

NEWS



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BELGIUM

MILLIONS OF POLES gathered to see and hear the Pope in Warsaw, Poznan, Katowice, Czestochowa, Nowa Huta, Krakow and Wroclaw, freely displaying "Solidarnosc" banners and applauding the Pope's expressions of support for the 1980 Gdansk agreements that gave rise to the free trade union movement. The Pope's visit allowed people to gather in millions for the first time since the state of war without being attacked by water cannons, tear gas and truncheon-wielding police. Not only did the whole nation see the Church services on television, but up to one third of the Polish population attended the events and was able to experience at first hand the unity of the Polish people in their aspirations for freedom, human rights, and human dignity.

LEADERS OF NSZZ "SOLIDARNOSC" and of government-sanctioned unions, dissolved in October 1982 by the authorities, issued a joint statement in early May calling for trade union pluralism and the release of persons sentenced for union work or membership. Because of the importance of this document, we are reproducing the full text below:

JOINT STATEMENT

The trade union law of 8 October 1982 erased what different unions had achieved in more than one hundred years. The new trade unions do not enjoy broad support in the society. The government is clearly trying to create a monopoly for trade unions functioning under the tutelage of the State-Employer. This is an attempt to obstruct the legal provisions that guarantee trade union pluralism, as evidenced by the hasty transfer (to the new unions) of capital assets of unions deprived of legal existence.

The laws of social evolution, again confirmed by events in recent years and months, provide irrefutable evidence that not every goal - notably changes in social consciousness - can be attained by administrative means. In the period following August 1980, we saw a gradual and profound change in national opinions and attitudes. A qualitative change took place which must be acknowledged and taken into account by the authorities.

Disregarding the will of society can profit neither the government nor the society. The good of the socialist state can only be based on a balanced compromise that takes into account the fundamental interests of different social groups. The re-establishment of union freedom is one of the indispensable elements of a much desired and genuine national agreement, and will enable Poland to recover from the present economic crisis.

Free of tension and uncertainty, economically stable, Poland is a trump card for security and peace in Europe. This is why united action in the resolution of fundamental national and state problems is now imperative and an absolute necessity.

Guided by a deep concern for the fate of our country, we believe that decisive steps are needed to correct this situation, particularly:

-the implementation, without further delay, of the principle of union pluralism which is stipulated by the law;

-the release of all persons convicted for their union activities, protests or political beliefs;
-the reinstatement of persons sacked for union work or membership.

The fact that this letter is signed jointly by representatives of the different post-August '80 union groups - the autonomous unions, the branch unions, the National Teachers' Union and "Solidarnosc" - proves that a pluralistic union movement is capable of reaching agreement in matters of fundamental concern to the working world, the nation and the state.

Signed by: Albin Melcer, in 1980 elected member of the national leadership of the independent Self-Governing Union of Construction Industry and Cooperative Workers (affiliated to the branch union central); Jan Simon, in January 1981 elected member of the national leadership of the Metalworkers Union (branch union); Lech Walesa, in October 1981 elected President of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarnosc"; Jacek Merkel, in October 1981 elected member of the National Commission Presidium of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarnosc"; Stanislaw Rusinek, in June 1980 elected to the Presidium of the Mazowsze Regional Commission (Warsaw section) of the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarnosc"; Antoni Lopata, in June 1981 elected President of the National Teachers' Union; Jan Trynkowski, in June 1981 elected to the General Council of the National Teachers' Union; Bogdan Fuitowski, in November 1981 elected to the working group of the Confederation of Autonomous Unions, after being voted President of the Independent Self-Governing Union of Computer Analysts in October 1980; Bogdan Stelmach, in November 1981 elected to the working group of the Confederation of Autonomous Unions, after being voted President of the national leadership of the Autonomous Self-Governing Union of Social Insurance Employees in late March 1981; Michal Zurawski, in November 1981 elected to the working group of the Confederation of Autonomous Unions, after being voted President of the national leadership of the Independent Self-Governing Union of Dairy Cooperative Workers in November 1980.

6 May 1983

"UNDERGROUND EDUCATION COURSES were initiated by groups of people who, after December 1981, felt they should rethink "Solidarnosc" experiences and seek a programme for the future. "...The first courses were organized in the Spring of 1982, but it was in the following Autumn that the movement gathered real momentum. "...The courses are organized from the base rather than from above, which results in a spontaneous development of initiatives and a flexible organizational structure. The groups consist of "Solidarnosc" activists: workers, engineers, clerks. They get together because they work in one place or in different places within one area. What brings them together are their union links."

- Tygodnik Mazowsze no. 46

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EDITORS OF THE UNDERGROUND PAPER KOS suggest that July 12 be a day of solidarity with underground printers. "Our printers work in extremely difficult conditions, up to 12 or 16 hours a day, on outdated equipment that often breaks down. Furthermore, they face severe legal sanctions." July 12 marks the anniversary of the birth in 1894 of Robotnik (Worker), the first underground paper published in Poland. KOS (Committee of Social Resistance) also suggests that a fund be set up to aid underground printers.

NINE WORKERS FROM "ZAMECH" (Mechanical Works) in Elblag, charged with printing and distributing leaflets and with helping people in need of financial and food aid, were sentenced by the Pomorski District Army Court to prison terms of one to two and a half years.

THE TRIAL OF MAREK HOLUSZKO began in Warsaw on April 7. Employed at the Institute of Meteorology, and "Solidarnosc" activist in the Mazowsze Region, he had been in hiding since 13 Dec. 1981. He is charged with membership in underground organizations, and with using false identity papers.

AFTER 16 MONTHS IN JAIL, Mieczyslaw Gil was granted a half-year break in his sentence because of his parents' severe illness.

EDMUND BALUKA WAS RECENTLY SENTENCED to five years in prison by a military tribunal in Bydgoszcz. One of the main leaders of the December 1970 strike at the Szczecin shipyards, Baluka fled Poland in 1973. He re-entered Poland secretly in 1981. Interned on December 13, he was placed under arrest in June 1982.

POGLOS (Echo), the underground "Solidarnosc" paper at the Merinotex factory in Torun, in its April issue called for the payment of higher than usual union dues for one month to help workers at the Ema-Apator factory cover legal costs and fines amounting to some 200,000 zlotys.

A PETITION IN DEFENSE OF JOZEF PINIOR, member of the Temporary Coordinating Commission arrested in the Spring of 1983, is circulating at the Pafawag and Fardom factories. In it, the workers pledge to turn their dues over for use by Pinior. This appeal was taken up in a recent issue of Z Dnia Na Dzień (Day To Day) no.20, suggesting that all enterprises in Lower Silesia send similar petitions to Pinior's defense counsel.

WORKING CONDITIONS at the Polchem Chemical Complex in Torun (central Poland) present a constant hazard to the health and safety of the crew, reports the underground Mazowsze Weekly (Tygodnik Mazowsze) no. 54. According to this source, conditions have changed little since the plant (a Polish-Belgian venture) was built after WW I. The emission of toxic fumes is not monitored or controlled; factory buildings are exposed to rapid deterioration and corrosion due to the acidic fumes. Safety conditions are not enforced: in 1979, three workers were killed and two others required extensive medical treatment after they were ordered to clean out waste from a tank in preparation for an official visit from the ministry. There was some hope for change in January 1981 when the NSZZ "Solidarnosc" National Coordinating Commission of Chemists signed an agreement with the Ministry of Chemical Industries providing for the modernization of facilities and for improvements in health and safety conditions. Aside from vacation benefits however, none of the provisions of the agreement have been implemented to date.

A THREE-MEMBER COMMISSION OF INQUIRY on trade union violations in Poland was appointed by the ILO Governing Body on 23 June. Nicolas Valticos (Greece) was named Chairman; he is a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and Secretary-General of the International Law Institute, and has served as Assistant Director-General of the ILO. The Commission also includes Andres Aguilar (Venezuela), member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and of the UN Commission for Human Rights; and Jean-Francois Aubert (Switzerland), law professor at the University of Neuchatel.

POLAND SUSPENDED ALL COOPERATION with the International Labour Organization and has threatened to pull out from this international body. In a letter dated June 24 to Francis Blanchard, Director-General of the ILO, the Polish Government categorically rejected the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, claiming that the ILO decision constitutes "an interference in the internal affairs of Poland and is contrary to the spirit and to the letter of the (ILO) Constitution."

In a reply dated the same day, Mr. Blanchard regretted the Polish government's decision, adding that "a Commission of Inquiry can be a valid means of achieving a mutually acceptable solution." He also stated that "the calling of a Commission of Inquiry is founded on provisions of the Constitution to which your government has submitted itself by virtue of its adherence to the Organization, and on obligations freely entered into by your government upon ratification of the Conventions that concern us here..."

THE TOTALITARIAN COMMUNIST SYSTEM is the form of totalitarianism that is most threatening to world peace, states a declaration issued on 20 May by the Committee of Social Resistance (KOS) and published by Information Solidarnosc, Mazowsze Region, no. 144. Speaking for organizations and groups active in the underground, the declaration notes that the totalitarian communist system is becoming increasingly militarized due to its deepening social and economic crisis; that its "peace offensive" propaganda blames NATO for the war threat; and that the only ideology upheld by this system is the preservation of power at all costs. The declaration asserts that:

- the defense of peace cannot be separated from the fight against totalitarianism, the struggle for freedom and democracy;
- it cannot be isolated from the fight against poverty, the defense of human and civil rights, the struggle for freedom, justice, democracy and solidarity;
- in view of the tense international situation, the defense of peace calls for a clear understanding of the nature and source of the factors threatening peace, and requires unified action by all nations.

KOS pledges solidarity with all nations, organizations and people for whom peace and life on earth is of highest value. Finally, it appeals to all independent organizations, groups and institutions in Poland and abroad to support this declaration.

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS, based in Brussels and representing journalists of nearly 30 news organizations, protested to General Jaruzelski over the number of Western journalists refused visas to cover the Pope's visit. The IFJ Executive Committee, meeting in early June, has also mandated its officers to send a mission to Poland to investigate work conditions for journalists and the status of the dissolved Polish Journalists' Union.

A FOUR-MEMBER 'SOLIDARNOSC' DELEGATION attended the 13th World Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions held in Oslo. For seven days beginning June 23, over five hundred delegates representing some 85 million workers discussed issues related to the three principal Congress themes: full employment and an end to poverty; trade union rights; and peace, security and disarmament. The Congress provided the "Solidarnosc" delegation with a unique opportunity to meet with many trade unionists, to offer an update on the situation in Poland and the Union's activities, and to appeal for continued moral, material and political support.

Because of space limitations, it is impossible to give a detailed account of the numerous expressions of support for NSZZ "Solidarnosc" received from the Congress participants. The resolution on Poland, adopted by acclamation in the final days of the Congress, offers the best illustration of this support.

THE THIRTEENTH WORLD CONGRESS of the ICFTU, meeting in Oslo from 23 to 30 June 1983, CONSIDERING the events that took place in 1980 in Poland, leading, thanks to the courageous efforts and determination of the workers, to the setting up of an independent and self-governing trade union organization known as NSZZ "Solidarnosc"; DENOUNCING the Polish authorities which, after having freely signed the Gdansk, Jastrzebie, Szczecin and other agreements with the workers' legitimate representatives, declared a State of War and imposed martial law on 13 December 1981, arresting and sending to detention camps tens of thousands of trade unionists, suspending all trade union activities and later dissolving all trade unions;

STRONGLY CONDEMNS:

1. the killing by the Polish security forces of at least 48 trade unionists since 13 December 1981, and the deaths of a large number of miners which occurred as a result of the militarization of industrial enterprises during martial law,
2. the continuous ban imposed on free trade union activities, and the dissolution of all independent workers' organizations, in flagrant contradiction to ILO Conventions 87 and 98,
3. the continued imprisonment of over 4,500 trade unionists, many of whom have been held for months without trial and under severe conditions,
4. the repeated harassment by the authorities in an effort to force workers, through moral or economic pressure, to join the so-called new trade unions,
5. the confiscation by the authorities of all funds and assets of NSZZ "Solidarnosc", despite a warning against such action by the ILO,
6. the plans to force thousands of formerly detained trade unionists into labour camps, under the "Law on proceedings to be applied towards people refusing to work" (Social Parasitism),
7. the multiple forms of repression directed against free trade unionists (including frequent detention, questioning, physical abuse, and various sorts of mistreatment in relation to their work, such as: transfer to other workplaces, non-payment of salary or unjustified dismissals - over 200,000 cases);

EXPRESSES ITS INDIGNATION at the organisation of show trials against 13 prominent leaders of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" and advisors from the Workers' Defence Committee (KSS "KOR", now dissolved) who face the death penalty for "plotting to overthrow the political system by force" whereas, at the time of their alleged conspiracy, they had been detained by the authorities for nearly one year; NOTES that the economic situation and living standards have severely deteriorated since the imposi-

tion of martial law, mainly because of the Government's persistent refusal to engage in any form of authentic social consultation about the much-needed reform of the economy;

SUPPORTS:

1. the activities carried out by "Solidarnosc" Chairman, Lech Walesa, and by the Temporary Coordinating Commission (TKK) of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" with a view to restoring civil and trade union rights in Poland,
2. the efforts by the Polish people and workers to create conditions for the democratic development of a free, social, educational and cultural network;

URGES affiliated organisations and the International Trade Secretariats to provide the ICFTU with means to make as effective as possible the support of the international free trade union movement for the efforts of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" to promote trade union rights and for humanitarian, legal and relief assistance;

CALLS ON all affiliates and ITS, also in line with the Statement on Poland jointly adopted on 10 November 1982 by the ICFTU, the ETUC and the WCL to:

- a) refuse all contacts with the so-called new "trade unions" that the authorities are trying to set up under the strict supervision of the Communist Party and the State,
- b) review any relations with organisations that have not taken a clear stand in favour of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" and against the violation of human rights and trade union freedoms in Poland; and in any case to use existing contacts to make clear member organisations' continuing recognition of and support for Solidarnosc as the representative trade union organisation in Poland,
- c) make clear at every opportunity that any development of relations through multilateral meetings with organisations that do not abide by the above-mentioned demand will be conditional on substantial progress towards a full amnesty for all detained trade unionists, and the resumption by the authorities of a dialogue with the Polish workers, as represented by the elected leadership of NSZZ "Solidarnosc".

Oslo, 30 June, 1983.

JERZY MILEWSKI, DIRECTOR of the Coordinating Office Abroad of NSZZ "Solidarnosc", addressed the 13th ICFTU World Congress on 27 June. He began his statement by observing that, four years ago when the 12th ICFTU World Congress in Madrid had convened, "Solidarnosc" had not yet been born and trade union freedom was non-existent in Poland. "Solidarnosc" had arisen from the will of the working people and it continued to exist today in spite of the fact that the totalitarian communist regime was again trying to take basic rights away from the working people through physical and psychological terror. However, "Solidarnosc" remained active; the best proof was that union dues were regularly collected, social benefits paid out, and many other activities were being carried out, despite the difficult and dangerous conditions and the formal dissolution of the union. The totalitarian regime could not stop Polish workers from seeking to build democracy and from restoring their faith in truth and justice. The Poles remained free in spirit, in spite of the imprisonment of several thousand unionists. On behalf of the "Solidarnosc" President, Lech Walesa, and the Temporary Coordinating Commission, Milewski expressed his appreciation for the unceasing assistance and support offered to NSZZ "Solidarnosc" by free trade unions.

He also read a message from Lech Walesa, the text of which follows.

MESSAGE TO THE XIII ICFTU WORLD CONGRESS

Mr. Chairman, Sisters and Brothers,

On the occasion of your Congress, I would like to convey to you my sincere wishes of success in your debates in benefit of the millions of working people which you democratically represent. I express my solidarity with your concerns, and it is with a feeling of hope that I look to the Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the organisation which has manifested so much good will and understanding for my trade union brothers in Poland.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed" is a popular saying in Poland. After the imposition of the state of war, in this difficult and trying period for us, you proved to be our true friends. Your Confederation offered material and moral support in varied forms to Polish trade unionists inside the country and abroad.

We do not anticipate a sudden change in our situation. We are realistic. We know that the road leading to the fulfillment of workers' and citizens' rights in Poland will be arduous and lengthy, but we will not cease to struggle for these rights. The ideals represented by NSZZ "Solidarnosc" are rooted in the hearts of millions of my compatriots. Today, these ideals are creating new relations between people, they are bringing people together, they are making them free, they are shaping the future. The August 1980 strike at the Gdansk shipyard initiated a process of change that cannot be detained by force.

The solidarity of the working people of Europe and the world means a great deal to us: it is a sign of the times forecasting new, peaceful and more human relations between nations. On behalf of millions of Polish trade unionists, I thank you for your concrete assistance, your solidarity and your big heart. Truth will prevail.

Gdansk, 16 June 1983

Lech Walesa

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE DELEGATES of the Congress was directed to Lech Walesa, President; to Zbigniew Bujak, Piotr Bednarz, Wladyslaw Frasyuniuk, Wladyslaw Hardek, Bogdan Lis, Janusz Palubicki, Jozef Pinior, Eugeniusz Szumiejko, members of the Temporary Coordinating Commission (TKK) and to all members of NSZZ "Solidarnosc".

Dear Brother Walesa,

The XIII World Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions was deeply moved by the message received from Lech Walesa, and conveys to you the fraternal greetings of all delegates in Oslo, representing the International Free Trade Union Movement.

Almost three years ago, the attention of the entire world was centered on your country, where the workers demanded that their natural rights to freely form and join trade unions be recognized by the authorities. The strikers of 1980, already marked with gold letters in the history of free trade unionism, demonstrated that nothing would halt the Polish workers' determination to take part in shaping the future of their nation.

We therefore saluted the birth of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" as a priceless contribution to the history of trade unionism and as an essential factor of peace and security in Europe and throughout the world.

We took part in establishing close and fraternal links with your Organization. Organizations affiliated to the ICFTU in numerous countries engaged in steady cooperation and close contact with "Solidarnosc". We met on countless occasions with your representatives. We applauded warmly to your presence at the 1981 ILO Conference in Geneva. And we were honored to address you directly during the First Delegates Congress of "Solidarnosc" in Gdansk 1981.

We also witnessed during that period your relentless efforts to solve the dramatic social and economic crisis into which the authorities of Poland dragged your country. At your request we were actually launching an international trade union campaign to promote massive emergency aid to Poland, when the military authorities decided to turn their troops against their own people, and chose to meet your trade union with guns and tanks.

Ever since the imposition of the state of war on 13 December 1981, we have seen with sorrow and anguish the cruelty imposed on your nation by the authorities. We have mourned your dead and felt deep sympathy for your prisoners. We have tried to help them by sending aid to them and to their relatives, and we will continue to do so. We initiated various actions, notably at the International Labour Organization, which led to the recent appointment by this body of a Commission of Inquiry on the situation in Poland.

We know perfectly well that "Solidarnosc" exists as an active trade union, deeply involved in the fundamental problems affecting the workers and as their true representative. Though forced to operate underground, "Solidarnosc" is a strong movement, deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of society.

Since its inception, the ICFTU has striven for the implementation of its motto: Bread, Peace and Justice; the rights belong to all mankind, and therefore our action knows no border.

As we gather here today to discuss jobs, poverty, trade union rights, peace, security and disarmament, we feel strongly that the existence of a free and independent trade union movement in your country, is an indispensable and meaningful component in the full realisation of these objectives.

We therefore pledge to you our continued support for NSZZ "Solidarnosc" and the demands that it put forward: the release of all detained trade unionists; full amnesty for those sentenced and reinstatement in their jobs for those dismissed or discriminated against because of their trade union or social activities; full respect for civil and trade union rights and freedoms; the resumption of the dialogue between the authorities and NSZZ "Solidarnosc" in the spirit of the 1980 Agreement.

We shall continue to make the representation to our respective governments, in order to put pressure on the military junta in Poland, to strictly abide by the above-mentioned demands and the relevant ILO Conventions. We shall further assist the efforts and activities of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" in line with requests from its elective leadership and their designated representatives.

To all of you, who fight in your own country for universal values, we extend our warmest wishes of courage, perseverance and hope.

Oslo, June 1983

Delegates to the XIII World Congress