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**Information on a Meeting of the Chairmen of the
Regional Citizens' Committees held in the Citizens'
Committee in Warsaw, at 6 Fredra St., 12 June 1989**

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Summary:

Chairmen of the forty-six regional committees discuss the upcoming round of elections in Poland.

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Participating in the meeting were chairmen or representatives of 46 regional committees[1] and Prof. Bronislaw Geremek, editor Andrzej Wielowieyski, Jacek Kuron, Jaroslaw Sleszynski.[2] The meeting was chaired by Henryk Wujec.

The debates concentrated on three basic issues:

1. Preparations for the second round of elections.[3] Professor Geremek, in his brief introduction, and the chairmen of the Citizens' Committees, in their speeches, have raised the following issues:

The elections were a huge, startling success, particularly if one considers the conditions under which the election campaign had been run. Even in places where victory in the first round has not been achieved, there is a great chance that in the second round all of [our] candidates will squeeze in.[4]

Fears were expressed that in the second round electoral attendance may be very low, which is dangerous, because electoral attendance of the coalition may be relatively high.

The voivodships have declared assistance to their neighboring regions, in which our candidates will be fighting for mandates in the second round. Thus, Poznan will be helping Pila (delegating two people from its staff, printing 20 thousand posters and leaflets). Pila will also be helped by Wloclawek and Szczecin. Piotrków, Kielce and Lublin came up with an initiative to help Radom.

Some voivodships had already successfully supported candidates from outside of the Citizens' Committee in the first round. In others, decisions regarding possible support for the coalition's candidates varied: some of them have already decided for which candidate they will vote, others are hesitating, afraid of being suspected of collaboration, in some cases one cannot find any suitable candidate. H. Wujec stated that the Committee leaves it up to the regions to support particular candidates, provided that it is done from the bottom and cautiously, without concluding contracts, supporting people who guarantee reliability.

2. The question of a national list.[5]

The participants raised the issue that in their regions there had been numerous voices of anxiety and resentment due to "delegating" to the government side the decision regarding the reelection of candidates from the national list. Concern by our side about the fate of that list was premature, clumsy, it was stated point-blank that it had been a political mistake.

Explanations have been submitted by B. Geremek, A. Wielowieyski and Jacek Kuron. It looks as if the situation which has arisen-the necessity to keep the contract on the distribution of mandates that was concluded at the Roundtable-from the legal point of view had no clean solution. In the meantime the huge electoral success has resulted in other, more radical demands [being made] by society as well as growing impatience due to a gradual realization of the democratic process.

3. The future of the Citizens' Committees

The participants drew attention to the fact that during the elections a huge amount of human capital had been created, which numbered in the hundreds of thousands, organized spontaneously and from the bottom up, verified in action. What is more, these masses of activists have organized themselves on their own in the areas that had been void in this respect earlier-in small towns and communities.

This capital must not be wasted. It has been noted that [these people] are potential activists for the regional self-governing bodies, in the future members of the Sejm senatorial teams, now in the process of organization, keeping communication offices of deputies and senators [in contact with] the voters.

Regional delegates expressed anxiety over potential strains between the Citizens' Committees and regional Solidarity bodies. Voices were heard that creation of the committees had weakened Solidarity, depriving it of some of its leaders. In the union movement mostly workers are gathered, while the intelligentsia has crossed over to the citizens' committees (a voice from Katowice). On the other hand the citizens' movement is enriching Solidarity ideologically and expands its tasks. Citizens' Committees form a platform for cooperation of different groupings: Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia, Dziekania, workers' "S," and "S" of individual peasants, youth movements. It has been noted that this constitutes their strength, creating an integrated platform for the opposition, at the same time, their variety would be an obstacle to a possible transformation of that movement into an association or a party.

An overwhelming majority of the participants was in favor of keeping the Citizens' Committees. In this connection attention was drawn to the necessity of working out a legal framework for their existence, their organizational structure after the elections and, most importantly, their financial basis.

It has been decided not to take any hasty organizational decisions in the near future, instead, keeping a form of understanding of organizations, initiating talks with the authorities regarding an extension of activities of the Citizens' Committees (officially they are to end their activity on 18 June 1989), and coming up immediately with various territorial initiatives of the National Councils.[6] The shape of the Committees in the future need not be the same. [...]

[1] On 7 April 1989 the National Executive Committee (KKW) decided to entrust the management of the election campaign to the Sejm and Senate to the KO of the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity." Under its aegis, citizens' committees popped up all over the country, whose main task was to manage the election campaign for "Solidarity" candidates.

[2] Jaroslaw Sleszynski, manager of the cultural section of the Warsaw KIK, "Roundtable" participants.

[3] The first round of elections took place on 4 June 1989, the second on 18 June 1989.

[4] In the first round "Solidarity" candidates gained 160 of the 161 possible seats in the Sejm (within the 35% of seats allocated to candidates outside of the PUWP and its "allied parties"). In the election to the Senate "Solidarity" candidates gained 92 seats out of the 100 possible (as opposed to the lower chamber of parliament, elections to the Senate were held according to fully democratic procedures). In the second round "Solidarity" gained the last missing seat in the Sejm (thus, gaining 161 seats for 161 possible), as well as the next 7 seats in the Senate (in total 99 of 100 possible).

[5] On the national (central) list the authorities placed 35 leading PUWP activists and "allied party" candidates. Only two of them gained more than 50% of votes, which in view of the electoral law meant that 33 seats would not be filled. That would obviously undermine a precise parity of mandates, agreed upon at the "Roundtable", depriving the PUWP and its allies a secure majority in the Sejm. In this situation the KO of the Chairman of NSZZ "Solidarity" agreed to modify the electoral law to shift the 33 mandates from the national list to the regional ones. In the second round the candidates of the PUWP and the "allied parties" could fight for them. The agreement for changing the electoral law between the I and II round of elections was considered by many observers as inconsistent with the law. It also provoked voices of protest within the "Solidarity" camp.

[6] The territorial authorities.