

aware of their rights. These, of course, were among the many functions assumed by Solidarity during 1980 and "before the war" as common usage has it in Poland today. This development led Lipinski to the podium during the Congress of Solidarity to announce the dissolution of the KOR, giving way to new forces which operate more effectively than KOR could.

Lipinski went on to address the delegates in a prophetic vein, when he said: "Despite these changes, I cannot help feeling that the struggle is not over. I myself was frightened when I heard Kania speak at a Party meeting of the bloodshed which threatens us. I myself was frightened to hear General Jaruzelski say that he is ready to mobilize the army for the defence of socialism in Poland. What is this supposed to mean? How can the army protect socialism by



Walesa riding high last year

shooting at people!" Less than three months after this statement, Edward Lipinski was taken into detention following Jaruzelski's mobilization of his army.

Lipinski helped create the KOR in 1976 and 1977. The KOR developed extensive contacts with the West, and particularly with the Western media. Inside Poland, its growth encouraged and coincided with the other fateful consequence of Ursus and Radom. Especially on the Baltic coast and in the Katowice area, the workers, and most particularly their unofficial but legitimized leaders, created Free Trade Union Committees. These in turn suffered their share of harassment. Lech Walesa knew much detention during his apprenticeship with the growing ideal of free trade unionism. This activity was not totally covert or secret. Much of it was discussed in the new journals such as *Robotnik*, throughout 1978, and certainly by the fall of 1979, the people of Gdansk were being advised by leaflet to take any complaints about a new shipyard bonus system to the Free Trade Union Committee of the Baltic Coast, and the names and addresses of the members were printed on the leaflet. The names included those of Lech Walesa and Anna Walentinowicz.

Early international attention

The situation by then had come to the attention of at least the free trade union movement outside Poland. On July 24, 1978, the Canadian Labour Congress, through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, presented a complaint to the International Labour Organization on the violation of ILO Conventions (numbers 87 and

98) by the Polish government. ILO Convention Number 87 is entitled "Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948" and Convention Number 98 is "The Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention." The complaint stated that under Poland's Trade Unions Act of July 1, 1949, any new trade union must join the Polish Federation of Trade Unions. Any trade union which failed to do so would be deprived of its legal existence as a trade union. Workers who were arrested or dismissed from their jobs following strikes and demonstrations could not look to official government trade unions for support. The official unions were not capable of defending the workers' interests, and this was nowhere better understood than in Poland itself. The Committee on Freedom of Association of the ILO was informed by the Polish government that the Trade Unions Act of 1949 was going to be replaced by a new act. The Committee requested that it be kept informed of the amendments to the law.

The ICFTU also demonstrated that the workers who belonged to the Founding Committee of the Baltic Coast Trade Unions, and its counterpart in Katowice, were arrested, interrogated, released, re-arrested and harassed for defending the rights of the workers. The government furnished no concrete information in answer to the ICFTU's allegations. The ILO Committee considered that the term "organization" in Convention 87 covered all workers' organizations, even those which were not in a position to fulfill functions traditionally associated with trade unions, such as collective bargaining. The ILO Committee requested information on the situation of the persons involved in the above workers' organizations. The Polish government had not replied by the time the strikes began in Gdansk. In May, 1980, Nicholas Valticos, Assistant Director General of the ILO and its Adviser on International Labour Standards, visited Poland as part of the investigation of this case. His report was examined by the Committee on Freedom of Association at its meeting in November, 1980, and the facts as presented by the free trade union movement were found to be essentially correct.

So it was that when the strikes erupted in August, 1980, the demands were no longer limited to material gains. The workers had come to demand recognition of the universal right to free trade unionism. By adhering to this demand the founders of Solidarity created a powerful force, one that has changed governments and political systems across the face of the earth. A major political dimension had been added to the struggle.

The church involvement

Some eyewitnesses have argued that the strike leaders in Gdansk adhered to their free trade union demand hesitantly, with some initial reluctance, a characterization also applied to the early involvement of the Church. The strikers, having won approval for a memorial cross, commemorating those killed in Gdansk in 1970, had a priest bless their temporary cross, knowing that this would attract many waverers to their cause. In recent months, critics of Solidarity have tried to deride it as being a creature of the Church. They completely, and possibly deliberately, ignore the fact that Poland is overwhelmingly a country of re-