

**December 5, 1980**

**Speech by Stanislaw Kania at Meeting of Party and  
State Leaders of the Warsaw Pact**

**Citation:**

"Speech by Stanislaw Kania at Meeting of Party and State Leaders of the Warsaw Pact", December 5, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, ANIC, Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, chancellery, no.5257, 9.12.1980. CWIHP Document Reader, vol.2. "Romania and the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1989"  
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112068>

**Summary:**

Kania talks at length about the problems facing the Polish United Worker's Party, he mentions the new Solidarity trade union, the Catholic Church, and the growing discontent of the workers.

**Original Language:**

Romanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

S P E E C H of comrade Stanislaw Kania at the meeting of the party and state leaders of the states participating in the Warsaw Treaty Moscow, 5 December 1980 Dear comrade Leonid Ilich Brezhnev, Dear comrades, It is difficult for me to speak today as the highest representative of the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP), not only because this is the first time that I have taken the floor before the experienced leaders of the fraternal parties in my capacity as First Secretary, but also because for us - the representatives of PUWP - it is very difficult to speak both before our people and before you, first of all since the fundamental sources of the crisis that arose in Poland are concentrated at the level of the central leadership of our party. This crisis is also the reason behind our meeting today. We appreciate this meeting as an internationalist preoccupation for normalizing the situation in our country. Our situation is really very difficult. It represents by itself a serious danger for socialism. This situation gives rise to the possibility of anarchical and counter-revolutionary actions taking place in Poland. We are aware of the responsibility we have to the working class and to the Polish people as regards the efficient solution of this crisis. We also perfectly understand the internationalist responsibility we have to the community of socialist countries and the international communist movement. We know that the situation in Poland may cause certain difficulties to our neighbors as well. We likewise know that we ourselves must come out of this difficult state. This is an obligation of ours, but we are firmly convinced that there are real possibilities of fulfilling the tasks we are facing. We maintain permanent contacts with the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and with comrade Brezhnev personally. We highly appreciate your opinions and advice, Leonid Ilich. Your assessment of the difficulties in our country, of the conflicts in Poland were of fundamental importance. For the second time, Leonid Ilich, the sentiment of appreciation for the characterization of the situation in Poland and our tasks for the future was indissolubly tied to your name. This contributes to the consolidation of Polish friendship and goodwill towards the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union - the leading force of the international communist movement. In our country we speak loudly about the immense material help which we have lately received from the Soviet Union. We highly appreciate the help given by the German Democratic Republic and other fraternal socialist countries as well. This help also has a great moral importance. The situation in our country continues to be very complicated. This is the deepest crisis that has ever taken place in Poland. Such a crisis has not happened in any fraternal socialist country. What do the difficulties of this crisis consist in? Mainly in the fact that it is not the first crisis, but the result of other crises that happened in Poland. Such events took place in Poznan, and they were followed by changes in the leadership and a wave of revisionism in Poland. Such events also happened in 1968, the well-known demonstrations of the students, then the dramatic events in December, 1970, on the Polish seaside, followed by the demonstrations in 1975, and, finally, in 1976. They were very dangerous demonstrations, triggered by price increases. The present crisis affects, to a large extent, the working class, as well as and other layers of the Polish society. This crisis has a mass character. Especially active in this crisis are young people - engineers, technicians, workers. The state of crisis continues. The main phase of the strikes has already passed, but the crisis drags on, and we feel its results every day. A certain state of demoralization has appeared, everybody wants to get more than can be produced. This crisis generated the appearance of unfavorable structures, especially the new trade unions, which cause a lot of problems. This is an attempt of the enemies of socialism to put our forces to the test. There are a great many reasons to worry. A lot of questions can be asked: was the appreciation of events in Poland really just? Was the way of coming out of this crisis really correct? We totally share comrade Leonid Ilich Brezhnev's opinion on the necessity of a deep analysis of the anatomy of all the events that generated this crisis. The understanding of all of the mechanisms that brought about the decomposition of the party, state, and economy of our country, of all the reasons and instruments that enabled the opposing forces to penetrate the working class, and the counterrevolutionary forces to infiltrate it are very important things. Despite all of the difficulties that turned up, we feel that our assessments corresponded to the actual situation. These assessments identified the main cause of the conflicts as the discontent of the working class, and there were real reasons for this discontent to appear. That is why the demonstrations had this mass character during the strikes. That is why there was even a mass participation of party members. That is why strikes also took place in a number of big enterprises in

Poland, including enterprises with old revolutionary traditions. The party turned out to be weak with regard to the ideological activity. We felt the result of the line that hid the class character. It was too early for us to launch the slogan of building a developed socialist society. We did this while in Poland's villages the individual household predominates, in the situation where in the 1970s the private initiative strongly developed in trade and other sectors. From the experience we have gained so far it is apparent that when mistakes appear in the party's policy, the working class – the party's foundation – reacts to these mistakes just as it must react. Our adversaries, the counter-revolutionaries, the fascists, taking advantage of our incompetence, tried to channel all this through a political groove. In our country, very sharp class conflicts occurred. I would like to mention in that respect that a lot of party members and people close to us lost their lives because of the bullets. We have adversaries in Poland. The counterrevolutionaries' activity becomes stronger when mass difficulties appear, and this is not accidental. It is not accidental that the intensification of the antisocialist activity coincided with the difficulties that appeared in 1976. After the unsuccessful attempt to effect a change of prices, the so-called "Workers' Self-Defense Committee" appeared, which was practically organized by the revisionist circles. At the same time, another organization also appeared, which today is called the "Confederation of Independent Poland". This organization emerged from nationalist circles. Both organizations have the same goals, more precisely counterrevolutionary goals. Even in the current difficult conditions, we think that the use of political measures to solve strike-type conflicts was appropriate. Different measures could have given rise to a wave of demonstrations, and bring about bloody confrontations. The results of such confrontations would have had repercussions on the whole socialist world. In spite of the problems we have, it seems to us that we did not have any choice other than compromise and accepting the creation of new trade unions. It was a very difficult – but necessary – decision to take at the fifth plenary session of our Central Committee. We did not have any other solution in relation to this issue. In our view, this decision creates conditions for using the mass organizations of the working people, in other words forces which otherwise could have been used by the opposition. How can the period after the biggest wave of strikes be assessed? It is a period of bitter class fight, a very difficult period for the party, and quite complex from a political point of view. The strike-type conflicts resulted in the appearance of a new trade union, "Solidarity", originating not in an initiative of the workers, but of the antisocialist elements, throughout the country. This trade union is supported by the workers, and enjoys popularity in the country since, as a result of the strikes, the workers obtained a number of social advantages. The leading nucleus of this organization is composed of people taking an outright counter-revolutionary, antisocialist stand. In the meantime, the crisis in the trade unions continues: trade union members keep on leaving the [industrial] branch trade unions. We succeeded in reducing the proportions of this process. In spite of the reduction, the [industrial] branch trade unions include somewhere about five million working people, while – unfortunately – about six million people joined the "Solidarity" trade union. During this period, the Catholic Church also strengthened its position, not only as an organization of faithful people but also as a defender of the material interests of workers. This process takes place mainly in Silesia, and on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Very active and very aggressive are the diversionist centers abroad, especially "Radio Free Europe" and the counterrevolutionary emigration circles, which supported the antisocialist circles with propaganda and financial aid granted to the "Solidarity" trade union. We strongly protested against this [activity] and obtained certain positive results, the backing down of hostile forces to some extent. There was, however, a certain disappointment and confusion in the ranks of party organizations due to the fact that we are again passing through a period of conflicts in the history of people's Poland. This also happened because "Solidarity" took into its own hands certain decisions, certain problems which it solved, although these problems should have been solved by the party organizations before the plenary session of our Central Committee. As a conclusion, I must say that our power, our party leadership came out of these strike-type conflicts with certain political advantages, in the sense that these conflicts were not solved by force but by political means, via agreements with the workers. The historical factors, the achievements of people's Poland, which are all related to the policy of our party, were also on our side. We have tried to formulate

certain assessments, certain programmatic stipulations in such a way that they correspond to the new circumstances. The main point was the affirmation that it was not socialism that had caused these deficiencies, but the fact that socialist principles had not been observed; that it is not the party that should be blamed for this situation, but the fact that some mistakes had been made. We launched the slogan of re-establishing socialist principles in Poland, reestablishing Leninist norms in our party life, and observing socialist ethics and norms of impartiality. The line adopted at the seventh Plenary Session was approved by the whole party, and by public opinion. Within the framework of the party there existed, for a long time, a certain state of mind, a situation in which the party members and the party active (core) turned their backs on the issues they had to solve. It is for this reason that of late, all the members of the Political Bureau and of the Central Committee have taken part in the meetings with the party members, as well as in the meetings with non-party members, the party thus reestablishing its force and influence on the masses. Nevertheless, a withdrawal of party members from the framework of the party is taking place. We have a certain reason for optimism in the fact that, in the last six months, we have received 26,000 new party candidates. We have done our utmost to reestablish the situation, but we have not succeeded in doing everything that was needed in regard to both the propaganda and the organization of the fight against the antisocialist forces. Consequently, the situation in the country is difficult, but it has a differentiated character. The most difficult situation is on the Baltic seaside, in the capital, and in the Wroclaw region. Positive changes took place in Silesia, Katowice, Cracow, and Poznan. We have also underrated the great force represented by the pressure exerted by the hundreds of thousands of party members for the purpose of calling to account those who committed the serious mistakes that had caused the situation - so dramatic - of our country. Hence the necessity of making cadres changes. At the latest plenary session of the Central Committee the necessity arose of drawing conclusions about comrade [Eduard] Gierek, who was invited to the plenary session but he did not turn up, and about comrade Jaroszewicz. In Poland there appeared a strong phenomenon of strongly criticizing the cases of many representatives of the leadership circles who enriched themselves, and used their situation in their own interests. Much to our regret, this phenomenon has had a mass character in the last ten years. Comrades, it is very difficult for us to come out of the crisis if the blame is laid on the leadership not for making mistakes but for the lack of elementary order, and that is why it is difficult to discuss such things because they are used by the reactionary forces to discredit all of the leadership cadres. We did not have the...but there are tens of thousands of people who act this way. We took the issue in our hands and assigned the task of analyzing this situation to the Party Control Commission. We were very much concerned about higher education. We were afraid that our adversary would succeed in influencing the youth organizations in the institutes of higher education, but he failed. Although there are attempts to create new youth organizations, the students' party body fights for the defense of the present organizations with positive results. The adversary did not succeed in creating new organizations of the peasants either. A favorable climate was created in the villages for the activity of our party, and our collaboration with the Peasants' Party is good. There have been a lot of strikes with social character in the last few months. These strikes strengthened the "Solidarity" trade union and made our position more difficult since the demands for pay rises were backed up by the workers. No such strikes have taken place in Poland in the last few days. Facts have occurred in the last few weeks proving that the intention exists to use social strikes in political actions. These were associated with the attempt of registering the "Solidarity" trade union, and were also due to the fact that we took a stand, pointing out that "Solidarity" would be registered when it had been defined as a socialist trade union. Strikes have taken place aiming at the destruction of the [industrial] branch trade unions. Such strikes have also taken place in the ranks of miners and railway workers, especially the strike at the Metallurgical Industrial Trust at Warsaw. This strike was triggered by the arrest of two people accused of stealing documents. Such strikes must be judged very severely since the counterrevolutionary forces are behind them. Through the agency of the strikes these forces show their true colours. There were hostile declarations in our country also on the part of the participants in the strikes, of antisocialist organizations, which were directed against the state. We made the

decision to arrest a group of persons who were members of the leadership of the "Confederation of Independent Poland". This caused a big reduction in the potential of this organization. Today and tomorrow more arrests of such persons will be made. [Speaking about the persons comprising the "Committee of Poland's defense", [I would point out that] we are preparing political solutions in regard to this organization. Its actions are connected with strikes of a political character, which make prominent their counterrevolutionary physiognomy. At the same time, they create a political climate which is favorable to us due to the fact that - on the one side - they manifest a wish for power, and - on the other side - adventurers show up who enjoy less consideration from the party active/core. Even though a critical situation arose, we succeeded, nevertheless, in isolating the anti-socialist forces to a certain extent. [We had to take a whole series of steps of repressive and administrative character. Under the leadership of the President of the Council of Ministers, there works a general staff constituted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, which monitor the application of a series of measures among which the introduction of military state [state of emergency, martial law] in Poland is included since the country's constitution does not provide for such a situation. We envisaged such a measure only from a military point of view. In addition, an operation to take the most active leaders of the counterrevolution into custody is being prepared. The principles of ensuring connections and the functioning of mass propaganda means, along with the communication and transport ways, are also being prepared. We are also creating special groups of party members whom we trust without reserve, and - if need be - we will give them weapons. We have selected 19,000 such comrades so far, and we think we will have 30,000 by the end of December. Part of these preparations, the information about these essential preparations, fell into the hands of the counterrevolution's leaders. [The appreciations and decisions of the 7th plenary session of the Central Committee made the situation even more serious, but in our view a more favorable climate for a counteroffensive appeared. At the 7th Plenary Session of the Central Committee, we focused our attention on the issues relating to the strengthening of party cohesion, of socialist democracy. The justness of the line adopted by the 6th Plenary Session of the Central Committee was confirmed to the full, and concurrently - in an acute way - the danger of this line being undermined by means of strikes, anarchy, and the activity of downright enemies having counterrevolutionary goals was underscored. A warning was issued at the Plenary Session. The Central Committee issued an appeal to the people, underlining the danger hovering over socialist Poland. All these have a more acute character than before. This is also because the situation calls for such a tone. Hostile demonstrations and actions existed in our country before as well, but the important fact is that now the state of mind of the working class allows us to speak with such a tone. This tone is approved by public opinion, which is an essential change in our situation, and we are going in this direction.] What are the main issues our emergence from the crisis is dependent upon? [The main issue is the party. It is very important for us to come out of this situation... to understand the great danger menacing socialism in Poland. Not all of the party members realize this danger. We underscore the necessity of ideological unity, of discipline, of the fight against factionism, which - in our conditions - gives rise to attempts to create, throughout the country, several centers, appeasement commissions, coordination commissions outside the party structure, with the regional committees, and in other instances. One of the organizers of this factionist activity was expelled from the party a week ago.] A very important issue for us is the Party Congress. The slogan of convening the Party Congress caused a lot of emotion in the party ranks. We felt the pressure to convene the Congress even in the course of this year. We deem this to be a very dangerous thing, where a great danger for the party is hidden since at the present time there are no conditions for a good organization of the congress, and we cannot be sure that we could have delegates who are people faithful to the party cause, to Marxism-Leninism. In order for us not to estrange ourselves from the present public atmosphere, we established the date for convening the Congress to be at the end of the first trimester or the beginning of the second trimester next year. It seems to us that we cannot convene the Party Congress before this date.] We are under pressure to organize elections within the framework of the party. We agreed that the elections take place only at the level of a number of base organizations since we were not convinced of their outcomes. If we

had organized elections for the city and region committees, most of the cadres would have been replaced. We are satisfied with the cadre changes we have so far made. These comrades go with more courage to discuss with people. The second issue of concern for us is the issue of the propaganda means. There are many bad things here. We believe that in the situation created the mass information means have an important role. That is why we think that we can be criticized for the way we held the reins of the press, radio, and television activity. We have made several changes of cadres in these fields, and we are going to make more such changes in the future, too. We have to change the tone of our propaganda. In the main, this is black propaganda. We have groups of publicists whom we can trust at our disposal. We have a good situation at the press organ of the Central Committee, the "Politika" newspaper. This publication is nowadays better than in the past. We have the same situation with other newspapers. In general, we have the possibility of controlling the situation in relation to the propaganda organs, although there are still a great many bad things in this domain. The third issue is the situation in the trade union movement, the reestablishment of the class character of the trade union movement. Congresses took place in all of the [industrial] branch trade unions, leadership organs were created, new coordination structures for the activity of trade unions were set up. We will probably call it the Trade Union Federation. The issue, however, does not boil down only to the name. We will exert an active influence for the organization of elections within the framework of the "Solidarity" trade union. From the current assessment of the situation, it is apparent that wherever elections took place, the extremist elements or the most reactionary ones did not enter into the leadership organs. A great many communists were elected by secret ballot, in the leadership organs. The outcome of the elections shows that much better organs were elected. It is these workers' elections that the opposition fears, consequently we will try to have such elections in the future. We will act more energetically regarding the criticism against the infringement of the statute of "Solidarity" trade union. This statute defines "Solidarity" as a political trade union organization. The "Solidarity" organization has a very difficult situation. The leader of this organization, Lech Walesa, is a rather un-popular character, in spite of the fact that much is being done to increase this person's popularity. He is a man directed by others. "Solidarity" has influence on the people involved in the "Defense Committee", but we want to separate these organizations. These people concoct counterrevolutionary plans that aim very far, and they are making preparations in that direction. We are concerned, however, by the fact that "Solidarity" organization exerts its influence on young people. "Solidarity" is not a "committee for the defense of workers", but a genuine "Anarchy". There are people there who are ready for any kinds of actions. The leader of the town organization in Gdansk is a 20-year-old man, and the one in Warsaw is 26 years old. This is a curious phenomenon in our country. We have to do with a very dangerous group, a determined group, which does not submit to any positive influence from outside. The fourth issue is the youth. The youth organizations are attacked from all sides. As I said before, the youth organizations...and we will further support them. As a result of our party's activity, we are satisfied with the position and... (?) of our armed forces, of the security forces (/)...to concern us, to worry us. We must have permanently in mind the fact that the difficult situation in our country has a certain influence on the army as well. It is a fact that now a quarter of the military still within their compulsory term of service in the armed forces have been discharged, and in their place the same number of young people - among whom certain youths who participated in the strikes or whose parents took part in the strikes - have been drafted for military service. This confronts us with a difficult task - the political-ideological education and the issue of discipline in our armed forces. We must also take into consideration the necessity of influencing the families of the military and of the troops in the security forces. We have to deal to a larger extent with the affirmation of the firm position of the Seim and the local councils. We must not exclude the fact that here, too, requirements of the counterrevolutionary forces will appear demanding the organization of elections. The important issue is now that the Seim will have to enjoy the support of all the social categories. Consequently, we want the Seim to attract in its activity as many people as possible. At the end of the various discussions we include an hour of questions the ministers are asked to answer. These meetings are covered by the TV stations and enjoy high appreciation

by the public . . . within the framework of the Seim because this way our socialist parliament is strengthened even more. I have to point out that we are coming up against very big economic difficulties. The principal problem is the very poor supply of the market. These phenomena can cause the danger of acute conflicts, and disorder. Today, the difference between demand and supply is about 20%, and it is rising permanently. The goods most necessary to the population are in insufficient supply. We are introducing the rational distribution of foodstuffs, especially meat. From this point of view, we will be the only country in Europe, where foodstuffs are rationed, but we have no alternative. We decided to reduce the export of color TVs, and cars with the view of selling them on the home market. In our conditions, the issue of providing for the population is a very important political issue. For us it is very important now to be able to import foodstuffs. At the present moment we are drawing up the plan for next year. All of our calculations show that we will have a very difficult situation as well. If this plan proves to be realistic, this will show that 1981 will be the third year in which the national income decreases. This reflects negatively not only on the living conditions of the people, but also on the state of mind of the Polish population. Coal production will also diminish since the miners will not work on Sundays any longer. We also have serious problems in regard to our foreign debts. Our debts in connection with the short-term credits amount to about twenty-six billion dollars. Next year we will have to import goods for about ten billion dollars. Consequently, the exports will not be enough for us to make the payments for credits, and the whole import will be made on credit. This created a very complicated situation. Poland is still very strongly dependent economically on capitalist countries, especially the Federal Republic Germany and the USA. This situation gives rise to certain threats of a political character. The United States gave us to understand that if we participate in the International Monetary Fund, we will have more advantageous credit terms. Our position is very clear on that score. We let the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union know our position, telling them that we will not make such a decision - first of all from the point of view of principle since we do not want to create a diversion in our family of socialist countries - and, secondly, because if we used such credits, certain pressures on us to increase wages on a national scale would once more gain impetus. We took certain steps to stabilize the economic situation of our country. This activity will last about three years, and its purpose will be to organize and restabilize the situation in Polish economy. To be able to come out of this difficult economic situation, we need strong help. We asked comrade Brezhnev to grant us help, and we have guarantees from the Soviet experts. We have already received a lot of help from the Soviet Union, a fact we highly appreciate. We are now drawing up an economic reform, which is prepared by an Economic Commission. We want to use the experience of the fraternal socialist countries. The degree of complexity of our situation consists in the simultaneous character of a number of negative phenomena in both economy and policy. The influence of counterrevolutionary, antisocialist elements is felt in the public opinion, in the party. This influence is felt ever more strongly by the workers, which aggravates our situation even more. For these reasons, the situation sometimes becomes dramatic. In a few days' time we will have a very difficult moment: it will be ten years since the events in December, 1970. This date will be noted, and we have already started thinking about the attitude we will have to take towards this issue. We cannot back down and leave this issue at the mercy of fate. We do not want this to be directed against . . . , against the people's power in our country. We share the appreciation given by the 6th Plenary Session of the Central Committee, which was reaffirmed by the 7th Plenary Session. We have to keep on acting on a wide front. The most important is the party, its consolidation, its influence on the whole working class. A main condition is to stop the activity of the counterrevolutionary forces. The evolution of the situation can present us with the necessity to take steps not only of a political character. Rest assured, comrades, we will be ready to act against the counterrevolution, for the defense of socialism in Poland. Thank you for your attention.