

= Lech Wałęsa =

Lech Wałęsa (/ ˈlɛk wɔˈwɛns/ or / wɔˈɫɛns/ ; Polish : [ˈlɛx vaˈwɛ ˈsa] ; born 29 September 1943) is a retired Polish politician and labor activist . He co -@ founded and headed Solidarity (Solidarność) , the Soviet bloc 's first independent trade union , won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 , and served as President of Poland from 1990 to 1995 .

Wałęsa was an electrician by trade . Soon after beginning work at Lenin Shipyard (now Gdańsk Shipyard) , he became a trade union activist , for which he was persecuted by the Communist authorities , placed under surveillance , fired in 1976 , and arrested several times . In August 1980 he was instrumental in political negotiations that led to the ground @-@ breaking Gdańsk Agreement between striking workers and the government . He became a co @-@ founder of the Solidarity trade union movement . After martial law was imposed in Poland and Solidarity was outlawed , Wałęsa was arrested again . Upon his release from custody he continued his activism and was prominent in the establishment of the 1989 Round Table Agreement that led to semi @-@ free parliamentary elections in June 1989 , and to a Solidarity @-@ led government .

In the Polish general election of 1990 , Wałęsa successfully ran for the newly re @-@ established office of President of Poland . He presided over Poland 's transition from communism to a post @-@ communist state , but his popularity waned and his role in Polish politics diminished after he narrowly lost the 1995 presidential election . As of 2016 , Wałęsa continues to speak and lecture on history and politics in Poland and abroad .

= = Personal life = =

Wałęsa was born in Popowo , German @-@ occupied Poland . His father , Bolesław Wałęsa (1908 ? 1945) , was a carpenter who was rounded up and interned in a forced labor camp at Młyniec (outpost of KL Stutthof) by the German occupying forces before Lech was born . Bolesław returned home after the war but died two months later from exhaustion and illness shortly before his 34th birthday . Lech 's mother , Feliksa Wałęsa (née Kamieńska ; 1916 ? 1975) , has been credited with shaping her son 's beliefs and tenacity .

When Lech was nine , Feliksa married her brother @-@ in @-@ law , Stanisław Wałęsa (1916 ? 1981) , a farmer . Lech had three elder full siblings ; Izabela (1934 ? 2012) , Edward (b.1937) , and Stanisław (b.1939) ; and three younger half @-@ brothers ; Tadeusz (b.1946) , Zygmunt (b.1948) , and Wojciech (1951 ? 1988) . In 1973 Lech 's mother and stepfather emigrated to the US for economic reasons . They lived in Jersey City , where Feliksa died in a car accident in 1975 and Stanisław died of a heart attack in 1981 . Both of them were buried in Poland .

In 1961 Lech graduated from primary and vocational school in nearby Chalin and Lipno as a qualified electrician . He worked as a car mechanic from 1961 to 1965 , and then embarked on his two @-@ year , obligatory military service , attaining the rank of corporal before beginning work on 12 July 1967 as an electrician at Lenin Shipyard (Stocznia Gdańska im . Lenina) , now called Gdańsk Shipyard (Stocznia Gdańska) in Gdańsk .

On 8 November 1969 Wałęsa married Danuta Gołota . The couple have eight children ; Bogdan , Sławomir , Przemysław , Jarosław , Magdalena , Anna , Maria @-@ Wiktoria , and Brygida . As of 2016 , Anna is running her father 's office in Gdańsk and Jarosław is a European MP .

In 2008 Wałęsa underwent a coronary artery stent placement and the implantation of a cardiac pacemaker at Houston Methodist Hospital in the US .

= = Solidarity movement = =

From early in his career , Wałęsa was interested in workers ' concerns ; in 1968 he encouraged shipyard colleagues to boycott official rallies that condemned recent student strikes . He was a charismatic leader , who helped organize the illegal 1970 strikes at the Gdańsk Shipyard when workers protested the government 's decree raising food prices and he was considered for the position of chairman of the strike committee . The strikes ' outcome , which involved the deaths of

over 30 workers , galvanized Wałęsa's views on the need for change . In June 1976 , Wałęsa lost his job at the Gdańsk Shipyard because of his continued involvement in illegal unions , strikes , and a campaign to commemorate the victims of the 1970 protests . Afterwards he worked as an electrician for several other companies but his activism led to him continually being laid off and he was jobless for long periods . Wałęsa and his family were under constant surveillance by the Polish secret police ; his home and workplace were always bugged . Over the next few years , he was arrested several times for participating in dissident activities .

Wałęsa worked closely with the Workers ' Defense Committee (KOR) , a group that emerged to lend aid to people arrested after the 1976 labor strikes and to their families . In June 1978 he became an activist of the underground Free Trade Unions of the Coast (Wolne Związki Zawodowe Wybrzeża) . On 14 August 1980 , another rise in food prices led to a strike at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk , of which Wałęsa was one of the instigators . Wałęsa scaled the shipyard fence and quickly became one of the strike leaders . The strike inspired other similar strikes in Gdańsk , which then spread across Poland . Wałęsa headed the Inter-Plant Strike Committee , coordinating the workers at Gdańsk and at 20 other plants in the region . On 31 August the government , represented by Mieczysław Jagielski , signed an accord (the Gdańsk Agreement) with the Strike Coordinating Committee . The agreement granted the Lenin Shipyard workers the right to strike and permitted them to form an independent trade union . The Strike Coordinating Committee legalized itself as the National Coordinating Committee of the Solidarity (Solidarity) Free Trade Union , and Wałęsa was chosen as chairman of the Committee . The Solidarity trade union quickly grew , ultimately claiming over 10 million members – more than a quarter of Poland's population . Wałęsa's role in the strike , in the negotiations , and in the newly formed independent trade union gained him fame on the international stage .

Wałęsa held his position until 13 December 1981 , when General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in Poland . Wałęsa and many other Solidarity leaders and activists were arrested ; he was incarcerated for 11 months until 14 November 1982 at Chylice , Otwock , and Arłamów ; eastern towns near the Soviet border . On 8 October 1982 Solidarity was outlawed . In 1983 Wałęsa applied to return to the Gdańsk Shipyard as an electrician . The same year , he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize . He was unable to accept it himself , fearing Poland's government would not let him back into the country . His wife Danuta accepted the prize on his behalf .

Through the mid-1980s , Wałęsa continued underground Solidarity-related activities . Every issue of the leading underground weekly publication Tygodnik Mazowsze bore his motto , " Solidarity will not be divided or destroyed " . Following a 1986 amnesty for Solidarity activists , Wałęsa co-founded the Provisional Council of NSZZ Solidarity (Tymczasowa Rada NSZZ Solidarność) , the first overt legal Solidarity entity since the declaration of martial law . From 1987 to 1990 , he organized and led the semi-illegal Provisional Executive Committee of the Solidarity Trade Union . In mid-1988 he instigated work stoppage strikes at the Gdańsk Shipyard .

After months of strikes and political deliberations , at the conclusion of the 10th plenary session of the Polish United Workers ' Party (PZPR , the Polish communist party) , the government agreed to enter into Round Table Negotiations that lasted from February to April 1989 . Wałęsa was an informal leader of the non-governmental side in the negotiations . During the talks , he traveled throughout Poland giving speeches in support of the negotiations . At the end of the talks , the government signed an agreement to re-establish the Solidarity Trade Union and to organize semi-free elections to the Polish parliament ; in accordance with the Round Table Agreement , only members of the Communist Party and its allies could stand for 65 percent of the seats in the lower house , the Sejm .

In December 1988 Wałęsa co-founded the Solidarity Citizens ' Committee ; this was ostensibly an advisory body but in practice a political party that won the parliamentary elections in June 1989 . Solidarity took all the seats in the Sejm that were subject to free elections , and all but one seat in the newly re-established Senate . Wałęsa was one of Solidarity's most public figures ; he was an active campaigner , appearing on many campaign posters , but did not run for parliament himself . Solidarity winners in the Sejm elections were referred to as " Wałęsa's team " or " Lech's team " because they had all had appeared on their election posters with Wałęsa .

While ostensibly only chairman of Solidarity , Wałęsa played a key role in practical politics . In August 1989 he persuaded leaders of parties formerly allied with the Communist Party to form a non-communist coalition government ? the first non-Communist government in the Soviet Bloc . The parliament elected Tadeusz Mazowiecki as the first non-Communist Prime Minister of Poland in over forty years .

= = Presidency = =

Following the June 1989 parliamentary elections , Wałęsa was disappointed some of his former fellow campaigners were satisfied to govern alongside former Communists . He decided to run for the newly re-established office of president , using the slogan , " I don 't want to , but I 've got no choice " (" Nie chcem , ale muszem . ") . On 9 December 1990 Wałęsa won the presidential election , defeating Prime Minister Mazowiecki and other candidates to become the first freely elected president of Poland in 63 years , and the first non-Communist president in 45 years . In 1993 he founded his own political party , the Nonpartisan Bloc for Support of Reforms (BBWR) ; the acronym echoed that of Józef Piłsudski 's " Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government , " of 1928 ? 35 , likewise an ostensibly non-Communist political organization .

During his presidency , Wałęsa saw Poland through privatization and transition to a free market economy (the Balcerowicz Plan) , Poland 's 1991 first completely free parliamentary elections , and a period of redefinition of the country 's foreign relations . He successfully negotiated the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland and won a substantial reduction in foreign debts .

Wałęsa supported Poland 's entry into NATO and the European Union , both of which occurred after his presidency , in 1999 and 2004 , respectively . In the early 1990s he proposed the creation of a sub-regional security system called NATO bis . The concept was supported by right-wing and populist movements in Poland but garnered little support abroad ; Poland 's neighbors , some of which (e.g. Lithuania) , had recently regained independence and tended to see the proposal as Polish neo-imperialism .

Wałęsa has been criticized for a confrontational style and for instigating " war at the top " , whereby former Solidarity allies clashed with one another , causing annual changes of government . This increasingly isolated Wałęsa on the political scene . As he lost political allies , he came to be surrounded by people who were viewed by the public as incompetent and disreputable . Mudslinging during election campaigns tarnished his reputation . Some thought Wałęsa , an ex-electrician with no higher education , was too plain-spoken and too undignified for the post of president . Others thought him too erratic in his views or complained he was too authoritarian and that he sought to strengthen his own power at the expense of the Sejm . Wałęsa 's national security advisor Jacek Merkel credited the shortcomings of Wałęsa 's presidency to his inability to comprehend the office of the president as an institution . He was an effective union leader capable of articulating what the workers felt but as president he had difficulty delegating power or navigating bureaucracy . Wałęsa 's problems were compounded by the difficult transition to a market economy ; in the long run it was seen as highly successful but it lost Wałęsa 's government much popular support .

Wałęsa 's BBWR performed poorly in the 1993 parliamentary elections ; at times his popular support dwindled to 10 percent and he narrowly lost the 1995 presidential election , winning 33 . 11 percent of the vote in the first round and 48 . 28 percent in the run-off against Aleksander Kwaśniewski , who represented the resurgent Polish post-Communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) . Wałęsa 's fate was sealed by his poor handling of the media ; in televised debates he appeared incoherent and rude ; in response to Kwaśniewski 's extended hand at the end of the first of the two debates , he replied that the post-Communist leader could " shake his leg " . After the election Wałęsa said he was going into " political retirement " and his role in politics became increasingly marginal .

= = Post @-@ presidency = =

After losing the 1995 election , Wałęsa announced he would return to work as an electrician at the Gdańsk Shipyard . Soon afterwards he changed his mind and chose to travel around the world on a lecture circuit . Wałęsa developed a portfolio of three lectures (" The Impact of an Expanded NATO on Global Security " , " Democracy : The Never @-@ Ending Battle " and " Solidarity : The New Millennium ") , and reads them at universities and public events with an appearance fee of around £ 50 @,@ 000 (\$ 70 @,@ 000) .

In 1995 he founded the Lech Wałęsa Institute , a think tank with a mission " to popularize the achievements of Polish Solidarity , educate young generations , promote democracy , and build civil society in Poland and around the world " . In 1997 he founded a new party , Christian Democracy of the 3rd Polish Republic , hoping it would help him to successfully run in future elections .

Wałęsa 's contention for the 2000 presidential election ended with a crushing defeat when he polled 1 @.@ 01 percent of the vote . His humiliation was increased because Aleksander Kwaśniewski , who was re @-@ elected in the first round with 54 percent of the vote , is a former Communist apparatchik . Wałęsa polled in seventh place , after which he announced his withdrawal from Polish politics .

In 2006 Wałęsa quit Solidarity in protest of the union 's support of the ruling right @-@ wing Law and Justice party , and Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński ? twin brothers who had been prominent in Solidarity and were now serving as the country 's president and prime minister , respectively . The main point of disagreement was the Kaczyńskis ? focus on rooting out those who had been involved in communist rule and their party 's attempt to make public all the files of the former communist secret police . Until then only members of the government and parliament had to declare any connection with the former security services . Wałęsa and his supporters argued the so @-@ called transparency legislation advocated by the government might turn into a witch hunt and the more than 500 @,@ 000 Poles who had possibly collaborated with the communist secret police could face exposure .

Despite waning popularity at home , Wałęsa 's international reputation remained untouched . He continued his lecture circuit around the world , occasionally appearing in headlines . In 2014 in a widely publicized interview , Wałęsa expressed his disappointment in another Nobel laureate , US president Barack Obama : he told CNN , " When he was elected there was great hope in the world . We were hoping that Obama would reclaim moral leadership for America , but that failed ... in terms of politics and morality America no longer leads the world " . Wałęsa also accused Obama of not deserving his Nobel Peace Prize ; during the 2012 US presidential campaign he endorsed Obama 's opponent Mitt Romney . In September 2015 , Wałęsa again hit the headlines after sharing his thoughts on the migrant crisis in Europe with media , saying , " watching the refugees on television , I noticed that ... they are well fed , well dressed and maybe even are richer than we are ... If Europe opens its gates , soon millions will come through and while living among us will start exercising their own customs , including beheading " .

= = Wałęsa and secret police = =

Since the early 1980s there were accusations that Wałęsa had served as an informant for the communist security services in the 1970s , despite his vehement denials and the ruling of a special court in 2000 that cleared him of the allegations of collaboration . The controversy around those allegations resurfaced in 2008 with the publication of a book that purported to prove Wałęsa , using the code name Bolek , had been an operative for the security services from 1970 to 1976 . The issue resurfaced again in February 2016 when the Institute of National Remembrance seized materials from the widow of Czesław Kiszczak , a former minister of the interior , that were claimed to document Wałęsa 's role as a spy for the security services .

= = = Court ruling = = =

On 12 August 2000 , Wałęsa , who was running a presidential campaign at the time , was cleared by the special Lustration Court of charges that he collaborated with the Communist @-@ era secret

services and reported on the activities of his fellow shipyard workers , due to the lack of evidence . Anti @-@ communists Piotr Naimski , one of the first members of the Workers ' Defense Committee that led to the Solidarity trade union , and Antoni Macierewicz , Wa??sa 's former Interior Minister , testified against him in the closed vetting trial . Naimski , who said he testified with a " heavy heart " , expressed his disappointment that Wa??sa " made a mistake by not going openly to the public , and he has missed an important chance " . According to Naimski , the court cleared Wa??sa on " technical grounds " because it did not find certain original documents ? many of which had been destroyed since 1989 ? offered sufficient proof that Wa??sa was lying .

In 1992 , Naimski , as a head of the State Protection Office , started the process of screening people suspected of being Communist collaborators in Poland . In June that year he helped Antoni Macierewicz prepare a list of 64 members of the government and parliament who were named as spies in the police records ; these included Wa??sa , then the Polish president . Wa??sa 's name was included on the list after a wrenching internal debate about the virtues of honesty versus political discretion . In response to the publication of this list , President Wa??sa immediately engineered the fall of prime minister Jan Olszewski and the dismissal of Interior Minister Macierewicz . A parliamentary committee later concluded Wa??sa had not signed an agreement with the secret police .

A 1997 Polish law made the vetting a requirement for those seeking high public office . According to the law , it is not a crime to have collaborated , but those who denies it and are found to have lied are banned from political life for ten years . The 2000 presidential election was the first use of this law .

Despite helping Wa??sa in 2005 to receive the official status of a " victim of communist regime " from the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) , this court ruling did not convince many Poles . In November 2009 Wa??sa sued the president of Poland , Lech Kaczy?ski over his repeated collaboration allegations . Five months later , Kaczy?ski failed to invite Wa??sa to the commemoration service at Katyn , which arguably saved Wa??sa 's life because the presidential plane crashed , killing all on board . In August 2010 , Wa??sa lost a libel case against Krzysztof Wyszowski , his former fellow activist , who also publicly accused Wa??sa of being a communist agent in 1970s .

= = = 2008 book = = =

The most comprehensive analysis of Wa??sa 's possible collaboration with secret police was provided in a 2008 book *The SB (S?u?ba Bezpiecze?stwa ; secret police) and Lech Wa??sa : A Biographical Contribution (SB a Lech Wa??sa . Przyczynek do biografii)* . The book was written by two historians from the Institute of National Remembrance , S?awomir Cenckiewicz and Piotr Gontarczyk , and included documents from the archives of the secret police that were inherited by the Institute . Among the documents were registration cards , memos , notes from the secret police , and reports from the informant .

The book 's authors said Wa??sa , working under the code name Bolek , was a secret police informant from 1970 (after he was released from the arrest) till 1976 (before he was fired from the shipyard) . According to them , " he wrote reports and informed on more than 20 people and some of them were persecuted by the communist police . He identified people and eavesdropped on his colleagues at work while they were listening to Radio Free Europe for example " . The book describes the fate of the seven of his alleged victims ; information regarding others was destroyed or stolen from the files . According to them , Wa??sa received over 13 @,@ 000 zlotys as remuneration for his services from the SB , while the monthly salary at the time was about 3 @,@ 500 zlotys . The authors said oppositionist activity in Poland in the first half of 1970s was minimal and Wa??sa 's role in it was quite marginal . However , according to the book , despite formally renouncing his ties with SB in 1976 , Wa??sa went on to have contacts with communist officials .

The book also said that during his 1990 @-@ 1995 presidency , Wa??sa used his office to destroy the evidence of his collaboration with secret police by removing incriminating documents from the archives . According to the book , historians discovered that with the help of the state intelligence

agency , Wa??sa , Interior Minister Andrzej Milczanowski , and other members of Wa??sa 's administration , had borrowed from the archives the secret police files that had connections to Wa??sa , and returned them with key pages removed . When it was discovered at the turn of 1995 / 96 , the following prosecutorial inquiry was discontinued for political reasons despite the case attracting much public attention .

S?awomir Cenciekiewicz also said that in 1983 , when Wa??sa was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize , the secret police tried to embarrass him and leaked information about Wa??sa 's previous collaboration with the government . By this time though , Wa??sa was already so popular that most Poles did not believe the official media and dismissed the allegations as a manipulation by the Communist authorities . The book 's first print run sold out in Poland within hours . The book received substantial coverage in the media , provoked nationwide debate , and was noted by the international press . Wa??sa vowed to sue the authors but never did .

= = = Kiszczak archives = = =

On 18 February 2016 the INR in Warsaw announced it had seized a package of original documents that allegedly proved Wa??sa was a paid Communist informant . The documents dated from the period 1970 @-@ 1976 ; they were seized from the home of a recently deceased former interior minister , General Czes?aw Kiszczak . The documents ' authenticity was confirmed by an archival expert , but the handwriting examination demanded by the prosecutors could take up to six months .

The dossier consists of two folders ; a " personal file " containing 90 pages of documents , including a handwritten commitment to cooperate with the secret police dated 21 December 1970 , and signed Lech Wa??sa - Bolek with a pledge he would never admit his collaboration with secret police ? not even to family ? ; the file also contains the confirmations of having received funds. and a " work file " contains 279 pages of documents , including numerous reports by Bolek on his co @-@ workers at Gdansk Shipyard , and notes by secret police officers from meetings with him . According to one note , Wa??sa agreed to collaborate out of fear of persecution after the workers ? protest in 1970 . The documents also show that at first Bolek eagerly provided information on opinions and actions by his co @-@ workers and took money for the information , but his enthusiasm diminished and the quality of his information decreased until he was deemed no longer valuable and collaboration with him was terminated in 1976 .

The sealed dossier also contained a letter , hand @-@ written by Kiszczak in April 1996 , in which he informs the Director of the Polish Central Archives of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych) about the accompanying files documenting the collaboration of Wa??sa with the Communist Security Service and asks him not to publish this information until five years after Wa??sa ? s death . In his letter Kiszczak said he kept the documents out of reach : before the 1989 revolution , trying to protect Wa??sa ? s reputation ; and afterwards to make sure they did not disappear or were used for political reasons . This letter and the accompanying documents had never been sent .

On 16 February 2016 , about three months after Kiszczak 's death , his widow Maria approached the Institute of National Remembrance and suggested selling it the archives for 90 @,@ 000 zlotys (\$ 23 @,@ 000) . However , according to the Polish law , all documents of political police must be handed in to the state . The administration of the institute notified the prosecutor 's office , which conducted a police search of the Kiszczaks ' house and seized all the historic documents . Maria Kiszczak later said she had not read her husband ? s letter and had " made a mistake " .

= = = Wa??sa 's response = = =

For years Wa??sa vehemently denied collaborating with the communist secret police and dismissed the incriminating files as forgeries created by the SB to compromise him . Wa??sa also denies that during his presidency he removed documents incriminating him from the archives . Until 2008 he denied having ever seen his secret police file . After the publication of the book SB a Lech Wa??sa in 2008 , he said that while he was president " I did borrow the file , but didn 't remove

anything from it . I saw there were some documents there about me and that they were clearly forgeries . I told my secretaries to tape up and seal the file . I wrote ' don 't open ' on it . But someone didn 't obey , removed the papers , now casting suspicion on me . " Wa??sa 's interior minister Andrzej Milczanowski denied the cover @-@ up and said he " had the full legal right to make those documents available to President Wa??sa " and " no original documents were removed from the file " , which contained only photocopies .

Wa??sa has offered conflicting statements regarding the authenticity of the documents . Initially he has appeared to come close to an admission , saying in 1992 , " in December 1970 , I signed three or four documents " to escape from the secret police . In his 1987 autobiography A Way of Hope , Wa??sa said , " It is also the truth that I had not left that clash completely pure . They gave me a condition : signature ! And then I signed . " He denies he acted upon the collaboration agreement . However , in his later years Wa??sa said all the documents are forgeries and told BBC in 2008 , " you will not find any signature of mine agreeing to collaborate anywhere " .

In 2009 , after publication of another biography connecting him with the secret police (Lech Walesa : Idea and History by Pawel Zyzak) , Wa??sa threatened to leave Poland if historians continue to question his past . He said that before revealing such information " a historian must decide whether this serves Poland " . After the accusations against him resurfaced with the discovery of the Kiszczak dossier on 16 February 2016 , Wa??sa called the files " lies , slander and forgeries " , and said he " never took money and never made any spoken or written report on anyone " . He said of the Polish public , which was about to believe in the allegations , " you have betrayed me , not me you " and " it was I who safely led Poland to a complete victory over communism " . On his blog on 20 February 2016 Wa??sa said in the 1970s a secret police officer begged him to sign the financial documents because this officer lost money handed to him to purchase a vehicle . Wa??sa appealed to this officer to step forward now and clear him of the accusations .

= = Religious and personal views = =

Wa??sa is a devout Roman Catholic Christian . He is a staunch opponent of abortion ; in 1993 during his presidency he signed a law restricting abortions in Poland . This law reversed the virtually free access to abortion that existed since 1956 and limited its use to cases in which the woman 's life is in danger , pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest , or the fetus is irreparably damaged . Doctors who violate the rules now face up to two years in prison . This abortion law is one of the most restrictive in Europe , deeply divided the country , and saw the former Solidarity coalition split between liberals and conservatives . The Polish Catholic Church supported Wa??sa , but public opinion polls indicated most Poles favored retaining a liberal abortion law ; 1 @.@ 3 million Poles signed a petition demanding a plebiscite rather than governmental imposition of the law . In 1994 a group of women legislators tried to ease the criteria for abortion ; Wa??sa vetoed their amendment .

Wa??sa is well known for his anti @-@ gay position . In 2013 he said on Polish television that homosexual people have no right to a prominent role in politics , " They have to know that they are a minority and must adjust to smaller things " . He also said homosexual MPs should sit " behind a wall " in a parliament . Despite sharp international criticism and a legal complaint of " propaganda of hate against a sexual minority " , Wa??sa refused to apologize for his comments . At a political rally in 2000 , he described gay people as " sick " and said , " I believe those people need medical treatment " . During the drawing up of a new Polish Constitution in 1995 , President Wa??sa argued against the inclusion of gay rights provisions . In 2014 City authorities of San Francisco renamed Walesa Street because of his " anti @-@ gay remarks " . A deputy speaker of the Polish Parliament said Wa??sa 's anti @-@ gay position could jeopardize his international career as a human rights speaker .

= = Honors = =

In 1983 Wa??sa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize . Since then he has received more than 30 state decorations and more than 50 awards from 30 countries , including Order of the Bath (UK) ,

Order of Merit (Germany) , Legion of Honor (France) , and European Human Rights Prize (EU 1989) . In 2011 he declined to accept the Lithuanian highest order , citing his displeasure at Lithuania 's policy towards the Polish diaspora . In 2008 he established the Lech Wałęsa Award .

In 2004 , Gdańsk International Airport was officially renamed Gdańsk Lech Wałęsa Airport and Wałęsa 's signature was incorporated into the airport 's logo . A college hall in Northeastern Illinois University (Chicago) , six streets , and five schools in Canada , France , Sweden and Poland also were named after Lech Wałęsa .

Wałęsa was named Man of the Year by Time magazine (1981) , Financial Times (1980) , Saudi Gazette (1989) and 12 other newspapers and magazines . He was awarded with over 45 honorary doctorates by universities around the world , including Harvard University and Sorbonne . He was named an honorary karate black belt by International Traditional Karate Federation . Wałęsa is also an honorary citizen of more than 30 cities , including London , Buffalo and Turin .

In the United States , Wałęsa was the first recipient of the Liberty Medal , in 1989 . That year he also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and became the first non-American head of state to address a joint meeting of the United States Congress . Wałęsa symbolically represented Europe by carrying the Olympic flag at the opening ceremony of the 2002 Winter Olympics . In 2004 , he represented ten newly acceded EU countries during the official accession ceremony in Strasbourg . In 1993 the heraldic authority of the Kingdom of Sweden assigned Wałęsa a personal coat of arms on the occasion of his admittance into the Royal Order of the Seraphim .

= = Cultural references = =

Lech Wałęsa has been portrayed , as himself or a character based on him , in a number of feature films . The two most notable of them are :

Walesa . Man of Hope (2013) is a biographical drama by Oscar-winning filmmaker Andrzej Wajda about the lives of Wałęsa (Robert Wiśkiewicz) and his wife Danuta (Agnieszka Grochowska) from 1970 to 1989 . It shows Wałęsa 's change from a shipyard worker into a charismatic labor leader . The film was shot in the historical locations of the depicted events , including the former Lenin Shipyard . It won three awards , including Silver Hugo for Robert Wiśkiewicz at Chicago International Film Festival and a Pasinetti Award for Maria Rosaria Omaggio at Venice Film Festival , and was nominated for five more awards .

Man of Iron (1981) is another Andrzej Wajda film about the Solidarity movement . The main character , a young worker Maciej Tomczyk (Jerzy Radziwiłowicz) is involved in the anti-Communist labor movement . Tomczyk is clearly portrayed as a parallel to Wałęsa , who appears as himself in the movie . The film was made during the brief relaxation of censorship in Poland between the formation of Solidarity in August 1980 and its suppression in December 1981 . Wajda was awarded both the Palme d 'Or and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury at the Cannes Film Festival for the film . In 1982 it was nominated for Oscar as the Best Foreign Language Film and gained seven other awards and nominations .

Both of these films were produced in Poland . In 1990 , Warner Bros intended to produce a " major " movie about Wałęsa in the US , with a \$ 20 million budget and Robert De Niro starring as Wałęsa . The company paid Wałęsa a \$ 1 million fee for the rights to produce a biopic . Although the movie was never made , this payment sparked controversy in Poland when five years later it emerged that Wałęsa concealed this income to avoid paying taxes on it . The Gdańsk tax office initiated a tax fraud case against Wałęsa but it was later dismissed because the five-year statute of limitations had already run out .

In 1982 Bono was inspired by Wałęsa to write U2 's first hit single , " New Year 's Day " . Coincidentally , the Polish authorities lifted martial law on 1 January 1983 , the same day this single was released . Wałęsa also became a hero of a number of Polish pop songs , including a satirical 1991 hit titled *Nie wierzcie elektrykom* (Don 't Trust the Electricians) from the eponymous album by the punk rock band Big Cyc .

Patrick Dailly 's chamber opera *Solidarity* , starring Kristen Brown as Wałęsa , was premiered by the San Francisco Cabaret Opera in Berkeley , California , in September 2009 .

= = Publications = =

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