



## Man of Iron Człowiek z żelaza

Director: Andrzej Wajda

©: Film Polski

Production Companies: PRF 'Zespoły Filmowe', Zespół Filmowy 'X'

Production Supervisor: Henryk Wloch

Production Manager: Barbara Pec-Slesicka

2nd Unit Production Managers:

Alina Klobukowska, Maciej Wojtulewicz

Assistant Production Managers: Maciej Skalski,

Iwona Ziulkowska, Iwona Klapinska,

Wanda Helbert, Jacek Górnowicz

Production Secretary: Barbara Fedyniak

2nd Unit Director: Krystyna Grochowicz

Assistant Directors: Andrzej Chodakowski,

Stanisław Kaluzynski, Lukasz Zielinski

Screenplay: Aleksander Scibor-Rylski

Director of Photography: Edward Klosinski

Camera Operator: Janusz Kalincinski

Camera Assistants: Jan Ossowski,

Krzysztof Ciesielski, Mieczysław Kozaczyk

Stills Photographer: Renata Pajchel

Editor: Halina Prugar

Art Director: Allan Starski

2nd Unit Art Director: Maja Chrolowska

2nd Unit Assistant Art Director: Joanna Lelanow

Set Decorator: Magdalena Dipont

Assistant Set Decorators: Emil Kostecki,

Jozef Runo

Costumes: Wiesława Starska

Make-up: Anna Adamek

Laboratory: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych

Music/Conductor: Andrzej Korzynski

Music Consultant: Małgorzata Przedpeńska

Sound: Piotr Zawadzki

Studio: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych

Cast:

Jerzy Radziwiłowicz

(Maciej Tomczyk/Mateusz Birkut)

Krystyna Janda (Agnieszka Tomczyk)

Marian Opania (Winkel)

Irena Byrska (Anna's mother)

Wiesława Kosmańska (Anna Hulewicz)

Bogusław Linda (Dzidek)

Franciszek Trzeciak (Badecki)

Janusz Gajos (2nd man at radio recording)

Andrzej Seweryn (Captain Wirski)

Marek Kondrat (Grzenda)

Jerzy Trela (Antoniak)

Krzysztof Janczar (Kryska)

Krystyna Zachwatowicz-Wajda (Maciej's mother)

Bogusław Sobczuk (TV director)

Wojciech Alaborski (staff member)

L. Andrzejewski

A. Barcis

Z. Buczkowski

J. Domanski

B. Dykiel (section head)

A. Ferency

A. Gawronski

L. Grzmocinski

T. Gwiazdowski

M. Jarosz

M. Juszcakiewicz

W. Kaluski

J. Kizkisz

M. Komorowska

A. Komornicka

H. Kowalczyk

I. Kownas

J. Kozak-Sutowicz

K. Machowski

M. Michalak

## Andrzej Wajda: Portraits of History and Humanity

# Man of Iron Człowiek z żelaza

### Andrzej Wajda on 'Man of Iron'

At the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, talks between the government and workers had already been underway for some time, but at the beginning, only shreds of information were reaching Warsaw. At the time, the Association of Filmmakers, of which I was president, had won the right to record important historical events for archive purposes, and a group of filmmakers was already at the shipyard.

The workers' guard at the gate recognised me at once. While I was on my way to the assembly hall, one of the shipyard workers asked:

– Why don't you make a film about us?

– What kind of film?

– *The Man of Iron* – he answered without hesitation.

I had never made a film to order, but I could not ignore this call. The echo of *Man of Marble* returned to me; the final scene had ended right here, at the gates of the Gdansk shipyard. This could provide a good excuse for making a new film.

Obviously, it would be impossible to explain what had happened at the shipyard in 1980 without returning to the events of 1970 and showing the social protests on the Coast. Efforts made after 1970 by myself and others to show these events on the screen had not been successful. Now, however, the authorities were considerably weaker, and the author of *Man of Marble*, Aleksander Scibor-Rylski, enthusiastically took to writing the script, while I, in my naiveté, went to talk to General Jaruzelski about the tanks which I needed for filming the scenes of the state of emergency introduced in the Coast in 1970.

The film was created overnight despite enormous difficulties, particularly with the script. We were constantly learning about new things which should be included in the movie, while others, too obvious, had to be edited out. Fortunately, I was not alone. Agnieszka Holland helped me enormously, writing some of the scenes and dialogues, following the suggestions of the participants of those events, taking part in discussions which often lasted for several hours. In particular, the disclosures made by Bogdan Borusewicz [member of Solidarity] proved to be exceptionally 'filmworthy'. We were learning to understand this new reality and to show it on the screen at the same time, which was not easy.

We had begun shooting in January 1981, and by June, in the company of Barbara Pec-Slesicka and Krystyna Zachwatowicz-Wajda [Andrzej Wajda's wife], I was on my way with a complete film via Stalowa Wola and Poznan to Gdansk.

Today I still feel a double satisfaction. In the first place, I had not shied away from the creative risks involved in dealing with current events, and secondly, I had managed to make the film before the imposition of martial law.

A few months later, Jaruzelski's tanks drove into the streets, confirming that the social contract had been signed under force... These were the same tanks which the general had refused to lend me for the film in the autumn of 1980.

wajda.pl

St. Michalski  
K. Mielczarek  
Z. Mayr  
K. Orzechowski  
J. Pawlowski  
J. Popielarczyk  
St. Staniek  
T. Sosna-Sarno  
L. Soluba  
P. Suchora  
A. Szejnach  
L. Terlecka  
M. Tronski-Szalawski  
J. Szczepanski  
K. Wieczorek  
K. Zaleski  
J. Zaorski  
Halina Labornarska (*doctor in psychiatric hospital*) \*  
Lech Walesa, Anna Walentynowicz, Stanislaw J.  
Borowczak, Zbigniew Lis, Teodor Kudla \*  
Poland 1981©  
152 mins  
Digital

\* Uncredited

Restored by Yakumama

#### With thanks to

Marlena Łukasiak, Michał Oleszczyk,  
Jędrzej Sabliński

Presented with the ICA and Ciné Lumière, who will also be hosting screenings of Wajda's works in February and March

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**SIGHT AND SOUND**

*Man of Iron* is not so much a political film (though inevitably because it deals with intensely absorbing contemporary events it will be seen that way) as a film about what it is like to live in opposition in a totalitarian society. What is immediately striking about *Man of Iron*, in comparison with many recent Polish films, is how it deals directly with the issues involved, and jettisons the ambiguously useful device of working through loaded metaphors – a route taken by many East European directors out of political necessity as much as aesthetic preference. Wajda has never suffered anxiety over the tricky business of how to present politics while making entertaining narrative cinema, and *Man of Iron* exists on the most superficial level as a technically polished, dramatically tense and moving moral tale. In another sense it offers the most succinct and compelling analysis of the background to the Polish upheaval.

In saying that, the film may be regarded as somewhat dry and abstract – but nothing could be further from the truth. Wajda and his team are in the fortunate position of having a readymade scenario with more latent dramatic scope than the best Hollywood scriptwriter could dream up. *Man of Iron* is set in the short period leading up to and including the signing of the agreement between strikers and government in Gdansk last August. Skilfully edited into this time scheme are three lengthy flashbacks referring to events of 1968, 1970, and the mid-1970s, each of which successively places more precisely the reasons why Solidarity emerged so strongly united last summer. The central characters are seen not as moral heroes struggling against the wicked state, but as fairly average individuals who gained in political consciousness with each setback.

Solidarity has announced that *Man of Iron* is also under pressure from the censor, with potentially 20 cuts being demanded for Polish release. The problem facing the censor is not what to cut, but what not to; almost every incident and scene poses a direct political threat to the established notions of political power.

Wajda has clearly relied on footage from *Workers '80*, a film made during the negotiations last summer, and uses material from that film to give context to the events of *Man of Iron*. Walesa makes several appearances as himself, but not only is he no actor, his view of the film leaves a sour taste. In early July, Walesa made a brief TV interview and described the film as 'too radical', 'too aggressive', and astonishingly enough declared it to be 'untrue', remarks all designed perhaps to reassure the government that his moderate influence seeks further blurring of the remaining differences between Solidarity and the authorities. Luckily Wajda doesn't need to play such circumspect political games, otherwise we would have been denied what must be his masterpiece.

Gustaw Moszcz, 'In Solidarity', *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1981