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POLAND: Pressure From the Workers

Solidarity leaders are finding it increasingly difficult to control the workers, who are angry over worsening food shortages, particularly meat, and the prospect of drastic price increases. [REDACTED]

Work forces in the factories have flooded regional and national Solidarity headquarters with demands that the union protest the situation. Workers in the central Polish textile city of Lodz have already held four days of controlled demonstrations. [REDACTED]

Yesterday, wildcat strikes occurred in Warsaw, and work stoppages have been scheduled for other cities in the coming weeks. These demonstrations thus far have been peaceful because of the restraint exercised by the police and because of Solidarity's experience in handling crowds. [REDACTED]

Solidarity's leaders are aware that the government has almost no food reserves to provide to the workers. Nevertheless, they believe that they have to respond or risk losing control of the workers. The union leaders probably will continue to criticize the regime's policies in strong terms, hoping that the controlled demonstrations will vent public anger while avoiding a showdown. [REDACTED]

The surge of discontent will divert the attention of Solidarity's leaders from preparations for the union's first congress scheduled for early September and from its efforts to reach compromise agreement on new legislation on censorship and self-management. [REDACTED]

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