

Workers Solidarity Alliance

U.S. Section of the International Workers Association

International Secretary

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INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY REPORT January 1996

Dear comrades,

Belated New Years greetings to one and all. I hope the New Year will bring good things for each of you personally and to us as an organization. I have high hopes for 1996 and look forward to renewed efforts by all of us in making WSA the type of national organization it should be: bigger, better and a hellava lot more efficient.

Please accept this as my first report as IS.

WSA Convention Follow-Up

In accordance with ~~the~~ a 1995 convention motion, I have contacted the Ottawa Branch of the IWW concerning their letter to the IWA secretariat, regarding possible direct affiliation. This letter was sent 01/15/96. We are awaiting their response. Copy of letter was sent to our DB and IWA Secretariat.

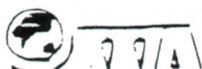
In regards to the second IS convention motion, regarding the IWA Congress, let me report on the following.

The Congress, per IWA Secretariat, will probably not happen until either the summer or years end. Since the Statutes (of the IWA) call for a 6 month period of discussion, etc. it's much too late for the congress to happen, as it traditionally does, during Easter week.

As of this moment I have not personally made our "Congress plans and do planning for WSA presence there, draft and present...WSA proposals", nor have I yet drafted a "report on WSA". What I have done is shared with all of you, through the DB, all of the materials which have come to our attention concerning IWA matters. I would hope that each and everyone of you will take the time to read them carefully and share your thoughts with me. It's personally of the utmost importance to know what you find interesting, important or exciting. Or what you really think we can contribute to the IWA and to the upcoming congress.

Any thoughts or comments?

International Workers Association



"participat[ing] in a broad front with other groups some of whom are social democratic".

IWA received a long letter from the Swedish SAC regarding their view of the differences as to why they are not in the IWA and their reasons for participating in the unemployment fund, their cooperation with the Spanish CGT (splitters from the CNT-AIT) and their view of possible future relations between the SAC & IWA. [The 10 page report & documents are available from NY for postage, but I would like to publish their main report, with my commentary, in a future DB]

The Norwegians reported that the SAS hotel workers were victorious, in part, due to their support.

The Swiss "Friends of the IWA" seem to be pissing some IWA comrades off. They are very critical of the former Secretariat and are supporters of one of the two CNT-france factions and voice their views very loudly, and in the opinion of some comrades, very rudely. Some in the UK SF & the German FAU seem to be raising questions about the role of the Swiss inside the IWA. [I think the whole tension, exacerbated by the Swiss, is turning over the very intense split within the French CNT in which the Swiss have obviously chosen a side. The Swiss also seem to be very, very hostile towards the old Secretariat.]

The FAU has submitted a 2 page document entitled **Ideas on a New Structure of the IWA Secretariat**. The document lists and breaks down specific functions that the Secretariat and Sections should carry out. We should discuss their proposals, as well as the previously published Sol. Fed. proposals, on creating a better IWA.

Also included is the former FAU IS' "Personal Statement on the 'Motion About the Difficulties That Encounters the IWA' ". This is in response to a position paper by the same name adopted at the Pau congress, 4/95, of the Bordeaux faction of the CNT-France.

Any and all of the above documents are available from the NY office. Please provide sufficient postage for the requested materials. Thank you.

W.S.A. SOLIDARITY

W.S.A. has sent letters of solidarity as follows:

1. In support of Greek anarchists arrested during huge protest rally. [Greek embassy here in NYC responded to our protest letter to them. Their response is available upon request]
2. In solidarity with the Paris local of the CNT in their effort to fight an eviction notice. The CNT has been at 33 rue des Vignoles for decades]
3. Letter sent to Leonard Peltier stating our continued support for his freedom. Protest letter also sent to Atlanta Prison.

W.S.A. PRESS RELEASES

We have sent out the following press releases:

1. PR 9601 Calling for solidarity with Bengali garment workers who've

IWA NEWS & HAPPENINGS

The new IWA secretariat is now in Madrid: Pº Alberto Palacios 2, 28021 Madrid, Spain. The new GS is Pascual, who I vaguely remember meeting in Cologne at the last IWA congress.

In previous DB's you've had the chance to review IWA Circular # 5 (11/8/95) and the English comrades report on the 11/95 IWA Plenary (Madrid). If these somehow slipped by you here's a quick summary:

IWA Circ. #5: Confed. of Rev. Anarcho-Syndicalists requests affiliation to IWA as the Euro-Siberian Section [Note: Current IWA policy only allows for single country sections. Acceptance of a bi-national section would constitute a change of long standing IWA practice. What do you think?]

Chilean anarchists have organized the Local Federation of Anarchists of Santiago. A pro-IWA group is being discussed. No address is given.

Two interesting reports from the Czech & Slovak republics (available for a sae).

Italian USI has gone through a "friendly divorce". The issue at hand is the signing of an agreement between one section of USI with various autonomous workers organizations that has created a "from below" workers united front of sorts (ACRA). The goal of this new coordinating body is to allow the smaller autonomous base unions at least 5% representation in some workplaces, thus obligating the boss/state to recognize them as a representative union. The opposing USI view is that this contradicts revolutionary syndicalism (the USI doesn't claim to be anarcho-syndicalist) and against the USI founding principles. [WSA has, in french, the "Bulletin of the Defense of the USI-AIT"]

Announcement of CNIL-Spain 8th congress (12/1-10/95) in Granada. WSA sent greetings.

German FAU launched campaign in support of zapatistas and boycott campaign in Germany against the Levensbaum co. which imports Mexican coffee. [Note: FAU also supported a tour of Gustavo (former WSA member) & Anna of Mexico in which funds were raised for the zapatistas]

Brasilian COB want to have discussed at the IWA Congress the issue "international solidarity and mutual support". Apparently they are peeved at IWA sections for not coming to their aid during one of their struggles.

Portugal: IWA Secretariat to visit a pro-IWA group there. No new news.

East European A-S meeting was held in Hungary this past summer. 70 comrades from the East ^{4 USSR} attended.

Sol. Fed. 12/95 Unofficial report on 11/25 Madrid Plenary [Full documentation available for sae- or \$1- from IS]:

Sections from Spain, France, Norway, Germany, Italy & England attended. Much time spent on discussion of CNIL-Bordeaux criticism of previous IWA Sec. & certain actions taken by IWA, including attending unionist conference in Nepal & support for the Nigerians who were criticised for

been locked out by Titas Apparels, Ltd., Dhaka, Bangladesh

2. PR 9602 , in cooperation with Atlanta WSA, concerning the touring of Chattanooga bus driver Ralph Williams home. Material aid is needed, please send same to Workers Aid Fund c/o Atlanta WSA.

A total of over 200 of these press releases have been sent out both here and abroad.

3. NY-NJ & Atlanta WSA are discussing the form of direct solidarity that can be taken to aid the Nigerian Awareness League in their efforts to obtain computers. More on this as it develops.
4. In regards to Bangladesh, let me mention that our initial efforts and contacts with the National Garment Workers Federation are bearing fruit. A two person IWA delegation visited with the NGWF. That report is printed elsewhere. But as you can see there's interest in the IWA. Another important showing that our views are relevant to those outside of the industrialized countries and among people of color.

W.S.A. IN THE PRESS

WSA's convention was written-up in the latest issue of "Libertarian Labor Review" (#19-Winter 1996).

Mention of the impending issue of **ideas & action** appears in the latest issue of "Organise!" (published by northern Irish anarchosyndicalists), as does the NY-NJ leaflet on French general strikes.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The NY-NJ office continues to receive lots of various anarcho-syndicalist, anarchist and libertarian publications. A full report will appear in my next submission. Kuddos to Dan for reorganizing our national archives.

CORRESPONDENCE IN/CORRESPONDENCE OUT

A full report to appear in next issue. Suffice it to say we have been in contact with comrades in Bangladesh, England, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, N. & S. Ireland, France, Norway, the US and Canada.

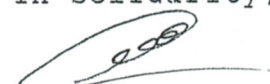
FOR YOUR INFO

Mike K. initiated contact with a representative of the Zairian Workers Union Organization (O'IS in French) who is presently in NYC. We will be meeting with him and shall report back.

The O'IS claims a membership of 30,000 and states it's an "independent union federation". Because of the general brutality and repression underway in Zaire the O'IS has initialed in the US a "Fund for Zaire Trade Unionists": POB 2919, Grand Central Station, NY, NY 10017.

That's all for now. Wishing you all the best and look forward to hearing from you about the IWA Congress and other things. Please, please, please dig into your pockets to help support our solidarity activities with comrades in Nigeria and Bangladesh.

Yours in solidarity,

Mitch 



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INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY CONVENTION REPORT, NOVEMBER 1996

Dear comrades,

The work of the IS is never dull. It always seems like there's always lots of correspondence to read and respond to. Always a solidarity appeal to take action on, and always a million and one other things to do beside. This year has been no different, except, of course, that this is a year in which the XX IWA Congress is to occur in December.

During the course of this year I have tried to get to all of you as much information concerning the Congress, and other matters, as possible through the pages of the DB. I hope that the information provided has been informative and useful. Your feedback is always appreciated and needed.

Below you will find a summary of the work of your 1996 International Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE

The IS has maintained correspondence with the IWA Secretariat and has sent the IWA Secretariat periodic mailings of WSA leaflets and news articles on labor struggles, both here and abroad.

WSA has also received correspondence from, or has corresponded with the following :

ASIA

National Garment Workers (Bangladesh), Philippine anarchist, Majdoor Library (India), ASF-IWA (Aust.), ABC (New Zelnd. & Aust.), GEFON! (Nepal) & KMU (Philippines).

AFRICA

Awareness League, Workers Sol. Fed. (S.Af.) and Zimbabwe Labour Party. Also the O'IS (Zaire).

LATIN AMERICA

COB (Brasil), ANA (Brasil), CORRE A & anarchosyndicalist (Venezuela), SO (Chile)

EASTERN EUROPE

'Torpedo (Serbia), Fed. of Anarchists (Belarus), CRAS (Moscow)

WESTERN EUROPE

IWA sec. (Spain), Spanish CNI, French CNI (Bordeaux & Paris), FAU (Gr.), WSM & Organise! (Ireland), NSF (Norway), SF (England), SUF (Swedish Young Syndicalists), Revolta (Spain), ABC (Greece), Dutch comrades, & Bangladesh Peoples Soli. Ctr. (Holland)

MISC. correspondence always arrive from Europe as well.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

As in the past, the NY Office received tons of various publications. Standard publications are CNI, SOLI (Spain), LE MONDE LIBERTAIRE (FR) LE COMBAT SYNDICALISTE (Bordeaux & Paris, plus regional version), UMANITA NOVA (Italy), LOTTA DI CLASSE (Rome & Trieste), BLACK FLAG (UK), DIRETE AKTION (GR.), ARBETARIAN (SWEDEN), CeNIT (FR.) COLLECTIVE ACTION NOTES (USA), WORKERS NEWS (Nepal), KNU CORRESPONDENCE (Philippines) SYMDIKALISM (SAC) WORKERS SOLIDARITY (WSM-Irl)

MISC. publications from all over the globe flood our office on a regular basis.

In addition to these, and other, newspapers, we received the Internal Bulletins from the FAU, CNI-F (Bordeaux) & SF regularly.

I.W.A. PUBLICATIONS

As of this report, there have been 11 IWA Circulars, plus other information. All of which have been republished in our DB.

SOLIDARITY APPEALS

During the course of the year we have responded to solidarity calls on behalf of the NGWF (Bangladesh), CNI (Spain), CNI-F (Paris), Colombian anarchists and Ukrainian miners..

Our action on behalf of the NGWF led to one garment manufacturer in NYC to end its purchase of Titas Apparels. This action also made the pages of LABOR NOTES.

W.S.A. PRESS RELEASES

Yours truly has issued 3 PR's since the beginning of the year. All three have called for solidarity actions, protest letters and fund raising for Ralph Williams (CARTA bus driver; Chattanooga), NGWF (Titus Apparels) & our campaign to raise \$2000 for the Nigerian comrades.

Although our efforts this year have been somewhat diminished, we are

in the forefront of all IWA sections in promoting solidarity with Third World libertarians and unionists. And, to blow our horn for a moment, if it were not for the WSA, the IWA wouldn't have any contacts in Nigeria or Bangladesh for example.

CANADA

Over the past year we have tried to communicate with the Ottawa IWW concerning their interest in the IWA, and, perhaps, about trying to cooperate on things. To date, we have not heard from Ottawa since March 1996, even though we invited them to our convention (May) and to work on the Nigeria campaign. I'm not sure what to infer from this, but if anyone is in communication with them, perhaps you can inform us of where the Ottawa folks are headed.

During this past period, we've received some independent inquiries from a couple of people in Quebec and Ontario. Periodic communication still happens with Bruce A.

U.S.A.

In addition to the N.S., I've answered the usual mail that comes into the NY office. Much of this mail is new inquiries, in which a standard letter and info. packet is sent.

XX I.W.A. CONGRESS, DECEMBER 1996

I've tried to get as much of the main info. on this congress (in english) to all of you via the DB. And special mail-outs to members of the NC. I appreciate Bill & Vince's written responses and input. I further appreciate Steve & Mike's input as well. Now, all that has to be done is put everything on paper so that the WSA's views can be represented at the Congress. And I hope this convention will also help us figure out some further perspectives as well.

As of this writing it is unclear as to whether or not we will have a representative at the Congress. I will not be attending, that's certain. I hope that Dan will attend, as he's indicated, but that's not written in stone yet.

The congress will discuss some major issues. There's proposals floating about as to whether or not to re-structure the IWA Secretariat. Whether or not to take one side or another in the splits within the French CNF and the Italian USI. Whether or not to allow official contact with the Swedish SAC, as well as other issues.

On the splits in the CNF and USI, it appears to me that WSA comrades are split on the issue. Given this, it seems prudent that we abstain from voting for or against one side or the other. In regards to the

Swedish SAC, again, there's a mixed opinion. It appears that most of those who expressed an opinion seem to favor treating our (IWA) relations with them similar to the way we would reformist unions. That is, recognize the SACs limitations, continue to, in this case, seek to have them reverse their relationship with the Spanish CGT (those who split from the CNT), share information and solidarity campaigns as appropriate. As for re-structuring the Secretariat, I would like to see us support the continued unified Secretariat (ie: located in one Section), but would like to see the formation of regional sub-secretariats and, perhaps, the formation of an external press group, say, in Germany. [The FAU has both the material and language resources to produce a good external IWA publication]

In regards to the CNT-F and USI split, I can say these will be hotly debated and feel that these splits, and the question of the SAC, will take up most hours of the congress, and be most divisive to boot. It appears that a number of key sections have taken positions against the Paris CNT and the Rome USI. Both Paris and Rome favor participation in state sanctioned union elections. Both also favor normalization of relations with the SAC. The English Solidarity Federation has taken a position (which has led to controversy) in favoring normalization of relations with the SAC. The Norwegian NSF are leading the charge, along with the Spanish CNT, in having no relationship with the SAC what so ever. Although a possible compromise may be the NSF's revised suggestion that a commission be formed to further look into and bring forth suggestions in the future. The idea itself isn't bad, but it's proposed loads, I think, the deck against a balanced solution.

The congress will decide whether or not to admit the following proposed new sections: CRAS (ex-USSR), Awareness League, BKI (Bulgaria), ASAUL (Portugal), Solidaridad Obrera (Chile & Organise! (N.Irl.)

FINAL NOTE: WSA comrades who're interested in receiving all 5 issues of the IWA DEBATE (which has all the congress materials) can do so by sending \$5.00 to me for xeroxing and postage.

At this point I would like to draw my report to a close. There's lots more to report on (basically the fine details of things), but this would take many more pages. So on this note I hope that my report is accepted and that we all make a real effort to build the WSA and to continue to be the real pioneer that we have always been in the international arena.

As always, I remain.

Yours in solidarity,

International Secretary