



GDANSK

WALESA AND THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT ■ OCTOBER

As the birthplace of the Solidarity movement that helped bring down the Iron Curtain, the city of Gdansk was rarely out of the news in the 1980s. The release later this year of the film *Walesa*, starring Robert Wieckiewicz as the eponymous trade union activist, will again throw the spotlight on the city's role in a famous chapter of world history. Those keen to explore the Solidarity story and follow in the footsteps of Lech Wałęsa (pronounced 'Lek Vowensa', for you English speakers) and can visit several fascinating sites.

At the Gdansk Shipyard, the BHP Hall where Wałęsa and his colleagues negotiated with Communist authorities has recently reopened as an exhibition space. A set of black and white photos powerfully evokes the struggle endured by the city's residents, within and beyond the shipyard gates. Outside those gates is the 42m-high Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970. Its construction was one of the first demands of the Solidarity union.

A wander through the seven themed rooms of the Roads to Freedom exhibition ([Ecs.gda.pl/Exhibition](https://ecs.gda.pl/Exhibition)) takes the visitor from a mock-up 1970s shop with empty shelves, through the period of martial law and on to the end of the Cold War. The admission ticket is a replica of a ration card used by all Poles in the Communist era.

While you're unlikely to catch a glimpse of Lech Wałęsa on the streets of Gdansk, the plaque outside his office in the city's Green Gate is now a popular photo stop. *Solidarity walking tours are offered by local English-speaking guide Margaret Andrzejewska-Bancewicz. Go to facebook.com/margaret.andrzejewskabancewicz. For information on the movie, visit walesafilmm.pl*

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