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Political, Institutional and Consciousness Conditions of the Round Table Agreement in Poland. An Attempt at Conceptualization

Introduction

The political changes in Poland of 1989 have been the object of the rigorous empirical studies and explanations through various theoretical accounts. The explanations of the 'negotiated collapse' of communism may be divided into two basic groups: individualistic and holistic. The individualistic explanations focus on the preferences and goals of the negotiating actors and argue that the course of political events was a result of calculations made by individuals. The holistic interpretations, employing such categories as class, and/or nations, and/or civilization, and/or social systems explain the collapse of communism by its systemic failures, which determine the behaviour of the individuals. These two kinds of explanations both have their own advantages and disadvantages. Although the individualistic explanations provide a detailed interpretation of the different phases of political bargaining and strategies adopted by their main actors, they extract them from the social context and ignore social conditions and limitations imposed by the historical situation. On the other hand, holistic explanations focus on the reconstruction of the social and historical context but they usually ignore individualistic preferences, bias and finally mistakes committed by actors treating them as a simple embodiment of the social entities which they represented: classes, nations or social systems. The aim of this paper is to extend non-Marxian historical materialism (Nowak 1983, 1991) in order to capture the behaviour of individuals and their groups.

Let us, briefly, characterise this theory, which belongs to the holistic group of explanations in social sciences (Nowak 2009). Class divisions, in accordance with this approach, exist not only in economy, but also emerge spontaneously in other spheres of human activity, such as politics and culture. In each sphere of social life it is possible to distinguish a material level consisting of means of coercion, production

and indoctrination. The relation to means of coercion in politics determines a division of a society into two social categories: the class of rulers, which controls the use of means of coercion, and the class of citizens, deprived of such possibilities. In economy, the material level is made up of the means of production, which determines a division into the class of owners and the class of direct producers. In the cultural domain, the material level consists of the means of spiritual production – for example printing presses, radio and television.

Thus, control over the material means provides the basis for a typology of societies in non-Marxian historical materialism (further n-Mhm). Applying this criteria, it is possible to distinguish class societies, where existing classes are separated, and supra-class societies, where the class divisions are overlapped. For example, one social class, keen on increasing the range of its social influence, may seize control over means of coercion and production and mass communication. A society with a triple class of rulers-owners-priests, monopolising control over politics, economy and culture, exemplifies one type of supra-class system. This social system refers to the structure of communism. The apparatus of the Communist Party in Poland, which controlled not only political life, but also the economy and culture was the counterpart of the class of triple-lords. Communism was the system of triple-rule in a political version because possession of the means of production and indoctrination by the class of rulers-owners-priests was subordinated to the enlargement of power regulation. This social system evolved according to developmental mechanisms of a purely political society.

The theory of political domination is the point of departure in the explanation of communism (comparison of n-Mhm with other conceptualizations, see: Brzechczyn 2008). It is assumed that individuals possess a range of preferences which govern their actions. The whole of civil actions can be divided into autonomous actions and regulated actions. Regulated actions are taken by citizens for the fear of coercion by the authority. Autonomous actions are taken regardless of sanctions by the disposers of means of coercion. The interest of the authority consists of maintaining and expanding the sphere of regulation, whereas the interest of a civil class of maintaining and expanding the sphere of civil autonomy. The notion of class interests allows the conceptualization of the force of a class. The force of a class, at any given time, is its ability to realize its own interest by way of maximization or optimization of selected parameters of social life.

It is possible to distinguish, roughly speaking, three stages in the model development of a purely political society: the stage of the growth of political regulation, the stage of enslavement and the stage of the gradual decrease of power regulation. In the first stadium, the mechanism of political competition leads to a steady rise of power regulation. Those from the class of rulers, who do not compete, are eliminated from the political structure of power or, by process of trial and error, learn to enlarge their sphere of control. As a consequence, social autonomy shrinks and the sphere of power regulation enlarges which, in turn, provokes an outbreak of civil revolution.

Its failure opens the road to the total enslavement of the citizenry by the class of rulers. In this stage of political development, the power regulation reaches its apogee and fields of civil autonomy almost disappear. Since the state of enslavement, there appears a tendency towards a gradual revitalisation of independent social bonds, which increases the citizens' ability to resist.

This leads to a civil revolution, which is crushed, but rulers – in order to avoid a follow-up – reduce the scope of their control. However, mechanisms of political competition lead once more to the growth of power regulation, triggering a further outbreak of revolution on a greater scale. This forces rulers to make larger concession and makes it more difficult for them to repress rebels. Thus, a political society evolves according to the following scheme: civil revolution – repression – concessions – growth of political regulation – next political revolution with a wider social base. Finally, mass protests erupt and their scale is so widespread that authorities, instead of beginning with repression, have no choice but allow sweeping concessions, which reduces the control of the rulers to a level acceptable by the class of citizens.

An Attempt of Extension of the Theory of Power

According to the theory of power in n-Mhm, there is only one strategy of realization of class interest, namely the maximalist strategy. Maximisation of the interest of the class of rulers aims at the establishment of the largest possible range of regulation in any social conditions. This strategy limits the range of civil autonomy and may lead – in a consequence – to the growth of civil resistance. Besides, it is possible to distinguish two other strategies: compromise and minimalist. The compromise strategy maintains (or extends) the power regulation in such a way that it does not lead to civil resistance and, at the same time, guarantees a certain degree of autonomy to the class of citizens. A minimalist strategy of the realization of the class interest means resignation from power regulation in exchange for e.g. the actually physical survival of rulers (in time of revolutions).

Similarly, three strategies of realization of the civil class interest can be distinguished: the maximalist strategy is the extension of the range of its autonomy, which leads to a limitation of the rulers' regulation and it does not provoke their counteraction; the compromise strategy in such way maintains (or extends) civil autonomy that it does not provoke the authority's reaction and guarantees the realization of the ruling class interests. Finally, the minimalist strategy means resignation from the maintaining of civil autonomy in exchange for e.g. the actually physical of the citizens threatened by authorities' repressions (e. gr. during a phase of enslavement).

According to Nowak (1991), the hierarchy of power always shapes the institutional structure in the form of a state pyramid. The constituents of this pyramid of political power are the supreme ruler and institutional positions within the elite of power and the apparatus of power. The supreme ruler is the institutional position

ascribed the largest sphere of influence. The elite of power is a set of positions with ascribed spheres of influence, each one smaller than the supreme ruler's but larger than any of an apparatchik's. However, the sum of the spheres of influence of members of the elite of powers is greater than the sphere of influence ascribed to the supreme ruler. Other positions in the state pyramid are occupied by apparatchiks of different levels, each with a smaller sphere of influence than those of the elite of power and the supreme ruler. However, the sum of spheres of influence ascribed to all apparatchiks is larger than the range of regulation ascribed to the positions within the elite of power and the position of the supreme ruler altogether.

Analogically, the class of citizens forms similar institutional structure (Brzechczyn, 2004). The basis of the network of autonomous civil relations is constituted by material means of social self-organization such as premises, lecture halls, printing machines, etc. In terms of relation to these means the civil class can be divided into the *civil leadership* and *rank and file citizens*. Members of the leadership make effective decisions concerning the intended use of these means. A rank and file citizen does not possess this decision-making power. As a disposer of apparently inconspicuous resources constituting the infrastructure of each civil movement an ordinary member of the leadership is able to endorse or block certain actions. A leadership member's position in the civil society depends on how many actions of rank and file citizens he or she can control. In a mass civil movement there are always some individuals willing to extend their sphere of influence for themselves. As a result of the struggle for social influence, idealistic civil activists become sidelined. After some time, the leadership (or civil elite) of the civil class will be dominated by those who have extended their spheres of influence or have learnt effectively how to do it. This tendency of oligarchisation among the class of the citizens is as natural as the mechanism of power competitiveness among the class of the rulers.

The division into the leadership and the civil masses is established following an institutionalization of the class of citizens. It can thus be assumed that the class of citizens has a certain organizational structure featuring the organization authority and ordinary members. A concept of an *organizational pyramid* can be then introduced, which is similar to that of a *state pyramid*. The organizational pyramid consists of the *leader* (counterpart of *supreme ruler* in the state pyramid structure), *civil elite* (*elite of power*), *organization core* (*apparatus of power*) and rank and file organization members. The first three components of the civil class organization form the *civil organization authority*. Each position within this institutional framework is ascribed a certain sphere of decision-making; greater in case of leader, lesser in case of a member of organizational core.

The question remains however, why do citizens agree to voluntarily obey their own elites? Four factors should be mentioned. First, the civil elites are responsible for restitutions and maintenance of the network of independent civil relations. Second, the rulers direct their political repressions first against the civil elites. Third, an internally structured civil class prevents social anomic and, fourth, united citizens are able to force the rulers to make larger concessions than an unorganized class cannot.

The question of participation of class elites in the process of making a class compromise must involve at least a rudimentary definition of relationship between social classes and their own elites. The elite lays out long-term strategies of realization of the interest of a given class. As previously mentioned above, in general three strategies of realization of both types of class interests can be identified: maximalist, compromise and minimalist.

The feasibility of a given strategy depends on the force of both antagonistic classes, which determines class conditions in a society. In the stage of gradual growth of power regulation and enslavement, the most optimal strategy for the ruling class is the maximalist strategy because allow to enlarge, in the most effectively way, the sphere of regulation of the whole class. The compromise strategy gradually becomes optimal in the stage of the cyclical decrease of power regulation because it reduces the losses in power regulation. A minimalist strategy becomes optimal in the case of a victorious revolution because, at the cost of relinquishing a sphere of influence, the rulers can at least save their lives.

Similarly, compromise strategy is optimal for citizens in the stadium of the growth of political regulation and in the stadium of enslavement because it allows reducing losses in civil autonomy. In the stage of the cyclical decrease of power regulation, the maximalist strategy is the most optimal for citizens because it allows the most effective way to enlarge their sphere of autonomy. The minimalist strategy is optimal in the case of repressions used by authorities (in case of lost revolutions) because resignation from autonomy becomes a condition of physical survival.

It turns out that the recognition of class conditions and choice of appropriate strategy are not made by individual members of the given class but by its elite. If a specific strategy of realization of class interest is effective, it will become widely accepted by the ordinary members of the given class via imitation. Only when the class strategy, proposed by the elite is ineffective, would individual members of a given social class seek their optimal strategy of realization of class interest on their own. The most successful ones would constitute a new class elite which would promote the most optimal – in specific class conditions – strategy that becomes widely adopted within the given class. The existence of the class elite is advantageous for the entire class because it reduces the time of choice and adaptation of an optimal political strategy in particular class conditions.

The Political, Institutional and Consciousness Conditions of the Class Compromise

A class compromise is not made between entire social classes but between their representatives known as class elites. Reaching a social compromise depends on the:

- i. balance of power between the class of rulers and the class of citizens;
- ii. choice of the compromise strategy by the civil elite following proper recognition of the force of the civil class;

- iii. choice of the compromise strategy by the elite of power following proper recognition of the force of the ruling class;
- iv. effective organization of the class of citizens letting to introduce a strategy chosen by its elite;
- v. effective organization of the class of rulers letting to introduce a strategy chosen by its elite.

The balance of power between social classes is maintained when the force of the civil class is sufficient to prevent repressions by the ruling class, but too weak to enforce political concessions from the ruling class. On the other hand, the force of the ruling class is sufficient to prevent the civil loop, but too weak to suppress the network of independent civil relations. However, a compromise is reached only when the balance of power between the classes is recognized properly by the class elites which choose the compromise strategy.

There are two possible types of erroneous identification of class conditions: (i) the class elite overestimates the force of its own class and underestimates the force of the opposing class elite – in this case it chooses the maximalist strategy; (ii) the class elite underestimates the force of its own class and overestimates the force of the opposing class – in this case it chooses the minimalist strategy. When the class elites incorrectly recognize the class conditions and chooses a wrong political strategy, a compromise is not found.¹

A choice of appropriate strategy is a not sufficient condition of class agreement because such a strategy has to be implemented among the members of a given class. The existence of such organisation on the civil side is another condition of class agreement. In addition to this, reaching a compromise accelerates the institutionalization of the civil class and reinforces the natural oligarchisation tendencies of the civil organization. These distinguished members of the civil elite are privileged to negotiate with the rulers and are thus in a better position than those with whom the authorities are not willing to talk.

Although, the three conditions outlined above: material (balance of power between classes), institutional (effective institutional organization of both classes) and consciousness (compromise strategies chosen by class elites) jointly form the sufficient condition of class agreement, the largest influence in this configuration of factors/conditions is exerted by the balance of power between classes being able to formulate and incorporate compromise strategy by elites of both classes. The formulation of political strategy additionally strengthens the oligarchic tendencies inside the citizenry.²

¹ More on this: Brzezczyn 2004.

² An alternative configuration of factors has been forwarded by Petreșu (2008, 4–8), who distinguishes three kinds of factors contributing to the collapse of communism: structural factors (economic failure and decay of ideology), nation-specific factors (political culture of society) and conjunctural factors (external and internal – for example the impact of Radio Free Europe). However, he attributes the decisive impact on making compromise to the political culture of the authorities and the ruled community (Petreșu 2008, p. 6).

From the Martial Law to the First Free Elections in Poland

Let us now exemplify the aforementioned considerations, focusing on the three conditions of the social compromise (based on following monographs: Codogni 2008, Dudek 2004, Garlicki 2004, Skórzyński 2009, and Trembicka 2003). The *Solidarność* movement was the result of mass strikes held in Poland in July and August 1980. The communist authorities, under the pressure from the masses, were forced to withdraw from regulation of large spheres of social life and allow with existence of independent trade unions. The introduction of martial law was an attempt of the reversal of this social situation. Despite these efforts, the communist authorities between 1981 and 1986 were not able to destroy the underground activity of *Solidarność*. According to a report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in December 1985, there were three hundred and fifty underground structures and groups in which thirty-four thousand people were involved. The police analysts estimated that about 5–6% of society manifested a so-called “hidden resistance”. Underground activity therefore appeared to be a stable phenomenon in what was the material condition of compromise.

The second condition was the institutionalization of the *Solidarność* movement. One of the most noticeable tendencies in this movement was the growth of its centralization and autocratisation. In the Independent Self-governing Trade Union “*Solidarność*” (*Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy Solidarność – NSZZ “Solidarność”*) appeared clear division into the apparatus of power and rank and file union members appeared. However, between 1980 and 1981, the pressure of the rank and file union members was considerable enough to curb such tendencies, for example, the development of competencies of the *Solidarność* National Commission (*Komisja Krajowa*). It was only due to the repression under martial law in Poland after December 13, 1981 that the civil masses withdrew from social activities. One of the objectives of the *Solidarność* Interim Coordinating Commission (*Tymczasowa Komisja Koordynacyjna*), established in April 1982, was to hold a general meeting of the union statutory authorities. After the amnesty in Poland in September 1986, a meeting of the National Commission members became entirely possible. However, instead of this, Lech Wałęsa and various groups around him appointed a number of extra-statutory bodies supervising the trade union activities. In October 1986 the Temporary Council of NSZZ “*Solidarność*” was established. In 1987 the Temporary Council and the underground Interim Coordination Commission were dissolved and replaced with the National Executive Committee (*Krajowa Komisja Wykonawcza*), with all its members appointed by Lech Wałęsa himself.

Wałęsa’s authoritative actions led to the emergence of opposition inside the union. In March 1987 the Workgroup of the National Commission of NSZZ *Solidarność* (*Grupa Robocza Komisji Krajowej*) was created, which included democratically elected members of the Commission, among others: Andrzej Gwiazda, Seweryn Jaworski, Marian Jurczyk, Jan Rulewski and Andrzej Słowik. With no access to national large-circulation periodicals (e.g. “*Tygodnik Mazowsze*”) and foreign aid, the Workgroup was unable to block the growing oligarchisation of the union structure.

This internal division of the “independent Polish civil society” of that time into constructive and radical opposition groups can now be interpreted with the aid of the theoretical framework discussed earlier. The strategy of the union structures loyal to Lech Wałęsa, which implemented a political program developed by a group of advisors originating from left-wing Workers’ Defence Committee (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*) and Roman Catholic circles, can be conceptualised as an example of compromise strategy. It stipulated reaching a compromise with the PZPR that would secure retaining power by the communists on the one hand, and on the other hand, guaranteeing society real political influence and control. At the same time, the political programme of the opposition inside the union and the “right-wing independence” organizations (Fighting Solidarity (*Solidarność Walcząca*), Confederation of Independent Poland (*Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej*), Liberal Democratic Party ‘Independence’ (*Liberalno-Demokratyczna Partia ‘Niepodległość’*)) can be described as an example of maximalist strategy assuming complete removal of the PZPR from power after fully democratic and free parliamentary elections.

The other side had been gradually preparing for a social compromise since 1986 by incorporating institutions which were already well established in Western European democracies into the state system of the late Polish People’s Republic. In 1987, the Office of Ombudsman was created and on November 29, 1987, the second nationwide referendum in the history of communist Poland was held which ended in the defeat of the communist authorities. Another example of “controlled openness” in the Polish People’s Republic was the appointment of a 56-member Consultative Council to Chairman of the Council of State in 1986. The Council members included a number of “independent” individuals, and the Council permitted publication of former underground magazines such as *Res Publica* and *Konfrontacje*, which were forums of the democratic opposition.

A factor which greatly contributed to the success of the compromise strategy on both sides of the social conflict, was a series of strikes in April, May and August 1988. By the end of April 1988 a strike of city transit employees demanding pay rises began in Bydgoszcz. The next day the workers of the Lenin Steelworks in Kraków went on strike, demanding pay rises but also re-employment of union activists from NSZZ “Solidarność”. On April 29, workers of the Stalowa Wola steel mill went on strike demanding the restoration of the Solidarność Factory Committee. A strike in the Gdańsk Shipyard followed on May 2, 1988, which, however, ended eight days later after the strike in the Kraków steelworks was crushed on the night from May 4 1988.

The second wave of industrial strikes took place in the second half of August 1988, commencing with a strike in the Manifest Lipcowy Coal Mine in Jastrzębie-Zdrój, which quickly spread to 14 different mines. Strikes also broke in the Port of Szczecin on August 17 and in the Northern Port in Gdańsk on August 20. Two days later, the Gdańsk Shipyard and Stalowa Wola steel mill went on strike again.

Due to the impact of the strikes, a meeting between Lech Wałęsa and General Czesław Kiszczak took place on August 31, 1988 to resolve the conditions of opening the Round Table Talks. After the meeting, the Solidarność Chairman called on the

workers to end their strikes, which met with protests. This peculiar stalemate in the autumn of 1988 paved the way for the implementation of compromise strategies on both sides of the social conflict in Poland. However, the next meeting on September 15–16 resulted in an impasse, which was not resolved until the end of 1988. The communist authorities were against the legalization of NSZZ Solidarność, following the principle “one trade union per factory” and only approved of those opposition Round Table negotiators who “accepted the existing legal order in the state.” The government questioned twelve names of negotiators (among other Kuroń and Michnik) on the opposition list. The discrepancies between the representatives of the government and Solidarność were so serious that both sides were not even able to agree on the content of a joint communiqué. During the discussions with the authorities Wałęsa decided to accept the government version of the communiqué, which explained that the main subject of the Round Table Talks, scheduled to start in mid-October, would be “the structure of the Polish trade union movement.” Wałęsa’s decision ignored the instructions of the National Executive Committee, which clearly stipulated that the prerequisite to start negotiations was a “solemn declaration of the communist authorities concerning the legalization of the Union” (Dudek 1997, p. 18; Skórzyński 1995, p. 105). Finally, the impasse was broken in early December after the television debate between Lech Wałęsa and Alfred Miodowicz (leader of the pro-government trade union, the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions). On December 6, 1988 the spokesman of the Polish cabinet, Jerzy Urban, announced that the authorities considered Lech Wałęsa to be a credible negotiator. After that, events began to unfold rapidly. On December 18, 1988, the Citizens’ Committee (*Komitet Obywatelski*) was established with fifteen thematic sections. The Committee membership list consisting of one hundred and nineteen people was arbitrarily drawn up by a team consisting of Lech Wałęsa’s closest associates; Bronisław Geremek, Jacek Kuroń and Adam Michnik.

In the opposing camp, the communist party leaders used this period of impasse to convince the Party apparatus that compromise with the opposition was necessary. For this purpose, the party top brass used internal bulletins to point to the threat of further social upheaval unless a compromise was reached. In January 1989, the Ministry of Interior Affairs registered forty-nine strikes in which fifteen thousand people participated. This was seven times more strikes than in December 1988. In February 1989 there were sixty-seven strikes (with sixty thousand participants) and in March – two-hundred and sixty strikes (Dudek 2004, p. 243). Finally, at a two-part general assembly of the PZPR Central Committee (December 20–21, 1988 and January 16–17, 1989) Wojciech Jaruzelski, Czesław Kiszczak, Mieczysław Rakowski and Florian Siwicki threatened the members of the party apparatus with dismissal unless they accepted negotiations with the Solidarity opposition.

During the two-month Round Table talks, the PZPR leadership exerted its influence on the course and pace of the democratisation process and secured its own place in Poland’s political life. They agreed to hold partially free and non-confrontational parliamentary elections, with 65% of the seats in the lower chamber

(Sejm) reserved for the Communist Party and its satellite parties, Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*) and United Peasant Party (*Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*). The remaining 35% of the seats in the Sejm were to be democratically elected. In addition, thirty-five seats were to be elected via the country-wide list of the PZPR candidates with no possibility of runoffs. The term of office of the newly elected parliament was four years. Another institution guaranteeing the continuity of the state system was the newly established office of the President which was given quite extensive powers such as the power of veto, the function of commander-in-chief of the armed forces, presiding over the Committee of National Defence, and appointing the Director of the National Bank of Poland (*NBP*). The President also had the power to dissolve Parliament if the Sejm failed to pass the budget bill within three months, failed to appoint the Cabinet or passed an act of law "threatening the President's constitutional prerogatives." The President was to be elected by the National Assembly to a six-year term of office. On April 17, 1989 NSZZ *Solidarność* was officially re-legalized by the Warsaw Provincial Court. However, the Union statute was supplemented with an accessory contract which limited the Union right to strike based on the Trade Unions Act from 1982.

The Campaign for the June 1989 elections stimulated social mobilization, especially in the provinces. Due to it, the level of opposition of Polish citizenry to communism could become more visible. The election of June 4, 1989 brought a landslide victory for *Solidarność*, with the turnout of 62% of voters. The *Solidarność* candidates won 160 out of 161 possible seats in the Sejm and ninety-two seats in the Senate. The government failed to secure a single seat in the Senate, while only three candidates reached the required majority of popular vote. Out of thirty-five seats on the country-wide list, only two were gained by the government.

Although the Round Table compromise brought a considerable increase in civil autonomy in Poland, the concessions made by the Solidarity side appeared too big in relation to the civil support that was evident during the June elections. The proportions of electoral victories came as a surprise. Although good election results had been expected, *Solidarność* had only hoped to win 50–60% of seats eligible in the Sejm and the Senate (Paczkowski 1995, p. 581). The results of the elections did not radicalize the stance of the *Solidarność* leadership during later negotiations. Two days after the election, the *Solidarność* representatives, under pressure from Czesław Kiszczak, who threatened to nullify the election results, agreed to make amendments to the electoral regulations during the campaign. These changes made it possible to enter thirty-three country-wide list candidates to the Sejm (Dudek 1997, p. 48). In protest, the organizers of the election campaign of the Citizens' Committee in Warsaw resigned before the second run, in which only 25% of eligible voters took part (Skórzyński 1995, p. 273). This decision may be interpreted as a critique of the compromise strategy accepted by *Solidarność* leadership.

The compromise strategy of the *Solidarność* elite, keen on maintaining the Round Table political status quo at all costs, and ignoring the rise of opposition to the system by the majority of Polish society, continued. On July 19, 1989 Wojciech Jaruzelski was

elected President of the Republic of Poland with the support of Sejm deputies from the Citizens' Parliamentary Club. On July 29, 1989 Jaruzelski named Czesław Kiszczak as the new Prime Minister. Kiszczak's nomination caused a wave of unrest and protests. In the third week of July there were thirteen strikes, in the fourth week of this month – twenty-seven strikes but in the first week of August there were eighty-five strikes in which fifty-six thousand people participated. The PUWP's leaders realized that Kiszczak's government was unable to calm the situation. On August 14, Kiszczak resigned from forming the government which opened the way to the nomination of Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Contrary to most expectations, Mazowiecki's cabinet did not revert the compromise strategy of *Solidarność* camp. The Polish United Workers' Party took over the ministries of defence, internal affairs, international economic cooperation, transport and communications. A PZPR nominee became the Director of the National Bank of Poland. In the budget proposal for 1990 the government assigned 5 billion Zlotys to the Office of Control of Press and Shows and prepared a new "democratic" state censorship bill. The Polish Prime Minister delayed his appointment of undersecretaries of state to key cabinet ministries for over six months. Only in April was the communist Security Service (*SB*) dissolved and replaced with the Office for State Protection (*UOP*). The new UOP employees were mostly former SB agents who had positively passed vetting procedures (ten thousand out of fourteen thousand). By June 1989, only twenty-three out of forty-nine province governors had been replaced. Nothing prevented the destruction of files of the communist Internal Military Service (*WSW*) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (Dudek 1997, p. 81–85).

The maintenance of the compromise strategy led to splits in the *Solidarność* camp. In May 1990 the Centre Agreement Party (*Porozumienie Centrum*) was founded, which advocated stepping up political reforms in Poland: free parliamentary elections (in spring 1991 at the latest), presidential general elections (in summer 1990 Lech Wałęsa was to be elected President by the National Assembly) and preparation of a new Polish constitution. Due to pressure from radicalized *Solidarność* factions, Wojciech Jaruzelski's term of office was shortened. In autumn 1990 Lech Wałęsa was elected President in national general elections and almost one year later, the first fully democratic parliamentary elections were held in Poland.

Conclusions

The presented analysis of conditions contributing to the class compromise still leaves aside a number of significant factors of social life in Poland. One of them was the Polish Roman Catholic Church, which model would have taken the role of mediator: during negotiations, the elites of both classes are not thrown back on their own resources but at critical moments can make use of third party mediation. Furthermore, the above analysis does not account for the economic aspect of social processes. The growing crisis of a communist command economy as well as the failure of economic transformations greatly influenced the adoption of compromise strategy

by the ruling class (description of this process in the light of n-Mhm, see: Brzezczyński 2004). Finally, an important dimension was the international situation. The Autumn of Nations in 1989 triggered by the Spring of Solidarność and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union soon rendered the Round Table political arrangement obsolete and unfit for the new system of power (Brzezczyński 2007).

It thus appears that, between autumn 1988 and summer 1989, the Solidarność elites under leadership of Lech Wałęsa recognized the configuration of the class forces more effectively and chose their compromise strategy more accurately. The emergence of opposition inside Solidarność and right wing opposition proves that there was a possibility of the different interpretation of the social situation in Poland and taking a more uncompromising political strategy. However, the June election turnout of more than 50% of eligible voters was undoubtedly an indication of social support for Solidarność resulting from an accurately chosen political strategy.

Paradoxically, the compromise political strategy, which most effectively contributed to the growth of civil activity gradually, appeared to be dysfunctional in the social conditions of the growth of civil mobilization and contestation. Namely, between autumn 1989 and autumn 1991, owing to the rapidly changing international situation and the growth of social activity of Polish society, the parties advocating a stepping up of political reforms in Poland generally recognized the class forces better. Their political platform can be interpreted as a maximalist one aimed at the growth of civil autonomy. A good illustration of this fact was Wałęsa's victory in the presidential elections – for whom maximization of political transformations in Poland became the main cornerstone in his later political platform – and electoral defeat of Mazowiecki representing the compromise strategy who lost to a maverick presidential candidate Stanisław Tymiński.

In the end, two important conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, reaching a class compromise was dependent upon material, organizational and ideological conditions shaped jointly on the both sides of political conflict. Secondly, although the compromise strategy was the most historically accurate strategy from autumn of 1988 to autumn of 1989, it was not such a strategy through the whole period of changes in years 1988–1991. Later on, due to the changing international situation and the growth of civil mobilisation of Polish society, compromise strategy became more and more inaccurate.

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