

Solidarność

News

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NEWSLETTER

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Compiled by: The Coordinating Office Abroad of NSZZ "Solidarność"

16 MONTHS AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF THE STATE OF WAR in Poland, and despite formal delegalization, NSZZ "Solidarność" is consolidating its structures and organizational activities. The Union works on three levels, with certain variations according to region. At the local or factory level, activities are carried out by the Clandestine Factory Commission (FKZ) which functions primarily in the large enterprises, and which coordinates work in medium-sized and small enterprises. The Regional Coordinating Commission (RKK; also called RKW - Regional Executive Commission, or RKS - Regional Strike Committee depending on the region) is responsible for coordinating activities in its respective zone. The Temporary Coordinating Commission (TKK) functions at the national level and is in contact with Lech Walesa who is widely acknowledged as the leader of the Union. Walesa's activities are however, severely restricted due to constant and close surveillance by security forces. The principal functions of the underground structures are to carry out statutory union work such as the collection of union dues and payment of benefits; information, press and operational activities; assistance to the families of imprisoned and jobless activists. In addition, the Union supports a variety of independent initiatives in the fields of education, culture and publishing. In conjunction with local parishes, it is also active in the organization of humanitarian aid for political prisoners.

"INDEPENDENT EDUCATION IS BECOMING A REALITY" writes Wiktor Kulerski in the underground press (Tygodnik Mazowsze no. 44). Kulerski, a "Solidarność" activist, is one of the initiators and leading figures in the National Council for Independent Education. "This activity demands a lot of organizational effort as well as a great deal of money. In order to fulfill our goals, we have had to set up a special Independent Education Fund (FON)...."Solidarity membership fees from school and university teachers are to be allocated to FON as well. Nonetheless, financial requirements of the Independent Education movement far exceed our resources. Our publications are geared towards young people and the sale profits will never manage to cover the expenses. Independent education, like all education, requires subsidy. Therefore, we appeal to all union members and indeed all members of society, for regular financial support."

THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF MILAN unanimously approved a donation of 35,000 \$US for NSZZ "Solidarność". A ceremony was held in the northern Italian city on 17 June, in the presence of Mayor Carlo Tognoli and Jerzy Milewski, director of the coordinating Office Abroad. Subsequently, Milewski met for talks with regional trade union leaders and activists.

THE AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, meeting on 24 May, issued a statement on Poland noting that the majority of the population continues to show support for "Solidarność", and that martial law has widened the gap between the authorities and Polish society. The statement also criticizes American and western banks for pursuing negotiations on the reach of Poland's debt.

P.O. Box 112, 1040 Brussels

JEAN BORNARD, president of the Confederation Francaise des Travailleurs Chretiens (CFTC), met with the underground leadership of our union, the Temporary Coordinating Commission at the beginning of June. The discussion focussed on "Solidarność" strategy, tactics and operational activities. Bornard also had a meeting with Lech Walesa.

JACQUES MAIRE, president of the Paris Regional Union of Force Ouvriere (FO), met with Lech Walesa, Anna Walentynowicz, "Solidarność" activists at the Gdansk shipyards, and families of imprisoned "Solidarność" members during his visit to Gdansk in May.

BRONISLAW GEREMEK, advisor to "Solidarność" interned until December 1982, was once again arrested on 19 May. He is accused of organising illegal meetings and spreading false information. Geremek was arrested after taking part in the 6 May meeting between Walesa and representatives of former official branch and autonomous unions.

ANDRZEJ SOBIERAJ, chairman of the Radom region of "Solidarność" was arrested in May and charged with organising and taking part in an illegal meeting on 3 May.

ZBIGNIEW BELZ, chairman of "Solidarność" in the Gorzow-Wielkopolski region was arrested in mid-April. He was in hiding since 13 December 1981.

INVESTIGATION IS PROCEEDING against 21 people "who breached the peace on May 1 in Gdansk and Gdynia", the official news agency PAP reported on 1 June. They are all under arrest. A further 72 cases have already been referred to Petty Offenses Tribunals; 53 people have been fined; one arrested; two had their punishments suspended; 7 were acquitted. (Uncensored Poland News Bulletin no. 11/83)

THE FIRST RADIO "SOLIDARNOSC" BROADCAST was heard in Swidnik on 29 April. The broadcast lasted half an hour and good reception was reported. Broadcasts were recently signaled in Poznan, Jaworzyna Gora, Warsaw, and Gorzow Wielkopolski, where a 10minute program was heard on 28 April.

ZBIGNIEW BUJAK, member of the Temporary Coordinating Commission, on the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland. Excerpts from interview published in the underground press (Tygodnik Mazowsze no. 53). "I think that all those who expect concrete and tangible results from this visit will be disappointed. The visit cannot have such effects; they should not even be hoped for because in such situations, the communist authorities do not make concessions."...."

THE AUTHORITIES insist on describing Lech Walesa as a private citizen. Recently, Friends of the United Nations Student Association (a small, officially recognized group, not very active) at Gdansk University invited Walesa to speak at one of its meetings. Soon after, the group was dissolved.

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EWA KUBASIEWICZ, sentenced to ten years imprisonment for organising a strike after the imposition of martial law in December 1981, has been conditionally released. Her sentence was first reduced to three years in April. Kubasiewicz was a librarian at the Naval Academy in Gdynia and Chairwoman of the local "Solidarnosc" branch.

ON 20 MAY, A WARSAW MILITARY COURT sentenced 9 members of "Solidarnosc" to prison terms ranging from two to three and a half years; two of them had their sentences suspended. According to PAP, they were members of the underground Interfactory Committee and were convicted of "inciting strikes and street demonstrations, publishing and distributing illegal publications, and of using terror against people they considered their political opponents."

SEWERYN JAWORSKI, member of the National Commission, received a beating in prison and was placed in special cell under extremely harsh conditions for two weeks for wearing a red and white badge. He was beaten in the stomach (he suffers from ulcers) and his medicines were removed. He was also told that he would not leave the prison alive.

THE SOVIET COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER Komsomolskaya Pravda said on 21 May that the trade union funds of "Solidarnosc" were spent on aims that had nothing to do with Polish workers' interests. "Analysis of spending convincingly testified that information and propaganda political activity took up a main position in Solidarity." These allegations are totally unsubstantiated as evidenced by the following text issued by the Gdansk Regional Commission, publically accounting for the disbursement of union dues collected from workers from the underground regional and local structures for the period ending 31 December 1982. According to this source, a total of 6,104,800 zlotys were spent. Aid to the arrested, sentenced or interned persons, and people in hiding, fired from jobs, and their families - 2,521,200 zlotys. This includes fines and court costs, subsidies for vacations for children of the interned and sentenced. Publishing activity - 2,252,150 zlotys. This amount was expended for the press, publications, Radio Solidarnosc and for purchases of necessary equipment. Organizational expenditures accounted for 1,091,450 zlotys, including transportation, communication, rent and equipment purchases. Losses sustained as a result of confiscations totalled 250,000 zlotys, not including loss of equipment.

OVER THREE THOUSAND UNIONISTS and "Solidarnosc" supporters gathered in Paris on 15 June to demonstrate their opposition to the forthcoming trial of twelve "Solidarnosc" leaders and advisors. The meeting was called to publicize the petition campaign condemning the "Show Trials of Warsaw" which has collected over 40,000 signatures from throughout the world to date. National and regional leaders of French trade unions CFTD, CFTC, CGC, FEN and FO spoke out against continuing repression of trade unionists in Poland. In his statement, Jerzy Milewski noted: "We must always bear in mind that a gathering like this one, every expression of active support for our cause whether it be a signature under a petition, a letter or a huge demonstration, has enormous meaning for our friends in Poland. It is an encouragement for them, and at the same time, it serves to restrain the authorities who must reckon with international public opinion even though this may be publically disclaimed." The petition campaign continues. Forms and additional information can be obtained from the Comite contre les proces de Varsovie, c/o Comite de Coordination du Syndicat "Solidarnosc" en France, 10 passage des Deux Soeurs, 75009 Paris.

EXCERPTS FROM THE ADDRESS to the Workers' Group, at the 69th session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, delivered by Jerzy Milewski, Director of the Coordinating Office Abroad of NSZZ "Solidarnosc". "In my country, Solidarnosc and all other authentic trade union organizations are prepared to negotiate a balanced compromise with the Polish communist authorities. The most recent evidence of this is the joint statement signed on 6 May by the leaders of "Solidarnosc", the branch unions, the autonomous unions and the National Teachers' Union. This latest appeal, like so many similar appeals in the past, was however, and unfortunately, flatly rejected by the authorities. In the same vein, the authorities have failed to provide an adequate response to the complaints filed with the Committee on Freedom of Association and to the questions raised by the Committee and the ILO Governing Body. For all practical purposes, the Polish government has denied its cooperation to the ILO."...."The Governing Body in its last meeting prior to the Conference, approved this decision (to call a Commission of Inquiry - ed.). In the name of our leader Lech Walesa and on behalf of the Temporary Coordinating Commission, the national leadership of our Union, I wish to convey to you our most sincere appreciation. We hope the firm stance of the ILO substantiated by the work of the Commission of Inquiry, will prompt the authorities of Poland to end their policy of terror and will force them to seek an agreement with Polish society.

I wish to repeat that the following demands must be met before such an agreement is possible: the release of all persons sentenced for their union work, their social involvement and their political beliefs; the reinstatement of those discriminated against or dismissed from their jobs for the same reasons; the restoration of legality for all unions that were dissolved by the so-called trade union law of 8 October 1982; the initiation of a dialogue with trade unions and other independent organizations that authentically represent Polish society so as to resolve the ever-deepening socio-economic crisis in Poland.

To conclude, let me reaffirm that after one and a half years of the state of war in Poland, "Solidarnosc" continues to exist as a trade union. It continues to enjoy broad popular support. It continues to struggle by peaceful means for the same goals that are so important to millions of working people throughout the world. We are all struggling for peace and human dignity. We are fighting against hunger and poverty, and against physical and psychological enslavement. We are also deeply convinced that these objectives can and will be reached through united action and a joint effort by all democratic trade unionists around the world."

WOJTEK GILEWSKI, has been named to head the Information Office of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" in Toronto, Canada as part of a general restructuring of the Office. Gilewski was vice-chairman of the "Solidarnosc" factory commission at the Ursus tractor plant outside Warsaw, and editor of the factory newspaper.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS in Poland was the theme of a public hearing of the US Congressional Committee on Human Rights in Washington on 26 May. At the invitation of the Committee, J. Milewski discussed the forms of repression in Poland.

A "SOLIDARNOSC" DELEGATION attended the XXXIII National Congress of Spain's Union General de Trabajadores in early June. In its report, the Executive Committee expressed the view of the U.G.T. that the present socio-economic crisis in Poland cannot be resolved without the participation of an authentic trade union organization.