

Report from Andrzej Stelmachowski to Lech Walesa,

6 September 1988

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Mr. Chairman

Lech Walesa

Gdansk

A report

Yesterday, i.e. on 5 September, I met with Secretary J. Czyrek. The conversation lasted from 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., and then for another 10 minutes [we talked] in connection with the need for intervention on behalf of workers dismissed from their jobs or called up for military service as a penalty [for participation in strikes].

At the beginning [of the meeting] I handed him your note of 4 September, and the second one from "Solidarity RI" relating to agriculture [in] which I have agreed with them on my trip to Czipstochowa for a harvest festival. To begin with, the Secretary was delighted that we are proposing to start the "Roundtable" in [a] reasonable, not too accelerated time limit. He also said that he had been expecting a second Kiszczak-Walesa meeting to discuss the agenda, a list of participants and an agenda, while it would appear from your note that such meeting is not planned. I responded to this that, of course, a Kiszczak-Walesa meeting is always possible if we both agree on what needs to be done.

In that case the secretary has revealed his vision of the "Roundtable." He sees it as follows:

1) An exchange of views on the proposed changes in: a) the socio-political system, b) the economic system;

2) Work procedure and methods of coming to conclusions. He sees the sequence of work [as follows:]

1/ Discussion of the democratization process, leading to the creation of a joint election platform and reaching an understanding on restructuring the most important state structures: the Sejm, the government, the chief of state (i.e., a "presidential system");

2/ Discussion of pluralism of associations (so that its implementation could be achieved by the year's end);

3/ Discussion of a trade union model. He emphasized, however: "we stand on the position of the trade union law."

He added: We won't quarrel about the sequence of the points.

As can be seen from the above, the sequence of his points is exactly the reverse of ours. Therefore, I put up a [a bit of an objection], explaining that "political and legal empowering is the necessary premise of further phases, as it is difficult to undertake obligations towards anyone without having a legal existence."

To this the secretary "put his cards on the table" stating that in deciding on the legalization of "Solidarity" the authorities would like to know how the "S" sees its place in the political system. They would like to see "S" as a constructive factor, and not one undermining the system. They do not demand that "S" should get actively involved in the system as it exists today, but they would like to see its co-participation and co-responsibility in the reformed system.

I expressed fear that unleashing a wide-ranging debate on reforming the political system will water down the whole question.

After a longer exchange of views he recognized that besides “a large table,” “smaller tables,” including a “union” one, could also be established. He insisted, however, that reform questions should at least be considered together with the union matters.

In view of my fears that the “large table” debates may be less specific, he has revealed still another proposal. Thus, they would like to set up temporarily a body like a “Council for National Understanding,” which would be entrusted with preparing the reform of the Sejm, government, etc. He asked if “S” would enter into such a council. I in turn inquired how such a council would be chosen: by nomination or by delegation by particular organizations. He responded that it would be through delegation (in this respect it would greatly differ from the Consultative Council) and resolutions would be taken through an “understanding” and not by a “vote.” Such a council would have about 50 persons.

I responded I could not decide this for the “S” authorities, but that I personally thought such participation might be possible, obviously already from the position of a legalized organization.

Then we moved on to the composition of the “Table” and the possibility of a “union table.” I said that for the time being we don’t have any proposals regarding the “Table,” while at the “union table” there would be 7-8 people, including about 5 worker activists and about 2-3 people from a team of “advisors” (I did not mention names). He responded by saying that on their side also there would have to be workers and that people from the OPZZ cannot be excluded.⁶⁶ He also asked if the strikers would be included in the “S” delegation. I responded that yes, that, for Lech, people who are “dynamic” are right now more important than those who already belong to “Solidarity’s ZBOWiD.” I appealed to him not to interfere, as far as possible, into the composition of the other side; we are ready to accept people even from the “party’s concrete” (at which he smiled and said this would be an exaggeration, as he would like to lead [the talks] to a positive conclusion).

As far as the “Large Table” is concerned, he mentioned several names such as Kozakiewicz, Kostrzewski (President of Polish Academy of Sciences), Stomma, Przeclawska, Marcin Krol, etc. I acknowledged it.

As far as setting the date for starting the debates, it would be next week (according to your note). I merely said that I did not like the figure 13, thus it would be either 12th or 14th. He said he did not have aversion to the 13th, but since a meeting of the Politburo is scheduled on that day, that day would be out of question anyway.

So much for your information. To sum it up—we are faced with a dilemma as to whether to agree to parallel debates at both tables: the “big one” and several small ones, including the “union” one, or not. If so, then we should invite to the “large table” people from the “Group of 60,” invited for Sunday (besides the “unionists”).

There is also the question whether the Kiszczak-Lech debate should be renewed to complete these things, or whether I should do it with Czyrek.

Before leaving the CC building I made a phone call to Rev. Urszulik (I had an earlier appointment, but due to the late hour I wanted to cancel it). Then attorney

Ambroziak, who was there, broke the news to me about a call-up of the military in Gdansk and Stalowa Wola and about the layoffs of 28 people from the Northern Shipyard in Gdansk. Therefore, I returned back to Secretary Czyrek and intervened. He promised to take up this matter.

Since Urszulik was urging me to come over (he sent a car), I drove to the Secretary of the Episcopate, where I met, with Rev. Orszulik, Abp. Stroba and Bp. J. Dąbrowski. I reported to them on my conversation with Czyrek.

They were of the opinion to agree to both a “large” and “small” table.

While writing this note (at 9:50 a.m.) I got a call from Czyrek, who told me the following:

1) Call-ups to the military are not a new event, but implementation of earlier instructions dating back to the strike period. He pointed out that it has to do with “short” mobilization exercises, 5 days, 10 days, 14 days at most.

2) He promised to explore the question of layoffs in the Northern Shipyard in conversation with the first secretary in Gdansk, who is expected to arrive today for a Politburo meeting.

I pressed [him] to eliminate as fast as possible the above mentioned measures, emphasizing the harmfulness of using the military for penal purposes (Minister Czyrek was against using this term).

Secretary Czyrek said that Gen. Kiszczak would be inclined to begin the “Roundtable” on the coming Wednesday (14th) or Thursday (15th).

With warm wishes to all of you,
P.S.

Please set up a fast telephone communication with Lech (i.e. specific hours and telephone number).

[Source: Andrzej Stelmachowski Papers. Translated by Jan Chowaniec.]