



# **IWA BULLETIN**

***MAY 2023***

**International Workers' Association**

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After a few years' break, the IWA External Bulletin is back. It is a compilation of articles about the work of our Sections and also IWA-wide news and campaigns.

For more information about the IWA on a more current basis, check out our social media pages:

- [facebook.com/iwa.ait](https://facebook.com/iwa.ait)
- [twitter.com/IWAAIT](https://twitter.com/IWAAIT)

Organizations which are interested in the IWA can contact us at:

- [secretariado@iwa-ait.org](mailto:secretariado@iwa-ait.org)

### **Who We Are**

The International Workers' Association (IWA) is an anarchosyndicalist federation founded in 1922. It seeks to organize workers into combative syndicalist organizations engaged in workplace struggles and grassroots organization, without union bureaucrats, parties or the state, to defend the rights and new conquests of the working class, towards a social revolution.

The IWA unites organizations with similar aims throughout the world with a final goal of establishing a libertarian communist society.

The IWA is independent of the bosses, employers' organizations, political parties and state institutions and does not receive any form of subsidies.

### **Principles of Organization and Action**

- Direct action
- Direct democracy and Federalism
- Solidarity and Mutual Aid
- Internationalism
- Independent financing
- Rejection of capitalism and the state

### **What We Do**

The IWA sections are involved in a wide-range of activity, including workplace solidarity and union organizing, training and advice for workers, campaigns involving outsourced, temporary and seasonal workers, organizing among migrant workers, anti-militarist campaigns, international solidarity campaigns, community organizing and the promotion of self-managed cooperatives.



# 28<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS OF THE IWA

On December 9–11, 2022, the International Workers' Association held its international Congress in the city of Alcoy, Spain. Delegates arrived from around the globe and we were particularly glad to see a large number of comrades from South America, Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region. Hundreds of people visited the event and accompanying cultural programs organized in the days leading up to and during the Congress. The hall was full of people and one could get publications from all over the world.

The work of the Congress was rather intense and lasted the full three days in the room packed with delegates. A number of comrades who were not able to travel also joined us online.

During the Congress, we were able to discuss the results presented by working groups, such as the group responsible for developing strategies for newer and smaller organizations to increase workplace organizing activities. A text was presented to the Congress which we hope the Sections and Friends will find useful.

Another working group deals with climate change. There was a very interesting discussion around this topic, with comrades from Pakistan giving a very inspiring account of their work during the latest floods in that country and comrades from Indonesia describing their work with a sustainable collective farm. Comrades from South America also had a lot to say about this subject. Work will be

started on a text about climate change from an anarcho-syndicalist perspective.

One of the important topics we discussed was an upcoming campaign in defense of the CNT-AIT of Spain, which is subject to various lawsuits by the Spanish section of the International Confederation of Labour (ICL, or

CIT in Spanish). More about this horrible situation of repression will soon appear on our pages as we launch this campaign.

Another notable thing is that we welcome a new organization to our fold, Organise! from Ireland. They join as Friends of the IWA.

The Congress really was a fine representation of the diversity of our federation. We were very pleased when the Congress unanimously supported the motion to hold our next Congress in Indonesia.

Also, for the first time ever, our Secretariat has become intercontinental, shared between the ZSP and the ASF of Australia. We believe this is a good solution for current times and for the current geographical presence of the IWA.

The IWA would like to thank all the comrades from CNT-AIT Spain who hosted the Congress, who came with publications or organized cultural events. A special thanks for those who worked on the organization of the Congress, including the team of translators! We would also like to congratulate all the delegates who managed to work through all the agenda points.

We hope that until next time, our projects and conflicts around the globe will be fruitful and that the IWA's new century will bring a renewal to our global struggle.

— IWA General Secretary

23.12.2022



# IWA DAYS OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE CNT-AIT SPAIN

The last IWA Congress decided that April 13-16 would be Days of Solidarity in defense of the CNT-AIT. Many Sections posted information about their situation and sent different expressions of solidarity.

The CNT-AIT is an anarcho-syndicalist union, known to many people around the world. Unfortunately, for several years now, it has come under attack by another organization, the Spanish affiliate of CIT, which also claims the name CNT.

These attacks, which are vindictive in nature, threaten not only the CNT-AIT, but also the historical traditions of anarcho-syndicalism in Spain. They are carried out through the statist apparatus and threaten to see members of the CNT-AIT put in jail. Their aim is to receive money and property from the CNT-AIT in order to destroy that organization.

The IWA considers an attack on any of our comrades to be an attack on all of us, so we stand united in calling for an end to these outrageous legal actions.

## ***Legal actions and lack of ethics***

These lawsuits are in strict contradiction to anarcho-syndicalist ethics in several ways:

**1. In the lawsuits, the Spanish section of CIT claims huge sums of money for damages because they say members of the CNT-AIT criticized them publicly.**

Freedom to criticize is a fundamental right of all members of unions and other organizations. Ideally, this should be done in a way that avoids slander and is based on the merits of arguments. Anarchists do not resolve such matters in courts by seeking punishment and material damages, only they seek to resolve things in other ways. This is a fundamental idea.

By comparison, we know of many slanderous

statements and articles made by the Spanish section of CIT, its representatives or individual members but we don't know of any IWA members who have sued these people. (Then again, some of the most vicious ones were made anonymously, in contrast to those unions being sued, who collectively agreed statements and signed them.)

**2. In some cases, the lawyer for the Spanish Section of CIT constructed cases that could land people in jail.**

Anarchists simply do not believe in the state jails, especially for "crimes" such as criticizing something. These are the methods of authoritarian states, not of anarchists.

**3. The amounts of money asked for in damages would bankrupt many of these organizations and taken together, destroy the CNT-AIT. (That's what these lawsuits are about.) In addition, in some cases, the office holders of some of the registered entities could be personally liable for tens of thousands of euros.**

This is about bullying people into silence and fear, not about promoting anarcho-syndicalism. This is also about wiping out those who do not go with the CIT's turn of direction. If successful, it would create long-term damage to the movement in many areas of Spain.

**4. The Spanish Section of CIT looks to evict many unions from spaces by claiming "property rights". The reality is complicated as many of the spaces only exist because of the years-long effort of members of the CNT-AIT to obtain them and maintain them.**

Property questions are tricky but even in divorce cases bourgeois courts acknowledge the division of property. Some unions of the CNT-AIT registered property as the property of the federation, CNT-AIT. That was their collective organization. Nobody ever registered property for CNT-CIT, but that organization claims it. When comrades have failed to give them what they demand, members of the Spanish Section of CIT have even resorted to

## IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE CNT-AIT

The IWA-AIT stands in solidarity with the CNT-AIT of Spain facing lawsuits brought by the Spanish section of CIT before the Spanish National Court. We call for them to be withdrawn immediately.






violence and theft, such as the library in Cadiz.

Anarchists are supposed to have another idea about private property. Spaces belong to the people who started them and worked to maintain them and actually use them. Members of the Spanish Section of CIT have made multiple decisions to just liquidate places and get cash for them. This is an attempt to destroy the meeting places of CNT-AIT, some which even predate the existence of the CNT, to make a profit and undermine that organization.

The attacks against CNT-AIT are vindictive, by an organization that on the one hand, seems to treat the CNT-AIT as "competition" but, on the other hand, pretends CNT-AIT is insignificant.

The very fact that these suits exist is an abominable breach of anarcho-syndicalist ethics. It cannot be tolerated by anybody who takes these ethics seriously.

— IWA General Secretary



# ASIA-PACIFIC IWA SUB-SECRETARIAT

The Asia Pacific IWA Sub-Secretariat was created to assist the IWA Secretariat support and co-ordinate communication with IWA affiliates in the broader Asia Pacific region. It is answerable to IWA Congress through the IWA Secretariat.

Delegates and observers from three IWA affiliates based in the Asia Pacific region (ASF, PPAS and WSF) attended the 28<sup>th</sup> IWA Congress in Alcoi, Spain. To the best of our knowledge, this is the greatest participation of IWA affiliates from the Asia Pacific region ever.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Congress of the IWA will be held in

Jakarta in December 2025. It will be the first IWA Congress held in Asia.

As a result of a discussion that took place at the first Asia Pacific IWA Convergence in Jakarta, November 2022, the Asia Pacific Sub-Secretariat was confirmed as a joint responsibility of ASF and PPAS and expanded from two comrades to five; one from ASF Melbourne North, two from PPAS Jakarta and two from ASF Perth.

It has been agreed to hold a second Asia Pacific IWA Convergence in Jakarta in June 2023.

## *2nd Asia Pacific IWA Convergence*

Since the 28<sup>th</sup> IWA Congress, the majority of the work of the Asia Pacific Sub-Secretariat has been taken up with planning and organising the second Asia Pacific IWA Convergence. The first Convergence was attended by comrades from Australia, India and Indonesia. Reports from Australia, India, Indonesia and the Philippines were received and discussed. On the last day, a discussion was had about building and expanding the IWA in the Asia Pacific region and raising awareness about and promotion of anarcho-syndicalism. With this in mind, it was decided to hold a second Convergence.

The first Convergence has been successful in generating unprecedented interest in anarcho-syndicalism and the IWA in the region and there are firm commitments from comrades in Australia, India, Indonesia, Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand with expressions of interest from Bangladesh, China, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore in attending.

Reports on the situation of workers in the countries of comrades attending will be received in

addition to discussions about how to continue to build and expand the presence of the IWA and promote awareness in the region.

## ***Change to Naming Conventions***

After concerns were raised by comrades in Singapore and Myanmar, the Asia Pacific Sub-Secretariat decided to change the method by which Initiatives are named. Previously, Initiatives were named after the nearest IWA section, initially ASF (Singapore and Manila). After the admission of PPAS to the IWA at the 27<sup>th</sup> IWA Congress, it was changed to PPAS, e.g. ASF Manila Initiative was changed to PPAS Manila Initiative (now MK, IWA Friends Group in the Philippines).

It was decided to rename all such Initiatives by IWA to avoid associations with the particular countries of IWA affiliates in the region. Henceforth, PPAS Singapore Initiative is now known as IWA Singapore Initiative.



### ***IWA Myanmar Initiative***

Having made contact with anarchists in Myanmar, the Asia Pacific IWA Sub-Secretariat assisted with the foundation of a new Initiative in Myanmar; IWA Yangon Initiative.

Currently, they are a small group of about 25 based in Yangon, they are comprised of comrades who have had previous involvement in trade union activity, social rights activism as well as the Burmese Anarchist Federation and Libertarian

Marxist Group. IWA Yangon Initiative was founded 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023. They are cautious in their activity as they live under a military dictatorship who have demonstrated their determination to repress religious and ethnic minorities and any other perceived threat to their rule. The focus of their activity is the translation of texts from English into Burmese ('anarchy' is translated literally as 'no king'). They are continuing to discuss the possibility of applying to affiliate to the IWA as a Friends Group.

## ***Solidarity campaign with sacked Ansell workers in Sri Lanka***

Readers of previous reports will know that a group of 11 workers sacked by Ansell in October 2013 for attempting to unionise with a reformist union affiliated to 'IndustriALL' contacted the Asia Pacific IWA Sub-Secretariat in June 2021 seeking help in their campaign to be re-instated with full compensation. Asia Pacific IWA Sub-Secretariat called upon ASF to respond on account of Ansell's global headquarters being based in Melbourne. Since then, ASF Melbourne North has initiated a campaign of solidarity protest actions and participated in campaigns organised by Australia Asia Worker Links, an organisation comprised of trade union and left-wing activists. ASF Melbourne North is responsible for communications directly with the 11 sacked Ansell workers and reports to ASF Secretariat and Asia Pacific IWA Sub-Secretariat. The campaign is ongoing.

**GOVERNMENTS  
CHANGE,  
CAPITALISM  
REMAINS.**



**THAT'S WHY  
WE ORGANISE**



**INTERNATIONAL WORKERS'  
ASSOCIATION**



WWW.IWA-AIT.ORG

# IWA SECTIONS STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE UPRISING IN IRAN

[Excerpt from the bulletin "AIT Info" edited by CNT-AIT France in March 2023]

The assassination of Mahsa Amini by the morality police of the Islamic Republic of Iran on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 triggered a wave of rebellion from the entire Iranian population who are rising up to demand freedom and an end to the Islamist dictatorship.

IWA sections have joined in solidarity demonstrations organized all over the world, and in particular in Paris, Toulouse, Barcelona, London, Leeds, Stockholm, Karachi...

## **Solidarity Federation (Britain)**

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, nearly 300 people gathered to affirm their support for the Iranian revolution. The date of February 11<sup>th</sup> corresponds to the end, in 1979, of the Iranian monarchy and its bloodthirsty and pro-imperialist dictatorship.

Protesters marched, sang and danced in streets and parks. They regularly sang a chant which was described by the very organizers of the rally as "a chant inspired by anarchists and the revolutionary left": "neither king nor mullah, all power to the shuras!" and also "for the revolution in Iran and everywhere else".

The shuras ("council" in Persian) are a traditional mode of organization comparable to general assemblies of the population. During the Iranian revolution of 1978, some workers organized themselves into shura (workers' councils) and would call strikes which would put an end to the pro-American regime of the Shah. While most far-left groups will support, more or less critically, the seizure of power by the Islamists and the Ayatollah Khomeini, in the name of anti-imperialism, the current of the shuras will refuse the implementation

place of this regime in the name of class struggle, freedom and equality between men and women.

## **WSF (Pakistan)**

The Workers Solidarity Federation, Friends of the IWA in Pakistan, called for a rally in front of the Press center in Karachi, on September 20<sup>th</sup>, against Islamist extremism in Iran and to protest against the



assassination of Masha Amini, beaten to death after being detained by the Tehran vice police. Millions of people in Asia suffer from religious extremism and this is a great threat to all of us!

We oppose all forms of state violence and brutality! Our full support to all women in the world who fight against patriarchy!!!

The rally was able to take place normally in calm and a large number of women also participated.

## **CNT-AIT France**

In France the CNT-AIT participates in rallies of solidarity with the Revolution in Iran, in Paris or in Toulouse. In connection with the KAF (Kurdish-speaking Anarchist Forum) it disseminates multilingual texts (French, Persian, Kurdish Sorani and Kurdish Kurmanji) in particular the text "IRAN: Neither king nor leader, down with the authoritarian system!"





وقتشه انقلابه، راهش هم اعتصابه عمومی  
اعتراض، اعتصاب، میرسه به انقلاب  
فقر، فساد، گرونی، میریم تا سرنگونی

Il est temps pour une révolution, et  
le chemin est une grève générale  
Manifestations, grèves, mènent à la révolution  
Pauvreté, corruption, cherté, on va vous renverser

<http://cnt-ait.info/category/inter/iran/farsi/>

## CNT-AIT Spain

It has also published a sticker in solidarity, with the slogan shouted during the demonstrations in Teheran suburbs : "It's time for a revolution and the way is a general strike! Protest, strike, are leading to revolution! Poverty, corruption, expensiveness, we are going to overthrow it".

In Spain the compañeros of the CNT-AIT took part in the demonstrations. In Barcelona a debate was organized with an Iranian Kurdish compañero.

## OLS (Sweden)

In Sweden, the compañeros of the local section of the IWA, Örestad LS, participated in the "Azadi – Anarkistiska frihetsunionen" (Azadi – Anarchist Union for Freedom) which regularly organizes demonstrations in Stockholm and also in Denmark.

## International Working Womens' Day

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, IWA sections celebrated the International Working Women's Day. Some IWA affiliates, as in Pakistan, France and Sweden, emphasized solidarity with the women of Iran and Afghanistan on this very special day.



## "INFORMA BULTENO" ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM IN ESPERANTO

Esperanto is the world's most widely spoken constructed international auxiliary language. Created by Zamenhof in 1887, it was intended to be a universal second language for international communication. The original idea was that by promoting a common language between humans, it would help to improve the mutual understanding beyond cultural and linguistic barriers, and so to foster world peace and international understanding.

Anarchism and Esperanto are strongly linked because of their common ideals of social justice and equality. During the early Esperanto movement, anarchists enthusiastically publicized the language, and the two movements have much common history, especially in Asia. Regularly in its congresses, the IWA encourages its members to study and promote Esperanto.



Informa Bulteno is a newsletter edited by esperantists from CNT-AIT France, with the cooperation of esperantists from other IWA sections, to inform about IWA activities.

If you are already familiar with Esperanto, you can download the newsletter from our website: <https://informabulteno.wordpress.com> If you are not yet familiar with Esperanto but would like to start, the language is easy to learn and there is surely an Esperanto club near to where you live.

We also issue stickers in Esperanto, that are

available on demand.

If you want to participate, even if you are not a regular esperantist user, you are more than welcome! You can get in contact with other anarchosindicalist esperantists by writing either by email to [contact@cnt-ait.info](mailto:contact@cnt-ait.info) or by post mail to:

CNT-AIT 7 rue St Rémésy 31000 TOULOUSE, FRANCE.

*vivu anarkosindikatismo! vivu internacia solidareco! vivu la ILA (AIT-IWA)!*

## DIRECT ACTIONS AT ZABKA STORES CONTINUE TO PAY OFF FOR PRECARIOUS WORKERS

Zabka is the largest convenience store chain in Poland with around 8000 shops. It is owned by the shady CVC Capital Partners, which last year was ranked the 4th largest private equity firm in the world. It was started as a spin-off from Citicorp.

Zabka is a franchise and many of its franchisees don't respect workers' rights. We know of many situations where workers were employed illegally in Zabka, without any contracts, with the wrong kind of contract (which denied employees their rights) or on conditions that are not legal. In addition to this, wage theft seems to occur quite commonly, including in the form of illegal deductions from salaries.

ZSP has already conducted numerous successful direct actions at Zabka, in various cities throughout Poland. In recent months, the union in Warsaw has had a number of successful actions where workers got what they were owed. In addition, we also often managed to get overtime pay and vacation pay without going to the courts: the contracts that Zabka franchisees often use do not include these things, although they should.

On October 16-22, the International Week of Actions against Unpaid Wages was held by the IWA. We held two actions at Zabka stores: on October 9 in Warsaw and on October 16 in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, a town near Warsaw. Both actions were successful and employees got paid

what they were owed. In the Warsaw shop, we saw that it was illegally functioning on Sunday. (Such stores can function if the owner is working or if it has postal services. Many of the Zabka shops are open on Sunday but not legally.) So the owner had to quickly shut it down. At the Grodzisk shop, it turned out (like in

many cases), that another worker who also was a victim of wage theft, who we didn't know about, showed up and also was able to get paid.

In January we were also able to help a teenager who was illegally employed without a contract in Zabka and whose wages had been stolen. We sent a letter demanding the money and the day before the picket, the money was paid (which is something that also happens when workers plan to take action). Even though this money was paid, we decided to go ahead with the picket to let the



owner (and the rest of the Zabka owners) know that this is not OK and that we intend to inform everybody about the kinds of things happening in Zabka; just in case the owner thought of hiring the next person without any contract.

In March we had two more actions – one in Warsaw and one in Minsk Mazowiecki. In the case of the Warsaw shop, it concerned two workers who we know, but there were other people in a similar situation. In the case of Minsk Mazowiecki, the owner paid the worker we wrote to them about, but then it turned out that another woman we know wrote that she had also been cheated. So we went there and she also received her money. In the Warsaw shop, the owner was arrogant and tore up the demand letter, but we went back with one of the workers and she also received her money.

Finally, in April we went to another store in Warsaw where the Mercedes-driving owner just hadn't paid one of her workers. She had been putting off giving this worker, a single mother, a contract, so the worker had never received a contract. Despite the very unpleasant encounter with this woman, the worker walked away with a large handful of cash.

We have been making this situation known to the public and the workers are getting a lot of support. Internet support in the last case was overwhelming for the worker and showed the owner that people in the community are not indifferent to these situations. We are also trying to put pressure on Zabka to do something to ensure that their franchisees respect workers' rights as part of their franchise agreement. In the last situation, Zabka wrote to us that there is „nothing they can do” to control the situation with their franchisees, whereas in one of the previous situations, they actually contacted the store and threatened to take away their concession.

In the future we hope to get to their corporate headquarters in another city and give more visibility

to this issue.

These problems at work are a plague in Poland, but especially in Zabka and, as it is such a visible company (with more than 500 stores just in Warsaw), with so many precarious workers, we are sure that more and more people will want to take action.



## AGAINST EXPLOITATION AND DANGEROUS WORKING CONDITIONS

Our friend and his brother come from Armenia and like many foreign workers, they are sometimes forced to accept illegal working conditions to make ends meet. In Warsaw there are hundreds of building sites, as real estate speculation is very common and many, if not most, of these sites are worked by immigrant labor. Regardless of whether the work is done by an immigrant or not, working conditions on many building sites are illegal: sometimes there are no contracts and health and safety regulations are often ignored. Not surprisingly, there have been a number of fatal accidents. ZSP has been involved with some cases at building sites in the past.

One of our friends unfortunately had an accident

at work. It was quite serious and he has not been able to work for many months. There was of course no safety measures at the site and when the accident happened, the people at the site did not follow the correct procedures, which require that the accident be reported and the site inspected. Of course they would not report this because there were 20 people working illegally at the site.

Instead of calling an ambulance, the friend was driven to near the hospital. The people running the site did not want to be seen anywhere near it. They made a small payment to the worker, but it was less than the amount promised which never came

In Poland, it has not occurred to business people yet that maybe they should be responsible for their subcontractors. The subcontractor is Kulej, a fly-by-night operation run from an apartment block with no office. We went to the company that subcontracted the work, which is a big building company called Malbud. At first, some managers there invited us in to talk to them and seemed interested in getting to the bottom of the matter. However, the next meeting with the corporate lawyer showed us how much contempt they have towards the people actually doing the work for them through their subcontractors. They kept repeating that this is the fault of the subcontractor, not theirs, while at the same time accusing the worker, as if he had made unreasonable claims and was acting to protect the interest of the subcontractor. They

claimed that the subcontractor had said that everybody there was legally employed. They were not interested that their site was worked by people without safety equipment, without insurance, without contracts. They weren't even interested that somebody could die at their worksite.



This sort of attitude has got to stop so the union will be continuing protests and information about these firms and their practices, warning people against working for them.

We sometimes say that capitalism kills and this is a very good example where that can be exactly the case. We don't want to see any more victims of this company's greed!

For safer workplaces, we need to take action and organize! In this case, quite literally, an injury to one is an injury to all!

## ACTIVITIES OF PRIAMA AKCIA UNION

### *100 years of the International Workers' Association*

To mark 100 years of the IWA, we organised public events in Bratislava (4<sup>th</sup> March) and Košice (1<sup>st</sup> April). They were attended by delegations from Organise! (Bratislava only), SolFed, WAS, PA and the IWA General Secretary, whom we thank very much for their visit.

During both events, a presentation was given on significant historical events in the development of IWA. The delegations spoke about the experiences of anarchosyndicalist practice in their respective countries mentioning also, for example, how they

came to the ideas of anarchosyndicalism and why they make sense in practical terms in their lives.

We added a Slovak context to the IWA anniversary by preparing an exhibition about our





activities in the years 2000-2022.

In addition, two blocks of excellent slam poetry performances and a punk concert in the evening provided an intense artistic experience in Košice. While in Bratislava we took care of the vegan refreshments, in Košice it was prepared by the local group Food Not Bombs.

### ***Problems in the workplace***

In March, we closed a more than year-long issue related to a restaurant in Bratislava. We helped a former worker - who approached us - to write a letter demanding payment of money owed, which included wages owed, a debt to the Health Insurance Fund and money related to unemployment benefits. The employer complied with all of these demands in essentially a matter of hours.

Also, we were busy with other workplace issues in various towns across Slovakia and discussed with workers how to resolve their problems, and potential disputes. These were companies of different sizes and specialization (an art school, an IT firm, a car manufacturer, a transport company, etc.).



### ***Open meetings***

In 2023 we will continue with regular open meetings of our union in Bratislava, Trnava and Košice. The meetings are intended for people who want to actively solve problems at work (for example related to unpaid wages but not exclusively), contribute to discussions with their own topics, come up with suggestion for actions or get involved in ongoing and planned activities of PA.

### ***Workshops on self-defence and gender in language***

At the beginning of the year we organized two workshops in Bratislava. The first one was focused on collective approach to security and self-defence. The aim was to learn how to make correct judgments in various situations, how to act when we are alone in a dangerous situation or how to help someone from the position of a bystander. The second workshop focused on language and the use of gender in texts and in everyday speech (Slovak language has, historically, strong patriarchal elements that exclude women and non-binary people). In this regard, and in the context of the IWA centenary, we decided that the practical part of the workshop would be to edit the existing Slovak translation of the IWA statutes. For both workshops, we reached out to people outside of PA who have experience with the topics.



### ***Participation in a queerfeminist demonstration***

A number of political parties are trying to push through laws to make life worse for women and queer people. Demonstrations against these efforts take place quite often, which we support, as they are organised in an egalitarian spirit that criticises both capitalism and state institutions. The demonstration on 8<sup>th</sup> March in Bratislava was one such demonstration.

### ***Publications***

We prepared the second Slovak edition of SolFed's publication *Fighting for Ourselves*:



*Anarcho-Syndicalism and Class Struggle*. For this purpose, we visited the Druckraum printing house in Vienna run by comrades from WAS.

We also published a leaflet about what an anarcho-syndicalist union is.

## ***Solidarity with CNT-AIT Spain***

Together with other IWA organisations, we joined Days of solidarity with CNT-AIT. We published a text about the situation and the attempts of the Spanish section of CIT to destroy CNT-AIT.

## ***New contacts***

Again, there were several new people that contacted us via our online form from all around Slovakia with who we then maintain and develop further contact and involve them in our activities.

# **AGAINST VULNERABILITY IN THE FOOD SERVICES SECTOR**

Working in a “black kitchen” restaurant, making deliveries and preparing food, is one of the alternatives that young people in Colombia find as a main source of income; besides, for young people, the labor market does not offer much of an option. However, it is one of the sectors with a high rate of irregularities in the hiring of workers.

Although there are no exact data on the number of workers hired in the country for these activities, growth can be inferred in recent years. According to data from the National Administrative Department of Statistics - DANE, the accommodation and food services sector for January of 2023 contributed 1.6% to the country's economy, more than activities such as manufacturing industry with 1.0%. And, in the specific case, in the municipality of Neiva, in 2020, according to the mayor's office, approximately 7,958 workers were hired in this sector.

So, while there is growth in the numbers employed in this sector, the violation of rights is also daily bread for the workers. Well, usually, some of these buffet-type restaurants, gourmet restaurants, bars, food courts, themed restaurants,

etc. pay by the hour, and they waive the obligations that workers have by right regarding social benefits, social security and affiliation to a compensation fund. Hence, for a majority this is not enough to even receive a minimum wage. It generates job instability that puts workers and their families at risk, many of whom are students. Likewise, there have been some cases of theft of tips by employers, which by right belong to the workers. Among other violations are workplace harassment and long working hours, as well as unfair payment to “immigrants.”

In this sense, we want to show that these irregularities must be denounced by the workers; silence should not be an option in the face of violation and workplace harassment. Just as the workers, through their labor power, help the growth of the sector, their rights must be recognized and ensured by the employers.

***DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS WITH US!***

— Neiva Various Trades Union  
Regional Federation of Huila, ULET-AIT





## WE ARE ANARCHOSYNDICALIST AND PROUD OF IT

The current development of the movement in France against the new pension law, once again unfortunately confirms the "loser logic" that permeates all the social movement in France. Both the trade union leaderships - supposed to represent the workers - and the parliamentarians (Deputies and Senators) - supposed to represent the people - failed in their strategy, the law was passed. This demonstrates the inefficiency and uselessness of any parliamentary and representative opposition.

Despite the population's legitimate anger, we have just witnessed the obvious theft of at least two years of our lives, leaving on the pavement, on the road to poverty, hundreds of thousands of people with "disrupted careers" - mainly women - on the road to unemployment workers over 55 years old, on the way to the hospital - at least what remains of it - the most worn down by the hardship of their job.

The old world is not rooted into real life. Trade union leaders and political parties, Senators and

Deputies extend the parliamentary and institutional routine without qualms. Move along, there's nothing to see here!

All the reformist unions - CGT, CFDT, FO, UNSA, SOLIDAIRES, FECGC, CFTC and FSU - are defending their strategy by arguing the importance of being united into a single "intersyndicale" (inter-union) and that they will remain united "until the end"... But and above all they are united to avoid the risky appeal to a general strike to the workers who are feeling unprecedented anger. The immediate reaction of the Intersyndicale, right after the law passed thanks to a real institutional coup d'état from the Prime Minister Borne, is the flagrant proof that the Unions don't want to make any real move: instead of calling for a general Strike, the Intersyndicale did call for ... another day of marching, 7 days after the law passed!!! They also called to invent punctual actions - like blocking administrations, high schools, postal sorting center... but without providing real support nor publicizing those actions,



making them in fact ineffective. What is the point of such “punching actions” with no real strength, done on the sly and ignored by the population since the actions have not been popularized.

“But Comrades, the struggle continues Comrade” as they tell us. How many more days of marching around: 10, 12, 15 or more, “in a good-natured atmosphere” as the trade-unions centrals rejoice in, echoing satisfaction about the “good manners of the demonstrators” expressed by the Police, the government and Macron himself.



What is the point of playing the parliamentary circus spectacle since by advance and simple calculation it was doomed to failure. The old political world is not living in real life but it is not suicidal. The united left (left populists of LFI, ecologists of EELV, Social democrats of PS, communists of PC), together with the far right RN of Marine Le Pen (the same one the united left rightly call a fascist...) and the right-centrists parliamentary group LIOT, all joined to create a facade opposition to Macron's government, what a masquerade and above all what a shame!

So despite the strikes in such strategic sectors as energy, transport, schools etc., the objective of withdrawal of the law has not been achieved. And yes, the voices of the millions of workers who oppose this flagrant injustice, this umpteenth forced passage by Macron, are missing.

So we need to collectively change the method!

Why the broadening of the struggle ignores the population? The reply is simple: unions are not at the service of workers, they are at the service of bourgeoisie. The bourgeois and the gentrified unionist leaders don't want to take the risk of losing control of the social movement, they are afraid of "political chaos" and disorder. But in fact they are

the chaos, they are the one who create disorders, and they are the one paving the way to the far right that is patiently awaiting its hour to come!!!

We Anarchosyndicalists, therefore syndicalists affirm that direct democracy, the self-organization of struggle through direct action by the workers themselves without any representative, any mediator, remain the only revolutionary path for the emancipation of workers. Therefore we call once again in front of the current situation:

- the holding of popular assemblies - inclusive of all the working class, active workers or unemployed, workers in training or retired, housewives, etc... - that are sovereign in their decisions without any external interference (political parties, unions, NGOs, religious organization or sects), visible to all,
- to the greatest participation of the population, far from the hackneyed and restrictive practices of the reformist union world and political routines.

*We have nothing to lose, nothing to negotiate,  
 Only the Social Revolution matters to us!*

— Some CNT-AIT France militants

## AN EXAMPLE OF MOBILIZATION IN A RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 2020 the President Macron / Prime Minister Philippe government tried to privatize our pay-as-you-go pension system. At that time, in a school district in the Gers (rural province in the south west of France), several teachers, tired of the high points of the joint-unions (intersyndicale) demonstrations, had tried to radicalize the struggle by participating in a collective with other teachers in the department. This collective was named "les black profs" (the black teachers, by analogy with "the black blocs"). A habit of general assemblies bringing together union members and non-union members, with a turn to speak and the attribution of precise mandates to prepare actions decided collectively, had been established. However, this



collective had not succeeded in becoming interprofessional (to extend toward workers of other branches of activity). Then came Covid and the confinement...

The lid had fallen back on, work had resumed.

As soon as winter 2022 arrived and a new so-called "reform" of pensions was announced, that is to say an umpteenth attack on our social benefits, general assemblies resumed at our workplace: they will soon take place every Monday at noon in the form of a picnic in front of our school campus, weather permitting. The habits contracted with the "black teachers" are being revived.

From then on, a variety of actions were set up according to the ideas discussed during the Monday general assemblies. This relies on about twenty committed workers who, unlike in 2020, are no longer counted only among the teaching staff. Soon, a sort of internal collective bringing together unionized and non-unionized staff, teachers, AESH (accompanying person for students with disabilities), maintenance technicians, AEDs (education assistants), and administrative workers was set up.

The creativity of each one enriches the struggle, thus a banner workshop gives place to the realization of five big banners "Total withdrawal, general strike" which will mark the spirits during the demonstrations in Auch.

Some events take place in our workplace like "the school of the future" or the display of photos of aged staff representing a school with staff aged 64 and more.

Picket lines every day of the strike in front of our workplace with banners, coffee and strike fund to invite our non-striking colleagues to join us and/or

support us financially and symbolically block the access to the school campus.

A "dying" in front of the school complex, the morning after the use of the 49.3 article to adopt the text postponing the legal retirement age. This action, which saw twenty-five people on the ground with signs "49.3 democracy assassinated", restricting the entrance to the school, allowed us to challenge the students and invite them to join us. This opened up discussions and in fact, we then went on a demonstration to occupy a traffic circle with them, without really blocking traffic but visible and audible to all the people going to the market that day.

Unauthorized strolls in the small town, so often very quiet, to call on its inhabitants to join the inter-union demonstrations and the information meeting organized by some colleagues.

Faced with the deafness of the government, blocking actions are taking shape in the Gers, at the call of a joint-union group that is less cautious than usual. Of course we are present.

During the general assemblies, two recurring subjects came up: the decision of a renewable strike and the constitution of a strike solidarity fund. Neither one nor the other is unanimous. Several colleagues (about fifteen out of eighty) are very quickly convinced by the necessity to launch into a renewable strike, the only way to have the time to prepare actions different from the classic demonstrations. In fact, about twenty people went on a renewable strike three days out of five for three weeks in a row... Of course, the strike is not totally renewable but the reality of the Gers is that we are the only school to be so strongly mobilized. The Gers is a very rural and sparsely populated

department in which schools are far from each other. Striking teachers are often isolated and may feel that "it is useless" to mobilize because alone we cannot change much. Hence the idea of going to meet our colleagues on the days of a renewable strike.

The strike solidarity fund was first launched by selling cakes on the market. Then, via a website. Its management has been evolving. Initially created to support the staff receiving the lowest salaries, it was gradually extended to all staff and gave rise to the following motion to clarify its operation.

*Principles of the strike fund voted unanimously on Tuesday 21/03/2023 in general assembly.*

*This strike fund will not compensate our loss of salary but aims to support the strike movement so that it lasts until the withdrawal of the pension reform.*

*For the precarious workers (AED, AESH, and contractual teachers), we can contribute for all the days of strike from 19/01/2023 to Friday 24 March 2023. As for the non-contractual teachers (tenured), the days of strike will also be counted from 19/01/2023 to Friday 24/03/2023, but the sum retained will be half of that given to the above-mentioned categories. This is to ensure the greatest equity.*

*Everyone is free to accept help from the strike fund or to put it back into the common pot if they feel they do not need it.*

It is to be noted that if certain trade union centrals (CGT, Sud Solidaire) have contributed to our strike fund, recognizing in this the intensity of our mobilization, other confederations on the other hand have not felt concerned!

The horizontal aspect of the struggle meets a form of solidarity or not...

The strike fund allowed for the establishment of a solidarity that modified the class relationship between teachers and AEDs or maintenance workers. Since then, the class relations that existed and the artificial division between workers in the same place have cracked, giving way to real solidarity.

At the time of writing, the struggle is not over and it is difficult to know if our determination will prevail. However, it is to be hoped that the shared struggle will have anchored in people's minds that the preservation of social gains will indeed be the

work of the workers themselves deciding the forms of their struggle.

— Some CNT-AIT militants

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# REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

It's been a long time since a government project has provoked such social mobilization in France. Three, four million demonstrators. It is enormous. The French are very angry. More than eighty percent of the workers are, according to the official polling institutes, opposed to the reform of their pensions. Eighty percent means that at least forty to fifty million people are absolutely opposed to the postponement of the retirement age to 64. But then, where are they? Why don't they join the demonstrations? Why don't they make their opposition clear? Why do they accept (because to remain silent is to accept) without saying a word what they consider to be unfair? Why do they resign themselves?

These are the kind of questions that the young (he was 18 years old) Etienne de la Boétie was already asking himself in the sixteenth century. How is it, he said, that the ordinary people who produce the wealth and hold the power accept being governed and martyred by tyrants? To answer this question, he invented the concept of "voluntary submission". The vast majority of individuals accept their condition as dominated people and this acceptance is of their own making.

One thing is clear: it is certainly voluntary, but it is above all the consequence of the indoctrination, the conditioning, the dumbing down that people undergo. From our earliest childhood, we are taught to obey the injunctions of the Authorities, never to contest them.

In the eighteenth century, the "philosophers of the Enlightenment", Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau etc... denounced those responsible for this conditioning: the State, religions, traditions. They explained that it was necessary to fight against them and that only the use of Reason would allow



us to overcome them. Rational education, they said, was what the people needed to dispel the darkness of obscurantism and free them from the chains of slavery.

In the nineteenth century, thinkers like Proudhon, Marx, Bakunin and many others, accompanying the reflections of the nascent labor movement, dissected the functioning of the capitalist system, showed the division of society into antagonistic social classes, the fundamentally unjust and criminal character of this system and explained that only the collective action of the exploited could overcome it. From the middle of the century, workers began to organize themselves and these efforts resulted in the creation by workers of different nationalities of the First International with the unanimously accepted slogan: "the emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers themselves". This slogan perfectly summarizes the program of the First International: to emancipate oneself is of course to destroy the existing economic and social system, to abolish the division of society into antagonistic social classes and the exploitation of

man by man; but it is also to educate oneself, to cultivate one's own culture, to develop one's own identity, to develop a rational spirit among the workers, to make them conscious. The initiators of the International believed that a social revolution, the abolition of the state and of capitalist exploitation, required that the great mass of workers be enlightened, clear-sighted and commit themselves accordingly.

Shortly after the creation of the First International, Marx developed the idea, absolutely opposite, that the transformation of the society would not pass by the destruction of the State, but by its conquest, which required the seizure of the State institutions by a vanguard, a political party, by any means (elections, social movement, revolution). Once this objective was achieved, the State, placed at the service of the workers' interests, had the task of preparing society for the

passage to a later stage of communism. This intermediate stage has been called dictatorship of the proletariat. This method does not require the mass of workers to be enlightened and lucid, but only a small fraction, the vanguard, to whom the revolutionary work is delegated. So we go from "the emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers themselves" to "building the popular power, embodied by the Party". In the mind of the wage earners, the solution proposed by Marx appeared infinitely simpler, faster than the one requiring the education of the mass of workers; and as a result,

almost the entire international workers' movement has been working on the construction of the Party of the working class and for more than 150 years, all over the world, parties that were supposed to embody the hopes of the exploited have been trying to conquer the state power in order to exert it for their own benefit. Many of these parties have come to power, either as a result of revolutions or through elections, but these experiments have always ended in resounding failures, sometimes even in catastrophes. Each time, it is the people, especially the workers and



the exploited, who have paid the price.

In 2023 in France, Macron - a former minister in a socialist government, elected in 2022 with the support of the trade unions - is shamelessly reversing all social advances. Many of those who rightly denounce his contempt today were singing his praises not long ago.

What is terrible is that history repeats itself: what we are experiencing, we have already experienced many times before. Things are clear, however, as long as the people choose to give up to one or a few individuals the unchecked power to decide what is good for them, it will be so.

Macron is a traitor, of course, but the system of representative democracy that allowed him to come to power, that made a whole people abandon to him in confidence the mastery of its destiny, this representative system is even more infamous.

In view of all the dangers that threaten us, it is

urgent to put an end to this system and to replace it by a true democracy, direct democracy. But for this to happen, a significant proportion of the population must first be aware that a social revolution is desirable, that it is possible, and therefore to be committed to preparing it. This formidable work of consciousness raising is the finality of anarchosyndicalism.

# SOLIDARITY FEDERATION - ROUNDUP -

A strike wave has spread across Britain in response to real-wage cuts, high inflation, and the legacy of austerity policies. Locals of the Solidarity Federation have been joining picket lines in solidarity with striking workers and agitating to push the struggle beyond the confines of union bureaucracy and division.

In Wales, a member of the Solidarity Federation Education Union (SFEU) has been fighting a pay-

grade dispute at a university, taking direct action in the form of a work-to-rule. This has already yielded concessions from the employer and a formal grievance has been lodged to claim back-pay for duties performed above their pay grade.

In April, Bristol Solidarity Federation ran a training session on assisting fellow workers through workplace disciplinaries, an eventuality we must be prepared to deal with when organising at work.

In January and February, Liverpool Solidarity Federation organised a series of film screenings about factory occupations, and in April held a reading group discussing an essay by Tom Brown, a prominent anarcho-syndicalist in post-war Britain. In March they ran a workshop about taking direct action against sexism in the workplace. The Liverpool local have also been organising against a surge of fascist activity in the area.

## SF EDUCATION UNION

The Solidarity Federation Education Union (SFEU) is a new initiative which grows out of the desire for connected struggle and defence of education workers across the board. In our small

but growing Union we welcome all workers within the sector, from primary to higher education, and all roles within the industry, from caretakers, classroom assistants, through to teachers. While some of the existing unions can be fairly effective, many workplaces have no real union presence and workers are left to either defend themselves or have "agreements" imposed upon them. Furthermore, traditional British trade unionism tends to replicate rather than challenge divisions of workers along lines of grade, function, degree of precarity, and workplace by prioritising the interests of specific categories at the direct expenses of others.



The SFEU is a unitary Union and aims to breach these divides. There are plenty of reasons for organising in this way, and the threats to our industry are many. Given the government's dire handling of the pandemic response, teachers and pupils across the country have been forced to return to unsafe conditions at school; staff at further and higher education institutions are having contracts terminated (and/or opportunistically not renewed) and there are now several universities where redundancies are programmed; a million university students have either received no face-to-face tuition this year while they have been charged exorbitant rents and tuition fees.

In addition to the immediate issues arising out of the pandemic, all levels of education are suffering from under-funding, privatisation, low pay, a lack of job security and marketization, as well as from the further intensification of a pervasive logic of competition and individualising "meritocracy"



through exams- and test-based forms of learning. Given the fact that all these issues affect students too, they can also join our Union, thereby further breaking down the divide between those regarded as the "producers" and the "consumers" of education.

We feel that it is essential for workers in this sector to come together to resist both the government and management by employing new tactics. These tactics include a return to more militant approaches, such as boycotts, strikes, and what we call direct action - action that we decide ourselves without having to go through endless committees, ballots, and stifling legislation. We organise horizontally through the principle of mutual aid, meaning that we have no executive committees, no paid officials, and are committed to transforming education and the world in which we live without having to trust that others with interests we don't share will do it on our behalf.

## STRANCALLY TWO CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Our comrades from CNT-AIT Marina Alta were 'summoned' via several threatening solicitor's letters recently to attend in person their Workplace Relations Commission adjudication hearing in March. The employers' solicitors objected to a remote hearing, even though most WRC ones these days are ordinarily held online. In addition, they made spurious claims of threats and intimidation – as if solidarity and standing up for our comrades and fellow workers amounts to trying to intimidate these extremely wealthy and powerful people.

These ridiculous and unfounded claims were refuted by our friends and comrades and the WRC disagreed with the employers and has ruled that the hearing will proceed remotely. We in Organise! will continue to support them in what is a patently

clear case of unfair dismissal, unpaid wages and unregulated overtime.

Support the struggle of anarchist workers.

### ***Reinstatement for comrades dismissed from Strancally Castle.***

The wealthy owners of Strancally Castle in Ireland are facing a long list of demands from their domestic and maintenance workers.

The grievances are as follows:

- Unfair dismissal.
- Absence of certain payslips.
- Amounts paid not shown in the payslips.
- Unlawful deduction of wages.
- Non-payment of salaries.
- Non-payment in lieu of notice.
- Mandatory overtime above the maximum allowed.
- Lack of proper weekly rest period.
- Core terms of employment containing false or misleading information.





## Union dispute in Strancally Castle private estate (Ireland)

The workers, supported by the libertarian union of the Marina Alta region in Spain, claim that they were fired for requesting a salary increase and for raising the issue of excessive overtime on the private estate, and have announced that they will fight for reinstatement.

The anarcho-syndicalist confederation CNT-AIT and its sister organizations of the International Workers' Association have shown their solidarity with the struggling workers, and have notified the company of the initiation of an official union dispute and the organization of a range of solidarity actions. Organise! have also given our support for

the workers' demands.

Inspectors from the Irish Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) have already confirmed payslip irregularities, certifying that the payment for overtime was made in breach of the Irish Payment of Wages Act.

The family company of the owners of the castle will have to facilitate the pay slips not delivered to the workers and regularize their salaries and taxes, and has begun a process of reviewing the payments to its large number of "domestic" workers.

In a further act of arrogance, the powerful owners of Strancally Castle, Gianni and Michael Alen-Buckley, have hired a lawyer who is appealing against the complaints of the workers, alleging that they are "not well founded", so the rest of the workers' demands are pending adjudication by the Workplace Relations Commission.

Gianni Alen-Buckley, born Giancarla Maria Gerarda Forte, and her husband Michael are facing the self-organized working class action of anarcho-syndicalists, who have dedicated more than a century of history to fight against capitalism and for a society free of exploitation.

# WSF AT THE AURAT MARCH

[Published 10 March 2023 by CNT-AIT, France]

The Workers Solidarity Federation (WSF), friends of IWA in Pakistan participated in the Aurat March (Urdu: عورت احتجاج or عورت مارچ, English: "Women's March") in Karachi on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March:

*"Don't forget the brave Afghan, Iranian and Pakistani women in their struggle against fascist regimes and patriarchy on International Working Women's Day. Let's hope for a better world where we all feel safe and loved."*

*On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March the Workers Solidarity Federation will join Aurat March in Karachi with banners to support the struggle of Afghan, Iranian and Pakistani women, the struggle against forced conversion of minor girls, along with the struggle*



for trans people's rights! Do join us for a better world!"

The Aurat March is an annual socio-political demonstration organized since 2018 in Pakistani cities such as Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta to observe International Working Women's Day.

The march manifesto demands economic justice, including implementation of labor rights and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, recognition of women's unpaid contributions to the "care economy", and provision of maternity leave and daycare centers to ensure women's inclusion in the labor force. It also demands access to safe air and

drinking water, protection of animals and wildlife, recognition of women's participation in the production of food and cash crops, access to a fair judicial system, the inclusion of women with disabilities and the trans community, reproductive justice, access to public spaces, inclusion in educational institutions, etc ...

Women and men carry posters with slogans such as *Ghar ka Kaam, Sab ka Kaam* ("Housework is everyone's work"), and *Mera Jism Meri Marzi* ("My body, my choice") which have become rallying cries.

*Mera Jism Meri Marzi* (Urdu: میرا جسم میری مرضی; lit. "My body, my choice") is a slogan used by feminists in Pakistan to demand bodily autonomy and protest gender-based violence.

Other popular slogans are :

*Nazar teri gandhi aur purdah mein keroun* ("Why do I adopt the veil because of your bad habit of ogling?")

*Agar dupatta itna pasand hai tou apni aankhon pe bandh lo* ("If you like the scarf so much, then tie it around your eyes")

*Tu kare tou stud, Mai Karun tou slut* ("If you do

it, you're a stud, but if I do it, I'm a slut")

*Khana khud garam karo* ("Prepare the food yourself").

Conservatives, right wingers and Islamists object to these slogans, which they think to be contrary to their Islamic ideology and allegedly promote vulgarity as well as a western culture and agenda. Opponents of the Aurat March accused its organizers on social media of flying a French flag, although the flag of the Women's Democratic Front



is red, white, and purple... The most radical opponents have added threats to stop the Aurat March by force if it includes slogans not acceptable to them.

In 2021, according to Pakistan's minister for religious affairs and interfaith harmony, Noorul Haq Qadri, Islamic societies are the best in protecting women's rights; Qadri says that Aurat March banners, placards and slogans do not match with Pakistan's social, political and religious standards imbibed in the collective thought of the Pakistani people, and that individual or civil society participating in the Aurat March ought not to get leeway to undermine the religious injunctions, and that instead the Aurat March ought to be celebrated as "Hijab day" to focus on discrimination by Hindu extremists against Muslim minorities in India. Each year's marches are organized amidst intimidation and attacks.

*"We anarchists consider the existence of a State to be the basis of paternalism. We humans are against the monopoly of anyone and we consider it our duty to raise our voice against it."*



# NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR!

## WAR DESERTERS WELCOME!

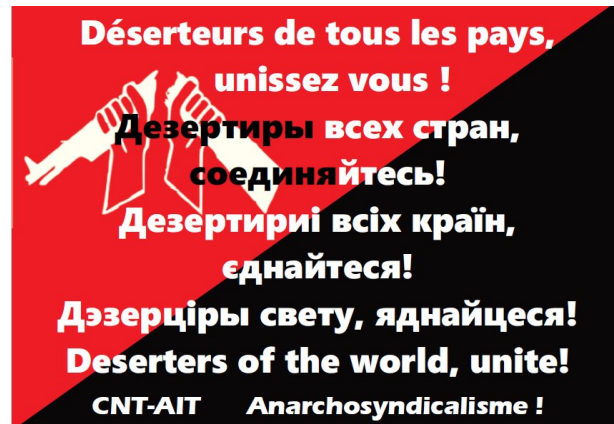
The IWA-AIT was created 100 years ago, after the First World War. The trauma of this butchery put antimilitarism at the core of anarchosyndicalist principles. Since then, IWA sections have consistently opposed militarism and capitalist wars, and supported the workers and ordinary people who are the victims of war.

When the army of the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, the IWA section in Russia (KRAS-MAT) immediately issued a statement against the war. Our fellow members in Russia participated in the demonstrations that exploded spontaneously on the streets of Russian cities. They expressed the anarchosyndicalist perspective that we are for *no war but class war*. In many countries in different continents, the sections of the IWA-AIT including the CNT-AIT in Spain, ZSP in Poland, WSF in Pakistan, and ULET in Colombia have expressed



the same point of view: extending their solidarity to the population suffering from the war – the people of Ukraine who were being bombed as well as the African and Asian migrants trapped at East European borders – while refusing to give any support to one state leader or another.

IWA sections also tried to develop practical solidarity with those who - whether in exile or remaining in Ukraine and Russia - have expressed their rejection of the war without falling into nationalist madness. For instance, CNT-AIT France



has provided assistance to Ukrainian refugees and to Russian deserters. Also, financial help has been provided to the 'Assembly' group of Kharkiv. Its members have not joined the Ukrainian army: from a military and tactical point of view, the involvement of some dozens of anarchists (the strength of the entire pre-war Ukrainian anarchist movement) in the nearly one-million strong Ukrainian army will not bring any significant change. But from a strategic position, keeping the anarchist perspective in view, joining the Ukrainian army reinforces nationalism, and gives backing to the state policy of national unity from neo-nazis to anarchists. Assembly has instead joined the civil resistance, where they can be decisive, at least locally. They provide help and support to civilians who suffer from the consequences of war, and who are always the great forgotten of the State, which in time of war directs all its financial and material resources to the army. Nor has Assembly renounced its pre-war practice of

tirelessly denouncing the corruption that rots all of Ukrainian civil society and bosses who have taken advantage of the extreme precariousness of the situation to make workers slaves without any rights. Assembly also campaigns for the right of Ukrainians who do not want to die at the front to migrate freely.

Since the beginning of the war, the KRAS has done an important job of collecting and sharing dispersed information about acts of resistance to the war, whether it be the burning of recruitment



centers in Russia or demonstrations by mothers of soldiers in Ukraine or in the peripheral autonomous republics of distant Siberia. In a recent article ([www.aitrus.info/node/6070](http://www.aitrus.info/node/6070)), the KRAS shows us that, contrary to what militarist propaganda would have us believe (whether Russian or Ukrainian), the support of the populations for the war does not go without saying. There are many young people who refuse to be killed, there are many parents who refuse to have their children sent to their deaths. Repression has fallen on the "dodgers" (as they are named by the authorities), while in Russia, as in Ukraine, the legislative arsenal is reinforced against these non-patriots. Despite the omerta and censorship, some information pierces through the local press or on social networks. Collecting and sharing this dispersed information has succeeded in tearing away the veil that the media has cast over criminal convictions and movements of refusal. In Russia, thousands of people have already been sentenced for desertion or "abandonment of post", even if it is difficult to know the exact figure because of censorship. Sentences are often suspended, in order to send the convicts back to the front. In Ukraine in 2022, about 12,263

cases of violation of the law on military service were tried, 26 times more than in 2021. In addition, unified electronic databases have been set up (in Russia) or are being prepared (in Ukraine) to ensure that no one can escape military enlistment.



These databases will make it possible to identify the entire population of fighting age and to cross-check information between the various administrative services (civil status register, bank, social security, etc.), creating a "spider web" to make sure no one can escape mobilization.

*[Information compiled from KRAS-MAT and other IWA sections]*

## CNT-AIT MADRID END FOUR YEAR CONFLICT

Four years ago the Trade Union Section of the CNT-AIT Madrid was established in the 'Plan International España' foundation. Today, after four years of fighting, we announce the end of the conflict.

Our purpose is to improve our working conditions and dignify our jobs. We are workers that recruit members for the foundation. We work out on the street to protest, even in inclement weather, while those who abuse their power play with our salaries from the comfort of their offices.

We soon learned that fighting is the only way, that dialogue with those who play with our bread

and see solidarity as merchandise was not an option. We decided to fight and, boy, did we fight... With the first picket that we held, we achieved the immediate reinstatement of the dismissed compañeras in Andalusia, solely and exclusively with direct action.

That first victory led to the dismissal of our union representative in July 2019. But that did not intimidate us. Quite the opposite. In January 2020, that colleague was reinstated by court ruling.

Since these methods of repression had not worked, the Foundation decided to get rid of our jobs, to sack all of the recruiters and outsource their work - with the consequent increase in precariousness and exploitation that this entails. They were willing to kill an entire department and cut dozens of jobs just to unsuccessfully get rid of the CNT-AIT. And they



had to take us back for the third time, although this time the reinstatement did not last long; a few weeks after the Supreme Court ruling came out, Plan International fired us again. For some of us, it was our third dismissal from the same company. But we returned to the fight, armed with the only tools that have proven to be useful for the working



class: solidarity, self-management, direct action and mutual support.

Almost a year and a half after that last dismissal, we have reached a satisfactory economic agreement that allows us to put an end to the conflict. We cannot say the exact figure because they have made us sign a confidentiality agreement, we can only say that the compensation received is much higher than the legal one.

We would be lying if we said that it is the victory we are looking for; it is not. Although we know that this was now the best option we had, for many of us it is a bitter victory, because after four years of struggle and three reinstatements, we were unable to keep our jobs. It comforts us to know that it is not a job that has any use for society, and that, in fact, in the last instance, we always hope that such jobs disappear (along with all jobs), especially in the tertiary sector, that only serve to increase capitalist consumerism and aspire to turn everything into merchandise. We also know that everything we have experienced in these four years will help us fight better in other present and future conflicts.

We would like to dedicate the last lines of this

farewell to all the unions, comrades and neighbors who have fought side by side with us, sending us their solidarity even though thousands of kilometers may separate us. Thanks to each and every one of you, compas, for having fought for our jobs as if they were yours, for demonstrating with actions that, no matter how much NGOs and Foundations want to empty it of content and sell it as merchandise, solidarity continues to be our best weapon to stand up to the exploitation and abuse of those who believe they own everything.

Thank you, because we would not have made it this far without you. We send you all a libertarian hug, especially to the compas of the ULET and ZSP.

See you in the assemblies and in the streets!

## CAFÉ CANDIL DISPUTE

The CNT-AIT Granada would like to announce the end of the conflict with Café Candil. One of our comrades was paid and another came to an agreement where everything that was demanded

was recognized. In this second situation, a first payment was made and the rest of the payments were agreed to be paid within certain deadlines.

The CNT-AIT of Granada had been in conflict with Café Bar El Candil since the fall of 2022. They had met with them to discuss the dismissal of a comrade and the working conditions. Since the issue was not resolved, they started protesting in front of the establishment in September. In October, they came to an agreement about payments for the first comrade who had been



fired. Then another worker came forward because he had not been paid. That situation was finally resolved only in April. There were several pickets held in front of Cafe Candil.



# THE PATRIARCHY KILLS. CAPITALISM FINISHES YOU OFF.

March 8<sup>th</sup>, a day of celebration of the working woman, is a historic day that vindicates the struggle of working women for equality and social justice, something that is as important today as it was more than 150 years ago when women workers in New York garment factories organized strikes, in the face of police retaliation, demanding higher wages. In Catalonia, during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the precariousness of the textile industry brought women workers on to the streets. Likewise, the workers in the match factories of London, who struggled against endless working days. These struggles have spread and continued up to the present, when the exploitation of women is still the order of the day.

Currently there are still many pending issues that need to be dealt with so that half of the human race is no longer in a situation of vulnerability compared to the other half. This inequality is best reflected in the world of work. Companies are a reflection of the patriarchal society; they look down on women and this is evident in the discrimination they suffer both in access to promotion and in terms of pay. During the past year, the wage gap between men and women was 9.4% in Spain, and in the European Union as a whole, women earn 13% less per hour worked than men, which is equivalent to approximately one and a half months' of salary per year. It is the same with possibilities of finding jobs; in the last quarter of 2022 unemployment in Spain increased, with the rate among women being 4% higher than that of men and, in the case of trans women, this rate is 80%.

Another problem women face at work is sexual harassment. It doesn't matter if it comes from a

boss, a co-worker or a client. All of this brings with it both psychological problems and a work environment in which the victim is forced either to give in at the expense of their own well-being or to leave their job, with repercussions on their working, economic, and social lives.

Among working class women there aren't many other options. Either you submit to a labor market that does not care about your rights or your dignity, or you are left unable to pay your bills. You have to reconcile life between a job that exploits and despises you, and time that you do not have, but that forces you to always be available for the needs





of those around you. The working day is doubled, with work within and outside of the home. Regarding care, the responsibility usually falls upon women. This is a reality that has a direct impact on the problems that we have pointed out already; it can prevent women from entering the labor market and from getting access to good training that would help them to get a better paying job. It is a vicious circle that we can only escape by breaking with this patriarchal and capitalist model of society that promotes social classes and the unfair distribution of wealth. For this reason, it is important to develop a discourse that breaks not only with gender inequalities but also with social class inequalities.

Bourgeois feminism strives to achieve an equality based on allowing women to reach the same level and social status as men who wield power, run companies and take charge of the institutions that the state uses to repress and subdue the majority of the population. Under anarcho-syndicalism, we workers and poorer people do not seek to equate ourselves to the men in power. Nor do we intend to run companies in the capitalist model, nor wear the uniforms that repress, punish and lock up the people who remain outside the margins. We do not want to have anything to do with the state because its institutions have been subjugating us for hundreds of years. In 2023 we want to reclaim the 8<sup>th</sup> of March as the International Day of Working Women. We reject all discourse put forward by unions, political parties and other organizations that, under the fallacy of "plurality", hide the word "worker" and paternalistically pay homage to women for being women. In this way, these spokespeople for those in power eliminate the social class component of this very important day of protest that originates precisely from the struggles of working class women. This is the bourgeois strategy of not referring to these historic events, making them invisible, as if they had never existed. We raise our voice against this memory loss and revisionism and in honor of working women, women in struggle.

It is delusional to claim equality between men and women and not to question the obvious social and economic differences that exist between a businesswoman and the women who work for her, between successful business women and their domestic workers, or the differences between those

with the opportunity to get jobs which afford a good standard of living and those who end up in the clutches of precariousness, with jobs in the fields or in hospitality, or those who are directly excluded and sometimes criminalized such as trans women or women of color. We do not want equal opportunities to compete with men in their rotten and obsolete patriarchal capitalist system; we simply want to destroy it in order to build a model based on social justice and a fair distribution of work and wealth.

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## NO TO THE EASY TRIGGER LAW: PUBLIC STATEMENT BY SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA



Again the state has acted in its own interests. This time, motivated by the pressure of the extreme right, allied with the high command of the Chilean police, the social democrat president has promoted a law that, basically, gives free rein to the use of firearms, in response to any situation in which the police believe their lives to be in danger. This is already provided for in the current laws, but the change is that "legitimate defense" is now allowed as a justification, even though in the past it has been an open door to impunity.

We have witnessed for a long time the use and abuse of lethal and non-lethal weapons in Mapuche communities, as well as at a number of social demonstrations, with a heavy cost in terms of deaths and injuries. We also saw how this rose

significantly during the outbreak of social protest in 2019.

This law, which arises as a result of the death of police officers at the hands of organized crime, has been an excuse that has given settlers, farmers and businessmen full permission to use the police forces as white guards in defense of their interests. It will not reduce crime or drug trafficking, but will act as an incentive for increased repression against the popular movement, considered as the real enemy according to Dipolcar's (police intelligence services) own investigations, in which leaders of various unions, environmental activists and left-wing parties have been followed.

We will see a greater, not a lesser, capacity of criminal organizations, which act as an executive arm of security policies, as we have seen in the armed attacks on the "Blue Tents" – informal street

vendors that have been attacked by criminal mobs hired by shop owners who accuse street vendors of unfair competition – or in the investigations where active police or state security officials have provided weapons and protection to criminal gangs. The objective is to demobilize the popular anti-capitalist movement and to exterminate those who stand up and fight big capital.

*We call on you to be attentive and to denounce forcefully the true objective of this law.*

*The easy trigger is not a fancy invention, it is a reality against the social movement.*

*Prepare the popular response to the abuses of state power through its armed forces: the Carabineros, the PDI, and the military.*

— Various Trades Union of the Biobío Border  
Solidaridad Obrera - AIT Chilean Region

# CAFÉ GAGARIN

## A MISTAKEN UNDERSTANDING OF (ANTI)CAPITALISM. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE W.A.S. IN ONE NEGOTIATION

In the following article, we note how great the difference can be between holding a set of values and actually acting in contradiction to them. Café Gagarin in Vienna, is commonly believed to be run by a collective of equal workers. In reality there has been a division between members of the "collective" and other people who work there. The members of the "collective" take on more responsibility, but also have more privileges, power and status. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, the "collective" at this point has consisted of white Germans and Austrians, while the "springerinnen" (workers who were not in the collective – ed.) were mainly migrants.

When they have tried to challenge the status quo, they have repeatedly been met with racist, authoritarian and chauvinist reactions. The rigid power structures made it impossible to question the hierarchies and the bad working conditions. Also, the level of exploitation has not been primarily



caused by disregard for (labour) laws but by the situation in which the "alternative space" is understood as a "good cause".

All this started to worsen at the end of 2021; in such circumstances it came as no surprise to see that a female member of WAS union was being shouted at and publicly humiliated by men from the "collective". Her demands that they take



responsibility for this were ignored and the collective tried to reframe the situation as the individual conflict of a hysterical woman. Eventually she decided to quit.

WAS started the conflict with Café Gagarin in spring 2022. They demanded compensation of less than 20% of the amount their member would have earned over the past 2.5 years if minimum labour law standards had been followed. This sum consists of the loss of income accumulated over the years as a result of illegally reduced working hours, unpaid tips, unpaid sick pay, unpaid holidays, unpaid 13 and 14 salaries, etc.



As WAS says: “We want to make it clear: we are not afraid to stand up to the bosses and fight against all forms of exploitation, even if they are painted red and black!”

What follows is the experience of WAS during one negotiating session with Café Gagarin.

“On the sixth of June 2022, a WAS delegation met with people working in the collectively-run Café Gagarin (though not with the formally/legally responsible managing director). We wanted to talk about violations of legal minimum standards set by labour law, and compensation for our member who had worked in the café. Unfortunately, the whole meeting and the general mindset of the Gagarin people turned out to be so grotesque and absurd that discussion was impossible. But let's start from the beginning.

It all started when we were asked to put our

mobiles in a remote polystyrene box lined with aluminium foil. This was so that we could not record the conversation. Fortunately, we were spared a personal search and body inspection for microphones...

Then one member of the collective told us that they couldn't trust us, so we had to sign a “non-disclosure agreement” that would prevent us from publicly reporting on the content of the discussion. We are already familiar with this practice from other employers. For example, the boss of Le Firin bakery demanded in negotiations that we accept a number of conditions that would restrict us in informing about the dispute.

We did not sign that letter (which was clearly professionally prepared by a person with knowledge of the law) because it was not agreed in advance and we had no mandate to do so. Furthermore, in the course of a longer discussion, all sorts of things would certainly have been discussed, including things that are already known. Signing the “agreement” would therefore mean silencing us in several ways.

As a result, the Gagarin people said that the discussion was therefore completely unnecessary and that they would not discuss any legal matters with us without a confidentiality agreement. One of the members of the collective even went so far as to say that he only came just to see whether we were, quote: ‘criminals or fools, or whether we had just received bad information from our friend’.

The Gagarin staff then wanted to explain to us how the café works. However, we made it clear beforehand that the discussion should not revolve around this topic. For us, it was and is only about compensation for our member, which is, moreover, much lower than the actual unpaid wage component. This is how we have reported on it in our letter to the café and in articles on the website. When we pointed this out, the response was that they would refuse anyway, that they would not discuss it at all, and that they would leave straight



away.

Nevertheless, they started giving us a lecture about how great Café Gagarin is, that there is no boss, etc., that they have done nothing wrong and everything is done in accordance with labour law. To this they added attacks on our member and indirectly accused her of lying. When this transparent attempt to make us doubt her claims didn't work, the "non-bosses" of the café attacked our union. The comic highlight of the whole discussion was when they asked if we were being paid for this campaign.

We have also heard accusations that we are "bad friends" to our member because we are inciting her against the café, instead of telling her that she needs to understand the other side and that maybe there was just a misunderstanding. And 'if we took legal action, we would ruin our friend's life'.

Our response, that we are a union and not a group of friends, went unheeded. They also ignored our statement that we were not interested in their internal structure and how they "work" on various problems, and that we were only concerned with minimal compensation for the withheld parts of wages as part of the economic exploitation they committed.

The highlight of the whole meeting, however, was when we said at the end that Gagarin's practice of recording fewer hours worked would plunge their former colleague into poverty as she was not entitled to unemployment benefits. The only response to this on their part was: "That's not our problem".

After about 20 minutes, the Gagarin people ended the meeting and left. Our conclusion after the show they put on was that this was the worst negotiation we have ever had with a company. Even the management of any sweatshop could show a hundred times more courtesy, respect, or willingness to compromise (and a much better understanding of labour issues) than these people from the "alternative collective."

Leaving aside the worker's right to compensation, it seems that the very idea that there is exploitation in their enterprise, that people work there to survive, that minimum legal standards are systematically violated, that they are not a big family where everyone likes each other but an enterprise that lives off exploitation has not yet entered the consciousness of Café Gagarin. Furthermore, knowledge of labour law at Gagarin



seems shockingly poor and it is unlikely that they have learned anything during the weeks of our protest actions.

Interestingly, their statements were full of internal contradictions. On the one hand, nothing that our member has told us is true, there has been no breach of the law and therefore no outstanding claims. On the other hand, they claimed that all the current male and female workers could then come forward and demand money. Or that they were not afraid that we should have gone to a labour court and everything would have been resolved 100% correctly. They seem to think that all WAS wants is to destroy the café..."

The dispute is still ongoing.

*Based on information from the WAS delegation at the meeting and article:*

<https://wiensyndikat.wordpress.com/2022/05/22/erstes-treffen-mit-dem-gagarin/>

*More information can be found on a dedicated website:*

<https://wiensyndikat.wordpress.com/tag/gagarin/>

and

<https://wiensyndikat.wordpress.com/2022/05/09/gagarin-faq-en/>

# TÜWI FINALLY PAYS!

In March 2023, WAS confirmed the conclusion of a conflict with restaurant Tüwi, which is quite well known in the local leftist scene. Similarly to the case of Gagarin, the management claimed that they are run on democratic principles, but it was not the case in reality.

## *Problems in Tüwi*

Workers in Tüwi, which is part of the Verein association, had two main demands:

- that the salary be raised to the minimum
- that the tips stay with the workers

On top of this, workers had been asking for more accountability and transparency in the way the association is run. In fact, the current manager and other coordinators have been barring people that are members of the association from checking its finances, while systematically silencing and marginalizing dissent. Even though Tüwi supposedly has statutes, the decision-making of the collective has been repeatedly overruled by a small group of people that are in positions of power.

In September 2022, one of the people most involved in the internal conflict was unilaterally fired by Tüwi's manager. The reason he explicitly gave was that the person was making "too much trouble" and that he did not want "Tüwi to become another Gagarin".

## *What happened*

While the issue of tips remained unresolved, the minimum wage had been raised already after September 2022. Before the workers started to organise, they earned 8 euros per hour (compared to 9.42 euros which was the minimum wage in the gastronomy sector in Austria in September 2022).

After the actions of WAS, an agreement was also made with the Tüwi manager on the case of the dismissed person – he agreed to an out-of-court payment of 3,000 euros, covering unpaid wages (which includes non-compliance with the minimum wage, unpaid holidays, unpaid 13. and 14. salaries, overtime, etc.) plus five months of full wages as compensation to the dismissed worker.

## *“Leftist” business projects*

Even though Tüwi and Gagarin have very different structures, they are both commercial places that are based on an ideal of collective values and solidarity. They offer low cost food and drinks and people can hang out there and feel that they are not giving their money to some huge capitalist multinational.

The problem is that both spaces have shown that they are not able to live up to their standards or even to show self-criticism. And while shady power structures (which a collective can deal with internally) are one thing, non-payment for work done is something else altogether. As anti-capitalists we should aim for more than the minimum guaranteed by the law. It seems that such a position is not commonplace within the leftist scene.

WAS' aim is to support workers in improving their material conditions and in making explicit the economic exploitation that keeps marginalized people in their marginalized positions.

In their own words: “We are an anarcho-syndicalist union: we do not get any money and/or reputation from carrying on labour disputes; we all put our free time and energy into our mutual aid network and the only reason why WAS has been involved in these disputes is because the affected workers organized in WAS have taken it into their own hands to change their situation.”

*Based on an article on WAS' website and information provided by the International Secretariat of WAS.*

<https://wiensyndikat.wordpress.com/2023/03/18/tuwi-finally-pays/>



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