

# Coins

– the 25th Anniversary of the Solidarity Trade Union –



face value	<b>200 zł</b>
metal	<b>900/1000Au</b>
finish	<b>proof</b>
diameter	<b>27.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>15.50 g</b>
mintage	<b>4,600 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** At the top, a semicircular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. On the left-hand side, an image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the right-hand side, an inscription, 200 / ZŁOTYCH. Below the Eagle, an inscription, SOLIDARNOŚĆ. At the bottom, a notation of the year of issue, 2005. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** Stylised images of people holding one another's hands, against the background of a stylised dove. A semicircular inscription, 25-LECIE, above, a semicircular inscription, NSZZ „SOLIDARNOŚĆ”, below.

*Coin Designer: Ewa Olszewska-Borys*



face value	<b>10 zł</b>
metal	<b>925/1000 Ag</b>
finish	<b>proof</b>
diameter	<b>32.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>14.14 g</b>
mintage	<b>64,900 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** At the top, on the left-hand side, a semicircular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. Below, an image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the left-hand side below the Eagle, an inscription, 10 Zł. A stylised fragment of the

inscription, SOLIDARNOŚĆ, at the bottom. On the right-hand side below, a notation of the year of issue, 2005. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** Stylised: a fragment of the outline of a map of the Polish coastline and below, images of people with flags and hands held upwards in a gesture of victory. Above, a semicircular inscription, 1980 NSZZ „SOLIDARNOŚĆ” 2005; in the centre, the logo of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of NSZZ „SOLIDARNOŚĆ”.

*Coin Designer: Ewa Olszewska-Borys*



face value	<b>2 zł</b>
metal	<b>CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy</b>
finish	<b>standard</b>
diameter	<b>27.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>8.15 g</b>
mintage	<b>1,000,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of the Eagle established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland; a notation of the year of issue, 20-05, on both sides of the Eagle; an inscription, ZŁ 2 ZŁ, below the Eagle; on the rim, an inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** A stylised hand held in a gesture of victory on the right-hand side. A diagonal inscription, NSZZ / SOLIDARNOŚĆ, on the left-hand side. A semicircular inscription, 1980-2005, above.

**On the edge:** The inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted 180°, separated by stars.

*Obverse Designer: Ewa Tyc-Karpińska*  
*Reverse Designer: Ewa Olszewska-Borys*

**All coins issued by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.**

*Coins were struck by the Mint of Poland plc. in Warsaw.*

*Printed by NBP Printing Office*



On 17 August 2005, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity, of the following face values:

- 200 zł – struck in proof finish in gold,
- 10 zł – struck in proof finish in silver,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish in Nordic Gold alloy.

## Solidarity – victorious also these days

25 years ago, in August 1980, shipyard workers were fighting for dignity and for the right to freedom. The protest of workers against the communist system was the initiating event which created the broad social movement unified within the framework of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "NSZZ Solidarność" [solidarity] – the movement which had an impact on the reality and on the decay of the era of cold war confrontation. "Solidarność" made it possible to dispel fear, raise heads, mobilize millions and fill human hearts with hope.

"Be not afraid" – appealed Pope John Paul II to us. We rose from our knees and demanded our rights, and the then state authorities understood that the people, organized on their grass-roots initiative, turned against them. And this was "Solidarność" – social activity unprecedented for decades. It was "Solidarność" with a capital "S", which attracted the attention of Europe and the world. It was a symbol, an icon of history in progress before our eyes.

25 years ago we were fighting not only for better living conditions but also for ideas, for more dignified life, for freedom of speech, for civil society. Neither the martial law nor brutal repressions managed to suppress our spirit of hope and zest for fight. We were then shouting "There is no freedom without "Solidarność". And we won it through strikes and negotiations – in a peaceful way. It was actually the Polish August which played a pivotal role in putting an end to the post-Yalta conference division in Europe and opened the gates of freedom in the states oppressed by totalitarianism.

"Solidarność" paved the way to the Round Table talks in Poland, first free elections and first non-communist government. This was the Polish way to democracy.

"Solidarność" also contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall, i.e. the so-called Autumn of the Nations of the year 1989, and to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The changes spread across all Central and Eastern Europe which was then under communist domination.

Even today there is a need for the spirit of "Solidarność". There are places where the spirit of freedom has not yet come and places where it has been suppressed by the post-Soviet dictatorship. We have always been close to those who seek to regain their freedom. May "Solidarność" help those who fight for democracy, citizens' liberties, freedom of speech, raise their heads. This is indeed the legacy of "Solidarność" – freedom.



Lech Wałęsa

The origin of "Solidarność" [Solidarity] traces back to the strike in the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk which broke out on 14 August 1980, i.a. in defence of Anna Walentynowicz, dismissed for her opposition activities. On 16 August the strike in the Shipyard developed into a solidarity protest at a number of industrial plants in the Gdańsk region. The Strike Coordination Committee was formed, with Lech Wałęsa as its leader. The Committee set out 21 demands with independent trade unions the highest priority. On 31 August the government committee – under a pressure of the wave of strikes spreading throughout the country – signed the first in the history of the People's Republic of Poland accord with the Strike Coordination Committee that represented the plants striking in the Gdańsk region. The agreement provided the guarantee of establishing independent trade unions. The 16-month period of legal operation of "Solidarność" was commenced. In November, after long-lasting hesitations of the government, the Union was registered with the Supreme Court, which was an unprecedented event in the Communist countries. The 1st National Meeting of Delegates of "Solidarność", held in September-October 1981, approved the union's programme and democratically elected its authorities – the National Committee and its chairperson, Lech Wałęsa.

From its very beginning, the trade union adopted the form of a large social movement that undermined the Communist ruling in Poland. It is estimated that 10 million Poles joined "Solidarność" in 1980-81. The union did not question openly the system prevailing in Poland. However, the emergence of a public force that got out of the authorities' control was unacceptable in the long run for the ruling Polish United Workers' Party and the USSR satellite countries. The following months in 1981 witnessed an aggravating conflict between the undemocratic authorities and "Solidarność", which declared freedom demands. The "Polish revolution" attracted attention of the whole world and with an increasing power affected the international policies of the world powers. Arrangements for the introduction of the martial law, undertaken as early as in 1980, gained momentum under the Soviet pressure in 1981.

On 13 December 1981, within a few hours thousands of startled "Solidarność" activists were arrested, including most of its leaders. By the end of 1982, ca. 10,000 people had passed through the internment camps. Many workers throughout the country went spontaneously on strike opposing the martial law. On 16 December 1981 nine persons were shot down in the *Wujek* Coal Mine, where the militia opened fire on the striking miners. People involved in the "Solidarność" movement before the martial law were now banned from work and public life. In the next years those, who illegally continued the opposition activities, were threatened by confiscations, arrests, and hard penalties of imprisonment. Many persons were forced to live in hiding. Seven "Solidarność" leaders and four members of the former Social Self-Defence Committee KOR (*Komitet Obrony Robotników* – The Workers Defence Committee) were imprisoned until mid-1984.

In spite of the repressions, conspiracy structures of the union began to revive throughout the country. Secret committees maintained activities at industrial plants, and regional underground management authorities

were established in larger "Solidarność" centres. Warsaw, Wrocław, Gdańsk and Cracow were the strongest centres of opposition. On 22 April 1982, the Temporary Coordination Committee of "Solidarność" – a conspiracy management of the union, in place of the statutory authorities – was established. The list of its most prominent figures included the chairman of the Mazovia regional conspiracy centre Zbigniew Bujak, the leader in the Lower Silesia Władysław Frasyniuk and a representative of "Solidarność" in Gdańsk Bogdan Lis.

In the years 1982-89, in line with the programme of building underground society announced by "Solidarność", independent activity developed on a large scale. Countrywide underground circulation of information comprised infinite numbers of leaflets and badges, a few thousand book and press titles published beyond censorship, conspiracy radio stations. Every year on 1 and 3 May and 31 August demonstrations were held to manifest support for "Solidarność", then repressed by the authorities. These demonstrations, organised in large cities and gathering thousands of "Solidarność" supporters, ended with violent clashes with the militia. The freedom aspirations of "Solidarność" earned wide recognition in the whole democratic world. The most spectacular proof of that recognition was the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Lech Wałęsa in 1983. The underground structures in Poland also obtained significant aid from the West.

The union played a key role in the fall of communism in Poland and in the whole region. In 1989, the Round Table negotiations were held between the Communist authorities and "Solidarność", (6 February – 5 April 1989). The partly democratic general elections held on 4 June 1989 under the agreements concluded during the Round Table negotiations were a turning point in the recent history of Poland. The electoral victory of "Solidarność" precipitated the fall of the Polish United Workers' Party and led to the appointment of the first in the region democratic government with the non-communist Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. The changes occurring in Poland and parallelly in the USSR sparked off a wave of anti-communist protests in other countries. It was only two months after the calling of the Mazowiecki's government into office that the Berlin Wall fell. The wall was a guarded line of fortifications dividing the city into the Western and Eastern parts, and a symbol of the division of Germany and of Europe into two hostile blocks. Also in November 1989 the Velvet Revolution took place in Czechoslovakia, which within a few days led to a peaceful change of rule in that country.

After over seven years of clandestine activities, on 17 April 1989 the Provincial Court in Warsaw registered the "Solidarność" Trade Union once more. The fall of Communism in Poland, confirmed with the election of the "Solidarność" leader Lech Wałęsa for the President of Poland, closed a period in the history of the union. However, the ideas of the first "Solidarność" are still deemed some of the most important foundations of the Third Republic of Poland.

The original wooden boards, where the demands of the striking workers were written down in 1980, were included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register on 16 October 2003.

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