

# Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/4209,Jan-Olszewski.html>

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## Jan Olszewski

4 June, the anniversary of the 1989 contract elections, is also the anniversary of the overthrow of Jan Olszewski's Cabinet (4 June 1992). It was the first government elected after fully free elections to the Sejm.





Jan Olszewski, who passed away last year, was Poland's Prime Minister in the years 1991–1992, a Member of the Sejm of the 1st, 3rd and 4th term, an advisor to the late President Lech Kaczyński. In 2009, he was awarded the Order of the White Eagle.

In the 70s he was the initiator, co-author and signatory of public speeches directed against communist authorities, including the most famous Letter of 59 against planned amendment to the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic. In 1976, he co-founded the underground Polish Independence Agreement, working to regain Poland's independence. He authored one of the most important publications in the samizdat - the guide "Citizen versus Security Services". In 1976 he was among the co-founders of the Workers' Defense Committee (later 'KOR' Social Self-Defense Committee). Olszewski participated in editing the founding document of 'Appeal to the society and authorities of the Polish People's Republic'. He was a co-author of the statute of free trade unions, which after August 1980 were transformed into "Solidarity". At a meeting of workers' representatives on 17 September 1980, he convinced them to opt for one nationwide Independent Self-

Governing Trade Union "Solidarity". He co-lead the registration proceedings of "Solidarity" and "Solidarity" of Individual Farmers. He was an advisor to the "Solidarity" National Coordinating Commission.

After the introduction of Martial Law, he became an advisor to the Polish Episcopate. He was an auxiliary prosecutor in the trial of the murderers of Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko. In 1988, he co-founded the Citizens' Committee with the Chairman of "Solidarity" Lech Wałęsa. He was opposed to seeking agreement with the communists. He refused to chair on behalf of the social side the commission for the reform of the court and legal system at the "Round Table".

On 6 December 1991, he headed the first non-communist government of reborn Poland. His government implemented the vetting law of 26 May 1992. On 4 June 1992, his Cabinet was overthrown by the defenders of the "Round Table".

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