

Document No. 78: Solidarity NCC Presidium, "Position Taken by the Presidium of the National Coordinating Commission and Leaders of the NSZZ"

December 3, 1981

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*Solidarity's NCC Presidium promulgated this important statement at the end of a dramatic session in Radom on December 3. Two days earlier, a large police force had stormed the Firefighters' Academy in Warsaw where cadets had been on strike and arrested the entire group. The incident, although not bloody since the cadets' decided not to resist, provoked anger among many Solidarity members. Partly as a result, the Radom meeting featured loud demands by some Presidium members for extreme responses. More moderate voices, such as Wałęsa, managed to delay full consideration of proposals such as setting up a provisional government, and the final statement of the session was relatively muted in tone. Still, the document contained some tough language about the unacceptability of the regime's actions against the firefighters, and in other situations. Of particular note was a demand for democratic elections to People's Councils at all levels, the first time such a proposal to change the system had appeared in an official Solidarity document. Thus, this statement—along with recordings of the Radom session (made surreptitiously and illegally by a NCC member collaborating with the Security Service)—became prime pieces of "evidence" for the authorities as they constructed official justifications for introducing martial law.*

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The position of the NCC Presidium and chairmen of the RC NSZZ Solidarity on December 3, 1981 (approved by the NC on December 12, 1981).

1. The party-state authorities have used the negotiations with the Union as well as the idea of social agreement to mislead the society. Talks on the key Solidarity demands (control over food supply, regional self-government, economic reform, compliance with the law, access to mass media) have proven to be fruitless. The government surprised the Union by submitting to the Sejm a draft of the so-called provisional system arrangement, which undermines basic interests of the working people. During the negotiations the authorities intensified anti-Union repressions, which were most strikingly manifested in the beating of the picketers in Chorzów and the Citizens' Police attack on the Firefighters' Academy in Warsaw. The justifiable students' strike is being deliberately protracted by the authorities, who torpedo attempts to solve the Radom conflict. Moreover, the Sixth Plenum of the PUWP CC decided to force the law in the Sejm on extraordinary measures, keeping the content of the law, which may determine the country's fate, in secret, without the nation's knowledge. Talks on the national agreement have been used by the government as a shield to conceal preparations

for the attack on the Union. In this situation, further negotiations on the issue of national agreement have become pointless.

2. Regardless of whether the law on extraordinary measures will authorize the government to put civilians before a military court, ban gatherings and restrict traveling, or only to annul the right to strike, it will not be introduced in any other way than through terror. It would amount to an attempt to subdue the society through force. Therefore, the Union will respond to the Sejm's potential passing of the law on extraordinary powers for the government with a 24-hour-long universal protest strike in Poland. In case the government takes advantage of the power granted to it by the Sejm to use extraordinary measures, the Union cells and all [workers'] crews should inevitably initiate a general strike.

3. The so-called provisional system arrangement for 1982 maintains in practice the old system of managing the economy, while burdening the enterprises and their crews with financial responsibility for decisions, which will remain in the hands of central organs. This amounts to voiding the reform and laws on self-government and enterprises which have already been passed by the Sejm, with the simultaneous bankruptcy threat of many enterprises or lay-offs and wage reductions. Together with the provisional arrangement dramatic price increases planned by the government are to be introduced. The society will have to pay for a reform which does not exist. The Union will not agree to price increases without economic reform. We will defend the working people from the consequences of such price increases, factory shutdowns, lay-offs, and wage reductions in accordance with the statutory goals of the trade union and with the use of all statutory means.

4. National agreement cannot be equivalent to introducing the Union to a repainted [*przemalowane*] FNU, which the government is striving for. Such decoration with the Solidarity badge of the state authorities' old facade, which led the country to collapse, would not alleviate the crisis, but could only deprive the Union of its independence and credibility.

5. The Union will not retreat from the following demands:

- a) abolition of any anti-Union repression by the authorities;
- b) submission to the Sejm of a draft law on trade unions in a version prepared with "Solidarity's" representatives;
- c) the government's retreat from the so-called provisional system arrangement, agreement with the Union, and then implementation of economic reform based on self-government of enterprises;
- d) democratic elections for People's Councils of all levels (including voivodeship councils ahead of time) and subordinating regional administration to them. We will not agree to voting on only one list as [was done] in previous years;
- e) respect for the Union's control over the economy, including especially food stocks—keeping them secret from the nation is unacceptable;
- f) granting the Social Council for National Economy competences which would allow real influence on government decisions and control over the social-economic policies of the state;

g) access to radio and television for the Council, Solidarity, Church, and other centers of public opinion.

These are the minimum conditions for national agreement, which will facilitate a joint, effective battle with the crisis. We are in favor of such an agreement.

*[Source: "Tygodnik Solidarność," No. 37, December 11, 1981, p. 3. Translated by Aleksandra Niemirycz.]*