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## CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ........................................ v

I. ANTECEDENTS ............................................. 1

II. THE JOINT HISTORY COMMISSION ......................... 5
   Its establishment and membership .................... 5
   Topics covered and work accomplished .............. 9

III. DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE COMMISSION ............... 15
   The Katyn issue ....................................... 20

IV. MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS ..................................... 25
   Polish reactions to the Joint Commission .......... 25
   Soviet reactions to the Joint Commission .......... 35

V. THE SIDE-EFFECTS OF THE COMMISSION .................. 41
   The press ............................................. 42
   Schools: teachers and textbooks ................... 45
   Horizontal ties ...................................... 47
   Filmmakers .......................................... 50
   Other channels and effects .......................... 54
   New candor about People's Poland ................. 58

VI. IN CONCLUSION .......................................... 63

NOTES ....................................................... 66

APPENDICES

I. Membership of the Commission .......................... 72
II. Polish Public Opinion on Katyn ....................... 74
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines a recent attempt to improve Soviet-Polish relations: the Joint History Commission set up by Gorbachev and Jaruzelski in May 1987 to clarify the "blank spots"—the taboo or falsified subjects in the common history of the two countries. The establishment of the Joint Commission is a prime example of the use of glasnost to diffuse pressures in both domestic and intra-Bloc relations.

History was a shrewdly targeted choice. Silence and untruths about such events as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, which gave Hitler the green light to invade Poland in 1939, or the execution at Katyn of Polish officers interned in the USSR at the start of World War II, have been for most Poles a galling reminder that the imposition of Communist rule was reinforced with a crude rewriting of the past.

Nevertheless, this attempt on the official level to clarify the troublesome nexus between history and politics has backfired. Instead of managing the more honest discussion of politically sensitive issues to their own advantage—for Jaruzelski to improve the popularity of his regime, and for Gorbachev to improve intra-Bloc relations—the two leaders have opened up a Pandora's box. The gesture of controlled conciliation has produced side-effects that alter former relationships in three areas.
1) In Poland, the Commission's work has released increasingly daring demands by the public for a new, genuinely truthful history, a process which testifies to more than the unbowed will for autonomy. It also presaged and has paralleled wider political developments, namely, the roundtable discussions between the CP and the opposition which resulted in the April 1989 legitimation of political pluralism.

2) In official relations between Moscow and Warsaw, the existence and work of the Commission has thus far produced only an agreement to disagree on the core blank spot—the responsibility for the mass execution at Katyn of some 4,400 Polish officers. Though this outcome is certainly not as momentous as the institutionalization of political opposition that has occurred in Poland, it is nonetheless an example of evolving new relations that entail unprecedented amounts of autonomy.

3) The work of the Commission has produced direct contacts and a meeting of minds between the reforming elements in both countries. As a consequence, liberals active in the two parties, and outside, have found a common cause—the struggle against totalitarian coercion.

Side-effects in Poland

The setting-up of the Joint History Commission (incidentally, the only one in Eastern Europe) was a gesture designed to win public confidence for Jaruzelski's regime. Poland's Communist authorities had learned during the Solidarity period (when society
proclaimed its own, and vastly different, version of Post-World War II events and Soviet-Polish relations) that the historical consciousness of the populace was a major breeding ground for dissent and political alienation. But Jaruzelski's conciliatory gesture produced quite opposite results. Instead of leading to national reconciliation, the Commission has unleashed further political pressures on the government, which became part of the process that forced the government to recognize political pluralism, in April 1989.

In the eyes of the public the Commission was flawed by its membership (largely Party or Army historians with dubious professional credentials), its manner of operation (behind closed doors, with only the closing communiqués), and its truncated agenda (at the start it did not propose to deal with Katyn, the most important blank spot for most Poles).

Independent-minded historians and journalists took the setting-up of the Commission as their green light to press for opening up to further consideration other topics in Soviet-Polish relations and for more candid discussion of those topics agreed to by the Commission. As a result, the issue of Katyn entered the agenda, and discussion of Soviet policies at the start of World War II began to address frankly the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 1939 that handed over eastern Poland and the Baltic states to the USSR. There is reason to believe that these public pressures had the tacit approval of
Jaruzelski, who for personal and political reasons wanted to assert this measure of Poland's autonomy.

However, the public also pressed for candor in another area, one that was far less acceptable to the authorities; it wanted the expose of the force and subterfuge that was used in 1945-53 to place and keep the Communists in power. Most of these facts were of course well known through underground and emigre publications, and had been passed on through oral or family tradition. But stated in the legal press after 1987, these historical facts served to discredit the Communists even more and contributed to their loss of the monopoly of power.

Polish-Soviet Tensions

Tensions that manifested themselves within the Joint Commis- sion and surfaced in the two countries' relations were also an unexpected outcome of a gesture meant to bring about international reconciliation.

From the start the two sides had a different order of priorities. While the Poles pushed for full truth and publicity about the blank spots and politically sensitive topics in Soviet-Polish relations, the Soviets resented being asked in effect to "repent" and preferred to direct attention to the study of issues that united rather than divided the two nations--like their common struggle against the Nazis. Obviously the Polish side was struggling for its political life, hoping to buy public support by exposing Soviet misdeeds, and trying to mollify Polish national-
ism. For the Soviet side the issues were not as pressing, either politically or emotionally.

Much tension arose because of differing professional standards. The Polish team enjoyed considerable autonomy from the political authorities and often acted on purely professional criteria. The Soviet side was severely constrained by Party discipline and constantly had to consult with the political authorities. While the Poles tended to accept objective facts, the Soviets tended to worry about their political consequences. For example, regarding the 1920 Polish-Soviet war, the Poles favor the publication of all the relevant documents. But the Soviets insist on a careful selection, one that would not advertize too much Lenin's support for exporting revolution, fearing that this might undermine Gorbachev's efforts at détente.

The absence of congruence in priorities and in scholarly methods eventually became transformed into tensions between the two regimes. Katyn is the prime example. Upset by the Soviet side's persistent refusal to face the question of who executed the captive Polish officers on Soviet soil, the Poles decided to force the issue. On the eve of Gorbachev's arrival on a state visit in July 1988, the Polish Party's Center for Public Opinion Studies released the results of a poll taken the previous fall, which revealed that 82% of the adult population knew about the "crime," and 68% of high school students held the USSR responsible.

Gorbachev failed to address the issue both during the visit and in his later response to the pointed questions of the Polish...
intelligentsia (released in November), which repeated the standard Soviet explanation in blaming the executions on the Germans. Finally, in February 1989, Jerzy Urban (the Polish government's spokesman) stated that everything indicates that the NKVD was responsible for the mass murder of the Polish officers. Significantly, his statement was carefully excised from the TASS version of the news conference.

What has resulted is a tacit agreement to disagree. It is an imperfect solution. But it is a step forward from former days when Warsaw simply parroted Moscow's dicta or opinions. Moreover, it is an interim solution, but one that should be closely watched for it will reveal much about the way intra-Bloc relations might evolve. Gorbachev's approach to managing the Bloc is still in a formative stage. The old relationships are unraveling, and alternative arrangements have not yet taken shape.

**Horizontal Ties**

The emergence of horizontal ties that cut across national and political allegiances has also overtaken the intentions of the two regimes. These ties exist and are multiplying on many levels, in each case destabilizing old channels and sidestepping officially sponsored relationships, as well as attitudes. In effect, they are the creative laboratories where the official "new think" is being transformed into culturally valid and acceptable norms that could well underpin new, much freer political relations.
The setting-up of the Joint History Commission has encouraged independent, liberal activity on various levels. In the USSR, where a curtain of silence had been lowered on Polish events and publications at the time of Solidarity, it is now possible to show Polish films, to publish Polish writers and scholars. Whereas in the past the attraction of the freer and Westernized Poland was a matter of individual private curiosity, now it openly lures a broad range of Soviet liberals, both within and outside the establishment.

There are reciprocal developments in Poland, and these are without precedent. For the first time since World War II Poles are taking positive interest in what is happening in the USSR. The press reprints the most daring Soviet contributions to the perestroika debates across the border. Even such Solidarity activists as Adam Michnik are impressed by the spirit and substance of Soviet reforms.

With travel restrictions eased, like-minded organizations and individuals seek to establish contacts outside the official channels. There have been two meetings of Soviet and Polish documentary filmmakers to discuss "glasnost and taboo in historical films." They took up most of the topics under consideration by the Joint History Commission, without being hobbled by the attendant tensions and difficulties.

Soviet reformers associated with the Democratic Perestroika group, which is close to Tatiana Zaslavskaya (the sociologist who is among Gorbachev's advisers) and Academician Sakharov, contacted
the Catholic Intelligentsia Club in Warsaw last summer. Since then the two groups have held two meetings to discuss the nature of political transformation going on in their countries. In Moscow the Association of Young Historians, formed last fall, is planning joint action—conferences, publications—with their Polish counterparts to contribute their voices to defalsification of the tangled Polish-Soviet relations.

In Conclusion

What general conclusions can one draw from these facts about the official and unofficial efforts to reinterpret the history of Soviet-Polish relations? While predictions are short-lived, given the fast-moving, changing situation, there is little doubt that de-mythologizing history is an important component of the changing political scene.

In Polish domestic politics, the de-ideologization of the recent past has not served to bridge the gap between regime and society but only to further undermine the legitimacy of Communist rule. It was very much part of the process that led to the historic compromise of April 5, 1989, which recognized the political legitimacy of non-Communists.

What can one extrapolate from the more candid version of relations between Poland and the USSR? One thing is certain: that process is part of developments which have no precedent and which render our old analysis, based on the client-state model, inadequate. New relationships are in the making.
In my view, just as the Polish CP had no other way out but to accept a multitiered political order, so in interstate relations Moscow and Warsaw will most likely work out some multitiered system.

The new system will preserve the military alliance; beyond that, it will permit various forms of economic, diplomatic and political pluralism. To judge from the way the review of the history of Polish-Soviet relations has progressed, it can no longer be an ideologically based alliance, legitimized by a mythology of past friendship and cooperation. The present-day leaders in Moscow and Warsaw would like it to be an alliance or partnership based on state interests and legitimized by the requirements of Realpolitik.
I. ANTECEDENTS

When Gorbachev and Jaruzelski set up the Joint History Commission in May 1987 to fill in some "blank spots" in the common history of the USSR and Poland, they both had their reasons. In Warsaw the Commission was viewed as an easy way to gain popularity for the regime; in Moscow, as a painless substitute for serious reform in intra-Bloc relations. The need for the step, on both sides, was immediate. But the antecedents go back to the Solidarity period (August 1980-December 1981) when the nexus between politics and history in Poland came out into the open.

After the signing of the Gdansk agreements between the independent trade union and the Communist regime, the defalsification of history--especially of domestic developments since the end of World War II and of Polish-Soviet relations--was very much part of Polish society's efforts to assert its autonomy. A teachers' strike in October 1980 demanded that "textbooks on history and literature, especially on modern history, should be verified...so that their contents do not contradict the true course of events." That postulate was incorporated in the agreement between the profession and the Ministry of Education, signed in May 1981, which specified that offensive textbooks would be dropped and school curricula changed accordingly.

Solidarity activities and publications were prominently instrumental in restoring a fuller version of Polish history: one that did not present Communist policies as always right and in the best interests of the country and did not whitewash every Soviet
action either through falsification or silence. The union published *Historical Notebooks* (Zeszyty Historyczne) focusing on discussions of recent history. And its weekly organ, *Solidarity Weekly* (Tygodnik Solidarnosc) printed extensive source materials on the political upheavals in 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976. In addition, to relieve a populace starved for unadulterated information, Solidarity-affiliated organizations sponsored numerous history lectures for factory audiences.

A similar spirit pervaded various official research centers and publications, regardless of whether they were connected with the universities, the Academy, the army or the Party. All critically re-examined their past activities and began to offer a vastly expanded, more objective coverage of modern times. As part of that process, blank spots (or "white spots", as the taboo subjects are called in Polish) in recent Polish history and in Soviet-Polish relations were being alluded to in sanctioned publications as well. The political aspects of the public producing its own, vastly different, version of national history did not escape the authorities. A report of the Commission to study the causes of social unrest, appointed at the 9th Party Congress held in September 1981, contained many outspoken passages on the baneful consequences of manipulating history. The report stressed that the "historical consciousness of society," so vastly different from the official version of events, was a fertile breeding ground of alienation and dissent. Accordingly, it urged the Party to make major changes in ideological work.
After the crackdown and imposition of martial law in December 1981 the military regime did not lower a curtain of silence on politically sensitive subjects. Many objectively written articles and books accepted for publication during the Solidarity period (when censorship was extremely lax) were in fact published. Similarly, the agreement on new social science texts and curricula signed in May 1981 was not abrogated. Discussions of the unsatisfactory presentation of modern history continued at meetings of historians and in pages of journals. Even the Party's theoretical organ referred critically to "court" (i.e., loyalist) historiography. Although individual taboo subjects were no longer openly mentioned, indirect allusions were plentiful. The festering disaffection with blank spots continued unabated.

From a narrow perspective, the military regime had become concerned that falsified history was counterproductive. Instead of legitimizing Communist rule and the alliance with the USSR, it had deleterious effects on morale-building among the ranks. In 1982 the Institute of Social Research at the Military Political Academy reported that the world outlook of young recruits had deteriorated from the late 1970s on and at present was not satisfactory. The appointment of reputable scholars from the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) to teach modern history was one of the reforms undertaken to improve the situation.

From a broader perspective, society's rejection of the official historiography was symbolic of the persisting political
crisis. Before Solidarity, the problem had mainly preoccupied intellectuals (scholars and journalists) and teachers. After December 1981 the military regime came to grapple with it as well. General Jaruzelski had the personal and professional background to be especially sensitive to these roots of the crisis. Born in Eastern Poland, he was deported in 1939 to the USSR where his father, an officer, died in a prison camp. Thus he could well understand the outrage of most Poles that the mass deportations were a taboo subject. Furthermore, Jaruzelski is reputed to be particularly concerned about restoring the honor of the nation's military effort during World War II, which was, in largest part, that of the non-Communist forces. (It is a fact that he paid out of his own pocket for monuments placed on the graves of several Home Army (AK) generals who fought the Nazi occupation on the side of the London government-in-exile.)

Jaruzelski was also sensitive to public opinion. During the 1970s he headed the ideological directorate in the army. Within the year after imposing martial law, in September 1982, he set up an independent Center for the Study of Public Opinion (CBOS), bypassing the existing Party and army institutions charged with the same task. CBOS is unique in Eastern Europe. It not only studies public opinion on sensitive political issues but also makes most of its findings public. By 1985 its surveys had established a list of blank spots in the history of Poland and of Soviet-Polish relations that were sources of irritation and mistrust toward the regime for the bulk of the population.6
II. THE JOINT HISTORY COMMISSION

Its establishment and membership

Jaruzelski and Gorbachev started discussing ways to improve contacts between their parties, countries, and peoples soon after Gorbachev became First Secretary. When the two leaders met on April 27, 1985, to discuss economic, scientific and technological cooperation, they also addressed the need to clarify certain touchy issues in Soviet-Polish relations. The final stage for organizing the Joint History Commission was set on April 21, 1987, in the Joint Declaration on Polish-Soviet Cooperation in the Fields of Ideology, Science and Culture, signed on the 42nd anniversary of the Treaty of Mutual Friendship, Cooperation and Assistance. The Declaration stated that the leadership of both parties had decided "to restructure the existing forms of ideological and cultural cooperation... in accordance with the demands of the times" in order to foster "rapprochement of our nations and strengthen mutual respect." More specifically, it stated that "the PZPR and the CPSU attach great attention to the joint study of the history of relations between our countries, parties and peoples. There can be no 'blank spots' in it.... All episodes, including also the dramatic ones, should receive an objective and clear interpretation." The setting-up of the Joint Commission to carry out this task was the most notable result of the April 1987 Declaration. Other measures included sponsoring more multifaceted cultural exchanges...
and charging the media to support and to popularize these efforts.

The Commission held its first meeting in Moscow, May 18-20, 1987. It issued a short communique, listing participants, outlining broad plans to work on joint studies (their topics were not divulged), and announcing that the next meeting would be held in Warsaw in November 1987. Actually, the second meeting was held some three months later--February 29-March 3, 1988. The third meeting was held in Moscow, November 29-December 1, 1988; and a fourth one was planned for May-June 1989. As work progressed and the need arose, some sub-groups with additional experts from outside the Commission were formed on an ad-hoc basis. (Between the second and third sessions, for example, there were eight meetings of sub-groups.)

The first two meetings issued official communiqués simultaneously in Pravda and Trybuna Ludu, which were accompanied by interviews with the heads of the two delegations. For the third session there was only a communiqué, and no interviews. (The press gave no coverage to the meetings of the sub-groups. I learned about them during interviews with members of the Commission.)

Membership in the Commission is very selective, reflecting the fact that it was set up by the two parties (not by the professional historians) for the specific purpose of providing "objective and clear interpretations... carried out from Marxist-Leninist positions." The Commission is headed, on each side, by specialists in ideology. Jarema Maciszewski, the Polish
co-chairman, happens to be a reputable historian of Polish-Russian relations in the 17th century. But in his party capacity he heads the party's higher school, the Academy of Social Sciences, as well as the Parliamentary commission on education and upbringing. Academician Georgii L. Smirnov, the Soviet co-chairman, serves as director of the party's Institute of Marxism-Leninism and is a member of the CPSU's rehabilitation commission. He is reputed to be Gorbachev's adviser on ideology.

As for the other members (listed, with their affiliations, in the Appendix), it should be noted that the Polish side comprises a disproportionate number of historians who have either Party or Army but not academic credentials. Of the 13 Polish members only four--Madajczyk (a World War II specialist), Maciszewski, Tanty (a historian of Polish-Soviet relations), and Wojciechowski (a specialist in German-Polish relations)--enjoy any measure of confidence as both professionals and representing "Polish interests," i.e., as not being subservient to Moscow. One further characteristic of the Polish side should be kept in mind. Like Maciszewski, most of them made their careers during the 1968 turmoil, when the nationalist wing of the Party utilized the student unrest to launch an anti-Semitic campaign and to stage a take-over.

For purposes of this report the credentials of the Soviet members are less important than how Polish historians (both on the Commission and outside it) perceive them and their attitudes toward Poland. Academician Smirnov is regarded as well-inten-
tioned but not well-enough informed about specific issues to be of decisive influence. Chubarian (a specialist on World War II) is respected both as a professional historian and as being the most objective and open-minded—and hence the closest to the Polish way of thinking. Views about Zhuravlev (a specialist on the CPSU's history) tend to be similarly favorable, though not equally enthusiastic. Yazhborovskaya (a specialist on the history of the PZPR) is mistrusted for being highly ambitious, ideological, and unwilling to press for any breakthrough favorable to the Polish side. Firsov (a specialist on the Comintern) is regarded as more flexible. Rzheshhevsky (a World War II specialist) is classified as a Stalinist and "decidedly hostile to Poland." He is reputed to be close to Valentin Falin, the current director of the Novosti press agency, who has a "Realpolitik" approach to various issues related to 1939. Parsadanova (an expert on Polish interwar and postwar history) is considered an honest but pedantic scholar—someone who will not be moved by the tragic aspects of Polish-Soviet relations. Academician Narochnitsky (a specialist on international relations) is not well informed about Poland and is "unsympathetic" to boot. Porfirieva (an expert on Polish postwar history) is also considered hostile to Polish interests and points of view.

As seen in Warsaw, then, the Soviet team has too many persons who are neither first-rate specialists on, nor well-disposed toward, Poland. In Polish eyes, these people will outvote the
more open- and reform-minded Chubarian and Zhuravlev and are the more likely to influence the well-meaning Smirnov.

**Topics covered and work accomplished**

Even though the Commission was meant to inaugurate a new era of openness and mutual trust, the communiqué issued at the end of the first meeting was not very communicative about the topics under discussion. Alluding in general terms to the utilization of new documents and the preparation of joint monographs it referred to only one specific topic: the history of the "international cooperation of the CPSU and the PZPR." In the interview that accompanied the communiqué, Maciszewski seemed to be keenly aware that a book on that subject was hardly one that would satisfy the Polish understanding of what most Poles view as genuine blank spots. Therefore he mentioned two other subjects: the 1920 Soviet-Polish war and the outbreak of World War II. Altogether, reflecting the Polish side's preoccupations, he made much more of the existing "silent zones" or blank spots, which enabled "hostile propaganda [to] make use of history to influence people's consciousnes," than did Smirnov, whose comments tended to be upbeat.

The second meeting, postponed for three months, issued a communiqué which enumerated specific topics that were to be examined: Polish-Soviet relations during 1917-21 and both on the eve and during World War II; the dissolution of the Polish CP; the re-settlement of Poles in the USSR during World War II; the Warsaw
uprising; and the comradeship-in-arms of the Soviet and Polish nations in fighting Hitler's Germany. 11

The third meeting was able to report to the public on what had been accomplished. (It was high time, since criticism about the lack of results had been mounting to such an extent that the statement issued at the end of Gorbachev's visit to Poland in July 1988 urged the Joint Commission to "speed up its work." 12 A joint report, "The Period Preceding and the Start of World War II," was almost complete, and would be finished in the nearest future. Work on the Comintern and the dissolution of the Polish CP was finished; a book on Lenin's views on Poland and the Polish working class movement, with a rich assortment of documents, was to be published; reports on the resettlement of the Polish population were ready for publication; work on the history of inter-party cooperation, on Soviet-Polish relations during 1917-21, and on the fate of Soviet soldiers in Poland during World War II continued. The issue of Katyn, the central blank spot for almost every Pole, was mentioned for the first time, but only to inform the public that the Commission had examined a Polish memorandum about the fate of the Polish officers "who died in Katyn," It had decided that the topic required further meticulous research. 13

Some results of the Commission's work had appeared in print by the end of 1988. Firsov and Yazhborovskaya had published their investigations into the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party. Yazhborovskaya had written an article on the Polish-Soviet war, and Parsadanova on the deportations of the Polish population. 14
These are regarded by the Soviet side as putting the disputed issues in a new light. For their part, the Poles are busy trying to revise the 13-volume documentary history of Soviet-Polish relations by replacing meaningless sources, such as congratulatory telegrams between heads of state, with texts of trade or reparation agreements or some more substantial communications between the two leaderships, especially during times of crisis.\textsuperscript{15}

Behind these bare facts of the Commission's work lies a much more dramatic story of how the range of subjects was expanded. This was due to pressures from the Polish side. From the very start it was obvious that the Poles had an agenda that did not exactly match the Soviets'. That was evident even in the way the two party newspapers titled the first communiqué. \textit{Pravda} printed it on page 4 under the heading "The Meeting of Scholars of the USSR and the PPR" while \textit{Trybuna Ludu} printed it on the first page with practically the same bland heading but added a subtitle: "The removal of 'blank spots' will strengthen the friendship of our nations." As mentioned above, Maciszewski's remarks at the news conference also indicated sensitivity to the true nature of blank spots as seen from the Polish side. Altogether, it was evident from the outset that the Polish CP had a much greater sense of urgency, as well as a much longer list, of the sensitive topics.

The clearest expression of high-level pressures from the Polish side was General Jaruzelski's article in the July 1987 issue of the CPSU journal \textit{Kommunist}. (I was told it was printed
only after considerable insistence.) It contained an unprecedentedly candid description of the tangled relations of the two countries. It documented with facts the "lack of confidence" and the "widespread ill feelings" that characterized the attitudes most Poles had toward Russia and the USSR. The enumeration of these facts amounted to a list of Polish resentments, to an agenda for revising the idyllic version that had been the rule until then.

Concerning the October Revolution and the rebirth of Poland, Jaruzelski stressed that after 123 years of partition most Poles wanted and worked for national independence, not for revolution—a notable departure from the customary paeansto the October Revolution as the only and correct beacon for Poland's future. Concerning the 1920 war, he mentioned both the Polish occupation of Kiev and the Red Army's march on Warsaw as having created mutual distrust. Concerning the outbreak of World War II, Jaruzelski specified three wrong Soviet attitudes: (1) the description of both Poland's defensive war and Hitler's aggression as "imperialist"; (2) the dismissive language about Poland after the defeat, which denied the country the right to independence; and (3) the repression and deportation of thousands of Poles deep into the USSR. Concerning the course of the war, he spoke up for the need to rehabilitate the courageous Polish war effort on all fronts (i.e., a plea for the recognition of those who fought with the Western Allies). And of course, there was a reference to the dissolution of the Polish CP by the Comintern in 1938—not the
most important example of Soviet misconduct to most Poles, but still a bona fide taboo subject that rankled Polish Communists.16

Jeruzelski's candor had an immediate effect. In September 1987 The New Times printed what was in effect an apology, in the form of an article by Smirnov. Reversing the practice of the last 48 years it stated that from the very start World War II was a "defensive and just war" for Poland. It also condemned Viacheslav Molotov, Foreign Minister at the time, for his description of the independent Polish state after World War I as "an ugly product of Versailles." (This is the correct translation of Molotov's word "chudovishche." Very revealing of the psychology of Poles is the fact that they invariably translate this word as "bastard.")17

These revisions and apologies went a good way toward assuaging Polish sensitivities, but not far enough. Polish members of the Commission told me that additional effort was necessary to have the Soviets drop their customary contention (incorrect and scurrilous to the Poles) that Smirnov repeated: namely, that "on September 17th, the government of Poland fled, abandoning the people and the country to their fate." With the authority of relevant documents the Polish side succeeded in convincing the Soviets that the Polish government crossed the border into Romania later, during the night of September 17/18, i.e., after and not before the entry of the Red Army into eastern Poland. The timing is a crucial issue to the Poles, for it proves that the Russians in effect invaded Poland while the legal government was still in the country. On a less vital issue, the Poles were also success-
ful in getting the Soviets to stop using dismissive language about interwar Poland—i.e., expressions like "panskaya" (landlord’s) Poland, which denigrated and denied legitimacy to the government of the Second Republic.

Polish members of the Commission also regard it as an accomplishment that much less subservient as well as truly independent-minded contributions by Polish historians are finally appearing in the pages of the Soviet press. To cite but two examples: The first 1989 issue of Voprosy Istorii KPSS printed an article by two members of Maciszewski’s Academy of Social Sciences on problems of studying the history of the Polish CP. While far from an objective study, it nevertheless contains quite outspoken criticism of past falsifications as well as pleas for access to Soviet archives to enable Party historians to produce works matching the level of general knowledge among Poles, and hence capable of competing with or squelching the hostile propaganda that thrives on the persisting prevarications.\textsuperscript{18} It was unprecedented to find the 70th anniversary of Poland’s independence marked by The New Times with the publication of commentary by a reputable Polish historian. Presented in the form of an interview with Andrzej Garlicki, head of Warsaw University’s history department, it was the most objective and multi-dimensional presentation of what led to Poland’s rebirth in 1918 that I have ever seen in the pages of a Soviet publication. It made ample reference to such causes as international diplomacy (i.e., not just the October Revolution) and to the popularity of Pilsudski.
Though not written by a member of the Commission, it was a good example of the quality and content that is considered the acceptable level of scholarship in Poland. It certainly measures up to the professional standards of the four well-qualified members of the Polish team, and represents the type of well-rounded interpretation they would like to see prevail.

III. DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE COMMISSION

Polish pressures for broader, more candid coverage of the blank spots are prime evidence of tensions that abound in the Commission. This aspect deserves fuller scrutiny, for it sheds light on the national and cultural-political divisions that exist even within that carefully selected group. On a micro-level it gives us a good picture of what prevails on a much wider scale not just in the Party but also in the two societies. Tensions arise from differing outlooks on three levels—national, political, and professional or scholarly.

Tensions due to nationalism or national traditions are the most obvious and have the deepest roots. The vast majority of Poles, even members of the ruling Party, see their country as the victim of unjust and tyrannical treatment on the part of their eastern neighbor, oppression that goes back at least to the partitions at the end of the 18th century. By agreeing to set up the Commission, the Soviets have recognized the strength of Polish feelings. However, having agreed to discuss Polish resentments the Soviets can take only so much in criticism that affronts their
own national pride. From the start they have insisted that the list of "wrongs" be balanced by research into the positive episodes in the experiences of the two nations (such as their common struggle against Hitler's armies and occupation). They also insist that some Soviet grievances be investigated as well (such as the mistreatment or murder of Soviet prisoners of war held in Poland during World War II, or the paucity of monuments to Soviet soldiers who died in the liberation of Poland). From my interviews with Polish members of the Commission and reading the Polish press it is evident that the Polish side is quite unresponsive to Soviet concerns.

The Soviets resent what they consider to be an excessive self-absorption on the part of the Poles. So much so, in fact, that they are not hesitant to make their irritation public. For example, when interviewed by Pravda at the conclusion of the second meeting, Smirnov complained about the compilation of overlong lists of blank spots in pursuit of aims far removed from clarifying complex problems and establishing an atmosphere of friendship. In similar vein, Izvestija, noting the first anniversary of the Gorbachev-Jaruzelski Declaration, denounced "the primitive logic [that prevails in examining Polish-Soviet relations]: let the Soviet Union admit that it is guilty of everything in the past and then everything will be fine." In both instances the Soviets attributed these motives to "opponents of socialism." But in Poland such criticism was viewed as
directed against "unreasonable" demands for Soviet repentance made both inside and outside the Commission.

As already stated, the political priorities of each side are not exactly congruent. From the tone of comments in the Party press of both countries ever since April 1987 and from my interviews with Commission members, it is obvious that the Soviets agreed to open up the blank-spot issues in order to improve intra-Bloc relations, to place them on a new footing of genuine partnership. They were not as much interested in revealing past "crimes" committed by their country or in adding fuel to the de-Stalinization debates going on in various professions and republics. There was a marked preference in the Soviet media to dwell on various officially orchestrated ventures resulting from the "new type" relations, such as increased and broadened cultural exchanges, rather than to go into details about the work of the Commission.

This has not been the thrust of the Polish authorities. They are vitally interested in clarifying the blank spots in order to shed the image of being Moscow's puppets, to derive maximum advantage from letting up on suppressed nationalist emotions, and to gain more public confidence. According to some of my interlocutors in Warsaw last fall, the regime's interest in removing the blind spots was a cheap way of going about democratization, an easy substitute for serious, but costly, political reforms that in their mind were the sole means for restoring harmony between the regime and society.
Thus the issue of blank spots is of vital importance to Jaruzelski. It was an important component of the strategy to save the political life of the Communist regime. By contrast, it is not a priority issue for Gorbachev. The Polish Party press was full of commentary, and TV had many programs shedding new light on Soviet-Polish relations. The Party sponsored many ancillary publications to publicize the Commission's substantive work. Again by contrast the Commission's work occupies almost no space in the Soviet media.

Finally, there are tensions arising from what I would term cultural-professional differences. The professional level and relations between scholars and the regime differ in the two countries. Crude politicization of the field took place in both together with the imposition of Communist rule, but in Poland the process has not been as thorough-going as in the USSR. For one, it was imposed much faster (1948-52) on a profession with high standards and close ties to the international academic community, and it lasted a much shorter time. These differences are pronounced enough to make it difficult at times for the Commission to find a common language—so I was repeatedly told in Poland.

One Polish member of the Commission informed me that he and his colleagues found it hard to work with the Soviets, who were not independent actors and had to refer every decision to the political authorities. By contrast, Polish historians felt they had the autonomy to act without having to consult or get permission from higher up for every step. This may be a somewhat
exaggerated view of the situation on the part of the Poles, but it is not too far off the mark. While in Poland I had completely free access to various Commission members, most of whom were very candid about their work and problems. Clearly, they did not feel constrained by any Party discipline. This openness was in marked contrast to what I experienced in Moscow, where, first of all I was told by a very well-informed individual (a deputy director of one Institute whose staff works on the Commission) that the Commission's members are strictly accountable to the political authorities and strictly enjoined from revealing details about its inner workings. Indeed, my meetings with Yazhborovskaya, among the more orthodox members of the Soviet team, were exceptionally formal and closed-mouth encounters. I was able to get much more information, similar to what was readily offered in Poland, only from Soviet historians who were not on the Commission.

Differences in training, autonomy, and professional ethic impede communication and progress. Some obstacles due to professional differences have been removed—for example, as already mentioned, the Soviets no longer use crude class-based terms like "panskaya" [landlord] regarding interwar Poland. There is unanimous agreement on the need to gain and establish freer access to archives and sources. However, when documents are lacking and Poles suggest the use of indirect evidence, most Soviets balk. Admittedly these tensions arise over issues that are politically very sensitive: e.g., the secret protocols to the Molotov‐Ribbentrop pact or the responsibility for the mass execution of
captive Polish officers at Katyn. In these instances the Soviets, given their political instructions, find it safe to hide behind the alleged absence of documents. And they refuse to consider or look for indirect evidence, such as Western diplomatic memoirs or correspondence or the secret protocols; or records of transport and food supplies in the critical months of spring 1940 to check the fate or whereabouts of the Polish officers interned in the USSR.

The same dry formalism and inability or unwillingness to fully explore source materials attach to less politically sensitive issues as well, such as the liquidation of the Polish CP. The Soviets were extremely proud, I was told, to produce two new documents to help solve "the mystery" surrounding this: one, the text of the Comintern decision to dissolve the CP in September 1938; the other, the decision to resurrect it in May 1939. Polish historians objected that these bare texts did not convey any information about the circumstances of the two decisions. After considerable wrangling, the Soviets agreed to provide more evidence showing to what extent the dissolution was an outgrowth of the Stalinist purges. But the Poles have not been able thus far to gain access to materials on the situation within the Comintern that had led to the decisions.

**The Katyn issue**

Tensions within the Commission at times become transformed into tensions between the Polish and Soviet authorities. Without
doubt the way the Katyn issue was handled provides the best illustration of how differences on the micro-level reach up to the macro-level.

As stated, the Katyn affair was not broached at the first meeting of the Commission. The issue was recognized at the second meeting after much pressure from the Polish side, but it was not singled out in the final communiqué. Inclusion of Katyn was essential for the Polish side if the regime was to gain any credibility in the eyes of the public through the setting-up of the Commission. For most Poles it is the most important, the basic, blank spot; and most Poles charge Moscow with the mass execution of some 4,000 officers interned in the USSR at the start of World War II. The deed and its subsequent denial are the symbol of Poland's subjugation, the first step in the USSR's designs to weaken and dominate Poland. Moreover, Katyn is the one issue on which there is general agreement among Poles, no matter whether they are part of the regime or in the opposition, in Poland or in the emigration. The fact that Jaruzelski, as already recounted, is reputed to have a personal stake (emotional and political) in getting to the bottom of this murky affair epito-
mizes how most Poles feel about Katyn.

At the start of the investigation, the Polish and Soviet authorities presented a united front on Katyn. When in February 1988 a group of leading Polish intellectuals addressed an open letter to their Soviet counterparts, asking for a genuine break-
through in relations between the two nations through a public
dialogue that would take up the Katyn executions, the two governments responded in unison. They denounced the letter as a misguided gesture by "specialists in breaking down open doors," i.e., by ambitious trouble-makers eager to take over what the Joint History Commission was already doing.22

That common stance did not last long mainly because of the mounting popular pressure on the Polish government (to be recounted below). But Soviet intransigence in denying any responsibility for the mass executions also contributed. Probably the clearest sign of the Polish regime's displeasure with the Soviet stance was the publication in July 1988 (on the eve of Gorbachev's arrival on a state visit) of a public opinion poll on Katyn, conducted the preceding autumn by the Party's Center for the Study of Public Opinion (CBOS). It revealed that 82% of the adult population knew about the "crimes" and that 68.4% of high school respondents blamed "the USSR" for it. (The words chosen by CBOS are highly significant. Whereas the February 1988 open letter of Polish intellectuals tactfully pinned the executions on Stalin and Beria, the CBOS referred to the Soviet Union--much more of a blanket condemnation, but one in keeping with the attitude of most Poles.)

Despite such an obvious nudge from the Polish regime, Gorbachev did not choose to address the issue. But he could not avoid it altogether, and continued what was considered to be an unsatisfactory dialogue with Polish intellectuals at the Warsaw royal castle by publishing in November 1988 some "fuller" answers to their questions in a pamphlet intended for wide distribution.
Gorbachev conceded that "many Poles are convinced that Katyn is the work of Stalin and Beria." However, he explicitly avoided endorsing that version of the event by reference to careful studies of the "tragedy" that were in progress. At the same time he managed implicitly to present the unchanged Soviet version by mentioning that monuments to Polish and Soviet military prisoners "executed by the Fascists" had been erected in Katyn to symbolize "the common suffering... of our two nations."\(^{23}\)

The fact that *Trybuna Ludu* did not print Gorbachev's elaboration on what happened at Katyn (only his recognition of Polish sentiments) makes it clear that the Polish Party did not accept his version of the event or its significance.\(^{24}\)

Evidence of tensions between the two regimes was paralleled by developments within the Commission. The Polish side prepared for the third meeting a detailed study of the sources on Katyn, seeking to finally disprove Soviet denials of any responsibility.\(^{25}\) (The Soviets have all along relied on a single source—the Bondarenko report presented by the USSR at the Nuremberg trials—and have paid no heed to reports by other international bodies or to documents gathered by families of the victims) but neither the excellently documented and argued memorandum by Madajczyk nor the threat of some Polish members to resign has produced any advance on the contentious issue. The communiqué of the third meeting stated that the Commission had familiarized itself with the "expert study concerning the fate of Polish officers interned in 1939 who died at Katyn and agreed that this question needs further
But the communiqué was not followed by interviews with the two co-chairmen, as was the case after the first two sessions. This was a clear indication of serious disagreement.

Although the Polish team did not resign, the Polish government evidently decided after the failure of the third meeting to pursue its own course, independent of Moscow. On March 7, 1989, Jerzy Urban, the government spokesman, stated that "everything indicates that the crime [against Polish officers] was committed by the Stalinist NKVD." It is not surprising that in reporting Urban's press conference TASS excised all references to Katyn.

Since so many of Stalin's crimes are now being disclosed and the Gorbachev regime makes political capital out of de-Stalinization, why should the Soviets persist so stubbornly in denying responsibility for Katyn? I asked why both in Moscow and in Poland and heard three explanations:

1. **Legal**: killing interned officers is a crime under the Nuremberg statutes and would make the USSR liable to legal prosecution for compensation. According to one Polish source (closely in touch with the Soviet Institute of State and Law), Gorbachev, before his official visit to Poland, consulted with experts and, after finding out about Soviet legal liability, changed his mind about admitting Soviet responsibility.

2. **Diplomatic**: Stalin used the persistent demands of Sikorski's London government-in-exile for explanation on Katyn as an excuse to break diplomatic relations and to start organizing in
earnest a more pliant regime for Poland, located in the USSR. Admission of Soviet responsibility for Katyn would make Stalin's action groundless and cast a considerable shadow over the foundations for the postwar Polish-Soviet "alliance."

3. **Political**: undermining the "legitimacy" of the nucleus government formed in the USSR after the break in diplomatic relations would undermine the legitimacy of the current Communist government in Warsaw, its direct descendant.

**IV. MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS**

**Polish reactions to the Joint Commission**

Mounting disagreement within the Commission, as well as between Warsaw and Moscow, cannot be properly understood without discussing the third level of tensions, namely, between the Joint Commission and other historians and also other liberal professions (including journalists). It is plainly evident in both countries, though at very different levels of intensity, given the differing importance of the issues under discussion and the disparity in professional autonomy in Poland and the USSR.

The way Polish members of the Joint History Commission were selected did not inspire much confidence in the rest of the profession and among the cultural elite. Certain trusted individuals were simply contacted by phone and asked to join. Membership became public when the communiqué at the close of the first meeting, held in Moscow, was published. Polish members confided to me that the "authorities" were careful to select
people who would not "offend" Moscow. Maybe this gesture succeeded in Moscow, but in Poland it misfired. The secretive way of selection and the manner of communicating the work of the Commission—via terse communiqués, infrequent interviews, articles and lectures—created mainly disdain or suspicion. Instead of calming public opinion and laying the disputed questions to rest, these procedures, in turn, created more pressures.

As this is not the place to give extensive coverage of the intelligentsia's reactions, several examples are cited as representing important segments of public opinion and the range of pressures.

The Polish Historical Association (PTH), proud of defending Polish national interests over the century, naturally assumed after the 4/21/87 Declaration that it would play a role in reformulating the characterization of Soviet-Polish relations in the past. Ten days before the Joint Commission met, the PTH dispatched a letter to Gen. Jaruzelski expressing readiness to cooperate in all future activities resulting from the new cultural relations agreement, adding that it foresaw "the possibility of full and mutual elucidation of Polish-Russian and Polish-Soviet relations," in which, in addition to "many proud pages of cooperation between our states and nations, there was no dearth of dramatic moments, mutual injuries and injustice." This ready offer was never answered or even acknowledged in any other way. But the Association did not give up. Unable to reach the authorities, the PTH at least twice asked and succeeded
in having Maciszewski report on the proceedings and progress of the Commission. These were stormy and emotional meetings, according to my interlocutors. For example, such highly respected historians as Aleksander Gieysztor suggested that the Polish team resign unless it received some proper answers to Katyn and the secret protocols in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. At its annual meeting in September 1988 the PTH included in its resolutions a postulate demanding the establishment of a "representative... commission, composed of outstanding scholars of the two countries who are representative of the profession." The same meeting elected a new president, Andrzej Ajnenkiel (a legal historian and member of the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences). A man of considerable eloquence and with a sense of patriotic mission, he proceeded to grant press interviews in which he made very outspoken comments that historians were not merely "scholars" but also "citizens"—hence, entitled to make their contribution to cleaning up the "polluted environment" of falsified facts and one-sided interpretations.

Other independent historians resorted to even more dramatic gestures. Undoubtedly, the prize should go to Ryszard Bender, a professor at the autonomous Catholic University in Lublin and a politically unaffiliated delegate to Parliament. During a foreign policy debate in the Sejm, he addressed the Foreign Affairs Minister, Marian Orzechowski, as a fellow historian and argued that relations between Poland and the USSR would greatly improve
with more forthright information about blank spots, foremost about Katyn.32

Another dramatic gesture on how to deal with the blank spots was the February 1988 open letter of leading Polish intellectuals to their Soviet counterparts. They did not even bother to mention the Commission or suggest how it should proceed but tried to reach out directly to the Soviet cultural elite, inviting it to a "public" dialogue, "a dialogue between free and independent people unhampered by official guidelines and diplomatic agreements." The letter was signed by several prominent historians, ranging from Bronislaw Geremek (an adviser to Walesa, who was dismissed from his job at the Academy's History Institute after the military took over) to Stanislaw Kieniewicz (the grand old man of the profession and editor of one of the few successful products of Soviet-Polish academic collaboration: the multivolume edition of documents on the 1863 Polish uprising).

After the historians, the liberal Party journalists are the second strongest group lobbying for greater openness in grappling with the blank spots. That group's efforts are best represented by the weekly Polityka. First, it announced that it would send a questionnaire to historians to seek their views on what were the main contentious events, which archives should be studied, which topics would turn out to be the least and which the most problematic.33 The same issue printed an interview with Eugeniusz Duraczynski on blank spots in modern history. The choice of Duraczynski was significant. He is a respected and gifted
historian of World War II who was trained in Moscow and used to hold a high Party position (he was head of the CC's Department of Education and Science until 1982, when he was dismissed for a personal indiscretion that offended the moralistic Jaruzelski), yet he was not included on the Commission. Hence publication of his views was meant to underscore that truly independent and qualified opinion was being sought.

With evident disdain Duraczynski made no reference to the Commission and launched instead into a discussion of how the principles promulgated by the April Declaration should be implemented outside that official body: how Polish historians, who had plenty of relevant materials, could now publish on subjects hitherto taboo; how Polish and Soviet historians could now organize fruitful conferences, publish collaborative works, and exchange opinion on the pages of scholarly journals. 34

Polityka took an even bolder step in October 1987 in publishing an interview with Yuri Afanasev, the outspoken liberal pro-Gorbachev reformer and director of the State Institute of Historical Archives in Moscow. Most of it was given over to a description of Soviet discussions of Stalinism. After the parameters and the depth of the Soviets' re-evaluation of their own past was outlined the interviewer turned to the topic of "cleaning up the history of Polish-Soviet relations." Afanasev was very forthright and stated that no problem should be avoided, no matter how difficult or sensitive, including Katyn. That statement by the Soviet historian finally lifted the taboo on
mentioning the topic of "Katyn" on the pages of legal publications. Likewise it also stated the obvious: namely, that Katyn was the premier problem in the tangled Polish-Soviet relations that required study by historians from both countries. 35

A year later Polityka again availed itself of Afanasev's help. In a follow-up interview it elicited another forthright appeal for a "speedy solution and clarification" of Katyn, as well as his opinion that in the intervening months the two Soviet-Nazi pacts in August and September 1939 had become the second burning issue in the eyes of the public and one to which the Joint Commission was slow, loath, or unable to provide proper answers. 36

(During an interview with Afanasev in Moscow, I had the opportunity to get a good sense of his qualities as scholar, his forceful personality, and his keen awareness of the political implications of the blank spots. Regarding the last, he said outright that regimes and alliances were not legitimated by silences or falsehood but by public trust and support.)

Liberal Catholic publications provide another source of pressure. The weekly Tygodnik Powszechny has not spared the Joint Commission from criticism, even ridicule. Kisiel, its satirical columnist, has quite mercilessly described its sham:

I have serious doubts about [this] method of informing about the past. The starting point is that the befuddled society never knew anything and that only now the keepers of the truth will kindly dole it out in appropriate amounts and wipe out the blank spots. As it turned out, this was a mistaken vision at the top, because everybody knew everything. The so-called blank spots were simply topics about which nothing was said and could not be said. I was highly amused by Mr.
Jarema Maciszewski, who praised on TV some professional commission which works hard at digging in piles of documents related to the start of the war in 1939 and to the deportation of Poles in 1940.... Why do we need archives and documents... when it is sufficient to talk with the participants of these events.... Books were written on these subjects in various countries and by various official and unofficial bodies. Even in the USSR such simple matters are not wrapped up in pseudo-scholarship.

Although not giving any credit to the Commission, the Catholic weekly has nevertheless taken its establishment as a sign of new departures, as giving licence to criticize publications on modern Polish history, most of which still do not measure up to the standards of objective scholarship. Thus it gave no less than two reviews to the book *Najnowsze Dzieje Polski, 1914-1983* (Warsaw, PWN, 1988) by one of the more respectable Party historians, Antoni Czubinski. The first pointed out various inaccuracies in the description of Polish-Soviet relations, such as "Soviet intelligence caused the arrest of the representatives of the London government [in Poland in 1945] and their deportation to Moscow" when it is generally known that they had been invited to meet with General Zhukov and were arrested upon arrival. The second review frankly stated that Czubinski's book should serve as a cold bath to the optimists who expected that a full version of such events as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the entry of Soviet troops into Eastern Poland, the break of Soviet relations with the Polish government-in-exile, etc., could be written.

Wiez, the monthly published by the liberal Catholic Intelligentsia Club (KIK), has also been critical of the Commission.
One article, for instance, noted how little of substance on the blank spots had been published in the year of the Commission's existence. As a remedy, it suggested that various magazines each take up a single blank spot and devote an entire issue to a thorough discussion of the problem. Another suggestion was that the taboo on emigre publications be broken and historical monographs put out in London, Paris or New York become freely available.39

In addition, the Catholic church sponsors a network of lectures on historical subjects that are taboo. They form either part of the regularly held "Weeks of Christian Culture" or are held at the discretion of individual parish priests. I attended one such meeting in a Warsaw parish in November 1987. A year later talks by Bronislaw Geremek, Adam Michnik, and Andrzej Zakrzewski had been published as a pamphlet bearing the title Blank Spots. Appended were excerpts from crucial documents, namely from the secret protocols to the Soviet-German agreements of August 23 and September 28, 1939, and from the April 1943 report of the Polish Red Cross mission on Katyn.40 What interested me was not only that the lectures were now available in pamphlet form (in decent large print), but also the method of distribution. Speaking with high school teachers in Warsaw who worked for the Ministry of Education inspecting the level of history instruction in provincial towns, I learned that they would take along copies of this particular pamphlet and leave them with the local teachers.
The reaction of underground publishers to the establishment of the Commission is instructive. In the past they had a monopoly on supplying untarnished information about various aspects of Soviet-Polish relations and flourished because of the blank spots. Initially, the reaction of the underground publishers (whose output is known as "drugi obieg"—the second run) was one of some alarm. After all, the Commission's aim was to put an end to the uses "hostile propaganda" made of the officially condoned and propagated falsehoods.

I talked with two representatives of the underground press: the editor of the journal Krytyka and the publisher of books under the Krag imprint. (They represent the liberal trend that strives for objectivity and shuns a new extremist nationalist version of events.) Both confirmed an initial concern about the disappearing distinction between the official and unofficial versions. But as it became clear with time that the Commission was not going to produce any unorthodox revelations, that apprehension died down. However, they do recognize the challenge of the increasingly open and revelatory publications in the Polish press and media.

In October 1988, publishers and readers of the liberal unofficial press held a meeting at Warsaw University to discuss the future. The consensus, to the extent there was one, was that despite the relaxed censorship, the need for the "second-run" publications would remain since what was going on at the official level was merely a partial process. What was being permitted was "liberalization," whereas the goal of the underground groups was
full freedom of expression. For example, the unofficial publications could and had to perform the role of exposing the tendency of the Party reformers to limit their criticism of the past to blaming Stalinism for everything that went wrong after 1945 or 1948. Such analysis was a distortion, for it did not deal with the full range of events. That approach characterized A. Werblan's recent biography of Wladyslaw Gomulka. It painted an idealized picture of events prior to Gomulka's dismissal in 1948, after which the Stalinists took over, distorting the more or less harmonious political process. At present, the underground liberals told me, a proper rejoinder to such books could only be published in the unofficial press.

Finally, there is the pressure exerted by the emigre historians and publications, for example, the Paris Kultura's "Historical Notebooks." I was told in Poland, but did not investigate the subject in any depth, that the materials and commentaries that appear abroad contribute a great deal to stirring up things in Poland. With practically unrestricted travel abroad, very spotty customs inspection at points of entry, the availability of emigre publications--often containing texts of documents or just a better-rounded interpretation--has increased. So has their accessibility. Students' access to these publications at Warsaw University, completely free during the Solidarity period, has not been discontinued altogether. They now need permission from the instructor--a matter that presents no problem. So much so that one seminar on modern Polish history at that
university (taught for the first time in fall 1988) is based exclusively on emigre and Western sources and publications, which in most cases present a version of blank-spot events that is very different from the one still upheld officially. With the help of such sources, the history that is passed on through oral or family tradition is supplemented with solid evidence.41

Soviet Reactions to the Joint Commission

Both dissatisfaction with and pressures on the Commission also exist in the Soviet Union, but at a lower intensity.

First of all, the scale of adverse reactions is infinitely smaller. Soviet-Polish relations are not a vital issue in the USSR as the regime and society try to come to terms with the past. The issue does not touch a raw nerve in most Russians, as it does for most Poles. Second, the process of dealing with blank spots is far different in the USSR. It involves uncovering information about events that have either been completely unknown or known to very few people. By contrast, in Poland what is at stake is not a lack of information or the knowledge of facts--almost everyone knows them--but their conscious falsification or suppression in enforced silence.

Nevertheless, despite these basic differences and the shorter time I could spend in Moscow, I was able to get some fascinating glimpses into the discord and criticism that the workings of the Commission have produced in the Soviet Union. In some instances there are significant parallels with what is going on in Poland--a
development that augurs well for the future, as is discussed below in section V on side-effects. But all along the reduced scale of magnitude should be kept in mind. Whereas in Poland criticism of and pressures on the Commission are widespread and openly stated in the press, in the USSR the process is carried on by a few intrepid individuals and gets hardly any publicity in the media.

My interviews with various Soviet historians on the Commission and outside uncovered a surprisingly large amount of negative response in that it was not fulfilling its tasks. Some condemned it on moral, others on professional grounds. Yuri Afanasev, without any hesitation, used the expression "pozor" (shame). He explicitly condemned the "persistent silence" of the Commission on such topics as August 1939, Katyn, and the Warsaw uprising, arguing that such behavior only contributed to perpetuating the old hostilities and phobias. If the Commission was unable to provide any clarification, it should nonetheless reveal to the public the reasons why it was impossible to arrive at any final conclusions, rather than hide behind ineffective silence.

Chubarian was also critical but for more specific reasons. As one example, he cited the unwillingness of his colleagues on the Commission to use Western sources to gain additional information about the Soviet-German negotiations of late August 1939. Two other historians outside the Commission (one from the Institute of Slavic Studies, the other from the Institute of the Economy of the World Socialist System) held that the Commission
was staffed with the wrong individuals, unfit for the job both by their convictions and training.

The matter of age and generations adds another dimension to the dissatisfaction with the Commission's work. Those of my critical interlocutors who were in their fifties repeatedly alluded to the advanced age of the Commission's members. One simply dismissed the possibility of expecting any worthy outcome from the body's present make-up, saying that it would take the next generation, presumably freed from blinkered views and habits, to arrive at some satisfactory answers. Those around forty dismissed the Soviet team as composed of "oldster" (stariki), people of "yesterday," who were patently unfit to take advantage of the opportunity and the challenge.

My youngest interlocutors, aged around 30, were not only the most negative in their comments, but also ready to act out their criticism and resentments. For example, the Wall Newspaper at the Institute of Slavic Studies displayed a typed letter from one of its young staff members attacking--there is no other word for it--Parsadanova, a member of the Commission as well as of the Institute, for her statement at a roundtable conference on blank spots held by Literaturnaya Gazeta in April 1988. It dressed her down for saying that the Commission sought to find "positive" information in the archives to shed light on various aspects of Polish-Soviet relations. The young man's argument was that all sources had an objective character (they were neither negative nor positive) and should be used as such, regardless of whether they
served this or that, more desirable or less desirable, version of history. The irate letter also asked the Institute's Academic Council (a) to call a public meeting to discuss the merits of Dr. Parsadanova's arguments; and (b) to make it known that her views did not represent those of the Institute. (When I asked the Institute's Deputy Director about the administration's response, he replied that, given glasnost, no one would remove the letter despite its excessively "strong language," "but that there had been no response to the two demands.) Another expression of the impatience of young historians is their request to the editors of Sovetsko Slavianovedenie to let them edit one issue of the journal in order to make their views and opinions known.

The best organized and most serious pressure on the Commission comes from the Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences. It is the professional center with the largest number of specialists on Poland, as well as the longest tradition in the field. Organized in 1947, it played quite an infamous role in "helping" Polish historians master the intricacies of Marxist methodology in the early 1950s. Since Gorbachev's accession it has responded to perestroika. In 1987, the old-time director D. V. Markov was replaced by the younger, more liberal and quite reform-minded V. K. Volkov. According to one unimpeachable source (one of his deputy directors), Volkov has been pressing for the inclusion of properly qualified specialists from his Institute in order to raise the Commission's level and improve its image. By the end of 1988, the only result of his
efforts was a cynical, nominal change: the transfer of Inessa Yazhborovskaya, a hardliner, from the Institute of the International Workers Movement to Volkov's Institute--a mere change in her affiliation.

I asked several people why this dissatisfaction with the Commission found no expression in the Soviet press. The answer was that the Commission's deliberations are regarded as a highly sensitive political matter. Hence various decisions or clarifications are held up "higher up," and its members are not allowed to comment on the Commission's deliberations to either Soviet or foreign journalists. (Of course, the rule is not that hard-and-fast and the injunction is observed variably. I had pretty open and informative interviews with Chubarian and Firsov, but not with Yazhborovskaya, who is both lower on the totem pole and more of an ambitious hardliner.)

Foreign criticism also presses on Soviet timidity and secretiveness. The best, and public, example of how Soviet specialists can react to justifiable Western skepticism about official "methodology" is that of Vadim Sirotkin, professor at the Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Academy. In a postscript to his article on the Riga Peace Treaty (which marked the end of the Polish-Soviet war of 1920), he wrote with considerable bitterness about the ridicule he was exposed to at a conference on glasnost, held at the Centre des Etudes Slaves in Paris, when he was confronted with the text of the Joint Commission's roundtable
discussion (printed in Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn, which also appears in English and French translations). 43

Sirotkin's audience took exception to Academician Narochnitsky's allegations that the concept of spreading world revolution was "alien" to Lenin, that it was held and propounded only by Trotsky, Tukhachevsky and other Left Communists. Consequently Sirotkin felt obliged to refute Narochnitsky publicly with citations from Lenin's speeches, "available in published sources," that Lenin and his comrades founded the Comintern in March 1919 "precisely for the sake of world revolution." He went on to say that "in the age of glasnost and perestroika it was not worthwhile to keep silent, refuse to fill in the blank pages in the history of the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 and of the Comintern... since all documents... have long been published, and naturally Polish and other foreign historians are well acquainted with them." 44

I was informed by several specialists that Smirnov was absolutely furious with Sirotkin for publicly criticizing the Commission. And I had occasion to observe the dividing line between the professionally honest Sirotkin and the politically motivated members of the Commission at a lecture on the 1920 war he gave at the Slavic Studies Institute in late November 1988. During the discussion period, Yazhborovskaya took exception to Sirotkin's argument that the USSR had pursued a double-track policy: negotiating in Riga while pushing on with the Red Army toward Warsaw, and hopefully beyond. Her position, in essence,
was that calling too much attention to such facts does not promote Gorbachev's foreign policy efforts.

(The extent to which this fear still persists is illustrated by one episode in the Commission. A joint publication of the books by Marshal Pilsudski and General Tukhachevsky on the 1920 war was proposed by the Polish side in order to bring to public attention the fact that both countries had erred—the Poles first by pushing for Kiev and the Soviets by driving toward Warsaw. This seemed to be a perfect way of implementing the Commission's goal to put an end to contentious issues by publishing full information. But whereas the Poles want a large press run, the Soviets are afraid of adverse publicity about Lenin being a proponent of carrying class war beyond Soviet borders and are merely willing to publish a small, special edition intended solely for libraries.)

V. THE SIDE-EFFECTS OF THE COMMISSION

Even though the Commission has not produced any important results, the very fact of its having been set up to deal with hitherto taboo subjects has had significant side-effects. There are two important, mutually reinforcing by-products: (a) the ever-broader involvement of individuals and institutions in each country and across their border in the blank-spot issues independent of the Commission; and (b) the increasingly candid and ever-widening coverage of these issues regarding not only Soviet-Polish relations but also spilling over to post-1945 Polish
domestic politics--an area certainly not intended to be approached by the Commission.

Thus the original purposes of the April 1987 Declaration and of the Joint Commission--to improve intra-Bloc relations and bridge the gulf between regime and society in Poland--have spread beyond these bounds, producing unexpected (and unwelcome) results. The dynamics set in motion by the mere existence of the Joint Commission have opened up the blank-spot problematics for discussion by independent-minded professionals and journalists. Instead of co-opting and silencing the opposition elements, the decisions of 1987 have heightened their self-assertiveness. Re-examination of the past, undertaken for limited ends, has grown into a process of genuine democratization. What was initially undertaken to ease pressure on both governments, is increasingly resulting in common grass-roots efforts to challenge totalitarianism in each country.

The Press

The response of the Polish press to the official initiatives in spring 1987 gave clear indication that exposes of the past, started during the Solidarity period and suspended under martial law, were going to surface again. Newspapers and journals began to publish increasingly bold revelations--ranging from memoirs and diaries to documents--on various blank spots. As before, all this discussion is an important component, and indicator, of movements for reform gaining momentum.
Three publications typify the on-going discussion in their different ways of addressing the blank spots: the bold political crusade, a middle-of-the-road approach, and a more dispassionate professional weighing of the issues. The changes that took place in the publication plans of Konfrontacje are probably most indicative of how historical issues have once again become topical. This monthly published by PRON (the pro-regime Patriotic Front for National Rebirth), made its appearance in January 1988 after about two years of planning. The editor of its history department, Jan Engelhardt, told me that initially a separate section on history was not under consideration. But after spring 1987, it became imperative to have one. Konfrontacje is one of the most outspoken journals, consistently pushing against the limits of the permissible. The cover of the April 1988 issue, for example, was a photomontage of a cemetery memorial with the word "Katyn" chiselled on it. And the historical section printed short biographies of eleven generals who had perished in the USSR, as well as discussion that the 4,143 bodies of Polish officers unearthed at Katyn were only part of more than 11,000 officers who had disappeared without a trace. This was as eloquent a way as any of saying publicly that Katyn occurred in April 1940, for at that time the dating of the massacre was not permitted in the legal press. 45

The addition in October 1987 of a biweekly supplement "History and Life" to the popular Warsaw daily, Zycie Warszawy, is another example of the growing topicality of history, after April
1987. The supplement has not been as daring as *Konfrontacje* in pushing the limits, often preferring to publish a translation of some revelatory text from the Soviet press rather than undertake a revelation on its own. (The professional public regards *Konfrontacje* as a fighting organ, while *Zycie Warszawy* is looked upon as one that goes along with the general trend and is more interested in gaining circulation than in eradicating the blank spots.)

Nevertheless, from its first issue it has emphasized the importance of dealing with blank spots "in our past, especially recent past," adding that today's political atmosphere "creates greater than ever opportunity to liquidate these spots. Making the full historical truth public is a way of attaining this goal." 46

The appearance of the unaffiliated *Res Publika* in June 1987—a resuscitation in legal form of a publication that was first an underground paper and later a normal, aboveground periodical during 1979-81—points up the connections with the Solidarity period. From its first issue the monthly has given inordinate attention to historical issues. Rather than publish documents or memoirs, however, it prefers the dispassionate discussion of professional ethics and the importance of writing objective history. This is not to belittle the blank-spots issue. It is intended to ensure that another misuse of history not take place: namely, one that, no matter what the evidence, always casts Poles in the role of victims and the Russians or Soviets as perpetrators. 47

Or, as the lead article in the first issue asked: Can
history in Poland ever liberate itself "from the shadow of politics" and attain independence and objectivity? 48

**Schools: Teachers and Textbooks**

The tradition of independent teachers' action that surfaced during Solidarity was revived after April 1987. Their efforts are not as high-blown as those of university professors, many of whom want to shape the nation's politics. Teachers want to gain normality for their work, to put an end to the demoralizing double standards created by the official and the popular versions of history.

At its request the Teachers' Association (Zwiazek Nauccyzcielski) has been meeting regularly with Maciszewski and other members of the Joint Commission to find out about the latest stage in clarifying the blank spots in order to be able to apply it in the classroom. From the interviews I had it seemed that they do not press as actively for concessions from the Soviets and are better disposed toward the Commission's efforts than are their university or Academy-level colleagues. But this does not mean that teachers are passive—just less aggressive. Their activity seeks to take advantage of the situation to push for solutions in two areas of concern: the preparation of new textbooks and reassertion of the importance of professional ethics.

Two texts on modern Polish history, one for the 8th grade (the last in the obligatory basic schooling) and one for the 4th lycee grade (the last for those entering the university) are in
process of being rewritten in order to incorporate the blank-spot clarifications. Interestingly enough, both texts were written during the Solidarity period when the teachers' union forced the Ministry of School Education to sign an agreement on better, fuller coverage of modern Polish history. Yet though an improvement over preceding texts, both were still not considered to be fully satisfactory either by the authors or by the profession. I was told by several reliable sources that as soon as the April Agreement was signed and the Joint Commission formed, Siergejczuk started working on a new edition of his lycee text. The revisions in the old text are not expected to be too extensive, since it gave decent coverage of even sensitive issues such as the events preceding the outbreak of World War II. The real novelty will be the addition of a section on People's Poland, a period which "his conscience" did not permit him to write about before. The text was almost ready in December 1988, with the author waiting for a favorable moment to submit it for publication. That tactic reflects the constantly mellowing censorship on the blank spots. Siergejczuk was convinced that pretty soon he could print all that deserved to be printed.

The watchful readiness to take full advantage of expanding liberties was also evident in the roundtable discussion, held in January 1988 by the editors of Historical Notebooks (Zeszyty Historyczne), a series begun in March 1982 under the auspices of the School and Pedagogical Publishers in order to provide teachers with factually correct teaching aids on interwar Polish history.
while the new, more objective texts agreed upon by the teachers' union and the Ministry of School Education were in preparation. The roundtable praised these pamphlets, written by university scholars, for providing good material on the interwar period—mainly biographies of political leaders and descriptions of various political parties. But it concluded that the Historical Notebooks had not dealt with the blank spots in Polish-Soviet relations, and that it was high time to supply this material, since this was what interested the student body most about the recent past. In the months that followed, however, no Notebook dealing with any of the blank-spot issues discussed by the Joint Commission was published, which reflected both the lack of real progress on the Commission's part and the unwillingness of reputable historians to shoulder the task in these circumstances.

**Horizontal Ties**

The renewed stirring in the press and among teachers was in essence a resumption of activities first started on a large, organized scale during the Solidarity period. But the emergence of autonomous horizontal ties between reform-minded Poles and Soviets was unprecedented. True, in March 1981 Solidarity had issued an appeal for cooperation addressed to other countries and peoples in the Bloc. But it fell on deaf ears. What is happening now is done without fanfare but much more effectively. Furthermore, it is having an incremental effect.
To begin with, contacts are not discouraged on the official level. Quite the contrary. New organizations and programs to promote greater understanding and cordiality have been launched. But at the same time as official channels of exchange were being refurbished, unofficial ones began to appear and flourish. This process is harder to document since it is not covered in the press or media; one gets a sense of it through private contacts. I am convinced that on this level there is now genuine and constantly growing communication. It runs independently of, but parallel to, the official efforts and programs.

My various Soviet interlocutors said that the April 1987 Declaration was important for lifting the taboo not just on blank spots in Soviet-Polish relations but on Poland in general. With the onset of Solidarity everything from Poland, whether films or publications, became suspect—so much so that Polityka was unavailable. The iron curtain of suspicion remained down during the subsequent years and was not raised until after April 1987. It should be pointed out here that ever since 1956 an interest in Poland, its freer institutions, its Westernized cultural traditions, was quite pronounced among Soviet liberal intellectuals. Many learned Polish in those days in order to have a "window on the West," as one of my acquaintances put it. Solidarity only stimulated that interest. So the official blessing in April 1987 met with a welcome response. Soviet historians are taking out of their desk drawers articles that could not be published before, translators are brushing up their editions of Polish historians or
sociologists which had no hope of publication under Brezhnev. At least two people I met were planning to set up co-ops to publish, among other things, Polish science fiction and literature.

On the Polish side, something unusual has happened for the first time: there is marked interest and respect for what is taking place in the USSR. Of course, the Polish regime is eager to promote perestroika and reprints appropriate articles from the Soviet press. But there is spontaneous interest in and response to Soviet processes on other levels, and this is unprecedented. The liberal Party reformers in Polityka back their counterparts in the USSR; Catholic intellectuals are very much taken with the moral revival evident in Soviet literature; some Solidarity activists, especially the movement's theoretician, Adam Michnik, wants to visit the USSR; young jurists take note of what the Soviet Institute of State and Law is doing.

On both sides of the border people are taking advantage of eased travel restrictions to establish direct ties with their counterparts, and to communicate. I became involved in one such venture. In the summer of 1988 an emissary from young Soviet sociologists and jurists (many of them close to Tatiana Zaslavskaya's Institute of Public Opinion) contacted the Club of Catholic Intelligentsia, in Warsaw, suggesting that they organize a seminar and invite the Soviets. In late November 1988 I took 15 invitations to Moscow (the whole thing was legal, my flight there would be faster than the mails and speed up the process) to a joint meeting in Warsaw on ways to study public opinion and to
encourage local participation. In Moscow I heard of similar plans on the part of the newly founded, autonomous Association of Young Soviet Historians (SAMI) to hold a conference on the blank spots with their Polish counterparts. And as already stated, young reformers at the Institute of Slavic Studies are planning to edit in the near future an issue of their journal, with contributions from young Polish scholars.

Filmmakers

The direct contacts between Soviet and Polish filmmakers are the best example of new horizontal ties that are burgeoning (and one that I can document). It shows as well the ease with which common goals and a common language are discovered on such occasions. What is pertinent to this report is that these meetings are much concerned with the blank spots in history.

On April 18, 1987, the Soviet Film Association signed an agreement with its Polish counterpart to cooperate on "History in Films." The first meeting took place in Moscow, April 5-7, 1988; the second in Warsaw, September 20-23, 1988; the third was planned for January 1989.

The Polish delegation to the first meeting included one historian, Andrzej Zakrzewski, from Warsaw University and very active on the independent lecture circuit devoted to the eradication of blank spots. The Soviet side was joined by Dr. Parsadanova, a member of the Joint History Commission, and two others who served on the Commission's sub-groups--Irina Mikhutina, a
researcher at the Institute of Slavic Studies, and Anatoli Latyshev, head of the Department of World Politics at the Higher Party School. The independent Soviet historian Natan Eidelman also participated.

The nature of the first meeting and presence of historians gave official circles on both sides the excuse to connect the film conference with observance of the first anniversary of the new cultural agreements and the Joint Commission and to publicize this appropriately. Literaturnaya Gazeta printed a very selectively excerpted one-page summary of the 170-page stenographic record of the meeting under the title "'Blank spots': from emotion to facts. The roundtable of Soviet and Polish historians." (The text of this spotty summary was reprinted in a pamphlet, Blank Spots, by a Polish government agency.53) The summary's bland title simply does not convey the emotional tone and content, much less the real substance, of the discussions.

Indeed, emotions took over from the outset, for the deputy head of the Polish delegation, Juliusz Burski (also deputy director of the Polish Filmmakers' Association) started on a personal note, redolent with historical and political resonances: his father had been imprisoned in Starobelsk (one of the three prison camps from which Polish officers were taken to Katyn for execution), and the last letter his family received was dated March 10, 1940. Zakrzewski's speech, which followed, detailed the importance of historical consciousness in the Polish political psyche and the general Polish understanding of blank spots.
In the discussions, Katyn, deportations, and 1939 took center stage. Parsadanova, Mikhutina and Latyshev stressed the need for dispassionate, painstaking researches based on ample documentation. Zakrzewski and Eidelman countered with arguments that this amounted to avoiding responsibility because enough direct or indirect evidence, as well as plenty of eye-witness reports, existed to permit drawing conclusions.

Candor and spirited exchange again prevailed at the second meeting, held in Warsaw in September 1988. It was attended by filmmakers and historians--the outspoken reformer Natan Eidelman on the Soviet side and Andrzej Ajnenkiel, the equally committed president of the Polish Historical Association. Adam Michnik was also present. The event was picked up and publicized as much as possible by the independent and the underground press. Tygodnik Powszechny first printed a report on the discussions, describing their goal as "liquidation of blank spots" not only on the screen (movies and TV) but in a broader context--in all publications (academic, literary, the press), and above all in the social conscience of both nations. It also lengthened the list of divisive topics: the 1920 war, the liquidation of the Polish CP, August and September 1939, deportations, Katyn (which word was censored out of the text, but the chronological placement of the ellipses /.../ plus reference to the pertinent paragraph in the legal code--the paper's practice in marking censored passages--made it obvious what had been deleted), the Warsaw uprising. Thus far the list was a duplication of what had been under consideration by the
Joint Commission. But the last and seventh topic was new: namely publication of information and source materials on Solidarity.  

Next, Tygodnik Powszechny printed the text of Eidelman's speech, in which he said, among other things, that Poland was "predestined by history to liberate among its powerful neighbors a great cleansing feeling of shame." Fittingly, the title of his talk was taken from Alexander Herzen's proclamation in response to the 1863 Polish uprising: "We are for Poland because we are for Russia."  

The uncensored report of the second meeting, printed in Solidarity's underground Tygodnik Mazowsze, provided more information about other steps that would go beyond the work of the Joint Commission. On Michnik's suggestion, the delegates sent an appeal to Polish and Soviet scholars and authorities "to make known all the circumstances and documents [related to] the murder of Polish officers... in the spring of 1940." They also proposed the formation of informal Soviet-Polish clubs to encourage better mutual knowledge among neighbors and to overcome mutual prejudices.  

My point in reporting at some length on these two meetings is to convey the flavor of what is increasingly happening outside the officially sanctioned and promoted ventures. It is a process that keeps growing in the number of participants and, despite censorship, keeps reaching more and more people. For example, the 170-page stenographic record of the April 1988 filmmakers meeting in Moscow was quite widely circulated both in Moscow and in
Warsaw. There were plans to publish it in 1989 and to make it more widely available. In addition, in October 1988 Ogonek published an interview with Eidelman in which the historian repeated his arguments about Russia's historic relationship to Poland that were expressed at the second meeting in Warsaw. 58

Other channels and effects

Although I do not have as detailed information about other independent contacts related to the re-examination of history, I cite them to indicate their range and character. In my view, this burgeoning activity promises positive results in achieving a genuine breakthrough in the way the two nations regard one another. It is also an inseparable part of genuine liberalization, bringing new elements into the dialogue that strengthen the emergence of civil societies formulating their own demands rather than supinely accepting the views of the respective regimes.

The Catholic Church has become engaged in improving and broadening Soviet-Polish relations. In 1988, as expected, a delegation of the Polish Church attended the millennium celebrations of Russian Orthodoxy. But there was an unexpected twist: Filaret, the Metropolitan of Belorussia, invited Cardinal Glemp for a visit which included a trip to Katyn, and Glemp placed a cross on the burial place of the Polish officers. (Since then, visits by ordinary Polish citizens, many of them placing dated crosses on the mass grave, have become frequent.) Glemp's visit was fully reported in the Polish press and supplemented by
interviews with participants, who invariably stated that Poles wanted the "full truth about Katyn." Obviously such visits and observances did not start anything new in Poland other than to give people some satisfaction that the crime of Katyn could now be somehow commemorated and the date of the executions memorialized.

But the visits and exchanges have had far more impact in the USSR. Several of my interlocutors in Moscow stated that the appearance of Polish visitors with their insistence on the full truth about Katyn acted as a catalyst. It spurred the Ukrainians and Belorussians to demand acknowledgment from Moscow that the mass murders and graves at Bykovina and Kuropaty had been committed during Stalin's time and not during the German occupation, as officially alleged. The plethora of new informal contacts and organizations that spring up on both sides of the border includes those that seek to acknowledge the past Polish presence in what is now the Western Ukraine and parts of Lithuania. That historical presence had been in effect a blank spot carefully passed over in silence, until the signing of the April 1987 Declaration when the Soviet delegation brought along, in a gesture of good will, several hundreds of Polish books and manuscripts from the famous Ossolineum library in Lviv (formerly Lwow). That official acknowledgment of the Polish presence has since led to the formation of an Association of Poles in the Ukrainian SSR, which was in part responsible for the two governments signing in October 1988 an agreement on the restoration of Lyczakow, the large
Catholic cemetery in Lviv with graves of well-known Polish commanders and writers.

Poles living in Lithuania have formed a similar organization and have also been successful in pressing for a similar agreement related to the cemetery in Vilnius--Rossa (where along with other Poles the heart of Marshal Pilsudski, Poland's authoritarian ruler between the wars, lies buried).

The Polish academic community, especially historians, actively supports the expansion of these contacts, organizing joint meetings or publications. For example, the Warsaw University branch in Bialystok (the large city closest to Soviet Lithuania) is planning an international conference on the Polish presence in Vilnius for late September 1989, to which historians from both countries, as well as from abroad, have been invited. These few examples of autonomous initiatives demonstrate how an official gesture has led to lively people-to-people contacts that seek to eradicate blank spots in areas of their immediate concern.

These initiatives and contacts are incipiently political. In many respects they resemble the ecology movement, which starts with the protection of the environment but mushrooms into various assertions of local and broader self-management.

Another unintended by-product of the Joint Commission is the example Polish historians have displayed for their Soviet colleagues. Its impact is felt both individually and at the institutional level.
Several Soviet historians, both on and off the Commission, told me that the official endorsement of the blank-spots issue has given them the opportunity to meet a much wider spectrum of Polish historians; i.e., not just those from the Institute of Slavic Countries in the Polish Academy of Sciences, which is staffed with politicized hacks. Whether Marxist or not, most Polish historians whom the Soviets have met recently happen to be first-rate scholars with irreproachable research standards and academic ethics. The Soviets told me that this exposure has been highly educative—an eye-opener in some cases, especially with the older generation.

I was able to observe that "educational" process at two conferences in Warsaw (both on the 70th anniversary of Polish independence) with Soviet specialists in attendance. The moderate, objective and patient tone of the Poles (not in the least bit emotional, as so often happens in their private conversations) was striking. So was their respect for facts as facts and their eschewing the stale quotations from classics of Marxism-Leninism. These were objective, multi-layered analyses such as can be heard in any first-rate Western university. Several Soviet historians told me that their exchanges with the Poles made it possible to discuss scholarly issues without any reference to ideology.

Furthermore, joint work on the blank spots, according to another Soviet historian from the Commission, revealed the need to "delve more deeply into the history of the CPSU and of the peoples of the USSR." When asked to elaborate, he told me that the
dissolution of the Polish CP made obvious the need for a fuller study of the Comintern. As for the fuller history of the Soviet people, he meant a more objective, more ample and many-sided history of peoples like the Lithuanians, Belorussians and Ukrainians and the formation of the Soviet Union.

Finally, the Soviets are very much impressed by the way the Polish administration of archives works and how their colleagues have a much wider and legally assured access to archival materials. That experience serves them as grounds for pressing to liberalize the management of Soviet archives.

The broader contacts with the Poles resulting from the work of the Joint Commission have made obvious numerous shortcomings to their Soviet counterparts. These touch upon methodology, institutional arrangements, subject matter, and personnel. The fact that the Institute of Slavic Studies was planning a session for February 1989 to review and reshape the whole field of Polish studies can be attributed in good part to the effects of expanded exposure to the Polish side.

**New candor about People's Poland**

The promise of greater candor on Polish-Soviet relations unleashed another unintended process. The Polish press, in addition to pressing for speedier and fuller work on those blank spots, also became active in shedding more light on the taboo subjects in Polish history. Thus, dealing with the unmentionable was extended to Poland's own political history.
This process is extremely important and is as much related to Soviet-Polish relations as are the five or six topics under consideration by the Joint Commission. Willy-nilly, the full story of how Poland regained independence in 1918, of where Polish soldiers fought during World War II, how People's Poland was created after the war, how the unification of the Communist and Socialist parties was carried out in 1948—all this reflects on Polish-Soviet relations. Among other things, this information shows how much was and could be achieved between the wars without benefit of Communism, or the degree to which force was used to establish Communist rule after the war.

Of course, none of this was revelation to the Polish public. But the publication of documentary evidence on taboo subjects in domestic politics in the legal press was new. Although this publicity may not exactly change the substance of the two countries' relations in the sense of undermining the military alliance, it certainly has provided plenty of ammunition for undercutting the legitimacy of Communist power in Poland. I would not argue that printing the facts on the use of force in imposing Communist rule in Poland was a precondition for the grudging establishment of political pluralism in April 1989. But it certainly was an important component of the worsening political crisis that was eased by curtailing the Communist monopoly of power. That political change in turn affects the nature of Poland's relations with the USSR.
Space permits merely noticing those topics that are directly related to Poland's postwar politics. Clearly the range of issues now discussed or documented in the open is much wider. And, to repeat, most of this information was public knowledge, having been passed on as oral history, or beamed there by various Western radio stations, and published by the underground press or by the emigration.

There has been a rehabilitation of the interwar period, once vilified as times of class oppression, economic and cultural stagnation, when Poland was ruled either by inept politicians or the authoritarian military. The fuller picture that is emerging brings into sharp relief the various failures of People's Poland under Communist rule.

Numerous monographs and periodical articles document fully the economic and cultural progress achieved during the interwar years. Similarly, solid, objective biographies of outstanding and not so major political figures have appeared in the past two years. These include not only Roman Dmowski, leader of the National Democratic camp, and Marshal Pilsudski, but even Edward Rydz-Smigly who succeeded Pilsudski and was an ineffectual leader. As for Pilsudski, he enjoys a veritable personality cult. So much so, that Polityka in its last issue of 1988 had a caricature that was a wry comment on the cult: it showed the outgoing year as trampling on Stalin's portrait but elevating that of Pilsudski in its stead.60
Concerning World War II, there is now a much fuller and fairly objective discussion of the extent to which Poles fought on the Western, allied fronts—not just on the Soviet side. And regarding those who had either cast their lot with Moscow or at some point sought to cooperate with the Red Army, there is much information on how they had either been tricked or betrayed by the Soviets.

The service of Polish fliers and soldiers in the United Kingdom and on the battlefields of North Africa and Italy is no longer passed over in silence. On the contrary, their exploits are meticulously and proudly recorded. More important, the fact that the pro-London Home Army (AK) and not the pro-Moscow People's Army (AL) had much the larger membership and did the brunt of the fighting against the Nazis in occupied Poland is now fully conceded. General Berling's now published memoirs sheds light for the first time on the political and personal rivalries among the Poles who chose to fight on the Soviet side. (He recounts how the internationalist-minded elements, more loyal to Moscow than to Poland, led by Wanda Wasilewska, eased him out from the leadership of the Polish units in the USSR.)

Current coverage of the early postwar years does not spare details on the force and subterfuge used by the Soviets and Communists to gain and retain power as the Red Army advanced into Poland. Increasingly more material is being published on how the AK helped liberate major cities in Eastern Poland, how they sought and managed to establish cooperation with the Red Army, only to be
arrested by the NKVD once the German soldiers were gone.\textsuperscript{62} Probably the publications that best catch the essence of the process are those dealing with the arrest of the 16 Polish underground leaders, loyal to the London government-in-exile, who agreed to meet and negotiate with Soviet authorities in Radom. Upon arrival there, they were flown to Moscow, imprisoned, put on trial, and most were condemned to death.\textsuperscript{63}

Related in substance are the documented memoirs of Henryk Rozanski, a close adviser to Hilary Minc (the top Polish economic expert), which contain much information on how the Soviets demanded and obtained excessive war reparations not only from the former German territories ceded to Poland but also from Silesia, which had been Polish since World War I.\textsuperscript{64}

There are quite a few articles on how the 1946 referendum had been rigged. The facts about this have been collected and analyzed in Krystyna Kersten's excellent scholarly monograph \textit{Birth of the System of Power}, published abroad in 1986.\textsuperscript{65} Even though it is easily available nowadays (being openly sold in the courtyard of Warsaw University right in front of signs forbidding such peddling), it is expensive. Reaching a much wider audience, the articles in the press detailing the Communist seizure of power are a constant reminder that the Party's rule had been illegitimately attained.

The operation of Stalinism in Poland and its aftermath is the fourth area that has been opened up to more liberal treatment in the legal press since April 1987. The range of publications and
interpretations is considerable: from pretty tame biographies to quite condemnatory revelations. Andrzej Werblan's biography of Gomulka is an example of the former approach. It presents Gomulka as a hero of the Polish way to socialism who was victimized by Polish Stalinists. According to this argument, things would have gone well in Poland had not the "evil forces" of Stalinism derailed his noble and successful efforts.66

However, there are many more publications that put the lie to this idyllic story. Articles detail the recently discovered burial grounds of hundreds of victims of the political terror that reigned after 1948. Articles and books outline how academic life was politicized after 1948, sparing no detail about the fate of some individuals as well as about the detrimental results. There are revelations about the methods used to bring about the unification of the Communist and Socialist parties in 1948.67

The critical review goes on to more recent, post-Stalinist times. Typical is the dissection of what happened in 1968, when the unrest among Warsaw University students was manipulated and used by one wing of the Party to unleash an anti-Semitic campaign and to oust its rivals from power.68 Many publications delve into the causes of the repeated workers' strikes and political unrest that have plagued Poland from 1956 onward.

VI. IN CONCLUSION

Given the historic compromise in Poland that was signed on April 5, 1989, which recognized the political legitimacy of forces
other than the Communist, as well as of the Solidarity trade union, there is no need to write a lengthy conclusion outlining various scenarios for the future. When I was completing my first draft of this report in March, I wrote in concluding the section on the unintended side-effects: "Altogether, the increasing openness in discussing the negative aspects of Poland's post-World War II political order begs the question--what will be the result of unleashing all this information? It is evident that, rather than bridge the gap between regime and society (as was Jaruzelski's intent), the Polish variant of glasnost has only served to further undermine the legitimacy of the Communist rule." To be sure, the future form of Polish-Soviet relations remains an unresolved issue. Here, I would prefer not to predict--and not only because of the fast pace of events. The multitude of unprecedented developments makes it pretty obvious that new relationships are in the making, for which our old analysis, based essentially on the client-state model, is no longer adequate.

One thing seems fairly certain: just as in domestic politics the Polish Communist Party had no other way out but to accept multitiered political order, so in inter-state relations Moscow and Warsaw will most likely work out a similar multitiered system. That new system will preserve the military alliance; beyond that, it will permit various forms of economic, diplomatic and political pluralism. To judge from the way the review of the history of Polish-Soviet relations has progressed, it can no longer be an ideologically based alliance, legitimized by a mythology of past
friendship and cooperation. The present-day leaders in Moscow and Warsaw would like it to be an alliance or partnership based on state interests and legitimized by the requirements of Real-politik.
NOTES


2. See, for example, Stefan Kieniewicz, "W oczach historyka," Polityka, no. 41 (October 18, 1981), pp. 1, 9. He named three groups of problems that could not be written about with candor: (1) the forerunners of the present-day ruling group, (2) the political and economic history of People's Poland, and (3) the history of Soviet-Polish relations and to some extent of Russian-Polish relations.


4. See the discussion, "History and Society," held by the editorial board: Nowe Drogi, nos. 4 and 6 (1985), pp. 106-17, 133-58.


6. P. Kwiatkowski, A. Szpocinski, "Badania sociologiczne nad swiadomoscia historyczna," Edukacja Polityczna, v. 12 (1988), p. 161. The list consisted of six topics: Katyn; the USSR's policy toward Poland in 1939; year 1956; the Warsaw uprising; the creation of the Polish CP; Polish boundaries after World War II.


"Genesis and Beginning of World War II" was ready by early March and was published in Trybuna Ludu on May 24, 1989, and in Pravda, the following day. According to the New York Times report, it acknowledged the secret protocols to the August 23 and September 28, 1939, treaties, even though no original had been found in Soviet archives. But it dealt only with the partition of Poland, leaving unmentioned the deal that was also struck on the Baltic states. Quite obviously, both governments thought it expedient to release the report on the eve of the Polish election.


15. Dokumenty i Materialy do Historii Stosunkow Polsko-Radzieckich. It has been published since 1961 under the supervision of the Institute of Socialist Countries, of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The first volume published in 1957 under the title Materialy Archiwalne do Historii Stosunkow Polsko-Radzieckich, was scuttled, for it contained too much archival information.


25. This was privately communicated to me. The study was written by Czeslaw Madajczyk, and some excerpts (those dealing with the German discovery of the graves and Berlin's efforts to break up Allied unity) had been published: "Dramatu katynskiego act drugi," *Miesiecznik Literacki*, no. 7 (1988), pp. 85-108.


28. The Association was set up in 1866 in Lvov, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and was active in supporting independence efforts before World War I. Its present membership numbers 4,000.

29. The letter, dated May 5, 1987, was never published, but I obtained a copy.


31. For two of Ajnenkiel's interviews, see *Zycie Warszawy* (The Historia i zycie supplement), no. 27 (November 11, 1988), pp. 1-3; *Tygodnik Kulturalny*, no. 40 (October 2, 1988), pp. 1, 5. Ajnenkiel gives many public lectures, including those at events devoted to historical observances under the auspices of the Catholic Church.


34. "O bialych plamach w historii najnowszej," *ibid.*, p. 14. These views represented the high hopes aroused by the April-May 1987 moves. During an interview in November 1988, Duraczynski conceded that he did not realize at the time the extent of the emotional and administrative barriers to opening archives and topics.


41. The Paris Kultura no longer has to be smuggled in from abroad; it is now published underground in Poland. Since the fall of 1988 such publications are being sold openly on the campus of Warsaw University. During the preceding year they were sold on the sly.

42. "'Belye piatna'--ot emotsi k faktam," Literaturnaya Gazeta, May 11, 1988, p. 5.

43. English text, "Closing the 'Gaps'," International Affairs, no. 6 (1988), pp. 141-52.

44. "The Riga Peace Treaty," ibid., pp. 141-42. Polish pressures work as well. On April 5, 1989, Literaturnaya Gazeta printed a plea by L. Pchivalov ("Poliaki i my") that the Soviet side respond to the documents on Katyn presented by the Poles to the Joint Commission because prolonged, and inexcusable, silence only fed distrust and suspicion.


47. This aim is clearly expressed by its editor, Marcin Krol, in an interview: Mowia Wieki, no. 4 (1988), pp. 44-45.


52. A second joint meeting took place in Moscow in April 1989 in TsEMA (the Central Mathematics Institute). I was informed by a West German friend who attended. This time the two sides discussed the recognition of political pluralism in Poland.


54. I obtained a Russian text in Poland: "Soyuz Kinematografistov SSR, Stennogramma sovetsko-pol'skogo simpoziuma-Istoricheeskoe kino, ot tabu do glasnosti."


58. "Optimism istoricheskogo znaniya," Ogonek, no. 44 (October 1988), pp. 2-4, 28-29. Eidelman told me during his visit to Columbia University in May 1989, that in March he had submitted an article detailing the Polish views and documentation on Katyn to Znamia. It was accepted, but the editors were not sure whether and when it could be published.


61. P. Matusiak, Ruch Oporu w Polsce, 1939-1945 (Katowice, 1987). General Berling's memoirs were shown in a movie version on Polish TV on October 12, 1988 (to commemorate Polish Army Day). The show occasioned quite a lively discussion in the press with additional information about the "blank spots" of that period.

63. See the interview with one survivor: Adam Bien, "Kulisy procesu szesnastu," *Lad*, no. 20 and 21 (May 15 and 22, 1988).


68. K. Kersten, "Rok 1968: motyw żydowski," *Res Publica*, March 1988; the March 6, 1988, issue of *Lad* (no. 10) was largely given over to the events of 1968.
APPENDIX I

Polish Members of the Commission

Jarema Maciszewski (chairman) Rector, CP's Academy of Social Sciences; Professor, Institute of History, Warsaw University

Col. Eugeniusz Kozlowski Deputy Director, Military Institute of History

Marek Kuczynski Maciszewski's secretary, Academy of Social Sciences

Col. Marian Leezyk Professor, Military Political Academy (Chair, Political Science Department)

Czeslaw Madajczyk Professor (and former Director), Institute of History, Academy of Sciences; Editor, Dzieje Najnowsze

Ryszard Nazarewicz Institute of the History of the Workers' Movement, Academy of Social Sciences

Col. Kazimierz Sobczak Director, Military Institute of History

Bronislaw Syzdek Director, CP Central Archives

Mieczyslaw Tanty Professor, Institute of History, Warsaw University

Wlodzimierz Kowalski Now affiliated with the Agrarian Academy, Olsztyn

Czeslaw Luczak Professor, Poznan University

Gen. Tadeusz Walichnowski Rector, CP Internal Affairs Academy

Marian Wojciechowski Director, State Archives
Soviet Members of the Commission

Georgi L. Smirnov (chairman)  Director, Institute of Marxism-Leninism; Academician
Valeri V. Zhuravlev          Deputy Director, Institute of Marxism-Leninism
Valentina S. Parsadanova     Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies, Academy of Sciences
Tamara V. Porfirieva         Institute of Marxism-Leninism
Oleg A. Rzheshhevsky         Head of Sector, Institute of General History, Academy of Sciences
Aleksandr O. Chubarian       Director, Institute of General History, Academy of Sciences
Inessa S. Yazhborovskaya     Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies, Academy of Sciences
Col. V. O. Daines           Institute of Military History
B. S. Popov                  Academy of Sciences
Col. P. A. Kochegura        Institute of Military History
Aleksei L. Narochnitsky     Department Head, Institute of USSR History, Academy of Sciences; Academician

Source: Thomas S. Szayna, "Addressing 'Blank Spots' in Polish-Soviet Relations," Problems of Communism, November-December, 1988, pp. 41, 42. Szayna's list, which includes names and affiliations of some consultants, has been shortened, updated and corrected.
APPENDIX II

Polish Public Opinion on Katyn
(in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Have you heard about the crime against Polish prisoners at Katyn during World War II?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I heard a lot about it.</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I heard about it.</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know nothing about it.</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Who, in your opinion, bears responsibility for the Katyn crime?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither; someone else</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans and USSR to the same degree</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to tell</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>