

October 2, 1986

Letter of Lech Walesa to the Council of State

Citation:

"Letter of Lech Walesa to the Council of State", October 2, 1986, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Institute of Political Studies (Polish Academy of Sciences), Warsaw. Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/113097>

Summary:

Letter of Lech Walesa to the Council of State calling for the end of martial law and the establishment of union pluralism

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

The Council of State of the People's Republic of Poland in Warsaw

Acting on the basis of a mandate given to me in democratic elections at the First Congress of delegates of the NSZZ [National Commission of the Independent Sovereign Trade Union] "Solidarity" in 1981, as chairman of that Union, led by an opinion expressed by the leaders of national and regional authorities:

-taking into consideration an unusually important decision of the PRL [Polish People's Republic] authorities relating to the release of political prisoners,[1] including a group of NSZZ "Solidarity" activists, which creates a new socio-political situation, allowing for an honest dialogue of all important social forces in Poland;

-motivated by my concern about further economic development of our country and having in mind the concentration of all Poles around the task of economic reform as a task of particular importance, in the absence of which we are faced with economic regression and backwardness, particularly in relation to the developed countries;

-drawing conclusions from the attitude of millions of working people, who over the last four years didn't find a place for themselves in the present trade unions, remained faithful to the ideals of "Solidarity" and wished to get involved together with them in active work for the good of the Motherland within the framework of a socio-trade union organization, which they could recognize as their own;

I am calling on the Council of State to take measures, which-consistent with binding legislation-would enable the realization of the principle of union pluralism, finally putting an end to the martial law legislation which constrains the development of trade unionism.

At the same time-for the sake of social peace and the need to concentrate all social forces on [the task of] getting out of the crisis-I declare readiness to respect the constitutional order, as well as the law of 8 October 1982 on trade unions.[2] True, the provisions of this law are far from our expectations, but they nevertheless create possibilities of working and respecting the principles of the freedom of trade unions and union pluralism, and only temporary regulations are blocking the realization of those principles. It is high time to put an end to those temporary regulations and to lead to the normalization of social relations in the area of trade unionism. This is [within] the competence of the Council of State.

I trust that the Council of State will wish to take advantage of that competence and use-perhaps this unique chance-to strengthen social peace and activization of all social forces for the good of our country.

[signed] Lech Walesa

Submitted to the Council of State on 2 October 1986.

[1] By the terms of an 11 September 1986 decision by Minister of Internal Affairs Czeslaw Kiszczak, all political prisoners were freed.

[2] A law passed by the Sejm on 8 October 1982 dissolved the NSZZ "Solidarity."