**"Cold War Détente and the December 1970 Protests on the Polish Baltic Coast:**

**The Missing Link of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*"**

**I. Introduction**

Many thick volumes have been written about the birth of *Solidarność* in Gdańsk's Lenin Shipyard in 1980.[[1]](#footnote-1) The December 1970 Protests on the other hand - the violent upheaval that foreshadowed and conditioned the breakthrough of August 1980 in innumerable ways - have received very little attention, in particular outside of Poland.[[2]](#footnote-2) As put by Lech Wałęsa: had he and his colleagues not learned from the travails of 1970, there would be no breakthrough in 1980. It was in December 1970, in the port cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia, Szczecin, Elbląg and other Baltic Coast towns, that "the largest and most violent working-class uprising in the history of state-socialist regimes"[[3]](#footnote-3) took place. The official casualty count: forty five dead, hundreds wounded by bullets and thousands injured, including hundreds among the police and military.[[4]](#footnote-4) In the aftermath, Władysław Gomułka was forced to resign from the post of the First Secretary and was replaced by Edward Gierek. The December Protests were followed by several months of occupational strikes that defined Polish politics for decades to come. In August 1980, the first independent trade union east of the Iron Curtain, *Solidarność*, was founded on the Baltic Coast. The repercussions it entailed for the Cold War world can hardly be overstated. The sensational images of a shipyard electrician named Lech Wałęsa challenging the communist monopoly of power have attracted a lot of global attention at the time and ever since. We now know that the Soviet Union had collapsed by 1991 and the political landscape of Europe had been redrawn by the end of the millennium. We are now equipped both with an abundance of sources and the advantage of hindsight to produce a comprehensive account of those grand transformations. What else remains to be explained?

Beyond the usual knowledge transfer lag between the particular locality and English-speaking academia, two interrelated elements of the causal nexus preceding the December 1970 Protests are either missing, neglected and misrepresented, both in Poland and abroad. One of them is a long-term, structural condition of the 1970 Protests that is conspicuously absent in most narratives, despite its seemingly self-evident nature. I suggest that it is illuminating to ponder on the relationship between the facts that the territory of Poland shifted several hundred miles westward after the war and that the 1970 Protests erupted in the newly-added, formerly-German territories. It was none other than Joseph Stalin and his geopolitical strategy in the wake of the Second World War that constituted the 'point of origin' without which one cannot begin to understand the genesis of the December Protests a quarter century later. In this paper, I introduce a category entitled *Yalta*[[5]](#footnote-5) and deploy it as an umbrella term to capture some of the consequences originating from the geopolitical shifts of 1945. On the most basic level, what *Yalta* meant for the Baltic Coast cities was a virtually complete population turnover. In 1970, a vast majority of Gdańsk's (up to 95%) and Szczecin's (up to 99%) residents could have lived there for 25 years at most. Most of the workers who participated in the 1970 Protests were between 20 and 40 years of age, meaning that either they or their parents were newcomers to those cities and new to the shipbuilding industry, which was virtually absent in prewar Poland. The demographic makeup of the 'old Poland' was different - its social fabric has never undergone such a radical rupture. Hence, it is crucial to keep in mind that cities such as Gdańsk (Danzig) and Szczecin (Stettin) used to be integral parts of Germany in order to understand why the 1970 Protests erupted on the Baltic Coast and not elsewhere.[[6]](#footnote-6)

In order to identify the second missing element, which can only be done when the first one is firmly in place, this paper studies the evolution of Polish - West German relations in the late 1960s. One week before the 1970 Protests began, the chancellor Willy Brandt visited Warsaw to sign the first postwar treaty between the two states. In the Treaty of Warsaw, as it became known, both sides recognized the permanent status of the Oder-Neisse border.[[7]](#footnote-7) Before the signing took place, Brandt paid a visit to the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw, dedicated to the 1943 Ghetto Uprising. After laying down the wreath, the chancellor fell to his knees to honor the victims of the Nazi occupation. That act, followed by the signing of the Warsaw Treaty a few hours later, constituted a self-evidently historic moment. It was a new opening, not only in bilateral German-Polish relations, but in the German-Jewish-Polish triangle as well. With the advantage of hindsight, it is difficult to describe Brandt's genuflection differently than as one of the most transformative 'world-historical' moments of the postwar era. What is the relationship between the outbreak of the December 1970 Protests on the Baltic Coast and Brandt's policy, visit and actions? According to the currently available accounts, the connection was tangential at best or simply coincidental.[[8]](#footnote-8) The common wisdom has it that it was the announcement of price increases on foodstuffs (December 12) and basic consumer goods that led to the outburst of discontent. Without questioning this interpretation, I argue that without an additional consideration of the broader social reaction to Brandt's visit, the currently available accounts of the causal nexus preceding the December 1970 Protests remain incomplete.[[9]](#footnote-9) In this article’s second part, I trace how each one of the three interrelated components: 1) *Ostpolitik*'s overall impact on Cold War's geopolitical landscape, 2) the Warsaw Treaty, 3) the *Kniefall*, 'activated' (working separately and in conjunction) 'the conditions of possibility' for the December 1970 Protests, particularly in the post-German Recovered Lands. For the sake of convenience, I occasionally subsume all three under one heading: 'the Brandt-factor', while also discussing how each one of them functioned on a different level and had different implications.

I argue that the multilayered causal nexus preceding the December 1970 Protests can be contemplated it its totality only by means of juxtaposing large macro-historical structures such as geopolitical tectonics or demographic transformations with concrete policies (such as *Ostpolitik*) and discrete events, such as Brandt's *Kniefall*. I retrieve the voices of the actors and observers of the violent days of December 1970 to explore how the post-1945 structural landscape had been affected by the Brandt-factor. This hybrid approach allows us to posit the 1970 Protests as conditioned both by macro-scale shifts (such as the emergence of the post-1945 world order) as well as by localized sequences of events with their own internal logic and own spatio-temporal dynamics. To place my argument within the existing theoretical literature, I borrow the conceptual distinction between processes and events in history as developed by, for instance, William H. Sewell in *Logics of History*.[[10]](#footnote-10) Such an interdisciplinary approach, based on combining the methods of history and social sciences, uncovers surprising parallels and allows for original insights.

Postwar Eastern European history is marked by patterns of mass protest against communist rule occurring with remarkable systematicity and unfolding along similar lines. 1953 in East Germany, 1956 in Hungary and Poland, 1968 in Czechoslovakia and 1970, 1976 and 1980 in Poland. Finally - the entire round of revolutions sequentially firing off one after another in 1989. The domino-like pattern of collapsing regimes was captured neatly by Timothy Garton Ash: "10 years in Poland, 10 months in Hungary, 10 weeks in East Germany and 10 days in Czechoslovakia."[[11]](#footnote-11) When the time comes, it will take 10 hours in Romania - some observers were quick to add, without being too far off the mark. The Soviet Union soon followed suit and dispersed into fifteen independent states. Referring to the collapse-mechanism rooted in the republican structure of the Union, a high Soviet KGB officer Nikolai Leonov remarked that the USSR "resembled a chocolate bar: it was creased with the furrowed lines of future divisions, as if for the convenience of its consumers."[[12]](#footnote-12) The strikingly ordered, simultaneous and analogical pattern of transformation rendered it appealing to think that the communist world must have been composed of sharply-delineated, underlying, tectonic building blocks that made it function and collapse in a systematic, nearly mechanistic way.

As a matter of fact, Marxist-Leninist social scientists were fond of perceiving societies as composed of such large blocks antagonistically interacting with each other in a Hegelian action-reaction spiral: workers and capitalists, toilers and intelligentsia, farmers and landlords, state and society, etc. Following the thaw of 1956, shrewd observers began to perceive that it was not in the least through a rather strict adherence to the tenets of the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy that the central planners of the Soviet-type economies had indeed transformed those societies into something resembling mid-nineteenth century Britain as seen by Marx when he wrote *Das Kapital*.[[13]](#footnote-13) The Polish Baltic cities could in fact be compared to the Newcastle or the Liverpool of the nineteenth century. Docks and shipyards employing tens of thousands as well as foreign trade traffic dominated the economic life. Big factories, heavy industry and port infrastructure was also conducive to high residential concentrations of workers in small urban clusters near the docks on the Polish Baltic Coast. This particular socioeconomic setup led to certain local peculiarities such as the higher than average national income inequality and thus a more marked social stratification.[[14]](#footnote-14) How could the Brandt-factor affect that seemingly rigid world organized and functioning according to the Marxist-Leninist blueprint, even if some local port-city specificity is taken into account? This paper examines the multidirectional feedback loop between socio-economic structures, high diplomacy, discrete events and social movements in empirical detail as well as offers a brief theoretical reflection in the concluding section.

For a decade or so, it has become commonplace to speak about the first postwar decade in Europe (1945-1956), especially east of the Iron Curtain, in terms of a revolution. While there was no one manifest revolutionary moment as dramatic as 1789 or 1917, the scale of transformations was of analogical proportions.[[15]](#footnote-15) In the Polish case, the imposition of the Soviet model was rendered even more transformative by the simultaneous shift of the country several hundred miles west, as agreed by the Big Three in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam.[[16]](#footnote-16) While Poland found itself in new borders already in August 1945, the repercussions of that fact - an exodus of people, things and ideas of biblical proportions - have been reverberating for decades and remain visible today. A look at the geographic patterns of the recent (2015) Presidential Elections provides a telling indication of the persistence of those accumulated legacies:

[Maps 1, 2, 3]

As is visible in the maps above, the territories controlled by Prussia/Germany before the First World War tend to be consistently more sympathetic to liberal and left-wing candidates, while the territories under the Russian and Austrian control tend to vote predominantly conservative. This trend is particularly strong in the former German lands that had never been a part of Poland before 1945. This persistent electoral pattern has recently received more attention from scholars and journalists alike.[[17]](#footnote-17) The electoral realm is just one area where the impact of pre-WWI imperial legacies as well as of *Yalta* is manifest. Needless to say, those legacies were certainly more 'active' in 1970 than they are today, after nearly half a century of more integration. For the purposes of this paper, contemporary Polish politics must be left behind, but the 2015 maps do serve as a proxy indicator for the fact that the Recovered Lands and the Baltic Coast of 1970 differed from the 'old Poland'. In 1970, those differences turned out to be politically seminal and are indispensable to understand the localized nature of the December Protests.

While many sociologists and political scientists focus on studying the grand socioeconomic transformations of communist societies such as urbanization, industrialization or emancipation of women,[[18]](#footnote-18) only recently have historians begun to take a closer look at the tumultuous past of the Polish Recovered Lands.[[19]](#footnote-19) This aspect of the post-1945 revolution - removing ca. 9 million Germans and building a brand new 'model' communist society out of a similar number of Poles by 1956 - was an immensely complex process that remains neglected by English-speaking scholars and largely forgotten in the accounts of the 1970 Protests. Even the best studies such as Roman Laba's *Roots of Solidarity*, reference the significance of *Yalta* merely in passing.[[20]](#footnote-20) This neglect is surprising given that many of the most prominent leaders of *Solidarność* such as Anna Walentynowicz, Bogdan Borusewicz or Andrzej Gwiazda were either born in the former Polish eastern borderlands (the *Kresy*) or belonged to the first 'native' generation. The Kresy trio were what Lech Wałęsa called "the Jacobins of the Revolution".[[21]](#footnote-21) The intellectual, dissident circles of Gdańsk and Szczecin were to a large extent formed by the former residents of Wilno, one of the most vibrant cultural centers of interwar central Europe. Wilno was the hometown of such figures as Czesław Miłosz, the Nobel Prize laureate in literature in 1980, or Stefan Jędrychowski - the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1970 and one of the two signatories of the Warsaw Treaty, alongside the prime minster Józef Cyrankiewicz. In short, without taking into consideration the experiences of those who had been expelled from their *Kresy* homeland during and after WWII, both the 1970 Protests and the birth of Solidarność in 1980 are inconceivable.

Conversely, it should be equally easy to imagine why the expellees were not particularly susceptible to the Hegelian bite of Marxist ideology that many Warsaw intellectuals subscribed to *en masse* both before and after the war.[[22]](#footnote-22) Most politically active Poles who found themselves in the *Kresy* on the eve of the Second World War experienced the full spectrum of Stalinist social engineering after the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact had been implemented and Poland partitioned between the Nazis and the Soviets. That spectrum included deportations and long years of wandering through Siberia's Gulag Archipelago. This hard lesson is summarized well by Andrzej Gwiazda, a central figure of the Gdańsk dissident circles throughout the communist period:

I repaid the totalitarian system for what it has done to me […]. My childhood experience on the collective farm ca. 300 kilometers from where Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn spent time in northern Kazakhstan cured me of ideologies and rendered me immune to the communist propaganda bug. […] I was never hooked, I did not go through conversions or withdrawals, like those people who might have been initially persuaded by its just causes."[[23]](#footnote-23)

On the other side of the expellee equation was the fact that the *Kresowiacy* were transferred into an new, alien environment. Prewar Vilnius and Gdańsk belonged to different worlds, from climate, through architecture, to economic profile. While Poland received a narrow corridor linking it with the Baltic Sea after the First World War and had constructed its own port (Gdynia) from scratch, the country's maritime tradition (cadres, expertise, equipment, etc.) remained limited. With the exception of Gdynia, the shipyards and ports of Gdańsk and Szczecin were constructed by German firms, with the Lenin shipyard proudly carrying the name of its founder - Ferdinand Schichau - before the war. In a nutshell, it is impossible to start imagining what Polish communism would be like without considering *Yalta* - the fundamental geopolitical transformation and the country's 'new place under the sun' after 1945.

The facts mentioned above are hardly revelations. It is surprising, however, that the context of *Yalta* is mentioned so rarely to account for the December 1970 Protests. One possible reason for why historians (and social scientists in particular) do not approach the consequences of *Yalta* analytically might be the prima facie impression that not much can be said beyond re-stating the obvious: borders changed, people were put on trains and moved from one place to another.[[24]](#footnote-24) Postwar conditions of reality descended upon the *stunde null* Europe divided into new contours of nation states - an exogenous given, a fact of life.[[25]](#footnote-25) However, those who found themselves in Gdańsk or Szczecin and remained there by 1970 did not appear out of a historical vacuum. It is thus worth pointing out that many people who were the leaders of the 1970 Protests carried vivid memories of the (so-called) resettlement in their minds. Even if the younger generation remembered little or nothing about the war, the collective memory of *Yalta* was still one of the core common social denominators in 1970, even if (and especially since) it could not have been discussed in public.[[26]](#footnote-26) The collective byword for this reference was indeed *Yalta* - with a whole range of meanings from the sense of abandonment by the Allies, unjust fate after the Second World War to the lost homeland in the east. From this perspective, the term *stunde null* - the zero hour of European history - in some ways hides more than it explains. Many of those who survived the war and found themselves in the Recovered Lands after 1945 dreamed and spoke of a new beginning, but what this term entailed was hardly more than a hopeful metaphor.

**III. National Communism in the Recovered Lands**

The long-term consequences of *Yalta* and the Brandt factor came to a confluence on the eve of the December 1970 Protests. One of the last formal acts of the Gomułka regime, one week before the Protests began, was the signing of the Warsaw Treaty on December 7, 1970. From the Polish perspective, the Treaty put an end to the quarter-century of uncertainty concerning the status of the Recovered Lands. At the time, it was advertised by the regime's propaganda as an epochal victory of Polish diplomacy. To understand how the Brandt-factor fit into that context, it is necessary to return to 1945 once again. What was the reasoning that persuaded Stalin to shift Poland westwards? Among the many considerations that determined the postwar shape of Polish borders, decisive were Stalin's predictions on how the balance of power in Europe was going to unfold. In 1945, no one could be sure what kind of future awaited Germany. Stalin was right to predict that the future of Poland was sealed. The country was to remain firmly within the Soviet sphere of influence and there was no force other than a full-scale war that could have changed that outcome. Consequently, transferring as much German territory as possible to Poland secured at least two objectives. First, without knowing the fate of the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ) and Germany in general, pushing Poland westward in 1945 meant expanding the Soviet influence as far into Central Europe as possible. Secondly, it meant that Poland would be likely to face the threat of German revanchism, something that could not be resisted successfully without Soviet backing. Consequently, it tied Polish territorial integrity to the Soviet Union. The intricacies of Cold War power shifts aside, Poland was de facto dependent on the Soviet Union to secure its western border after 1945.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Stalin was aware that imposing the Soviet model of communism upon Poland would not be easy. He reportedly remarked once that installing communism in Poland could be compared to saddling a cow.[[28]](#footnote-28) To make the operation easier - Poland should be rendered as dependent on Soviet support as possible. In May 1946, a few days after Churchill's Iron Curtain speech in Fulton, a Polish governmental delegation visited Moscow. They were reassured by Stalin that "every arm stretched out to grab the Polish Western Lands will be cut by the military might of the Red Army."[[29]](#footnote-29) Polish leaders made no mystery out of the need to rely on Soviet support to keep the Western Lands and openly admitted that "Soviet guarantees of our borders" were much more valuable than international treaties.[[30]](#footnote-30) The vassal nature of that strategic entanglement was frequently driven home by the Soviet leaders. During a visit to Szczecin in 1960, Nikita Khrushchev reassured the Poles, who worried about the increasingly confrontationalist voices from West Germany, with the following words: "the allies of the Polish People's Republic will defend her borders just like their own borders [...] it is worth mentioning here - in the westernmost city of the Republic - that the border posts on the Oder and Neisse will be defended by all of us side by side with the Polish nation."[[31]](#footnote-31) As long as the German threat was real - went the Soviet message - you should keep quiet and kindly ask for our support.

Domestically, taking over the Recovered Lands was exploited as a nation-unifying cause to win some degree of support for the communist regime after 1945. The abandoned German property and land offered an opportunity to proceed rapidly with the communist policy agenda - industrial nationalization and agricultural collectivization, initially euphemized as 'land reform'. "Through their control of the Ministry for the Regained Territories, [the communists] monopolized an extensive patronage apparatus for the distribution of the newly annexed lands, from which most of the German population fled or was expelled, to their nascent clientele. Their control of the extremely rapid and supposedly spontaneous process of distributing the lands and assets of large agricultural estates throughout Poland among the peasantry served a similar purpose and helped to undermine the rival Peasant party" - the only political force that could threaten the communist monopoly on power.[[32]](#footnote-32) The success of those hallmark policies was in turn to present a model for the 'old country', where changes so radical were initially seen as too provocative.[[33]](#footnote-33) Furthermore, the anti-German sentiment was a safe card to play. The 'reintegration of the cradle of the Slavic peoples' was a project that no patriotic Pole could oppose. By portraying themselves as the sole guarantors and executors of this historic mission, the communists were waging a battle for the hearts and minds of Polish society. Before 1970, that strategy seemed to work rather well. The strongholds of opposition remained focused around the 'old' centers of Polish culture such as Poznań (in 1956) or Warsaw (in 1968); the Recovered Lands, in part because of the massive deployment of Soviet troops in the region, seemed more comfortably subdued.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The high point of the anti-German propaganda fuelled by the alleged threat to the Oder-Neisse line fell in the first half of the 1960s, but it continued in milder forms until and beyond 1970. Marcin Zaremba, in his book *Communism, Nationalism, Legitimacy*, argues that Władysław Gomułka correctly identified the anti-German sentiment as the most reliable societal glue facilitating social cohesion and mobilization. In Poland, this glue turned out to be much more powerful than the egalitarian ideals of communism. As expressed by Zaremba: "[i]t will not be an exaggeration to say that the 1960s were pervaded by a spirit of anti-Germanism, only slightly covered by the politically correct strife with imperialism, militarism and revanchism. Anti-Germanism was practically the only officially accepted form of nationalism."[[35]](#footnote-35)

The residents of cities such as Gdańsk, Szczecin or Elbląg were the main addressees of the anti-German message. While the official version rationalizing the annexation of the Recovered Lands held that they were 'returning to the mother's womb', cities such as Szczecin could boast no permanent connection to Polish history and had belonged to the German national core for centuries. While Gdańsk's history boasts a large Polish component, the city had also remained predominantly German for the past several centuries. The unsettling experience of being transferred into a German material world from what was Polish Wilno in 1939 was vividly captured by Stefan Chwin, a novelist born in Gdańsk in 1949. The architecturally unmistakable origins of his new Gdańsk home, built in the late nineteenth century bourgeois suburb named Oliva (now: Oliwa), provided a daily reminder of what happened in 1945 and why his parents had to move from their ancestral seat in Lithuania to Pomerania. "I knew some residents of Gdańsk from the former Eastern Poland" - Chwin wrote - "who carried a real sorrow of expulsion in their hearts, missed their lost native land and murmured occasionally that Lwów and Wilno should be ours again one day."[[36]](#footnote-36)

The threat of German revisionism meant something much more tangible for residents of the Baltic cities than for those living in Warsaw or Cracow. It was present in their everyday lives - from the shipyard cranes to the railways, despite street renaming and other cosmetic attempts at polonization, the signs of the German past could not have been missed. Gomułka rationalized the sharp nationalist line of the 1960s retorting that it was merely a response to the growing clamor of West German 'revisionism' - an umbrella term for all the voices demanding the return of the *Ostgebiete*, usually coming from the expellee organizations. Indeed, the activity and rhetoric of organizations such as the *Bund der Vertriebenen* provided more than enough reasons to elicit a reply.[[37]](#footnote-37) The West German *Ostgebiete* agitation machine was perceived by the Poles as well-organized and extensive. As it was put by a leading Recovered Lands activist in a public speech, "the number of institutes, organizations and journals busying themselves with preparing assaults against our Western border reaches tens of thousands. Our organizations and magazines can be counted on the fingers of one hand." Still, there was no real reason to worry since "we had an ally that could not be touched by all the West German Ost-Institutes. We have the truth and justice on our side."[[38]](#footnote-38) While his audience must have realized what kind of an ally the speaker had in mind, the point about the considerable intensity of the West German *Ostgebiete* *forschung* and propaganda was true. It was not until the new line of the Kurt Georg Kiesinger cabinet set in after 1966 that the official West German stance with respect to the status of the *Ostgebiete* (temporarily) *unter Polnisher* *Verwaltung*[[39]](#footnote-39) began to evolve toward accepting the status quo.

One of the first moves by Gomułka after he came to power in 1956 was the establishment of the Association for the Development of the Western Lands (TRZZ). The main task of that organization was nominally development, but what it usually applied itself to was beating the drum of ethnic resentment and prophesying an imminent German reconquista.[[40]](#footnote-40) All kinds of weapons from the nationalist mobilization arsenal were deployed by the TRZZ. One of the most prominent examples was the glorification of the heroic medieval (1410) Grunwald victory over the Teutonic Knights. Annual reenactments, with tens of thousands of heavily armored knights re-fighting the battle, took place on every 15 July since 1960, the 550th anniversary. In 1969, a monument "to those, who fought for the Polishness of Gdańsk" was erected in the center of the city to commemorate the massacre of 1308, after which the city had been lost to the Teutonic Order for 158 years.[[41]](#footnote-41) The scope and intensity of that campaign was truly astounding given that Poland was, after all, nominally a communist country ideologically committed to transnational solidarity of all toiling peoples. The fact that the East Germans (now occupying large swaths of the old Prussian Kingdom) were portrayed as good Germans and the West Germans as bad Germans with Prussia simultaneously remaining the cradle of all the evils of modern German history, further added to the paradox-strewn ideological acrobatics of the 1960s.[[42]](#footnote-42)

An insight into the reverberations of the hostile exchanges between Warsaw and Bonn in the Recovered Lands in the 1960s can be gained from a report written by a Polish counterintelligence colonel, delivered to the top echelons of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1964. The report was written thanks to a detailed verbal account by a Polish woman working as a tour guide for a group of 120 West German tourists. The group, mostly from Hamburg and Lübeck, arrived to Gdynia on a ship named *Nordland* on 9 May, 1964 and travelled in the vicinity of Gdańsk for three days. The tourists began their visit by loudly expressing their disappointment about the fact that individual sightseeing and photographing was not allowed and their liberty was limited:

"In general, an atmosphere of anger and bitterness prevailed [among the tourists]. They were indignant that no one was allowed to visit friends or their former estates, factories, facilities, etc. [...] Discussions were held about how badly the Germans were mistreated after the war, [accusations were put forward] that the Poles have falsified history, etc. The Polish guide mentioned the various Polish achievements: the reconstruction, vibrant cultural life, free education, healthcare, etc. [One tourist] reacted [strongly to those words saying] that it was all propaganda [lies] and that the communists had prepared him [to do this particular job] very well. [Others have remarked] with ostantatious satisfaction, that it was the Germans who had taught the Poles [how to maintain] order, and when it comes to politics - the Poles have to do everything that 'Ivan tells them to do just the way that John rules over the [West] Germans.'"[[43]](#footnote-43) Other members of the group "criticized everything and claimed that the Gdańsk Voivodeship and Gdańsk are German lands, that they have to return and will return to Germany, that the Polish residents who live here will be allowed to stay, but the Germans will be the legitimate owners." [...] The ship's owner [...] and his wife Margaret uttered remarks that the Gdańsk Coast counts as the *Vaterland* for many Germans, that they still own property here and that the Poles have no right to say that the Germans are guests here. Further, he said that the Germans had prepared plans to reconstruct Gdańsk and that after their return, they will rebuild the city so extensively that it will become larger than Hamburg."[[44]](#footnote-44)

The place of the Recovered Lands in Gomułka's nationalist propaganda was absolutely central. During a mass rally held with hundreds of thousands of participants in Wrocław in May 1970, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of reintegrating the Recovered Lands, Gomułka went so far as to claim that "the return of our nation to the ancestral Piast [medieval Polish dynasty] Recovered Lands was the greatest victory in the history of our nation [...]. The endeavors of those first heroic years [of the pioneer settlement campaign, 1945-1948] will forever remain a grand national epos in the memory of the generations to come."[[45]](#footnote-45) The celebrations of 1970 were the last in the series and the issue of the Recovered Lands never again played a central role in Polish public discourse.

**IV. The *Kniefall* and the German-Jewish-Polish Trilemma**

The tone of exchanges between the FRG and Poland began to soften under the grand CDU-CSU-SPD coalition (1966-1969). The green light for negotiations was signaled publically by Gomułka in May 1969. The process was accelerated by the SPD's electoral victory in October 1969.[[46]](#footnote-46) Official negotiations between Bonn and Warsaw began in February 1970, but the communist media coverage of the preliminary talks was limited and the fervor of nationalist bickering was just beginning to abate.[[47]](#footnote-47) In this sense, the news of the new opening in Polish-German relations came largely as a surprise for most observers, especially in Poland. One reason for this was the secret nature of the 'backchannel' diplomacy conducted by Egon Bahr with the East. The rapprochement became more obvious after the signing of the Moscow Treaty (August 1970), but it was only in late November 1970 that the news of Brandt's forthcoming visit and the Treaty became widely advertised in the Polish media. While an analogy between this foreign policy u-turn, which was merely a part of the larger détente package, and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact might be exaggerated, the point remains that the level of surprise produced by Brandt's visit was, for a large part of the Polish audience, comparable to the global sense of unbelief on August 24, 1939.

An insight into the Polish regime's thinking on the eve of that u-turn can be gained from a secret report written by the counterintelligence service, prepared exclusively for the Politburo. Written by veteran 'cold warriors', the report summarized the state of the negotiations up to April 1970 as well as "our motives and guidelines for the talks with the West German government" since the Politburo considered it "necessary to make all members of the Party aware" of them. Tellingly, the authors explicitly acknowledged the fact that the "broad and in-depth" information supplied to "the public opinion of our country with respect to the West-German policy" was now inaccurate enough to require serious rethinking. In other words, by April 1970, the Polish counterintelligence advised to "re-orient" the prescriptions given to the state media to reflect the new developments on the international scene.[[48]](#footnote-48) Consequently, several articles portraying Brandt in a positive light appeared in the fall of 1970, with his anti-Nazi past and distance to the expellee organizations being especially highlighted.[[49]](#footnote-49)

As the media attention to the forthcoming Warsaw Treaty increased in November 1970, so did the activity of the Polish secret police, who attempted to gauge the public's reactions to the impeding 'normalization' with the FRG. The general conclusions reached by one such local survey in November 1970 were positive - most citizens held nothing against normalization in principle, even if there were many voices doubting either the intentions of the FRG or pointing to various practical obstacles that rendered the implementation of the Treaty uncertain, such as the questionable Bundestag ratification.[[50]](#footnote-50) Another survey, conducted throughout the month of December, provided a more mixed spectrum of opinions on Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and the Warsaw Treaty. In general, indifference was rarely to be found and all kinds of strong opinions, from enthusiasm to accusations of betrayal of national interest or dishonoring the victims of the Nazi occupation were voiced, with no single mindset prevailing. Many pointed to the (ten-year) non-aggression pact signed with Nazi Germany in 1934, which did nothing to prevent aggression in 1939. While the fraction of generally positive expectations was significant, Gomułka was clearly mistaken to expect the society as a whole to welcome the Treaty exclusively as a grand international success.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Why did Gomułka, "a famously devout and ascetic communist,"[[52]](#footnote-52) always skeptical of the West's intentions, decide to play along with the new game of *Ostpolitik* in the first place? Why, given the lessons learned in avoiding a Prague Spring in Warsaw in 1968, did he calculate that letting go of Germano-phobia was safer than opposing Moscow and the right-wingers at home? After all, he was a veteran communist apparatchik who experienced two world wars first hand and, by 1970, a virtuoso of exploiting ressentiment to mobilize the masses to win legitimacy and stability. This paradox has been succinctly captured by Gomułka's colleague Jan Szydlak, a high party functionary: "for twenty years we have been feeding the nation with fear of the Germans. We were squeezing tears from the eyes of the elders, many among the youth have joined us as well... and now what? Now, the anti-German card is on the table and we cannot play it anymore. How are we going to keep the nation together? It is a very serious problem."[[53]](#footnote-53) One of the few scholars who have devoted a couple words to that central dilemma is Timothy Garton Ash: "For a start, West German recognition of the Oder-Neisse line effectively robbed the Polish communist authorities of the bogey of West German revanchism. Few people realized the extent to which the alleged German threat had been a source of popular support for the communist authorities. Gierek had to seek his legitimacy elsewhere."[[54]](#footnote-54)

A glimpse into Gomułka's position is provided by the protocols of the Polish Politburo sessions from 1970. On April 10, Gomułka reported on the talks he held with Brezhnev in Budapest during the twenty fifth anniversary of the birth of the Hungarian People's Republic. Brezhnev boasted about the progress made in the talks with the West Germans while Gomułka made it clear to his party colleagues at home that his reaction to the news was far from enthusiastic. As suggested by other historians, Brezhnev was indeed keen on receiving loans and technology from West Germany in return for certain political concessions, a strategy that eventually culminated in the Helsinki Accords of 1975. His enthusiasm was not shared by most of the satellites and was opposed especially in Poland and in Ulbricht's East Germany.[[55]](#footnote-55) The fact that both Gomułka and Walter Ulbricht (the latter on May 3, 1971) were dismissed from their posts due to poor health at the time when the Soviet-West German rapprochement was accelerating is certainly not incidental.[[56]](#footnote-56) In other words, although Gomułka was interested in securing the permanence of the Polish western border, he was pleased neither with abandoning the convenient revanchist scare nor the Cold War confrontation in general. It is this contradiction, which stemmed from differing intra-Soviet-Bloc interests, that lies at the heart of the policy conundrum preceding the December Protests. Warsaw's only choice when faced with directives from Moscow was how long to procrastinate. On a global scene, it was thus the Moscow Treaty (August 1970) that constituted a real breakthrough, not the Warsaw Treaty.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Nonetheless, even if Gomułka had to follow Moscow and embrace the dreaded 'Rapallo spirit' of Russo-German rapprochement, how could he have misread the social implications of détente with West Germany so badly? Why did he think that removing the German boogeyman would help the Poles to swallow the foodstuffs and consumer goods price hikes, scheduled for December 12, 1970? On the simplest level, as expressed by his close associate Stanisław Trepczyński, "he had been so preoccupied with signing the Treaty with the FRG" that he failed to notice the inopportune timing of the price reform and the insufficient intensity of 'public relations' campaigns softening the ground for the forthcoming bad news.[[58]](#footnote-58)

However, there was much more to Gomułka's conundrum than absent-mindedness. Two years before, in 1968, Gomułka rode the wave of grassroots anti-Semitism and mobilized militant 'labor brigades' to quell the intellectuals' insubordination of March 1968, perhaps preventing the spread of the Prague Spring northwards. He employed the well-tried 'accusation' of Jewish affiliations to 'discredit' a group of intellectuals and students centered around the University of Warsaw, who organized demonstrations to defend civic liberties endangered by a recent ban on a theatre play deemed anti-Soviet. Gomułka managed to rally a vast majority of the party and numerous workers around the slogan of counteracting the 'Zionist (fifth) column' in Poland. In 1968, methods far removed from any definition of détente were thus clearly not foreign to Gomułka. His maneuver was also designed to outflank the fledgling national-conservative wing within the Party. That wing, also known as the Moczar group, was led by the Deputy Minister of Interior Mieczysław Moczar and assembled primarily the officer corps of the security apparatus. It was they who sparked the initial disturbances and left Gomułka with little choice but to endorse the anti-Semitic wave.[[59]](#footnote-59)

The ghost of the 1968 purge came back to haunt Gomułka in December 1970. It was precisely Brandt's *Kniefall* that marred the triumphal script for narrating the unfolding story of a Polish diplomatic victory. Before signing the Treaty in the afternoon of December 7, the chancellor had reserved a few hours for a quick tour of Warsaw. Initially, the plan was to pay homage to the fallen Polish resistance fighters and other victims of the Warsaw 1944 Uprising. "It turned out, however, that the monument commemorating the Uprising was merely a modest figure of a small boy and as such was deemed unsuitable for the homage that the chancellor intended to pay to the Home Army."[[60]](#footnote-60) Consequently, the German delegation proposed that the wreaths could be laid in front of both the Monument of the Unknown Soldier as well as the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes. The Polish government did not oppose that plan publically, but some officials did wonder (privately) "whether the gesture toward the Jewish resistance fighters was not a 'political comment' on the anti-Semitic witch-hunt happening in Poland since 1968 and whether it was not somehow associated with Brandt's [planned] visit to Israel."[[61]](#footnote-61) As Brandt claimed in his memoir, the idea of falling on his knees in front of the Warsaw Ghetto memorial appeared to him on the spot; it was not something he had planned in advance.[[62]](#footnote-62) In consequence, he took everyone by surprise. The initial reason for the taboo imposed on Brandt's genuflection - according to the Germanist Agnieszka Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska - was precisely its impromptu genesis, which caught the censors unprepared. As there was no politically correct guideline at hand to supply suitable comments, silence ensued and continued unabated until the 1990s.[[63]](#footnote-63)

The informational ban on Brandt's *Kniefall* was far from robust, however, and all but complete.[[64]](#footnote-64) The reaction of the Moczar right-wingers (and in general: nationally-conservative Catholics) to the *Kniefall* was ambivalent, to put it mildly. Why was it that it was in front of a ghetto memorial that Brandt fell on his knees (a Christian gesture, after all) whereas he "merely" bowed in front of a "Polish" monument? "He kneeled in front of the wrong statue" - complained the Moczar-controlled press in 1971. Furthermore, Brandt (a social democrat) was not at all representative of the Germans who should have apologized, complained Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.[[65]](#footnote-65) It is plausible to assume that such reactions were not uncommon and that it was precisely what the authorities feared when they attempted to hide the *Kniefall* from public scrutiny. Brandt's gesture was thus analogous to *Ostpolitik* in a sense that it did not belong to the confrontational Cold War script and thus took many by surprise.[[66]](#footnote-66) Since Gomułka had to follow the anti-Zionist line imposed by Moscow after the Six-Day War, he was consequently caught off guard by Brandt's gesture as well.[[67]](#footnote-67) "The Polish leadership considered Brandt's gesture as aimed at the Jewish people, not the Polish people" wrote Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, a scholar of Polish-German relations:

"[...] in the wake of their 1968 crackdown on Polish Jews, the communists were unwilling to admit to having made a mistake. In an attempt to remove Polish Jewry from the consciousness of Polish society they had now marginalized the Jews, eliminated their contribution to Polish culture, and almost erased the memory of the Holocaust. Thus, the official press selected a different photograph to convey the meaning of Brandt's visit, [namely] his bow before the Tomb of Poland's Unknown Soldier."[[68]](#footnote-68)

Fittingly, the chancellor's last words, as he was boarding the plane back to Bonn, were directed to the prime minister Cyrankiewicz: "[...] Poland has also not worked out [*ausarbeiten*] this part of her history yet."[[69]](#footnote-69) As Ruchniewicz suggests, "it was not the right moment to talk about the problem of Polish anti-Semitism."[[70]](#footnote-70)

The complexities of the entangled Polish-Jewish-German history are too immense to be explored further in this article. The multidimensional transcendence of Brandt's gesture reached far beyond bilateral Polish-German relations and beyond Cold War geopolitics. In Poland, Brandt's *Kniefall* was "shrouded in a veil of mystery", but the communist-controlled media failed to render the blockade watertight. True, the images of Brandt's *Kniefall* remained largely inaccessible for an ordinary citizen until 1989, but the ban was rather porous, especially in the few weeks following Brandt's gesture.[[71]](#footnote-71) To begin with, a full schedule of Brandt's visit had been publically announced on the radio on December 6. Brandt's bow in front of the Unknown Soldier's Tomb was witnessed by ca. 2.000 onlookers, his gesture in front of the Ghetto Memorial - by ca. 300-400.[[72]](#footnote-72) The Polish Press Agency (PAP) was the first to report at 12:25pm (December 7) on Brandt's visit to the Heroes of the Ghetto monument, "erected at the spot where the Nazis had murdered, executed and deported 400.000 Jews to death camps", a report then distributed to all the major media in the country.[[73]](#footnote-73) True, no major Polish newspaper published a clear, large photograph of the genuflection the way that many major world newspapers did on their first pages on December 8. But one local newspaper, for example, did write about "all dailies" of Paris and Brussels "publishing a photograph of chancellor Brandt paying homage in front of the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto on his knees".[[74]](#footnote-74)

To be sure, most of the attention was dedicated to the diplomatic and technical aspects of the Warsaw Treaty and the benefits it provided for the Polish People's Republic, focusing on the now secure western border. Nonetheless, on December 7, the national evening news service did show (very brief) footage of Brandt's genuflection. *Życie Warszawy*, a major newspaper, also published a (small) picture of the kneeling chancellor on December 8.[[75]](#footnote-75) In most newspapers, the picture was edited to make it seem that Brandt was kneeling in front of a Polish soldier, not in front of the Ghetto monument.[[76]](#footnote-76) At the same time, the most widely distributed newspaper in Poland, the party organ *Trybuna Ludu*, informed (on the first page, on December 9) of the chancellor's bow in front of the Unknown Soldier Memorial as well as of his "genuflection honoring the victims of the Nazi occupation."[[77]](#footnote-77) The *Życie Warszawy* praised "the anti-Nazi resistance fighter Brandt" and spoke highly of his "genuflection in front of the Heroes of the Warsaw Memorial, which moved him deeply" and assured that "Polish society knew how to appreciate such [a manifestation of] human feeling".[[78]](#footnote-78) The regime-sponsored Catholic *Słowo Powszechne*, also on December 8, praised Brandt's "courage" and slammed the "cowardly" critiques of his policy and "the disgusting comments ridiculing his spontaneous gesture in front of the Ghetto Heroes memorial" in West Germany.[[79]](#footnote-79) More loyal authors tried to bring the situation under control by attributing the turn in West German policy to the supposedly model Polish-East German relations.[[80]](#footnote-80) Nonetheless, "Brandt's gesture, despite the censors' effort, had reached some parts of the society", according to Adam Krzemiński, a leading expert on Polish-German relations.[[81]](#footnote-81)

"In the 1970s, the image of the kneeling chancellor had made it into the consciousness of a considerable part of the society osmotically", wrote Krzemiński.[[82]](#footnote-82) He followed Brandt's 1970 visit closely as a young journalist. His word choice - osmosis - was not accidental. It is indicative of the difficulty in tracing the reactions of Polish society to the *Kniefall* in general: a taboo not to be explored further, after all. Consequently, it is difficult to find opinion surveys pertaining to that particular gesture, public or covert, if some did take place. Still, even if many Poles were spared the news of the *Kniefall*, the larger point remains: the expectations before the visit, as expressed by Krzemiński, "were enormous. It is hard to imagine today how serious a trauma Bonn's refusal to recognize the Oder-Neisse border had caused in Poland. It was not only about the fear of German revisionism. It was the humiliation of provisionality and the sense that one had no choice but to accept the Soviet warranty."[[83]](#footnote-83)

In sum, while the Warsaw Treaty and Brandt's visit must have been known to any conscious citizen and were actively followed by many, it is impossible to gauge how many Poles knew about Brandt's *Kniefall* and what they knew in mid-December 1970. On the other hand, it is certainly true that the authorities did not fully succeed in their apparent wish to make it disappear. The general availability and popularity of the Western media in Poland, such as the Radio Free Europe or the Voice of America, is undisputed and was outstanding east of the Iron Curtain. It is also worth emphasizing that port cities such as Szczecin and Gdańsk were even more special in this regard. As the Polish secret police noted, journals such as *Der Spiegel* were regularly smuggled by maritime channels and the familiarity with the German language was higher in the Recovered Lands than elsewhere as was the exposure to the *Deutsche Welle*.[[84]](#footnote-84) "A particularly destructive role [...] was played by the Kiel-based radio stations, the Deutschlandfunk and the Deutsche Welle in particular, in the wake of the ratification of the FRG-Poland Treaty" - complained the Polish counterintelligence about the causes to the December Protest a few months later. "We have established the identity of twenty eight persons working as informers / correspondents of those stations. Severe repressive measures have been applied to some of them".[[85]](#footnote-85)

On the morning when the Gdańsk workers were marching out of their shipyard, on December 14, *Der Spiegel*'s new edition was being released. Its front page was occupied almost entirely with a photograph of Brandt's *Kniefall*, the large-font letters asking: "Durfte Brandt knien?", should Brandt have fallen to his knees? As a major Polish daily reported on December 17, Brandt's gesture had sparked "a veritable storm" in West Germany.[[86]](#footnote-86) It is highly unlikely that at least some of its shockwaves had not reached the Polish Baltic cities, which had been visited by ca. 10.000 West German sailors in 1970, many of them in regular touch with the Polish population.[[87]](#footnote-87) One can also assume that the mystifying silence of the Polish authorities might have additionally rubbed the wrong way, especially those who were regularly in touch with Western sources of information. In this sense, even if Brandt's *Kniefall* was largely but imperfectly hidden from the (exclusively) Polish audience, the informational awkwardness surrounding the gesture surely had some impact. Such an extraordinary moment, appreciated or scorned, understood or not, must have affected anyone who saw or heard of it.[[88]](#footnote-88) In any case, even if the image of the kneeling chancellor did not filter down to the shipyard workers, they certainly could not have missed the signing of the Warsaw Treaty and the bow in front of the Monument of the Unknown Soldier. These those two moments were publicized absolutely everywhere.

A vast majority of accounts of the origins of the December Protests opens with an introduction along the following lines: "After the government's announcement of substantial price increases in basic foodstuffs on 12 December 1970, workers in the coastal cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia, Elbląg and Szczecin held mass meetings [and] elected strike committees". The news of the Warsaw Treaty was not good or significant enough to mollify the frustration caused by the announcement of the price hikes.[[89]](#footnote-89) Gomułka miscalculated on several levels, most authors agree. Most consequentially, he was wrong to put the psychological effects of both decisions along a binary 'good or bad news' axis. While learning about the Treaty might have been welcomed as a Polish foreign policy success by some, for those living in the Recovered Lands the immediate impression could have been colored with even stronger emotions. From the very beginning of their stay in those areas after 1945, their residents lived in a state that the historian Gregor Thum aptly called a "permanent impermanence syndrome".[[90]](#footnote-90) Whenever there was a spike in international tensions (e.g. the Korean War or the second Berlin Crisis) and the prospect of a third world war seemed realistic, the vision of a German return loomed large. What the Treaty meant for many of those people was probably closer to a feeling of relief rather than triumph. The image of a bowing or kneeling German chancellor certainly sent a different message than, for example, the maps of Germany in 1937 borders or the images of Adenauer wearing the black-cross tunic of the Teutonic Knights in public, prevalent in the early 1960s.[[91]](#footnote-91)

As argued by Edyta Czop, the historian who has studied the Polish secret police's surveys of popular reactions to Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, "it is more suitable to speak of 'activation' of Polish society" rather than of the kind of mollifying relief or escapist euphoria that Gomułka wanted as a buffer against the inevitable discontent following the price increases. As she convincingly argues, no conscious citizen could remain indifferent to such a momentous turning point. The Brandt-factor had clearly emboldened the citizens to voice their opinions more openly. Furthermore, Czop rightly emphasizes that Gomułka's regime had been feeding the population with stories about "the bad Germans living in the FRG and the good Germans living in the GDR" for years.[[92]](#footnote-92) Consequently, many found it prudent to express all kinds of reservations about the (West) German intentions upon being asked. Many others did not need extra nudges to express such reservations honestly, giving vent to their feelings of inappropriate/insufficient atonement or convictions of unnecessary or premature reconciliation. Furthermore, the stagnating living standards of the late 1960s were often rationalized by the media by means of the clearly escalating international tensions and the support for the brotherly peoples they necessitated, especially in Vietnam. Vigilance against revanchist Germany was generally perceived as a reason large enough to justify some austerity. After the Treaty, however, "people began to ask what war [was going to break out] and with whom, if the Treaty with the FRG has just been signed."[[93]](#footnote-93)

"Freiheit heisst, die Angst verlieren" [freedom means letting go of the fear] - these were the words of an East German dissident and a participant of *Die Wende* from Rostock as well as the title of a recent book by Christian Halbrock dedicated to the local opposition movement.[[94]](#footnote-94) It is difficult to measure the effects of 'losing fear' and not easy to find 'evidence' demonstrating that it is freedom that it leads to, especially in a repressive, closed regime. This difficulty concerns the genesis of the December 1970 Protests as well. Unfortunately, I have not discovered a single direct piece of evidence that has recorded the immediate reactions of the Baltic workers to Brandt's visit *in situ*, before the Protests began. Additional local research, including interviews, would have to be carried out. One the other hand, while it is easy to pinpoint the economic causes of discontent by studying the workers' welfare postulates, no one was shouting 'we are not afraid' in the streets - this state of mind was demonstrated by direct action. At the same time, the Polish Baltic Coast was still far from being a place free from fear in December 1970. The security apparatus demonstrated amply that, in 1970, the regime was very far from being 'communism with the teeth broken out' that the dissident Adam Michnik saw in the mid-1980s. Last but not least, one of the largest Soviet military bases, the Kaliningrad Oblast, was merely 50 miles away across the Gdańsk Bay, with its units ready to intervene at any moment and its warships visible cruising from the promenades of Gdańsk and Gdynia.

Despite these methodological difficulties, intrinsic to studying any closed society, it is possible to uncover significant traces of the influence that the Brandt-factor had on the social atmosphere preceding and surrounding the December Protests, as expressed in contemporary voices. New evidence indicative of that link can be found in a recently published selection of letters sent by Polish citizens to the central mass media authority - *Radiokomitet*. It was an institution established after the 1956 thaw and was a popular destination for everyone wishing to express his or her reaction to the content broadcasted on the public radio or television. Among the letters surveyed by Paweł Szulc, the author of the publication, two striking patterns emerge. The only authors to make a connection between the Brandt-factor and the December 1970 Protests were those from the Recovered Lands and the former Prussian partition. Those from the old parts of Poland did not make such a connection, at least not in the selection of letters chosen by Szulc. To be sure, most writers focused on economic grievances. They also expressed their outrage on the indiscriminate use of force and the resulting massacre. Still, a few examples do convey the significance of the German context at the time. The most illuminating is a letter written by a shipyard worker from Gdańsk who had emigrated to the city from southern Poland in the early 1950s. He had witnessed the strikes, shootings and deaths of his colleagues. On January 3, 1971, he expressed his reaction in the following words:

"The Baltic Coast is inhabited by a population that has emigrated from various parts of our country after the Second World War. The share of the native population [those who had lived there already before WWII] is negligible, the proverbial drop in the bucket. Suddenly, during the recent events, we were called "Hitler's residue", "subversive elements" [and] "hooligans" who need to be destroyed by any means. [...] It was 9am, December 16. [Ten thousand] workers were listening to a speech by the representatives of the strike committee, gathered on the square in front of the administration headquarters. A few steps beyond the gate, soldiers wearing Polish uniforms formed a semicircle. Next to them - the police with machine guns aimed straight at us. Behind them - armored vehicles ready to attack. My colleagues tried to initiate a dialogue with the military. They said: "You want to fire at us? Your brothers and fathers? Perhaps [some of you] will come to work here [in the shipyard] next month." It was then that the commander gave the order to fire - no warning, a salvo was released, three fallen, ten wounded."[[95]](#footnote-95)

A few days after the massacre, the author of that letter talked with his colleague, who happened to be an air force lieutenant. His colleague explained what kind of rationales those "regular, gray" soldiers were supplied with to motivate them to open fire at their own folk. "The kind of light shed on the population of our city" was supposed to leave no room for doubt in the heads of those "young, rural" recruits. Namely, it was "Hitler's residue" and a German fifth column that they were crushing. "They believed [in those words] and soon demonstrated what they were capable of doing." It was precisely that searing paradox - young Polish soldiers firing at the very same people who had been busy transforming a formerly German city into the main Polish port for the past quarter century - that prompted the shipyard worker write to the *Radiokomitet*, even though he had never felt it necessary to make his opinion known before. He signed the letter as "a disappointed and embittered shipyard worker."[[96]](#footnote-96)

A closer look at the 1970 Protests reveals that the workers consciously based their actions on a script known to all: the storming of Berlin in 1945, in which ca. 100.000 Polish soldiers participated and ca. 10.000 lost their lives. This joint Soviet-Polish operation was a cornerstone in Moscow's propaganda of brotherly relations between the two nations. The seat of the (provincial) Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Gdańsk was commonly referred to as the "Reichstag" by the striking workers.[[97]](#footnote-97) The climax of the revolutionary atmosphere was reached on the evening of December 15 when the 'Reichstag' was set on fire and burned through the night while the crowds blocked access for the incoming fire trucks. Barricades sprung up, preventing fire brigades from acting. The rebranding of the Party headquarters could have been a reference both the Reichstag fire of 1933, but more likely - to the final act of World War II in Europe, crowned with planting a Soviet flag on top of the edifice. What is characteristic is that it was the Party headquarters (not police or military) that was attacked first, which suggests that the nature of the protests was political from its inception. Not unlike the storming of the Bastille in 1789, the Central Committee building was the most immediate symbol of the injustice and oppression, while its rebranding as the 'Reichstag' is indicative of the centrality of the German context at the time.

In two other letters sent from the Baltic port cities, the context of the German occupation emerges as a central point of reference as well. It is telling that as soon as the prospect of a new German occupation was apparently fading, the communist regime was stepping in with the same kind of brutality, perhaps to fill in the new void in its monopoly on fear politics. A resident of Elbląg wrote on December 22, 1970:

"... The Citizens' Militia [State Police], after intruding into the apartment, asked no questions, but beat, kicked and threw our people out into the cars [treating them] like non-humans. They were held at the police station for sixty hours with no food and then [the police] took those people - hungry and battered - God knows where. [...] How is it possible that under socialism, in People's Poland, innocent people are monstrously maltreated, even more so than the Gestapo [did] in the [concentration] camps? [...] We are afraid to walk the streets, when we see a policeman now - and back then we trusted him - we are more scared than [we were] of the Gestapo during the war."[[98]](#footnote-98)

Another citizen, from a Pomeranian town of Lębork near Gdynia, wrote in a similar vein:

"... why on earth does Gomułka send bacon and coal to Russia and other countries? We have to suffer while the gentlemen from the ministry tour and drink around at the taxpayer's expense. The grey masses cannot make ends meet, while the bellies of the capitalists keep on growing. [...] The German murdered us [sic], but communism - so much desired by you, will finish us off - the grey masses - by hunger."[[99]](#footnote-99)

Given the intensity of the wartime occupation experience still in the living memory, it is unsurprising why the Brandt-factor might have led to a particularly lively kind of 'activation' of Polish society. In another illuminating example, a disturbed citizen from Lubliniec, an interwar border town with a roughly evenly mixed Polish-German population, wrote:

"Why has our government presented us with such a Christmas gift? Had those banquettes for foreign officials in Warsaw not been prepared with such pomp - so impressive that even Brandt sent us an additional thank you note for hospitality last week - then hundreds, thousands or even millions [of Zlotys] could be saved. [...] Now meat and high quality sausages can be eaten only by the ministers and high party dignitaries, they have high incomes and binge at those banquets every day, while the workers are supposed to be satisfied with borscht and bread, hence the bitterness in Gdańsk and the bloodshed it has led to."[[100]](#footnote-100)

His letter indicates that the reactions to Brandt's visit could have been diametrically opposed to the one hoped for by Gomułka. If Poland was able to secure such a grand international success, why was the country unable to feed its own people? If Germany was our sworn enemy, why was the chancellor greeted with so much pomp? If Germany had violated international treaties in the 1930s, how do we know she will not do it again? Simple as such reasoning was, it is hard to say why it would be less obviously predictable than the euphoria that Gomułka seemed to have taken for granted.

In late December, the *Voice of Szczecin* daily released an article entitled "Let us think it through one more time". It enumerated all the damage totaling 12 million Zlotys and ended with an emphasis on the significance of "certain political losses" that were perhaps less tangible, but not less consequential. "The main slogan of the revisionist FRG propaganda of the recent days was the claim that the [December] events occurred in the German lands, the inhabitants of which do not feel at home. It served as evidence for arguing that the recently signed Polish-West German treaty has been rendered void. [...] Szczecin, Poland's window to the world, has been, is and will be that one special spot where each incident assumes an extraordinary significance. Both good and bad. We have to keep that in mind."[[101]](#footnote-101) Similar words were uttered by Szczecin's first postwar president, Piotr Zaremba: "The anarchy in the streets, catapulting our city into world headlines at the very moment when our real achievements here have just been internationally acknowledged and recognized as an irreversible matter of fact in the recently signed treaty, has to be recognized as an act worthy of condemnation."[[102]](#footnote-102)

The main argument used by the regime to turn the public opinion against the striking workers was to blame the "vulgar excesses" on "hooligan and gangster-like elements", "provocateurs" and other "anti-socialist elements".[[103]](#footnote-103) A variation on this theme was to accuse the "hooligans" for playing directly into the hands of "the enemies of Poland", more or less consciously.[[104]](#footnote-104) In the aftermath of the Protests, the protesters were branded as collaborators of foreign intelligence services, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* in particular. In an operational report prepared by the Polish counterintelligence in October 1971, we read: "[t]he December Events on the Coast and their aftermath coincided with a spike in foreign intelligence activities [...] As the official relations between Poland and the FRG are being normalized, the possibilities for hostile propaganda activity targeting our society are on the rise [...]."[[105]](#footnote-105) Eight foreign spies, five from the US and three from the FRG were detained in 1969-1970. All of them were sentenced to severe prison sentences. A few West German sailors were discovered "smuggling out certain documents that have disappeared during the December events [...] including [the photographs of] the burning edifice of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. In Hamburg, a well-known agent of the BND is offering a very high remuneration in exchange for a written account of the December events."[[106]](#footnote-106) In 1971, the Polish counterintelligence claimed to have uncovered ten cases of "espionage-indicative inquiries" [questioning of Polish citizens about politically sensitive issues] by the BND, including one case of a shipyard worker's wife. Most questions focused on the December events."[[107]](#footnote-107) An increasing number of West German tourists (2.500 in 1970 and 5.929 in the first nine months of 1971) was indicative of the fact that "a majority of tourists perceived their arrival as strongly linked to the Polish-West German negotiations" which materialized, for example, in their attempts "to conduct opinion polls surveying the [prevailing] attitudes to Brandt's new policy."[[108]](#footnote-108) Any Pole who answered such "opinion polls" was suspect. The activities of the BND, real or fabricated, were exploited by the regime to frame the December 1970 Protests as instigated by foreign plots and subversion. In particular, the reports pointed to the West German opposition labeling it a 'special interest group' interested in destabilizing the situation in the Recovered Lands. This evidence suggests that the German boogeyman had to be immediately reapplied as soon as the first consequences of his departure could be observed.

Judging from the protocols of the Politburo meetings, the events on the Baltic Coast stirred a veritable panic among the leadership. While the workers were setting party committees on fire, the international context exerted pressure of no smaller caliber. That pressure was expressed succinctly by Ignacy Loga-Sowiński, an influential Politburo member: if both Gomułka and the Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz were sacrificed as scapegoats responsible for the massacre, "a peculiar situation would ensue - two weeks after signing the treaty with the FRG, both its initiator and its signatory would be gone. It's a matter of state importance."[[109]](#footnote-109) After Gomułka was dismissed on December 20, Gierek still needed several months to restore the peace and order. The fact that Cyrankiewicz was 'promoted' to a position of the Chairman of the Council of State (a nominally top, but practically powerless position) a few days after Gierek took power is indicative of the fact that Cyrankiewicz had to remain to ensure that both signatories of the Warsaw Treaty were still represented in top state organs. Cyrankiewicz held this post until he retired altogether in 1972, after the ratification of the Treaty in the Bundestag.[[110]](#footnote-110)

**VI. Sailors and dockers: on social stratification**

A few days after the December 1970 massacre, a party-internal *Commission for investigating the socio-economic problems of the Coast* was brought to life by the regime. Its final report was circulated among the leadership in February 1971. The conclusion read:

“There exists a strict link and dependency between […] the phenomena of criminal and hard-currency activity, the sailors' frequent contacts with ‘the Western style of life’ and the existence of an impressive world of private wealth on the Coast and the demoralizing influence of that lifestyle […] on a certain group of younger workers, especially those poorly paid. This influence is reflected both in the recruitment of some of them into that world, e.g. as *cinkciarze* [street foreign-currency changers] as well as evoking, among a considerable group of workers, a hatred of the world of wealth and resentment of the authorities who tolerate it. All of this has certainly played its part in the December 1970 events.”[[111]](#footnote-111)

The 1970 Protests had a crucial socioeconomic background representative of an orthodox social scientific view of the world - social stratification rooted in income disparities. As indicated by the report quoted above, it was the growing income and status gap between those employed in the state-controlled industrial sectors (such as the shipyard and dock workers) and those profiting from the so-called parallel economy revolving around various way of parasitizing on the foreign trade flow passing through the ports that constituted the socioeconomic backbone of the crisis. While workers in the Lenin shipyard toiled for a meager salary in the unconvertible Polish zlotys, the dollar or deutschemark revenue of those who sailed to the West in the ships the workers had built (if they gave same forethought on how to arrange illicit smuggling operations) made more profit than the workers could expect to amass in years of toil. The fortunes of those employed in the maritime export services were not to remain covert. The conspicuous consumption of the black market kings was meant to be seen.[[112]](#footnote-112) The relationship between wealth and cooperation with the secret police was not meant to be seen, but was even more self-evident than the often nebulous origins of wealth. This stratification dynamic in port cities is essential to understand why *Solidarność* was created in shipyards, but also why its egalitarian message reverberated so strongly in a country where the egalitarian promise was the only remaining appeal of the Marxist-Leninist ideology.[[113]](#footnote-113) This mood was already prevalent in 1970 and is reflected in a letter to the *Radiokomitet* (the central media authority), collectively signed by "the shipyard workers of Szczecin". It ended on the following note: "We do not want to have this kind of party leadership, we do not want dictatorship. We want to be members of a truly Marxist-Leninist party, with reasonable, flexible and truthful leadership. We want true socialism! Away with the careerists and the 'red bourgeoisie'."[[114]](#footnote-114)

Poor pay and the appalling housing shortage, strenuous labor, inefficient organization, arbitrariness of managerial decisions - the Dickensian working conditions were the very real causes behind the growing frustration. The sense of injustice was additionally fuelled by observing the wealth of the smugglers growing with each shipload successfully bribed through the port gates. Many secretly coveted the elegant jackets worn or the BMWs driven by the entrepreneurial few among the sailors. Many wondered how it could be that the workers' state allowed its vanguard of the Lenin shipyard to fall so low in social and material standing.[[115]](#footnote-115) When the protests turned into looting and destruction on the night of December 17/18, one of the first shops robbed in Szczecin was the one where one could purchase luxury products only by paying with foreign currency.

The announcement of price hikes on December 12 was almost a textbook example of a spark that set off the proverbial powder keg. The (perfect) storm had been long in the making. December 13 happened to be not only a Sunday, but also a traditional 'trading Sunday', two weeks before Christmas. Forty years later, those who were behind the decision to raise prices are still unable to explain why they did not consider the potential consequences of such provocative timing. Not unlike Franz Ferdinand's insistence to ride in an open car in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, the decision to raise food prices just before Christmas meant asking for trouble. The proponents of the conspiracy theory point to this coincidence as a major evidence indicating that the entire 'revolution' had been orchestrated well in advance. In the author's opinion, such a view ascribes more intelligence and foresight to the economic planners and military commanders than justified by evidence. Closer to reality is a view that that fateful decision both reflected and symbolized the disconnect between the communist technocratic elite and the cultural sensitivity of the predominantly Catholic and conservative Polish nation.

According to senior historians of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, the Protests' escalation cannot be understood without considering that it was the high-ranking army officers, working closely with the Moczar right-wingers, who independently decided to open fire at a group of workers walking toward a shipyard gate in Gdynia in the early morning of December 17, killing thirteen.[[116]](#footnote-116) This incident sparked the most violent day of the December Protests, now remembered as Black Thursday.[[117]](#footnote-117) The morning massacre was a turning point after which the hitherto localized skirmishes with the police escalated into regular street warfare, with army tanks rolling in to pacify the workers. The morning salvo could have been a 'provocation' aimed at initiating a chain reaction leading to the removal of Gomułka and his old guard. This view has been expressed by Andrzej Friszke, a leading expert on the topic.[[118]](#footnote-118) The fact that the shipyard workers were fired upon (without any warning) immediately after they disembarked from their morning commuter train and started walking toward their workplace was "profoundly bizarre".[[119]](#footnote-119) "One cannot help wondering who in the leadership may have been interested in escalating tensions", added the historian Luba Fajfer.[[120]](#footnote-120) In a gesture of desperate protest, the body of one of the fallen workers, the eighteen year old Zbyszek Godlewski, was laid on wooden planks, wrapped in a national flag and carried through Gdynia's main street. Tens of thousands of Gdynia's residents joined and formed an impromptu demonstration, but were soon brutally dispersed by the army. Five more people were killed in Gdynia that day, hundreds wounded and thousands arrested and beaten. Altogether, between December 14 and 20, the total military deployment on the Baltic Coast reached 27.000 soldiers (13.000 in the Gdańsk Area), augmented by 550 tanks, 750 armored vehicles and 108 aircraft. The navy committed 2.188 servicemen.[[121]](#footnote-121)

Does the Brandt-factor remain even tangentially relevant given the lack of a consensus on the key question of who gave the orders to fire and the self-evidently economic causes of the 1970 Protests? When looking closely at the violent days of December 14-20, it is indeed relevant only contextually. But looking from a higher vantage point, it can be perceived that it was precisely the new détente course pursued by Moscow and Bonn that generated and certainly widened the split between the two factions in the Polish communist party: between those who embraced it and the national-communists who were anxious to let go of the hard Cold War line, i.e. (with all likelihood) the group responsible for the violent 'provocation' in Gdynia. From this perspective, the Polish internal divisions were both reflective of and caused by larger international shifts and by Brandt's *Ostpolitik* in particular. Gomułka found himself torn by a dilemma. One the one hand, he had to abide by the instructions from Moscow and seek rapprochement with Bonn. On the other, he had to placate the growing party opposition outflanking him from the right. In the end, he failed on both ends. On 16 December, he met with the Soviet ambassador Averkii Aristov. Aristov's impressions did not bode well. A phone call from Brezhnev followed the next day and an official letter expressing disappointment at Gomułka's leadership followed on December 18. A month later, a letter embracing Gierek's new measures supplied a coda to the leadership replacement process.[[122]](#footnote-122)

Nonetheless, given the powder keg in existence prior to Brandt's visit in Warsaw, it is legitimate to ask whether his visit in general, and the *Kniefall* in particular, had some real influence upon the Baltic workers. From a Marxist perspective, it was indeed the abhorrent working and living conditions combined with the relative degradation of status that made the workers desperate for a change. The threat of a Teutonic reconquista, even if supported by vivid collective memories, belonged to an imagined sphere of abstraction that, after all, had not yet materialized. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine a worse insult to any patriotic Pole than being accused of helping the Germans, especially in the Recovered Lands. The regime's old strategy of framing the opposition as "Hitler's residue" was not a cause of the Protests, but has certainly added fuel to the flame. Moreover, it was completely inconsistent with the message conveyed by Brandt's visit a week previous. This pretext also helped to mobilize the security apparatus, leading to escalation and, in all probability, to an attempt at coup-d'etat.[[123]](#footnote-123) The Warsaw Treaty did not lead to an overnight fraternity between the two nations, but it certainly mitigated the fear, perhaps just enough to embolden the workers' to walk out of the shipyards and march under national colors while singing the internationale. In this sense, Brandt's visit was a classic sine qua non for a revolution. Needless to say, it was insufficient on its own.

**VII. Conclusion**

There is no direct causal stream between Brandt's visit and the shipyard strikes one week later. The argument developed in this paper is not meant to challenge the primacy of socio-economic or political explanations. In a crudely reductionist narrative, most shipyard workers would have to be described as more concerned with the cost of the upcoming Christmas prepararions than with international affairs. It was upon hearing the news of the price increases in the evening of December 12 that 3.000 Lenin Shipyard workers voiced their unhappiness for the first time, not in the days following Brandt's visit. The chronology and hierarchy of causality is clear. The argument is designed to encourage an exercise in emphatic historical imagination based on a careful study of long-term trajectories of the actors involved, which include the sorrow of expulsion, lost homeland and migrations to an alien, postwar, post-German environment. Such an exercise is not meant to substitute 'hard evidence', the proverbial smoking gun, which has not been found. In a closed-society dictatorship such as Poland of 1970, any words uttered by contemporary actors on a topic so politically charged as relations with Germany were by definition modulated, more or less consciously, by a number of filters, more or less coercive, and thus can only be used as evidence of any kind when a careful contextualization is provided.

This paper provides such contextualization together with the most relevant evidence known to the author. This material allows for a reflection about the reasons why the December Protests started in the Recovered Lands and took place (virtually) nowhere else in Poland.[[124]](#footnote-124) In the six days between December 7 (Brandt's visit) and December 12 (price increases), Polish society was served an unusually inconsistent propagandistic combination. It was a dizzying mix of triumphalism ('the border is finally secure', 'the chancellor personally honors fallen Polish soldiers'), a full informational volte-face ('not every West German is a revanchist neo-Nazi as you had been told for the past quarter century') and awkward silence over the genuflection and the respective West-German and global reactions. It was against this informational backdrop that the shock of the price hikes played itself out. As argued by the two historians (Czop and Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska) quoted earlier, the regime's media apparatus was overwhelmed by a sequence of events that did not belong to the old Cold War script. It was Brandt's own gestures and words in Warsaw on December 7 that tipped the scales of what could be spun by the regime's propaganda. As many studies of Gorbachev's *glastnost* have consistently demonstrated, even a small informational tack in a hitherto closed society is extremely difficult to handle, is likely to have a catalytic effect and spark a much more active approach toward free speech and related rights.[[125]](#footnote-125) That such an effect was produced by the Brandt-factor is beyond doubt and can be credited to the chancellor himself. If we add this story to the existing body of literature, the genesis of the 1970 Protests is enriched and closer to comprehensive.

The events in the Lenin Shipyard from August 1980 are more widely known worldwide. The birth of Solidarity in 1980 was markedly different from the protests ten years earlier.[[126]](#footnote-126) The 'Carnival of Solidarność' was seen as a self-limiting revolution both by its participants[[127]](#footnote-127) and by observers.[[128]](#footnote-128) The workers' demands were written down on paper and emissaries selected to negotiate with the regime, internal discipline among the strikers was strictly enforced, 'irresponsible acts' suppressed collegially. On August 30, the August Accords were signed by the government and Lech Wałęsa and the workers' protest soon transformed itself into a legal organization - the *NSZZ Solidarność*. Despite numerous attempts at 'provocation' from the regime's undercover agents, law and order ruled supreme throughout the entire duration of the strike. It soon became obvious that the most durable lesson of 1970 was the will to stay put in the shipyards. The perfection of the occupation-strike method eventually led to a real breakthrough in August 1980. Retrospectively, the December 1970 Protest resemble a classic revolutionary scenario modeled on the storming of the Bastille. The birth of Solidarity in 1980, on the other hand, approaches a *Herrschaftsvertrag* situation - a negotiated delineation of power and establishment of a (temporary, as it turned out in December 1981 and then in 1989) modus vivendi.

In a twisted stroke of irony that only History can perform, it was not only the Polish workers' shop floor and housing conditions in 1970 that resembled what Engels saw in Britain in mid-nineteenth century and what inspired him to predict the ultimate unsustainability of capitalism. The fundamental causes of the protests were rooted in economic exploitation, itself conditioned by systemic corruption, inefficiency and shortages of state socialism of the Soviet type.[[129]](#footnote-129) Echoing Lenin's deconstruction of social imperialism of the kind practiced in Wilhelmine Germany, the economic vulnerability of the working class in Poland was covered by a smokescreen of nationalism, warmongering and ideological doctrinism right from a Machiavellian instruction manual. All that was occasionally spiced up by stories of espionage, sabotage and treason. The initial demands of the striking workers - wage increases, independent trade unions, medical insurance and other welfarist postulates - had a lot in common with other progressive labor movements around the globe. As soon as the workers were out in the streets however, all kinds of alternative narratives joined in the discursive battle. Needless to say, old school anti-Russian Polish nationalism ruled supreme, but there were also other options readily available: anti-communism, anti (black market or nomenklatura) one-percent, anti-Zionism, catholic conservatism or economic protectionism. Many other discursive superstructures were heaped upon the underlying base of economic inequality and exploitation, but nationalism and Catholicism soon crowded out everything else, eventually to emerge victorious in 1989. Marxist *weltanschauung* backfired against the regime, not in the least because so many had to study the master quite attentively.[[130]](#footnote-130) It was both thanks to the shock and awe kind of application of raw force - which was admittedly impressive in its own terms and certainly far removed from the prospect of a withering state that Marx and Lenin occasionally entertained - as well as timely scapegoating that prevented a nationwide uprising, Soviet intervention and more bloodshed.

This paper demonstrates that a combined application of conceptual tools used by social scientists and archival historical research can lead to new insights. Such a hybrid approach sheds light on an important cause of the December 1970 events that can be missed if tools of merely one discipline are deployed. The consequences of *Yalta* cannot be understood without, for example, learning about what kind of socio-cultural meaning the collective memory of expulsion conveyed for the people resettled to the Recovered Territories and how it interacted with the intricacies of Cold War international relations. In turn, only within this broader picture can the intended and unintended consequence­s of a gesture such as Brandt's *Kniefall* be traced. Only with all of the surrounding contextual background can a term such as 'a turning point of history' be fully appreciated, even if history turned twenty years later than some wanted it to turn already in 1970. That being said, Brandt's humble gesture certainly deserves the honor of being spoken of as a moment that 'changed the course of history'. It can only be pondered why so many human lives had to be lost in yet another among history's countless unintended consequences.

1. To mention just a few English-language works of considerable scholarly impact: Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution : Solidarity* (New York: Scribner, 1983); Alain Touraine, *Solidarity : The Analysis of a Social Movement : Poland, 1980-1981* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Michael D. Kennedy, *Professionals, Power, and Solidarity in Poland : A Critical Sociology of Soviet-Type Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power : The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Michael Szporer, *Solidarity : The Great Workers Strike of 1980* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2012); Shana Penn, *Solidarity's Secret : The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Lawrence Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier : The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The best English-language sources on the December 1970 Protests are still: Luba Fajfer, "The Polish Military and the Crisis of 1970," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 26, no. 2 (1993), 205-225; Roman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity a Political Sociology of Poland's Working-Class Democratization*, 1989), Introduction. The topic is also covered (in passing) in some of the works cited above as well as in: Daniel Singer, *The Road to Gdansk : Poland and the U.S.S.R* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Grzegorz Ekiert, "Rebellious Poles: Political Crises and Popular Protest Under State Socialism, 1945-89," *East European Politics and Societies* 11, no. 2 (1997), 321. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Paweł Domański, *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego, Grudzień 1970* (Londyn: Aneks, 1991), 77-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Of course, this refers to the Big Three Yalta Conference in 1945. In Polish popular memory and common parlance, this term is deployed to refer to the various consequences of that conference, including Soviet-domination, population transfers or the westward shift of the borders. For a quick overview, see: Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution...*, 1-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Gdynia, a city a few miles north of Gdańsk and another major scene of the 1970 Protests, was a Polish city before the Second World War, but the overall point remains: the entire postwar Polish Baltic Coast was in Germany before the First World War and as such was a target for 'German revisionism'. For more information, see any publication or map pertaining to the so-called 'Polish corridor' in the interwar period. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For an overview of the role played by the Oder-Neisse border in postwar Polish-German relations, see: Christian Lotz, *Die Anspruchsvollen Karten : Polnische, Ost- Und Westdeutsche Auslandsrepräsentationen Und Der Streit Um Die Oder-Neisse-Grenze (1945-1972)* (Leipzig: Meine Verlag, 2011); Christian Lotz, *Die Deutung Des Verlusts : Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen Im Geteilten Deutschland Um Flucht, Vertreibung Und Die Ostgebiete (1948-1972)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag), 2007; Piotr H. Kosicki and Justyna Beinek, *Re-Mapping Polish-German Historical Memory: Physical, Political, and Literary Spaces since World War II*, (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For a recent, representative and authoritative view of Polish historians, see the introduction to: Jerzy Eisler, *Grudzień 1970 : Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje*, (Warszawa: IPN, 2012), 72-81.

   This observation applies to the American view of *Ostpolitik*'s significance within Cold War's geopolitics in general. As admitted by Jean-François Juneau, "[u]ntil recently, the historiography of German-American relations has paid only scant attention to the question of *Ostpolitik*. This topic remains a blind spot in most of the studies on the foreign policy of President Nixon and his influential National Security Advisor, Henry A. Kissinger." Jean-François Juneau, "The Limits of Linkage: The Nixon Administration and Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, 1969–72," *The International History Review,* 33 (2011), 278. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. One of the best accounts available on the broader significance of *Ostpolitik* in Eastern Europe: Friedhelm Boll, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz and Peter Beule, *"Nie Mehr Eine Politik Über Polen Hinweg" : Willy Brandt Und Polen* (Bonn: Dietz, 2010). Nonetheless, the connection between the December 1970 Protests and the Brandt-factor is not to be found even in this excellent volume. See also: Carole Fink and Bernd Schäfer, *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974 : European and Global Responses* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. In particular: see the chapter analyzing the storming of the Bastille, William H. Sewell, *Logics of History : Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), Chapter 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Quoted in: Timothy Garton Ash, "The Revolution of the Magic Lantern," *The New York Review of Books*, January 18, 1990. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Quoted in: Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted : The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For example, see the reminiscences of the Warsaw University economics professor Zdzisław Sadowski, in: Zdzislaw Sadowski and Pawel Kozlowski, *Przez Ciekawe Czasy : Rozmowy z Pawlem Kozlowskim o Zyciu, Ludziach i Zdarzeniach*, (Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne, 2011), 150-160. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. I return to this issue in Section 'VI: Sailors and dockers: on social stratification' [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Balázs Apor et al., *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe : New Perspectives on the Postwar Period* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishers, 2008); a recent conference at the UC Berkeley was entitled "Postwar as Revolution? Rethinking power in Eastern Europe after World War II", https://creees.stanford.edu/event/conference-postwar-revolution-rethinking-power-eastern-europe-after-world-war-ii. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For a quick overview of the immediate post-1945 developments in the Polish Recovered Territories, see: Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire : How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 545-550. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For a recent scholarly analysis of those legacies, see: Monika Nalepa and Grigore Pop-Eleches. "The Missing Link(s): Imperial Legacies and Anti-Communist Attitudes in Poland 1984-1989," (manuscript in preparation); for a journalistic take: Jan Cieński, "Poland's Past Marks its Present," *Politico*, June 2, 2015, accessed July 1, 2016, http://www.politico.eu/article/polands-past-marks-its-present. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Katherine Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia : Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society, 1949-56* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Malgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Nancy Wingfield and Maria Bucur, *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). For a general overview, see: Ivan Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993 : Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See: Gregor Thum, *Uprooted : How Breslau Became Wroclaw during the Century of Expulsions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), Jan Musekamp, *Zwischen Stettin Und Szczecin : Metamorphosen Einer Stadt Von 1945 Bis 2005*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), Hugo Service, *Germans to Poles : Communism, Nationalism and Ethnic Cleansing After the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Beata Halicka, *Polens Wilder Westen : Erzwungene Migration Und Die Kulturelle Aneignung Des Oderraums 1945-1948* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. In a recently published volume of interviews with the founders of *Solidarność* (conducted by Roman Szporer) the significance of *Yalta* does emerge more clearly. See: Szporer, *Solidarity : The Great Workers Strike...,* 88, 100, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity...*, 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See: Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes : A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); The classic statement of the problem is Czesław Milosz's, *The Captive Mind*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1953). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Quoted in: Szporer, *Solidarity : The Great Workers Strike...*, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Some scholars take it a step further, however. Mitchell Orenstein, in an article entitled "Poland: From Tragedy to Triumph" in Foreign Affairs went as far as to argue that: "Today, Moscow’s decision to push Poland to the west must seem a massive strategic error. That’s because its long-term effect was to move Poland solidly into the orbit of Germany. Indeed, today’s Poland, to a large extent, is Germany, inhabited by Poles. Since Germany accepted this situation by signing a peace treaty with Poland in 1990, it has sought to draw Poland closer. And Warsaw has proved a willing partner." This quote comes from a sub-chapter tellingly entitled "Westward Ho!"; Mitchell Orenstein, "Poland: From Tragedy to Triumph," *Foreign Affairs* 93, 1 (2014), 23-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Two excellent volumes that question that convenient cliché: Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, *Redrawing Nations : Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, *Warlands : Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Before 1989, public references to the *Kresy* were perceived by the regime as hostile and provocative. While the topic remained taboo in public, its significance was obvious to any conscious citizen. See: Jerzy Kochanowski, "Kresy (w) Pamięci," in: *Kresy Rzeczpospolitej: Wielki Mit Polaków*, ed. Jerzy Baczyński et. al., (Warsaw: Polityka, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For more details on this relationship, see: Jerzy Holzer, *Europa Zimnej* Wojny (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2012), 25-28; for a general (if outdated) overview: Euzebiusz Basiński and Ryszard Nazarewicz, *Sojusz Polsko-Radziecki a Zachodnia Granica Polski* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TPPR "Współpraca", 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. After: Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, *Communism Unwrapped : Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. "Polityka ZSRR w kwestii polskich granic zachodnich", Referat Włodzimierza T. Kowalskiego, 1967, [in:] AAN, TRZZ 571/508, l. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. For example, see: The transcript of the Politburo meeting from10 April 1970, [in:] AAN, KC PZPR 1354, V/90 (microfilm 2913), Protokoły posiedzeń BP KC PZPR za rok 1970, Protokół nr 12, posiedzenie BP w dniu 10 kwietnia 1970, l. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. AAN, TRZZ (571), Sygnatura 10, II Walny Zjazd Delegatów TRZZ w Olsztynie w dn. 23-24.01.1960, Referaty, glosy w dyskusji, listy dyskutantów, l. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Joseph Rothschild and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Return to Diversity : A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. For more information on this particular aspect of the Polish Recovered Lands, see: Radosław Domke, *Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne Polski w Propagandzie Lat 1945-1948*, (Zielona Góra: Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2010), 16-25; Andrzej Korboński, *Politics of Socialist Agriculture in Poland: 1945-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); Michael Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944-50*, (New York: Routledge, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For a an overview of the geographic distribution of the 1956 protest, see: Paweł Machcewicz, *Polski Rok 1956*, (Warszawa: Mówią Wieki, 1993). In general, the Recovered Lands participated in the 1956 and 1968 moments as well, but to a lesser extent. The 1970 Protest was more peculiar due to its markedly more localized nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, Legitymizacja, Nacjonalizm : Nacjonalistyczna Legitymizacja Władzy Komunistycznej w Polsce*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2001), 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Stefan Chwin, *Kartki z Dziennika* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Tytuł, 2004), 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. More on the activities of the West German expellee bands, see: Andrew Demshuk, *The Lost German East : Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), especially Chapter Seven. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. "Referaty, glosy w dyskusji, listy dyskutantów," [in:] AAN, TRZZ 571/10, II Walny Zjazd Delegatów TRZZ w Olsztynie w dn. 23-24.01.1960, unnumbered. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. 'Under Polish Administration' - a direct quote from the text of the Potsdam Conference Agreement and a frequent phrasing used by the expellee unions and other groups interested in revising the territorial status quo. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. More on the role of the TRZZ: T. David Curp, *A Clean Sweep? : The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945-1960* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. APG, Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej w Gdańsku, Wydział Kultury, Materiały konkursowe pomnika „Ofiar zbrodni krzyżackich w Polsce” (1969), l. 1147. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Edyta Czop, "Normalizacja stosunków Polsko-Niemieckich w 1970 r. w świadomości społeczeństwa Województwa Rzeszowskiego w Świetle Raportów Służby Bezpieczeństwa," *Polityka i Społeczeństwo*, 4 (2007), 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. "Notatka informacyjna dot. zachowania się na Wybrzeżu turystów z NRF", [in:] IPN Gd 0046/90, Informacje dotyczące spraw prowadzonych przez Wydział Śledczy KWMO w Gdańsku w 1967..., l. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid., 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. "I, II, III i IV Wojewódzki Zjazd Delegatów TRZZ w Gdańsku," [in:] AAN, TRZZ 571/45, l. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. The party-run newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* held that it was Gomułka's public consent expressed on 17 May, 1969 that set the negotiations in motion. See: *Trybuna Ludu*, 15 November 1970, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Carole Fink and Bernd Schäfer, *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974...*,44-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. "Protokoły posiedzeń BP KC PZPR za rok 1970", [in:] AAN, KC PZPR 1354, V/90 (mikrofilm 2913), załącznik 2, l. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Agnieszka Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska, "Wizyta Willy'ego Brandta w Polsce w dniach 6-8 grudnia 1970 roku w świetle ówczesnej prasy polskiej," *Rocznik Polsko-Niemiecki / Deutsch-Polnisches Jahrbuch,* 17 (2009): 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Edyta Czop, "Normalizacja stosunków Polsko-Niemieckich...," 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid., 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Padraic Kenney, "The Gender of Resistance in Communist Poland," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (1999), 413. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Mieczysław F. Rakowski, *Dzienniki Polityczne, 1969-1971* (Warszawa: Iskry, 2001), 249. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution...*, 319. A similar reflection was also expressed by Henry Kissinger in an internal note from December 18. Quoted in: Holger Klitzing, "To Grin and Bear it: The Nixon Administration and Ostpolitik," in: Carole Fink and Bernd Schäfer, *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974...*, 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See: Randall Everest Newnham, *Deutsche Mark Diplomacy : Positive Economic Sanctions in German-Russian Relations* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 160-161. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. As the historian Wojciech Roszkowski points out, it was the widening Sino-Soviet split that provided the conditions of possibility for détente in Europe, which "incentivized" Brezhnev to accelerate the talks with West Germans. Wojciech Roszkowski, *Najnowsza Historia Polski, 1945-1980*, (Warszawa: Świat Ksiązki, 2003), 555-560*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. More on the Polish-Soviet-German triangle in the late 1960s: Oliver Bange, "*Ostpolitik* as a Source of Intra-bloc Tensions," [in:] Mary Ann Heiss and S. Victor Papacosma, eds., *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc Conflicts*, (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), 106-121. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Quoted in: Jerzy Eisler, *Grudzień '70 : Wewnątrz "Białego Domu"*, (Warszawa: Colibri, 1991), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. For one of the best English language account of the March 1968 disturbances, see: Michael Chęciński, *Poland, Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism* (New York: Karz-Cohl Publishers, 1982). Also: Joanna B. Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other : The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). Also: Dariusz Stola, *Kampania Antysyjonistyczna w Polsce 1967-1968*, (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2000), Beate Kosmala, *Die Vertreibung Der Juden Aus Polen 1968 : Antisemitismus Und Politisches Kalkül* (Berlin: Metropol, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Kisztelińska-Węgrzynska, "Wizyta...," 36-37, 45. The causes of the failure of the Warsaw Uprising, due to the ambivalent role (not) played by the Red Army, was a sensitive topic under communism. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid., 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. His claim has been frequently contested, e.g. see: Michael Wolffsohn, *Denkmalsturz? : Brandts Kniefall*, ed. Thomas Brechenmacher (München: Olzog, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Kisztelińska-Węgrzynska, "Wizyta...," 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. For more see: Wiesława Surdyk-Fertsch, "Das Willy-Brandt-Bild in polnischen Geschichtslehrbüchern und in den Lehrplänen für Grund- und Hauptschulen 1982-1998," [in:] Carsten Tessmer, eds., *Das Willy-Brandt-Bild in Deutschland und Polen*, (Berlin: Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung, 2000), 113-122. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Adam Krzemiński, "Przyklęk pokoju," *Polityka*, nr 49, 4 December, 2010, 68-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For more views of *Kniefall*'s signficance, see: Christoph Schneider, *Der Warschauer Kniefall : Ritual, Ereignis Und Erzählung* (Konstanz: UVK Universitätsverlag, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. A view confirmed by Włodzimierz Borodziej, who spoke of the regime's inability to frame Brandt's gesture in any face-saving way given the 1968 anti-Semitic purge. See: Robert Jurszo, **"**Gest Willy'ego Brandta był dla Niemców częścią rozrachunku z samymi sobą" [Interview with Włodzimierz Borodziej], Dzieje, 7 December, 2012. accessed on 25 September 2016, at: http://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/prof-w-borodziej-gest-willyego-brandta-byl-dla-niemcow-czescia-rozrachunku-z-samymi-soba [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, "Ostpolitik and Poland," [in:] *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974...*, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Willy Brandt, *Erinnerungen,* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1989), 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Krzysztof Ruchniewicz,"Geste mit politischer Langzeitwirkung. Willy Brandts Kniefall vor dem Ghetto-Denkmal in Warschau," [in:] *Geschichte lernen. Pädagogische Zeitschriften bei Friedrich in Velber in Zusammenarbeit mit Klett*, (102) 2004, 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Bogdan Koszel, "Die Außenpolitik der Volksrepublik Polen gegenüber der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949-1989," [in:] Jan-Pieter Barbian, Marek Zybura, eds., *Erlebte Nachbarschaft. Aspekte der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. After: Michael Wolffsohn, *Denkmalsturz?*..., 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid., 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Kisztelińska-Węgrzynska, "Wizyta...," 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Adam Krzemiński, "Willy Brandt w Warszawie. Ciągłość i zmiana w niemieckiej polityce wobec Polski (1970-1990-2010)" [Interview by Basil Kerski], [in:] *Dialog, Magazyn Polsko-Niemiecki*, (94), 2010-2011, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Robert Jurszo, **"**Gest Willy'ego Brandta był..." [Interview with Włodzimierz Borodziej], Dzieje, 7 December, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. *Trybuna Ludu*, 9 December, 1070, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ryszard Wojna, *Życie Warszawy*, 8 December 1970, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Quoted in: Carsten Tessmer, eds., *Das Willy-Brandt-Bild in Deutschland und Polen*, (Berlin: Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung, 2000), 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Adam Krzemiński, "Przyklęk pokoju," *Polityka*, (49) 2010, 68-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Adam Krzemiński, "Willy Brandt w Warszawie..." [Interview by Basil Kerski], 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid., 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid., 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. "Główne problemy pracy Wydziału II-go na odcinku zwalczania działalności wrogich wywiadów," [in:] IPN Gd 00105/8 t. 2/1, Materiały i informacje Wydziału II KWMO w Gdańsku dot. działalności wywiadowczej państw zachodnich ..., l. 202-209. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid, l. 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Quoted in: Michael Wolffsohn, *Denkmalsturz? ...*, 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. "Główne problemy pracy Wydziału II-go na odcinku...," 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. More on the immediate and later Polish reactions to Brandt's *kniefall*, see: Gerhard Gnauck, "Der Kniefall, der in Polen fast nicht stattfand," *Die Welt*, December 7, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ekiert, *Rebellious Poles...*, 320. Kissinger praised Gomułka for predicting that the Treaty with Bonn would alleviate the fear of the German territorial claims, but Gomułka "erred when he believed that the newly won popularity could overcome Poland's chronic economic problems." Henry Kissinger, *Memoiren*, ed. Hans Jürgen Von Koskull (München: Bertelsmann, 1979), 847. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. A term used by the contemporaries as well. Thum, *Uprooted : How Breslau Became Wroclaw...*, 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. "Prawda o Ziemiach Zachodnich," [in:] AAN, Akta Jana Izydorczyka, 473/19, l. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ibid., 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid., 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Christian Halbrock, *"Freiheit heißt, Die Angst Verlieren" : Verweigerung, Widerstand Und Opposition in Der DDR: Der Ostseebezirk Rostock* ([Göttingen:](https://www.google.com/search?safe=off&rlz=1C1CHWA_enUS637US637&q=G%C3%B6ttingen+Germany&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LSz9U3MCooNs8xU-IAsZOyTAy0jDLKrfST83NyUpNLMvPz9POL0hPzMqsSQZxiq4zUxJTC0sSiktSiYoWc_GSwMACDfZeuTAAAAA&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjuhbft6tDLAhUD9R4KHZYqDYcQmxMIeigBMBI) Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Paweł Szulc, "Ładną Gwiazdkę nam Rząd Zgotował: Grudzień '70 w listach do Radiokomitetu," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 16 (2010), 447. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid., 447-448. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. *Dni, które wstrząsnęły Polską – Grudzień 1970*, DVD, Jacek Sawicki and Jerzy Eisler (Warsaw: IPN, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Paweł Szulc, "Ładną Gwiazdkę nam Rząd Zgotował...," 450. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Ibid., 445. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Ibid., 453. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. "Zastanówmy się jeszcze raz", *Głos Szczeciński*, December 29, 1970. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Artur Kubaj, "Rewolta Szczecińska", *Wolność i Solidarność, Studia z Dziejów Opozycji Wobec Komunizmu i Dyktatury*, 8 (2015): 245-252. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Zygmunt Korybutowicz, *Grudzień 1970* (Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1983), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. *Dni, które wstrząsnęły Polską – Grudzień 1970*, DVD, Jacek Sawicki and Jerzy Eisler (Warsaw: IPN, 2006). Also: "Przebieg i ocena wydarzeń grudniowych." Protokoły posiedzeń BP KC PZPR za rok 1970, Protokół nr 29 z posiedzenia BP KC w dniu 29 stycznia 1971, [in:] AAN, KC PZPR 1354, V/90 (microfilm 2913), załącznik. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. "Główne problemy pracy Wydziału II-go na odcinku zwalczania działalności wrogich wywiadów," [in:] IPN Gd 00105/8 t. 2/1, Materiały i informacje Wydziału II KWMO w Gdańsku dot. działalności wywiadowczej państw zachodnich ..., l. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Ibid., 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Ibid., 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid., 211-212. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. "Protokół nr 19, December 19, 1970," [in:] AAN, BP KC PZPR 1354, V/90 (mikrofilm 2913), l. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Another indication of the topic's importance: in a opinion poll conducted in Poland in June 1972, the ratification of the Warsaw Treaty was viewed as the most important international event by the respondents, higher than the recent visit of Richard Nixon to Poland. Quoted: Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, "Ostpolitik and Poland," [in:] *Ostpolitik...*, 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. "Sprawozdanie zespołu badającego problemy społeczno-ekonomiczne wybrzeża gdańskiego", AAN, XII-1795, l. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Anna Walentynowicz, the heroine of the August 1980 strike, enraged her shipyard management already in 1978 when, in an underground newspaper, she reported on their luxurious, in her eyes, lifestyles. See: Douglas Martin, *Anna Walentynowicz, Polish Provocateur Who Spurred Communism's Fall, Dies at 80.*The New York Times, April 12, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. A new light on this topic has recently been shed by: Piotr Perkowski, *Gdańsk--Miasto Od Nowa : Kształtowanie Społeczeństwa i Warunki Bytowe w Latach 1945-1970*, (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2013), 190-238, 295-300. More on the second economy of communist port cities, see: Irina Mukhina, From *Rags to Riches. Port Cities and Consumerism in the Soviet 1970s and 1980s*. [In:] Eva Hausbacher et al., *Fashion, Consumption and Everyday Culture in the Soviet Union between 1945 and* 1985 (Vienna: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2014); Dmitry Kozlov, "Sailors and youth consumption in Soviet seaports during the Cold War period." Valahian Journal of Historical Studies 20 (2013): 61-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Paweł Szulc, "Ładną Gwiazdkę...," 457. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. More on the propagandistic construct of the vanguard, instrumentally applied to exploit the 'heroes of socialist labor', see: Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland : Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. For a comprehensive selection of documents on this issue, see: Jerzy Eisler, eds., *Grudzień 1970 w Dokumentach MSW* (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. For a recent cinematographic take, see: *Czarny Czwartek. Janek Wiśniewski padł*, DVD, Antoni Krauze, (Gdynia: Nordfilm, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Andrzej Friszke, *Rewolucja Solidarności 1980-1981*, (Warszawa: Znak-Horyzont, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Quoted in: Robert Walenciak *, Za kulisami PRL-u, Grudzień 1970*, DVD, (Warsaw: TVP INFO, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Fajfer, *The Polish Military and the Crisis of 1970*, 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Jan Nalepa, *Wojsko Polskie w Grudniu 1970* (Warsaw: Bellona, 1990), 75-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Janusz Rolicki, *Edward Gierek : Przerwana Dekada* (Warszawa: "BGW", 1990), 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. For more evidence on the 'conspiracy thesis', see: Jerzy Eisler, *Grudzień '70 : Wewnątrz "Białego Domu"*, (Warszawa: Colibri, 1991), particularly: 3-38. Also: Henryk Kula, *Dwa Oblicza Grudnia '70 : Oficjalne - Rzeczywiste* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo DJ, 2000) [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Most other major protests also happened to take place in the post-German Recovered Territories, with a major one in Wałbrzych in the Lower Silesia. Other minor protests, such as in Kraków, did not begin until December 18 and were staged 'in solidarity' with the Baltic Coast. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. For one of the best recent works, see: Leon Aron, *Roads to the Temple : Truth, Memory, Ideas, and Ideals in the Making of the Russian Revolution, 1987-1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. On the evolution of the labor movement between 1970 and 1980, see: David Ost, "Polish Labor before and after Solidarity," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 50 (1996): 29-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Neal Ascherson, *The Polish August : The Self-Limiting Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. For an overview of the systemic weaknesses of centrally planned economies of the Soviet-type, see: André Steiner, *The Plans that Failed : An Economic History of the GDR* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution : The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. On the nature of this learning process, see: Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom : The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), Chapters 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)