



Erasmus+



Lech Wałęsa



Wall of Democracy

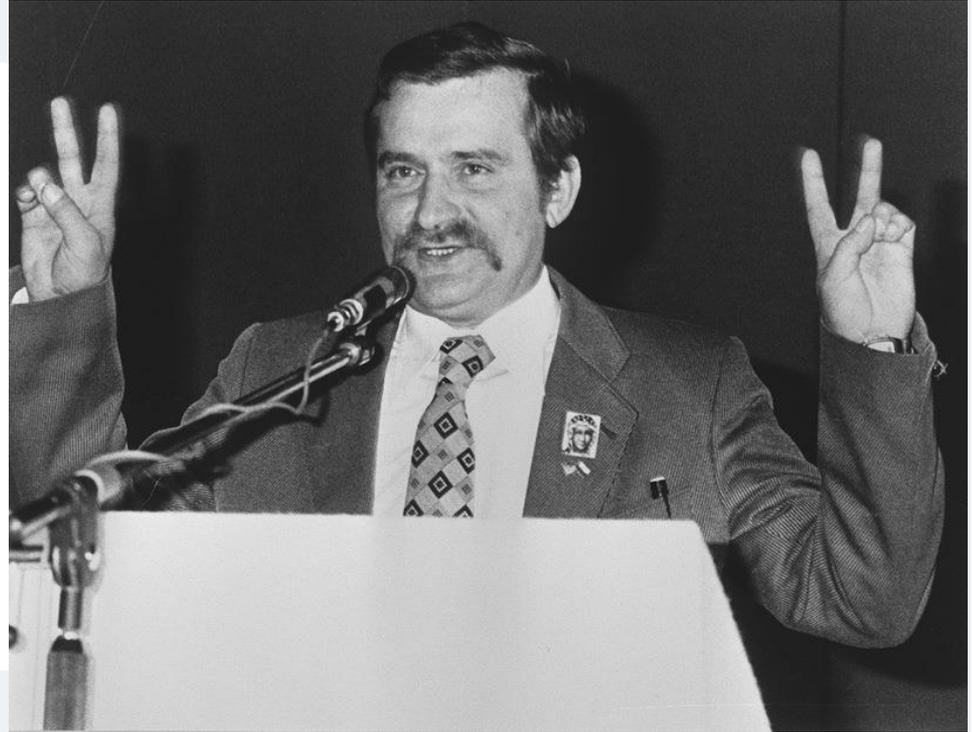


1921



who is he?

- politician
- Nobel Peace Prize laureate
- former president of Poland (1990 - 1995)
- former leader of a trade union “Solidarność” (eng. solidarity)
- activist



early life

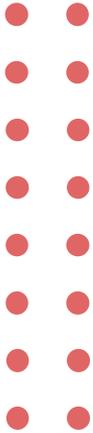
- born 29th of September 1943, Popowo
- worked as a car mechanic, served in the army and later was employed in the Gdansk shipyards as an electrician
- meanwhile he became a trade-union activist what led him to works issues, surveillance and arrests



first victory



In August 1980, when protests broke out, Wałęsa was elected as the leader. He helped with coordination of other strikes in Gdańsk. Protestants demanded right to free formation of trade unions and to strike. On August 30, the demands came true.



short-term freedom

The country's brief enjoyment of relative freedom ended in December 1981, when General Jaruzelski, imposed martial law, "suspended" Solidarity and arrested many of its leaders, including Wałęsa who was detained for nearly a year. In November 1982, the people forced Wałęsa's release, but Solidarity remained illegal.



Nobel Peace Prize

In 1983 he was awarded Nobel Peace Prize. He was unable to accept it himself, fearing Poland's government would not let him back into the country. His wife Danuta and their son accepted the prize on his behalf.



the end of the communist era



The economic situation in the country was getting worse and worse. Jaruzelski had to negotiate with Wałęsa and Solidarity. It led to parliamentary elections. Even though they were limited, they forced the establishment of a non-communist government.

second Solidarity

Wałęsa, as a head of the revived Solidarity labour union, began a series of meetings with world leaders. In April 1990 at Solidarity's second national congress, Wałęsa was elected chairman with almost 80% of the votes.



presidency (1990-1995)

In December 1990, Wałęsa won Poland's first direct presidential election. However, in 1995, he lost another elections.



awards

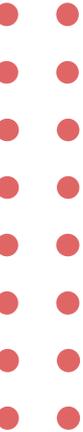
Walesa has been granted many honorary degrees from universities, including Harvard University. He was named the Time Person of the Year (1981) and one of Time's 100 most important people of the 20th century. He has received dozens of the highest state orders. In 1989, Wałęsa was the first foreign non-head of state to address the Joint Meeting of the U.S. Congress.

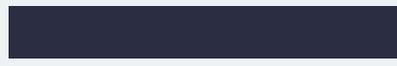
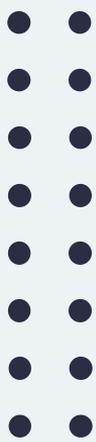


Joint Meeting at the US Congress



Lech Wałęsa at the US
Congress in 1989





Thank you for your attention

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