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## Polish-Austrian Relations during the Last Peak of the Cold War

**Abstrakt:** Tragiczne wydarzenia polskiego kryzysu lat 1980–1982 zostały przedstawione na tle partnerskich stosunków Polski z bogatym, neutralnym krajem zachodnim, jakim była Austria. Dla Polski ważne było wznowienie kontaktów choćby z wybranymi państwami bez konieczności ustępstw politycznych. W analizie szczególny nacisk położono na polskie próby pozyskania polityków austriackich do wyjścia z politycznej izolacji, w jakiej znalazła się Warszawa po 13 grudnia 1981 r. Narracja została podzielona na dwie części: pierwsza przedstawia stosunek Austrii do reform w Polsce w latach 1980–1981, a druga – reakcję Austrii na wprowadzenie stanu wojennego w Polsce. W latach 1981–1982 w polskim MSZ prowadzono intensywne prace nad przełamaniem politycznej izolacji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** relacje polsko-austriackie, Austria, PRL, stan wojenny, MSZ.

**Abstract:** The tragic events of the Polish crisis of 1980–1982 were presented against the background of Poland's partnership relations with a wealthy, neutral Western country such as Austria. It was important for Poland to resume contact, if only with selected countries, without the need for political concessions. In the analysis, particular emphasis was placed on Polish attempts to recruit Austrian politicians to overcome the political isolation in which Warsaw found itself after 13 December 1981. The narrative is divided into two parts: the first shows Austria's attitude to reforms in Poland in 1980–1981, and the second – Austria's reaction to the imposition of martial law in Poland. In the years 1981–1982, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs carried out intensive work to overcome political isolation.

**Keywords:** Polish-Austrian relations, Austria, Polish People's Republic, martial law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



## Austria in the Face of Attempts at Political, Social and Economic Reforms in Poland

The primary purpose of the analysis is to describe Polish-Austrian bilateral relations as seen from the perspective of Polish and Austrian diplomatic documents. The historical method was used to report on the course of political meetings and negotiations accompanying the introduction of martial law in Poland. The analysis uses unpublished documents, mainly from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Austrian archives. The presented topic has not been studied before. It also discusses the recent Austrian research undertaken by Maximilian Graf and Peter Ruggenthaler. The gradually released Polish archives relating to the 1980s allow for systematic enrichment of the knowledge of the end of the Cold War and the last 'hot crisis' of that war.

The post-war Polish-Austrian relations went through various stages – the most fruitful of these stages in political and economic terms ended with the 1970s. The political change and the growing economic crisis in Poland ushered in the correction of their bilateral relations. Austria was a genuine and reliable partner of the Eastern states and did not abandon cooperation with them even during turbulent crises.<sup>1</sup> The balance of bilateral cooperation in the 1970s was very favourable for Poland. During the rule of Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, 14 bilateral agreements were signed, and trade was significantly facilitated. Poland's entry into the GATT zone in 1967 opened new economic opportunities. Austria has allocated funds to specific production sectors. The lack of changes was a typical phenomenon for the entire Soviet bloc in this period and was considered politically dangerous. The unfavourable phenomena in the early 1980s mentioned the use of tariff barriers in the food industry sector by Austria. Sanitary and customs requirements were tightened, and restrictions were imposed on importers cooperating with Eastern States.

By analysing the possibilities of the Polish economy and global development trends, the Austrian side tried to compete with Italy, the French and the Americans in terms of investments in the automotive industry.<sup>2</sup> The Austrian side was looking for the so-called niche sectors that were less attractive to

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<sup>1</sup> O. Rathkolb, 'Austria: An Ambivalent Attitude of Trade Unions and Political Parties', in: *Solidarity with Solidarity. Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980–1982*, ed. by I. Goddeeris (Plymouth, 2010); G. Enderle-Burcel, *Zarte Bande: Österreich und die europäischen planwirtschaftlichen Länder. Delicate relationship* (Wien, 2006); E. Röhrlich, *Kreiskys Aussenpolitik. Zwischen österreichischer Identität und internationalen Programm, Zeitgeschichte im Kontext 2* (Göttingen, 2009); L. Dreidemy, J. Knierzinger, 'EU-Africa Relations During the Resource Crises of the 1960s/70s and the 2000s', *CES. Open Forum Series. 2020–2021*, no. 42(2020), pp. 26–35, <https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/uploads/files/Open-Forum-Papers/Working-Paper-Knierzinger-Dreidemy-Septembr-2020.pdf> (accessed: 20 Jan. 2025).

<sup>2</sup> J. Kaliński, Z. Landau, *Gospodarka Polski w XX wieku* (Warszawa, 1998), pp. 281–83.

other Western countries. Predicting trends linking the economic exchange of centrally planned and free-market states was difficult. Each of the eastern countries had different development trends and investment needs. Although it seemed that the human resources and limited raw material possibilities encouraged the dominance of the textile and electronics industry in the eastern area, it did not happen.<sup>3</sup> The Austrians highly appreciated the possibility of acquiring skilled workers in Poland, whose share in such investments in third-country markets was key. The development of direct investments was related to the purchase of a license. Loans granted to Poland were to be the flywheel. It was a special form of investment, the so-called capital or financial.<sup>4</sup> Austrian loans were related to the need for Warsaw to obtain capital from several sources while introducing the rules of the new lending policy in Poland.<sup>5</sup> At that time, many countries offered financial services linked to direct investment.

Austrian loans were related to the need for Warsaw to obtain capital from several sources while introducing the rules of the new lending policy in Poland. Austria directed the funds transferred to specific sectors of production.<sup>6</sup> The loans granted by Austria were divided into several basic groups. A large pool was used to finance investments. Subsequent sums were allocated to the purchase of raw materials and semi-finished products. The third group were loans for consumer goods. In the late 1970s, the total loan amount from Austria was 23.5 billion schillings. Until 1979, only 360 million was spent mainly on groceries.<sup>7</sup>

The selection of individual sectors in which the republic decided to invest was related to the analysis of the activity of other Western countries in Poland. However, it was consistent with the tendency described by Van der Wee, supporting industries related to heavy industry: mining, metallurgy, and metallurgy. The possibilities of raw materials, human resources, facilities and potential outlets were estimated. Apart from long-term goals, one should also mention short-term goals resulting from the reaction to the current situation or growing crises, such as during the events of 1980–1981. At that time, the focus was on ensuring the delivery of raw material commitments,

<sup>3</sup> A. Wiczorkiewicz, *Kooperacja przemysłowa Polski z rozwiniętymi krajami kapitalistycznymi* (Warszawa, 1980), pp. 126–27.

<sup>4</sup> J. Witkowska, *Bezpośrednie inwestycje zagraniczne w warunkach stowarzyszenia i przyszłego członkostwa w WE* (Warszawa, 1993), p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> J. Gajdek, 'Der mittelbare Nachbar. Österreichvorstellungen in Polen, 1970–1995', in: *Mit anderen Augen gesehen. Internationale Perzeptionen Österreichs, 1955–1990 (Österreichische Nationalgeschichte nach, 1945/2)*, ed. by O. Rathkolb, O.M. Maschke, and S.A. Lütgenau (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2002), p. 661.

<sup>6</sup> H. Van der Wee, *Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy, 1945–1980* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 90.

<sup>7</sup> A. Kisztełińska-Węgrzyńska, *Bruno Kreisky. Polityka zagraniczna i dyplomacja wobec PRL (1959–1983)* (Łódź, 2018), p. 222.

without which the Austrian economy could suffer heavy losses. In fact, it was the Austrians who initiated 'direct' talks conducted by representatives of enterprises, thanks to which consultations with persons who did not have decision-making powers were omitted.

In the early 1980s, new geopolitical conditions were created to develop Austrian-Polish relations. The American reaction to the war in Afghanistan forced Western states to take part in the economic and political sanctions against the USSR. Austria reacted to this news cautiously, emphasising a different approach from the West to cooperation with the Eastern states. The foreign policy directions of the Second Republic included non-European activities and the consolidation of social democratic forces in underdeveloped countries as well as joining the process of détente in Europe. Meanwhile, in Poland, after signing agreements between the government and the strike committees and the final constitution of NSZZ Solidarność on 17 September 1980, the dynamics of Polish diplomatic relations were determined by the state-society dispute.<sup>8</sup>

The Austrian side positively assessed the Austrian-Polish bilateral relations in the first half of 1980. The authorities in Vienna expected the Polish side to overcome its mounting economic difficulties. Detailed economic analyses had constantly listed Poland as the most important country in the region, an important sales area for Austrian products and a partner striving for the technological expansion of its essential production sectors.<sup>9</sup> At that time, the last treaties were signed, ending the fruitful stage of prosperity in the bilateral agreements.

Appointed prime minister of Poland in the spring of 1980, Edward Babiuch represented a group of the closest associates of First Secretary Edward Gierek of the ruling Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). He was perceived in Austria as a politician who could prevent the growing crisis in Poland. The reforms proposed by Babiuch were welcomed with optimism in Vienna, along with the appointment of Andrzej Jedynek, the Polish ambassador to Austria from 1978 to 1980, as the Minister of the Heavy and Agricultural Machine Industry.<sup>10</sup> Despite the positive assessment of Poland's openness to having relations with Western countries

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<sup>8</sup> A. Paczkowski, 'Dyplomacja polska czasów kryzysu (1980–1989)', in: *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 6, ed. by W. Michowicz, W. Materski (Warszawa, 2010), p. 822.

<sup>9</sup> Bruno Kreisky Archive Foundation, Stiftung Bruno Kreisky Archive (hereinafter: StBKA), 'Projekte und Kooperationen. Information betr. 2. Tagung der österr.-polnischen Arbeitsgruppe für das Bauwesen und wirtschaftlich-technische Forschung in Warschau, 27.–30. Mai, 1980', Länderboxen Polen Box 2; K.E Meyer, 'Foreign direct investment in the early years of economic transition: a survey', *Economics of Transition*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1995), pp. 301–20 (at p. 310).

<sup>10</sup> StBKA, 'Besuch des Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der VR Polen Edward Babiuch in Österreich, 25.–26. Juni, 1980', Länderboxen Polen Box 2.

under Gierek's rule, the need for constant cooperation between Warsaw and the Eastern countries could not be ignored. The observed social discontent and the steadily improving organisation of the opposition in Poland raised questions about the direction of further cooperation.<sup>11</sup>

A series of official visits in 1980 ended the 'golden age' in the two countries' bilateral relations.<sup>12</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Willibald Pahr visited Warsaw in the spring. In June, Prime Minister Edward Babiuch travelled to Vienna for several days of talks.<sup>13</sup> The meetings were held in a friendly and open atmosphere. New loans for Poland and supplies of Polish raw materials for Austria were discussed. The Polish political situation was not overly commented on at that time.<sup>14</sup> Proposals for joint investments were received with interest. Asia and Africa were to become bases for joint ventures and strong political bases for developing the social democratic movement.<sup>15</sup> Prime Minister Babiuch's efforts to save the economic plan for 1980 led to mass layoffs in workplaces and further increases in food prices. The wave of strikes, starting at the Świdnik factory, spread throughout the country.<sup>16</sup> In February 1980, the improvement in the efficiency and growth of exports was officially recognised as insufficient, and it was planned that after balancing the country's agricultural products, Poland would return to world markets as a recognised exporter of agri-food products.<sup>17</sup>

The radical change in the internal situation in Poland resulted in sudden shifts in the positions of power, which began on 24 August 1980. The Politburo of the PZPR was reorganised. Stanisław Kania was made the first secretary of the Central Committee.<sup>18</sup> Prime Minister Edward Babiuch was dismissed, and Józef Pińkowski was appointed in his place. As a result of this reconstruction, six out of thirty ministers left, including Emil Wojtaszek, who had been the Minister of Foreign Affairs for four years. Józef Czyrek took his place. On 31 August 1980, Deputy Prime Minister Mieczysław

<sup>11</sup> L. Kamiński, *Przed i po 13 grudnia. Państwa bloku wschodniego wobec kryzysu w PRL, 1980–1982*, vol. 1: *Sierpień 1980 – marzec 1981* (Warszawa, 2006), p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (hereinafter: AMSZ), D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, Note of 7 May 1980, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> StBKA, 'Besuch des Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates der VR Polen Edward Babiuch in Österreich, 25.–26. Juni, 1980', Länderboxen Polen Box 2.

<sup>14</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 46/84, w. 2, 'Information on the results of the visit of the Prime Minister Comrade Edward Babiuch to Austria of 27 June 1980', p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Current elements of Austrian foreign policy, May 1980', p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> T. Kozłowski, *Anatomia rewolucji. Narodziny ruchu społecznego „Solidarność” w 1980 roku* (Warszawa, 2017), pp. 174–75.

<sup>17</sup> A. Ząbkowicz, *Koncepcja zagranicznej polityki kredytowej w Polsce w latach 1971–1980* (Wrocław, 1992), p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> A. Skrzypek, *Mechanizmy klientelizmu. Stosunki polsko-radzieckie 1965–1989* (Pułtusk–Warszawa, 2008), p. 228.

Jagielski signed a historic agreement with the chairman of the Solidarity trade union, Lech Wałęsa, in Gdańsk. From the effects of the Kremlin's actions in the first days of September 1980, particularly dismissing Gierek and giving instructions to restrict the border traffic and control the country's social situation, the Russians gave the initiative to the Poles.<sup>19</sup>

News about Gierek's removal from power was received with concern in Vienna. Growing social discontent and a deepening recession were observed. In September, there were reports of Chancellor Kreisky's criticism of the Polish government.<sup>20</sup> It was about expressing an objection to prevent the escalation of negative statements. The situation in Poland did not affect Austria's credit policy at that time. In the 19 September 1980 letter of the Minister of Finance, we read about the additional investments planned in Poland in the coming years and about the repayment forecasts for particular tranches of the loan granted in June. In 1980, Poland was to begin repaying its loan from US\$ 1.3 billion to US\$ 5.2 billion so that the entire debt would have been repaid by 1990. Almost half of the whole amount was to be paid in the years 1982–1985: a total of US\$ 20 billion at that time, which, under the prevailing conditions then, seemed not feasible. In mid-September, the Minister of Foreign Trade and former ambassador to Austria, Ryszard Karski, asked for an additional credit line of 3.5 billion shillings to purchase the goods needed to fulfil the existing orders and limits related to Poland's previous loans.<sup>21</sup> Even then, this case was not lost, and the Austrian side was still considering supporting individual production branches with the hope of cooperation and joint profits in the future.<sup>22</sup> The situation worsened drastically, however, at the end of 1980. The state of Poland's balance of payments was critical due to its constantly growing trade deficit, with the simultaneous increase in its debt service burden.<sup>23</sup>

The changes at the top of the government and the political confrontation in Poland were noticeable in the work of foreign missions. Analysing the planned activities of the Embassy of the PRL in Vienna and the Polish Institute in Vienna, the management of the 4th Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noticed the need to coordinate cooperation with the Austrian media and centres reporting the situation in Poland.<sup>24</sup> Ambassador Adamkiewicz reported positive signals from the Austrian authorities

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>20</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Letter from J. Mąkosa to J. Czyrk of 5 Sep. 1980', p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> StBKA, 'Notizen betr. Besuch des polnischen Außenminister Karski in Wien, September 1980', Polen Box 2.

<sup>22</sup> StBKA, 'Projekte und Kooperationen', Information betr. 2. Tagung der österr.-polnischen Arbeitsgruppe für das Bauwesen und wirtschaftlich-technische Forschung in Warschau, 27.–30. Mai 1980', Länderboxen Polen Box 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ząbkowicz, *Koncepcja zagranicznej polityki kredytowej*, p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Note from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in Vienna dated 8 Sep. 1980'.

regarding the maintenance of economic exchange and the ratification of bilateral agreements or planned meetings in the future.<sup>25</sup> The Austrian side presented the situation similarly, paying much attention to Poland's need for material assistance. Granting further loans to the country was considered, and the export possibilities of Polish industry were analysed.<sup>26</sup>

On 8 September 1980, the Polish Embassy in Vienna sent Foreign Affairs Minister Czyrek a note on the assessment of Polish affairs made by influential political groups in Vienna over the past months. The ambassador assured Minister Czyrek that the situation in Poland interested Austrians, politicians and citizens alike, while the attitude towards the Polish transformations was subdued. According to the ambassador, the signing of the August agreements was greatly appreciated by the Austrians, and the expectation that the Polish government would meet the strikers' demands was high.<sup>27</sup> The nature of the Austrian reactions was considered balanced; according to Ambassador Adamkiewicz, the government circles and the influential opposition politicians behaved cautiously. The statements of Austrian Trade and Industry Minister Josef Staribacher and Chancellor Kreisky were intended to support the workers' demands. The government guarantee for the coal loan granted to Poland (in the amount of 300 million shillings) was maintained.

The position of the SPÖ (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, Social Democratic Party of Austria) was characterised by support for the Polish workers' demands. Kreisky, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party at the time, pointed out in a statement on 20 August that 'wherever workers are engaged in the kind of struggle that is currently taking place in Poland, the SPÖ must stand by their side'.<sup>28</sup> Later in his speech, the chancellor pointed out that these events should be treated as seriously as those in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. He expressed the hope that 'the USSR will remain moderate and refrain from military intervention in Poland in the manner of Afghanistan'.<sup>29</sup> An attempt to solve the Polish problem by force would mean the end of détente.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, it would be a political

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten, (hereinafter: ÖStA), AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 03-00/270-II.3/81, 'Gespräch mit dem polnischen Botschafter Adamkiewicz en Herrn Bundesminister für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten am 10.09.1981', pp. 2–3.

<sup>27</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Note from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in Vienna dated 8 Sep. 1980', p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> B. Kreisky, 'Politik braucht Visionen'. *Aufsätze, Reden und Interviews zu aktuellen weltpolitischen Fragen mit einem Vorwort von Walter Jens* (Bonn, 1982), pp. 116–17.

<sup>30</sup> M. Graf, 'European Détente and the CSCE Austria and the East-Central European Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s', in: *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972–1990*, ed. by N. Badalassi, S.B. Snyder (New York–Oxford, 2018), pp. 249–74.

defeat for the communist parties in Europe, which would continue to exist but 'would lose their dynamics for decades to come'.<sup>31</sup>

In Poland, comments were also made on the chancellor's statement during the meeting of social democratic parties in Dortmund. Kreisky then appealed for help to the Polish government, without which the granting of the demands in the future was impossible. 'We want to express a special appreciation that an agreement on such important matters could be reached without friction and without any external pressure'.<sup>32</sup> Heinz Fischer, Executive Chairman of the Social Democratic Party in the Austrian Parliament, an associate of the chancellor and later president of Austria, expressed a similar position. Fischer also participated in the formation of a solidarity committee in Vienna to support the striking workers. It included Albrecht Konecny, the writer Peter Turrini, who was associated with the SPÖ, and Heinrich Keller, the former secretary general of ORF. The committee aimed to organise a fundraiser for the strikers. On this mission, Günther Engelmeier (on behalf of the Christian faction) and Josef Hummel, general secretary of Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB, Austrian Trade Union Federation) were sent to the Solidarity Congress in August and September 1981.<sup>33</sup>

At that time, Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP, Austrian People's Party) officially supported the strikers' demands. In the second half of August, the party youths were collecting signatures for a document expressing solidarity with the strikers. Thanks to such youths' direct contacts with those taking part in the strikes, 150,000 shillings' worth of voluntary contributions were transferred to the Polish strikers as support for their cause. Parades were also organised. At the beginning of April 1981, students from the University of Vienna marched with the slogans 'Hands away from Poland!' and 'Russians away from Poland!' along the streets of the city centre to the Embassy of the USSR. The Polish authorities noted, however, that no political party had joined the group of protesters, and the media did not pay much attention to the action.<sup>34</sup>

The social mood in Poland was escalated by the difficult economic situation and the shortages in the country. The Poles signalled increasing problems with obtaining basic food products. 'In the second quarter of 1980, 61 per cent of the [survey] respondents assessed the level of supply as bad. This indicator was dangerously close to that of 1976 when this assessment was shared by 71 per cent of [the] respondents'.<sup>35</sup> The embassy closely followed the reactions of the media and the grassroots social actions aimed at helping the strikers. The organisations and committees responsible for the collection of

<sup>31</sup> Kreisky, *Politik braucht*, pp. 116–17.

<sup>32</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Note from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in Vienna dated 8 Sep. 1980', p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 46/84, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram No. 2223/III of 1 Sep. 1981'.

<sup>34</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 46/84, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram No. 110/II of 3 Apr. 1981'.

<sup>35</sup> Kozłowski, *Anatomia rewolucji*, pp. 181–82.



money and goods to be sent to Poland were mentioned. The absence of any public demonstration and protest against the Polish authorities, however, was deemed noteworthy.<sup>36</sup>

The Austrian side also analysed the situation in Poland through its diplomatic missions in other countries. In the 30 September 1980 letter of employees of the Embassy of Austria in the USSR, we read about the negative assessment of the 'Polish way'. The example that the Polish strikers had set was supposed to be dangerous for other communist countries, and for this reason, forced solutions were necessary.<sup>37</sup> According to Austrian diplomats, the age-old political animosities between nations and a peculiar bill that the opposition had issued to the Polish authorities and their Soviet superiors were of decisive importance for the social foundations of the movement in Poland.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, Polish diplomacy was focused on calming the country's allies. High party officials (Andrzej Żabiński, Zdzisław Kurowski, Kazimierz Barcikowski, Emil Wojtaszek and Stefan Olszowski) went on a series of working visits in the Eastern countries to calm the negative moods there. They assured their allies that the necessary steps to avert the crisis had been taken.<sup>39</sup> The Polish party leaders, however, were basically defenceless against the adverse foreign reactions. They were tasked to persuade the authorities of the countries allied with them not to generate feelings of distrust, hostility and anti-Polishness, as did East Germany and Czechoslovakia.<sup>40</sup> The East German authorities assessed the events in Poland as 'counter-revolutionary'. This could suggest that Erich Honecker's team was considering participation in the military intervention in the PRL.<sup>41</sup> In relation to the Western countries, the foreign policy assumptions presented in the document from 1981 had not been revised. Most of them were focused on 'defending our interests'.<sup>42</sup> The main activity area was to disentangle Poland from the debt spiral.

Economic talks took place between Austrian Chancellor Kreisky and Ambassador Adamkiewicz on 20 January 1981. The chancellor was not convinced of the accuracy of the presented development prospects.<sup>43</sup> At that time, the issue of the carbon loan agreed in mid-1980 was 'at a standstill'. It

<sup>36</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Note from the Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in Vienna dated 8 Sep. 1980'.

<sup>37</sup> J. Tejchma, *Odszedł Gomułka, przyszedł Gierek. Notatki z lat 1971–1973* (Toruń, 2006), p. 149.

<sup>38</sup> StBKA, 'Sowjetische Haltung, September, 1980', Länderboxen Polen Box 2.

<sup>39</sup> A. Górajek, *Wydarzenia społeczno-polityczne w Polsce w niemieckiej literaturze i publicystyce lat osiemdziesiątych (1980–1989)* (Wrocław, 2006), pp. 62–63.

<sup>40</sup> Paczkowski, 'Dyplomacja polska czasów kryzysu', p. 837.

<sup>41</sup> F. Gańczak, *Polski nie oddamy. Władze NRD wobec wydarzeń w PRL w latach 1980–1981* (Warszawa, 2017), p. 139.

<sup>42</sup> AMSZ, GM, z. 6/86, w. 1, 'Basic tasks'.

<sup>43</sup> StBKA, 'Notiz für Herrn BK. betr. die Vorsprache beim polnischen Botschafter am 20.1.1981', Länderboxen Polen Box 2.

was made contingent on the commencement of the construction of three power plants in Poland, which had been suspended.<sup>44</sup> The ambassador proposed moving the coal delivery dates or removing the resource conditions from the contracts.<sup>45</sup>

The Austrian chancellor's televised speech regarding the political changes in Poland was carefully crafted. The chancellor indirectly criticised the actions of Solidarity. At the same time, the appointment of General Wojciech Jaruzelski as prime minister was not a sign of fundamental changes in the policy of the PRL, but it meant that the government would regain its recently lost authority.<sup>46</sup> Kreisky was against the democracy realized by the masses of workers with the emerging new ruling class composed of strong opposition leaders.<sup>47</sup>

Ambassador Adamkiewicz repeated the chancellor's words about the need to extend help to Poland. In addition, 'Kreisky reported his conversation with [Soviet Union] Prime Minister Tikhonov, in which he seriously – and he thought effectively – made people aware of the dire consequences of a possible intervention for détente'.<sup>48</sup> In the spring, it was arranged that the chancellor would visit Poland mainly for propaganda purposes as the political and economic cooperation between the two countries was at a standstill at that time. Kreisky emphasized then that he was interested in the situation in Poland both as the head of government and as a social democrat. Although he did not agree with everything that was taking place, he avoided taking a critical position or spoke cautiously because, as he admitted, he did not want to obstruct the already difficult situation for the PRL authorities.<sup>49</sup>

The growing Polish political crisis in 1981, fuelled by the social unrest and the growing pressure from the bloc states, made it impossible to continue the previous diplomatic relations.<sup>50</sup> The Eastern countries suspended the agreements on the freedom of personal movement, and Soviet propaganda 'warned' against the counter-revolution being prepared by Solidarity.<sup>51</sup> The Austrian authorities watched the events in Poland with concern, anticipating the pacification of the unions. It can be concluded that the analysis of the situation then was characterized by a lack of factual assessment. The problem concerned most of the Western countries, which on the one hand downplayed Solidarity's possibilities for development and action and on the

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<sup>44</sup> StBKA, 'Kohl-Kreditvertrag, Juli 1980 Polen Box 2; Kredit an Wegłokoks/Polen, 1981', Länderboxen Polen Box 2.

<sup>45</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 766/I of 21 Jan. 1981'.

<sup>46</sup> Kreisky, *Politik braucht Visionen*, pp. 145–46.

<sup>47</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 1612/II of 11 Feb. 1981'.

<sup>48</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 46/84, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 1107/II of 30 Apr. 1981'.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> J. Zając, R. Zięba, *Polska w stosunkach międzynarodowych 1945–1989* (Toruń, 2006), pp. 180–84.

<sup>51</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Pół wieku dziejów Polski* (Warszawa, 2005), p. 337.

other hand underestimated the communist authorities' determination to deal with the crisis.<sup>52</sup> As for Austria, a clear picture of its position on the events preceding the introduction of martial law in Poland could not be drawn.<sup>53</sup>

The attitude of the Austrian authorities towards the changes in Poland in 1981 was influenced by two main factors. Firstly, the chancellor, initially positive about the development of trade unions and their influence on the liberalization of political life, noticed over time the religious foundations or motivation of these increasingly powerful circles supported by the Catholic Church and the Pope. The fact that the protracted protests in Poland made it impossible for the country to deliver coal to Austria in the planned quantity and at the required time, which likewise destabilized the situation in Austria, further cemented this stand.<sup>54</sup> The second factor was related to the rapidly growing number of asylum seekers in Austria using the visa-free entry policy. Before the imposition of martial law in Poland, more than 20,000 Poles went to Austria. The publication of a series of articles in the tabloid press on such issue led to the radicalisation of the people's related sentiments. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 1 December 1981, the chancellor announced the implementation of a unilateral visa-required entry policy in Austria.<sup>55</sup> After the first bloody clashes in Poland, however, the issuing of visas for potential victims was resumed, cooperation with other countries for aid was launched and a call for international support for Poland was made.<sup>56</sup>

In the fall of 1981, the bilateral relations between Austria and Poland died out.<sup>57</sup> The enormous social tension that had built up over the last three years had also become part of the Austrian public discourse. The opposition accused Kreisky of supporting communist propaganda and promoting the position of the Polish authorities uncritically. According to ÖVP representatives, it was not right to blame the workers for the situation.<sup>58</sup> Józef Czyrek, who, as mentioned earlier, was a member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee, went to Vienna in November for the last time before the imposition of martial law in Poland. This meeting, however, did

<sup>52</sup> M. Heruday-Kielczewska, *Reakcja Francji na wprowadzenie stanu wojennego w Polsce: grudzień 1981 – styczeń 1982* (Warszawa, 2012), p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> Austrian activities can also be considered in the broader context of the international support offered to Poland. P. Jaworski, 'Szwedzka pomoc dla Polski i Solidarności w latach 1980–1981', in: *Czas przełomu. Solidarność 1980–1981*, ed. by W. Polak, P. Ruchlewski, and J. Kufel (Gdańsk, 2010), pp. 259–70.

<sup>54</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 'An den Herrn Bundesminister für Auswärtige Angelagenheiten, 13.08.1981', pp. 4–5.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 18-14/24-II.3/81, 'Offizieller Besuch des polnischen Aussenministers, Jozef Czyrek, in Österreich vom 9. bis 11. November 1981', p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Rathkolb, 'Austria: An Ambivalent Attitude', pp. 269–88.

<sup>57</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 'Polen sowjetische militärische Intervention, 9.12.1981'.

<sup>58</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 43/84, w. 5, 'Cipher telegram no. 3061/III of 19 Sep. 1981'.

not yield any political or economic effect as what was done therein was only to examine the ground before the planned system changes.<sup>59</sup> Kreisky did not see any credible and practical element of the planned reforms in Poland.<sup>60</sup> He only pointed out the underestimated value of the loans repaid by Poland and the increase in the number of Poles flowing into Austria.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, the Polish authorities struggled with the growing political and economic crisis without success.<sup>62</sup> The Soviet leadership thus insisted on taking more decisive measures against the opposition. On 8 December 1981, Austria and Poland sent each other notes informing each other that the application of the provisions of the 18 July 1972 agreement on the mutual waiver of the visa requirement for entry into the countries was suspended.

### Reactions to the Imposition of Martial Law in Poland on 13 December 1981

Austria's official position towards the imposition of martial law in Poland was shaped in three stages. The first stage was characterised by a cautious reaction to the events of the first days of the Solidarity strikes, and the second stage was characterised by the radicalisation of opinions after the pacification of the miners at the Wujek Mine. The third stage began in mid-January 1982 when the chancellor's official statements and press interviews showed an increased interest in Polish affairs. Austria's position on Polish matters, unlike most Western European countries and some neutral countries, is more balanced and restrained. Vienna favoured the Polish authorities, aware as it was of the limited activities under the so-called normalisation announced by the government. General Jaruzelski and Mieczysław Rakowski then made public speeches on the topic, which were followed by expressions of the social mood and international reactions.<sup>63</sup>

After the imposition of martial law in Poland, the attitude of the Austrian authorities towards the changes in Poland changed dramatically. The chancellor closely watched the social situation in Poland and explored the possibility of helping the injured workers.<sup>64</sup> However, none of Austria's

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 'Cipher telegram no. 943/IV of 25 Oct. 1981'.

<sup>60</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 18-02/7-III.1/81, 'Information für den Herrn Bundesminister, 11.11.1981'.

<sup>61</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 18-14/35-II.3/81, 'Besuch des polnischen Aussenministers in Österreich. Arbeitsgespräch mit BM Dr. Staribacher vom 11.11.1981'.

<sup>62</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 20-00/19-II.3/81, 'VR Polen, Verschuldung im Westen bzw. in Österreich, 11.11.1981'.

<sup>63</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 03-00/29-II.3/82, 'Polen. Lage am 7.01.1982'.

<sup>64</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 'Information für den Herrn Bundesminister, 28.12.1981'.

criticisms and unfavourable comments made their way to the Polish public.<sup>65</sup> Instead, the Austrian remarks on the events in Poland reached the Polish government headquarters through Ambassador Adamkiewicz.<sup>66</sup> The chancellor also criticised the humanitarian aid operation initiated by the ÖVP.<sup>67</sup> He said that the process of collecting material aid as part of such an operation would be manipulated. Ambassador Adamkiewicz emphasised that the chancellor's position on this matter should not be understood as an attempt to interfere in the reactions of the Polish state or the Church.<sup>68</sup> The chancellor's criticism of the Polish Catholic Church was met with a sharp response from the conservative circles in Europe. The chancellor's statements were reprinted in the German magazines *Münchener Abendzeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutschen Zeitung* and *Die Welt*. It was pointed out that by blaming the Catholics in Poland for the imposition of martial law in the country, the chancellor showed a complete misunderstanding of the political situation and called into question his previous achievements in the field of foreign policy. The German press also quoted Cardinal Franz König as saying the chancellor's behaviour was 'incomprehensible'. According to Cardinal Franz König, Kreisky adopted optics favourable to the communist regime and Moscow, allowing them to blame their economic failures and failed reforms on the ordinary citizens who only demanded that their fundamental rights be respected.<sup>69</sup>

The first reactions in Austria to the imposition of martial law in Poland were carefully noted and commented on by both the diplomatic channels and the Politburo. In an 18 December dispatch, Ambassador Adamkiewicz talked about the correct form of cooperation with the Austrian trade unions headed by Chairman Anton Beny. He said that the protests had to occur due to the political need and the approval of the ÖGB president. According to the ambassador, the greatest dissatisfaction was manifested by the representatives of the Christian Democrats, supported by Polish emigrants. However, the ambassador's attention was on the collection of money and gifts that these factions were systematically carrying out in addition to organising protests.<sup>70</sup> Austria's initial reactions were similar to those of other Western countries: condemning the authorities' actions and announcing the humanitarian aid grant.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>65</sup> AMSZ, Dep. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'M. Rakowski's trip to Austria'; M. Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne, 1981–1983*, vol. 8 (Warszawa, 2004), pp. 277–87.

<sup>66</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 8/86, w. 4, 'Note on the reaction of official factors in Austria to events in Poland after 13 Dec. 1982'.

<sup>67</sup> B. Miązek, 'Pomoc dla polskich emigrantów w Wiedniu w latach 1980–1989', in: *Austria i relacje polsko-austriackie w XX/XXI wieku*, ed. by A. Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska, K.A. Kuczyński (Łódź, 2013), pp. 117–23.

<sup>68</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 883/I of 18 Jan. 1982'.

<sup>69</sup> StBKA, 'Informationen der ÖB', Länderboxen Polen Box 1.

<sup>70</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 46/84, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 3241/IV of 18 Dec. 1981'.

<sup>71</sup> P. Ceranka, 'Reakcje państw zachodnich na wprowadzenie stanu wojennego w Polsce', *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 1 (2009), pp. 105–21 (at p. 108).

The Polish authorities made efforts to present a more favourable picture of why they decided to impose martial law. They did this for the sake of their Eastern allies and of the Western countries. A standard line of argument was adopted: the imposition of martial law was an internal decision and was not subject to any international discussion.<sup>72</sup> General Jaruzelski sent a letter to Chancellor Kreisky in which he justified the imposition of martial law and critically assessed NATO's policy to date. In that letter, General Jaruzelski asked for the restoration of Poland's former correct relations with Austria.<sup>73</sup> The demand for reliable information from Poland was high in Austria. Official announcements were followed, and Poland's future political and economic plans were read from them. The communists later announced a gradual removal of restrictions related to the martial law in force, a strategy to show the international arena that they were 'seeking solutions to the Polish problems on their own'.

Meanwhile, in Poland, attempts were made to create an information centre that promoted state commentaries on events in such a way that they could influence international public opinion on such events.<sup>74</sup> The Tuesday press conferences of the government spokesman, Jerzy Urban, were meant to convince the global democratic states of the 'temporary nature of the introduced restrictions on civil rights'. Jerzy Urban travelled to Austria several times between 1981 and 1983. From his notes from his visits to the country, an analysis of the media system of Austria could be drawn, which could be used for propaganda purposes if cooperation with selected individuals were established.

The critical remarks sent by the Austrian foreign office, Dr Paul Ullmann, at the beginning of the Polish crisis painted a negative picture of Poland. They were related to the genesis of the December events. The ambassador decided that martial law was imposed only to calm the public, and that there were really no reforms that were planned to be implemented to improve the situation of the country in the near future. According to foreign office officer Paul Ullmann, Poland did not have any important politician, visionary or planner in its history who was responsible for setting the direction of the state's development, both in the interwar period and after the war. The Solidarity movement, however, showed enormous political and democratic potential. The ossified and schematic authorities in Warsaw could not cope with the problem posed by the movement. Democracy was not an easy topic in Poland. People did not learn to think in terms of community; rather, the

<sup>72</sup> A. Skrzypek, *Dyplomatyczne dzieje PRL w latach 1956–1989* (Warszawa, 2010), p. 331.

<sup>73</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 8/86, w. 4, 'Letter from General Wojciech Jaruzelski to Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, 5 Jan. 1982'.

<sup>74</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 03-00/312-II.3/81, 'Zur polnischen Krise. Stand 20. Februar 1981', pp. 1–13.

belief in racial, cultural, national and social differences was strengthened. The communists, on the other hand, instilled in their citizens the belief that power is there for the taking. This relationship of dependency was transferred from Moscow, along with the belief that 'the Russians will take everything'.<sup>75</sup>

The threats to the Polish economy resulting from such cooperation include: deterioration of the balance of payments due to the outflow of capital invested in Poland, combining new projects with the necessity to contract investment loans on unfavourable terms, emphasis on selected, traditional economic sectors and depriving local companies of the possibility of creating their own specific ownership advantages.<sup>76</sup> Austria has consistently supported the efforts of the eastern states to develop within the framework of the existing political and economic structures.<sup>77</sup> Eastern countries, including Poland, intensified activities aimed at signing trade agreements that could either supplement the deficit of goods or provide access to new technologies. An additional obstacle to decision-making at the central level was the activity of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. This structure imposed restrictions on making independent economic decisions, for example, by imposing obligations on individual countries as part of multi-annual plans.<sup>78</sup>

Ambassador Adamkiewicz sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a summary of the Austrian reactions to the imposition of martial law in Poland gathered from 13 December 1981 to 1 February 1982. He drew attention to the dynamic development of the observed reactions and to the factors that were conditioning the changes in the country's official position on the matter. The first phase, characterised by moderate reactions and a relative understanding of the situation in Poland, lasted until the miners at the Wujek Mine were killed. After this, the chancellor and President Rudolf Kirchschläger delivered several speeches strongly condemning the Polish authorities. In mid-January, spurred by the media campaign, the speeches, demonstrations and protests intensified. A group of intellectuals and people of culture also actively reacted.<sup>79</sup> In the second half of January, the sharp speeches by the SPÖ, which the ambassador thought were conditioned by the party's political struggle with the ÖVP, slightly changed their rhetorical tone. This was mainly due to the SPÖ's desire to make Austria stand out among the Western countries that were boycotting the Polish government

<sup>75</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 03-00/49-II.3/82, 'Polen. Lage am 12.1.1982', p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> J. Schröder, 'Planowanie w przedsiębiorstwach handlu zagranicznego- kierunki przemian', *Handel Zagraniczny*, no. 11 (1987), pp. 11–14.

<sup>77</sup> W. Jarzabek, 'Polish Economic policy at the time of détente, 1966–1978', *European Review of History: Revue europe enne d'histoire*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2014), pp. 293–309 (at p. 295).

<sup>78</sup> R. Skobelski, 'PRL w Radzie Wzajemnej Pomocy Gospodarczej w latach 1956–1970', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, vol. 114, no. 3 (2007), pp. 49–90.

<sup>79</sup> T. Kwiatkowski, *Pamięć zbiorowa społeczeństwa polskiego w okresie transformacji*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 2008), pp. 35 ff.

and for economic reasons. Poland was to remain an important supplier of raw materials to the Austrian markets.

During this very difficult initial period, Austria tried to exert political pressure on Poland. For example, the meeting of the Mixed Commission, which in the previous years had developed very good conditions for economic cooperation, was postponed, making the resumption of its work contingent on lifting restrictions on the Austrian embassy in Warsaw. Separate documents also report in detail the Austrian government's position on the establishment of trade unions and on the Chamber of Commerce. It should be emphasised, however, that among Western countries, Austria expressed an exceptionally favourable attitude towards Poland and was perceived as a partner in trying to save the country from economic collapse. In assessing Vienna's policy towards Poland, Ambassador Adamkiewicz suggested that arrangements be made for the Polish state officials Mieczysław Rakowski, Deputy Prime Minister Jerzy Ozdowski and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Wiejacz to visit Vienna.<sup>80</sup> They were to personally report to Austria the reforms that the Polish authorities have undertaken. Austria did not impose any formal economic restrictions on Poland, nor did it yield to the American pressure to boycott Poland and the USSR.<sup>81</sup>

In one of the documents prepared by Dr Paul Ullmann, an employee of the Bundesministerium für Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten (director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' political section) in February 1982, an assessment of the political situation in Poland was prepared. In it, he drew attention to the unique position of Poland in the region, including the role of the Catholic Church; the domination of private property in agriculture, where over 80 per cent of the usable lands belonged to the farmers, and the country's close relationship with the Western European industry and production developed in recent years through exchanges, licenses and investments.<sup>82</sup>

On 18 March 1982, Ambassador Wotava and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tadeusz Olechowski met in Warsaw. The ambassador handed over a letter to General Jaruzelski, and upon the recommendation of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, suggested the development of further relations. In his letter, the chancellor expressed his concern about the fate of the interned opposition activists. It was emphasised that Austria did not want to interfere in Poland's internal affairs but cared about the latter's image on the forum of European socialist parties. During the meeting, there

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<sup>80</sup> M. Przeperski, 'Między dziennikarstwem a polityką. Mieczysław Rakowski w latach siedemdziesiątych', in: *Elity komunistyczne w Polsce*, ed. by M. Szumiło, M. Żukowski (Warszawa–Lublin, 2015), pp. 478–501.

<sup>81</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 1909/I, 4 Feb. 1982'.

<sup>82</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 03-00/130-II.3/82, 'Polen Fact-Finding-Mission der SPÖ. Pressenkonferenz, 12.02.1982'.



was a request to release the internees, to which the Polish minister gave a strongly negative reply.<sup>83</sup>

The chancellor's reply was straightforward and firm. Kreisky expressed concern about the mass arrests after 13 December. He demanded the release of the persecuted people, especially the opposition activist Juliusz Garztecki, who was imprisoned in Białolęka.<sup>84</sup> To justify his demand, he referred to the provisions of the CSCE, which Poland was also a signatory to. It was only a 'diplomatic trace' and the beginning of an exchange of correspondence with General Jaruzelski. Its result was a document from February 1982 that provided special measures to prevent the collapse of the economic exchange with Austria. The document emphasised the need to maintain the economic work of the Mixed Commission and the continuity of political consultations with the chancellor and president.<sup>85</sup> Minister Czyrek sent additional instructions on 27 February 1982.<sup>86</sup> The political department of the embassy was to focus on informing the Austrian authorities about the situation in Poland and the status of the cooperation with the party leaders, directors of institutions and companies cooperating with Poland, as well as the humanitarian aid coordination.

The reaction of the Western states to the imposition of martial law in Poland was both decisive and negative. The sanctions announced against Poland included the suspension of the negotiations on the refinancing of the PRL's debt covered by government guarantees, the refusal to grant new loans to Poland, the blocking of the credit lines already existing in Western banks, the suspension of the agreement on the sale of certain types of food by the European Commission at reduced prices and a ban on fishing at the American shores and on the landing in the USA of LOT Polish Airlines planes. It was announced that the sanctions would be lifted after the release of the political prisoners and the restoration of Solidarity's freedom of action. The most important element of the sanctions, however, was the cutting off of the Polish economy from new loans. This directly blocked the purchase of grains and feed, causing a decline in the production of agri-food products.<sup>87</sup> The US sanctions against Poland were criticised by Chancellor Kreisky in January and March 1982 at the Madrid summit,<sup>88</sup> and Minister Pahr repeated the chancellor's position at the end of the meeting.

<sup>83</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 03-00/91-II.3/82, 'Polen. Lage am, 19.1.1982', pp. 1–2.

<sup>84</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 8/86, w. 4, 'Letter from Chancellor Bruno Kreisky to General Wojciech Jaruzelski, 4 March 1982'.

<sup>85</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Note of 27 Feb. 1982'.

<sup>86</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Note on measures to secure the implementation of Minister Czyrek's order of 27 Feb. 1982'.

<sup>87</sup> Z. Fallenbuchl, 'O sankcjach gospodarczych wobec Polski', *Kultura*, no. 12/435 (1983), pp. 50–64.

<sup>88</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 7/86, w. 2, 'Cipher telegram no. 4711/1 of 25 March 1982'.

It was important for Austria not to waste the work of détente to date on account of the Polish affairs. According to the chancellor, after the introduction of the embargo, Poland, dependent on the Western economies, was doomed to extermination.<sup>89</sup> Kreisky also criticised the American policy towards asylum seekers, pointing out that in 1956 and 1968, and also at that time, Vienna was admitting Polish citizens who had to leave their country for economic reasons.<sup>90</sup> The American side demanded explanations from the Austrian embassy. Ultimately, the Austrians prepared a document in March 1982 in which it presented the official position of the state on the international sanctions imposed on other states. The text points out that many times in the past, mistakes have been made in applying collective sanctions to selected countries. Austria, as a neutral country, did not intend to indiscriminately participate in such activities.<sup>91</sup>

Postulates regarding the will to cooperate for the reconstruction of Poland also appeared in Austrian documents.<sup>92</sup> In April 1982, at the Polish Embassy in Vienna, Ambassador Adamkiewicz met with the councillors of the Soviet Embassy, Alexei M. Boronin and Artur W. Dmitriev. They provided the Polish side with theses on how to perceive Kreisky's policy towards Poland. The assessment was generally positive, and special attention was paid to the willingness of Austria to cooperate with Poland despite the Polish boycotts by other countries. The advantages of the boycotts, it was said, were the absence of demands for Poland's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, opposition to the US economic sanctions and the lack of interference in Poland's internal affairs. The Russian side mentioned Kreisky as an important political partner because he maintained normal relations with Warsaw as far as possible, opposed the repression by the American side and rejected the conditions of the dialogue on the topic of détente from the political situation in Poland. The need to maintain proper relations with the chancellor was emphasised to encourage other political forces in Austria and the West to counteract the American policy.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 'Runderlass an alle Berufsvertretungsbehörden am 11.03.1982'.

<sup>90</sup> M. Graf, P. Ruggenthaler, 'Polnisch-österreichische Beziehungen im Kalten Krieg', in: *Austria w polskim dyskursie publicznym po 1945 roku. Österreich nach 1945 im polnischen öffentlichen Diskurs*, ed. by A. Kiszteńska-Węgrzyńska (Kraków, 2016), pp. 31–66 (at p. 54); M. Graf, P. Ruggenthaler, 'Entspannung trotz Krisen? Zu den Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und Polen vom Staatsvertrag bis zum Ende des Kalten Krieges 1955–1990', in: *Österreich–Polen. Stationen gemeinsamer Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by W. Jarząbek, P. Ruggenthaler (Graz–Wien, 2021), pp. 223–38; Rathkolb, 'Austria: An Ambivalent Attitude', pp. 269–88.

<sup>91</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1981, Polen 166, 'Runderlass an alle Berufsvertretungsbehörden am 11.03.1982'.

<sup>92</sup> M. Graf, 'Österreich und die "polnische Krise" 1980–1983', in: *Österreich Polen. Stationen gemeinsamer Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*, eds W. Jarząbek, P. Ruggenthaler (Graz–Wien, 2021), p. 218.

<sup>93</sup> AMSZ, D. IV, z. 7/86, w. 2, t. 10, 'Cipher telegram no. 700/II of 16 Apr. 1982'.

At the end of 1982, official invitations for a visit to Poland were consistently extended to Austrian state officials, and in case these invitations were not met with interest, even visits by parliamentarians were suggested. The Polish side hesitated regarding how to react to the chancellor's proposal concerning the holding of an international conference on Polish affairs. There was a fear of raising issues related to martial law in a wider forum. Meanwhile, the Austrian intentions mainly concerned the economic security of Poland, which, as an important exporter of raw materials, had problems with maintaining the servicing of its existing liabilities.<sup>94</sup>

An important point in the Austrian-Polish talks, even in this difficult period of political stalemate, was the issue of loans. Initially, the imports of Polish raw materials were suspended, and the loan tranches were also frozen. The decline in exports in 1981 was 25 per cent while the imports decreased by 43 per cent of the value in 1980. In the following year, the downward trend was stopped only in March. The Austrians withheld sanctions against Poland due to concerns about its growing debt but also because of the Polish coal. Solutions to the economic situation of Poland were sought.<sup>95</sup> Plans were formulated to increase Poland's export of raw materials to Austria, start bilateral cooperation on third markets, and write off some of Poland's liabilities. Moreover, Chancellor Kreisky tried to use international organisations for cooperation. The European Advisory Commission to the United Nations developed an economic aid plan with additional options for debt repayment and the creation of a so-called refinancing corporation.<sup>96</sup> The Austrian fears related to the implementation of the aid thus accepted were related to the possible reaction of other Eastern countries that took loans from Western countries and could demand a similar change in repayment terms.<sup>97</sup>

Problems with servicing foreign debts appeared as early as 1980, when the possibilities of obtaining new loans decreased significantly.<sup>98</sup> This year, loans of \$ 8.67 billion were obtained from the United States, which were used in full to pay off instalments and interest. The following year, US\$ 5 billion flowed in, while debt service was US\$ 9.4 billion, with export receipts of US\$ 4.9 billion and import expenditure of US\$ 5.8 billion. Polish credit policy has suffered a severe failure. The main reason was political conditions. Poland did not belong to the free market economy system and taking actions that ignored this fact had to bring disastrous consequences. The authorities in Warsaw were aware that it was impossible to solve Polish economic and social problems

<sup>94</sup> AMSZ, D. IV Austria, z. 8/86, w. 4, 'Materials for Minister J. Wierzbicki, 27 March 1982'.

<sup>95</sup> Heruday-Kielczewska, *Reakcja Francji*, pp. 33–70.

<sup>96</sup> AMSZ, D. VI Austria, z. 28/86, w. 1, 'Note on Kreisky's proposal of 18 March 1982'.

<sup>97</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 'An den Herrn Bundesminister für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, 02.08.1982', p. 8.

<sup>98</sup> W. Morawski, 'Pelzająca katastrofa. Gospodarka polska w latach osiemdziesiątych', in: *W przededniu wielkiej zmiany. Polska w 1988 roku*, ed. by A. Friszke (Gdańsk, 2009), p. 28.

without fundamental changes to the functioning of the state, and these were entirely dependent on arbitrary decisions from Moscow.<sup>99</sup> Investments made in Poland did not contribute to improving the situation, as they faced an underinvested economy. Disproportions in the development of individual industries, or the inability to export attractive goods, for which Poland could receive the foreign currency needed to pay off debts, accelerated the crisis. To meet the credit requirements, new loans were taken, often under pressure from investors, who, under the threat of withdrawing from their contracts, demanded to incur further obligations. The consequence of the great wave of investment in the first half of the decade was not so much an increase in export production but import restrictions in the second five-year plan.<sup>100</sup>

In March 1982, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Olechowski visited the Austrian Embassy in Warsaw. He encouraged the preparation of state visits and the renewal of political contacts. He renewed the invitation given to Chancellor Kreisky before the imposition of martial law. The text of the note shows that the organisation of the chancellor's visit to Poland was the basic task set by the Polish authorities.<sup>101</sup> The ambassador assured the Polish authorities that the Austrian side saw the need to develop further contacts.<sup>102</sup> Ambassador Wotava sent a letter after the meeting in which he positively assessed the intention of Minister Olechowski and sent a query to the ministry regarding further steps that could be taken to restore full diplomatic contacts between the two countries.<sup>103</sup>

The Austrian analysis of the Polish political and economic situation in the first months of 1982 focused on the assessment of the economic threats to the region related to the Polish economic crisis. They protested against the Western European sanctions, pointing out that these mainly contributed to the drastic deterioration of the supply of basic products, impoverished ordinary citizens and resulted in higher prices. According to the Austrian authorities, the boycott of Polish products contributed to unfavourable changes in trade. On 17 June 1982, the chancellor presented the idea of the 'collective action'

<sup>99</sup> D. Stiefel, "'Zarte Bande' Österreich und die planwirtschaftlichen Länder", in: *"Zarte Bande" Österreich und die europäischen planwirtschaftlichen Länder. "Delicate Relationships" Austria and Europe's Planned Economies*, ed. by G. Enderle-Burcel, D. Stiefel, and A. Teichova, Series: Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs, vol. 9 (Wien, 2006), pp. 19–24.

<sup>100</sup> L. Jasiński, *Blżej centrum czy na peryferiach? Polskie kontakty gospodarcze z zagranicą w XX wieku* (Warszawa, 2011), p. 260; J. Laskowski, 'Gospodarka Austrii w ostatnich latach siódmej dekady', *Gospodarka Planowana*, no. 3 (1981), pp. 161–63.

<sup>101</sup> AMSZ, D. VI Austria, z. 8/86, w. 4, 'Note on major aspects of Polish-Austrian relations, 6 Feb. 1982', p. 3.

<sup>102</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 03-00/252-II.3/82, 'Polnischer Wunsch nach Herstellung politischer Kontakte mit Österreich, 16.03.1982'.

<sup>103</sup> ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1982, Polen 166, 'An das Bundesminister für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, 16.03.1981'.

of states to provide economic aid to Poland. At that time, he did not define any preliminary political conditions, stating only that the requirement of this action was the ordering and liberalization of the Polish economy. In December 1982, visits by representatives of some Austrian business concerns were organised, including Voestalpine, which had a good experience of cooperating with Poland. The chancellor, anticipating the economic slump in Poland, suggested not to delay supporting Warsaw. Poland could declare bankruptcy and thus no longer pay its debts. In the situation then there could be no question of even returning to the production indicators in 1981 as many branches of production had fallen into disrepair due to the shortages in the supply of raw materials. Poland was systematically plunging into a crisis.

In the second half of 1983, high-level officials of Poland and Austria met many times during visits to third-party countries. The goodwill of Austria, the need to develop trade exchange and the negative influence of the US on the political situation in Europe were emphasised. At the same time, when foreign politicians mentioned the Austrian support for Polish affairs, the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs made such information public. Thanks to Austria, Polish diplomats had made the first small step towards ending Poland's political isolation. In July 1983, martial law was abolished, having been only officially suspended on 31 December 1982. The Austrian side, however, still assessed the situation in Poland as very difficult. Despite the difficulties involved, however, the Austrian authorities decided to support Polish affairs in the international forum. As Maximilian Graf wrote, they were, therefore, a kind of 'icebreaker', helping Warsaw break out of its political isolation.<sup>104</sup>

## Summary

The analysis concerns Polish-Austrian bilateral relations as seen from the perspective of Polish diplomatic documents. The method of historical analysis was used to report political meetings and negotiations accompanying the introduction of martial law in Poland. The Polish authorities worked hard to restore proper relations with Western countries. To this end, official state visits with democratic countries were planned and prepared. The adopted research thesis centres around the lines that the Austrian government, inclined to help the Polish authorities, could and wanted to cross. In that period, a significant burden on bilateral relations was the inefficiency of the Polish economic system. In response to the social consequences of the imposition of martial law, Austria provided massive humanitarian support to Poland. The historical research methods adopted are designed to answer the question of whether communist Poland, limited by its economic and political system, could count on Austria to help them initiate reforms. Conclusions concern the possibility and magnitude of Austria's commitment to economic reforms in Poland. At the same time, the actions of Polish diplomacy were assessed, which were focused on reassuring the allies.

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<sup>104</sup> Graf, Ruggenthaler, 'Polnisch-österreichische Beziehungen', p. 55.

## Stosunki polsko-austriackie u schyłku zimnej wojny

Analiza dotyczy polsko-austriackich stosunków dwustronnych widzianych z perspektywy polskich dokumentów dyplomatycznych. Wykorzystano metodę analizy historycznej dla zrelacjonowania przebiegu spotkań politycznych i negocjacji towarzyszących okolicznościom wprowadzenia stanu wojennego w Polsce. Władze polskie intensywnie pracowały nad przywróceniem właściwych stosunków z państwami zachodnimi. Przyjęta teza badawcza koncentruje się wokół granic, które rząd austriacki, był skłonny przekroczyć, aby nieść Polsce pomoc. W tym okresie znacznym obciążeniem dla stosunków dwustronnych była niewydolność polskiego systemu gospodarczego. W odpowiedzi na zapasę gospodarczą i społeczne skutki wprowadzenia stanu wojennego Austria udzieliła Polsce ogromnej pomocy humanitarnej. Przyjęte metody badań historycznych miały na celu odpowiedź na pytanie, czy komunistyczna Polska, ograniczona przez swój system ekonomiczny i polityczny, mogła liczyć na pomoc Austrii w zainicjowaniu reform. Wnioski dotyczą skali zaangażowania Austrii w reformy gospodarcze w Polsce. Jednocześnie oceniono działania polskiej dyplomacji, które były skoncentrowane na uspokajaniu sojuszników.

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