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January 02, 1981

POLAND

Solidarity continues to show evidence of its strength and determination to carve out an institutional niche for itself alongside the Polish Communist Party. Meanwhile, the continued political ferment has led to renewed indications of Soviet concern.

Elections of Solidarity officers are being held throughout the country, after which the unions will seek to play a greater role not only in the factories but also in the search for solutions to the country's massive economic problems.

Solidarity reportedly will soon acquire its own newspapers, which would be a notable step forward for the union. [REDACTED] the regime has already agreed to a press run of 300,000 copies of a Solidarity weekly. Solidarity is asking for 800,000. (C)

The weekly would cover trade union news and political, cultural, and economic matters. The editorial board would include Solidarity leaders and well-known intellectuals who in the past have been among those demanding economic reforms and other institutional changes. It is not yet clear if the new weekly would be censored, but Solidarity would strongly object to the current censorship system.

Local authorities in Szczecin have agreed to allow, beginning next week, the regional Solidarity organization to publish 100,000 copies of a weekly called "Unity." Solidarity has agreed to supply its own paper; this will circumvent a standard regime argument of a paper shortage.

Party leader Kania continues to demonstrate his willingness to cooperate with Solidarity. Earlier this week he laid a wreath at the monument in Gdansk to the fallen workers of 1970, a gesture designed to regain the confidence of the population. In a speech to shipyard workers he promised that the party would "continue to listen" to the voice of Solidarity.

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[REDACTED] the mood among consumers this past week was subdued and quiet. The population was still enjoying the remnants of the relative abundance of holiday consumer supplies, but this week will see a return to the shortages that characterized November and early December. [REDACTED]

Soviet Comment

Moscow yesterday issued its sharpest attack in the last few weeks on "antisocialist forces" in Poland. A short TASS dispatch criticized their efforts to hamper the work of the Polish party. It charged they were trying to use the slogans of Solidarity as cover and to establish the union as "an organization of a political kind" which would act as "a sort of counterbalance" to the party. [REDACTED]

The dispatch also sharply attacked the economic demands being made by "oppositional circles . . . through the channels" of Solidarity. It charged that such demands represented a deliberate effort by "antisocialist forces" to deepen Poland's economic crisis for political benefit. [REDACTED]

The TASS attack seems aimed at keeping pressure on Solidarity to moderate its demands and on Kania to move against intellectuals and dissidents allied with the union. Its implicit separation of antiregime elements from Solidarity, however, is in line with other Soviet commentary, such as the suggestion in last week's *Pravda* article on trade unionism that Solidarity could be tolerated if its power and objectives were sharply circumscribed. [REDACTED]