Poland stumbles on the road to capitalist restoration

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The election of a new government in September will herald an attempt to make a final push to capitalism. Will they succeed? Martin Suchenak weighs up the odds

Over the last three years we have argued that the transition from Stalinist command planning to capitalism would be a long and arduous process, despite the fact that the ruling parties collapsed relatively swiftly after 1989. The coming to power of bourgeois restorationist governments throughout Eastern Europe in the years 1989-91 was a necessary, but by no means sufficient, pre-condition for the overthrow of the bureaucratically planned economies.

Between the subjective desire for the return of capitalism and the existence of even a rough and ready regime of accumulation of exchange values lies a stormy ocean of transition in which a number of rocks have to be successfully negotiated.

Like the nuclear family after a successful proletarian revolution, command planning after a successful political counter-revolution has to be replaced, not merely declared ?abolished? with a wave of the hand. While the legal status of the old planning ministries may have been be made null and void, while government decrees may no longer ?recognise? the legitimacy of the old system and have declared the market king, economic reality has soon borne down upon the newly triumphant regimes.

Some of the difficulties in throwing a bridge between desire and achievement arise from the nature of modern capitalism itself. Capitalism is not simply a market for the exchange of goods and services?this can equally be achieved through barter and a system of simple commodity production.

There is no denying that these forms of exchange and circulation of goods have become widespread in countries like Poland, filling the gap opened up by the demise of centralised, all-embracing planning. Enterprises deal directly with each other, swapping stocks of one good for another, which in turn can be used as ?money? to purchase much-needed equipment or raw materials from a third enterprise.1

As in all transitional periods in the history of modes of production, the merchant, the speculator and all kinds of legal and illegal intermediaries spring up to oil the connections between different segments of industry and agriculture. These layers, which in ?normal? times play an entirely subordinate and even repressed character, in such times as we are now experiencing act as a catalyst, helping the disintegration of the old system and preparing the way for the ?new?. Private fortunes are made, capital is accumulated in this primitive fashion, some hoarded, some salted abroad, some channelled into the fledgling stock markets.

The progress of the transition period can be partly judged by the degree to which this primitive accumulation becomes subordinated and replaced by different kinds of market, ones which reflect the
existence not of merchants but of the owners of capital and wage labour.

Such markets do not spring ready-made into existence; they have to be constructed. Physical means of production have to be given a new monetary value (their capital stock) according to measures that prevail on world capitalist markets within which they will be expected to perform.

This is a precondition for this embryonic capital to be divided into small parcels of ownership (shares) that can then be traded on capital markets where their value can expand or diminish, where they can be taken over or obliterated according to profitability.

But who can perform this act of capitalist calculation, who can institute the market mechanisms? How can enterprises be privatised before there is such a market to be sold into? Who can be given the title to ownership of capital in order that commodity owners can face each other in the market?

The answer to each one of these questions is far from technical. They presuppose the resolution of a class struggle, between those classes that exist and those that are striving for existence. The working class is suspicious of, or hostile to, the break-up of its industrial associations into competitive units where this will lead to unemployment and wage cuts; the enterprise managers resist an honest calculation of their own factories? market worth or their debts when it may signal their impending demise.

Industrial manager, government official, financial adviser from the IMF, trade union leader? all eye each other with deep suspicion when the matter of property rights is debated in parliament or in the factory council. The process of turning privilege and power into wealth and title is not, therefore, an easy matter.

Poland is no exception, despite the fact that it entered the transition period with many advantages over its rivals. The experience of the 1981 coup and after, utterly discredited the Stalinists? dictatorship within the working class. This allowed an openly pro-capitalist leadership to reign supreme over the trade union Solidarnosc which, assuming governmental power, could speak for ?society? against the bureaucracy.

Turning this to its advantage, the new Polish government of autumn 1989 turned its back on piecemeal monetary reform and in a January 1990 Big Bang of vicious monetary measures, slashed state subsides, unleashed prices and tried to introduce one of the preconditions for capitalist calculation.

Yet by the time President Walesa dissolved the Polish government in May this year, the restorationists had still not managed to take the decisive transitional measures necessary to transform Poland into a recognisably capitalist country. True, a large measure of monetary stability has been introduced, a stock market has appeared,2 large sectors of industrial production for which there is no effective demand have been cut, tens of thousands of mini-private enterprises have been set up, a free market in agricultural goods has been established, and a recognisable labour market and reserve army of labour is slowly emerging.

But none of this can disguise one plain fact: the bulk of Poland?s physical means of production has not yet taken the form of capital.

Despite the growth of the private sector since 1989, the state-owned banks and big industries still dominate the Polish economy. The private sector is concentrated on agriculture, trade (85% of all employed work in private enterprises) and construction (75% of workers in this sector). Only a small number of large scale industrial enterprises have been privatised.

There are a number of reasons for the dominance of state ownership of industry. On the one hand, there is a lack of private capital, both native and foreign, which would be prepared to buy the big companies and
Thus turn them into capital. Part of the reason for this is undoubtedly the protracted duration of the world recession. This ensures that we are living through a phase of widespread devalorisation and destruction, the turning of capital into vacant physical use-values without an exchange value.

In a period of expansion it might have been expected that many of the use-values in the former Stalinist states could have been transformed more easily into exchange values as the much lower productivity of these enterprises could still have found a market for their produce in a rapidly growing world market.

But since 1989 we have been very far from approaching this situation. In the west highly productive branches of multinational companies have been closing factories. This has significantly held back the tempo of capitalisation of the means of production in the east. There has been an acceleration of foreign investment into Eastern Europe during 1992 and 1993. But its overall weight in the total economy is very small indeed and mainly confined to joint ventures.

Secondly, the legislative framework is still incomplete. For example, protracted disputes over ownership of property are clogging the courts, some of them originating from before the Second World War. This significantly impedes investment and capitalisation.

In addition, privatisation efforts are meeting increasing resistance from the factory councils and the trade unions. This is not surprising, given that according to the so-called ?pact on state enterprises?, privatisation meant that the factory councils lost all their rights on the management boards of the enterprises. Even if the privatisation plans of the ?mass privatisation programme? adopted by the Sejm in April this year were to be carried through, this would only lead to the privatisation of firms employing 4% of the total workforce and producing a mere 5% of GNP.

Privatisation was only ever one route to capitalism in Poland, even if it was the restorationist?s ideologically preferred route. It was quite clear from the experience of the previous governments and the failure of Balcerowicz shock therapy (January 1990), that the way to finally restore capitalism would not be found in privatisation as such, but in restructuring the non-commercial nature of the state-owned industrial and banking system, that is by forcing the notoriously indebted state enterprises and the state banks to act according to profit criteria to create a large state capitalist sector. As one bourgeois commentator has put it:

?By early 1992, it became apparent that solutions to the problems of enterprise privatisation and restructuring in Poland would have to include restructuring relations between state enterprises and the banking system, which was dominated by nine state owned banks that had been formally separated from the National Bank of Poland in 1989.? 5

At the beginning of 1992, inter-enterprise debts had already reached some $14.8 billion?approximately 15% of the Polish GDP. Why is the question of the banking system?s relations to the state enterprises so important in monitoring the progress of the transition period, indeed, decisive in judging the point of qualitative transition in the transformation of the economic base of these societies?

We long ago pointed to the importance of approaching the study of the transition period concretely. We have to analyse the tasks of the transition from the conditions that the bourgeois restorationist governments inherited from the disintegrating Stalinist governments. Without exception, in the 1980s Eastern Europe witnessed extensive decentralisation and weakening of the planning indicators and the regulatory authority of the associated institutions. In Yugoslavia the process of dismantling the method of pure physical indicators in planned output had gone furthest before 1989, in the USSR it had developed the least.
After 1982, Poland travelled some considerable distance along this road before the Party finally relaxed its grip on the political apparatus of government. Did this mean that bureaucratic planning had long ceased to have any meaning in Yugoslavia or Poland in the 1980s? Has capitalism been restored?

Not at all. What occurred was a process whereby the Stalinist planners, desperately seeking to enliven productivity but opposed to introducing democratic control of the plan, deregulated and decentralised decision-making to plant and enterprise level. Day-to-day decisions were delegated and success in meeting plan goals moved away from reliance upon volume targets towards financial surpluses.

But the overall accumulation process?how newly generated wealth was to be used?was controlled by central state institutions and above all by the Central Bank and its specialised satellites (e.g. foreign trade, agriculture). The amount of retained surpluses, some key price levels (especially energy), investment decisions concerning new plant and equipment were regulated centrally.

These decisions were essentially politically motivated and not carried out according to capitalist calculations of profit maximisation or capturing market share from rival enterprises. Prices and output levels were not set according to these twin objectives but rather fixed in a way calculated to direct resources to predetermined military or political goals. These may have been to serve the power interests of one sector of the bureaucracy, to promote regional development or to pacify workers.

The key task of economic restructuring (as opposed to monetary stabilisation) thus centres on the reshaping of the relationship of the Central Bank to the main enterprises, to put these transactions on a primarily commercial basis. Money must broaden out from being simply a means of account to become a measure of capitalist value.

Above all, the Bank must allow money (including, particularly, its credit form) to expand in accordance with the enlargement of surplus value extraction, to promote production and allow the realisation of this value. The Olszewski government tried to tackle this problem by developing a debt-reduction programme which was proposed by the Suchocka government in August 1992. Called the Financial Restructuring Law, it came into effect in March 1993. Its purpose is to use a new $400 million World Bank loan plus the better part of the unused $1 billion IMF ?stabilisation fund? to re-capitalise the banks and get rid of their debts.

The lack of progress on this front in the three years after the Polish Big Bang accurately reflected the drawbacks of a dogmatic approach to the fashionable neo-liberal restoration strategy which deemed that the best role for the state in the process was to do as little as possible except privatise industry as much as it could as quickly as it could and let the market do the rest.

From the outset, this was a complete failure. There were no markets, only classes and castes with varying and limited control over the production and distribution. Enterprise managers kept production going through pre-existing links, piling up debts between each other with generally worthless promises to pay sometime in the future. The Central Bank printed money and extended credit to cover these debts and pay wages. Commercial rates of interest on ?loans? did not exist; money was not self-expanding value so much as an increasingly meaningless unit of account.

The government could not stand by. As early as 1991 it realised its privatisation programme was getting nowhere fast, bogged down in the sands of working class resistance and international disinterest. Also it was forced to intervene to set a punitive tax on enterprises that awarded decent wage increases. Moreover, in its attempt to get tax revenue it imposed a dividend tax on enterprises? assets.

This merely encouraged the managers to wilfully downgrade the estimations of their assets, thus further
hampering the process of capitalisation. In turn, this worsened still further the net weight of the enterprise debts upon the banks' balance sheets, increasing the political leverage of the enterprises over the banks; the financial system had come to depend for its existence on turning over the debts and not foreclosing.

During 1992 and 1993, the government came to terms with its responsibility for shaping the transition to capitalism, although here again progress has been hampered by the need to secure majorities for measures in a parliament in which Solidarnosc or old Stalinist parties' deputies have had to reflect, however inadequately and treacherously, the feelings of the working class.

But action was called for. By May 1992, some 45% of all state firms (which accounted for the bulk of production) were running at a financial loss. Poland was effectively running an extended IMF and World Bank overdraft facility. These imperialist agents should have called the receivers in a long time ago, but it is notoriously difficult to put padlocks on the gates of a whole country.

The March 1993 legislation took a carrot-and-stick approach to the banks. By threats and incentives it aimed to get the Central Bank to take a tough stand against insolvent firms in exchange for releasing the banks from the full debt burden of these firms. Likewise, bad debts of enterprises were to be written off or sold (in exchange for shares), if the enterprises expressed their intention to develop and implement restructuring programmes in order to make themselves profitable and potentially sellable.

But, given the past record of the state banks in forcing their creditors to restructure enterprises, to give loans according to profit expectations, the effect of this legislation remains in doubt. As the government itself admitted, the law would only be applicable where banks restructure or sell their debt by March 1994.

This means that the whole programme runs the risk that debt write-offs will not be used to meet the aims of the restorationists: forcing unprofitable firms into bankruptcy and potentially profitable ones to capitalise their assets. Rather, it may just open a new round of credits to firms with written-off debts and, thereby, simply reproduce the practice of recent years.

Before the government was dissolved, in May this year, there were few signs of change. In particular, there have been hardly any cases where banks resorted to the bankruptcy legislation and brought them court. Despite the restructuring programme there is:

"... still no obligatory trigger to push banks to monitor their clients' cash-flow and debt situation more closely, and no immediate threat of court proceedings to focus enterprise managers' minds on the need for radical restructuring." 9

The Polish government does not just face a series of technical economic difficulties in restoring capitalism. These occur against a background of mounting hostility and suspicion on the part of the workers. Trade union-based resistance had been mounting as the effects of the 1990 Big Bang shock wore off. Workers began to regain a degree of confidence as the slump bottomed out during the second half of 1992; production in April 1983 was reported 8.1% higher than April 1992. Yet real wages had begun to drop seriously.

More and more workers felt confident enough to protest. The numbers on strike went up from 221,300 in 1991 to 752,500 in 1992. The real offensive of the workers began to gather strength in the summer and autumn of 1992. Some 1,900 disputes were reported in the first quarter of 1993 alone. Naturally, in this climate, popular support for privatisation and industrial restructuring further declined. Therefore, the government resorted to proposing the Pact on Enterprises (sometimes called the Social Pact), which
should aid the restructuring programme and the privatisation of the large state enterprises by incorporating
the unions.11

This was the really new thing that the Suchocka government brought into Polish politics. It has to be seen
as a means of supporting the implementation of the laws on debt restructuring and mass privatisation by
defusing workers? resistance. The government offered the unions a say in how to privatise and
commercialise state enterprises and guaranteed certain rights to influence supervisory boards of privatised
enterprises. In exchange, the union leaderships have to ensure social peace.

One element of this class-collaborationist agreement was the introduction of legally binding limits on wage
increases which would be negotiated quarterly between the unions, the government and employers?
representatives at a national level. The negotiated boundaries would then determine the wages at
enterprise level. This kind of national bargaining was an attempt to counteract the relative weakness of
management at a plant level, which the workforce had exploited to push through ?excessive? wage

This pact was finally signed by Solidarnosc and the OPZZ (All Polish Alliance of Trade Unions) on 22
February 1993. But from the very beginning it was accompanied by a series of strikes. Initially, these were
mainly concentrated in mining, particularly in Silesia, where a miners? strike effectively paralysed the
region in December 1992. At the beginning of this year, other important strikes took place in the transport
sector. A strike of the transport workers in the Lodz region last February brought traffic in central Poland to
a standstill. The government had every reason to be wary of a growth in working class militancy and the
potential for a nation-wide generalisation of these conflicts. Therefore, the attempt to tie the official working
class leaderships to the overall economic strategy of the government via the ?Social Pact? was quite an
astute ploy by Suchocka.

This was even more important as in spring this year a new budget was adopted which included further
reductions in spending on social security, education and health. In addition, price rises for electricity (10%),
petrol (8%), gas (5%), medicine (18%) and public transport (30-80%) were introduced at the beginning of
April as well as a tax on wages, which should contribute up to one third of total state revenue in the future.
Most of these measures?in particular the budget for 1993?were brought through parliament with the votes
of Solidarity deputies. Additionally, the government was able to get the law on privatisation adopted in April
with the votes of Solidarnosc and the Democratic Left Alliance (block of the Social-Democracy, the OPZZ
and small neo-Stalinist parties).

This treacherous policy has met with increasing hostility from the workers, particularly Solidarnosc
supporters. This pressure from below was expressed, for example, in the debate and vote on the budget
for 1993. The union?s leadership accused the parliamentary faction of being ?disloyal?, because it did not
vote against the budget as the Solidarnosc leadership had recommended.

The growing radicalisation of the workers and the polarisation within society was expressed in the strike of
public sector workers who are paid out of the budget. There are some 700,000 workers in health, 750,000
in education, 80,000 in science and 30,000 in culture. Up to now these sectors of the working class had
protested comparatively little. Their class consciousness had been traditionally hampered by ideas of
?professionalism?. The high proportion of women amongst them had also led to a tradition of chronic
neglect of their concerns by the union leaderships.

However, over the last years these workers have been hit extremely hard by the policies of the pro-
capitalist governments. Funding for education, for example, dropped from 12.8% of the budget in 1990 to
8.8% in 1993. Furthermore, all governments since 1989 have been able to suspend the law which required
that public sector wages had to keep pace with the national average wage. To add insult to injury, the wage fund for these workers was cut by another 5% in the 1993 budget.

Since the government refused to even consider new wage increases, the primary demand of the workers?negotiations?broke down and the public sector strike, which in the end led to the fall of Suchocka, was launched. According to Solidarnosc and the OPZZ, at least 20% of all workers took strike action. The Solidarnosc deputies in parliament were then pressured to put forward a motion of no confidence against the government; the Solidarnosc union leadership itself threatened the government with a general strike if the motion failed.

This was mainly talk. The motion of confidence was intended as a warning shot, a means to force the government into concessions, rather than bring down a government that Solidarnosc had created and had supported. The actual fall of the government took everyone by surprise.12

The stage-managed game proved to be one parliamentary trick too many. A government which always had to rely on its opponents? inability to form an alternative, rather than on its own strength, a government which did not command a parliamentary majority even on the basis of a coalition, proved vulnerable to the growing contradictions within Polish society. Having been handed an unexpected prize by the vote of no confidence, President Walesa?always keen to test his bonapartist powers and hopeful of a stronger and more stable government?exercised his constitutional right and dissolved the parliament and called new elections for September.

The weakness of the party system, its fragmentation into a ludicrous mosaic of small and even smaller parties, reflects the absence of strong native capital and of a stable petit bourgeoisie and middle class in the country. Despite a new electoral law?the introduction of a 5% threshold for parties and an 8% threshold for alliances?it is unlikely that the coming elections will lead to a more stable parliamentary basis for the restorationists. The parties and alliances which will probably be elected on 19 September are not likely to differ that much from the forces represented in the present parliament.

Whilst opinion polls have to be treated cautiously, particularly since they have usually proved to be relatively inaccurate in the past, it is almost certain the major opponents of the ousted government will perform relatively well. The Democratic Left Alliance, an alliance between the ex-Stalinist Social Democratic Party and the OPZZ, will most certainly gain more votes. The same applies to the Polish Peasant Party which was a bloc partner with the PWUP under the Stalinist regime and which is particularly strong in northern Poland where there are still significant numbers of collective farms. Of the right wing opponents to the Suchocka government, the far right nationalist Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) will maintain, if not improve, its position. Apart from these parties/alliances, only the Democratic Union and the Solidarity Trade Union, the core of Suchocka?s support, can count on defending their positions.

The Christian Catholic right, with the Christian National Union as its most prominent component, may face problems in getting over the 5% or 8% thresholds. This also applies to the so-called Olszewskiete and ferocious anti-communist forces (Movement for the Republic, Centre Alliance, the Third Republic Movement, the Freedom Party, Christian Democracy and the Christian Democratic Labour Party), which are in the process of forming an alliance called the Polish Union.13

There will be a new competitor in the electoral race as well: Walesa?s non-party party, the ?Nonparty Bloc to Support Reform? (BBWR). Not only is its name similar to Pilsudski?s ?Nonparty Bloc to Cooperate with the Government? from the 1920s. Walesa?s version also takes up the ideologies of corporatism, of dividing the nation along the lines of estates rather than interests and parties:
For this reason, [Walesa] has suggested that the bloc be built on "four legs": workers, employers, peasant farmers and local administration. Each of the four groups would sketch out proposals in twenty points or fewer, to fit on a single side of paper, and pledge to push these specific programmes forward in the new parliament. Implicit in the BBWR is also the need for a stronger executive, Walesa? s most consistent political demand. 14

Walesa clearly aims to profit from the momentum and political strength he has at least temporarily gained by dissolving parliament and announcing new elections. The BBWR would not simply be the President? s ally inside parliament, it could also be a vehicle to help strengthen the bonapartist powers of the president should the next parliament prove as unstable and incapable of building the basis of a stable government as the last which is far from unlikely.

The social base for such a presidential authoritarian bonapartist regime exists in the form of large layers of the Polish population in the towns and countryside who have already turned their back on party politics, plus a large impoverished peasantry and urban petit bourgeoisie who could form the social base of a bonapartist dictatorship. It is no surprise that the BBWR is concentrating on mobilising these disgruntled layers, centring its appeal on the person of the president in the election campaign.

Such a bonapartist dictatorship may prove the only means of tackling the growing resistance from the working class. Tragically, there is a massive disparity between the anger? even desperation? of the working class and the political weakness of its leadership, the lack of a coherent strategy for safeguarding working class interests by both the OPZZ, the Social Democracy and Solidarnosc leaders. This means that further protests which do not lead to improvements, which exhaust workers? energy without making any real gains, could induce parts of the proletariat to see a ?strong leader of the nation? as a lesser evil.

This is a real possibility if we look at the results of many of the recent strikes. For example, the strike of the Silesian miners in April displayed the typical strengths and weaknesses of the Polish working class today. On the one hand, it was an impressive strike in a whole region with fairly solid support.

On the other hand, its demands, basically that the government should take the miners? demands seriously, provide some welfare programmes and hear the miners? representatives, not only meant that the government could easily meet the demands, but also revealed to the enemy the lack of a serious willingness to fight to the finish.

Many reports of the myriad of smaller strikes suggest a similar pattern. Strikes and occupations quite often seem to be a means of expressing the misery of this or that sector of the working class, rather than a means to win a concrete goal. Even the public sector workers? strike, which lit the fuse that blew up the government, ended rather curiously. When the government fell it simply stopped, or more accurately, fizzled out, despite the fact that the wage demands had not been met.

The situation is not hopeless for the Polish proletariat, but its crisis of leadership is profound and far from being resolved. The decisive question will be whether the radicalisation which could be observed, for example, in the public sector strike in Warsaw, can be raised to the level of a coherent economic and political fightback against the next government.

The example of the Warsaw region, under the leadership of Jankowski, clearly showed that within the workers? movement there exists pressure on the official leadership to resort to more radical demands. Jankowski, unlike the national Solidarnosc leadership, demanded ?Not only the ousting of the government but the dissolution of the parliament, a halt to all price increases, the postponement of the value-added tax, and tax benefits and new subsidies for state firms.? The Warsaw region? s Solidarnosc leadership also
called for a general strike on 20 May for these demands and was able to paralyse the city’s public transport on 21 May.

This also indicates that, in the last period, the Solidarnosc trade union has taken the leading role in most working class protests, despite its small size compared with the OPZZ, which could not decide whether it was a supporter or a rival. Under the pressure of the Polish industrial proletariat in its traditional strongholds, Solidarnosc has become less and less of a safety valve for the government. The conditions are ripe for the workers who struggled so heroically against the Stalinist dictatorship to turn against their new oppressors and would-be exploiters.

NOTES

1. The planning principle would be converted for the transitional period into a series of compromises between state power and individual corporations—potential proprietors, that is, among the Soviet captains of industry, the emigré former proprietors and foreign capitalists.? L Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, London, 1973 p253

2. The Warsaw stock market has not worked as a means of concentrating capital. In 1992, only 14 firms registered and compared with their initial prices all but two shares have lost value?: (J Tittenbrun, ?Der polnische Weg zum Kapitalismus?, in: Prokla 89, Berlin, December 1992, p611)

3. Not surprisingly, a bourgeois commentator complains: ?Foreign investment is still hesitant. In 1992 only DM 6.4 billion has been invested. Most of this came from the USA, followed by Italy, the Netherlands and Germany with a share of DM 400 million.? (Quoted in H Schwiesau, ?Unser nachbar Polen auf schwierigen Wegen?, in: Zeitschrift für.europäischen Dialog und Perspektive 2/93, p17)


6. Most state firms, in turn, showed relatively little interest in, or aptitude for, restructuring, especially since Poland’s financial system was incapable of bankrupting insolvent firms that resisted restructuring. And as . . . firms that were chronically unprofitable should be shut down. The absence of available credit-initiated bankruptcy procedures meant that the ministry had to be actively involved in this process as well.?, ibid. p22-24

7. . . . declines in enterprise profitability wreaked havoc with the banks? balance sheets, so that by mid-1992 the viability of 30-40% of their loans was in doubt . . .?, ibid

8. One novel creation of the transition period in Poland is the appearance of vulture capital? markets?markets for the debt of firms that are insolvent or bankrupt; creditors thus make money by feeding on dying? firms, by redeploying assets that still have any value.


10. RFE/RL Report, 11.6.93, p5

11. Nevertheless some right wing or liberal government advisers and representatives of the private employers criticised the pact as a ?sell out? to the unions.

12. The vote on 23 May was seen as a bizarre accident, especially since it was due to the fact that two of the government?s parliamentary supporters were absent when the vote took place. Solidarnosc?s parliamentary caucus had no idea of what government it wanted to replace the Suchocka government with; it did not think it would win the vote anyway.

13. These blocs are riven by personal frictions, which make it unclear exactly which blocs still exist. For groups like the Union of Labour, the Liberal Democratic Congress (Bielecki) and the Party ?X? it will be extremely difficult to leap over the 5% hurdle. It is extremely unlikely that any group will gain more than 15?20% of the vote.
