

**THE HOLY SEE FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE POLISH POLITICAL
TRANSITION: THE ROLE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II (1978-1989)**

**A POLÍTICA EXTERNA DA SANTA SÉ NA TRANSIÇÃO POLÍTICA POLONESA: O
PAPEL DO PAPA JOÃO PAULO II (1978-1989)**

Marcos Alan S. V. Ferreira (UFPB e UNIPAMPA)
marcosalan@gmail.com

Renan Honorato (UFPB e UNIPAMPA)
renanmh@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper uses the method of process tracing in order to follow how the change in the Vatican leadership on the year of 1978 contributed to the shift in its foreign policy towards an anti-communism policy that helped on the fall of the Polish communist regime. In the late 1970s, the Vatican influenced the political change on some Communist countries. The final years of the Cold War introduced a range of new actors that contributed to the American preponderance in the international system after the demise of the USSR. Among them, we can highlight the rebirth of the oldest diplomacy in the world, which was able to be among the high players in the system once again: the Holy See. Also, the cooperation between the American president Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II is a controversial point that must be investigated. It is possible to assert, however, that Karol Wojtyła played an essential role during the Polish political transition and that it was possible because of the partnership that His Holiness developed with Ronald Reagan and also with internal opposition personified in the union Solidarity.

Key-words: Religion. Foreign Policy. Poland. Holy See.

Resumo: Este trabalho usa o método de *process tracing* a fim de seguir a forma como a alteração na liderança do Vaticano no ano de 1978 contribuiu para a mudança em sua política externa para uma política anticomunista que ajudou na queda do regime comunista polonês. No final dos anos 1970, o Vaticano influenciou a mudança política em alguns países comunistas. Os últimos anos da Guerra Fria introduziram uma gama de novos atores que contribuíram para a preponderância americana no sistema internacional após o desaparecimento da URSS. Entre eles, podemos destacar o renascimento da diplomacia mais antiga do mundo, que foi capaz de estar entre os *high players* no sistema uma vez mais: a Santa Sé. Além disso, a cooperação entre o presidente norte-americano Ronald Reagan e o Papa João Paulo II é um ponto polêmico que deve ser investigado. É possível afirmar, porém, que Karol Wojtyła desempenhou um papel fundamental durante a transição política polonesa e que isto apenas foi possível devido à parceria que Sua Santidade desenvolveu com Ronald Reagan, mas também com a oposição interna polonesa personificada no sindicato Solidariedade.

Palavras-chave: Religião. Política Externa. Polônia. Santa Sé.

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Introduction

On the 16th of October, 1978, Karol Wojtyła succeeded Albino Luciani as Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, becoming Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope in 455 years (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 3). Wojtyła was the first pope to originally come from the Eastern side of the Iron Wall, a region of the world where religion was living a clash with local governments because of communism (DRAGADZE, 2004, p. 141-50). In a period marked by the Cold War, this fact would

prove very important in the unfolding of the conflict between the USSR and the USA, especially in pope's homeland: Poland.

This article aims to show how the actions of the then new pope represented an important factor in the downfall of the communist regime in Poland using as his weapons his charisma and the powers granted to him by the Roman Catholic Church. By changing the *Ostpolitik* – a policy that sought to promote the dialogue between the Vatican and the Communist states at different levels to prevent the persecution of Catholics in these countries (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 16) – implemented by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, he aimed to change the relations between the Holy See and the communist states. Therefore, Wojtyła showed that he would not be as passive as his predecessors were towards communism, representing a threat to the regime in the entire world. Since this was among the first goals of the new pope, the time period studied by this article takes place from the rise of Wojtyła to the top of the Catholic hierarchy, in October, 1978, to the fall of the communist regime in Poland, which occurred in 1989. Our objective is to understand to which extension his influence in Polish domestic politics was relevant.

It is important to notice that the importance of the State of Vatican City is many times overlooked by analysts of international relations (TROY, 2008, p. 65-73; TARLTON, 2012, p. 14-7) since most analysis from scholars are based on military and economic/financial power of States, areas in which the Vatican has neither importance or interest. However, it is important to assess cases in which this actor of international relations is a central figure as the one studied in this work and emphasize the importance of the man taking all the most relevant decisions in this State: the pope.

His actions was guided by interests to support the Holy See influence across the world, as largely defined by realist theories of International Relations, while URSS was guided by a Marxist approach (see LINKLATER, 1990). Regarding this point, Martin affirms that¹

[...] John Paul knew that in terms of diplomatic power he was seen as an anomaly among traditional world leaders. Most of the 116 full-fledged embassies on Vatican Hill are, in the internationally recognized formula, accredited to the “Holy See.” In practical terms, Karol Wojtyła, as Pope John Paul II, is that Holy See. Neither his institutional organization nor his investment portfolio—and certainly not religious reverence or agreement with the Pope on moral matters or political ideals—dictates the necessity of maintaining those diplomatic missions, but simply hardheaded realism (MARTIN, 1990, s/p [E-PUB File]).

With the help of the Holy See's foreign policy in the period, the policies carried out by the U.S. government during the Reagan Doctrine made the country one of the major donors – along the

1. The authors thank here the anonymous reviewer for this valuable insight for paper improvement.

Vatican itself – of internal anti-Communism movements in Poland, mainly through CIA hidden bank accounts and resources sent through third parties, such as Belgian and Italian groups (TARLTON, 2012, p. 41-2). As quoted by Flatley (2007, p. 4), “with similar interest in destroying communism and establishing democracy throughout the globe”, Reagan and Pope John Paul II “held the opportunity to align with one another and create a commanding coalition, generating a political influence so powerful it could potentially prompt revolution and alter global affairs forever”.

1. Methodology

For this research, we have used a process tracing, a method in which one must draw all observable theoretical implications, especially those that help one to understand the independent variables that cause a predictable change in the dependent variable. Then such dependent variable is tested empirically in a theory to analyze a case study (KING; KEOHANE; VERBA, 1994, p. 226-8) in this case the influence exerted by Pope John Paul II in the fall of the Communist regime in Poland.

It is also important to note that such strategy was used in order to increase the number of causal mechanisms elaborated on the theory that we attempted to write about the end of communism in Poland, since this method tends to favor this type of control in the dynamics between the variables. This approach is especially useful to us given the fact that it encourages scholars to analyze “each set of measurable perceptions by decision-makers of others’ actions and intentions”, which commonly makes necessary to reach the level of the individual actor (KING; KEOHANE; VERBA, 1994, p. 226-8).

We used the process-tracing variety known as analytic explanation, in which a historical explanation is converted into an analytical causal explanation about the event studied, gradually adding analytical causal explanations, causing it to become part of a theory (ALEXANDER; BENNET, 2005, p. 210-13).

After an initial exploratory analysis of the bibliography, the two main hypotheses that we proposed to test during our research were:

H₁ – Karol Wojtyła had an important role during the regime change process in Poland through the support and empowerment of Solidarity;

H₂ – Karol Wojtyła and Reagan cooperated in order to support and empower the actors involved in the change in the Polish regime.

It was clear that these two hypotheses would support our goal of finding out the level of influence that Karol Wojtyła had had in the regime change process at his home country. H₁ is considered because there is no evidence of Wojtyła intervening directly in the process. His role, we argue, was not of a direct negotiator (except during the period when Solidarity was illegal), but of an

influencer. He showed the people of Poland that they should not be afraid of fighting the regime and that made the local anti-communist movements more powerful. Later, he would help with the popularization of Solidarity, making references to it and implicitly showing that the trade union was a viable option for the Poles to fight a good fight in a righteous way.

H₂, on the other hand, was more difficult to test. Given the fact that neither of the actors has confirmed any cooperation during this period – in fact, Wojtyła denied it in life –, there is no absolute proof that it really happened (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 297). However, as stated by Hudson: leaders tend to, whatever reason, lie (HUDSON, 2007, p. 50-3). Therefore, given the evidences we found – and that will be thoroughly analyzed later –, we began our analysis with the assumption that Ronald Reagan and Karol Wojtyła cooperated in order to end the Communism in Poland.

In order to achieve the goal of analyzing Wojtyła's role in the regime change process, we recurred to a bibliography on foreign policy analysis theories (WARNER; WALKER, 2011; GOLDSTEIN; KEOHANE, 1993) and about Polish history and culture (JAKUBOWSKA, 1990; ŁUKASIEWICZ, 2009; DAVIES, 2005a; DAVIES, 2005b; DAVIES, 2001). Moreover, documents from the Politburo as well as from the Vatican were used during this research, as was bibliography on the case, which included the case studies by Bernstein and Politi (1996) and George Weigel (2005; 2003). All of these factors were taken into account to tracing process of our independent variable.

This work is divided into seven parts, including our conclusion. Given the fact that we are drawing an analytic explanation, we elaborated these parts in chronological sequence, making it easier to follow the events during the process traced and analyzed according the literature available about the issue. Finally, at the end of this article, we will assert our conclusions about the two hypotheses and the case studied here.

2. The rise of a pope and the beginning of mass movement

Many of the cardinals who were part of the second conclave of 1978 said that Wojtyła was elected due to his background (JUDT, 2005, p. 585). The new pope had never come into direct conflict with the communist government, which made him an excellent candidate to proceed with the *Ostpolitik* policy applied by his predecessors. Moreover, they believed that Wojtyła, having lived in a dictatorial system and being a victim of it, would have greater chances to reform the Church and give more powers to the Curia or any other organizations within the Vatican. However, Pope John Paul II would not take any of these initiatives. In addition to breaking the *Ostpolitik* in the first months of his pontificate, he ensured that the most important Vatican City State foreign policy decisions would be made by the pope himself (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 630).

The reaction of the Polish United Workers' Party was one of immediate dissatisfaction. Despite never having criticized the government directly, Wojtyła knew how to act against the

government in order to move the population. Both the First Secretary of the Party, Edward Gierek, as the Minister of Defense, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, worried about the news (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 269).

Both knew about Wojtyła's *modus operandi*, since he had acted in a manner to annoy the government without putting people at risk, especially through requests for building permits of new seminaries and churches, something necessary, since the exercise of any religion was restricted at the time and the government was trying to "choke" the Catholic faith of the Polish people. Wojtyła, largely due to his experience as an actor and writer during adolescence and youth, knew how to use symbols to affect the people, something that would become a mark of his pontificate.

Wojtyła's intention as soon as he assumed the post of pope was to visit his homeland, since the 900-year anniversary of the death of St. Stanislaw, the patron of Poland, was coming on April 11, 1979. Notwithstanding the interest of the pope, Soviet authorities advised the local Party not to allow such a visit, which could have unpleasant consequences for the Communist Party in the country. Party leaders decided not to prohibit the pope's visit fearing further repercussions, but to defer it to a date in which there was a smaller symbolic importance for the country, more precisely between the 2nd and the 10th of June of the same year (OSA, 2003, p. 139-42).

On June 2, Wojtyła landed in Poland. His first visit to his homeland got higher proportions than those expected by the communist leaders. Over a million people came to wait the arrival of the pope. Gierek met Wojtyła on arrival, as he would have met any other head of state. This was the only meeting during the visit of the pope. After brief speeches to the authorities, the pope was taken to the Victory Square, where a mass would be celebrated for the population. That event would be televised to other countries – including the U.S. – and public input was controlled by the military: 300,000 people gathered in the square to watch the mass conducted by the new pope (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 292).

The homily began full of symbolism and with the words that would mark the visit of the pope: "Together with you I wish to sing a hymn of praise to Divine Providence, which enables me to be here as a pilgrim" (JOHN PAUL II, 1979a). John Paul II would identify himself throughout this trip as a "pilgrim". This word implies that the Polish territory is a holy land to Catholic Christianity, and identifies the highest authority of religion as a visitor to this land.

On June 9, John Paul II uttered words aiming to mark the Polish people. In the Shrine of the Holy Cross, in Mogila, he said:

The Cross cannot be separated from man's work. Christ cannot be separated from man's work. This has been confirmed here at Nowa Huta. This has been the start of the new evangelization at the beginning of the new millennium of Christianity in Poland. We have lived this new beginning together and I took it with me from

Krakow to Rome as a relic. Christianity and the Church have no fear of the world of work. They have no fear of the system based on work. The pope has no fear of men of work. They have always been particularly close to him. He has come from their midst (JOHN PAUL II, 1979a).

During his farewell on June 10, one more time a million people gathered around the pope in order to celebrate a mass in honor of St. Stanislaw, one of the patrons of the country. This time, the words of Wojtyła would serve as an incentive and as emotional support to the Polish people against communism: “You must be Strong, dearest Brothers and sisters! You must be strong with the strength that flows from faith! [...] There is therefore no need for fear. We must open the frontiers. There is no imperialism in the Church, only service” (JOHN PAUL II, 1979b).

Even though Wojtyła’s pilgrimage did not mark the beginning of the anticommunist movements in Poland, it surely marked the moment when the Polish people became willing to face the socialist government again. Solidarity members have made similar statements, such as Zbigniew Bujak, who would be the leader of the union branch in Warsaw. He said that before Wojtyła’s visit, he had intended to start a movement, but was not sure if there would be any support to his initiative. Bujak said that, upon hearing Wojtyła’s last statement in Poland, he felt that his movement could thrive, stating: “Both the fears we had when we began our struggle against the totalitarian system and our concern over future developments now disappeared [...] We saw that there were many of us. This was very important and put our doubts to flight” (BUJAK apud BERNSTEIN & POLITI, 1996, p. 12).

In order to understand why Pope John Paul II was able to ignite the sparks of revolution with just a visit to his native country, we must also understand the internal situation that the country was living. After several years of communist rule, a key factor is clear within Poland: the country was no longer made up of peasants, but by urban workers with at least basic education, which allowed for the creation of some advanced labor movements. However, Poland was undergoing a unfavorable economic situation: the country's GDP fell by 2% in 1979, 8% in 1980 and between 15% and 20% in 1981, marking the highest rates of economic recession of an industrialized economy since the end of World War II (BARKER, 2002, p. 169-72).

The rapid growth through which the country went through in the 1970s turned out to widen income inequality between social classes. Public corruption was seen by the population as endemic, which led to the lowest levels of popular belief in the history of the regime. Moreover, foodstuffs were becoming a problem and supplying the population became increasingly difficult. The country was the most polluted of all Europe, causing many health problems, including the high rate of stillbirth babies, the biggest of the continent. Finally, the country owed millions of rubles to the USSR and a value between \$20 and \$25 billion to Western banks.

Aiming to control the scarcity of food, Gierek implemented a new pricing system. Until then, this type of product suffered a price freeze that was constantly affected by the crisis in the supply, which caused an increase in prices that infuriated the major population. In search of a solution for the food shortages and the threat of riots, in the late 1970s Gierek created the “free price” stores at market prices, defraying production and avoiding the spread of the effects of the unbalance in supply and demand to be felt by the major population. The idea did not work. Besides generating increasingly large queues at the controlled price shops, the announcement on the 1st of July, 1980, that the fine cuts of meat would only be offered at market prices stores did blow a wave of strikes that culminated in the city of Gdansk (BARKER, 2002, pp. 169-72).

In the last four years (1976-80), at least a thousand strikes had occurred in Poland. Many of the strikes and demonstrations had finished with more serious repression by the government. However, the most serious manifestations of 1956, 1970 and 1976 taught the strikers that the government did not know how to deal with them, and the only mean of negotiation between the two parties was a promise of a wage increase.

It was in this context that grew one of the most powerful internal anticommunist movements of that time, The Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" (*Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy "Solidarność"*). They acted mainly through strikes that pressured the government into negotiation with the workers, not engaging in violent actions. This organization was fundamental on the process at hand, however, as our focus is not the rise of these organizations, we will not describe how they came to be so important. Therefore, we recommend Osa (2003), Barker (2002) and Bernstein and Politi (1996) for more information on these processes.

The pope considered that the actions of Solidarity could really contribute to a regime change, which led him to support the union since its birth. Wojtyła promoted it as a good omen for the Poles. On the 20th of August, barely a week after the beginning of the activities of Lech Wałęsa and his fellow strikers, a group of Polish pilgrims met Wojtyła at the Vatican. He greeted them with the words: “God, grant through the intercession of Mary that religion may always enjoy freedom and that our homeland may enjoy security [...] Lord, help this people, and always defend it from every evil and danger” (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 356-7).

Besides that, Wojtyła wrote a letter to the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. In this letter, the Pope said: “I pray with all my heart that the bishops of Poland [...] can even now help this nation in its difficult struggle for daily bread, for social justice and the safeguarding of its inviolable rights to its own life and development” (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 358).

With these words, John Paul II blessed the strike movement and pointed that the clergy from around the country should support the movement at the local level, something that Wyszyński was afraid to do. On the same day that the arrival of this letter was announced (August 23rd, 1980)

(BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 358), the government agreed to negotiate with the Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee (*Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy*, MKS, by then the most important movement in the country) of Gdansk. These negotiations ended up lasting one week and only on August 31 government ministers signed the “21 Points”, as had been named the workers’ demands (BARKER, 2002, p. 174-5).

On August 30, 1980, Jagielsky accepted all the demands made by the workers of Gdansk and, on the next day, the Gdansk Agreement would be signed. We must emphasize that the communist government was worried about its legitimacy at this time, given that the last clause of the agreement stated that workers should accept the leadership of the party, recognizing its existence and the rights of the rulers. Despite this last clause, Gierek was weakened at the Politburo and was fired and replaced by Stanisław Kania (OSA, 2003, p. 148).

Three weeks after the Gdansk Agreement, on September 17, leaders of the many branches of MKS met in their first national meeting, which decided to establish the creation of the first union without connection to the central government east of the Iron Curtain: the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" ("*Solidarność*"). Soon after its birth the union already counted 3 million members, but still had not been officially approved by the government. In a few weeks, the movement had grown to the point of numbering 10 million workers from several sectors of production. All classes joined the labor movement with the majority of its members, except the class teachers of primary level, in which the rate of compliance was 48%. Even so, the large number of workers gave the movement an adherence rate of 80% of the entire workforce of the country (OSA, 2003, p. 148-51).

In October, members of the Solidarity promoted a general strike with the duration of one hour across the country. This strike was intended to serve as a warning to communist leaders: the Solidarity trade union should be officially recognized, otherwise more strikes would occur throughout the country. When 80% of the workforce of a country stops working, the consequences are obviously disastrous. Due to the growth of the union, the *de facto* power of the Party diminished – the Polish United Workers Party counted 3 million members, while Solidarity had already reached the impressive sum of 10 million workers and 1 million were part of both organizations (Davies, 2001, pp. 16-18) –, making its control over the territory more fragile.

On October 22, the Party launched the first internal document on the introduction of martial law in the country for reasons of State security. In this paper are described the measures that will be taken if Martial Law is applied in the country, which includes a description of all restrictions on the freedom of the Polish people and also the broadening of the powers of some organizations. The introduction of Martial Law in Poland would not only restrict the rights of the population in the

hope of strangling the anticommunist movements, but would also have to change the constitution of the People's Republic of Poland (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*, PRL) itself.

Therefore, more than a year would pass before the establishment of the Martial Law in Poland due to internal debate within the Politburo over a direct military intervention in Poland that took into account the participation of another individual of the international scene: the president of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan.

The Politburo began such conversations on October 29, 1980, when they prepared a program for the recovery of the Polish economy and discussed the issue of anticommunist movements in the country. The decision of the Politburo leaders was that the authorities should use more force to repress movements, cut the rights of the Church and prepare the economy for the Soviet plan to introduce, among rebates, grants and short term loans, more than 1 billion rubles in the Polish economy (POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC POLITBURO, 1980).

On October 24, Solidarity would gain legal status, which was celebrated by all its members. However, the size of the union caused internal problems: even though the leaders of the branches were popular, contrary views within the movement were emerging. The main group did not know how to act due to the proportion that the movement reached. The crisis of Solidarity would begin the following year, on March 19 of the following year (BARKER, 2002, p. 184).

3. Reagan, Wojtyła and the U.S.-Vatican approximation

Arguably, among the most important factors on the importance of the pope in the regime change process in Poland is his approximation to the American President Ronald Reagan. Both leaders had an anticommunist agenda and, after seeing the importance of Wojtyła on the news coverage of the pope's first visit to Poland, when he was not even a formal presidential candidate, Reagan knew that that man could be a strange, but valuable asset in his fight against Communism (O'SULLIVAN, 2006, p. 91-2).

President Ronald Reagan came to power on January 20, 1981 and prepared his cabinet with individuals who would help him in the task of approaching the Holy See and, more specifically, Pope John Paul II. One of these men was Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had served as National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter previously, as a consultant specifically on the situation in Poland. Having already had contact with Wojtyła during his tenure as pope, Brzezinski was the initial connection between John Paul II and Reagan. Catholics also filled other important positions in the president's office: the Secretary of State Alexander Haig; National Security Advisor, Richard Allen; retired Army General Vernon Walters; and the director of CIA, William Casey (O'SULLIVAN, 2006, p. 176-8).

The group came to the conclusion that Solidarity represented a direct threat to Moscow, not only to the Polish Party, which made the aid to the group a major priority of the Reagan administration at the time. Thus, the approximation to the pope was necessary, as well as the approach to the trade union American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) (TARLTON, 2012, p. 40).

The assistance of John Paul II was necessary for the Reagan administration. They could get inside information of Polish society, as the bishops and priests served as the eyes and ears of the pope in Poland and participated intensely in the politics in the country. In addition, Wojtyła's influence over the Poles would prove very important in Reagan's capitalist cause.

Casey and Walters would serve as direct links between Washington and the Vatican, they were the individuals who would visit John Paul II to report U.S. findings on the case and hear what news the pope had to say about it. While the U.S. representatives to the pope showed satellite photos that had been taken recently and CIA reports on the case, as well as scenarios of the likely actions of the USSR, Wojtyła informed the Americans what their bishops in Poland told him, and increased the reliability of the Poles towards the Americans.

It is important to make an observation here before moving on: Weigel (2005, p. 442) disagrees that such coordination existed due to the low number of meetings – fifteen – between Wojtyła and the two Americans. However there are evidences that the Vatican used AFL-CIO, an organization that was working with the CIA, in order to send funds to Solidarity. Also, the Voice of America was used for sending coded messages to members of the outlawed Solidarity on the delivery of equipment and other matters, which included resources from the Vatican (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 561; TARLTON, 2012, p. 45). The fact that the Catholic Church itself was undergoing an internal problem with regard to the liberation theology also strengthens the principle that the ideologies of the United States and the Vatican had converged and that there was greater coordination in their policies. Finally, the proximity between Wojtyła and Reagan and the timing of the pressure on Poland by the two leaders also indicates a high probability that there has been some coordination between them.

Regarding the AFL-CIO, its support was needed mainly due to its contacts in Europe. Since the beginning of Solidarity, the AFL-CIO supplied the group with advice, equipment and financial resources, which provided the organization with a good contact network with European labor organizations that could send such aid to the union, including the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (*Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond*, ACV) and Caritas, primarily responsible for the transport of goods to Poland. Thus, the AFL-CIO became the channel through which the U.S. government and the Holy See would send their resources to Solidarity, establishing a partnership

that would help the survival of the union during the period of its illegality (TARLTON, 2012, p. 43-4).

The amount sent by the U.S. government for the Solidarity movement was at least \$50 million (JUDT, 2005, p. 589). Tarlton states that the Catholic Church also sent resources through the AFL-CIO, using the Vatican Bank to raise the necessary funds (TARLTON, 2012, p. 40). However, due to the fact that the operation was conducted confidentially, there is no way to determine the exact amount that was sent by the Vatican to Solidarity. Moreover, the accounts of the Vatican Bank do not have the same transparency of other state banks. The importance of the AFL-CIO to Solidarity was such that, when Lane Kirkland (director of the organization) died, several senior members of the union attended his funeral, including Lech Wałęsa (TARLTON, 2012, p. 42).

The Government of the U.S. would participate in an explicit way, direct or otherwise, in the international scenario. Reagan started international media campaigns to seek support for the cause of Solidarity, as well as domestically. On several occasions, Reagan made pronouncements on TV (REAGAN, 1981; REAGAN; THATCHER; O'NEILL, 1982) with the intention of making the movement internationally known. These efforts rendered the union and Wałęsa international awards such as the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize and the 1982 Time Magazine Person of the Year.

The Reagan Administration would also assist the movement by cutting aid, loans and any other type of financing to the Polish communist government, making its economy even more fragile. Besides that, Reagan would renegotiate the terms of the existing Polish debt in unfavorable terms, if Solidarity did not come to have greater freedom (REAGAN, 1981).

Finally, one can say that the Reagan administration strengthened the union by announcing that there would be retaliation to any intervention made by the Warsaw Pact in Polish territory (REAGAN, 1981). It is true that the Soviet action in Afghanistan may have had a considerable weight in the decision against the intervention (the USSR apparently did not have enough resources to engage in two simultaneous conflicts) (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 406), but the statements of Reagan to support Solidarity and the threat of retaliation by NATO may have weighed in the decision making of the communists, who opted to advise the implementation of Martial Law in 1981, rather than direct intervention.

4. The Politburo reacts

The news about the growth, as well as the political and economic achievements of Solidarity, worried the Soviet leadership about the situation in the country. They sent Leonid Zamyatin, an ambassador of the USSR, to assess the situation in the Poland. His report, on January 22, 1981,

indicated that Solidarity was disputing the role of dominant power in Poland. According to the transcript of the meeting at the Politburo, Zamyatin said:

The complexity of the situation in Poland stems from the fact that activities are carried out by the enemy, against which a decisive struggle is necessary, and that under the pressure of past mistakes the party has lost its creative ties with the people. The working class has many reasons for dissatisfaction. This is especially true of young workers, who have not yet suffered hardships. They are being exploited by Solidarity. [...] Moreover, the group around Walesa, *backed by the Church*, wields great strength. If we look at the situation in Poland now, it is characterized by a certain increase in the role of the Party and its concrete activities. This of course is leading in turn to a growth of tensions, since the counterrevolutionary forces have their plans and aspire to power (...) (POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC POLITBURO, 1981b)

One of the most relevant measures that the Politburo point out at the time of this meeting is to apply more effort on the part of the communists in relation to the media in the country (POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC POLITBURO, 1981). Despite the fact that all the official newspapers of the country at the time were controlled by the government, the Solidarity campaigns across the country were clearly having an effect. Furthermore, the Catholic Church was acting more actively after the letter from Wojtyła. One of the main methods used by the clergy was using messages linking human and workers' rights to religion and nationalism, besides asking the Poles to avoid conflict (POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2015).

The intensity of changes indicated that Solidarity was becoming too big to be controlled effectively by Wałęsa and the members of the central committee. In March 1981, Solidarity promoted one more general strike, but longer: for four hours the country's workers refused to work on March 27.

The episode caused a stir at the Politburo: military exercises were performed near the border by troops of the Warsaw Pact, and Soviet leaders advised the intervention of policemen in the occupied offices in Bydgoszcz (BARKER, 2002, p. 185). However, Jaruzelski appealed to the clergy. The pope himself asked for the end of the strike in Bydgoszcz, which made Wałęsa and most senior members of the union convinced that the end of the strike was necessary. Nevertheless, a sizeable minority did not agree with the attitude (Barker, 2002, p. 186), which made the Solidarity movement become more fragile internally, ending the era of its domain. Now weakened, the central command of the union would have no more power in the decision making of national strikes, which would cause it to lose power and other movements to rise, some even more radical (Barker, 2002, p. 197-201).

It is important to note that the first contact between Jaruzelski and the pope himself – through the Polish clergy – made John Paul II even more influent in this case: now, Wojtyła was the

only person who had access to all the other parts involved, with the only exception of Politburo. From then it would become a common practice by Jaruzelski to contact the pope and the Church, which meant that Wojtyła received information from the Party in Poland through Jaruzelski, from Polish society – through the Polish clergy – and from the diplomacy/U.S. intelligence through Walters and Casey.

September 1981 marked the beginning of Soviet pressure on Jaruzelski regarding the implementation of Martial Law in the country. This event took place primarily after statements made by Solidarity and the pope in the same month. On September 6, Wojtyła told a group of Poles at the Vatican that Poland had the right to be independent. Although the Catholic leader had already said it several other times, this was the first time he spoke in a secular tone, without the use of any kind of religious analogies (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 455). Another event that marked the month of September was the first national congress of Solidarity, despite the internal disagreements. Wałęsa, following the guidance of the pope, called for moderation, besides inviting foreign workers to form unions similar to Solidarity in other countries (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 455-6).

It was because of such events that the session of September 10 at the Politburo leaders showed an aggressive tone towards the Party in Poland, as well as emphasized the evil that Solidarity caused to communism, referring to the charter from the union drafted at the Congress: “It's a dangerous and provocative document. [...] The authors of the appeal would like to create confusion in the socialist countries and stir up groups of different types of turncoats” (POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC POLITBURO, 1981a).

Because of these answers from the Politburo, the Polish Party began plans for the implementation of martial law on September 13. In a document drafted by the Party, we can see that they already knew to which areas should be sent the largest number of troops, besides considered the use of propaganda as a tool to legitimize the implementation of martial law (POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC 1981).

On the 14th, John Paul II issued the encyclical letter *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), in which he writes about the dignity of the worker. He advocated the right of workers to organize in unions, but also talked about the responsibilities thereof, that they should not assume that the individual or group interests are more relevant than national interests (JOHN PAUL II, 1981). Solidarity had now a papal document to celebrate their struggle, which can be emphasized by the fact that the document would be known thereafter as "Gospel of Work" (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 419).

Despite new efforts by Jaruzelski – who was now First Secretary since Kania abdicated from office in October, 1981 –, like the “Front for National Reconciliation”, which promoted a dialogue between the Church (represented by the new primate, Józef Glemp; Wyszyński had been victim of a cancer), Solidarity and the Party, the Politburo did not agree with such measures. Although the

Party owned the bureaucratic apparatus of the State, the Polish people felt connected to the other two organizations, which meant that the three institutions were sharing the power in the country and, because of that, was seen as necessary by the government (Barker, 2002, p. 208). After being pressed by the Soviet institution, Jaruzelski was not seeing any other conditions to keep the country under control: the Party simply did not have ties with the population, most of them no longer seemed to want to be part of a socialist system, which meant that the First Secretary had to issue the martial law. At 6am on the morning of December 13, 1981, Jaruzelski was on TV to announce the imposition of martial law, officially named Operation X, which had been started at midnight of the same day. This event marked the end of the period known as the Polish Crisis (BREZHNEV, 1981).

At this time, all leaders of Solidarity branches were arrested – except Bujak, who managed to escape – and people seemed to simply accept the imposition of martial law, not resisting in any way. Internal movements such as the Fighting Solidarity and the Orange Alternative emerged only in 1982. Later, Kania would make the following assumption on this lack of fighting spirit of the Polish people at that moment:

The fact that martial law in Poland was [established] without causing enormous protest or bloodshed, without active opposition, was due to the peculiar way that people consented with martial law. People were very tired of the dismantling of the economy, with the permanent strikes. There was no market at all. Shelves in the stores were empty. [...] This created a condition of great fear in society, but not so much that the people began to support the authorities. It would be truer to say that for the moment the support for Solidarity was checked (KANIA apud BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 491-492).

Another factor that may have calmed the population about the reactions to the martial law was the homily by Glemp. The prelate's response to the new state of emergency was to be broadcast on television by the Party and his words were to be distributed in pamphlets. All this support from the Communists was originated from his message on the martial law, which he affirmed consisted of a “[...] higher necessity, it is the choice of a lesser rather than a greater evil” (GLEMP apud BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 496).

This reaction by Glemp was not an expression of weakness by the primate, but a miscommunication with the Vatican. After the imposition of martial law, the communications of the clergy to the pope were cut, making it difficult for Wojtyła and his bishops to pass his guidelines correctly. Only on the radio it was possible for Glemp to hear John Paul II words: “Too much Polish blood has already been shed, especially during the last war [...] Polish blood must no longer be spilled. Everything must be done to build the future of our homeland in peace” (JOHN PAUL II apud BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 500).

However, the intention of the pope was different. He had drawn on the morning of December 13, 4 points that should be applied at the papal foreign policy from then on: 1) get as much information about what was happening in Poland as possible; 2) discourage acts of provocation; 3) open up new channels of communication with the regime of martial law; and 4) signal to the world and to Poland the pope and the Church were “in solidarity with the Polish nation”, words he would use the next morning at Saint Peter's Square (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 501).

“This solidarity with the Polish people serves also to bolster certain values and inalienable principles such as the rights of man and the rights of the nation [...] values and principles that must create, now in our times, great solidarity” (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 501). With these words, the pope sought to establish itself as a major player in the fate of his homeland, as well as emphasize the importance that Solidarity would still have in the future of Poland.

5. The superpower and the pope

A few months later, after maintaining communications through letters throughout the year, Wojtyła and Reagan met at the Vatican on June 7, 1982, in order to draw the strategy that would change the situation in Poland: while Reagan would impose sanctions on Poland and start an international campaign against the Polish government, Wojtyła scheduled a visit to Poland in order to motivate the people of his country and to initiate talks with the Communist government (TARLTON, 2012, p. 39-45).

The pope then scheduled the visit to Poland – approved by the Party – between the 16th and the 23rd of June of the following year (1983). Wojtyła still hoped to go beyond his goal of initiating talks with the government: John Paul II was convinced that, due to his history as a child of extremely religious parents and education at Marian Catholic schools, Jaruzelski was a Catholic Polish nationalist before a communist. This meant that the pope considered the possibility that Jaruzelski's government could still change the political landscape completely, but the First Secretary would need support for that (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 568).

Reagan, on the other hand, had already begun the process even before formally entering into an agreement with Wojtyła. On December 23, 1981, in his speech to the American people, the president denounced the abuses committed by the Polish government. He stated:

Already, throughout the Free World, citizens have publicly demonstrated their support for the Polish people. Our government and those of our allies have expressed moral revulsion at the police state tactics of Poland's oppressors. The Church has also spoken out, in spite of threats and intimidation. But our reaction cannot stop there. I want emphatically to state tonight that if the outrages in Poland do not cease, we cannot and will not conduct "business as usual" with the perpetrators and those who aid and abet

them. Make no mistake, their crime will cost them dearly in their future dealings with America and free peoples everywhere (REAGAN, 1981).

Through his international campaign, which had yet to denounce the official banning of Solidarity on October 9, 1982 (REAGAN, 1982), Reagan achieved his objectives: in addition to the heavy penalties imposed on the Polish government – they could no longer get loans in the West and the negotiations of previous debts had been unfavorable to the communist country –, the U.S. suspended the status of most favored nation of Poland under the GATT, which made the country's economy suffer even more (CURTIS, 1992).

After the pope landed in Poland on June 16, 1983, one of his first appointments was a meeting with Jaruzelski, preceded by speeches from both to a crowd at Belweder Palace, the official Polish residence in Warsaw. From this speech, the pope began his plan to encourage the Poles claiming that Poland had the right to independence, “her proper place among the nations of Europe, between East and West”. Moreover, the path to sovereignty should be built taking into account “social agreements stipulated by representatives of State authorities with representatives of the workers” (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 554). By analyzing these words, we can see that Wojtyła was referring to the Gdansk Accords and Solidarity, which should act as representatives for the workers in negotiations.

This statement also supports our initial H_1 , since it clearly demonstrates how important Solidarity was for the pope. As is clear by now, Wojtyła could not act directly in the Polish territory considering he was a head of state who could not legitimately act there without Soviet authorization. He also needed to instigate the Poles towards a peaceful resolution of the Communist situation, which required constant presence and reminders. Therefore, after seeing in Solidarity an opportunity, Wojtyła seized the opportunity and tried to popularize the union, something he managed to do in the end.

Negotiations per se were initiated soon after the public speeches, having joined Wojtyła and Jaruzelski, the Primate Glemp and the President of Council of State, Henryk Jabłoński. Jaruzelski stated that the pope did not deliver an ultimatum or made any threats, which would be expected of someone with an alliance with the U.S., but tried to persuade the First Secretary to end the martial law. Moreover, Jaruzelski thought Wojtyła's positioning regarding the Church strange: in a Poland without Solidarity, the greatest representative of the civilian population as a whole was the Catholic Church, which made such an institution a great power within this scenario. Glemp himself had negotiated the construction of over 200 new seminaries, even with the economy of the country and its infrastructure crumbling. However, the pope spoke in defense of the Polish people, not the Church (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 555).

While Jaruzelski aimed an alliance with the pope to isolate the most extremist members of Solidarity and to make it possible to negotiate with the U.S., Wojtyła stated that he wished a state of normality achieved as soon as possible. Only then Poland would be better viewed by other countries (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 556). It meant that, while the General was seeking the help of the pope in order to bash the trade union with a ‘divide and conquer’ strategy that would force them into negotiations with the government, Wojtyła was planning to end Martial Law before proceeding into the talks.

Wojtyła did speeches to one million people in Częstochowa and Katowice. At the first city, the Pope transmitted to the Poles that the fight was not over, they should continue fighting peacefully for their rights. Facing the Black Madonna – a religious symbol of great importance to the Poles, given her ties to Polish State-building –, John Paul II said: “you have been given us by Providence for the defense of the Polish nation, accept this call of Polish youth together with the Polish pope, and help us to persevere in hope” (JOHN PAUL II apud BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 558). He continued:

Man is called to victory over himself [...] It is the saints and the beatified who show us the path to victory that God achieves in human history [and to achieve such victory, there is the need for living in truth [...] It means love of neighbor; it means fundamental solidarity between human beings [...] making an effort to be a person with a conscience, calling good and evil by name and not blurring them [...] developing in myself what is good, and seeking to correct what is evil [...]] (JOHN PAUL II apud BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 558).

At this time, not only John Paul II affirmed that the end of communism was something that had been achieved, which caused a great impact on the Polish people, but also made them recall the recent past, when Communism was being fought against by Solidarity. By that, Wojtyła meant that Poles should have faith and fight communism, not to remain silent. Also, it is important to note that Wojtyła was repeating what Reagan had done a few months earlier, when he referred to the USSR as an ‘Evil Empire’ (REAGAN, 1983). They witnessed the example of the pope himself: after concluding the homily, Wojtyła suspended over his head the clerical girdle he was wearing on the day he suffered the injury during his assassination attempt and offered it to the Black Virgin. John Paul II had fought Communism, suffered a grave injury, but still did not react violently, using only words to fight the evil that was plaguing Poland, as he considered communism.

In Katowice, he reiterated: “The State does not give us this right, it has only the obligation to protect and guard it. This right is given us by the Creator who made man as a social being” (JOHN PAUL II apud BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 559).

On the last day of the pope's visit, he managed to get an appointment that he had requested since the beginning of his trip to Poland: a meeting with Lech Wałęsa, the Solidarity leader who had been released a few months earlier from house arrest, but had not received permission to work. At this meeting, Wojtyła asked the former trade union leader to intervene in the actions of Solidarity (TARLTON, 2012, p. 33-5).

Even though they considered the union's massive actions valuable, Wojtyła and the Church as a whole sought alternatives to this kind of demonstration, since they repudiated violence and did not want the Poles to suffer even more. Therefore, the pope was asking Wałęsa to act with more moderation than before and avoid demonstrations in large numbers, using advertising as its main tool. We can then say that Wojtyła was influential in the decision making of Solidarity since its leader changed the *modus operandi* of the organization due to the pope's advice and actions. Moreover, an opposition leader who seeks a drastic change in the regime under which he lives, but waits patiently and does not take drastic measures, according to Tarlton, is not common (2012, p. 33-5).

Finally, the second meeting between Jaruzelski and Wojtyła would confirm some suspicions that the pope had had at their first meeting. As he suspected, the typical Polish education made Jaruzelski a nationalist and Catholic Polish. Therefore, when he introduced the martial law, the pope reflected during that week, Jaruzelski was actually making the less aggravating decision for the country, bearing alone the weight of that heavy cross and the second meeting only confirmed such suspicions, as the general did not refuse the proposals that Wojtyła based in human rights. Then when he left his country, Wojtyła was convinced that if the Soviet leaders gave the opportunity, Jaruzelski would appeal to what was best for his country (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 568-9).

6. The rise of Gorbachev: a unique opportunity

Due to external pressures caused by the pope and Reagan as well as internal pressure, in less than a month after the pope's visit, Jaruzelski negotiated with the Church ways to alleviate the draconian measures imposed by the martial law. On July 21, 1983, martial law officially ended, thanks in part to the pope's actions (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 476).

In 1985, an event marked the whole process analyzed here. With the death of Andropov's successor, Chernenko, a different communist occupied the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev was to become a key factor in the regime change in Poland, as were Reagan, Jaruzelski, Wałęsa and Wojtyła.

Shortly before Gorbachev took power, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, visited the Vatican on February 27, 1985. This was the first time that Wojtyła saw a "human face" on

socialism, as the diplomat suggested to the pope that negotiations between representatives of the Holy See and the USSR on matters such as the rights of Catholics in the USSR should be initiated soon. This suspicion was confirmed in May, when the Polish clergy began to send reports on the new Secretary of the USSR. When Gorbachev himself went to Poland for a meeting of the Warsaw Pact Advisory Committee, Jaruzelski and he talked about the Catholic Church and Poland. For the first time a Soviet leader showed interest in this important connection, which surprised the Polish leader. Jaruzelski did not know, but all this interest stemmed from the restructuring strategy of the new Soviet leader that would be called *perestroika* (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 657-65).

Perestroika consisted of a series of reforms in the political and economic spheres by the Soviet Union. Driven by the economic stagnation that the USSR lived, Gorbachev planned a change in the economic plan for the economy to grow again. Over time, the political and social arenas would be affected due to the distrust that people had towards the government. About Gorbachev and *perestroika*, Wojtyła said:²

Well, he's a good man, but he'll fail [...] because he wants to do something that's impossible. Communism can't be reformed [...] Perestroika is an avalanche that we have unleashed and it's going to roll on [...] Perestroika is a continuation of Solidarity. Without Solidarity there would be no Perestroika (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 664-5).

Excited by the changes, Jaruzelski drew plans to take advantage of this new moment. Such excitement stemmed from the fact that the Western campaign was increasingly pressing the Polish economy: the country was being hampered by sanctions and embargoes led by the U.S., and the latter also vetoed the participation of Poland in the International Monetary Fund. The pressure came on both sides, but with the restructuring policies of Gorbachev, and a more frequent dialogue with the Soviet leader, Jaruzelski felt a willing to liberalize the conditions in the country and improve relations with the West by turning to a 'policy of guided partnership with' the opposition (DAVIES, 2001, p. 408).

It was for this reason that on September 11, 1986, the regime announced the release of 225 prisoners who had been considered dangerous by the government, thus granting a general amnesty for Solidarity members who were still under arrest. It was the definitive end of the era of martial law in Poland (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 666).

On January 13, 1987, a historic meeting took place at the papal office in the Vatican: Jaruzelski visited John Paul II, holding the first meeting between them since Wojtyła's 2nd visit to

² It is important to note that this corresponds to the Wojtyła's point of view. Although the authors agree that Solidarity may have been a factor that influenced the beginning of *perestroika*, they disagree with the assertion that the reform program is a "continuation of Solidarity", since many other factors not analyzed in this work were important in triggering it.

Poland. At this meeting, the general told the pope what he knew about Gorbachev and his new policies, as well as the policies that were possible because such changes. Jaruzelski emphasized the importance of the pope's support regarding the guidance of the Church was crucial, because without such an institution it would be impossible to get the support of civil society. Such affirmation indicates that the general was practically admitting that communism was defeated (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 669-71).

Aiming to celebrate the success of Solidarity, the pope returned to Poland on June 8, 1987. One of the most symbolic homilies of his entire pontificate, John Paul II took place on the 12th of the same month, when Wojtyła celebrated a mass for 750,000 workers and their families in the city of Gdansk, where the Solidarity movement began. He stated:

I pray for you every day in Rome, I pray for my motherland and for you workers. I pray for the special heritage of Polish Solidarity [...] I'm glad to be here, because you have made me captain [...] There is no struggle more effective than Solidarity! [...] I'm very happy. Now even a fool can understand that finding a passage in this labyrinth [...] requires Solidarity. This is the only road (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, p. 684-5).

After Wojtyła's third visit, the signs of the weakening of the regime were clear not only for intellectuals and for Solidarity, which would return the legality in 1987 (although it was only officially recognized on January 18, 1989), but also for the whole country, as Wojtyła's speeches and the union's campaigns became wider (WEIGEL, 2005, p. 585-6).

However, the situation became increasingly complicated and was getting out of control. Wałęsa had warned the rulers that employees would take action by themselves one time or another, which happened between April and May 1988, when a series of strikes began. The strikes were instigated by the resentment of young workers that grew up watching the Solidarity act. Moreover, the conditions of life deteriorated increasingly with the price increases and wages freezes. To get out of this situation, the government resorted to Wałęsa himself, who failed to calm the anger of the strikers. Osiatynski highlights that the party feared a boycott of the population to the 1989 elections, which demanded the participation of at least 50% of the population (1996, p. 26). As a last resort, Jaruzelski promised the strikers that he would initiate direct talks with the opposition, which would be led by Solidarity (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, 1996, 686-8).

We can see the indirect influence of Wojtyła in this process. Many former Solidarity leaders, including Anna Walentynowicz, the crane operator who initiated the movement in Gdansk with Wałęsa, were no longer part of the union. In view of the entire process described here, it is possible for us to notice that, due to the support of the pope to the Solidarity movement, the popularity of Wałęsa and the importance of the union surpassed that of other movements, which allowed their dominance during the negotiations and in subsequent elections.

This proposal from Jaruzelski was based on a misperception on his part. The General believed that the internal instability created by years of separation of Solidarity members would allow for the implementation of reform policies at the pace he wanted and without an organized opposition. However, the members of Solidarity were able to form a well-structured opposition, even though their official recognition by the government as a union was as recent as January 18, 1989 (OSIATYNSKI, 1996, p. 23-6).

Such negotiations, that would be known as Roundtable Talks, began on February 6, involved three main subjects and were divided into the same number of groups: 1) on the trade union pluralism, in which the goal was the legalization of Solidarity; 2) on policy reforms, in which the conditions under which Solidarity could participate in elections should be established; and 3) on systemic reforms in the economic and social policies, that would discuss the development of an "anti-crisis pact" proposed by Solidarity.

In the end, the opposition got the result they wanted: on June 4, 1989, elections would be organized in the country in which 35% of the Sejm seats would be disputed, as well as all of the seats from the new house of parliament, the Senate. The elections for president would occur in 1990, when Wałęsa was elected, and Jaruzelski would remain in office until then (BERNSTEIN; POLITI, p. 689-90). The Polish political system had finally been changed.

Conclusion

After tracing process that followed the participation of the Supreme Pontiff on the regime change process in Poland, it is possible to notice that Wojtyła could not act directly itself, but acted as an influencer. He used the Polish identity to the Catholic religion (Łukasiewicz, 2009; Jakubowska, 1990; and Gerould, 1980) to be able to achieve his goal of ending the communist regime in his homeland. The fact that a compatriot became the leader of the Catholic Church represented a turning point with regard to communist rule in Poland in view of the force that this religion has in this country. It is possible for us to say that Wojtyła knew he had such power from the moment he was elected, in view of the drastic change in the foreign policy of the Vatican that the new leader implemented.

Wojtyła used the Solidarity labor union to reach his goal. The union itself had been a creation with strong support of Wojtyła after his first visit to Poland as pope. Given the importance of the Catholicism in the country, the support of the religious leader made it possible for the union to grow more than expected, reaching labor classes that were not expected at first, like intellectuals and teachers, for example.

Also, he used his speeches in order to reach the Polish people and motivate them in the fight against Communism, using Solidarity as his main ally in Poland. Through the nationwide strikes

organized by the union – that received the blessings of Wojtyła –, the country's economy was becoming increasingly fragile, which made weaker the State control over the population, especially in a society in which the Catholic Church was almost as important as the government itself and was commanded by a man who was clearly against the communist principles.

Wojtyła used religion as a speech act, similarly to the method exposed by Mona Sheikh (2012). His position as the absolute leader of the Catholic Church allowed him to preach against communism, which he never did in a direct way during the period studied here. In his speeches, Wojtyła never spoke out against the regime itself, but always left the impression that the Poles should fight for their rights and for their freedom. The Polish history is marked by the partition of their territory and the difficulty in determining their country's very existence (DAVIES, 2005b, p. 394). Therefore, in suggesting that the Soviets represented a further obstacle in the self-determination of the Polish people, Wojtyła was influencing the Poles to join the movement that aimed at the end of communist rule, especially through Solidarity actions.

The period when the union became illegal in Poland, especially during the implementation of Martial Law, represented the moment in which the figure of Wojtyła was more present during the process. With his speeches emphasizing the union, the pope promoted a positive advertisement which facilitated the popularization of the movement, even without the approval of the regime. Such action may have supported a positive outcome for Solidarity on the elections after the Roundtable Negotiations.

Also during this period, Wojtyła used resources from the Vatican to finance the activities of Solidarity. Bearing in mind that the union, even illegal, still represented a very strong link between the anticommunist movement and population, John Paul II sent funds from the Vatican Bank to the union, which allowed – along the resources sent by the U.S. Government – the development of positive propaganda by the union itself and its survival.

The development of the alliance with the U.S. also proved to be positive. Despite not having been an initiative of Wojtyła, the meetings with Walters, Casey and even Reagan allowed a level of cooperation that had never existed between the two states. Before that, there were no relations formally established between the U.S. and the Vatican due to public opinion pressure in the U.S. (STEBBINS, 2009). Reagan's support proved crucial when the already fragile economy of Poland was further hampered by Western sanctions imposed by the American superpower, which helped persuade Jaruzelski that negotiations with the opposition were necessary.

We should also emphasize the use of process tracing on this research. This method enabled us to observe the dynamics between the actions of Wojtyła and the role played by Solidarity. Through our analytic explanation, we could support the main hypothesis that the pope's support proved crucial to the survival of the union, by sending financial as well as technological resources –

even the presses used in the manufacture of union propaganda were sent by the alliance between Reagan and Wojtyła (TARLTON, 2012, p. 41) – and mainly keeping the movement alive in the memory of the Polish people, not allowing it to be forgotten and to eventually become predominant during the regime change.

Finally, the performance of Wojtyła in the process was indirect, mainly through speeches and becoming a sort of "campaign manager" for the union. Being a popular individual, leader of the Catholic Church and countryman, the pope's support proved crucial to the growth of the labor movement that was about to put down the Polish communist regime. Through strikes supported by the pope, the union caused damage to the local economy, providing the possibility of talks between the government and the opposition, led by Lech Wałęsa and his fellow Solidarity members.

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