

Adviser to Walesa speaks out

By CAMPBELL MORRISON

Dr. Wiktor Askanas is a Business Administration professor at UNB who was an active member of Poland's Solidarity movement until he left disillusioned a few months after the implementation of martial law.

This article paraphrases Dr. Askanas's ideas, and has been proofread by him before being submitted to the Brunswickan.

Solidarity was founded in 1970. In its early stages it was a very small organization recruiting people who were to be the leaders of the movement. With long range goals these people began to create the Trade Union. In the early years the concepts and ideology was created and it wasn't until the late seventies that the organization began to enjoy some success.

The success came from the political atmosphere in Poland. The Gierek government was being challenged by the lower politicians, Olszowski, a voting member of the politburo, and Grabski, a provincial first secretary and non-voting member of the politburo. In order to make Gierek look bad, and create an excuse for his dismissal, Olszowski and Grabski ignored Solidarity. This gave Solidarity more freedom than a subversive organization would normally receive. Olszowski and Grabski infiltrated Solidarity to try to gain control, but could only get about 30 per cent power in the democratic organization. The freedom which Solidarity enjoyed under the facade of ignorance was enough to publish an underground newspaper with a circulation of 20,000.

As time went on, however, the movement gained momentum. Olszowski and Grabski put the sacrificial Kania, a high bureaucrat in the general committee, into power. He was sacrificial because the squeeze was on between the two political camps and Solidarity. With this confusion and turmoil in government, Solidarity grew un-

challenged. Finally, it emerged at the end of the decade as a power to be dealt with.

The goal of Solidarity was simple. They wanted to destroy the "red bourgeois" class which had grown in size. The "red bourgeois" were those industrialists, or party bosses who were taking advantage of their position to pursue personal wealth. They were corrupt men who were using public funds privately. Contrary to North American beliefs,

Solidarity didn't have capitalistic goals, and from 1978 to 1981, they enjoyed as much freedom as we in Canada. Poland was not suffering from censorship or economic hardship until 1979. The London Times, The New York Times, Time Magazine, Newsweek, European radio and American television were all readily available. Poland, economically, was better off than USSR.

Solidarity was a Trade Union. The members of Solidarity were socialists; and they were in agreement with the Polish system of government except for the proliferation of the "red bourgeois," and the restoration of workers' participation in governing the country. Two men, Bujak and Lis, were both members of the Government and of Solidarity.

For ten years these concepts were these concepts were the base of the union. In 1981 the movement suddenly received ten million new members. Overnight the organization grew from a small subversive group to a Trade Union of ten million strong. It was in this period that Solidarity had its eight months of glory. Solidarity was working and successful by the measurements of influence. A great deal of money was pouring in from numerous sources worldwide, but Solidarity was not sufficiently organized to control all of the people and all of the money. This led to a year of anarchy both in the country and in the movement. Nobody was clearly in control. Lech

Walesa was verified as a leader by a slim margin of 4 per cent. But, if he was leader, he couldn't define what it meant to be leader.

Also, during this time, there was constant discourse between the

members of Solidarity and the government. But Solidarity couldn't agree on



what was a good settlement, or what was a good agreement, because goals had become vague and there was no leadership. Two thousand five hundred agreements were signed between the government and Solidarity members, each one negating others.

The Polish government was laughing at Solidarity - a great movement which was blind and was, in fact, working against itself.

From this point the movement lost its Trade Unionist beginnings, and lost its goal of smashing the "red bourgeois". It became a huge blind populist movement. Eventually Walesa became further removed from Solidarity by the confusion and the West's praise, and he stupidly claimed, to Brezhnev, to be the only leader in Poland as well as challenging Brezhnev to a confrontation. The comment helped the Polish

government put an end to Solidarity and anarchy by imposing martial law in 1982.

With Solidarity in confusion, martial law succeeded. As a protest against the imposition of martial law, Ronald Reagan imposed economic sanctions on Poland. This did not work. As a result of the economic sanctions the average citizens were hurt. They became disillusioned that the Americans would penalize them. The Americans were thought to be friends, not enemies. Also, the sanctions forced the Polish economy closer to the USSR, a result which the Americans didn't intend.

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