

# IWA

## EXTERNAL BULLETIN

### SPRING 2017



**SINCE 1922**

## Contents

<b>[ZSP] Organizing in the Polish Post Office .....</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>[ZSP] The Campaign at POLOMarket has Gone National .....</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>[ZSP] Workers Win Against Citibank for Discrimination and Mobbing .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>[SolFed] Ephesus Restaurant Pays Up .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>[SolFed] Brighton hospitality worker gets £600 payout after demanding holiday pay for herself and her workmates .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>[SolFed] Dispute with Alpha Care .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>[SolFed] Campaign against insecurity in Sandemans .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>[ASI] Report from ASI on recent activities .....</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>[ASF] ASF Takes Action Against Wage Theft and Unfair Dismissals .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>[ARS] Anger from the underground: Bulgarian miners in wildcat strike .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>[ARS] Anarcho-syndicalists and former workers block Bulgarian telecom headquarters over unpaid wages .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>[ARS] Wildcat Strikes at one of the biggest retailers in Bulgaria .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>[PA] Victory in a wage theft conflict with CATO Agency .....</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>[CNT-AIT] Direct Action and Victory against McDonald's .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>[CNT-AIT] Campaign against Culset .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>[KRAS] In Defense of Education and Education Workers .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>[NSF] 100th Anniversary of the Norwegian Syndicalist Federation .....</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>[ZSP] 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ZSP .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>[IWA] Anarchosyndicalism and Community Organizing -Tenants Organizations, Direct Action and Mutual Aid .....</b>	<b>21-22</b>
<b>[IWA] Welcome New Friends to the IWA .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>[IWA] The XXVI IWA Congress .....</b>	<b>24</b>

## Organizing in the Polish Post Office

Over the past year, members of our union working in the Post Office have been involved in creating various platforms for workers to exchange ideas and helping to network postal workers all over the country to take action outside the mainstream unions. The result has been an important independent initiative to fight for better working conditions and the largest workers protest outside of the mainstream unions since the transformation.

The main problems facing postal workers are low wages. Many mail carriers make just above the minimum wage, even after decades of service. In order to supplement their income, they are expected to check meters, sell insurance, candy bars or gadgets – of which usually does not generate much money at all. Another problem for mail carriers is that the Post Office is understaffed and some have huge regions to cover, making it impossible to do everything in an 8-hour day.

The two main unions for the mail carriers have pactured with the government. This is especially true for Solidarity, which is politically connected to it and tries to ensure that strikes do not occur in the public sector. They are concluded a number of unfavourable agreements. The 2016 "pay raise", which restructured some elements of the salary, meant that some workers wound up earning 50 euros less than before.

Workers clearly have had enough of this exploitation. In 2016, some protests and work stoppages in different cities occurred. A comrade was involved in organizing these protests locally, but they were not really coordinated. Rather, we began publicizing these actions on a Facebook page and new groups appeared, ready to take some action. At this point, several members of ZSP from different cities decided to travel and meet different groups of workers and to try to gather people in their cities. So far, 3 national meetings of postal workers have been organized and a 4<sup>th</sup> is being planned now, to take place shortly.



At the first national meeting in Wrocław, the demands of the workers were formalized in the assembly. These included a 1000 zloty (235 euro) pay raise and reorganization of the regions. It was also decided to hold a day of decentralized actions and, a centralized protest in Warsaw.

The decentralized actions were much better attended than the Post Office bosses and union bureaucrats had expected, taking place in 23 cities, with participation of even up to 300 people in cities like Warsaw, Katowice or Wrocław. Both the Post Office management and union leaders had been trying to dissuade workers from attending in various ways. Directors of some post offices called the protests „illegal” and threatened to fire workers attending and both the Post Office management and leaders of Solidarity campaigned to discredit ZSP by various means, especially in the right-wing and Catholic media and on Solidarity webpages. In the end, two workers were scapegoated and fired. Both are fighting for their reinstatement and money was collected in solidarity. Many workers also signed petitions in their defense.

Despite the attempts to intimidate workers, thousands came to Warsaw at the beginning of April, making it the largest independent workers' protest the country has seen and the largest ever of postal workers.

The Post Office in the meanwhile both pretends to want to improve working conditions, but at the same time, try to scare the workers. One thing that they started to do is to hire prisoners, which perhaps is a workforce they think will be forced to accept



any conditions. In some Post Offices, workers are directly or indirectly threatened with replacement. Another thing is that a new agreement was signed by the two main unions, settling for a raise of just 150 zloties.

At the same time, the minimum wage is set to increase by at least 100 zloties next year, and maybe by even 150 zloties. So really, the wages are just going up slightly above the minimum.

It also has to be mentioned that among the problems facing the mail carriers is unpaid overtime. The Post Office seems to treat it as if people are just working too slow and if they cannot deliver everything within their working hours, it's their fault, having nothing to do with the workload or the poor organization of work. Notoriously, the head of Solidarity at the Post Office, Bogumil Nowicki, was quoted as saying: „Mail carriers say they work 10-11 hours a day. These are not hours which are completely counted, but this is an expression of courtesy on the part of workers towards the firm. If we had to follow the labour law, I suspect that the company would have enormous problems.”

Workers will be meeting soon to plan their next steps.



### The Campaign at POLOMarket has Gone National

*One successful direct action and a new union, fighting against abuse at the supermarket chain. The bosses try to frighten and repress.*

At the beginning of the year, some current and former employees of POLOMarket formed a union to fight against various problems such as unpaid overtime, problems with taking breaks and not respecting the rights of disabled workers. Since February it has won compensation for one worker through direct action and has filed numerous claims for overtime and other payments. So far, more than 20 pickets have taken place around the country. The chain has responded by bringing

a criminal case against one comrade and using various forms of harassment, included trying to get another fired.

Immediately after the pickets started in Bydgoszcz and nearby towns, the supermarket chain claimed that it was willing to sit down and talk, but as it turns out, it had no intention of discussing with the union. They were stalling, but all the while claiming in the press that they want to resolve the situation.



Therefore, at the beginning of March, a group of people from the union showed up at the corporate headquarters and demanded an audience.

Although the company had claimed that nobody was available to meet workers, after announcing that they would sit in the lobby until somebody came, it turned out that everything was possible. The company agreed to settle the situation of one worker who had been unfairly dismissed in December. Having been treated so poorly by the supermarket, she did not ask for reinstatement, but instead agreed to adequate monetary compensation. However, the company did not want to discuss the other matters, claiming it does not violate workers rights and falsely claiming in the press that they are waiting to discuss with workers, but that they have not sent anything about their claims.

What the chain did instead was to start with a number of intimidation tactics – first by initiating a criminal case against Rafal, a former employee who has been outspoken about what was going on in the supermarkets.

Rafal found that it was not easy to even find representation in his city since he is going up against powerful people who are rich and influential. However we were able to provide legal help and his case is underway.

The supermarket has been sending spies around both during and after the protests, even following people to a bar afterwards. The spies, who are far from discrete, take photos and videos and try to scare workers from appearing at the pickets. The company has instructed workers not to talk to protesters and

got people in one city to sign a statement that they don't agree with us. Of course such tactics are well-known and we have had to take appropriate precautions, including limiting the participation of current workers. But it seems that the company is capable of everything, even writing to the employer of one of our members (who doesn't work in the supermarket but has been at the protests). It seems they think that people in unions should be denounced to their bosses. Members of the union also report different forms of harassment which they suspect are linked to this campaign, such as having tires slashed more than once, just before protests.

At a recent protest at Czestochowa, numerous members of management also appeared at the protest. Apparently, the company must be very concerned if they sent so many big wigs to monitor the action. All of this instead of just talking to the union and settling what they owe. It seems that from this behaviour we can conclude that POLOMarket is trying at all costs to discourage workers' organization and that this might be because of the potential costs to them. If it were only about the overtime claims that we have filed, they'd be much better off just paying them and getting the matter done with. Their exaggerated reaction and repressive methods may indicate that the problem might be widespread and the eventual cost to them much bigger.

The comrades have no intention of giving up the fight and each form of intimidation just shows that the actions should be escalated. In the meanwhile, actions will continue, supported by comrades from ZSP and sympathizers around the country.



## Direct Action Pays!



In 2016, a famous supermarket chain called MarcPol started not paying workers and eventually shut down most (but not all!) of its markets, claiming to be bankrupt. A group of workers decided to block the entrance of the market in downtown Warsaw, which was still working. All of the workers who took part in the action have received money - more than 100,000 zloties (about 24,000 euros) in total.

Unfortunately, not all workers owed money have received any yet. This shows, once again, that those that choose to take action are more likely to get something that does that don't. We still hope that the others will at least get some payment from a special fund that deals with these things, but it has been a long time already.



The schemes set up by the state that are meant to "protect workers" are doing a lousy job. First of all, they do not guarantee compensation in the total amount of their wages and second of all, they take their time. The court tends to appoint people who get paid whether or not they do their jobs in helping workers to recover money.

With this experience in mind, ZSP calls on workers to organize themselves and to stop taking such abuse! When the organized take action, they are more likely to achieve results!

## Workers Win Against Citibank for Discrimination and Mobbing

Two workers have won their cases against Citibank in Poland. Three people had sued the company – for discrimination of a worker after paternity leave, for mobbing and for sexual harrasment. The court found in favour of the two workers who claimed discrimination and mobbing and awarded them significant compensation. In the discrimination case, the victory is especially significant as there is widespread pressure at work for men not to take paternity leave – a pressure which reinforces patriarchal practices in the society and which penalizes men who might want to share parenting responsibilities.

A third case, from another city, has been dropped. Unfortunately, issues of sexual violence are not treated very well and it is often an ordeal to see such a case through.

We remind people also of the repressive response of Citibank towards activists of ZSP and other workers when exposing the situation. The bank tried to start a criminal case against members of the union, who were threatened and questioned by police. We think that the bank would be better off taking definitive measures against harrasment at their workplace; since this success, more workers have contacted us with the intent of suing the bank.

The union congratulates those who took on the corporate giant and stood up for their rights and dignity.

ZSP is committed to the struggle of all workers against discrimination of whatever sort. We send another warning to Citibank that they had better take this issue more seriously and stop the harrasment! All people deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity in their workplace!

ZSP Multi-Union Branch, Warsaw

(Edited from: <http://zsp.net.pl/workers-win-against-citibank-discrimination-and-mobbing>)

## Ephesus Restaurant Pays Up

Solidarity Federation was in dispute with a restaurant called Ephesus in Brighton but they reported in late May that the conflict came to an end and that the worker in question has been paid all that was owed.

Many immigrants work in the hospitality industry in Brighton. This worker, from Spain, wanted to find a way to collectivise the dispute and try to improve the conditions for their fellow workmates even though they were leaving. As the notice period finished, the worker asked for all their holiday pay and if they were going to receive the money owed for minimum wage. All they were offered was a measly £150. Management hoped this would keep the worker quiet.

A demand letter was delivered, giving the bosses until May Day to pay up. As they did not do so, comrades from SolFed and several other organizations went to the establishment.

Following this action the restaurant sent an email with belated payslips, altered contracts, accountant statements, all trying to justify their poor employment practice. They claimed that the worker's 4 months' employment before the altered written contract was just a couple of trial shifts, a blatant lie.

Next SolFed organized a communications blockade and another picket. The following day, some of the holiday pay was paid but by no means the full amount. Two days after the picket, management called for a meeting with the worker. Initially they wanted to meet the worker on their own and in a park, obviously tactics to try intimidate the worker in some way, but they were ensured they were not alone and arranged to meet in a neutral place.

The meeting involved one of the managers trying to weasel their way around paying. Alongside this, they tried emotional blackmail, played ignorant and even threatened people



with either legal action or some mysterious other action. He tried to finish the meeting stating all that had to be done was to make an offer, while people reminded him that it was not up to them to make an offer and that they have demanded the minimum that was owed.

From this, many SolFed supporters tweeted Ephesus directly to continue the pressure. The next day the restaurant rang the worker and offered a bit more, then after refusal, a little bit more. The worker stood strong and was supported. The worker then had a stroke of genius; they would accept a lower amount if the rest of the money was split among the rest of their workmates and not management, failing this the campaign would continue (we had already planned the actions to follow). This act of solidarity would have encouraged the workers to demand more and show that the bosses were not unbreakable. Ephesus saw this potential and caved in immediately, paying the worker the full amount owed in holiday and minimum wage pay.

Following this, the worker met some of their ex-colleagues and found out that Ephesus is starting to issue everyone with proper contracts and their practice is changing.

(Edited from:  
<http://www.brightonsolfed.org.uk/brighton/smile-s-solidarity-and-ephesus>)

## Brighton hospitality worker gets £600 payout after demanding holiday pay for herself and her workmates

One of the most common problems faced by workers in the hospitality industry is the withdrawal of holiday pay. In an industry dominated by zero-hour contracts, many workers and even employers are unaware of workers' legal right to holiday pay, even when on a zero-hours contract. This was the case for one former waitress at a cafe in the North Laine.

The worker had been at the cafe for several months before even discovering, via a colleague affiliated to SolFed, that workers on zero-hour contracts are still entitled to holiday pay proportional to the number of hours which they work. The workers collectivised this issue and were successful in pushing the employer to provide all of the workers with a new contract which stipulated that they would be entitled to holiday pay.

After some time following the signing of the new contract, the worker came to experience a hostile work environment due to the attitudes of certain colleagues, and decided that she wanted to leave her employment. It was at this point that she realised that her employer only intended to pay her the holiday pay which she was entitled to from the point that she had signed the new contract, some ten months after she had initially begun working there. The employer also decided that they would work out her holiday pay according to the minimum wage, and not the wage which she had been earning whilst working there.

The worker then brought her case to Brighton SolFed, asking for help in working out exactly how much she was entitled to and in demanding that the employer pay it in full.

A demand letter was written up by SolFed in accordance with the worker, demanding that the employer pay the full amount of holiday pay of over £600. The worker submitted this letter on their own due to the complex workplace dynamic which might have seen a SolFed member accompanying her as being overly intimidatory. Still, the worker was confident that SolFed was there to back her up, should any issues arise.

As a business which operates in the busy North Laine, the employer clearly did not want to endanger their business in any way and paid the amount in full under threat of industrial action by the SolFed local.

This case clearly demonstrates both the power of collectivisation, when the workers collectivised to demand that holiday pay be included in their contracts, and the power that the threat of industrial action can have on a business operating in a busy area with high visibility.

Since this case, the worker has become an active member of the local, as she wants to show the same solidarity which was extended to her to other workers in her position.

<http://www.solfed.org.uk/brighton/brighton-hospitality-worker-gets-ps600-payout-after-demanding-holiday-pay-for-herself-and>

**An injury to one  
is an injury to all**

**Brighton SolFed**





## Dispute with Alpha Care



In early April, Liverpool SolFed reached an agreement with Alpha Care which satisfied the economic demands made by a former worker. This company, specialising in home-care, owed the worker some unpaid hours, mileage and holiday pay. She decided to leave the company because of the working conditions.

SolFed supported the worker's demands and distributed, along with other workers, a leaflet giving information about the dispute and encouraging them to organise for better working conditions.

Finally, Alpha Care agreed to pay the full amount demanded. However, the company did not acknowledge any debt and accused the worker and SolFed of "...not having followed the right procedures and acting in bad will". According to them they only paid in order to not to see our faces anymore. Whatever the reason, at least the worker got the owed wages.

In today's climate of privatisations and undermining working conditions, care workers are suffering a lot. Liverpool SolFed urges care workers to organise in order to fight back and improve working conditions in the sector. Among other problems, carers are suffering:

- \*No guaranteed or uncertain hours
- \*Unpaid travel time between jobs
- \*Below minimum wage in real terms
- \*Unpaid/unplanned breaks and expected to rest between jobs
- \*Inadequate training, left feeling unprepared and unsupported
- \*Unsafe manual handling and under staffing
- \*Lone-working in high risk environments.

## Health & Social Care crisis: voting won't solve it !

*(Prior to the elections, various SolFed locals put out calls to organize instead of vote. This one is from Brighton.)*

Our NHS is in crisis: doctors' surgeries in Brighton are closing down, A&E waiting times are getting longer, hospitals are shutting up shop - and the sick and old are being left to die on hospital trollies.

The care system is in an even worse state: poor wages and criminal working condition mean there just aren't enough carers.

Here in Brighton most council contracts are privatised, and carers are often employed illegally: paid below the minimum wage, denied paid holidays, being forced to work long and unpredictable hours on zero-hours contracts and left to work without adequate training or supervision.

Of course the price of this isn't just being paid by the health and social care workers at the sharp end, it means health and care services are getting worse for all of us.

While traditional politicians argue about who can sort the problems out - and while they all claim to be spending more money than ever - the reality is that things are getting worse, with NHS and council care budgets being cut, 'Brexit' causing a recruitment crisis, and doctors even being forced to become unpaid border guards by vetting patients' immigration status before giving treatment!

Traditional trade unions have shed plenty of crocodile tears too - but do nothing other than organise the odd protest march, issue the odd pamphlet and back down.

SolFed is working with health and care workers to try and make things better through workplace organisation.

We are currently supporting care workers fight unfair dismissal and illegal pay fights, as well as disabled and vulnerable adults to make sure they get the care they're entitled too - and that poor housing doesn't make their conditions worse. And we're working with other groups to oppose inhumane immigration rules being forced on the sick too - see [docsnotcops.co.uk](http://docsnotcops.co.uk).

By collectivising workers' grievances - and using direct action to represent the needs of the vulnerable - we're making a small but real difference.

And the election on June 8th is, at best, a distraction. At worst, it's a ploy to lull us all into the belief that voting for any of the candidates will help sort this out.

If you've got a spare couple of hours to make our NHS and care systems better for everyone, don't waste them voting. The problem is cuts and privatisation driven by capitalism - and voting for anyone is a vote of confidence in the system that's got us in to this mess in the first place. Join us instead.

**Don't vote - organise!**

## Campaign against insecurity in Sandemans

At Easter, Liverpool-SolFed made a call out to protest against working conditions at Sandemans, a company who offers "Free Tours" in Liverpool and across Europe. "Free Tour" does not mean that guides are volunteers.



*Leafleting in Madrid.*

In Sandeman's case they are 'self-employed workers' and their incomes are based on the tips that are given

at the end of the tour and out of those tips workers have to pay a variable amount of money per tourist to the company. This is, according to Sandemans, a "marketing fee".

Sandemans' business model seems to be the new fashion among the many business. Some people call it the "Gig Economy". Companies don't have employees but "use the services" of self-employees, meaning they have no responsibilities and don't have to give any rights like holidays, sick-pay, pension, job security, etc. Liverpool-SolFed, through the initiative of a former guide, called out for a campaign to denounce the working conditions of Sandemans guides and to inform the users of the reality behind the "Free Tours".

A group of supporters, went to the meeting point at St George's Hall, to distribute information among the guides and the tourists. Actions also took place in other cities that Sandemans operates like Madrid, Barcelona and Prague.

The management's answer was the expected - denying everything and threatening legal action for defamation in case we kept the campaign. And given the gig economy context, it is true that you can't use words like "dismissed" or say that your company "forces" you to do anything when you are self-employed.

As we have done in other cases, we want to say loud and clear that the so-called "Gig Economy" is an attack on workers' rights. The self-employed status, in this case, is nothing but a trick which does not benefit the workers but puts them in a vulnerable position. It is a joke to talk about "flexibility" or "free configuration of your working time" when is your employer - customer in their language - decision to give you work or not without any explanation.

In Sandemans the insecurity is even worse as the pay is tips-based (and the "Free Tour" publicity does not help this). As even management acknowledge, it's not the job to have if you want to make long-term plans like having children.

We wonder what is going to happen with long term-plans when any job-security definitively disappears thanks to innovative companies like Sandemans?

## Report from ASI on recent activities



Due to evictions becoming a more ubiquitous occurrence in the daily life of the working class in Serbia, ASI's actions, throughout the past few months, have mainly been centered around organizing against this brutal form of capitalist repression. To this end, ASI has founded the Collective Tenant Defense initiative which functions to mobilize and organize working class solidarity against the looming threat of proletarian families being thrown out in the street.

ASI has through Collective Tenant Defense organized successfully against the evictions of the Khawatmi family, the collective housing of the workers of Trudbenik, a company destroyed through capitalist privatization, as well as against the especially brutal eviction attempt against Julijana Terek, an artist working with children. Throughout these anti-eviction campaigns the police response has only gotten more violent and perfidious. Despite our initial successes, both the Khawatmi family and Ms. Terek have been evicted at later dates. The eviction of Ms. Terek in particular stands out for the shameless tactics used by the officials of the bourgeois state. Namely, after a standoff during which the police beat those attempting to prevent the eviction, the eviction was called off and re-scheduled in three days. Without any regard for even their own legality, the police and the enforcement officers showed up the next day in the early hours of the morning, cut the door down, and threw Ms. Terek out of the house in a matter of minutes.

ASI also organized a street campaign against the spectacle of the recent presidential elections, cleaning up the streets after they have been defaced with bourgeois party propaganda. Additionally, ASI also mobilized for International Women's Day, an especially important occasion considering the fact that the double exploitation of women, both at work and at home has only gotten more intense under neoliberal austerity measures. Not wishing to participate in the recuperation of the feminist movement by the ruling order, we conducted a guerilla campaign directly in the streets, showing our stance against the subjugation of women by writing graffiti in public spaces.

### Description of one of the actions



On June 2, at 7 o'clock the children's cultural centre *Living Room of the Elves* was thrown out in the street.

On 3rd October 2016 we gathered for the first time to defend this institution, home and workplace, a small shed in which, for more than 25 years, Julijana Terek and her son, student of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, have been living. For years at this place Julijana has organised numerous humanitarian events and theatre plays for children with special needs and those without parental care. Not caring that they are leaving a family without a home and a workplace, and children without a cultural institution, debt collectors, thieves that rob the poorest under state's permit and police protection, came that morning to throw the Terek family out on the street. By action of solidarity of gathered people — Julijana's neighbours, friends, and activists — collectors were driven away and the eviction was prevented.

However, this did not prevent the criminals who want to build a gym, a coffee shop, or a gambling house at the location to continue with their criminal activity. The Municipality scheduled the next eviction attempt for 1st June this year. The entrance to the Living Room was unlawfully encircled by tens of fascists in blue, servants and followers of capital, a few hours before the scheduled time. After more than five hours of police brutality, beatings, and arrests, solidarity and doughty struggle of gathered people once more prevented the eviction. Before they left, the collectors announced the next attempt for Monday, 5th June.

Disregarding their own word, and in contradiction to state's own laws, this morning at 7 o'clock the scum broke the lock on the entrance to the *Living Room of the Elves* and with police assistance threw an unprotected family from their beds onto the street! Once again collectors proved that, just like the police, they work exclusively in the interest of politicians and capital. By breaking laws when it suits them they stomp on the poor not showing even a whit of humanity!

This must not discourage us! The struggle must continue! Pressure on the working class will grow day by day. Every one of us can be thrown out on the street if that is in the interest of capitalists. Therefore we must continue to organise and help each other in situations like these! We need to continue the fight for the *Living Room of the Elves* and to help Julijana and her son. We will continue to inform you on these activities via our Facebook page. However, they are not the only ones who need our solidarity. Already for next week is scheduled the second eviction attempt of Khawatmi family, on whose case we already reported. Also in this case we need to gather in large numbers and show the criminals that we will not allow these things!

### **NO PASSARAN!**

*(Also see article on tenant organizing and anti-eviction struggles on p.21 of this bulletin.)*

### **ASF Takes Action Against Wage Theft and Unfair Dismissals**

ASF Melbourne is in dispute with Accurite Industries in North Sunshine. Two members are owed wages; one is owed \$635.82 and the other \$537.12



Wage theft is far more widespread than most people realise but it is becoming harder to ignore. If you've reported to work, done the work, you deserved to be paid. Not paying workers is theft any way you look at it.

We see that the comrades have already gone to the workplace to confront them and are waiting for the positive resolution of the problem.



ASF also has called for a boycott of Bulk Fuel Australia. Two drivers, who had asked to be put on a full-time contract and who had complained about illegally docked wages and safety concerns, were dismissed. One was actually dismissed on the very day he became eligible for a permanent contract. Shortly after, a new worker was hired, blowing a hole in the claim that the work was no longer needed.

ASF considers this to be related to the company's attempts to have a casual workforce, which they have few obligations towards. They are calling on all workers in Australia to support the boycott in solidarity with the dismissed drivers.

## Anger from the underground: Bulgarian miners in wildcat strike

The miners from Obrochishte - the third largest manganese mine in the world, located in eastern Bulgaria, went on wildcat strike on 01.06.2017. The strike was supported by the anarchosyndicalists from ARS (Avtonomen Rabotnicheski Sindikat / Autonomous Workers Union), while the bureaucratic union in the mine opposed the strike and sided with the bosses.

17 miners from the day shift refused to come out of the mine and stayed underground for 5 days. All the workers from the other shifts, around 150 people, joined the strike. The miners, alongside with the anarchosyndicalists, blocked the main portal so the trucks of the company could not get the goods out. The strike broke out after the management refused to comply with the collective bargaining agreement that was signed earlier this year. The collective agreement was the result of similar strikes in March, when the miners went on hunger strike and organized mass protests to demand raise in salaries, improvement of the working conditions and review of the mining concession contract. Wages in the mine are extremely low - between 230 EUR (the minimum wage in Bulgaria) and 305 EUR per month. Workers do not receive the necessary equipment, no food vouchers, they don't have transportation provided and the working conditions in the mine are terrifying.

The current 25-years concession contract for the mine was made back in 1999 by the right wing government of Ivan Kostov, famous for his mass privatization policy. For the last 18 years, the private operator of the mine - "EuroMangan", failed to comply with any of the concession agreements, which led to ecological and social disaster in the region. During all those years not a single inspection or regulation was made by the authorities. The organization is owned by a Cyprus offshore company with unclear ownership, but the day-to-day operations are managed by a woman named Teresa Dankova, famous among the workers as 'the satan'. She regularly insults the miners, refuses to sign their papers for their social benefits and once she even refused to open the gates for an ambulance to

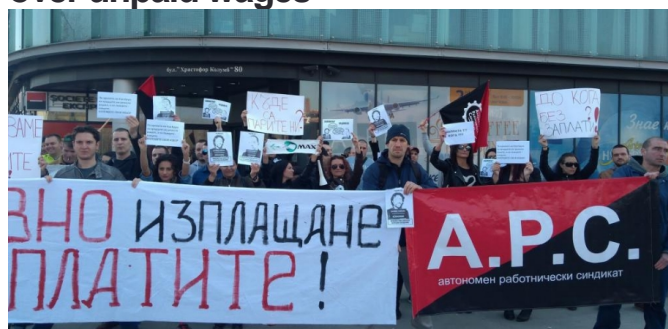


pick up a heavily injured worker. During the March strike, the CEO of "EuroMangan" David Wellinges called the miners' demands - "extortion". Nevertheless, with pressure from the workers, and through the mediation of the Minister of Energy and the Ombudsman, a collective labor agreement was signed, which stipulated an increase in salaries (albeit with the pitiful 75 EUR), transportation for the workers and also the employer made a commitment to abide by the labor laws.

But it turned out the collective agreement means nothing to the company. They have so far failed to fulfill any of the agreed terms. Furthermore the management has yet to pay salaries for April. That's why the miners went on strike again, but this time with more radical demands - they want all the bosses to leave the mine for good. The strikers got a lot of media attention and solidarity. ARS organized actions of solidarity with the miners in the capital city of Sofia. Workers from the Varna's section of the union (the closest big town to the mine) joined the strikers in their blockade and raised money for food supplies.

The strike ended on 05.06.2017 when the government officials stepped in, "frozen" the concession and gave a 14-day term to terminate it permanently. With this semi-victory, the miners went out from the underground after 5 days, but said that the blockade of the mine stays, as well as strike-readiness, and that if the bosses return after the 14-days term, they will resume the direct actions. In that period, Autonomous Workers Union plans to organize more solidarity actions as well as protests in front of the ministry of electricity (the ministry that is in charge of the concession), so it can put pressure on the officials to comply with the workers' demands.

## Anarcho-syndicalists and former workers block Bulgarian telecom headquarters over unpaid wages



Former employees of Max Telecom, along with anarchosyndicalists from ARS (Autonomous Worker's Union) organised a picket demanding the immediate payment of all unpaid wages.

The protest began at 10 am, Friday March 24, in front of the office of Max Telecom - the fourth-biggest Bulgarian mobile operator. The company owes several salaries to more than 150 people and management thought that they could get away with not paying, but the workers are determined to show them that this will not happen! About 50 people besieged the building with chants of "Salaries, now!"

Workers read a statement with their demands then blocked the road. Company managers decided to hide thus, the empty building was stormed by protesting workers and syndicalists who stuck up stickers and posters in the entrances and the offices of the company.

"Dickheads from management had to flee and leave the offices empty, so we put our messages on them and on the locked doors of the premises. Then we blocked the road to Sofia Airport. If you don't pay our salaries, next time our actions will not be as 'symbolic'! We will no longer tolerate this mockery of our labor! Immediate payment of all outstanding wages!" said one of the angry workers participating in the protest.

Autonomous Worker's Union organized a joint meeting, with striking workers from another struggle (Picadilly) to organise a common protest.

## Wildcat Strikes at one of the biggest retailers in Bulgaria

The workers from one of the biggest Bulgarian retail stores Picadilly, supported by anarcho-syndicalists from Autonomous Worker's Union went on wildcat strikes across the country. The reason is wage theft – workers haven't been paid for months. The company owners and high management are hiding and refuse to give any explanations. The demands of the workers are for immediate payment of the salaries and full benefits. They occupied the entrances of the company headquarters in Sofia, but were blocked by private security sent by the management members hiding inside.

In Varna, the angry workers blocked the biggest store of the company in the city. After that, they marched to Investbank (the bank that is in control of the assets of the company) demanding the bank to unblock the payments. Some of the workers rushed inside the bank while others stood outside picketing.



The company is owed by Nikolay Lazarov through Luxembourg offshore company.

### Organizing with hospitality workers

Recently ARS has set up an organizing campaign for hospitality workers in the Black Sea area. This region is known for its beach resorts, hence a large influx of casual work in the summer. And with it, exploitation. Good luck with the initiative!



## Victory of Priama akcia union in a wage theft conflict with CATO Agency

In the first half of May 2016 Priama akcia entered a wage theft conflict against CATO Agency after we had been contacted by Martin asking for help with his unpaid wages. It took less than a month of activities and here is the good news – the company paid up. Our protest and direct action tactics proved effective once again. We would like to thank to everyone who spread information about the conflict and showed support to Martin.

### REASON OF THE CONFLICT - UNPAID WAGES

Martin worked for CATO Agency as an unloader of animal food for Royal Canin between July 2015 and March 2016. Since November 2015, he also worked as a products promoter. Most of his wages came late which was in contradiction with the contract and § 129 of the Labour Code. In March 2016, he decided that he wouldn't tolerate such business practices anymore and contacted Priama akcia union.

Since the money wasn't paid up by the company director Veronika Šmihulová Kašpar by the end of April (and she was claiming without providing any evidence that he had allegedly caused some damage) we decided to act.

### OUR ACTIONS

On 1<sup>st</sup> May, we visited the headquarters of the company in Košice, which is at the same time a home address of the company managing directors. No-one opened the door, but we left a demand letter in the mailbox.

CATO Agency was given 7 days to pay up. They didn't meet the deadline, so on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May, we published an article announcing that we are entering a conflict with CATO Agency to make them pay the unlawfully withheld wage. Almost immediately a lawyer and the company director Šmihulová Kašpar called Martin. They exchanged information about hours worked, which confirmed that



CATO Agency owed Martin 190 €. The boss claimed that she had paid everything, but this was not true.

As the money wasn't paid, on 24<sup>th</sup> May we published a template of a protest e-mail and an e-form that people could use to tell the company what they think about their practices. First, e-mails were sent mostly by people in Slovakia, but then the conflict took on an international dimension and information appeared in Slovak and English on various websites and Facebook.

Šmihulová Kašpar was also responsible for PR and marketing of the international film festival Art Film Fest in Košice, so we contacted the organizers of the festival one after another and asked them for a statement regarding their cooperation with a person that runs business in Slovakia in such a way.

Soon after, we reminded in Košice again them that we are still here. On 1<sup>st</sup> June, there was a fashion show promoting new Art Film Fest costumes. The guests, media and festival partners received information about the practices of the managing director in front of the hotel in which this event took place.

### AND MONEY WAS PAID

We didn't have to carry on with our next planned activities. One week after the last action, Martin received 175 €. He considered the payment of this amount satisfactory and decided the campaign could end.

However, regardless of whether CATO Agency would have paid the remaining 15 € or not, we decided to inform them that this amount is still missing. We knew that the boss didn't want to pay Martin for one taxi ride (5 €) although she had promised to pay, as well as for two hours (10€) worked at a promo event for Royal Canin

(the request to stay for two more hours had come from the representative of that company). We sent the boss an e-mail in which we described these sums and were curious how she would respond.

The next day a response came, in which, however, there was an unclear answer, so we sent a reminder a couple of days later. Only then did the company director make herself clear. She informed Martin that she required the actual taxi receipt (a scan was not enough) and that the remaining two hours simply would not be paid because the employer never demanded anything like this from him. (It would be quite interesting to see the accounting between CATO Agency and Royal Canin and how these two hours were recognised...)

## **CATO AGENCY PRACTICES**

During the conflict we found several irregularities on the side of CATO Agency. However, we know only about one worker who worked for this company, and therefore can't generalize. However, we think that potential CATO Agency workers should pay attention to the following:

**Late wage payments.** Money was paid after the period specified in § 129 of the Labour Code.

**Non-payment of wages.** This was the root cause of the conflict. The managing director lied when she claimed that she had paid everything. We believe that Martin was able to get his wages only thanks to the involvement of Priama akcia union and supporters.

**Evidence of worked hours.** It turned out that it was difficult for CATO Agency to provide complete evidence. On the contrary, Martin was able to recreate a precise work schedule for each month thanks to e-mail and SMS communication with the boss. Thus, he could easily dispute the evidence provided by her. However, he didn't know that the two extra hours at a promo event, which were not confirmed, would become such a big deal.

**A contract not in line with legal requirements.** Neither the scope, nor the place of employment was duly specified in the student work contract.

**Is CATO Agency a temporary work agency?** The company has the word "agency" in its name but according to the Business Register, there is nothing in its scope of business which would authorize it to act as an agent providing workers to other companies. Despite this, Martin worked for another company (Royal Canin) at the premises of a third company (building and gardening material stores) and followed not only the instructions of the managing director of CATO Agency, but also of the Royal Canin representative.

*The above article can be found here, in a longer form:*

<http://www.priamaakcia.sk/Victory-of-Priama-akcia-union-in-a-wage-theft-conflict-with-CATO-Agency-.html>

*The longer version includes an interview with Martin. The following is a brief extract:*

***„What advice would you offer to someone with a similar problem?“***

*„I would advise all the people with such a problem to not be afraid. I realize that sometimes it is easier to turn a blind eye to injustice, even when it affects you personally. I know that people in general are afraid of standing up to those who in a superior position. It took some time to decide if it was worthwhile for me to start an open conflict, but the support that I felt throughout the whole conflict and the successful result convinced me that I made the right decision.“*

*A video related to the conflict can be found here, with subtitles in English:*

<http://www.priamaakcia.sk/Kratke-video-o-spore-za-nevyplatenu-mzdu.html>



## Direct Action and Victory against McDonald's

Comrades from the CNT-AIT in Tarragona, Spain, took action against a McDonald's restaurant in Roda de Bara. According to the union, the restaurant:

- \* Harrassed the worker for being on sick leave because of a work-related accident. In the end, they fired her.
- \* Constantly forced people to work unpaid overtime
- \* Gave tasks outside of the work category, like cleaning streets (all morning), which is the job of municipal workers. Such work was never assigned when the Work Inspector came.
- \* Did not properly pay for work in the evening hours.
- \* Forced her to be on call and to be able to be located 24/7, even on days off, to be called into work if necessary. They also did not respect days off during the week, sometimes using this day off arbitrarily and without justification.

The comrades picketed the restaurant and asked others to phone them. At the beginning of may, they wrote:

"We inform you of the favourable resolution against McDonald's of Roda de Bara (Tarragona). The conflict is finalized for the moment, since the court date was the 2 of May and the company offered to pay the demands and transfered the money to the ex-worker. Without doubt this is the result on an effective pressure campaign which lasted for months and intensified on the last days before the court date, since prior to that, the company refused to make any settlement during arbitration. Their change of attitude came over the last few days. We thank everybody for your support and we conclude that with just a little effort (like phone calls and messages in the social media), we can have favourable results. Long live class consciousness and social struggle!"

## Campaign against Culset



Culset didn't pay but tried to repress a comrade. The comrades from CNT-AIT in Albacete have been protesting the fruit and vegetable wholesaler. People working at Culset were owed months of wages. A worker fighting for pay was fired. A court has already found the dismissal to be wrong and that the worker is owed money, but the company still tries to bring legal action against the worker! The union has extended their action to the main clients of Culset. Several protests have been held so far, including in other cities.



## Restructuring the CNT-AIT

This April, unions from a few regions of Spain gathered in Villalonga for the Congress to restructure the CNT-AIT. After the old CNT-(ex-AIT) executives and a few of its unions tried unsuccessfully to force most of the member Sections out and then instigated a split, the IWA Congress recognized that that organization was no longer a member of the international federation. Some of those wishing to remain in the IWA and not with the defederated CNT reorganized, with a view to continue with the anarchosyndicalist international.

## KRAS in Defense of Education and Education Workers



FRONT is the abbreviated name of the KRAS education union. In 2016, higher education workers from several independent unions and initiatives gathered in Moscow to discuss a strategy for fighting against the deteriorating working conditions in education. Besides poor pay, there have been cuts in positions and many workers have a tough workload.

Unfortunately, because of the very repressive situation, it seems that many are afraid to organize for their rights. The workers also discussed the fact that the struggle for improved material conditions is not enough, since there are also issues of increasing bureaucracy and control in the universities and a strong neoliberal tendency in the government.

A general strike may be a distant perspective in these circumstances, especially given the problems there are to even protest in Russia.



Despite these, on June 28, hundreds of workers from the Russian Academy of Sciences and other institutions took part in a protest against underfunding and increased bureaucracy and other problems. Members of FRONT were among the protesters.

## Mass action against resettlement and gentrification in Moscow

On May 14, tens of thousands of people rallied in Moscow against the program of destroying houses in the center of Moscow and resettling people, as part of the gentrification process. Activists from KRAS took part. They see such protests, which take place despite repression, as hope that new, radical movements can appear around such issues.

## Solidarity Protest on May First



On May 1, KRAS along with some other independent union organizations, took part in a picket in solidarity with repressed worker activists in Kazakhstan. Despite the fact that the authorities did not allow the protest, people found a way around the ban and managed to show their solidarity.

Kazakhstan is known for its brutal repression of workers, such as the shooting of striking oil workers in Zhanaozen in December 2011. Unions have been shut down. In April, one unionist was sentenced to 2.5 years for calling for a strike and another faces 12 years in prison.

## 100th Anniversary of the Norwegian Syndicalist Federation: 1916 – 2016

The NSF had an 100th Anniversary event on October 29th as start for the NSF Centennial. It was held in a wooden house in Grunerløkka in Oslo and it was very well attended. Greetings were held from IWA Secretariat (with seat in Poland) by the General Secretary, a comrade from SF Manchester, and a comrade from Ørestad LS, which is an IWA Friends organization. Later, it appeared 9 workers from a new grassroots initiative of transport workers from the big transport terminals in Oslo and surroundings, and they made a greeting to the NSF.

There were first speeches about the founding of NSF on December 28th of 1916 and the numerous direct actions the following years. The NSF was also in the forefront of making actions by taking the 8th hour day, and started to agitate for the 6th hour day as early as in 1919. A health worker/ historian, who is writing two books about the NSF, spoke about the development in Rjukan, a community where the NSF had 600 affiliates in 1920, and how the local branch of the main Confederation, the LO, sometimes cooperated, but most times undermined the NSF and its direct actions.

Another speech was about NSF activities in the twenties and thirties. The NSF joined the IWA at its founding Congress in 1922, and has since taken actively part in it. The NSF kept organizing in the twenties and thirties. They had also a women's group that actively took part in the NSF organizing efforts, and many of its members were also arrested during the World War II for illegal work against the Nazis.

The oldest current NSF veteran spoke about the NSF activities from the World War II to the reorganization in 1977. The NSF cooperated in this period with the revolutionary syndicalists in Sweden, as the SAC had made a reformist development, and with Danish comrades. He also spoke some about the reorganization of the NSF in 1977 and the union work he and other NSF comrades had in the metal industry. There had been some major unofficial/ illegal strikes in this sector that had radicalized the workers.



Then the last and biggest part of the event was about work conflicts which NSF members had taken part in and/or supported. To mention some: The NSF had a couple of years after the reorganization in 1977 an own action that was successful, about the repression against NSF union activists, a comrade talked about the activities of the NSF Section during the pre-school teachers unofficial strike in 1987, another about the unofficial strikes at Tollpost- Globe (big transport terminal) in 1992 and the SAS -Hotel conflicts in 1992 and 1993. Thanks to these conflicts, tens of thousands of Norwegian workers in these and other branches got fixed instead of temporary contracts! It was also mentioned work conflicts up to today. Activists of the unions at Tollpost-Globe and SAS Hotel workers union and other unions participated at a NSF Conference in April 1996 about Direct action. Two Liverpool dock workers who were on strike also participated at this Conference. It was the start to the very big solidarity work from Norwegian local unions to the Liverpool dock workers.

The SF comrade, and another comrade, spoke about this support work in the nineties, and also about the very big solidarity work

among Norwegian local unions for the British miners strike in the 80-s. The SF comrade saw clearly the link between the Norwegian Government plans to privatize the railways, and the privatization in Britain: It has been a disaster in Britain and now the Norwegian government is copying them!

NSF activists were active in establishing local unions solidarity committees for arrested workers in Chile and Bolivia in the end of the seventies, and members took actively part in local union support for arrested workers in Poland after the Marshall law in December 1981. A comrade from ZSP informed about the situation of Polish workers today, and how Poland tries to attract factories as a low cost country. The speech was then about ZSP work conflicts which there are a lot of, and how they act against the Government and Employers policy.

The Swedish comrade had a speech about privatizations in Sweden. He said the legislation in Sweden makes it easier for minority organizations to negotiate than in Norway, and told about work conflicts of Ørestad LS. It was also spoken about that the comrades in Ørestad LS, Denmark and NSF will start a Scandinavian cooperation.

All these examples and many more show the importance of International solidarity and affiliation to the International Workers Association (IWA). The importance of the NSF affiliation and active participation in the IWA

since 1922 was mentioned in all the speeches about the different decades.

This commemoration was held in times when the employers and the state are attacking the workers and their rights on all fields. The lower oil price compared to some years ago is used to attack the oil-workers conditions and rights and they are throwing thousands into unemployment while the oil companies still are having big profits.

One and a half years ago, pilots in Norwegian went on strike for the right to be employed by those they actually perform their work for, and not by temporary agencies. The dock-workers have campaigned and went on strike for up to three years in some ports for collective agreements and for the right to perform the work in accordance with international conventions (ILO). And in October there was a four weeks long train drivers strike demanding a common standard in education, so its independent of the different train companies that will appear when the plans of privatizations of the railways will be put into practice in 2017.

Because of this situation, where the Norwegian tripartite, class- collaboration model is shaking, the NSF has got more requests about new forms of resisting and anarchosyndicalism in the last one and a half year, than in the more "silent" period from the year 2000!



## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ZSP

2017 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ZSP. Since its founding in 2007, it has organized dozens of successful direct action campaigns, including a couple of strike actions, numerous occupations and hundreds of pickets. It has been influential in bringing various labour problems to public attention and has organized amongst workers who had previously been

ignored or had no organization, such as casual workers, agency workers, outsourced workers, non-contracted workers and immigrants.

During 2017, ZSP has planned various public events throughout Poland to raise awareness of anarchosyndicalist ideas and practice.

*continued on p. 22*

## **Anarchosyndicalism and Community Organizing Tenants Organizations, Direct Action and Mutual Aid**

While anarchosyndicalism is an idea that focuses around the organization of workers in the workplace, it is also clear that society needs to be self-organized on many levels to work towards the kind of transformation we desire, towards a libertarian, self-managed society. Throughout its history, anarchosyndicalist organizations have engaged in a myriad of social activities and organizing – from organizing literacy programs to self-managed communities. There have also been times when local class struggles, such as rent strikes, etc., have overlapped with the broader social movement of workers. In recent years, some of the Sections of the International Workers' Association have also become involved in tenant organization.

In terms of the most recent years, the first of the Sections to engage in this activity to any extent was the ZSP. Some of its members became involved with organizing tenants and the organization and ZSP have shared premises every since. The main idea for the ZSP activists is to spread self-organization and mutual aid, encourage direct action and class confrontation – and of course to gain wins for poor and working class people against exploiting landlords and property developers and against the city's anti-social housing policies and plans for gentrification.

Since then, they have managed to bring the problems of tenants to the forefront of public attention and helped to expose the corruption of city officials, lawyers, courts and businesspeople in the housing privatization scandal, which grew into the greatest affair in the history of Poland since the transformation. Many working class and poor people have got involved in helping each other and in protesting the problems, increasing their self-empowerment. Many evictions have been blocked or otherwise prevented and hundreds of people have a roof over their head, thanks to the continued action of the tenants activists.



All the while, members of ZSP have tried to promote more libertarian solutions to public housing, based on self-management of the tenants, rather than management by the bureaucrats. There has also been some overlap of activity and support for actions.

The actions of the tenants have also hit many city officials quite hard, ending in numerous dismissals. Over the years it has become quite obvious to many that people need to take direct control over such matters instead of leaving it up to non-accountable processes, approved by elected or appointed representatives, acting in their name but completely against their interests.

The next organization that started to become involved in tenants matters was SolFed. They've published some brochures to help tenants understand their rights and set up times when they can drop in and get advice. In Brighton, a Housing Union was established. As the comrades describe the union, it is "made up of private sector tenants, council tenants, and those with mortgages, coming together to improve our lives in the here and now by finding ways to fight exploitation in the housing sector." The union seeks to bring tenants together to take direct action. In the private rental sector, they would like tenants who share the same agency to come together to put pressure on the agencies to drop their fees.

## Solidarity Federation



the  
**STUFF  
YOUR  
LANDLORD**  
doesn't want you to know

The comrades know that direct action in housing works. Over the past year, they have organized successful actions, forcing agencies to return deposits, fees, and to make repairs.

Another Section which just recently started working with tenants is ASI from Serbia. (You can see an article about this and about a recent action on pp.11-12 of this Bulletin.) They just started the Collective Tenant Defense, an organization much needed in their local conditions. So far they have organized a number of actions against evictions and have got into some serious confrontations with the police.

All of these initiatives are quite good examples of how anarchosyndicalists try to organize on a broader basis, to spread methods of direct action and address the abuses of capitalism and the state against working people who are struggling for their basic living conditions in a world where they are just treated like a way of earning money.

L. Akai

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ZSP (continued from p. 20)

In the first half of 2017, public events were held in the biggest cities in Poland – in Warsaw, Lodz, Wroclaw and Krakow.

In Warsaw, a public event was held after the ZSP Congress and included talks on various workers struggles it was involved with over the past 10 years, as well as presentations by workers from current struggles such as PoloMarket and the Post Office.



In Wroclaw, the ZSP co-organized an anarchist weekend conference and May Day. Members of the ZSP organized a number of workshops, ranging from questions of organization and overcoming hierarchy to how to work with the broader society to how the ZSP itself functions.

In Lodz, activists also attended a tenant protest and invited them to discuss together. A group of tenants also appeared in Krakow. In Krakow the public event was held during a two-day training weekend, focusing on workplace organizing and winning conflicts.

The organization is hoping to be able to complete an overview of their actions over the last ten years, which they would like to publish on the internet.

---

## Welcome New Friends to the IWA

The XXVI Congress of the IWA (December 2016), saw the addition of two organizations as Friends of the IWA. The WSA is an anarcho-syndicalist organization from the United States.



<https://workersolidarity.org>

The Libertarian Students' Union is an anarcho-syndicalist students' union from Colombia.



<http://www.ulestudiantil.org>

We welcome them to the IWA and hope to hear good news from them soon.

---

Organizations wishing to join use can get more information by consulting the guide on our website: <http://www.iwa-ait.org/content/affiliation-information>

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

## The XXVI Congress of the IWA



At the beginning of December 2016, the XXVI Congress of the International Workers' Association was held in Warsaw, Poland.

Among the decisions made were some modifications to the statutes concerning affiliation, setting guidelines for organizations which would like to join and clarifying procedures. (The new text of the statutes can be downloaded here: <http://www.iwa-ait.org/content/statutes-iwa>) There were also resolutions concerning the development of a strategy to help with workplace organizing and training sessions, as well as a decision to facilitate the organization of events by the Sections and the federation.

Despite the fact that several issues required more debate and discussion, the work of the Congress went quite smoothly and was carried out in a very comradely atmosphere. Prior to the Congress, there was a public meeting which drew a lot of interest and throughout the Congress there was time for integration in the evenings and even a tour of places connected to the wartime ZSP and anti-fascist resistance. Towards the end of the Congress, an open discussion on workplace organizing was held, where activists from different Sections shared their ideas and experiences.

Despite the generally positive experiences of the Congress, all was not perfect as, unfortunately, the Congress had been

preceded by a split off of a number of important Sections. These Sections had been drifting in another direction for some time and over the past few years had stopped contributing positively at the international gatherings, in favor of trying to disaffiliate most of the Sections. This turned relations quite sour for some and unfortunately, there seemed to be no will to find any compromises or other solutions. Some incidents escalated the tensions and in the end, some of the Sections decided to pursue another path. As it was obvious that their decisions were already made, the Sections recognized that they had gone their way and were no longer a part of the International federation.

The matter became somewhat complicated after the fact that a large delegation came from Spain stating they do not want to leave and even claiming that no such decision was made organically by the CNT. (Indeed they had decided contradictory things, but unfortunately, the rank and file no longer are in a position to control what their representatives are doing.) Some also declared that they still regard themselves as part of the IWA in Spain and intend to reorganize the CNT-AIT. In light of this issue, the Congress decided that an Extraordinary Congress be held in 2017 to deal with this question, among other things.

We thank everyone who took part in the Congress for the good work and comradely attitude.

IWA Secretariat