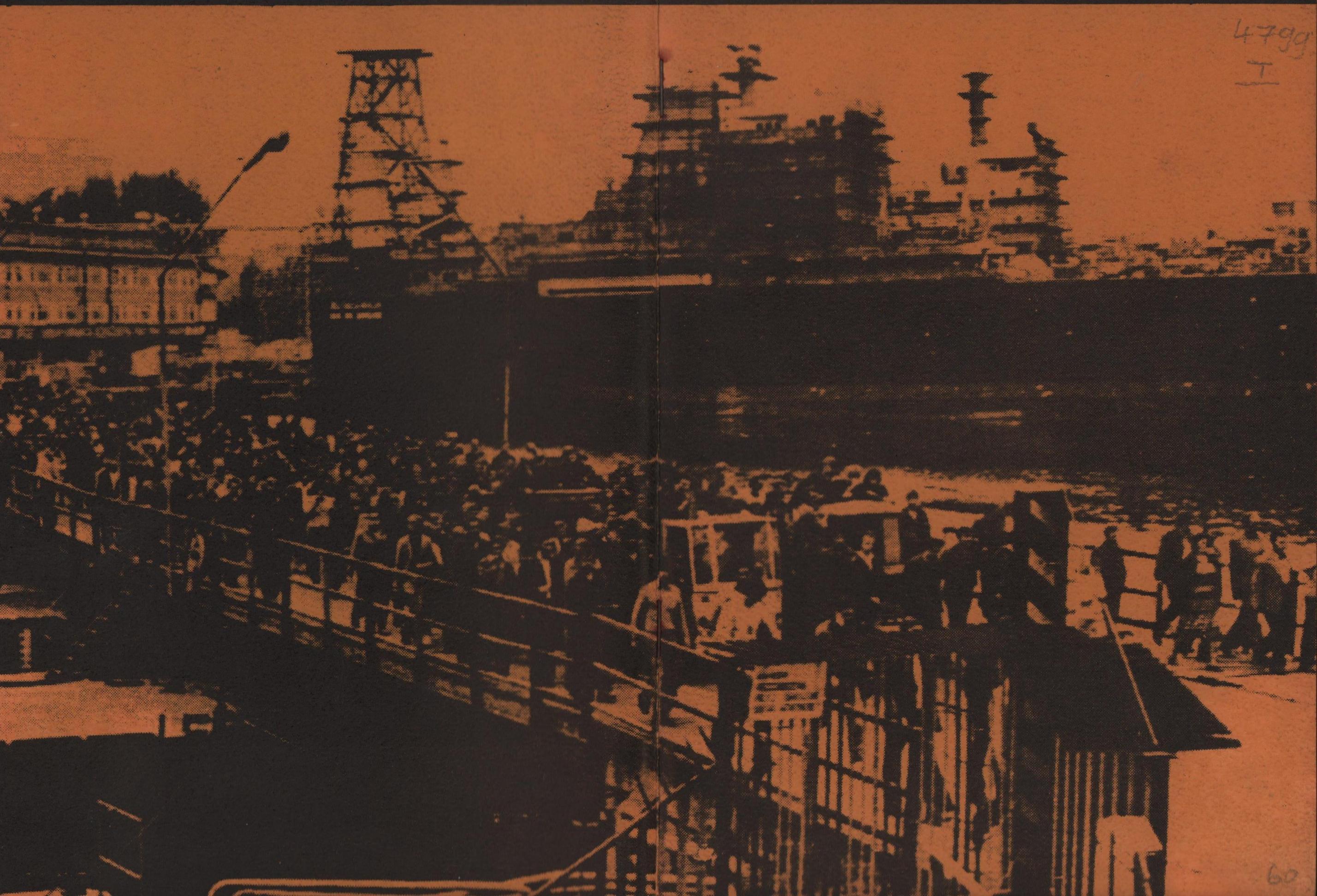


"Now there were more of us as we crossed the bridge." (see page 6)

THE STRIKE IN GDAŃSK



52.00

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THE STRIKE IN GDAŃSK

August 14-31, 1980

Edited and Translated by
Andrzej Tymowski

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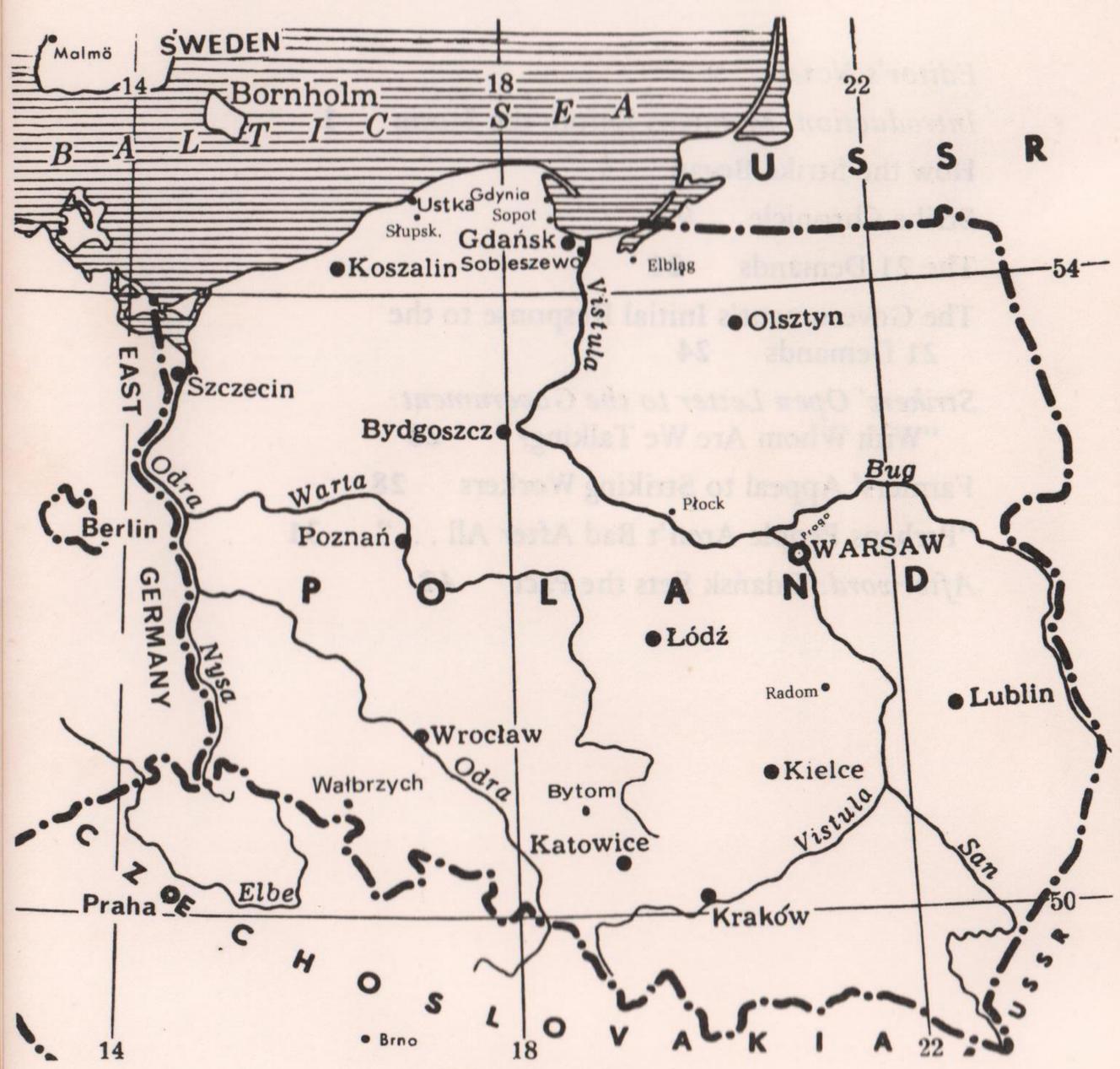
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Editor's Notes

The Strike in Gdansk consists of excerpts translated from *Strajkowy Biuletyn Informacyjny*, "Solidarność" (*Strike Information Bulletin*, "Solidarity") published at the Gdansk shipyards by the Free Printing Plant of Gdansk from August 23 to August 31, 1980. It appeared in 13 issues, with one extra supplement (no. 14).

"Ludzie Moze I Nie Sa Zli" (Hanna Krall talks with Anna Walentynowicz) was translated from the Newspaper *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Jan. 11, 1981, Krakow.

All photos are from *Labor Focus on Eastern Europe* (Box 23, 136 Kingland High St., London E8, England), Vol. 4, Nos. 1-3, Spring-Autumn, 1980. This special issue contains voluminous translated documents and commentary on the strikes in Poland, against which I compared my translation. I recommend it as a valuable English language source.

The map of Poland is taken from *Poland: 1970-71, Capitalism and Class Struggle*, published by Black and Red, Box 9546, Detroit, Mich. 48202.

A note on translation: even in informal speech, Polish speakers employ titles of respect, often in conjunction with the given name of the person addressed (Mrs. Anna) or with that person's position (Mr. Foreman, Mr. Professor).

I would like to thank all my friends who read the manuscript and made suggestions for improvements. Responsibility for the final result, however, including any errors in translation, rests with me alone.

—Andrzej Tymowski
April 15, 1981

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Crowds outside the Lenin Shipyard, Gdańsk, 23 August

Introduction:

MOMENTS BEFORE THE STORM

The tumult raised by a great historical event often obscures the actions of individual figures taking part in the fray. The two interviews that follow are exceptions to this rule.

They were translated from the *Strike Information Bulletin*, "Solidarity" published at the Gdańsk shipyards. The bulletins chronicle the events during the last two weeks of August, which culminated in the agreement establishing free trade unions in the People's Republic of Poland.

Tensions had been building in Poland for weeks before the strike in Gdańsk. Several hundred scattered work stoppages had sought—with some success—to redress local grievances and demanded pay raises to offset the recent rise in food prices.

There had been no mention of free trade unions yet, except in uncensored publications such as *Robotnik* (*The Worker*). Founded after the strikes in 1976, *The Worker* attempted to stimulate a dialogue between workers and the political opposition. It was widely read in Gdańsk and the other cities on the Seacoast. Throughout the summer it carried the theme: "Don't burn party headquarters; form strike committees!"

The specter of 1970 haunts all worker risings in Gdańsk. In December of that year, a fed-up but exhilarated population repulsed the militia sent to control their demonstration. The crowd then stormed the police garrison (almost succeeding in freeing the prisoners) and burned the party headquarters. Heady stuff, watching those file cabinets in flames and bureaucrats fleeing the ship like rats. But by March it was back to Communism as Usual, with no discernible change in daily life and only a new face on party billboards to show for the effort. The futility of the bloodshed was never forgotten.

Mixed with the memories of December were the grievances of this summer. For the week prior to August 14, 1980 the shipyard at Gdańsk steamed with anger over the firing of Anna Walentynowicz. A woman of indomitable personal courage, she was always the first to come to the defense of anyone harassed by management. Her abiding example had a deep effect

HOW THE STRIKE BEGAN

Our reporter interviewed several shipyard workers about the beginning of the strike. Here are two of these interviews:

I

QUESTION: How did the strike begin?

ANSWER: Bogdan and I talked it over and agreed that on August 14 we would come to work an hour early. We wanted to put up posters in the locker rooms spreading the news about the firing of Anna Walentynowicz and demanding 1,000 zloty raises and a cost of living allowance. Posters bearing this information were made up by the Young Poland Movement. We had a total of seven. I arrived before the others. A moment later Kazik, with whom I'd made plans the day before, appeared. Kazik works in Dept. W-3. So we went there first. We hung a poster beneath the timeclock and Kazik with a few friends stayed behind to make sure that no one ripped it down. Meanwhile, I went over to my department where I waited for Bogdan. Because he was late I decided to start on my own. I smeared the poster with paste and hung it on the door of the locker room. Then I went on to the other locker rooms. As I was sticking up the posters people congratulated me.

Q. Did people already have the sense that there would be a strike?

A. Yes, very much so. They asked a lot of questions, wanting to learn all the details. Small groups of people were getting ready for their morning meetings with foremen. I started to inform them that a strike of the entire shipyard had begun and that we were meeting in the yard.

Q. Did the foremen see the posters?

A. Of course, everybody could see them, including the managers.

Q. Did the managers attempt to stop this?

A. No, because groups of people had gathered around the

on everyone. The injustice done her became both a symbol and a goad to action.

But what action? Merely another in this latest catalogue of local strikes demanding higher wages? They'll just raise the prices again after everything settles down. And what of the jumpy party bosses and their 500,000 guardian angels on the eastern border? They won't go away no matter what happens. Most disquieting of all, what of the mood of helplessness that comes from remembering the futile sacrifices of strikes past?

We come now to the dark and groggy pre-dawn of Thursday, August 14. We're on the tram to work—Bogdan, Kazik, you and I, and thousands of others. A few of us have leaflets crammed into our lunchboxes or posters folded into our jackets. They make us feel vulnerable and invincible at the same time. Adrenalin pounds, thoughts race ahead. Will someone have tipped off the guards at the gate? How will the others in the plant react to the posters? Will the strike come off at all? Will it end like last time?

Or will it be just the beginning?

—A. T.

posters. They were afraid to intervene. In spite of that the first 15 minutes were somewhat tense. The foremen began to step in. I approached one of the crews that I knew and started to explain what we are fighting for. Most of them agreed with me. At the request of the foremen, who sensed what was cooking, we moved away a little and gathered next to a large stack of electrodes. In a short while there were about 30 people grouped together. Next to them another group was forming near the tool shed's locker room. Fearing that they might drift away I came up to them and loudly began to talk about the strike. I explained that a strike was beginning in the entire shipyard, that it's about raises and Mrs. Walentynowicz, who was unfairly fired. As I kept talking, people became bolder. "Let's go," I said. There were about 50 people together at this time. We made a banner. Just at that moment Manager Barc appeared and asked what was the matter. I said, "Manager, there's a strike on."

"Why a strike? What's it about?"

I answered, "Can't you read, sir?" and showed him the banner. I gave him a few copies of *The Worker* and a statement about Mrs. Anna's case, after which I left to gather people together. When I returned, the party departmental secretary Mazurkiewicz appeared. He tried to seize the banner but the boys moved quickly and prevented him from doing so. The secretary kept screaming, "What is the meaning of this?" They answered, "None of your business, mister." Somebody stuck a bunch of leaflets into his hand. Everybody surrounded him and started to laugh because it looked as though the secretary himself was handing out leaflets. But I shouted, "Take them back," because I didn't want to waste the leaflets on him. When the secretary left I grabbed the banner and led the boys out into the yard. All this happened in the vicinity of the shipways. People had seated themselves all around the yard. Suddenly the assistant manager—Bryczkowski—showed up. This set people in motion. They jumped up and began to gather in the center of the yard. Others joined them. When a large number had collected, a signal was heard from the crane. It was a small horn which Józek had turned on. The manager began to get frantic. "What's going on?" he screamed, "Go to work." But no one was listening. Somebody shouted, "Look at the banner, mister, if you want

to know what's going on."

A locomotive pulled up. It stopped nearby and the driver began to applaud. With the crowd that had gathered near us I went over to the workshop of the prefabricating plant. We stood there for five minutes when Jurek and his group showed up. More and more people were walking out of the workshop. In a few minutes foremen appeared who tried to push people back inside. But the shop had already stopped work. People dropped their hammers, began to put away tools and joined us.

II

QUESTION: How did the strike begin?

ANSWER: I arrived at the shipyard at 4:15. To the very day of the strike I had not told anyone that it was going to happen. I work mostly with party members, so I was afraid that someone would snitch and the strike wouldn't come off. I held off saying anything to the very last minute. On the day of the strike we agreed that Ludwik would wait for me. I was the only one from my department. I pasted up seven posters and gave five to Ludwik. After sticking up the posters, I got the leaflets ready. I had about 500 of them. I gave one to everybody who came into the locker room. "Take this and read it. Today the whole shipyard is going on strike."

Q. Did the leaflets say that there is a strike on?

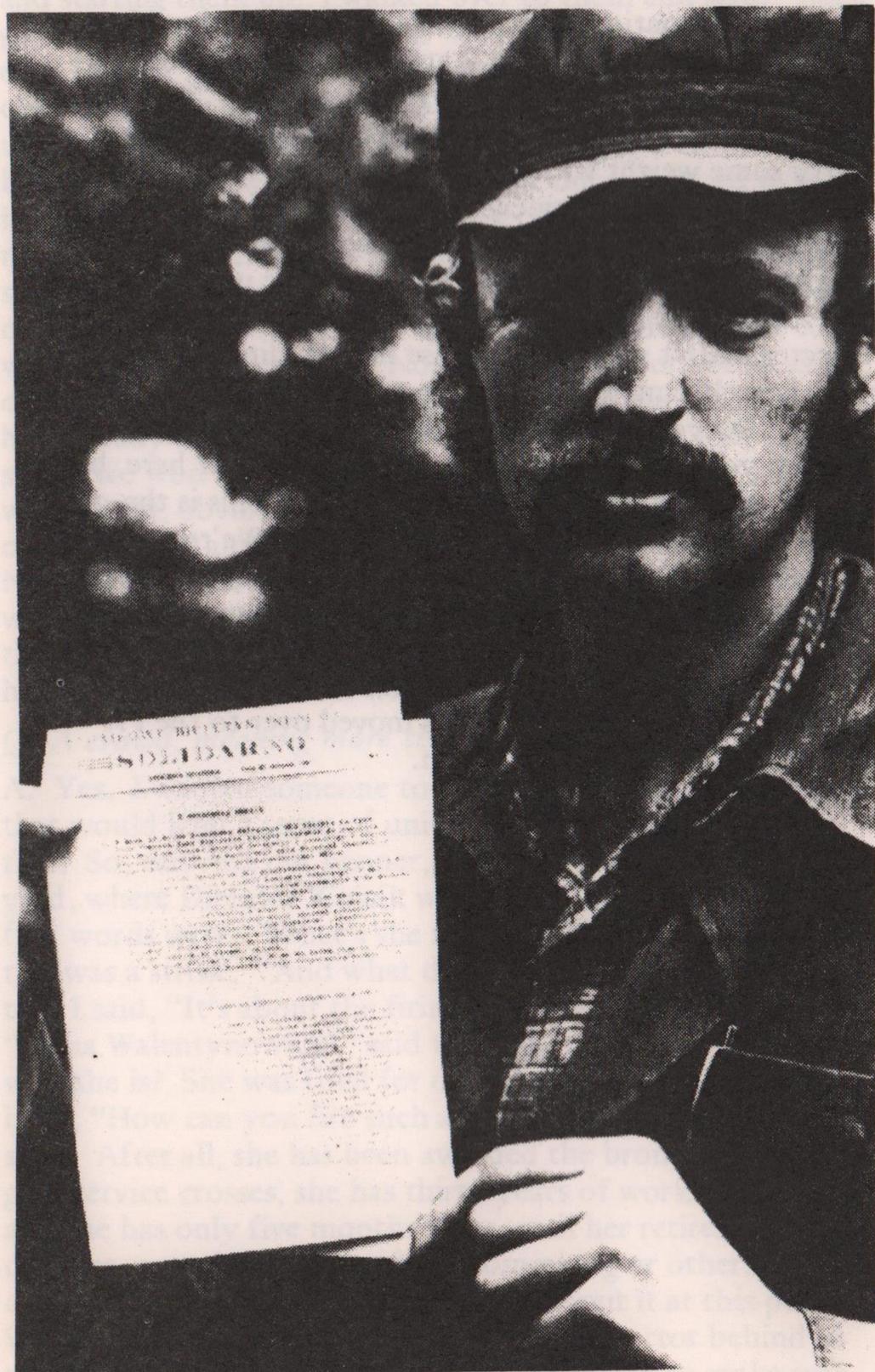
A. No, but the day before I had asked those whom I trusted what they would do if a strike were called. Many said that they would strike. I gave these people leaflets, telling them to pass them out to others. At a quarter to six a sizeable group had gathered near the locker room—30 people more or less. A few were getting scared and said that this could not possibly work, why doesn't a large department start it? We responded that K-3 and K-4 have already walked off the job. At some point somebody said, "Let's not stand around here, let's go back to the shop." I tried to prevent this, but I couldn't stop people by myself and everybody was already returning to the workshop. I realized that when we got there with the foremen and Labędzki, the local party secretary, member of the Central Committee, everything might fall through. People were taking their places next to their machines

and starting them up. I walked over to them and said, "Let's go. K-3 and W-4 have stopped work." I just blurted that out even though I didn't know for sure what was happening. I only wanted to get them to come with me. Finally they made up their minds. "Well, let's go." They stopped their machines halfheartedly. The desire to move out onto the yard won out in the end. I took the posters along. We made our way to the mess hall and then on through the entire shipyard. People started coming out from everywhere to see what was going on. We shouted to them, "Turn off your machines and come with us." Many joined us. Now there were more of us as we crossed the bridge. People were walking off the ships. They had already stopped work but hadn't decided to join us. They said, "We won't work but we can't go with you yet." They were afraid, obviously. We reached K-3 and saw that a group of people had already gathered. This made us feel a lot better. Now we were sure that something would come of all this and we started shouting and cheering. People started to look out the windows from the construction offices. Outside, a crowd had formed and we went with it to K-3.

Q. A crowd, meaning more than a hundred?

A. Yes. I wanted someone to speak to the gathering because that would lend a sense of unity, but there wasn't time for that. So, carrying our banner, we got to the end of the shipyard, where Director Wojcik was already waiting for us. His first words were: "What's the meaning of this?" I replied that this was a strike. "And what do you want?" asked the director. I said, "It's about the firing of Anna Walentynowicz." "Anna Walentynowicz?" said the director. "Do you know who she is? She was fired for disciplinary reasons." I shot back, "How can you fire such a person for disciplinary reasons? After all, she has been awarded the bronze, silver and gold service crosses, she has thirty years of work in the trade and she has only five months to go until her retirement." The director started to mutter about something or other. Bogdan cut in, "We don't need to talk to you about it at this point. We're moving on now." And we left the director behind in the crowd. We stationed people on the bridge to make sure that we weren't cut off. During this time many people joined our procession. We came up to the gate and stopped there for

a moment of silence in honor of those who died in 1970. Then we sang the national anthem. Next we moved to the steam shovel. We climbed onto it and were immediately surrounded by a crowd of people. We gave a speech: "We need to choose a strike committee. We need trustworthy people who carry some weight with their work brigades. Let them step forward." At that moment the director arrived with his entourage. Because he was standing below us, we invited him onto the steam shovel and helped him scramble up. As the director started to speak, Leszek Wałęsa suddenly appeared. The director hadn't seen him because he had climbed up from the rear. Leszek came up to the director and in a gruff voice asked him, "Do you recognize me, sir? I worked at the shipyard for ten years and still consider myself a worker here, because I have the confidence of my work crew. This is the fourth year I am out of work." Then he said, "We're starting a sit-down strike." At these words everyone let out a tremendous cheer. We then requested that Mrs. Walentynowicz be driven to the shipyard in the director's car. He wasn't too happy about it, but we held firm and moments later the car left to get Mrs. Anna. The rest of us moved over to the PA system. This is how the strike began.



The first issue of the strike bulletin

From Bulletins no. 12 and no. 13 and a supplementary issue.
Dated August 30-31, 1980.

STRIKE CHRONICLE

From the editors of *Solidarity*:

With this issue we begin publication of the *Strike Chronicle*, prepared by our friends on the editorial staff of *The Worker*.

8/14 Thursday

6 a.m. Workers from departments K1 and K3 of the Lenin shipyard walk off the job. They are soon joined by department C1 and the engine shop. Groups of workers parade around the shipyards with banners reading: "We demand job reinstatement for Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Wałęsa, 1,000 zł raises, cost of living adjustment."

9 a.m. A mass meeting begins. A strike is proclaimed amidst speeches and singing. A strike committee forms which proposes the following demands: reinstatement for Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Wałęsa (members of the Founding Committee of the Free Trade Unions of the Seacoast and the Strike Committee in December, 1970); erection of a memorial monument for the victims of that December; guarantees of no reprisals; raises of 2,000 zł; family subsidies on a par with those of the MO.* During the meeting Lech Wałęsa clammers onto a steamshovel near the hospital. Henceforth he heads the strike.

Management agrees only to reinstate Anna Walentynowicz and Lech Wałęsa, to the construction of the memorial and to guarantees of no reprisals.

Interpress (press agency for foreign journalists) denies that a strike has begun at the shipyards.

The Plenum of the Provincial Committee of the Party meets that evening with Political Bureau member Kania. Many statements contain elements of hysteria. People speak of the terror instituted by MKS†, of anarchy, and of anti-socialist forces. Rear Admiral Janczyszyn declares that the army will do nothing that might jeopardize their standing with the population at large.

*Citizen's Militia, i.e., the police.

†MKS—Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy (Interfactory Strike Committee).

8/15 Friday

The Paris Commune shipyard in Gdynia joins the strike. Andrzej Kołodziej assumes a leading role. He has been working there for two days following his dismissal from the Gdańsk shipyard for distributing *The Worker*.

Almost all the remaining shipyards, ports, urban transportation and factories connected with the shipbuilding industry join the strike.

At noon all communication links with provincial capitals are cut off.

Discussions with management continue all day. At the latter's suggestion, departmental representatives join the discussions. Some of the people are still undecided, some have even been sent by management. This weakens the strikers' position.

A workers' security force is already in its second day of operation. They refuse to admit strangers to the factory grounds and check to make sure that no one brings in liquor.

KSS—the Committee for Social Self-Defence—issues a statement expressing solidarity with the strikers and protesting the cut-off of communications.

8/16 Saturday

Morning. An atmosphere of anticipation. Management agrees to the demand for raises, does not consider itself empowered to speak to the other demands. Talks drag on because management refuses to guarantee raises in writing.

Around 3 o'clock, outvoted by the majority, Lech Wałęsa declares the strike over. A rise of 1,500 zł has been won, as well as a family subsidy nicknamed "the shipyards'." Upon leaving the conference hall Wałęsa realizes that a significant portion of the shop crew want to continue the strike in solidarity with other factories, which were refused any concessions. In light of this Wałęsa reverses the call to end the strike, but his section of the public address system has already been turned off. Over other portions of the system the Director of the plant issues orders for all to vacate the factory grounds by 6 p.m. A majority of the workers leave. That night 21 delegations from striking factories arrive at the shipyard. MKS is formed, a provisional list of demands is formulated. Those

*KSS is more commonly identified by its former acronym KOR—Workers' Defence Committee.

workers who left earlier in the evening begin to return.

PAP (Polish Press Agency) releases news of the end of the strike.

8/17 Sunday

9 a.m. Holy Mass at the Gdańsk shipyard. Attending this Mass are 4,000–5,000 people from the shipyard (also from the repair yard), and 2,000 people outside the gates. After Mass a cross is set in the ground outside Gate II.

At the Paris Commune shipyard approximately 5,000 people attend Holy Mass at 11 a.m., 1,500 outside the gates.

8/18 Monday

The workers who had left the shipyards are returning.

The Director denies MKS access to the PA system. He cuts the power circuit feeding the speakers at Gate II, which at the same time deprives the hospital of electrical power. He broadcasts appeals for a return to work. Leaflets urging an end to the strike are dropped by airplane.

A mass meeting is held in front of the Director's office. The speech of Director Gniech is met with jeering whistles.

One hundred and fifty six factories have already joined MKS. This is now a general strike. The presidium (steering committee) now constitutes 18 members.

Responding to requests made by the strike committees of the Gdańsk and Gdynia shipyards, city authorities ban the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The Free Printing Plant of the Gdynia shipyard publishes an MKS leaflet addressed to the residents of the Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot Tri-City: "The factory strike committees are maintaining order in the factories. WE WILL PULL THROUGH!!!"

In a televised speech Gierek rejects all social demands and expresses support for the CRZZ.*

KSS—"KOR" and the editors of *The Worker* issue an appeal to all work crews in Poland, among other things calling on them to form authentic workplace organizations—Free Trade Unions.

*Central Council of Trade Unions—party controlled trade unions.

8/19 Tuesday

Delegates from MKS file a note at the Provincial Government offices addressed to Premier Babiuch, demanding participation of the central government in the negotiations.

In the meantime 17 factories belonging to MKS (including the repair yard, the "North" yard and the "Wisła" yard) begin a series of separate discussions with Pyka, the chairman of the government commission. These factory delegations include directors and first secretaries.

At a meeting of the Gdańsk WRZZ (Provincial Council of Trade Unions) with representatives of 14 factories, Szydłak* declares: "We [the party] won't give up our power, we won't share it."

By evening MKS has organized 253 factories.

8/20 Wednesday

The delegates from the strike committees who had begun to talk with Pyka, under pressure from their shop-floor constituents, break off separate negotiations. During the night Pyka is removed as chief of the government commission.

Intellectuals issue an appeal calling for the recognition of MKS, counseling moderation and good sense on both sides.

The strike is being supported by the employees of the Polytechnic Institute in Gdańsk, the Opera, and the Philharmonic.

Cars of delegates driving to their factories are being stopped, searched, flags removed, etc. This continues up to and including Friday.

The press intensifies the campaign against "anti-socialist forces."

The local press prints articles demanding that ties with KOR and RMP† be severed as a precondition for the opening of talks.

Opposition activists are arrested. The authorities believe that this will "soften up" MKS. They assume that the strength of its resolve thus far has been inspired from outside.

From an MKS statement: "Our response to the anti-strike stance of the CRZZ is the 'decision of all delegates of shops

*Head of CRZZ

†Ruch Młodej Polski (Young Poland Movement)—student activists who seek to break the official stranglehold on the teaching of Polish history and dissemination of Polish traditions.

organized in MKS to resign from the party/government trade unions.'" In this same statement: "Strike committees of individual factories should not carry on any talks with government officials whose subject would be our common demands. . . . We have repeatedly called on and continue to call on the government spokesmen to begin negotiations. To delay the opening of these talks is to cut off one's own roots. MKS is the only guarantee that the government of the PRL [People's Republic of Poland] will meet the workers' demands."

8/21 Thursday

The government commission arrives with Vice-Premier Jagielski. At 2 p.m. Jagielski proposes separate talks with individual crafts. This is the latest attempt to bypass MKS—the Vice-Premier confers with factory "threesomes" (the directors, the departmental party committee, and the [Party] Factory Council). Nonetheless these talks have no influence on the real situation.

As they do every day, crowds of people gather at the gates of the shipyard to hear MKS bulletins broadcast over the PA system.

Longshoremen issue a statement revealing that as early as the second day of the strike PRL officials notified shippers that this is an authorized strike. This declaration gives shippers the right to claim damages from their insurance companies for losses resulting from work stoppages.

Jagielski gives a speech broadcast over the local radio station.

The MO monitor approaches to the shipyards, checking identification of all persons leaving.

The "Zamech" factory in Elbląg stops work. Reports are received of strikes in Słupsk and Ustka.

From an MKS statement: "Faced with an intensifying level of false and provocative propaganda . . . MKS declares . . . that the work crews on strike are not fragmenting the unity of the Polish nation nor do they act to the detriment of the Polish state. If those in power wish to see this for themselves, let them come to the striking workplaces and become familiar with the MKS statutes that represent them. The truth will be found here, not in the offices of the WRN [Provincial office of the National Council]."

Responding to accusations of "anti-socialist forces," MKS

chairman Lech Wałęsa declares: "No one inspires us from behind the scenes, but I do know the activists of KOR." He presents a history of KOR to the meeting hall.

After abandoning separate negotiations, delegates from the repair yard and the "North" yard join the presidium of MKS.

That night reports are received of preparations for a landing party intending to destroy the Gdynia shipyards' print shop. Strike committee members begin to spend the night in the various departments.

8/22 Friday

Ministers from the government commission carry out separate negotiations with "threesomes" which are broadcast over the local radio channel.

At 2 p.m. an MKS delegation goes to the villa where Jagielski is staying to propose the beginning of talks. The Vice-Premier agrees.

Poznań intellectuals come out in support of the striking workers. Employees of the University of Gdańsk issue an appeal to the authorities to give the interests of the strikers serious consideration.

The government commission with Barcikowski begins talks with the MKS in Szczecin. They are presented with a list of 36 demands including freedom for arrested members of KOR and the editors of *The Worker*.

Factories approached by government ministers with proposals for separate talks declare their intention to negotiate only through MKS.

8/23 Saturday

Lech Wałęsa calls for an end to harassment of persons supporting the strike.

At 2 p.m. the Gdańsk Provincial Governor arrives at the shipyard. He confers with a four-person committee (not broadcast over the PA system). It is agreed that Jagielski will arrive at 8 p.m.

The first issue of the *Strike Information Bulletin*, "*Solidarity*" printed by the Free Printing Plant of Gdańsk, appears today. Among other things this issue carries the text of the International Labor Organization's conventions concerning the right to organize and the right to strike.

Three hundred and eighty-eight shops have already joined MKS.

At 8 p.m., the government commission headed by Vice-Premier Jagielski arrives at the shipyard. Talks with the Presidium of MKS are begun. Lech Wałęsa chairs the meeting. The talks in their entirety are broadcast over the PA. The meeting limits itself chiefly to Jagielski's appearance, since the government has not fulfilled the pre-condition of restoring telephone communications. As is reported in *Solidarity*, his speech "disappointed listeners with its cliches and lack of concrete proposals." Referring to the key demand for formation of Free Trade Unions, Jagielski ventured only that the current trade union law needs to be modified. He also mentioned new elections for (official) Factory Councils. He rejected the proposal to publish MKS demands; avoided the right to strike issue, and expressed surprise that anyone connected with the strike was being harassed. He stated that the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the press, but that independent publications have an anti-socialist character and are harmful. He gave assurance that there are no political prisoners in Poland.

From an MKS statement: The mass media "... have ignored the existence of MKS in Gdańsk and the existence of similar committees in Szczecin and Elbląg. Also ignored is the fact that strike actions have been fully coordinated and directed by democratically formed MKS's. ... The authorities seek to engage in divisive negotiations, attempting to bribe groups of workers with high monetary raises. These are presented as discussions aimed at resolving our demands and ending the strike. The impression is created that enterprises and services vital to the food supply and the normal functioning of the Seacoast are not on strike. In reality these have long ago joined the strike. All the while, however, with the full consent of MKS, they have continued to perform the work necessary to satisfy basic human needs and to protect the wealth of the nation from ruin. We are accused of anti-socialist tendencies, whereas our demands are in complete accord with the system of law in force in Poland and in no way have violated the social order or alliances of the State.

"Let us point out that the lies disseminated about the situation on the Seacoast and about the aims of the striking

workers undermine whatever trust can still be claimed by the censored press, radio, and TV, and certainly do not serve to promote social tranquility."

8/24 Sunday

Leaflets signed by WK-FJN [Provincial Committee of the Front for National Unity] are distributed throughout the city. They accuse MKS of refusing talks with the government commission "even while extending invitations to do so."

The presidium of MKS meets with the specialists that have come to the shipyard. A commission of experts forms to assist the Gdańsk MKS. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, editor in chief of the Catholic monthly *Więź* (*The Bond*) becomes its chairman. Other members are: Dr. B. Geremek, Dr. B. Cywiński, Dr. T. Lowalik, Dr. J. Staniszkis, Dr. W. Kuczynski, editor A. Wielowiejski.

A delegation from MKS arrives in Szczecin. Both MKS's agree that demand number one, free trade unions, is non-negotiable. The strike will end only after it is granted.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the PZPR [Polish United Workers' Party] meets in Warsaw. There is a reshuffling of high positions in the government and the Party. Gierek announces changes in the charter for trade unions and elections to Factory Councils.

8/25 Monday

Since telephone links to the rest of the country have still not been restored, the presidium of MKS calls for a vote on whether to undertake talks with the government commission. The delegations comprising MKS unanimously decide against opening such discussions.

That evening telephone lines to Szczecin and Warsaw are reconnected. MKS also obtains a promise that communiques from shipyard negotiations will be aired on local broadcasting stations.

A press release from the Soviet new agency TASS suggests uneasiness in the USSR over the western media's interference in internal Polish affairs.

8/26 Tuesday

At 11 a.m. the government commission with Vice-Premier

Jagielski arrives at the Gdańsk shipyard. During the discussion both sides present positions regarding the first and most important demand. MKS demands that the strike committees be transformed into free trade unions at the factory and provincial levels. This is precisely what the government commission refuses to approve. Jagielski proposes that a group be convened, comprised of representatives and expert counsel from both sides, which would precisely formulate the respective positions in regard to demand number one.

TV broadcasts a homily delivered by Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, calling for calm and reasonableness. In a televised speech, Wojna, editor of *Trybuna Ludu*, official party newspaper, mentions the possibility of instituting the right to strike as well as a new press law. He also mentions the prospect of seeing repeated the situation at the end of the eighteenth century, i.e., the partitions of Poland.

8/27 Wednesday

Strikes are spreading throughout the entire country. An MKS is formed in Wrocław. The strikers there express solidarity with the list of demands of the Gdańsk MKS.

During the meeting of representatives and experts from MKS and the government commission, strikers make explicit the demand of transforming the strike committees into founding committees of Free Trade Unions.

8/28 Thursday

We read in the *Baltic Daily*: "In the whole world there does not exist a workers' organization dissociated from a specific political movement with an ideology, and with the standard bearer of that ideology—a political party." The *Daily* also inquires as to the ideals to be espoused by the free trade unions. This is an explication of the government's thesis that the free trade unions are contrary to the Constitution of the PRL, since they are to be independent of the party, which according to the Constitution has a leadership role in the nation.

At 11 a.m. the government commission with Jagielski arrives at the shipyard.

The problem of censorship is discussed. The government commission declares that the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech. MKS concedes that within some limits censorship

is necessary. It points out, however, that the stifling of free expression was one of the causes of the present crisis. MKS demands real guarantees that freedoms granted by law will be honored in fact.

MKS demands that a Mass for shut-ins be broadcast over the radio once a week.

Jagielski regards this as a matter for the Church, not for MKS.

Also discussed is the problem of political prisoners and repression, cases of which were presented in detail by MKS.

Jagielski responds with evasive answers.

During a break, Lech Wałęsa, at Gate II, appeals to work-crews for solidarity. He urges them to join MKS, but not to interrupt work.

At 6 p.m., the next round of talks begins between MKS and the government commission.

Money is being sent from all over the country to the Fund to Build a Memorial to the Victims of December.

Money is also being sent from all over Poland for the MKS fund.

At the present time four MKS's exist in Poland: in Gdańsk (over 600 enterprises), in Szczecin (over 200), Elbląg (several score), in Wrocław (several score). Many key manufacturing plants are on strike; among others, PAFAWAR in Wrocław, the textile factories "Dzierżyński" and "Marchlewski" in Łódź.

In many Polish cities public transportation has gone on strike. (Łódź, Warsaw, Wałbrzych, Słupsk, Koszalin.)

At the Ursus plant a Workers' Solidarity Committee is formed.

8/29 Friday

The government commission fails to show for the next round of talks at the agreed time, 12 noon.

A group of representatives from several large factories arrives: from Lublin, Bytom, Wrocław and other cities.

From a statement issued by the Polish Council of Bishops: "The Polish Council of Bishops expresses appreciation both to the striking workers and their committees as well as to the authorities for not allowing public order to be violated. . . ."

R. Oseń-Nowicki donated the sum of 100,000 zł to the account of MKS. "I owe this to my forefathers as well as to my fallen comrades in arms."

At 4 p.m. the Drama Theatre performs.

A delegation from the Bydgoszcz MKS arrives; they represent 32 factories.

In a speech broadcast on radio and TV Barcikowski mentions enemies of socialism "of all kinds and varieties."

8/30 Saturday

The administration of the Port of Gdańsk reports that 60 persons have been sent to Sobieszewo for the harvest to provide food for the strikers.

Delegations of striking factories in Słupsk and Łódź arrive. Bus and tram drivers from PKS—the Polish Transportation Authority—have decided to resign from the official trade unions.

At 10:30 the next round of talks between the government commission and the presidium of MKS begins. The document agreed to earlier which specified views regarding points 1 and 2 of the list of demands is initialed. Lech Wałęsa brings up the matter of the recent arrests in Warsaw and asks Jagielski to stop the arrests and release those detained. Jagielski, not taking a stand on these matters, moves on to the projected joint communique by MKS and the government declaring an end to the strike and returning to work. This question is not acted on. Jagielski sets the time of his return from Warsaw as approximately 8 p.m.

At 4 the Drama Theatre performs.

A delegation from seven striking factories in Krosno Odrzańskie arrives. A strike of solidarity and warning had been carried out there; renewed strikes have been threatened if the Seacoast's demands are not met.

A delegation from Gdańsk University reports that the Enterprise Council (i.e., the official union organization) has offered its proxy vote to the Strike Committee. Among other things, they have come out in favor of autonomy for all institutions of higher learning. The delegates especially want to thank prof. Głębocki for his assistance.

A stormy discussion takes place between the presidium and the MKS plenum chiefly concerning the matter of the new trade unions' independence from the Party and their territorial range. (A rumor has been spread that the new unions will organize only on the Seacoast.) The matter of imprisoned opposition activists was also taken up. (The report of the

presidium concerning this matter was read publicly.) The plenum decides to raise the demand of freeing all political prisoners.

Editor Wielowiejski and prof. Stelmachowski explain points of controversy concerning the form and functions of the new trade unions.

Delegations from Warsaw arrive: from the Enterprise Council of Warsaw University, from the "Warsaw" Steel Works, from the "Tewa" Works (76,340 zł from a workplace of 5,000 people was turned over to MKS), from the Workers' Solidarity Committee of "Ursus" Mechanical Works. The latter two included in their demands freedom for arrested opposition activists in Warsaw. (The authorities were presented with a list of names of those detained.)

Throughout the evening discussions of demands 1 and 2 were carried on by workers of the Gdańsk shipyards. Jagielski did not show.

Solidarity strikes were threatened in the Lenin Steel Works, the Katowice works, and in some coal and copper mines.

8/31/1980

COMMUNIQUE:

At 5 p.m., Aug. 30, 1980 the government commission and MKS Gdańsk signed the formal agreement concerning the 21 demands put forward by the strikers. Since a settlement had been reached, the strike was declared over.

Vice-Premier Jagielski signed a statement in which he declared that all persons detained by the MO during the last two weeks whose names were mentioned on the list delivered by MKS to the government commission will be released tomorrow 9/1/1980 at 12 noon.

From the final bulletin, Aug. 31:

At this time we would like to state publicly that the *Strike Information Bulletin "Solidarity"* was prepared by an independent editorial board that cannot be identified with MKS (the Interfactory Strike Committee). For the editorial committee, which prepared *SIB "Solidarity"* issues 1-14.

(signed) Konrad Bieliński
Mariusz Wilk

From Bulletin no. 2, Aug. 24, 1980.

THE 21 DEMANDS

The demands of striking work-crews represented by MKS:

1. Acceptance of Free Trade Unions independent of both the Party and employers, in accordance with the International Labor Organization's Convention number 87 on the freedom to form unions, which was ratified by the PRL.
2. A guarantee of the right to strike and guarantees of security for strikers and their supporters.
3. Compliance with the freedoms of press and publishing guaranteed in the Constitution of the PRL. A halt to repression of independent publications and access to the mass media for representatives of all faiths.
4. (a) Reinstatement to their former positions for:
 - people fired for defending workers' rights, in particular those participating in the strikes of 1970 and 1976;
 - students dismissed from school for their convictions.(b) The release of all political prisoners (including: Edmund Zadrożyński, Jan Kozłowski, and Mark Kozłowski).
(c) A halt to repression for one's convictions.
5. The broadcasting on the mass media of information about the establishment of the Interfactory Strike Committee



Queuing for meat in a Warsaw suburb

(MKS) and publication of the list of demands.

6. The undertaking of real measures to get the country out of its present crisis by:
 - (a) providing comprehensive, public information about the socio-economic situation;
 - (b) making it possible for people from every social class and stratum of society to participate in open discussions concerning the reform program.
7. Compensation of all workers taking part in the strike for its duration with holiday pay from the Central Council of Trade Unions.
8. Raise the base pay of every worker 2,000 zł/per month to compensate for price rises to date.
9. Guaranteed automatic pay raises indexed to price inflation and to decline in real income.
10. Meeting the requirements of the domestic market for food products: only surplus goods to be exported.
11. The rationing of meat and meat products through food coupons (until the market is stabilized).
12. Abolition of "commercial prices" and hard currency sales in so-called "internal export" shops.*
13. A system of merit selection for management positions on the basis of qualifications rather than Party membership. Abolition of the privileged status of MO, SB [Internal Security Police], and the party apparatus through:
 - equalizing all family subsidies;
 - eliminating special stores, etc.
14. Reduction of retirement age for women to 50 and for men to 55. Anyone who has worked in the PRL for 30 years, for women, or 35 years for men, without regard to age, should be entitled to retirement benefits.

*Domestic market shops sell at controlled prices—but frequently have only limited supplies or are entirely out of stock. "Commercial" shops sell at significantly higher prices but are relatively well supplied. Together with "internal export" shops which sell for hard currency only, this system encourages black marketeering and perpetuates shortages by diverting goods to commercial outlets. Polish ham, for instance, is never available in regular shops, but sometimes can be found as a high-priced delicacy in commercial ones.

15. Bringing pensions and retirement benefits of the "old portfolio" to the level of those paid currently.
16. Improvement in the working conditions of the Health Service, which would assure full medical care to working people.
17. Provision for sufficient openings in daycare nurseries and preschools for the children of working people.
18. Establishment of three-year paid maternity leaves for the raising of children.
19. Reduce the waiting time for apartments.
20. Raise per diem from 40 zł to 100 zł and provide cost of living increases.
21. Saturdays to be days off from work. Those who work on round-the-clock jobs or three-shift systems should have the lack of free Saturdays compensated by increased holiday leaves or through other paid holidays off from work.

Gdańsk 16/8/80

Interfactory Strike Committee
based at the Gdańsk Shipyards

THE GOVERNMENT'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE 21 DEMANDS

Yesterday (Aug. 23) at 8 p.m. the government commission headed by Vice-Premier Jagielski arrived at the Gdańsk shipyards for discussions with MKS. These discussions are aimed at reaching agreement on the 21 demands put forth by 388 factory crews on strike, thereby ending the strike. Lech Wałęsa chaired the meeting. At the outset he asked Jagielski to state the position of the government regarding these demands. The discussions in their entirety were transmitted over the factory PA system, therefore we will limit ourselves to summarizing the main points of the meeting.

Since the precondition for opening talks (the resumption of all telephone communications) has not yet been fulfilled, the meeting consisted of little besides Jagielski's appearance.

His speech disappointed listeners by its cliches and lack of concrete proposals.

Referring to the key demand, the "acceptance" of trade unions independent of the Party, Jagielski conceded that there need to exist organizations which would effectively defend workers' interests. The law in this regard, adopted in 1949, has been shown, in the opinion of the Vice-Premier, to be insufficient to the task, and hence in need of modification. However, *our* experience post-December (1970) has made it clear to us that any solutions based on accommodation of the strike committees into existing union structures does not guarantee the transformation of those trade unions into genuine workers' organizations empowered to protect their interests. For this it is clear that Jagielski's proposal based on calling new elections to (official) Factory Councils is not a real solution at all, but only an obfuscating, evasive attempt to divert discussion away from the call for free trade unions.

In considering other demands discussed by the Vice-Premier, attention should be given to his stubborn refusal to publish the full list of MKS demands in the mass media (demand no. 5). Demand no. 2, which calls for the "guarantee of the right to strike," according to the Premier, requires much more discussion and thoughtful consideration. "Guarantees of security for strikers and their supporters" has been assured.

Information about the repression of individuals connected with the strike came as news to Jagielski and he promised to investigate the charges in detail. We want to underscore once again that Vice-Premier Jagielski guaranteed security for all strikers and their supporters.

It is worth noting Jagielski's "sincere" belief in the Constitutionally guaranteed existence of freedoms of speech, the press, and publication in Poland (demand no. 3). According to him it is necessary only to smooth out the rough edges in the functioning of censorship. The Vice-Premier dismissed the remainder of demand no. 3 concerning not harassing independent publications with some cant about the anti-socialist character of these publications and their harmful effect on society.

The head of the government commission acknowledged the other demands concerning improvements in the economy as "in principle" appropriate (with the exception of lowering the retirement age). On the other hand, he declared that in the present national crisis it is not possible to put them into effect. He supported this claim with many statistics, all unambiguously indicating imminent economic ruin if the government were to fulfill these demands. Thus only partial solutions are possible at this time, but even these were not clearly defined.

In sum, then, the appearance of the chairman of the government commission, Vice-Premier M. Jagielski, was perceived as foggy, full of cant, bereft of any practical solutions and even at moments incompetent. It is possible that this was only a ploy to establish contact with MKS before today's plenary session of the Central Committee of the PZPR. We hope that after the opening of talks the government's delegation will address itself seriously to the fundamental workers' demand: the formation of independent trade unions. The strike will continue until this demand is met.

—the editors of *Solidarity*

Strikers' Open Letter to the Government:

“WITH WHOM ARE WE TALKING?”

Gentlemen! You are not talking to the same people whom you asked in December '70 “Will you help?” and got the answer: “Yes, we'll help.”

We are different primarily because, having joined together, we are no longer powerless.

We are different because during the last 30 years we have learned that promises are never fulfilled.

We are different because we have come to understand that when you speak of healing the wounds of the national economy, you are planning to cheat us.

With whom are we talking?—this is the title of this letter. The answer seems simple: with the government commission. With the Vice-Premier of Poland. Can there be anyone more competent to deal with the task at hand? But in the MKS negotiating hall the Premier is most often heard to say, “I don't know, I don't usually concern myself with these matters, I haven't had time to find out.” It reached the point that when asked, “Has the Premier read yesterday's *Trybuna Ludu*?” Jagielski answered: “No, I haven't had the chance.” An honest reply! The meeting greeted this candor with a burst of laughter. Is the Premier only capable of such “honest” answers?

The prime concern of the people represented by MKS is the formation of free trade unions. The dialogue on this subject appeared very peculiar. An MKS representative said, “We want free trade unions.” Vice-Premier Jagielski: “Agreed, we also believe that the trade union movement needs modernization.” MKS repeated stubbornly: “We don't care about changes in the old, petrified trade union structures.” To that Jagielski said, “Of course, we agree. Let's set up principles according to which the reorganization of the trade unions can begin.”

This sounds a lot like the discussions between the old man and the old woman in Mickiewicz's fable “Shorn or Shaven?” The old woman: “Shorn, I tell you!” The old man: “Shaven, shaven!” The old man, becoming irritated, ducks the old woman under water. Even while drowning she holds up two fingers in the motion scissors make: “shorn.” This

short digression is not, of course, a suggestion that anyone wants to drown anybody else. Let's get back to the matter at hand.

The dialogue, or rather, the two unconnected monologues were punctuated in the meeting hall by gales of laughter. What modernization? What renewal? Why, can't the Premier hear well? Why can't he hear what the presidium of the MKS is saying? Why can't he hear the laughter, the spontaneous, hearty laughter of genuinely amused people gathered in the meeting hall?

The atmosphere in this hall is completely different from that of a few days ago. A lot has changed. More and more often people simply laugh—honestly! We could take a survey: “How are the Premier's words received, he who always talks about his honesty and truthfulness?” There is probably only one answer: “The more the Premier insists on his honesty, the more honest laughter resounds in the negotiating hall.”

Did the Premier really not know about the leaflets slandering workers on strike that were distributed throughout the Tri-City area?

Is the Premier really unaware of repeated detentions and beatings at the hands of the MO and SB all over the country of people connected with the democratic opposition?

One one question remains: “What does the Premier know!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

As late as last Friday leaflets signed by the Provincial Committee of the Front for National Unity were dropped on the city, which read: “Persons participating in strike actions need fear no consequences as long as they have not been party to acts contrary to the laws of the PRL.”

Today no one would be surprised by a leaflet reading: “PERSONS IN POSITIONS OF POWER NEED FEAR NO CONSEQUENCES AS LONG AS THEY HAVE NOT BEEN PARTY TO ACTS CONTRARY TO THE WILL AND THE INTERESTS OF POLISH WORKERS!!!!!!!!!!”

—the editors of *Solidarity*

FARMERS' APPEAL TO STRIKING WORKERS

Introduction:

The word "Chłopi" historically meant "peasants." In colloquial Polish today it refers to people who work on farms, and carries a pejorative nuance akin to "hicks" or "yokels." All these notions are consciously brought to the fore in choosing the title "Committee for Peasant-Farmers' Self-defense," and of course disappear with the generally accepted translation "farmers."

On July 20, 1980 the Committees for Farmers' Self-Defence (Komitety Samoobrony Chłopskiej) from every part of Poland and all independent farmers' publications issued an "Appeal to Striking Workers." The following excerpt from this appeal appeared in Bulletin no. 7, Aug. 27:

We now need to talk about a very sad fact. For the last 35 years government and party authorities have been teaching society to hate us farmers. Our work is not acknowledged, nor is our role in providing food for all to eat. "Boors," "lousy," and "bums" are only a small sampling of the epithets we must listen to whenever we happen to be in the city. Add to that the insults we encounter in government offices, the frequent hostility when we are waiting on line in shops—all despite the fact that in our own shops we can obtain only bread, sugar, salt, and kasha, and even these are not always available. City people resent us when we try to buy anything in their stores. Fantastic rumors are making the rounds about our earnings



Farmers waiting for coal deliveries near Katowice

and our supposed wealth. A drive to any country village and a walk through the houses there would certainly dispel these myths. The authorities purposely separate and set us against one another; we must purposely begin to unite.

What we have presented here is our minimum program for necessary changes and fundamental improvements in the countryside. At a later stage, after the stabilization of the national economy, land reform needs to be carried out. What is at stake is not a new redistribution of land but rather a new system of rights, new self-managed institutions, genuine co-operatives. We need full communal management of their lands in all respects (except defense) by farmers themselves. Otherwise we will always be threatened by a return to the times of famine. If things don't start working out in this direction, there will be even fewer young people left in farming, and even less food being grown. It won't be long before the government and party authorities achieve their strategic goal and destroy the family farm. Concern for the family farm is a matter for the entire nation. . . . You city dwellers and factory workers are without genuine unions; your rights are not respected. But we who live in the countryside are treated like slaves. The headmaster of the *gmina** and the party secretary have unlimited power over our affairs. At any moment they can take away our land or turn us out of our farms, transfer our children to a distant school, stop construction already in progress on a house or barn, draft a son onto a collectivized farm where instead of a gun he'll be issued a scythe. The head of the *gmina* decides how much we should plant and when to harvest without regard for the productivity of such procedures. Often, without our consent and at our expense, the head of the *gmina* sends government combines onto our fields to harvest grain that is still green. In some regions of the country we are year-by-year assigned new fields while old ones are taken away. We are utterly beholden to the head of the *gmina*'s good- or ill-will when buying even a single bag of cement, or a meter of coal, lumber, or other material. For each such item we must go to him with a requisition form and to each such form attach the required tax stamps. We lose at least a third of otherwise productive time on formalities and

*The smallest territorial subdivision; smaller than a county, similar to a township.

waiting on line. Practically speaking, the head of the *gmina* is responsible to no one and there are no appeals from his decisions. During a single year he can lead all of us to ruin and we do not even have the right to raise a formal complaint. . . .

As farmers we express full solidarity with you workers and we support your demands.

Let us be reminded in closing that there won't be any meat in the pot nor other food on the Polish table if Polish agriculture continues to be destroyed. The survival of the family farm is the concern of the entire nation.

This "Appeal to Striking Workers" was signed by regional Committees for Farmers' Self-Defense and by independent farmers' journals.

Anonymous poem from Bulletin no. 4, Aug. 25, 1980:

RECIPE, POLISH STYLE

Take that which you have not got,
Salt, and seed of caraway add.

Then mix with something that
The markets recently haven't had.

Mix together, carefully and long
'Til you get bored—then stop;
And sprinkle with whatever was
Too dear to buy at the shop.

Brown it lightly on a spit;

You can bake it or panfry—

Basting all the while with what's

Beyond your dreams, why even try?

Everybody here eats this stuff

There's enough for all, for sure.

And this, my friends, is the miracle

Of Polish agriculture.

"Ludzie Może i Nie Są Żli" (Hanna Krall talks with Anna Walentynowicz) was translated from *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Kraków, Jan. 11, 1981.

"PERHAPS PEOPLE AREN'T BAD AFTER ALL . . ."

HK: (*We need to know the whole story right from the start in order to understand what happened on August 14. Shortly after noon on that day Anna Walentynowicz arrived at the main gate of the shipyard. There she saw several women waiting for her with flowers. Some men invited her onto the steamshovel to say a few words to the crowd.*)

Anna Walentynowicz in answer to a question about the beginning:

AW: I am fifty-one years old. I was born in the Wołyń region.*

I had a mother, father, and brother. When the war broke out, my father went to the front, my brother was deported and my mother died of a heart attack. Strangers took me in. After returning to Poland I began to wander from village to village hiring myself out to work. In the summer I helped with the harvest, in the autumn I sold kitchen knives which the farmers I worked for fashioned out of old scythes. During the winter my masterst hustled whiskey. My job was to tend the still at night so it wouldn't burst and, during the day, to tote the bottles for the business in my knapsack. I'd be paid for the whiskey and knives with flour, potatoes or kerosene, which I then lugged back to my masters' farm.

We moved to Gdańsk. They got a mare and a cow from the United Nations' relief agency. The young gentlemen of the house went away to school and I was left to do the housekeeping. I never went to school, really, only for a while before the war when I got as far as the fourth grade. But in my papers I put down that it was the seventh. When I filled out the application for welder I wrote down fourth, but one of my fellow workers said, "What's the matter with you, Anna, make that 'seventh.'" It's easy to change a four to a seven, so that's what I did. To be honest, though, I never had any more schooling, except a course at the shipyard for those who can't read or write and some welding courses.

*In the southeast of Poland, Wołyń became Soviet territory after WWII.

†"Masters," (*państwo*) may sound anachronistic, but "employers" just does not convey all the social aspects of their relation.

My masters were getting rich. They already had horses, pigs, colts, five cows and chickens, and were hiring extra hands to help with the work. I rose at four in the morning to feed the creatures and prepare breakfast for the hired hands. At seven I went to work in the fields and let the cows out to graze. I returned at seven in the evening to milk the cows. Then I'd go out with a sickle and wagon to gather nettles for the pigs and mash them in the chopper. I went to bed at midnight, only to rise again at four to feed the creatures.

I'm not saying this to put blame on anybody, only to be faithful to my experiences.

One day we noticed what looked like a grave of some kind in the boxwood bushes in front of the house. We wanted to transfer it to the cemetery and began to dig. It turned out not to be a grave at all but a buried box. I opened it and saw gold watches, brooches and rings—one was especially nice, shaped like a braided snake with one blue eye. Just at that moment the lady of the house ran up, gathered all the stuff into her apron and that's the last we saw of it.

On Christmas Eve they set a place for me in the kitchen and brought me a piece of the traditional Christmas wafer (*opłatek*). I didn't want to sit there by myself, so I went out to the horse stable and shared my wafer with Goldie. She was a beautiful mare; in harness she walked like an artiste, with a dancer's stride—her muscles tense, like this. Just two turns around the track and she was wet with sweat, that's how sensitive and delicate she was. I wished her well (as is traditional with the *opłatek*) and Goldie neighed in response. If this is unnecessary, please just cut it out of the text. I'm only telling you this to be faithful to my experiences, because you asked me about them.

In midsummer I decided to strike out wherever my legs might carry me. I walked and walked, I fell asleep, I walked some more, all the while wondering what to do. Best probably to take my own life, but how? My masters made soap out of dead cattle. I remember noticing how quickly the caustic soda dissolved every last little bone. I considered getting some of that soda, but I didn't even know where to look for it. Well, I didn't take my life and kept on walking.

I found my way to a bakery. What got me to stay there were the baskets brim full of white rolls they had standing all over the place. Can you believe it, I could eat as many as I wanted. It was no big deal—the rolls sat there and I just picked

out a nice one and ate it. No one told me not to, so I ate as much as I wanted.

I have met so many good people in my life. Some let me eat white rolls, others let me stay in their basement for free, and still others gave me a little heater to put into my basement. (These heaters are great for warming frostbitten fingers. You first smear kerosene on them and hold them next to the open flame until the kerosene evaporates.) But the most important of all these people was the man who told me, "Don't sit around here like this. Go to the shipyards; you will have the chance to learn and make something of yourself."

I couldn't sleep a wink that night. I prayed to Our Lady of Ostra Brama while my heart trembled all night: I hope they'll take me at the shipyard, I hope they'll take me. Our Lady heard my prayers because in November, 1950 I was admitted to the training course for welders. November 8, to be exact—here's the stamp. And here is another right next to it, the eighth of August, 1980—the date I was fired. Thirty years—quite a coincidence, don't you think?

A year later my picture appeared in the newspaper for the first time. It was an article entitled: "Our super-quota workers." From then on it appeared more and more often—before the Youth Festival in Berlin, on the occasion of the Congress of Trade Unions. (Three of us, Sołdek, Gołabek and I, went to the Festival as representatives from the shipyard.) My picture was also on display in the showcase of super-quota workers in the courtyard of our plant. The photo shows me on the job with my overalls on, goggles in one hand and welding tip in the other. Next to me stood Jadwiga Wiśniewska—240%, and Emilia Sekuła—210%. I had the highest score—270% of the production norm. The showcase was right in front of the Director's office, and below it in red paint was emblazoned "Our Women Welders—Super-quota Workers from the Róża Luxemburg Brigade."

That Youth Festival in Berlin in 1951 was a very important event for us in those years. To prepare for it we spent two weeks at a training camp where we learned many things: how to march in step, how to sing in unison "Hey, you horses, steeds of steel," and how to answer the questions of agents of imperialism. It was deemed especially important not to be enticed into staying in the west. Just keep to your own group, we were told, and don't answer anybody's questions no matter what. I remember that at one point a young miner from Silesia asked "How am I

supposed to know what I would do if an imperialist provocateur approached me?" Right away one of our fellow workers from Olsztyn, a tall, blond guy, jumped up. "If my fellow worker doesn't know now how he would behave, what's going to happen in Berlin?" Soon after, the miner had to sign a statement that his health was not so good and return to Silesia.

As for me, I just sat quietly and kept repeating to myself that I certainly wouldn't even open my mouth in front of any provocateur.

On August 18 we visited our first exhibit in Berlin, the Czech one. We walked around in pairs. Just before leaving we noticed that our colleague from Olsztyn was missing, the tall one who had misgivings about the miner's behavior. We called the roll, counted off—he's gone. We headed back to our quarters. No one was supposed to talk to anybody else, especially not to strangers. Well, from then on we lost a delegate or two a day, only we stopped calling official roll and counting off. We were told in no uncertain terms not to dare speak a word of this back home. If someone should ask, we were to call it enemy propaganda.

I've been talking about the Festival in such detail because it was a turning point in my life. It was my first contact with living a lie and the first time that my organization ordered me to lie to others.

My son was born on September 7, 1952. I won't say anything about his father because it's not worth the effort. He showed me his true nature even before the wedding and I decided not to get married.

My child and I lived for a while in a Home for Mothers and Children. Finally I wrote a letter to Bolesław Bierut* and I was assigned an apartment. It's still where I live, on Grunwald Street, a room with a kitchen, 53 meters square. In the summer it's bright and sunny.

HK: *(I observe that her story is the biography of the ideal worker, such as Wanda Gościmińska, or Apryas, or the Bugdołów brothers. But none of those other people became strike leaders. Can she point to any specific day, or to a single event that put her life on the path to the shipyard gate that fourteenth day of August?) Anna Walentynowicz responds:*

AW: I represented the Women's League in our departmental col-

*First Secretary of the Party, Chairman of the Council of State.

lective. Once a week we met to decide penalties and incentive awards. Every one of the men nominated his own people for premiums and when it came the women's turn, the money had run out. I protested that this was unfair.

On one occasion we received 3,000 zł to apportion, in ten payments of 300 zł each. As it turned out the money had already been spoken for: three members of the Council got it: 1,000 zł each. I understand that two of them had to turn over their shares to the chairman anyway, because he dropped a lot of money playing the lottery. That's the first time that I publicly complained that they were taking money intended for workers. The next day the foreman informed me in a whisper, "Mrs. Anna, there was a phone call, you are asked to report to the office. If you should not come back, what about the child?"

They started the questioning by asking me if I listened to foreign radio broadcasts. I told them to stop playing the fool, since it was not the radio that was at issue, but yesterday's conference. I returned to work a few hours later. Do you think this could qualify as the beginning?

HK: *(No, I don't think so. There are thousands of stories like these about premiums, conferences, interrogations. The difference is that most people who were called in for questioning stopped speaking out. Anna Walentynowicz, on the other hand, continued to talk about injustice and wrongs done.) Anna Walentynowicz in answer to the question "Were you afraid?"*

AW: In 1964 I got married.

A year later I was stricken with cancer.

After my operation I received one hundred and forty hours of radiation treatment. When I was leaving the hospital, the doctor told me that at best I had five years to live.

The time the doctors allotted me ran out in 1970. Immediately after that, December burst on the scene—that scream, that blind despair which drove people into the streets.

I realized that five years had passed and I was still alive. If God spared my life it must have been to allow me to accomplish something worthwhile. I thought hard what that might be.

I knew that I could not conquer great wrongs by myself, so I started with small things. I would collect milk coupons from the people in my department, who otherwise had a long trek to the mess hall. I warmed the milk in a pan from home and then carried it to everybody's work station. I did the same with soup.

I convinced one of the men to deliver the soup to our department where I would reheat it. When everyone had finished, I washed the dishes. Not at the expense of work time, of course, but during my breaks.

The foreman accused me of showing off and declared that workers are supposed to eat in the mess hall. I put away the dishes and looked around for something to do next. In front of our workshop there was a small plot of land. I spaded the dirt and planted flowers. Again the foreman confronted me. "You just want to attract attention, don't you?" "I don't want anything, my dear Mr. foreman, except to see some flowers growing here." He ordered me to stop and that ended the garden.

I was bored. On the mobile crane I had work to last me four hours, not more. (I had transferred to the crane after my operation.) They wouldn't let me tend a garden, they wouldn't let me heat the soup, so I sat in my perch and crocheted. One day I noticed a silence down below. I sounded my buzzer, and a fellow worker spelled it out for me on the floor: S T R I K E. I rushed down and found that a crowd had already gathered. The Director was trying to tell the workers that the premiums were being apportioned strictly according to the Premier's instructions. I shouted, "But the Premier promised us that we could decide about the premiums ourselves." When I called out, people urged me to the microphone. I repeated what I had said about the premiums, but also added that we should go back to work now, and the management would let us know what they shall have decided. People returned to their jobs. It was on this day, May 20, 1971, that the management took notice of me—not for calling a strike, but for urging resumption of work—and all because people listened to me. They hadn't heeded the manager's appeals, nor the Director's, but they listened to me and that worried my bosses.

HK: *Anna Walentynowicz, once again, in answer to the question, "Weren't you afraid?"*

AW: My husband died in October of 1971, and my son joined the army. The funeral was the tenth, and my son went away on the twenty-fifth. I was alone.

What should I be afraid of, now that I was all alone?

I needn't fear for my husband, because nothing worse could happen.

Nor for my son, because he had already grown up.

Not for myself, either, because I was convinced that God had spared my life, although I still did not understand why. Was there anything left to fear for? No, fear was not a part of my life at this time.

Besides, I kept busy with my work, the cemetery, and trips to Ustka to see my son. Every Christmas Eve I would take a package of graveside candles in one hand and some food for the trip in the other. First I went to the cemetery to light the candles and then I traveled to see my son. At the grave I would say, "Do you see how it is, Kazik? Everyone else spends Christmas Eve with loved ones, but both of you are lost to me in completely different worlds. I cannot reach both of you at the same time, but like some cosmonaut I have to circle back and forth between you. It just isn't fair."

I made a cross for my husband myself. I welded it, galvanized it, and painted it black on white to look like birch bark. I made the holders for the candles very long. Sometimes I moved them around a little on the grave and could feel them touch the casket. I would say, "Kazik, can you hear me? It's me." And I would tell him everything that happened at the plant that day. When the strike was over I ran to the cemetery. "Kazik!" I yelled. "Listen! We won!"

HK: *Anna Walentynowicz in answer to the question "When did you realize what needed to be done?"*

AW: After December [1970], I thought to myself: Now at last things will change. After all the shootings and the blood that was spilled, it's impossible that things slide back to the way they used to be. Sad to say, it was possible.

At the time I was helping two women, Mrs. Lodzia, paralyzed for twenty years, suffering from progressively worsening arthritis, and Mrs. Alicja, an 83-year-old woman without close family. Mother Theresa of Calcutta was once asked what you can offer a person one half hour before his death. She answered: "The faith that a person is never completely alone." I couldn't do anything for many people, but I thought that at least I could help Mrs. Alicja.

I first heard about free trade unions two years ago. I didn't know what they were exactly, but the idea immediately came to mind that if we had real unions we wouldn't be so helpless in the face of highhanded corruption. I sought out people who could explain these matters. I was surprised when I first met

them because they were intellectuals who wanted to help us workers. I told my friends at the plant about them and brought along some literature about unions.

Life started to get more and more difficult for me at the plant. Employees were forbidden to speak to me. The plant manager marked out boundaries beyond which I could not go: from the front gate to the locker room to my work station. In the workshop I had an area designated from the entrance to the chainlink divider. Since the toilet was on the other side they had a key made for me to a different one, in another plant. Every time I stepped outside these bounds would count against me as an absence from my work station. In September I decided to retire. Before retirement people are always promoted to a higher scale without having to take an examination, but they made me take one. I passed it. Then the plant manager announced to the workers, "If you want her to be promoted, take down your poster." The poster had been hanging there since June, since the Pope's visit, and no one wanted to take it down. But because my raise depended on it, they said okay, and down it came.

All this was very hard to stomach. I was buoyed only by the idea that I was not alone and that I could still pray. We prayed every afternoon in the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gdynia. We said the rosary aloud for the intention of reinstatement of workers who had lost their jobs, for judges who render unjust verdicts, and above all for each of us always to have the courage to come to the defense of another human being.

In January I was transferred to department GS. I worked with three people, each of whom had an assigned task: the brigade leader was to keep an eye on me so that I wouldn't leave; the group leader so that I wouldn't do any talking; and Mrs. Jadzia was to ply me with women's gossip. This transfer was illegal, because it disregarded my work record and qualifications. On those grounds I appealed to the arbitration commission. The arbitration commission referred the case to the appeals commission, the appeals commission in turn to the court, the court back to the appeals commission. Half a year later a binding decision reinstated me to my former position in department W-2. Weeks passed and no one paid any attention to this directive. This being the case, I took it upon myself to report to W-2, but the plant manager blocked my way and ordered me to leave. The following day four security guards jumped me at the main gate. They grabbed me by the arms, took away my i.d. pass and dragged me

off to the guardhouse.

I reported for work every day, as directed by the court's decision, but I was not allowed to work. One day they would lock me in the locker room. On another the security guards would hold me forcibly at the guardhouse. On a third nothing special happened, the Director merely announced that the court's decision did not apply to him, and so on. On August ninth the guards called for a car and drove me to the personnel department. There, after thirty years' work at the Gdańsk Shipyard, they presented me with my work record, back pay, and a notice of dismissal for disciplinary reasons. On my record appeared the notation (from Article 52) "for deliberate desertion of one's work." This in spite of the fact that I came in and punched my time-card without fail every day.

The clerk who filled out the forms said to me, "Mrs. Anna, what they are doing to you is awful. I had to take two tranquilizers to be able to hand you this notice."

"So why are you doing this?" I asked her.

"They'll fire me if I don't," she said, "and then somebody else will come along and do it."

"Let that other person not do it either. The next person should refuse as well. After all, they won't fire everybody."

Why can't people understand something as simple as that, what do you think?

HK: Anna Walentynowycz in answer to the question "Are people evil?"

AW: When the strike broke out people changed in strange and wonderful ways. People became good. Instantly, on that very first day. I even heard one of my worst persecutors begin to speak sort of bravely into the microphone. That was too much for me and I let everybody know how he had behaved before. The situation quickly turned ugly and Leszek had to calm the crowd in the meeting hall. "Please, everybody sit down," he said, "and let's maintain some Christian dignity. I will personally escort this gentleman out the door, so that no harm comes to him."

And he led him out to the gate and even beyond it, past the crowd waiting for him there.

That man came to my house recently to apologize.

Everybody apologizes to me now and everybody is friendly and nice to me. I get "Good morning, Mrs. Anna," from the guards who once twisted my arms, and they no longer bother to

check my i.d. pass. The foremen who made sure that I used only my own toilet congratulate me now. Mrs. Jadzia, who gossiped with me, told me not long ago, "I'm with you, Mrs. Anna." One day during the strike I went over to see these three with an English journalist. How delighted they were to see me! "We had to do all those things, Mrs. Anna, because we were afraid," they told me. And you aren't afraid any more?" I asked. "No, not any more." We rushed to embrace each other. So I suppose that people aren't bad after all; it's just that they are terribly afraid.

HK: *Anna Walentynowicz in answer to a question about the fourteenth day of August:*



Anna Walentynowicz takes a megaphone to exchange opinions with a Lenin shipyard official.

AW: That morning I went to see the doctor at our outpatient clinic. Somebody said, "There's a strike on." I looked over at the cranes on the other side of the shipyard wall. They were not moving. Taking no chances, I did not return home but went to my friends' house, at number 40. Just before noon a neighbor ran over to tell me, "The Director has sent a car for you." "I'm not leaving here," I answered. "Let them drive right to the front entrance of the building." The car did just that, I jumped in and we were off. I arrived at the shipyard a few minutes after noon. Some women stood at the main gate holding flowers. It turned out that they were flowers for me. Somebody asked me to climb onto the steamshovel. I got up there and saw a huge crowd, just like during the Pope's visit. Above the crowd I saw a banner reading; WE DEMAND: RE-HIRE WALENTYNOWICZ!

I tried not to cry.

I said, "Thank you," and got off the steamshovel.

After that we went to the Hall of Occupational Health and Safety for a conference, but you probably know the rest so there's no sense in repeating it.

HK: *A conversation with Hanna Krall.*

Afterword:

GDAŃSK SETS THE PACE

The strike in Gdańsk was by no means the first outbreak in last summer's wave of strikes, but it quickly became the epicenter of the revolt. Other striking factories included the Gdańsk demands in their own lists of grievances. Many enterprises not on strike expressed solidarity and pledged to join the walkout should the government refuse the Gdańsk demands.

The significance of these demands lay in the call for Inter-factory Strike Committees (MKS's) and the insistence that these continue to exist as founding committees of free trade unions after the settlement. The unions were seen both as a guarantee that the government would fulfill its side of the bargain and as a motor force in carrying out a program of social and economic reforms.

As other MKS's began to federate with Gdańsk, the revolt attained the force of a general strike. By the end of August, when the Silesian coal miners began to stop work, there was no doubt that the entire country would come to a halt unless the government acceded to the demands.

In transcending immediate wage grievances, the Gdańsk MKS made explicit the accumulated lessons of workers' revolts in 1956, 1970, and 1976; namely, that in a nominal workers' state *every* strike challenges the fundamental rationale of the entire apparatus. Since the party claims to express the most highly conscious strivings of the working class, any workers who reject its program call into question the authority of the state itself. The workers at the Warski shipyards in Szczecin realized this in 1970 by insisting that the first secretary of the party, Gierek, and the prime minister, Jaroszewicz, appear before them in person to answer their complaints. Gierek managed to defuse that crisis by a dissembling show of humility. "I come before you, a worker like yourselves. Will you help get the country moving again? Go back to work."

"Solidarity" Is More Than a Trade Union

Ten years later Polish workers showed themselves to be better organized and less willing to be placated by mere promises. They selected a union as the most useful organizational form for their purposes.

But in several important respects Solidarity has become much more than a western-style trade union. It is organized not by trade (as were the now defunct party-dominated unions) but by region. This brings the clout of the industrial working class to the aid of groups like teachers and Health Service employees who have less economic leverage. It also allows Solidarity to move beyond bread and butter issues and to address social concerns such as protecting opposition activists from government harassment and pressing for increased civil liberties.

Secondly, no trade union in history has enjoyed such total support of the population. Solidarity counted an active membership of 10 million after only two months in existence. Virtually every employed person, including one-third of the membership of the party, now belongs to Solidarity. In spite of a heavy propaganda barrage blaming the new union for increasing political tensions and exacerbating food shortages, Polish society has not flinched in its support for Solidarity.

The union's official name is the Independent and Self-managed Trade Union "Solidarity." These two characteristics, independence and self-management, provide a fuller picture of what Solidarity means to its members than does its formal appearance as a trade union.

Having won the freedom to organize in defense of workers' interests, the union has spread the mantle of this freedom over the daily life of the entire country, extending a new measure of personal dignity to every Pole. Its very existence vindicates the petty and gross indignities under which Poles have chafed for the last 35 years. Andrzej Wajda portrayed the historical sweep of this anguish in his film *Man of Marble*. The film shows how ordinary people, many of whom set to work with a genuine good will to build a socialist Poland, have felt cheated and abused by the corruption and inept antics of the Communist regime. Commonly referred to as the "red bourgeoisie," they have proven themselves incapable of managing anything efficiently except their own personal villas. Even such a travesty, however, is a lesser insult than their crudeness and insipidity. There is an oft-repeated phrase: "They can't even lie to us intelligently. They take us for idiots." The universal joy at the rollback of censorship is due as much to the drowning out of these lies as to the greater latitude for personal expression.

Solidarity Is Independent, Within Limits

The last two and a half centuries of East European history have bequeathed to today's strikers a heritage of romantic, obstinate heroism in frustrated efforts to repel the foreign invader. Solidarity's independence from the party and state-employer is welcomed as a victorious moment in that history.

But just as Poland's present nominal independence as a sovereign state is limited by its "alliance" with the Soviet Union, so too Solidarity's independence is circumscribed by Poland's role in the international system of capitalist production. Although Poland's economy is called "socialized" rather than capitalist, the laws of accumulation of value and capital production operate just as they do in other industrialized countries. Surplus value, in the form of capital, extracted from labor is invested by the state according to the central plan. In the last ten years these investments have had disastrous results. Instead of providing the basis for more intensive and hence more efficient production, they have plunged the Polish economy deep into debt. The \$26 billion owed to western banks is an unambiguous symbol of Poland's obligation to reorganize its system of capital production. Short of leading a revolution against the system of capital production itself, Solidarity will be forced to shoulder the responsibility of increasing industrial productivity.

Translated into daily life this means (a) eliminating corruption and waste due to mismanagement, (b) compelling the labor force to increase the productivity of their work, (c) convincing the general population to endure even greater shortages until an unspecified time when the system regains its footing and (d) revitalizing agricultural production.

Solidarity as trade union is uniquely suited to tackle these problems. No one feels this more acutely than the ruling Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP). It is no exaggeration to say that Solidarity has been allowed to exist largely because no other social force in Poland is remotely capable of leading the country out of its present economic crisis.

(a) Solidarity offers fresh, untainted moral leadership. A recent series of scandals involving the profligate lifestyles of high party officials has humiliated the government. In sharp contrast Lech Wałęsa has refused a government villa and instead submitted the choice of a new apartment for his family to a union vote.

(b) No one but the union can ask the population to under-

take yet more sacrifices. The fight over "free Saturdays" illustrates this point. On the surface it appeared that the union was holding out for a shortened work week against the intransigent government. Both sides, however, would admit this as a long-range goal. The true battle revolved around *who decides* that workers come in on Saturdays in the immediate future. The government would be powerless to enforce such an order in any case. The union, on the other hand, having wrested yet another formal concession from the government, could "volunteer" Saturdays at work.

(c) The union has insisted that existing shortages be distributed equitably over all strata of society through rationing. The first steps have already been taken; special shops for government employees (police, party officials, etc.) have been abolished as well as commercial shops which sold for hard currency only.

(d) The union's support for farmers' organization is based on the sincere sentiment of fraternity with working people harassed by the state. Reinforcing that sentiment is the realization that food shortages are due, at least in part, to official neglect of agriculture in favor of heavy industry. The farmers need to be included in any general economic reform so that they can better feed the rest of society.

Self-management

The phrase "self-managed" refers both to the format of internal union organization as well as to Solidarity's determination to influence the direction of the national economy. The first issue of the Warsaw Region's bulletin *Independence* (Oct. 9, 1980) published statements concerning self-management: "[Working] people themselves know best where their interests lie and how to pursue them. Therefore the highest authority in our union is vested in factory level organizations. . . . Self-management, as we all know, is people of common interests joining together to articulate and defend those interests. . . . Our union is self-managed, which in the most general terms means that decisions made by local groups concerning their own affairs cannot be overturned by higher union officials. . . ."

These declarations should be recognized as minimum standards against which to judge the growth of Solidarity. Is the national leadership, for instance, acting in the spirit of self-management when it moves to squelch wildcat strikes? Since factory organizations are the ultimate authority in the union,

it would seem that there can be no "unauthorized strike" and that the national union structure is dutybound to support every local job action.

Solidarity from its inception has prided itself on openness and direct democracy. Talks with government representatives as well as intra-union discussions have been regularly broadcast over loudspeaker systems for all to hear. We can only hope that the instinctual urge for democracy on the part of the members of Solidarity will countervail the tendency for national leadership to take an even stronger hand in directing Solidarity's development.

The government has not yet formally presented an economic reform program. There have been reports (*New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1981) that its general outlines include channeling the workers' movement into a system of decentralized planning and management. The proposals are rumored to hover between the Hungarian model of a partial market/profit incentive economy and Yugoslavia's system of workers' councils. The councils in Yugoslavia are elected by factory workers and have some degree of authority over administration and day-to-day management of the enterprise.

The Three-way Compact

From the above considerations it should be clear that Solidarity is more than a trade union—even an independent and self-managed one. At the very least it is the vehicle consciously selected by the strikers through which they challenge party rule. The choice had been carefully calculated to reduce the risk of military retaliation and to pursue most efficiently their concrete demands.

If Solidarity is permitted to exist at all—a Soviet invasion can never be totally discounted—it will maintain its posture of independence. Solidarity's future as a self-managed workers' organization, however, depends on its response (a) to pressures from its own members for internal democracy, and (b) to pressures from the government to participate in a remodeled version of workers' councils that reintegrate workers into the system of capital production.

Solidarity's strength rests on the unanimity of support it commands in the Polish population and its phenomenal success in mobilizing that support in the general strike.

Its union structure, on the other hand, predetermines limits

to its development. In exchange for official recognition the union has entered into an unspoken three-way compact with the PUWP and the menacing Soviet presence. The uneasy equilibrium of this compromise affords the only hope for resolution of the present crisis. It is clear that, although the Polish workers might be conquered, they could not be forced to work. Any attempt at either of these would require military intervention on a scale so vast that its tremors would engulf not only the social order in Eastern Europe, but the already deteriorating relations between East and West as well.

Each side of the compact stands to gain specific benefits in return for what it surrenders in the spirit of compromise. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church waits in the vestibule, ready to sanctify the accord and chastise noncompliance. Taking this suprapolitical role, the Church insures its own survival no matter what the outcome.

A case can be made that Solidarity has the most to gain and that it stands in the strongest bargaining position due to its popular support. Undeniably it has demonstrated what will become the historic paradigm for effective resistance to a totalitarian state—the non-violent general strike (non-violent not in the Gandhian sense of absolute refusal to do harm, but certainly in the tactical sense of placing the onus of violent retribution squarely on the government). Through a remarkable network of communication and an unshakeable determination in pursuit of its concrete goals, Solidarity has systematically achieved every one of these goals while convincing the government that military action would be self-defeating.

Solidarity has paid a price for these gains: it has agreed to forswear the implications of the successful general strike in favor of conventional trade unionism. Put another way, the union has backed away from its own power. Since its earliest days, Solidarity has been carrying out *de facto* the One Big Union program of classical syndicalism. It moved to the brink of the apocalyptic general strike aimed at superseding the social authority of the dominant political power. Were it not for the Russian tanks at the border, Solidarity would long ago have supplanted the authority of the PUWP. In order for the PUWP and the Soviet Union to countenance its existence, Solidarity must continue to deny any such syndicalist ambitions and give positive evidence of its trade unionist intentions. Union leaders never tire of repeating: "We can win only what the Party allows us to win. The Czech

mistake (in 1968) was to criticize the party.” *

Far from threatening state power, a trade union will serve to reinforce it. Solidarity as trade union is perhaps the Polish state's last hope of maintaining authority without resorting to armed force.

The union would provide a chain of appeals buffer between workers' discontent and political power, as well as a safety valve for venting otherwise explosive pressures. Never again will the first secretary need to intervene personally in every flare-up over price rises. (A curious anomaly: had the workers a union before this summer's strikes, Gierek might not be unemployed today.)

Secondly, in return for wage and benefit concessions, the union would guarantee the smooth, if not always uninterrupted, functioning of production. It could be counted on to discipline its members, reducing or eliminating wildcats. As with “free Saturdays,” it could volunteer future sacrifices for the common good. In short, it can accomplish what the party obviously could not: sending the workers back to their jobs having infused them with a new will to increase productivity.† In July, 1980, the government was unable even to raise the price of meat; in Feb., 1981 the prime minister's appeal for a ninety-day moratorium on strikes has been put into effect and protected against disruption through the personal authority of the union's national leadership.

Thirdly, unions—like other institutions—tend to aggrandize individuals. An elite develops susceptible to all the temptations associated with positions of power and prestige.

In effect, then, the union can become a partner with the government in stabilizing the economy and reinforcing the leadership role of the party. This is the party's share of the compromise: nothing less than the reestablishment of its control over society. Its contribution to the three-way balance, of course, is to act as advocate for the union before Soviet power. Past worker revolts in Poland have witnessed various revisionist conceptions of working within the party for change, of “liberalizing” the party. And although there is upward pressure from the basic party organizations for the leadership to get on with the reform

*Radio broadcast of interviews prepared by Madeline Lundberg, WBAI, New York, March 1, 1981, Larry Josephson program.

†Waleśa's name is the Polish verb “to loiter, to play hookey.” The popular wisdom has it that “the government is *waleśa*, and Waleśa is governing.”

movement, most of today's workers are unconcerned with the personalities at the top of the apparatus. In fact, the more politically “conservative” those personalities, the better, for those are more acceptable to the Soviets. All that Solidarity requires from the PUWP is intercession with the Kremlin. The Soviets, in their turn, are pressuring the Polish party leadership to bring the union to heel; that is, to reduce it to a tool for disciplining Polish society in order to restart production.

The price that the Soviets pay for playing this waiting game is the constant risk that the revolt will spread to their own workers or to those of satellite states. Certainly the situation in Poland can never return to what it was before last summer. The longer the Poles breathe the air of freedom from Moscow's domination, the more dogged their determination grows never again to submit. Day by day they mature in both the practical organizational experience and in the political canniness that make that determination a force with which Moscow must reckon.

The Kremlin accepts these risks in the hopes that the Polish party can reconstitute its authority and recuperate the workers' movement. The equilibrium thus established would be weighted in favor of continued rule by the USSR. The alternative for the Soviets, armed intervention, carries so high a cost that it is now recognized by all to be a last-resort response of weakness rather than strength. *Ideologically*, it would mean unleashing vindictive retaliation against a working class that the Soviets themselves in large measure created (by channeling the population dislocated after WWII from farms to new industrial centers). This in turn would spell the end of the already shaky allegiance to the Kremlin of all western Communist parties except for such diehards as the French and U.S. CP's.

Militarily, it would mean a war-footing occupation of Poland. That would certainly spawn a resistance composed of a cynical and incorrigible population that could not be managed except by the harshest totalitarian terror. It is not unlikely that key elements of the Polish Army would join the resistance. While the West would probably not render any concrete assistance to the Poles, the U.S. would leap at the opportunity to recement the crumbling NATO alliance, vanquishing any residual opposition to the deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe.

Lastly, the Soviets would incur crushing *financial* costs. They would become liable for the \$26 billion debt to the west and could no longer depend on Western capital and grain shipments.

They would have to pay for the occupying force as well as train and equip additional units to counter the hostile military stance of NATO. The need to feed Poland's population would further strain Russia's tenuous agro-economic situation.

★ ★ ★

As this is being written the ninety-day moratorium on strikes called by prime minister Jaruzelski has all but fallen apart. This moratorium was the image of the unspoken compact within which the last series of crises has unfolded. Moscow has mounted an overpowering campaign of intimidation to force the party to crack down on Solidarity. The leadership of the party seems to want to please everyone. But unless they can get a reform program underway soon, they will please no one and may be destined for the scrap heap of ex-leaders.

For its own part the workers' revolt that coalesced into the union called Solidarity has won concessions unprecedented in the Eastern Bloc. The workers themselves have demonstrated a resourceful courage that speaks more lucidly than any attempts to second-guess them. They now face what is perhaps the most arduous portion of their journey—in the face of seemingly irresistible odds to maintain the rebellious impulse that has carried them this far.

—Andrzej Tymowski