

Flier prepared for Panel Discussion held on December 13, 2021

MARTIAL LAW IN POLAND 1981-1983

selected dates relevant to the panelists' stories

- August 31, 1980** The AUGUST AGREEMENT reached – the government accepts the 21 demands of the Inter-Factory Strike Committee, paving the way for the formation of the nationwide Solidarity Union (September 17, 1981)
- February 17, 1981** The government approves registration of the Independent Student Union, student equivalent of the Solidarity Union.
- October 18, 1981** Wojciech Jaruzelski (chief of the Polish Army and Defense Minister) becomes the First Secretary of PZPR (Polish United Workers Party)
- December 2, 1981** Hundreds of troops and police break-up a sit-in strike of more than 300 cadets of the Firefighter' Academy in Warsaw (a dry run for martial law?)
- December 12, 1981** 10:30 P.M. All telecommunication facilities were stormed, and phone lines cut to “prevent misinformation” (Operation Azalea)

Shortly before midnight, the Military Council of National Salvation (Polish: *Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego*, abbreviated to **WRON**) was formed and the Martial Law Decree was issued.
- December 13, 1981** 12 A.M. The borders were sealed, arrests began of Solidarity activists, sympathizers, and anti-communist intellectuals (Operation Fir)

6.A.M The broadcasting of Wojciech Jaruzelski's televised speech began.
- December 16, 1981** Nine coalminers killed and 21 wounded when ZOMO opened machine gun fire during pacification of the strike in coalmine “Wujek.” Strikes and demonstrations continued through December 17 in Gdańsk and Kraków.
- August 31, 1982** A massive wave of anti-government demonstrations across Poland on the anniversary of the August Agreements was answered with brutal force, at least seven people killed throughout Poland.
- December 31, 1982** Martial Law is suspended as no major protests took place after Lech Wałęsa was released from custody on November 17, 1982
- June 16-23, 1983** The Pope John Paul II visits Poland for the second time during his papacy
- July 22, 1983** Martial Law is officially lifted but brutality of the regime continues and many remained in prisons until the general amnesty in 1986.
- October 19, 1984** Father Jerzy Popiełuszko murdered by agents of *Śłużba Bezpieczeństwa* (Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs)
- December 1986** A report shows that 740,000 people had left Poland since 1980.



Martial law: Some Laws and Rules

Sealed borders and closed airports ... No intercity travel without special permits

Restrictions in changing permanent residence

Strict Curfew – originally from 7:00 p.m. till 6 a.m., later adjusted start at 10:00 p.m.
But ... when people started taking walks to avoid watching the nightly TV news
at 7:30 p.m. - an idea that spread from Świdnik to many other cities,
the curfew was moved back to 7:30 p.m. in the whole country)

TV news presenters in military uniforms...

TV2 (second TV program) suspended

Tanks and military patrols on the streets

Phone lines disconnected

Renewed **censorship** of mail and phone calls
after these services resumed...

Ban on taking photographs

All independent political and union activities criminalized....

Solidarity delegalized...

STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS FORBIDDEN

Many **factories placed under military management.** ... 8,000 “commissars” dispatched to
129 most important factories and sectors such as telecommunication, transportation,
mining, power stations, public services and healthcare...
court martial for refusing to follow orders

a six-day workweek imposed

some magazines and newspapers cancelled

COURTS: expedited rulings and proceeding carried in a summary manner

Military courts established to bypass the normal court system

Penalties sharply increased

VERIFICATION in media and educational institutions - thousands of journalists,
teachers and professors banned from work after tests of attitudes toward the government

Imprisonment for spreading “**false information**”

Harsh penalties for the creation, dissemination, or simple possession
of any materials outside of the official circulations (censored)

Instruction in schools and universities temporarily suspended for weeks