Public opinion and political change in Poland, 1980-1982

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Abstract
This book deals with the importance of public opinion in Poland at the time of the rise of Solidarity and the workers' movement, when opinion polling and freedom of political debate were at their height. Dr Mason's analysis is based on the most open and revealing opinion polls ever to issue from a communist country, polls conducted by the government, the universities and Solidarity itself on fundamental political issues - the nature of the socialist state, the role of the party, popular confidence in Solidarity, the church and the regime. The lack of information about public attitudes is perhaps the major weakness of all studies of communist regimes. Dr Mason's data provide important insights into relations between the rulers and the ruled, and provide the opportunity of balancing the contentions of traditional elites with more objective data from below.

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Poland since 1980 undoubtedly explains a good deal. Political apathy is the lack of psychological involvement in public affairs, emotional detachment from civic obligation, and abstention from political activity. But it is not any of these things alone, and these may be regarded as necessary, but not sufficient, components of political apathy. Political apathy is evidenced in mass, collective behavior but has its origins at the level of the...