

Workers Solidarity Alliance-IWA

New York Area Group

339 Lafayette St., Room 202, New York, NY 10012 (212) 979-8353

P R E S S R E L E A S E

New York, New York, 21-1-91, No.1

TURKISH METALWORKERS STRIKE, TURKISH MINERS ARRESTED

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In early January of this year a pay dispute between Turkish metalworkers and employers began. The strike is over the metalworkers claim for a "living wage". In early January a strike by some 85,000 metalworkers shut down Turkey's automobile and other key metal industrial sectors. Reports have it that some 230 workplaces were shut down by this strike action.

The strike, and continuing activities, came about as the employers federation (MESS) broke off negotiations with the metalworker unions in late December. MESS rejected wage claims and failed to address the problems associated with Turkey's high level of inflation.

On 3 January 1991 a general strike by over a million Turkish workers took place. This strike, supported by the metalworkers, was called to emphasize the Turkish working class' desire to gain both economic justice and respect for union activities. Independent union activities are heavily restricted by Turkish law dating back to the days of the military dictatorship established in the 1980's.

On 4 January 1991, 50,000 workers took part in a protest march in Turkey's capital of Ankara. The demands of the march were economic justice, higher wages and better working conditions. During the course of this march 210 miners were arrested. These miners, under Turkish law, may be tried by the state security court and may be given harsh prison sentences, including death.

All unions and workers' organizations are encouraged to contact their local Turkish consulate and demand the release of all imprisoned miners and, further, demand that a settlement between the metalworkers and employers be reached that satisfies the workers demands.



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IN BYELORUSSIA LEGAL TERROR SET-UP TO PUT DOWN STRIKERS

In March 1991 workers at Kuzbas, Donbas, and Vorkuta resumed striking to demand the fulfilling of the 1989 agreements, but this time they added to their demands a call for the resignation of President Gorbachov for conducting an anti-people policy of favoring the "right-wing" of the military and bureaucrats.

Workers at Minsk have solidly backed the strikes, demanding decent working conditions. Many Byelorussian undertakings supported Minsk city workers.

Today, however, the Byelorussian workers movement lacks the strength to face up to the organized apparatus of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the secret police (KGB). Activists of the strike movement have been accused of common crimes by the court system and the KGB for "activities to discourage production." Questioning is accompanied by constant threats of arrest, families and fellow workers have been frightened.

Here are the names of some of the strike committee members who see themselves threatened by KGB action:

Ignatovitch, at Minsk, heating equipment factory;
Rudick, Minsk, MPC "Integral";
Babayov, Minsk, "Vavilov" factory
Siniak, Minsk, automakers union;
Stanko, Ankervich, Krivski, and Andreyev, at Orcha, members of the town strike committee;
Representatives of the strike committee of the tractor factory at Minsk whose names are not yet available but will soon be forthcoming.

All these militants are undergoing aggressive and unconcealed repression by the nomenklatura.

The Free Inter-Professional Union (SMOT), the conference of strike committees of Byelorussia (May 18, 1991) turn to the people everywhere and call on them to display support and solidarity with the purpose of opposing KGB and CPSU terrorism directed against the militant strikers of Byelorussia.

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The CPSU, as it loses power under the pressure of the Soviet workers movement, tries by every means to maintain its sole rule. Only a united solidarity which knows no frontiers is able to oppose and stop the terror of the moribund, said to be "in transition", bureaucracy.

Please send letters and telegrams of protest to the following address:

USSR, Byelorussia, Minsk 220129, Republikanskaya Prokuratura

Letters of support and solidarity should be addressed to:

USSR, Byelorussia, Minsk 220094, Prospekt Rokossovskovo
dom 12 kov, 1, kv 550, Matveyenko Anatoly ("Metroprofessionalava-
avaya Rabotchaya Solidarnost" -- Inter-professional Workers
Solidarity)

Paris, May 1991

SMOT Agency Abroad

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TO THE WORKERS: EAST and WEST

We, participants of the International Syndicalist Conference in Moscow (March 16-18, 1991) dedicated to the 70th Anniversary of the Kronstadt rebellion, state that the wreckage of the Stalinist system of state socialism against which the Kronstadt sailors fought opens new perspectives for the independent workers' movement in the USSR.

We warmly support the aspirations of the workers of the USSR to be independent of the [communist] party and state structures. We are sure that a simple substitution of state exploitation to the exploitation of national and international capital will not give us freedom, social justice, private and collective security.

Today the party and state bureaucracy, who uses the slogan of "decentralization" of our economic system, usurps our means of production, with foreign companies set up dirty and giant resource using factories inside of the USSR. The interests of our old bureaucrats and our new capitalists coincide with each other.

Only the stubborn struggle by the workers of the USSR for their interests and the forming of strong fighting unions and for the reconstruction of our society on the principles of self-government is the only alternative.

Moscow, March 1991

International Workers Association, Secretariat (IWA/AIT)
Confederation of Bolivian Workers (COB)
Italian Federation of Anarchists (FAI)
Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAC), USSR
Organization of Anarchist Communists, Naples, Italy
The Center of Libertarian Researchers, Italy
Central organization of Swedish Workers (SAC)

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SOUTH AFRICA: TWO DAY GENERAL STRIKE PLANNED

COSATU, NACTU and twelve independent unions have announced plans for a two day general strike for November 4 and 5 if the government continued to refuse to consider demands for changes to regulations affecting value-added tax which came into effect the first week of October 1991. The unions are calling for a zero-rating of food, medicines, medical services, water and electricity, an improved poverty relief program. The unions are against further economic restructuring, particularly since the burden continues to fall on the backs of the working class and the poor.

COSATU OFFICIALS CONVICTED ON TRUMPED-UP CHARGES

On Tuesday, October 15, 1991 COSATU officials Jay Naidoo, Sydney Mafumadi, Moses Mayekiso and Baba Schalk were convicted on charges of kidnapping and assault.

The incident occurred in August 1990 when COSATU officials caught a man who later turned out to be a police agent, acting suspiciously outside COSATU headquarters in Johannesburg.

Despite protests from workers both inside of South Africa and around the globe, the South African government proceeded with this political trial. The trial began in July 1991 and has been seen as a clear attempt to weaken the independent union movement in South Africa.



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SOUTH AFRICA: MASSIVE TWO DAY STAY-AWAY A SUCCESS

A crippling two-day national stay-away called for by the Confederation of South African Unions (COSATU), National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) and a number of other smaller independent unions concluded on November 5 after demonstrating that the working class could bring South Africa's economy to a standstill.

The two-day strike saw an estimated 3.5 million people stay-away from their jobs. The strike was called to protest the imposition, in October, of a value added tax (VAT). The VAT imposes a heavy burden on poor and working people, a majority of whom are black.

The strike, according to all sources, was the largest in the history of South Africa. COSATU reported that "absenteeism had run 100% in Pretoria, 95% in greater Johannesburg and Durban and 70% in Cape Town." (New York Times, 11-6-91). The only violence reported was at the President Steyn gold mine where 89 people have died in the week leading up to the strike and during the strike itself. This violence was between reactionary supporters of the Zulu Inkatha movement and supporters of COSATU.

It has been reported that a total of 172 workers were arrested during the two-day stay-away, mostly on charges of participating in "illegal" marches. 5,000 workers at the Anglo American's Saaiplaas mines refused to work an additional two days after management threatened to discipline stay-away participants.

President F.W. De Klerk angrily reacted to the stay-away as could be predicted. "I can not be satisfied with a stay-away action that should have never taken place" and that the strike movement was led by communists and radicals.

It is actions such as these that can only lead to the further empowerment of the South African working class and point the way that it is only the working class acting on its own, and not through political parties, that the apartheid-capitalist class can be abolished.



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American Steelworkers Need Your Support

This past November marked the one year anniversary that 1700 members of United Steel Workers Of America Local 5668 were locked-out by their employer, the Ravenswood Aluminum Company (RAC). A year ago, as union members were leaving the factory out of the front gate, scabs were coming in the back. The company has said that the workers have been "permanently replaced", the steelworkers say they have been locked-out.

RAC, a multi-national company owned by the Swiss-based Rich Group, prior to the strike demanded many concessions from the USWA, which were refused by the workers. The local union told the company that they would continue to negotiate although the contract was about to expire. The company had other plans. RAC has turned this small Ohio River community into an armed camp with barbed wire fences, a heavily armed private police force and electronic surveillance.

Despite the hardships faced by the workers they continue to fight against RAC but they need your solidarity. Resolutions of support and financial donations can be sent to:

USWA Local 5668
P.O.B. 56
Ravenswood, West Virginia 26164, USA

Carol Cable Strikers Stand Firm, Support Needed

After six months on the picket line the nearly 100 members of United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1015 are standing strong. The strikers, many of whom are from Central America, are in a life or death struggle for their jobs and dignity.

Carol Cable insists on shifting the cost of health insurance to the workers and instituting a drug testing program. Some 70 strike breakers are working in the factory while some strikers have received letters telling them that they have been "permanently replaced."

The United States is one of the few countries in the industrialized world where there is no national health insurance. The other country is South Africa.

Resolutions of support and financial donations are requested and can be sent to:

U.E. Local 1015 Strike Fund
14819 Atlantic Avenue
Compton, California 90221, U.S.A.

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE-IWA CELEBRATES 8th CONVENTION

Workers Solidarity Alliance, U.S. Section of the anarchist unionist International Workers Association, held its 8th national convention in Fort Wayne, Indiana May 25 - 26, 1991. WSA members from Indiana, Alabama, Texas, Tennessee, California and New York attended this annual convention.

The WSA National secretary Ginger stated that; "Those attending this years convention managed to **carry** out 18 hours of work into two days and the results are impressive. New leaflets, new activities and new contacts with others are planned for the upcoming year."

As is customary at WSA conventions, the opening session heard reports and reviews of the organization's work by the National Secretary, International Secretary, local groups and Working group's. A review of the current finances of the organization was also heard in the National Treasurer's report.

The National Secretary reported on inquiries, distribution of materials and the prospects of new members and building the organization that has occurred in her first five months in office.

The International Secretary discussed IWA activities and WSA participation on the international scene. The International Secretary reported that WSA maintains contact in all parts of the globe except Africa where our contacts seem to be irregular.

The WSA Working Group's report various forms of activities. Their currently exists two working groups: the Feminism and Sexism and East European working group's. There continues to be discussion about forming a Public Workers group for comrades employed in this sector.

Local WSA reported on their various activities. The WSA groups continue their various activities, which include: labor solidarity, workplace organizing, anti-sexist issues, anti-racist issues, anti-militarism and a whole host of other activities and projects.

This year, like last year, WSA members spent a lot of time talking about our focus and many new projects originated in this discussion.

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Given a heightened awareness about war and its consequences, WSA plans to issue two new leaflets for general distribution. One of these will be directed at working class youth (and others) who plan to join the military. This flyer will be written by two WSA members who have served in the military and will hit upon the reasons for why working class people are drawn to the military to escape poverty and a failed educational system.

Furthering our last years discussion on "Anarcho-syndicalism and Feminism" this years convention agreed to put the finishing touches on a general distribution leaflet about anarcho-syndicalism and feminism.

Also on the printed text scene it was agreed, pending membership vote, a shortened version of our general principles, **Where We Stand**, which can be used in both leaflet form and printed regularly in our quarterly magazine **ideas & action**. This statement will also include a new ecology statement and an improved **sexism statement**.

In addition to all the new written material, there are some new projects. WSA is going to have coordinated May Day activities in 1992. Since the groups and members of the WSA are present in different numbers and circumstances in different areas, we are expecting a lot of different activities, from demonstrations to picnics to educationals. A **common** theme May day poster is also planned.

WSA is also encouraging and organizing a united libertarian workers contingent to march in the mass labor rally to be held in Washington, D.C. on August 31. The WSA invites all libertarian workers to join this contingent at Solidarity Day II.

The WSA further agreed to make a concerted effort at fund-raising to help support on-going activities and to send a delegation to the 1992 I.W.A. Congress. Several proposals were also agreed to in regards to the 1992 IWA Congress including one resolution each on racism and reproductive rights.

One of the more controversial issues at this convention was how to respond to the Industrial Workers of the World recent interest in opening up discussions with the IWA about possible IWW affiliation. The convention resolved to have the WSA National secretary write the IWW asking them to respond to earlier correspondence by the IWA Secretariat. We are also seeking IWW clarification about their two proposed "understandings". The first IWW "understanding" pertains to their non-US members and how they would fit into the IWA organization outside of the USA. The second "understanding" regards the IWW's desire to include within the IWA's ranks organizations that currently are not members of the IWA. Favorable response by the IWW may be the starting point for future discussions between the WSA, IWW, and IWA about possible IWW affiliation with the IWA.

On the subject of relations with other organizations, WSA passed a proposal that we go on record as supporting the creation of a Free Women's group, autonomous of the WSA and affiliated with the international Free Women's network. The WSA Working group on Feminism and Sexism will serve as our contact with this organization. Women from the WSA and throughout the libertarian workers and anarchist movements are encouraged to participate in this process.

In other action WSA agreed to develop the type of organization that is relevant not only to the workplace but to community, gender and race as well. A lively discussion about the racial dimension also took place and the need to make WSA more reflective of the world we live in. Another good discussion that took place centered around the workplace. Various reports were heard about WSA members activities in the workplace. It was also agreed that coordination between workers in various sectors is also needed and, on the international level, it was agreed that the IWA could play a very important role. WSA members also agreed to finish a booklet on workplace organizing and tactics from a libertarian workers point of view.

In many ways, the focus of this year was as much on how to get things done as it was on what to get done. People proposing projects also proposed time lines for completion of these projects and there was more of an effort to complete things in a timely manner. The National Committee (composed of regional delegates) plans to do a better job corresponding and in helping to facilitate the completion of proposed projects.

During the recap and closure portion of our convention WSA members thought that the convention was productive and in persevering in a comradely way through some difficult issues. As one participant put it, comradeship is "one of our hallmarks."

A lot of action was taken to make the WSA more efficient and more vital. The WSA is as committed to finding new ways of expanding our activities and influence as ever. If the convention was any indication 1991-92 looks to be a good year for the Workers Solidarity Alliance-IWA.

The 9th national convention of the WSA will be held in New York City, Memorial Day Weekend, May 23 - 24, 1992

Founded in 1984, the Workers Solidarity Alliance-IWA coordinates anarchist unionist activities in Alabama, California, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

National Secretary: Post Office Box 11838, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37939-1838, USA