will contest the orders of the political leadership so the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) becomes weak.

Timothy Ash, referring to the period 1980-1982, points out that although the basic structure of the political dictatorship is simple, totalitarian and monolithic, its daily politics are full of internal tensions and contradictions, which become more acute in times of political crisis. (Ash, 2002:8)

On April 23, 1981 Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Commission Report, emphasized the weakening of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) and the rise of Solidarity as an organized political force: "To a significant degree the PZPR has lost control over the processes under way in society. At the same time, "Solidarity" has been transformed into an organized political force, which is able to paralyze the activity of the party and state organs and take de facto power into its own hands. If the opposition has not yet done that, then that is primarily because of its fear that Soviet troops would be introduced and because of its hopes that it can achieve its aims without bloodshed and by means of a creeping counterrevolution". (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981a: 2)

At the Session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 30 April 1981 the Soviet leaders discussed the results of negotiations between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union delegation and the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) leadership. The Session was Brezhnev presiding and its taking part: Andropov, Gorbachev, Grishin, Gromyko, Suslov, Tikhonov, Ustinov, Chernenko, Demichev, Kuznetsov, Ponomarev, Solomentsev, Kapitonov, Dolgikh, Zimyanin, Rusakov.

Suslov, the chief ideologist of the Soviet Communist Party criticized the actions of the Polish leadership regarding Solidarity. He appreciated that Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) leaders were "indecisiveness" and he criticized the so-called "horizontal structures" which was "creating total disorder in the organizational structure of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) and are completely at odds with Leninist organizational principles for the structure of a Marxist-Leninist party". (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981b: 2-3)

Andropov appreciated that: "the Polish friends, in particular Comrade Kania, support the "horizontal structures," and this is leading, as you know, to the disintegration of the party". (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981b: 3)

In August 31, 1980, Edward Gierek the first secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) was replaced by Stanisław Kania. He was discredited following the signature of the agreement with Solidarity Movement. Stanisław Kania is a man with unclear vision and willing to compromise. Many comrades of the Communist Party join the Solidarity Movement, but they didn't leave the party. In this situation the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) could no longer work. The orders of political leadership were not clear. The fellow acting in horizontal structure of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) who also joined in the trade union movement began to challenge the orders given by the leadership of the

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Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). After the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Communist Parties were free to follow their own path to socialism. But the Soviet Union had never been accepted the disloyalty towards Marxism-Leninism thought by recognizing an independent trade union. By the willingly or by the need, the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) recognized even an independent trade union which was supported by millions of peoples and by the Polish primate. In this context the General Wojciech Jaruzelski was entering in the political arena of Poland.

In 1981, Jaruzelski finally secured a place in the history books of his country, a controversial one until now. As head of government and the Communist Party, Jaruzelski enacted martial law - a decision which he justified until his death by the imminence of the Soviet invasion. While Jaruzelski protected his act as necessary to prevent an armed intervention by the Soviet Union, the weight of historical proofs sets an ultimately failed trial to suffocate Solidarity movement on orders from Moscow.

A third argument that supports my point of view is that the Soviet interests deeply affected by the Solidarity Movement must be defended. "According to the official Soviet point of view, the difficulties in Poland were caused by two groups of reasons: subversive activities of imperialism and mistakes in domestic policy." (Bessonova, 2010: 69)

It was chosen the solution of the Soviet reformers - a skillful game played under Soviet domination in Poland - the entering in the political arena - first as defense minister and then as prime minister and secretary general of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) – of the General Wojciech Jaruzelski a close of Yuri Andropov. The Solidarity Movement with quick steps undermines Moscow's chances to introduce reform in the Soviet Union and in the entire communist bloc, by introducing the liberal market economy, but with the rigorous maintaining of the political control. The Solidarity movement must be stopped. "The Soviet was putting tremendous pressure a Polish prime minister Wojciech Jaruzelski to act. The grassroots opposition movement led by Solidarity was potentially catastrophic for Soviet." (Jones, 2018: 3)

Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed by the Soviet Union to act within Poland. Clearly he hadn't the option to decide alone. He can only propose a course of action which was subsequently approved by his superiors in Moscow. Since August 1980, the Ministry of Defense led by General Wojciech Jaruzelski made preparations to stop the rise of the Solidarity Movement. After entering of the legal activity of the Solidarity Movement the Soviet Union leadership decided to do a demonstration of power - the military maneuvers. A fleet of Soviet war occurs in the Baltic Sea near the Gdansk Bay and several tank's divisions occur at the eastern border of Poland. In the shortly time the General Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed as the prime minister. So, pro-soviet faction of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) took the control of the state apparatus, even if the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) leadership was losing ground. Early in 1981 in the secret was planned a military coup led by Wojciech Jaruzelski.

In this period in the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) occurring the major changes - in October the General Wojciech Jaruzelski assume the supreme position in the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) and became the general secretary of the Polish Communist Party. Stanislaw Kania was replacing. The communist establishment who

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implemented the discredit the Solidarity Movement leaders at the beginning of December 1981 can acted independently by the Polish Communist Party. This communist establishment included the General Wojciech Jaruzelski, General Kiszczak, General Siwicki, but also the men with or without military uniform who held the key positions in the government and in the industry. These men were loyal to the soviet agencies which had approved their appointment in these important positions. In this situation practically nothing could return Poland to the situation before 1980. Soviet intentions are obvious - regaining the control on Poland and the rehabilitation of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). Direct military action of Soviet Union would have made Poland an unbearable burden for the Soviet Empire. The Soviet Union inaction would have resulted in the loss of any chance that the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) to establish itself again as before. So the Soviet Union chose to act through items of fair prepared and trained to act receivable within Poland.

After Checinski the security of the regime depends at all times on the potential coercive power of the security and armed forces. The relative importance of Party, security services and military in preserving communist rule in Poland varies with circumstances. (Checinski, 1982: 23-27)

At the 14th meeting of the Warsaw Bloc Defense Ministers Committee took place in Moscow under the chairmanship of Marshal D.F. Ustinov, defense minister of the Soviet Union. The ministers discuss the Solidarity movement and protests in Poland, and how to handle the issue in the media. However, on the Soviet side were Marshal Kulikov (Commander-in-Chief of the United Armed Forces), Army General Gribkov (Chief of Staff of the Treaty), Marshal Ogarkov (Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Army), General Epishev (Head of the Political Directorate). The Polish People's Army (Ludowe Wojsko Polskie, LWP) Chief of Staff, Col.-Gen. Florian Siwicki, said in his speech, among other things, that the complex socio-economic situation in the country might produce serious disturbance inarms and military procurement for the Polish People's Army (Ludowe Wojsko Polskie, LWP) as well as for the armies of the alliance in the nearfuture. Then he spoke about government policies and he said: "these policies areaimed at bringing the country out from its complicated situation as well as unmasking the enemyactivities of those opposed to socialism, especially those of "Solidarity's" extremist circles" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981c: 2).

In his speech, Marshal Ustinov said that General Jaruzelski had asked for help in a telegram because the situation in Poland had deteriorated. Ustinov considered that the demand was justified, because socialism was endangered in that country, which could have serious consequences for the situation in the Warsaw Pact. He therefore proposed that a paragraph be inserted in the communique expressing support for the Polish Government, which would have meant military intervention in Poland. Romania, through General Olteanu, expressed an official point of view of the state leadership and stated that, from the information received from Bucharest, it results that General Jaruzelski had not addressed any request for help to the Romanian authorities. Also, General Olteanu requested that the other ministers could make the decision on which want it, but mentioning that Romania is against intervention in Poland.

The final text of the press, radio and television briefing on the work of the 14th meeting of the Committee of Defense Ministers is extremely relevant to the state of mind of the Soviet Union, formally supported by the other communist bloc countries, partners of the Warsaw Bloc. "The defense ministers committee expressed its alarm at

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the worsening situation in the Polish People's Republic (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, PRL). The subversive activities of the anti-socialist forces, behind whom stand the aggressive imperialist circles, has a direct impact on the fulfillment of the allied obligations of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact member-states. Solidarity was expressed with the Polish United Workers' Party's (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) battle, with all Polish patriots against counter-revolution, with the battle to bring the country out of its crisis. As a result, it was underlined that the Polish nation can rely completely on the support of the socialist states." (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981c: 3) Information will be published in the press by all the Warsaw Bloc countries, with the exception of the Romanian. This course of action was agreed upon by all the defense ministers except the General Olteanu, Romanian defense minister.

On December 13, 1981, Jaruzelski addressed the Polish nation. The Polish Radio informed about martial law being imposed at a 06:00 (6:00 a.m.) audition: "I declare that today the Military Council of national Salvation has been formed. In accordance with the Constitution, the State Council has imposed martial law all over the country".

The draft instructions to the Soviet ambassadors for the leaders of the fraternal countries contains about the martial law declared in Poland contains some interesting things. First of all, the declaration of martial law aimed at suppressing trade union movements: "detained the most extremist elements of Solidarity, the Confederation for an Independent Poland, and other anti-socialist groups" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981d: 2), and the operation was carried out in secret in order to facilitate the capture of trade union leaders: "to ensure the success of the operation, the Polish comrades observed strict secrecy. (...) Thanks to this our friends have succeeded in catching the enemy completely unawares, and the operation so far has been implemented satisfactorily" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981d: 2). But the most important thing was that "on the very eve of implementation of the projected operation, W. Jaruzelski communicated about it to Moscow" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981d: 2). The draft instructions conclude that the Soviet side has nothing to do with the declaration of martial law and that it is the choice of the Poles: "in so doing we ensured that the Polish comrades would resolve these matters solely by internal means" (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1981d: 2).

There are considerations that lead us to believe that the Soviet Union exerted extremely great pressure on the Polish leadership, which was likely to create among it the fear of a Soviet invasion of Poland, especially since this had happened in 1956 in Hungary and in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Certainly Polish leaders saw martial law as a way to prevent the Soviet invasion, but also to appease trade unions that were demanding more and more rights.

In conclusion, the introduction of martial law in December 1981 in Poland was inevitable. Since 1980 in the leadership of the government and in the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) are placed in key positions people in uniform prepared to act within Poland and who are loyal to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union chose to act through these men to regaining the control on Poland and the rehabilitation of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR).



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