

## = History of Solidarity =

The history of Solidarity ( Polish : Solidarność , pronounced [ sɔlɪˈdarnoʂt ʔ ʔ ] ) , a Polish non-governmental trade union , began on 14 August 1980 , at the Lenin Shipyards ( now Gdańsk Shipyards ) at its founding by Lech Wałęsa and others . In the early 1980s , it became the first independent labor union in a Soviet bloc country . Solidarity gave rise to a broad , non-violent , anti-communist social movement that , at its height , claimed some 9 . 4 million members . It is considered to have contributed greatly to the fall of communism .

Poland 's communist government attempted to destroy the union by instituting martial law in 1981 , followed by several years of political repression , but in the end was forced into negotiation . The Roundtable Talks between the government and the Solidarity led opposition resulted in semi-free elections in 1989 . By the end of August 1989 , a Solidarity led coalition government had been formed , and , in December 1990 , Wałęsa was elected president . This was soon followed by the dismantling of the communist governmental system and by Poland 's transformation into a modern democratic state . Solidarity 's early survival represented a break in the hard line stance of the communist Polish United Workers ' Party ( PZPR ) , and was an unprecedented event ; not only for the People 's Republic of Poland ? a satellite of the USSR ruled by a one-party communist regime ? but for the whole of the Eastern bloc . Solidarity 's example led to the spread of anti-communist ideas and movements throughout the Eastern Bloc , weakening communist governments . This process later culminated in the Revolutions of 1989 .

In the 1990s , Solidarity 's influence on Poland 's political scene waned . A political arm of the " Solidarity " movement , Solidarity Electoral Action ( AWS ) , was founded in 1996 and would win the Polish parliamentary elections in 1997 , only to lose the subsequent 2001 elections . Thereafter , Solidarity had little influence as a political party , though it did become the largest trade union in Poland .

## = = Pre 1980 roots = =

In the 1970s and 1980s , the initial success of Solidarity in particular , and of dissident movements in general , was fed by a deepening crisis within Soviet influenced societies . There was declining morale , worsening economic conditions ( a shortage economy ) , and growing stress from the Cold War . After a brief boom period , from 1975 the policies of the Polish government , led by Party First Secretary Edward Gierek , precipitated a slide into increasing depression , as foreign debt mounted . In June 1976 , the first workers ' strikes took place , involving violent incidents at factories in Płock , Radom and Ursus . When these incidents were quelled by the government , the worker 's movement received support from intellectual dissidents , many of them associated with the Committee for Defense of the Workers ( Polish : Komitet Obrony Robotników , abbreviated KOR ) , formed in 1976 . The following year , KOR was renamed the Committee for Social Self-defence ( KSS - KOR ) .

On October 16 , 1978 , the Bishop of Kraków , Karol Wojtyła , was elected Pope John Paul II . A year later , during his first pilgrimage to Poland , his masses were attended by hundreds of thousands of his countrymen . The Pope called for the respecting of national and religious traditions and advocated for freedom and human rights , while denouncing violence . To many Poles , he represented a spiritual and moral force that could be set against brute material forces , he was a bellwether of change , and became an important symbol and supporter of changes to come .

## = = Early strikes ( 1980 ) = =

Strikes did not occur merely due to problems that had emerged shortly before the labor unrest , but due to governmental and economic difficulties spanning more than a decade . In July 1980 , Edward Gierek 's government , facing economic crisis , decided to raise prices while slowing the growth of wages . At once there ensued a wave of strikes and factory occupations , with the biggest strikes taking place in the area of Lublin . The first strike started on July 8 , 1980 in the State Aviation

Works in ?widnik . Although the strike movement had no coordinating center , the workers had developed an information network to spread news of their struggle . A " dissident " group , the Workers ' Defence Committee ( KOR ) , which had originally been set up in 1976 to organize aid for victimized workers , attracted small groups of working @-@ class militants in major industrial centers . At the Lenin Shipyard in Gda?sk , the firing of Anna Walentynowicz , a popular crane operator and activist , galvanized the outraged workers into action .

On August 14 , the shipyard workers began their strike , organized by the Free Trade Unions of the Coast ( Wolne Zwi?zki Zawodowe Wybrze?a ) . The workers were led by electrician Lech Wa??sa , a former shipyard worker who had been dismissed in 1976 , and who arrived at the shipyard late in the morning of August 14 . The strike committee demanded the rehiring of Walentynowicz and Wa??sa , as well as the according of respect to workers ' rights and other social concerns . In addition , they called for the raising of a monument to the shipyard workers who had been killed in 1970 and for the legalization of independent trade unions .

The Polish government enforced censorship , and official media said little about the " sporadic labor disturbances in Gda?sk " ; as a further precaution , all phone connections between the coast and the rest of Poland were soon cut . Nonetheless , the government failed to contain the information : a spreading wave of samizdats ( Polish : bibu?a ) , including Robotnik ( The Worker ) , and grapevine gossip , along with Radio Free Europe broadcasts that penetrated the Iron Curtain , ensured that the ideas of the emerging Solidarity movement quickly spread .

On August 16 , delegations from other strike committees arrived at the shipyard . Delegates ( Bogdan Lis , Andrzej Gwiazda and others ) together with shipyard strikers agreed to create an Inter @-@ Enterprise Strike Committee ( Mi?dzyszak?adowy Komitet Strajkowy , or MKS ) . On August 17 a priest , Henryk Jankowski , performed a mass outside the shipyard 's gate , at which 21 demands of the MKS were put forward . The list went beyond purely local matters , beginning with a demand for new , independent trade unions and going on to call for a relaxation of the censorship , a right to strike , new rights for the Church , the freeing of political prisoners , and improvements in the national health service .

Next day , a delegation of KOR intelligentsia , including Tadeusz Mazowiecki , arrived to offer their assistance with negotiations . A bibu?a news @-@ sheet , Solidarno?? , produced on the shipyard 's printing press with KOR assistance , reached a daily print run of 30 @, @ 000 copies . Meanwhile , Jacek Kaczmarski 's protest song , Mury ( Walls ) , gained popularity with the workers .

On August 18 , the Szczecin Shipyard joined the strike , under the leadership of Marian Jurczyk . A tidal wave of strikes swept the coast , closing ports and bringing the economy to a halt . With KOR assistance and support from many intellectuals , workers occupying factories , mines and shipyards across Poland joined forces . Within days , over 200 factories and enterprises had joined the strike committee . By August 21 , most of Poland was affected by the strikes , from coastal shipyards to the mines of the Upper Silesian Industrial Area ( in Upper Silesia , the city of Jastrz?bie @-@ Zdr?j became center of the strikes , with a separate committee organized there , see Jastrz?bie @-@ Zdr?j 1980 strikes ) . More and more new unions were formed , and joined the federation .

Thanks to popular support within Poland , as well as to international support and media coverage , the Gda?sk workers held out until the government gave in to their demands . On August 21 a Governmental Commission ( Komisja Rz?dowa ) including Mieczys?aw Jagielski arrived in Gda?sk , and another one with Kazimierz Barcikowski was dispatched to Szczecin . On August 30 and 31 , and on September 3 , representatives of the workers and the government signed an agreement ratifying many of the workers ' demands , including the right to strike . This agreement came to be known as the August or Gda?sk agreement ( Porozumienia sierpniowe ) . Other agreements were signed in Szczecin ( the Szczecin Agreement of August 30 ) , and Jastrz?bie @-@ Zdr?j on September 3 . It was called the Jastrz?bie Agreement ( Porozumienia jastrzebskie ) and as such is regarded as part of the Gda?sk agreement . Though concerned with labor @-@ union matters , the agreement enabled citizens to introduce democratic changes within the communist political structure and was regarded as a first step toward dismantling the Party 's monopoly of power . The workers ' main concerns were the establishment of a labor union independent of communist @-@ party control , and recognition of a legal right to strike . Workers ' needs would now receive clear

representation . Another consequence of the Gdańsk Agreement was the replacement , in September 1980 , of Edward Gierek by Stanisław Kania as Party First Secretary .

= = First Solidarity ( 1980 ? 1981 ) = =

Encouraged by the success of the August strikes , on September 17 workers ' representatives , including Lech Wałęsa , formed a nationwide labor union , Solidarity ( Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy ( NSZZ ) " Solidarność " ) . It was the first independent labor union in a Soviet @-@ bloc country . Its name was suggested by Karol Modzelewski , and its famous logo was conceived by Jerzy Janiszewski , designer of many Solidarity @-@ related posters . The new union 's supreme powers were vested in a legislative body , the Convention of Delegates ( Zjazd Delegatów ) . The executive branch was the National Coordinating Commission ( Krajowa Komisja Porozumiewawcza ) , later renamed the National Commission ( Komisja Krajowa ) . The Union had a regional structure , comprising 38 regions ( region ) and two districts ( okręg ) . On December 16 , 1980 , the Monument to Fallen Shipyard Workers was unveiled in Gdańsk , and on June 28 , 1981 , another monument was unveiled in Poznań , which commemorated the Poznań 1956 protests . On January 15 , 1981 , a Solidarity delegation , including Lech Wałęsa , met in Rome with Pope John Paul II . From September 5 to 10 , and from September 26 to October 7 , Solidarity 's first national congress was held , and Lech Wałęsa was elected its president . Last accord of the congress was adoption of republican program " Self @-@ governing Republic " .

Meanwhile , Solidarity had been transforming itself from a trade union into a social movement or more specifically , a revolutionary movement . Over the 500 days following the Gdańsk Agreement , 9 ? 10 million workers , intellectuals and students joined it or its suborganizations , such as the Independent Student Union ( Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów , created in September 1980 ) , the Independent Farmers ' Trade Union ( NSZZ Rolników Indywidualnych " Solidarność " or Rural Solidarity , created in May 1981 ) and the Independent Craftsmen 's Trade Union . It was the only time in recorded history that a quarter of a country 's population ( some 80 % of the total Polish work force ) had voluntarily joined a single organization . " History has taught us that there is no bread without freedom , " the Solidarity program stated a year later . " What we had in mind was not only bread , butter and sausages , but also justice , democracy , truth , legality , human dignity , freedom of convictions , and the repair of the republic . " Tygodnik Solidarność , a Solidarity @-@ published newspaper , was started in April 1981 .

Using strikes and other protest actions , Solidarity sought to force a change in government policies . In some cases , as in Bielsko @-@ Białą , Solidarity managed to force corrupt officials of the government to lose their jobs . At the same time , it was careful never to use force or violence , so as to avoid giving the government any excuse to bring security forces into play . After 27 Bydgoszcz Solidarity members , including Jan Rulewski , were beaten up on March 19 , a four @-@ hour warning strike on March 27 , involving around twelve million people , paralyzed the country . This was the largest strike in the history of the Eastern bloc , and it forced the government to promise an investigation into the beatings . This concession , and Wałęsa 's agreement to defer further strikes , proved a setback to the movement , as the euphoria that had swept Polish society subsided . Nonetheless the Polish communist party ? the Polish United Workers ' Party ( PZPR ) ? had lost its total control over society .

Yet while Solidarity was ready to take up negotiations with the government , the Polish communists were unsure what to do , as they issued empty declarations and bided their time . Against the background of a deteriorating communist shortage economy and unwillingness to negotiate seriously with Solidarity , it became increasingly clear that the Communist government would eventually have to suppress the Solidarity movement as the only way out of the impasse , or face a truly revolutionary situation . The atmosphere was increasingly tense , with various local chapters conducting a growing number of uncoordinated strikes as well as street protests , such as the Summer 1981 hunger demonstrations in Poland , in response to the worsening economic situation . On December 3 , 1981 , Solidarity announced that a 24 @-@ hour strike would be held if the government were granted additional powers to suppress dissent , and that a general strike would be

declared if those powers were used .

= = Martial law ( 1981 ? 83 ) = =

After the Gdańsk Agreement , the Polish government was under increasing pressure from the Soviet Union to take action and strengthen its position . Stanisław Kania was viewed by Moscow as too independent , and on October 18 , 1981 , the Party Central Committee put him in the minority . Kania lost his post as First Secretary , and was replaced by Prime Minister ( and Minister of Defence ) Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski , who adopted a strong @-@ arm policy .

On December 13 , 1981 , Jaruzelski began a crack @-@ down on Solidarity , declaring martial law and creating a Military Council of National Salvation ( Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego , or WRON ) . Solidarity 's leaders , gathered at Gdańsk , were arrested and isolated in facilities guarded by the Security Service ( Służba Bezpieczeństwa or SB ) , and some 5 @, @ 000 Solidarity supporters were arrested in the middle of the night . Censorship was expanded , and military forces appeared on the streets . A couple of hundred strikes and occupations occurred , chiefly at the largest plants and at several Silesian coal mines , but were broken by ZOMO paramilitary riot police . One of the largest demonstrations , on December 16 , 1981 , took place at the Wujek Coal Mine , where government forces opened fire on demonstrators , killing 9 and seriously injuring 22 . The next day , during protests at Gdańsk , government forces again fired at demonstrators , killing 1 and injuring 2 . By December 28 , 1981 , strikes had ceased , and Solidarity appeared crippled . The last strike in the 1981 Poland , which ended on December 28 , took place in the Piast Coal Mine in the Upper Silesian town of Bieruń . It was the longest underground strike in the history of Poland , lasting 14 days . Some 2000 miners began it on December 14 , going 650 meters underground . Out of the initial 2000 , half remained until the last day . Starving , they gave up after military authorities promised they would not be prosecuted . On October 8 , 1982 , Solidarity was banned .

The range of support for the Solidarity was unique : no other movement in the world was supported by Ronald Reagan and Santiago Carrillo , Enrico Berlinguer and the Pope , Margaret Thatcher and Tony Benn , peace campaigners and NATO spokesman , Christians and Western communists , conservatives , liberals and socialists . The international community outside the Iron Curtain condemned Jaruzelski 's actions and declared support for Solidarity ; dedicated organizations were formed for that purpose ( like Polish Solidarity Campaign in Great Britain ) . US President Ronald Reagan imposed economic sanctions on Poland , which eventually would force the Polish government into liberalizing its policies . Meanwhile , the CIA together with the Catholic Church and various Western trade unions such as the AFL @-@ CIO provided funds , equipment and advice to the Solidarity underground . The political alliance of Reagan and the Pope would prove important to the future of Solidarity . The Polish public also supported what was left of Solidarity ; a major medium for demonstrating support of Solidarity became masses held by priests such as Jerzy Popiełuszko .

Besides the communist authorities , Solidarity was also opposed by some of the Polish ( émigré ) radical right , believing Solidarity or KOR to be disguised communist groups , dominated by Jewish Trotskyite Zionists .

In July 1983 , martial law was formally lifted , though many heightened controls on civil liberties and political life , as well as food rationing , remained in place through the mid @-@ to @-@ late 1980s .

= = Underground Solidarity ( 1982 ? 88 ) = =

Almost immediately after the legal Solidarity leadership had been arrested , underground structures began to arise . On April 12 , 1982 , Radio Solidarity began broadcasting . On April 22 , Zbigniew Bujak , Bogdan Lis , Władysław Frasyniuk and Władysław Hardek created an Interim Coordinating Commission ( Tymczasowa Komisja Koordynacyjna ) to serve as an underground leadership for Solidarity . On May 6 another underground Solidarity organization , an NSSZ " S " Regional Coordinating Commission ( Regionalna Komisja Koordynacyjna NSZZ " S " ) , was created

by Bogdan Borusewicz , Aleksander Hall , Stanisław Jarosz , Bogdan Lis and Marian Witek . June 1982 saw the creation of a Fighting Solidarity ( Solidarność Walcząca ) organization .

Throughout the mid 1980s , Solidarity persevered as an exclusively underground organization . Its activists were dogged by the Security Service ( SB ) , but managed to strike back : on May 1 , 1982 , a series of anti government protests brought out thousands of participants ? several dozen thousand in Kraków , Warsaw and Gdańsk . On May 3 more protests took place , during celebrations of the Constitution of May 3 , 1791 . On that day , communist secret services killed four demonstrators ? three in Warsaw and one in Wrocław . Another wave of demonstrations occurred on August 31 , 1982 , on the first anniversary of the Gdańsk Agreement ( see August 31 , 1982 demonstrations in Poland ) . Altogether , on that day six demonstrators were killed ? three in Lubin , one in Kielce , one in Wrocław and one in Gdańsk . Another person was killed on the next day , during a demonstration in Częstochowa . Further strikes occurred at Gdańsk and Nowa Huta between October 11 and 13 . In Nowa Huta , a 20 year old student Bogdan Włosik was shot by a secret service officer .

On November 14 , 1982 , Wałęsa was released . However , on December 9 the SB carried out a large anti Solidarity operation , arresting over 10 ,000 activists . On December 27 Solidarity 's assets were transferred by the authorities to a pro government trade union , the All Poland Alliance of Trade Unions ( Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych , or OPZZ ) . Yet Solidarity was far from broken : by early 1983 the underground had over 70 ,000 members , whose activities included publishing over 500 underground newspapers . In the first half of 1983 street protests were frequent ; on May 1 , two persons were killed in Kraków and one in Wrocław . Two days later , two additional demonstrators were killed in Warsaw .

On July 22 , 1983 , martial law was lifted , and amnesty was granted to many imprisoned Solidarity members , who were released . On October 5 , Wałęsa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize . The Polish government , however , refused to issue him a passport to travel to Oslo ; Wałęsa 's prize was accepted on his behalf by his wife . It later transpired that the SB had prepared bogus documents , accusing Wałęsa of immoral and illegal activities that had been given to the Nobel committee in an attempt to derail his nomination .

On October 19 , 1984 , three agents of the Ministry of Internal Security murdered a popular pro Solidarity priest , Jerzy Popiełuszko . As the facts emerged , thousands of people declared their solidarity with the murdered priest by attending his funeral , held on November 3 , 1984 . The government attempted to smooth over the situation by releasing thousands of political prisoners ; a year later , however , there followed a new wave of arrests . Frasiński , Lis and Adam Michnik , members of the " S " underground , were arrested on February 13 , 1985 , placed on a show trial , and sentenced to several years ' imprisonment .

= = Second Solidarity ( 1988 ? 89 ) = =

On March 11 , 1985 , power in the Soviet Union was assumed by Mikhail Gorbachev . The worsening economic situation in the entire Eastern Bloc , including the Soviet Union , together with other factors , forced Gorbachev to carry out a number of reforms , not only in the field of economics ( uskoreniye ) but in the political and social realms ( glasnost and perestroika ) . Gorbachev 's policies soon caused a corresponding shift in the policies of Soviet satellites , including the People 's Republic of Poland .

On September 11 , 1986 , 225 Polish political prisoners were released ? the last of those connected with Solidarity , and arrested during the previous years . Following amnesty on September 30 , Wałęsa created the first public , legal Solidarity entity since the declaration of martial law ? the Temporary Council of NSZZ Solidarność ( Tymczasowa Rada NSZZ Solidarność ) ? with Bogdan Borusewicz , Zbigniew Bujak , Władysław Frasiński , Tadeusz Janusz Jędrzak , Bogdan Lis , Janusz Pańbicki and Józef Pinior . Soon afterwards , the new Council was admitted to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions . Many local Solidarity chapters now broke their cover throughout Poland , and on October 25 , 1987 , the National Executive Committee ( Solidarity ) | National Executive Committee of NSZZ Solidarność ( Krajowa Komisja Wykonawcza NSZZ

Solidarno?? ) was created . Nonetheless , Solidarity members and activists continued to be persecuted and discriminated , if less so than during the early 1980s . In the late 1980s , a rift between Wa??sa 's faction and a more radical Fighting Solidarity grew as the former wanted to negotiate with the government , while the latter planned for an anti @-@ communist revolution .

By 1988 , Poland 's economy was in worse condition than it had been eight years earlier . International sanctions , combined with the government 's unwillingness to introduce reforms , intensified the old problems . Inefficient government @-@ run planned @-@ economy enterprises wasted labor and resources , producing substandard goods for which there was little demand . Polish exports were low , both because of the sanctions and because the goods were as unattractive abroad as they were at home . Foreign debt and inflation mounted . There were no funds to modernize factories , and the promised " market socialism " materialized as a shortage economy characterized by long queues and empty shelves . Reforms introduced by Jaruzelski and Mieczys?aw Rakowski came too little and too late , especially as changes in the Soviet Union had bolstered the public 's expectation that change must come , and the Soviets ceased their efforts to prop up Poland 's failing regime .

In February 1988 , the government hiked food prices by 40 % . On April 21 , a new wave of strikes hit the country . On May 2 , workers at the Gda?sk Shipyard went on strike . That strike was broken by the government between May 5 and May 10 , but only temporarily : on August 15 , a new strike took place at the " July Manifesto " mine in Jastrz?bie Zdr?j . By August 20 the strike had spread to many other mines , and on August 22 the Gda?sk Shipyard joined the strike . Poland 's communist government then decided to negotiate .

On August 26 , Czes?aw Kiszczak , the Minister of Internal Affairs , declared on television that the government was willing to negotiate , and five days later he met with Wa??sa . The strikes ended the following day , and on November 30 , during a televised debate between Wa??sa and Alfred Miodowicz ( leader of the pro @-@ government trade union , the All @-@ Poland Alliance of Trade Unions ) , Wa??sa scored a public @-@ relations victory .

On December 18 , a hundred @-@ member Citizens ' Committee ( Komitet Obywatelski ) was formed within Solidarity . It comprised several sections , each responsible for presenting a specific aspect of opposition demands to the government . Wa??sa and the majority of Solidarity leaders supported negotiation , while a minority wanted an anticommunist revolution . Under Wa??sa 's leadership , Solidarity decided to pursue a peaceful solution , and the pro @-@ violence faction never attained any substantial power , nor did it take any action .

On January 27 , 1989 , in a meeting between Wa??sa and Kiszczak , a list was drawn up of members of the main negotiating teams . The conference that began on February 6 would be known as the Polish Round Table Talks . The 56 participants included 20 from " S " , 6 from OPZZ , 14 from the PZPR , 14 " independent authorities " , and two priests . The Polish Round Table Talks took place in Warsaw from February 6 to April 4 , 1989 . The Communists , led by Gen. Jaruzelski , hoped to co @-@ opt prominent opposition leaders into the ruling group without making major changes in the structure of political power . Solidarity , while hopeful , did not anticipate major changes . In fact , the talks would radically alter the shape of the Polish government and society .

On April 17 , 1989 , Solidarity was legalized , and its membership soon reached 1 @.@ 5 million . The Solidarity Citizens ' Committee ( Komitet Obywatelski " Solidarno?? " ) was given permission to field candidates in the upcoming elections . Election law allowed Solidarity to put forward candidates for only 35 % of the seats in the Sejm , but there were no restrictions in regard to Senat candidates . Agitation and propaganda continued legally up to election day . Despite its shortage of resources , Solidarity managed to carry on an electoral campaign . On May 8 , the first issue of a new pro @-@ Solidarity newspaper , Gazeta Wyborcza ( The Election Gazette ) , was published . Posters of Wa??sa supporting various candidates , appeared throughout the country .

Pre @-@ election public @-@ opinion polls had promised victory to the communists . Thus the total defeat of the PZPR and its satellite parties came as a surprise to all involved : after the first round of elections , it became evident that Solidarity had fared extremely well , capturing 160 of 161 contested Sejm seats , and 92 of 100 Senate seats . After the second round , it had won virtually every seat ? all 161 in the Sejm , and 99 in the Senate .

These elections , in which anti @-@ communist candidates won a striking victory , inaugurated a series of peaceful anti @-@ communist revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe that eventually culminated in the fall of communism .

The new Contract Sejm , named for the agreement that had been reached by the communist party and the Solidarity movement during the Polish Round Table Talks , would be dominated by Solidarity . As agreed beforehand , Wojciech Jaruzelski was elected president . However , the communist candidate for Prime Minister , Czesław Kiszczak , who replaced Mieczysław Rakowski , failed to gain enough support to form a government .

On June 23 , a Solidarity Citizens ' Parliamentary Club ( Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny " Solidarność " ) was formed , led by Bronisław Geremek . It formed a coalition with two ex @-@ satellite parties of the PZPR - United People 's Party and Democratic Party - which had now chosen to " rebel " against the PZPR , which found itself in the minority . On August 24 , the Sejm elected Tadeusz Mazowiecki , a Solidarity representative , to be Prime Minister of Poland . Not only was he a first non @-@ communist Polish Prime Minister since 1945 , he became the first non @-@ Communist prime minister in Eastern Europe for nearly 40 years . In his speech he talked about the " thick line " ( Gruba kreska ) which would separate his government from the communist past . By the end of August 1989 , a Solidarity @-@ led coalition government had been formed .

= = Party and trade union ( 1989 to the present ) = =

The fall of the communist regime marked a new chapter in the history of Poland and in the history of Solidarity . Having defeated the communist government , Solidarity found itself in a role it was much less prepared for - that of a political party - and soon began to lose popularity . Conflicts among Solidarity factions intensified . Wałęsa was elected Solidarity chairman , but support for him could be seen to be crumbling . One of his main opponents , Władysław Frasyniuk , withdrew from elections altogether . In September 1990 , Wałęsa declared that Gazeta Wyborcza had no right to use the Solidarity logo .

Later that month , Wałęsa announced his intent to run for president of Poland . In December 1990 , he was elected president . He resigned his Solidarity post and became the first president of Poland ever to be elected by popular vote .

Next year , in February 1991 , Marian Krzaklewski was elected the leader of Solidarity . President Wałęsa 's vision and that of the new Solidarity leadership were diverging . Far from supporting Wałęsa , Solidarity was becoming increasingly critical of the government , and decided to create its own political party for action in the upcoming 1991 parliamentary elections .

The 1991 elections were characterized by a large number of competing parties , many claiming the legacy of anti @-@ communism , and the Solidarity party garnered only 5 % of the votes .

On January 13 , 1992 , Solidarity declared its first strike against the democratically elected government : a one @-@ hour strike against a proposal to raise energy prices . Another , two @-@ hour strike took place on December 14 . On May 19 , 1993 , Solidarity deputies proposed a no @-@ confidence motion - which passed - against the government of Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka . President Wałęsa declined to accept the prime minister 's resignation , and dismissed the parliament .

It was in the ensuing 1993 parliamentary elections that it became evident how much Solidarity 's support had eroded in the previous three years . Even though some Solidarity deputies sought to assume a more left @-@ wing stance and to distance themselves from the right @-@ wing government , Solidarity remained identified in the public mind with that government . Hence it suffered from the growing disillusionment of the populace , as the transition from a communist to a capitalist system failed to generate instant wealth and raise Poland 's living standards to those in the West , and the government 's financial " shock therapy " ( the Balcerowicz Plan ) generated much opposition .

In the elections , Solidarity received only 4 @.@ 9 % of the votes , 0 @.@ 1 % less than the 5 % required in order to enter parliament ( Solidarity still had 9 senators , 2 fewer than in the previous Senate ) . The victorious party was the Democratic Left Alliance ( Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej or

SLD ) , a post @-@ communist left @-@ wing party .

Solidarity now joined forces with its erstwhile enemy , the All @-@ Poland Alliance of Trade Unions ( OPZZ ) , and some protests were organized by both trade unions . The following year , Solidarity organized many strikes over the state of the Polish mining industry . In 1995 , a demonstration before the Polish parliament was broken up by the police ( now again known as policja ) using batons and water cannons . Nonetheless , Solidarity decided to support Wa??sa in the 1995 presidential elections .

In a second major defeat for the Polish right wing , the elections were won by an SLD candidate , Aleksander Kwa??niewski , who received 51 @.@ 72 % of votes . A Solidarity call for new elections went unheeded , but the Sejm still managed to pass a resolution condemning the 1981 martial law ( despite the SLD voting against ) . Meanwhile , the left @-@ wing OPZZ trade union had acquired 2 @.@ 5 million members , twice as many as the contemporary Solidarity ( with 1 @.@ 3 million ) .

In June 1996 , Solidarity Electoral Action ( Akcja Wyborcza Solidarno?? ) was founded as a coalition of over 30 parties , uniting liberal , conservative and Christian @-@ democratic forces . As the public became disillusioned with the SLD and its allies , AWS was victorious in the 1997 parliamentary elections . Jerzy Buzek became the new prime minister .

However , controversies over domestic reforms , Poland 's 1999 entry into NATO , and the accession process to the European Union , combined with AWS ' fights with its political allies ( the Freedom Union ? Unia Wolno?ci ) and infighting within AWS itself , as well as corruption , eventually resulted in the loss of much public support . AWS leader Marian Krzaklewski lost the 2000 presidential election , and in the 2001 parliamentary elections AWS failed to elect a single deputy to the parliament . After this debacle , Krzaklewski was replaced by Janusz ?niadek ( in 2002 ) but the union decided to distance itself from politics .

In 2006 , Solidarity had some 1 @.@ 5 million members making it the largest trade union in Poland . Its mission statement declares that Solidarity , " basing its activities on Christian ethics and Catholic social teachings , works to protect workers ' interests and to fulfill their material , social and cultural aspirations . "

The European Solidarity Centre , a museum and library devoted to the history of Solidarity and other opposition movements of the Eastern Bloc , opened in Gda??sk on 31 August 2014 .