

No. 12

**Letter by the Chairman of the SPD, Brandt, to the Chairman of the
Military Council of the People's Republic of Poland, Jaruzelski
14 January 1982¹**

AdsD, WBA, A 9, 11.

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English translation: Dwight E. Langston

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you for your letter, which reached me on 11 January. I appreciate the fact that, at this difficult time, you sent me your summary of events in Poland and brought to my attention the goals which you are pursuing with your actions.

It does not require many words to ascertain that current developments in your country² have many people here worried and put a strain on the international relations climate. In past weeks, German social democrats and the Federal Government which they lead have, as you well know, worked toward a well-balanced stance intended to avoid more acute crises. In doing that, we have not always reached an agreement in our own country and, in particular, not among some of our important allies.³ Even so, we are determined to hold to this position as long as objective circumstances allow us to. We have not forgotten the special nature of the relations between our two countries. At the same time, it is necessary for us to coordinate our stance with our Western partners.

For the SPD – and this is also the case for the Socialist International⁴ – it is of utmost urgency that all those arrested in your country since the declaration of a state of emergency be released, that the trade union Solidarity⁵ be able to continue its work, and that the martial law be lifted. Systematic violations of human and trade union rights, wherever on earth they occur, cannot leave us indifferent. Also, we

urgently wish that the national dialogue in Poland be renewed between the political leadership, the representatives of Solidarity, and the Catholic Church.

On 29 December in Paris, leading representatives of the Socialist International appealed to all responsible parties not to use the crisis in Poland as an excuse to decrease efforts towards détente and arms reduction.⁶ With great concern we observe that current events present considerable risks for continuing those very policies of détente and cooperation which are of primary concern to both our nations. Undoubtedly, this places an additional major responsibility on your shoulders.

Our sense of solidarity applies to the entire Polish nation, whose well-being and future in Europe are, and will remain of greatest importance. Poland must find its own way, a way which the people will accept and which is in keeping with the general principles recorded in the Helsinki Final Act.⁷ To the extent that we can render practical help, there will certainly be no lack of willingness in my country from people in positions of responsibility and from our citizens.

Yours respectfully,

<signed Willy Brandt>⁸

1 The template copy is a copy of Brandt's letter. At the end of the typewritten document is noted: "Dispatch by H[ans] E[berhard] Dingels over/Polish Embassy in Bonn.

2 copies to H[ans]-J[ürgen] W[ischnewski] 14 January 1982.

Photocopy of the receipt to Comrade Herbert Wehner 18 February 1982."

2 Cf. No. 70. Note 2.

3 Critical voices were raised especially in the USA. On 17 December 1981 President Reagan termed the imposition of martial law in Poland as a "serious violation of the agreement of Helsinki". EA 36 (1981) 2, l. 19. Also the Italian and French Socialists under Bettino Craxi and Lionel Jospin urged for clear statements on the Polish state and party leadership's repression. Cf. *Fischer* 2001, p. 326f.

4 Cf. Berliner Ausgabe, vol. 8.

5 Cf. No. 58, Note 12.

6 Cf. EA 37 (1982) 2, Z 22.

7 Cf. No. 3, Note 13, and EA 30 (1975) 17, D 437 – 484.

8 Rubber stamp.