

# Coins

## – The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of June 1976 –



face value	<b>10 zł</b>
metal	<b>Ag 925/1000</b>
finish	<b>proof</b>
diameter	<b>32.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>14.14 g</b>
mintage	<b>56,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of the Eagle, established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland. At the top, a semicircular inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. On the left-hand side of the Eagle, an inscription, 10, on the right-hand side, an inscription, ZŁ. Below the Eagle, a stylised image of a broken railway track. At the bottom, the notation of the year of issue, 2006. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** Against the background of a stylised image of a cordon of militia officers wearing helmets and shields, a stylised image of a woman and a boy superimposed. At the top, a semicircular inscription, 30. ROCZNICA (30<sup>th</sup> anniversary); at the bottom, a semicircular inscription, CZERWCA 1976 (of June 1976).

Coin designer: : *Ewa Olszewska-Borys*



face value	<b>2 zł</b>
metal	<b>CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy</b>
finish	<b>standard</b>
diameter	<b>27.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>8.15 g</b>
mintage	<b>1,000,000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** An image of the Eagle, established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland; on both sides of the Eagle, a notation of the year of issue: 20-06. Below the Eagle, an inscription, Zł 2 Zł. On the rim, an inscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left leg.

**Reverse:** In the central part, an inscription, 1976. Below the inscription, against the background of stylised silhouettes of two men with their arms raised, on the right-hand side, a stylised image of a hand. On the left-hand side and at the top, a semicircular inscription, 30. ROCZNICA CZERWCA (30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of June).

**On the edge:** The inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated by stars.

Obverse designer: *Ewa Tyc-Karpińska*  
Reverse designer: : *Ewa Olszewska-Borys*



Coins struck by the Mint of Poland plc. in Warsaw.

Printed by NBP Printing Office

On 21 June 2006 the National Bank of Poland puts into circulation coins commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of June 1976, of the following face values:

- 10 zł – struck in proof finish in silver;
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish in Nordic Gold.

In the first half of the 1970s Poland saw some progress in its living standards. The progress, however, relied upon a fragile foundation such as increasing foreign debt and lack of proper reform to boost the economy. To raise finance through loans, the Edward Gierek government strengthened its liaison with Western countries, but at the same time it was generous with servile gestures towards Moscow. Aspirations for amendments to the Constitution i.e. incorporating a legal formula providing for the leading role of the governing party and a permanent alliance with the Soviet Union, triggered movements among intellectuals and university students in 1975.

When the first foreign loan repayments became due and payable, economic difficulties intensified. Again, the public suffered shortages of food and supplies. The authorities of the Polish People's Republic took a decision to stabilise the market by increasing prices. Contrary to the commitments made by the authorities, following the 1970 and 1971 events, not to take any decisions that affect the public without wide national consultations, they started to act by surprise. The proposed price changes were announced on 24 June 1976, leaving just one day for consultations. These were to be confined to the mass meetings steered by party organisations and held at major plants.

The draft proposal as such, as well as the fictitiousness of the consultations preceding the implementation of the price increases, provoked public outrage. On 25 June, the whole country went on strike. The strikes covered 97 major plants, many other threatened with going on strike if the prices were to go up. In Radom, the Warsaw district of Ursus and, at a lesser scale in Płock, strikes evolved into street manifestations. The 1976 events did not differ much from any of the protests of 1956 and 1970. They gathered mostly workers, were poorly organised and were lacking leaders; their demands were confined to revoking the imposed unfavourable decisions which were to lower the living standards.

The Radom demonstration set out for the headquarters of the Voivodeship Committee of the Polish United Worker's Party and demanded that talks concerning price increases be held. When the party authorities refused, the crowd barged into the building. In the buffet they found the then-rare luxury goodies that were much in demand those days, which made the anger grow even more. The Committee building was set on fire. In Ursus there were mostly the local tractor factory workers who demonstrated. They stopped the rail traffic nearby on one of the major international routes.

Special forces of the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens Militia, ZOMO were sent against the demonstrators. ZOMO were so brutal that two people perished in the demonstrations. Contrary to the developments back in 1956 and 1970, no shotguns were used ... Such "lighter" intervention was a result not only of the scruples of those in power, but also a consequence of the previous experience. Those who had ordered the forces to fire, eventually lost their power.

During the events and just after their suppression a few thousand were arrested, quite often casual people. They were beaten up, and driven through the so-called "fitness paths" (militia officers were beating up the runners with clubs). The strikers were fired in mass, especially in Radom. A few hundred people were brought before "kolegium", i.e. a body of citizens having jurisdiction over minor offences, or courts.

The June protests made the authorities withdraw the decision on price increases, which was announced on 26 June evening, substantiating their decision with reservations ensuing from the consultations. They realised their complete fiasco and they were trying to strengthen their position by organising mass meetings condemning the participants of the events in Radom and Ursus.

The significance of June 1976 was manifold. The intellectual circles realised how necessary broader social collaboration, with workers in particular, was, and the workers found out that they needed intellectual guidance in their protests. A new action plan sprouted. It was clear that top-down transformation of the communist system was not possible and due to the prevailing political situation effectiveness of fierce protests was limited.

The beginnings of solidarity with the persecuted workers were spontaneous. Intellectuals, students and scouts protested against the persecutions, raised aid funds and attended legal proceedings. In September the Worker's Defence Committee (Pol. Komitet Obrony Robotników - KOR) was founded. The committee included representatives of Roman Catholic circles, among others - father Jan Zieja, the National Army (AK) war veterans, intellectuals and independent politicians of the pre-war and war generations and junior members involved in the students' protest movement of 1968. In the following years, other organisations emerged, such as the Movement for the Defence of Human and Civic Rights, the Confederation for Independent Poland and the Young Poland Movement.

Yet another time the workers became convinced that their protests did not go unnoticed, however, on the other hand, they paid a high price for it with suffering and repression. As before, the protest did not lead to institutional changes that were to guarantee supervision of the authorities' actions in the future. Therefore the idea that such changes were a must was evolving. The experience of June 1976 gave rise to the desire to create Free Trade Unions. Despite various kinds of repression, these were established in three centres, with the key centre being the Gdańsk Coast. The need to streamline the workers' protests was best summed up by Jacek Kuroń, who said: "What we need is to set up committees, not to burn them down."

June 1976 was the inception of opposition movements, which in the following four years were to bring forth the "Solidarity" movement.

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**All coins issued by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.**