

~~Top Secret~~
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SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

The decision Wednesday by free trade union activists to establish a national advisory organization presents the Kania regime with a major challenge, but we believe the regime will not refuse the organization the legal right to exist. [REDACTED]

Although the recent agreements ending the strikes on the Baltic Coast and in Silesia did not prohibit the formation of a national union body, the regime probably hoped it would not be confronted so quickly on this sensitive issue, which will test the limits of Soviet tolerance. Nevertheless, the regime probably believes it has no alternative but to live with the national body--at least for the near term. To refuse it registration in the current heated atmosphere could lead to further confrontations and possibly a general strike. Representatives of the advisory groups will present their registration papers to the courts next Wednesday. [REDACTED]

The decision to form the advisory organization was the result of a compromise among free trade union activists on what character a national organization would have. The stronger unions on the Baltic Coast under Lech Walesa opposed the creation of a solid federation, saying that the unions should concentrate their efforts on augmenting their local bases of power. The weaker unions outside the Baltic Coast pressed for a federation believing they needed protection in their struggle to become established. In the end the two sides agreed on the creation of a consultative, advisory national organization with no authority over local unions. The official status of this advisory body will be valid for one year at which time the first congress reportedly will be held. The regime may be relieved and may see an opportunity to exploit the differences within the free trade union movement. [REDACTED]

It is not clear whether the national body intends to try to register for all the free trade unions or only for itself. The regime will probably insist that each factory, district, or regional union register, in order to use the registration data to keep closer tabs on the strength and support for the unions. [REDACTED]

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Despite the vigor shown by the free trade unions, which reportedly now include more than three million workers, the regime is having some success in blunting their spread and in sowing confusion among workers. Nine official unions with 5.8 million members have already dropped out of the regime-sponsored trade union organization and declared themselves to be "independent and autonomous." In fact they probably remain under party influence. Many workers have been harassed into staying in existing unions, and others have stayed out of fear they will lose social benefits if they join the new unions.

The regime may soon have to deal with students who will return to the campuses in early October and may renew demands for autonomous student organizations. More worrisome will be the possibility that students might raise additional political demands or form an alliance with the new unions.

Activities by Soviet Leaders

Observable activities by the Soviet leaders reveal nothing unusual. Soviet media provided upbeat coverage to the meetings Brezhnev and Suslov had with Deputy Premier Jagielski last week which implicitly endorsed the initial efforts that Kania and his colleagues are making to put things right in Poland.

There have been no consultations with East European leaders of the type that would take place if the Soviets believed they must exert greater pressure on the Poles. Defense Minister Ustinov did meet with East German leaders and other Warsaw Pact defense ministers while attending the Comrades-in-Arms 80 exercise last week, and Ukrainian party chief Shcherbitskiy was in Bulgaria for a few days to mark the Sofia regime's 36th anniversary. Neither Brezhnev nor any of the other top Soviet leaders, however, are known to have met with any of the top East European leaders since Brezhnev's sessions with his East European counterparts in the Crimea during late July and early August.

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