

## Letter from Andrzej Slowik to “Roundtable” Chair Wladyslaw Findeisen

12 February 1989

The Working Group of the National Commission of NSZZ “Solidarity”  
Lodz, 12 February 1989

Mr. Professor  
Wladyslaw Findeisen  
Chairman of the “Roundtable”  
Chairman of the Social Council of the Archbishop of Poland

Dear Professor,

We want to share with you the following remarks, concerns and anxieties:

As members of the National Commission elected by the First National Congress of Delegates of the NSZZ “Solidarity,” we feel responsible for the mandate entrusted to us by the electorate and voluntarily accepted by us.

This responsibility and honor has been forcing us to conduct social actions for the benefit of the Union, the working people and the Motherland, interrupted only by periods of arrests, internment or prison. We are conducting them with faith in the victory of good and [the belief] that sooner or later Poles will be able to overcome prejudices, anxieties, to forgive injustice, and to jointly begin building in our country law and order, based on truth, justice, freedom and love. We can be relieved of responsibility for the fate of the Union and its activity only by an act equivalent to the one that entrusted us with this responsibility. But of citizens’ responsibility toward Motherland— nobody can [be relieved]. Hence our concerns and anxieties.

The once great social hopes placed in the current talks of the “Roundtable” have now apparently faded— particularly among the working class—as the importance of these talks is not any longer a sufficient argument to stem the spontaneous eruption of strikes.

To some degree it is a result of uncertainty regarding intentions, arising for different reasons. The initial public enthusiasm following the announcement of the talks (in the beginning of September) burned out in an excessively long wait for their start.

Additional disappointments in some socially active circles is caused by an incomplete representation of the so-called social side, which cannot always be justified by categorical refusal of participation of that or another group or circle. The conviction prevails that not all significant groups or organizations have received such an offer.

Moreover, the NSZZ “Solidarity” delegation is not fully representative. It does not include many authentic activists of the Union (signatories of the August 1980 Agreements,<sup>104</sup> elected members of the National Commission and its Presidium, and still active leaders of the regional structures), who, not questioning either the need of reaching an understanding with or a statutory function for Lech Walesa, think that the Union is not someone’s private or group property, [but] that it had been created as a democratic and pluralistic organization, obeying its own voluntarily adopted rights—and it should stay as such.

The “Solidarity’s” delegation represents only one group, and even if it is now a group in control of the main spheres of the Union’s life, it is still only one group, and it is difficult to expect that other groups would feel bound by an agreement on which they will have (from the very beginning) no influence whatsoever.

An understanding which has a chance to be national, may be perceived in important public circles as being particularistic. If the PRL [People’s Republic of Poland] authorities were inclined toward a policy of confrontation, then controversies within the “Solidarity” would certainly be to their advantage. (However, experience is teaching us that in a confrontation the Union consolidates.) With regard to a course toward an understanding, matters look rather different. Will an additional secret agreement for the defense of a particularistic understanding be concluded, and will the parties to such agreement be co-sponsoring a policy of repression toward its opponents, whom they had not even heard earlier? For us it is hard to imagine, though such fears also exist.

Even more serious is another apprehension—a fear that incomplete representation at the “Table” and hence a limited focus on the [actual] situation will mean that particular arrangements (or even parts of them) will be so far below social aspirations that with a verbal acceptance they will, in fact, be rejected by the society.

Please, excuse this frankness. It is dictated by the sense of responsibility and concern about the future of our Fatherland. We trust we shall be properly understood. This is already the last moment when these and other dangers (not articulated here) can be prevented through supplementing the “Table.” But it needs to be done before the final decisions are taken. Perhaps an expansion and diversification of the delegation’s composition will cause greater difficulties in negotiations, perhaps even part of the common record will be questioned—but it is probably better that controversies take place at the Table *before* concluding the agreement than outside of the Table after its conclusion.

We are submitting to you the readiness of the Working Group of the National Commission of NSZZ “Solidarity” to send our delegation to the negotiations.

With the authorization of the  
Working Group of National Commission

Andrzej Slowik  
[signed]

*[Source: A. Stelmachowski Papers, Translated by Jan Chowaniec for CWIHP.]*