

Letter for the funeral of the late Bronisław Kawęcki

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Participants of the funeral ceremonies for the late Bronisław Kawęcki in Radom

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was with deep sorrow that I received the news of the passing of Bronisław Kawęcki — a patriot, an activist of the anti-communist opposition, and a witness to our recent history.

He became involved in NSZZ “Solidarność” from its first days: he organised the Provisional Founding Committee of the union at the medical-supply enterprise Cezal in Radom, for which the plant’s management of the time sought to dismiss him. He then became chairman of the workplace commission there. He served on the authorities of the Radom Land Region and represented it at the historic First National Congress of Delegates in Gdańsk–Oliwa. He was also secretary of the mediation group appointed by Solidarity for talks with the government side.

For that commitment the regime repaid him in its own way. Already on 13 December 1981 Bronisław Kawęcki was placed in investigative custody and then interned for more than six months in the so-called isolation centre in Kielce, from where, because of his health, he was transferred to the prison hospital in Łódź. Removed from his job immediately after release from internment, in the 1980s he was fined, detained and constantly surveilled by the Security Service. Even so he did not cease to act as a distributor and editor of underground press. From the autumn of 1988 he served on the open, though still formally illegal, Inter-Enterprise Regional Commission of NSZZ “Solidarność” of the Radom Land. In the spring of 1989 he co-founded the Civic Committee of the Radom Land and helped organise its campaign before the June “contract” elections.

A separate chapter of Bronisław Kawęcki’s work — especially close to me as a historian — is his effort to preserve the memory of the heroes and victims of Radom June. Already in 1981 he became chairman of the Social Committee for the

Construction of the Monument to the Workers' Protest of June '76 and organised the commemorations of the fifth anniversary of those events. Under martial law he took part in numerous demonstrations commemorating that June. In free Poland he served as consultant and assistant to directors Wojciech Maciejewski and Jacek Gwizdała on the most important films about the events of 1976: *A City under Sentence* and *The Stone*. In a similar way he supported work on films devoted to Father Roman Kotlarz.

It is deeply symbolic that in the jubilee Year of the Workers' Protests of June 1976 we bid farewell to a man so devoted to commemorating that uprising. Already in 1981 Bronisław Kawęcki was one of the initiators of the laying of the foundation stone for a monument to the workers' protest — and for decades he carried the memory of Radom June. In recognition of his merits he was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity. The Homeland will always remember him.

To the family and friends of the deceased I extend my heartfelt sympathy.

Shine, O Lord, upon his soul!

With expressions of respect

Karol Nawrocki

President of the Republic of Poland

The letter was read by presidential adviser Jarosław Margielski.