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Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores

IWA-Conference

**on precarious/casual work,
self-management and cooperatives**

León, 13-15 August 2010

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The Conference started at 10:40

Secretary of the IWA: The sections are taking part in the IWA Conference, except for FORA, COB and ASI. There is a group from Peru from the Periodico Humanidad, who were also invited. They are not members of the IWA but they want to speak about the cooperatives. They couldn't get visas and therefore they are not here. The consulate in Lima said that they don't earn enough money. Protests were sent to the Spanish consulate. One section which is not present is KRAS. The delegate was waiting for the visa. According to our information he received it and has arrived in Spain and is on the way. MASA from Croatia was also invited. The CNT has invited FAI as observers. The sections and MASA are those which can speak on each point - the rest are observers.

Grupo Fuego (FAI): We wish all the attendees success with the agreements and that the resolutions serve to counter the advance of capitalism. We are aware that without organizational evolution, there is no way to stop this advance.

MASA Croatia - an anarchosyndicalist organization created in 2008. We are still a small group, with about 35 people. There are 4 smaller groups in the rest of Croatia and 2 other groups being formed. We had only a few actions and only one had any result. Besides this we were the organizers of some actions organized by students. We are here to learn.

IWA Secretary: Now there will be a presentation of all the sections, starting with the ZSP.

ZSP: There are two of us from Poland. We are glad to be here.

PA: Two comrades from Slovakia have come. The introduction is not important, the discussion will come later.

USI: We have written a document on self-management and cooperatives and we have a proposal to debate because we consider that they are very important in the perspective that the comrade from the FAI presented before to fight against capitalism.

SP AIT: 4 people have come from Portugal - one from Lisbon and 3 from Porto.

SF: We are from Brighton and we thank people for the hospitality.

NSF (Secretary) I have come as a delegate of NSF. Also another comrade was going to come but he had an accident.

FAU: We come from Berlin. We are waiting for the comrade from the Babylon Cinema conflict.

CNT-F: We are 4 comrades from Pau. The CNT-F doesn't have a common position on these topics and we came to present the position of the union from Pau.

CNT-E: We thank the sections for the effort they made to come and the comrades from Leon for organizing the conference.

Secretary - Lets start with the agenda. The first point is the election of the chair and the minute takers. There are no volunteers for the minutes, they will be taken by Leon. There also is none for the chair, so I will do it. Lets go to point 2.

Topic A - Anarchosindicalism and precarious work.

1) The general state of things.

ZSP: Asks if the documents have been read to shorten the time.

Secretary: Not to prolong this much, I propose that this point lasts 2 hours.

PA: We believe that this can be skipped since everything is mostly on paper and has been read. We proposed the conference and we believe it should be as productive as possible and this point is just informational. If delegates want to discuss this point, it is up to them but we believe that time should be used for practical action.

NSF: Let each Section speak for a while about the most important actions. In point 2 we can talk about the problems that occur in every country. We start with the first round.

ZSP: A little about the problems of precarious work in Poland. We can consider that half of the working population is in this situation. The first group of people are those who don't have a permanent contract, that have civil contracts and are not covered by the labour law. Another group are self-employed but in reality they have bosses. This is about 30% of the workforce and 75 percent of these are fake self-employed.

The largest group of these people are in the health care industry. The nurses' and doctors' unions estimate that 50% of the workers there are fake self-employed and these people were used as a strategy to commercialize the health care system. The rest are unionized but have a problem with these self-employed. Because of opposition and controversy, it was very difficult to implement the laws on temporary employment agencies and this was done in only in April 2004. From 2004-2008, the number of people who use temporary employment agencies increased by 100% each year. Statistics of temporary agency workers don't include people who went to work in other countries. The problems of the temporary workers are that their work conditions are worse even though this is not allowed. They are not offered indefinite contracts when their temporary work is finished. They sometimes even change the name of the company to avoid responsibility and to continue giving temporary contracts. The conditions for hiring temporary workers have been changed. It used to be that you could not hire people from temporary work agencies for at least 6 months after group dismissals, nor could you hire them when there is a strike. With the crisis the laws changed and you can hire temporary workers after group dismissals and during strikes. Students are another precarious group. First time employees can be paid up to 20% less than minimum

wage. Foreign workers are also precarious. They often cannot exercise their rights since if their contract is terminated, their visas expire and they have to leave the country and cannot pursue claims. Some workers who are contracted in other countries, do not even receive minimum wage.

PA: Only two things about the situation in Slovakia in the last 10 years, because they are the most important in relation to precarious work. One of the things happened in 2001. There was a new Labor Code, more liberal than the previous one. Until the crisis there were a few changes and then the crisis made more liberalization. They invented the Flexikonto, the workers work fewer hours and receive the same salary, but when there is more work, they have to work more without getting more money. Concerning the precarization of labour, there is a rising tendency, especially amongst part-time workers, some working part-time involuntarily, the number of self-employed people are growing, they are not really self-employed. We have prepared a text. It is very long and interesting, with lots of statistics, which are not exact since it is complicated to establish the exact number of precarious workers.

USI: In general in Italy the number of temporary workers has increased, increasing precarity. The labour market is changing a lot and this started in the 90s. In 1993 the situation started to change with the collaboration of the official unions and an attack against the gains of the workers made in the 60s and 70s. The governments and the unions are acting in agreement to precarize the labour market. Now they are making another change in this sense and in the last two years, with the crisis, more people are using the temporary employment agencies and this is becoming something normal. To give a general picture of what is happening in other countries. The most striking of the actions against precarious labour that we have made was against IKEA where a comrade was fired, making boycott actions, telling people not to buy their furniture. In the end, the comrade was reinstated and those who participated in the work at the center learned enough and one of them that no longer works there set up a syndical section of people who work in tourism. This experience was good for this because it already created a new group to fight against precarity in the tourism sector.

SP-AIT: In Portugal there are about 2 million precarious workers, The majority come from companies that have been closed or denationalized, which means they have been privatized. Some of these companies which existed until the 25th of April 1974 landed in the hands of groups of bankers and multinationals. These precarious workers are the most proletarianized people. About 70% are working in temporary agencies. Another part are people who work with employment agencies from the university for free, on internships, for example, journalists. The law of the "green receipts" obliges them to pay 230 euros to the state although they receive nothing. A network was created against this law and now you have to pay 170 euros instead of 230. All of this was promoted by a left party, the Left Block, a residual movement of Maoists and Trotskyists... The largest part of the precarious workers are not in heavy industries, nor are they immigrants. Therefore we tried to create a popular movement of precarious workers and the unemployed. We tried to work together with the Green Block but this was impossible because they had nothing to do with the conditions of the workers, of the unemployed, people who had precarious work in hard sectors. On last May Day we tried to do something and we organized in this "May Day" platform but nothing came of it because these people have nothing to do with the most exploited people. So we try to gather more labouring people in Porto, workers and the long-term unemployed. We are trying to organize a popular assembly because we don't hope for anything from the parties and from the left, nor from the manipulated structure of the green receipts. We are willing to participate in the demonstrations of the reformist unions with our own anarcho-syndicalist propaganda. It is difficult to enter like our comrades in Lisbon have done, but in Porto we have workers roots and we see this as necessary. We have to discuss in these assemblies, organized by the Portuguese Section (SP-AIT). This precarization is not just touching Portuguese and Brazilian workers who go to work in the companies that appear and disappear to avoid giving indefinite contracts and many of them take advantage of the fact that immigrant workers don't have papers and therefore they work two or three months and the companies disappear without paying. In Porto this has happened many times, with the workers from the civil works and trade. We have come to the point that the workers have to pay to appear on lists of precarious workers, and pay up to 150 euros to wait to get on the list of workers offered by the temporary employment agencies. There are 2000 people who were getting aid not to live on the streets and they have been removed. Therefore we would like to organize a popular assembly to organize everybody who has suffered the latest measures, which represent only 10% of what the government wants to impose in the coming months. It is an opportunity to organize the precarious workers in anarcho-syndicalism.

SF: During the last 20 years, there was an important economic restructuring and companies that were well in the 70s and 80s but now 80% of the workers are in the services, creating this situation called flexible work. Many companies are contracting temporary workers to do the work that permanent employees were doing. Among the most affected are the young, when they lose their jobs they are left without any help and they don't have any right to any benefits so they fall into a spiral of problems. There are about 2.5 million unemployed but they are changing

the laws so to make the workers that are on the dole return before the time or lose their benefits if they don't find work quickly. They are trying to make changes so that you need to work in order to get your benefits and this is meant to reduce salaries. They try to separate the sectors so that they cannot demand their rights.

NSF: 10% of workers are temporary. In the past women were used for this. Many women work part time. Women are used for part-time work but also immigrants from the east. There is only 4% unemployment in Norway, but this is rather high for the Scandinavian model. In the last few years, the post office was privatized and 6000 people were dismissed, These workers receive benefits from the state and cannot work. They have been sacked by the system and are dependent on welfare. About 12% are in this situation and therefore the real number of unemployed reaches 16%. The Scandinavian system is well known for the advantages for the workers, it is very generous with the capitalists, because in Spain or England capitalism has to pay the workers to dismiss them but in Norway it is easy to fire people. The laws are in favor of the capitalists who can do what they want. Capital and the state go hand in hand, with the result that nationalizing the companies, the workers are subjected to benefits. A third of the workers in Norway are getting aid. And now these benefits will be drastically reduced and so are used against the part-time workers, against women and immigrants, the workers from temporary work agencies against the permanent ones. 20 years ago they had more rights and these situations were not allowed, then with some restrictions and now Norway is not a member of the European Union but is part of the European economy. Now the workers from the temporary work agencies are admitted like a labor force. They are trying to change the legislation to give rights to the agency workers, who are used against other workers. The struggle is not only in the economic aspect, but precarity influences most workers.

CNT-F: I am going to make a quick resume. There are 2 million unemployed and 7 million precarious workers. The majority of precarious workers are in the private sector and it is easier to have struggles in the public sector. In the private sector you are faced with a boss and it is easier to organize a struggle but it is more difficult to organize in temporary work. The CNT is organizing workers in the public as well as the private sector.

FAU: In Germany there was a strong social democracy and all the economy was organized with collective agreements, at least the government of the social democrats and the Greens which came to power in 98, promoted flexibility through labour reforms to put the temporary companies on the market and these reforms weakened the organizational landscape which had been before. In reality there are subcontractors in Germany and temporary employment agencies in all the sectors. There are sectors like health care and transport where there are more temporary workers and subcontractors. In theory, the people who work in the same company should be on the same conditions but this is avoided with a series of legal loopholes. There are illegal things but there is very little organization to oppose this. The little resistance that exists is to a large extent in the mainstream union. These unions perceive precarious workers as cheap competition which need to be confronted and there are not perceived as workers with worse conditions that form part of the labour system. The people that work in the temporary employment agencies are not organized and work for less than the salaries in the collective agreements, and this has weakened the main unions. People think that in Germany the salaries are high but there are also salaries for 3 euros an hour. A few cases have come to light because they were reported but the majority are not. The state subsidizes low salaries, keeping the situation calm, so the low salaries increase. In the context of withdrawal of Social Security and welfare, and of social repression, it follows that precarious people accept bad conditions because otherwise they would be unemployed, in humiliating circumstances. Other comrades have already spoken about immigrants in precarious conditions: the immigrants do the more precarious work in the most atypical conditions. In some cases they are health care workers or care for the elderly or disabled. There are labour relations in the family which have no type of contract. There have been some cases reported and salaries and payments were received but also the major unions interfere with such cases, as they see immigrants as competition. These unions even set up hotlines to encourage people to anonymously report illegally employed immigrants. This situation is changing by projects and programs which are opened for the precarious workers, although at the moment they do not work well. The majority of the cases are anti-racist groups and left extraparlimentary groups that work in these syndicates. This is a perspective for a grassroots anachosyndicalist organization.

CNT-E: I do not represent the CNT as a whole but the CNT from Granada. After the crisis the real estate sector was dismantled and is went from being a very important sector to collapse almost completely. This highlighted that we were living in an unreal situation based on an injection of money from the EU and that there is no production base in Spain, which is the reason for the large number of unemployed. Add to this the current government measures to drastically cut salaries, make dismissals cheaper and all the cut all the social benefits in general. The mainstream unions make strikes to keep up appearances. Those who are suffering most are the immigrant workers because they occupy the most precarious positions. What we are seeing is only the start of the measures intended to be implemented to serve the capitalists and so that the workers have to pay for the investors losses. What the

union has done is participate in strikes but it has not changed the plans of the government. On September 29 the mainstream unions are calling a general strike saying they will change the course of the government but the CNT does not believe this and we know that with only one day we will change nothing and we will have to pull out all the stops to achieve anything. And we know that the mainstream organizations hope that we will make pickets for them and thus save them. Many CNT unions have big mistrust in this strike. This afternoon other comrades will give more information on more specific actions.

FAI: After listening to all the sections we conclude that the economic issues are the same throughout the world. In every country there are temporary employment agencies, unemployment, job insecurity, official unions with similar tactics and it shows that capital is very well organized at the global level and this capital is what determines the policies of all countries. This leads us to the conclusion that the actions we take in each country are just band-aids. If there is not a powerful worldwide organization, we will not be anything. The only alternative is the Social Revolution and this revolution has to be conscious and united, from all the libertarian movement. Organization and social consciousness to reach this revolution.

MASA - Croatia: About the situation in Croatia, some problems are the same and others are specific. The mainstream unions only have one proposal and it is not useful at this moment and with the intention to join the European Union they are making reforms only so that they can join. All of the privileges are being by with the new neoliberal government. This is because of the global capitalist crisis. The people who had low salaries are affected most of all; there is a labour reform which attempts to destroy the collective agreements. They are also cutting aid and disability payments, cutting money for hospitals and schools to save money. The unions are trying to collect signatures to change some things but as reformist unions what they expect is to make a pact with the state about the reforms they are making. 80% of workers have temporary contracts and all the people who had permanent contracts are becoming temporary workers. Many are over 40 because for them it is more difficult to find a job. The retirement age for women is going to be increased from 60 to 65.

Secretary: The Sections have made their presentations. The debate will be adjourned until the afternoon.

PA: Are there any Sections which have campaigns dedicated to labor precarity? There is a campaign in the FAU and the ZSP. We would like to know which sections have campaigns dedicated to temporary work. Although now we cannot talk about all the actions, but to put points in common after the conference.

SP-AIT: It is not enough to speak of the Social Revolution and personally I am sick of speeches about the social revolution in the future and I think that the crisis is an opportunity but I think there is a lot to talk about for the Social Revolution to become realizable. We have to place ourselves in common between the anarchosindicalist and anarchist organizations and take advantage of the crisis and use it. Apart from Spain, we are residual organizations and we have to discuss tactics and strategies to organize ourselves. In Portugal many people who call themselves anarchists try to approach us. Many comrades reject the words tactics and strategy because they think these are military concepts but we have to discuss these issues. Regarding the debate on cooperatism, we have to take into account that we will run into many reformists who will try to make a secondary issue the primary one. In this regard there are examples in Argentina, Germany and Portugal where a textile factory was occupied and the comrades are working for themselves but are working for the capitalist market, because there is no other.

2) Definition of the main problems for anarchosindicalist actions: concrete actions, examples of self-organization, results and lessons learned.

IWA Secretary: Lets begin with the Slovak section, Priama Akcia, which has 20 minutes 40 minutes with the translation. Then the comrades from ZSP, CNT-E, FAU...

PA: I would like to talk about a conflict that we had in PA. There was a worker. She was working in a pet shop and had no written contract. She worked this way a few days and was let go. After some 24 hours, the boss told her that she was on a trial period and had no right to get paid. In the end, the boss gave her part of the money, but not all and after a while the worker called the boss and demanded her money. In the end she contacted us. At the moment we don't have comrades in that city but it so happened that we were having a congress in there and we were able to speak to the comrades and with the worker. We prepared a pamphlet and we gave out the information at the entrance to the shop. The boss has 2 shops and a warehouse. The first day we went to the shop where she was working. There was not a lot of people but we spoke to the woman who was working there at the moment, also without a contract, which is illegal. We spoke to the boss by phone and we said that he has to pay the worker. He

claimed that he paid her already and threatened some legal action. He threatened us that we would have to pay up to a million euros. In the end, we achieved the effect that the boss told the worker that she has to close the shop, therefore we went to the other one. From what we know, the first shop stayed closed the whole day. The worker in the other shop was in a better situation since he was legally employed. After this first action we planned how to continue the conflict. She still didn't get paid. The worker met with a comrade and the owner and he continued threatening legal action as no agreement was reached. We will comment on some related laws: First of all, there was no contract, which is against the law; secondly they did not pay the worker; this is punishable by up to three years in prison. The worker had also broken a few laws and therefore she didn't continue the conflict. She was receiving unemployment benefits while she was working. This is not strictly illegal - it depends on the contract. Since she did not have a contract we didn't know how this would work. Another thing, she was working while she was on sick leave. If the boss found out about this he could make problems for her. In addition to the legal threats against the worker, Priama Akcia is not registered as a union. This could be a big problem and the complaint could go directly to the worker. There was also physical aggression on the part of the employer. Another thing, we published an article on the web page about the conflict, saying that the employer did not pay. You have to also take into account that web pages are registered. I am going to say how the conflict was resolved and what was learned. We already said why the conflict did not go further. There was fear of physical attacks and we had also heard that the boss had connections with the mafia. The other things is that she would have to act publicly against the employer, which is unusual in Slovakia. Also, there was no group in this city. The worker had the possibility to find a new job with legal conditions. Given the refusal of the worker to do anything, we also did nothing. In the end she called the Labour Inspector and the Commercial Inspection, which visited the shops and in the end the employer had different fines. We also heard that the other employee got a legal contract. We think that this contract was thanks to our actions. At the moment we are trying to find out if the proper salary is being paid. Normally the members of PA don't agree with the Labour Inspections but we do not have a clear position on this. We agreed with the call that the friend of the worker made because there would not be a direct action. The first lesson we learned is that we are please with our capability to reach. We were in the middle of a congress and this stopped. It was the first time we helped a worker who came to the union to ask for help in a conflict. Also we are beginning to speak about legal relations in PA. Thanks to these discussions we have leaned a lot about our rights and the risks of doing certain things. A few comrades were not satisfied and so for a few days we talked about legal questions and not about actions to take and there are two reasons for this: we had no presence in that city and the majority of contacts we made through a friend we were not very certain of what could happen to us or her if the employer followed through on his threats. We have to face this situation and it took us two days to study the laws. We have been speaking about the possible strategies with other comrades from the IWA. We thank the ZSP, CNT-E, NSF and CNT-F for their support. We were inspired by the publications of FAU. We published the English pamphlet on our web page and there is more information about this conflict in the document.

SP-AIT: How long ago was that?

PA: In May-June 2009.

ZSP: How have you resolved the problem of publishing information which could have legal consequences on your web page?

PA: There was a risk of being sued for libel and we decided to put a little note on the web page which said that the owner of the page is not responsible for its content, now we see that there is no risk in publishing this information.

ZSP: We also have this problem but we are not afraid because we say the truth and we haven't been taken to court. It could actually help publicize the conflict.

PA: We had a problem that we had no written documents which would prove that the labour relation existed and we had to consider that the worker was scared to do certain things.

CNT-E: Are there reformist unions in Slovakia?

PA: It depends what is considered reformist unions. In Slovakia we have the same official unions as in other countries.

CNT-E: Why did the worker turn to you and not to those unions?

PA: The worker wouldn't consider that option because these unions have no interest in these conflicts and the situation in Slovakia is distinct because workers are not unionized and this is precarious work and in these cases it is less probable that the workers unionize. Also she knew us through a friend.

ZSP: What you said about the worker who was afraid is very familiar to us. It is particularly difficult in certain sectors. In Poland it is very common to work without a contract and the bosses sometimes blackmail people with this. The poor workers, immigrants are afraid. When we talk about a common strategy it is important to take a position on this work.

PA: Yes, we have these discussions all the time. There is always the problem that we want to do something and the worker doesn't want but we want to be very careful with this type of thing since there can be legal consequences and we don't have any agreement yet on this issue. As for the fear of the workers, it always depends on what they feel. If they want to do something, we support them. If they don't, obviously we won't do anything. For us it is difficult to make the person feel safe and continue the struggle when there is no tradition of struggle, either in Slovakia or PA. The solution to overcome fear is to win conflicts so there is a reference and people stop being afraid of struggle. A few months ago a comrade had a conflict and was and and he was willing to fight, so we supported him. He won his claims without resorting to direct action since in the end we found another way which allowed us to do this without it. If we find examples of this type it will follow that the workers will lose their fear.

SF: We have seen a similar situation when they didn't pay a worker at a restaurant. The workers were a little afraid because the boss threatened them with a knife. For the little sections these conflicts are a good intermediate stage before we take on bigger conflicts.

PA: We want to be precise about the topic of the students. We are preparing pamphlets concerning the student workers who don't earn salaries and are contracted through temporary work agencies. It has two principle parts: the first will be an introduction where we explain why it is important that the students give their opinion. The second part is the experience with conflicts. The third part speaks about the legal situation and what we have learned from that. Which is probably the most important. The first conflict was in construction, in the summer of 2001. Two comrades from PA were involved. The main problem was that the employer tried to cheat us with the number of hours we had to work. The workers who were students were going to receive two hours less. We had a heated discussion when we talked about this with the employers and there was no solution. The comrades from PA started to develop a plan to see how to confront this. The plan consisted of four steps: we wanted to get media attention and this is easy in summer. We wanted to get in contact with the 17 workers. We from PA designed a poster for the campaign. We morally supported the workers that were in this situation, to boycott the builder and not the agency and to give an example to other students to fight for their rights. We thought about the possibility the Sections do solidarity actions against the foreigner investor. In the end nothing was achieved and I am going to mention the negative aspects of this conflict. We were not capable to respond rapidly to to address the conflict and ensure that the students be organized to prepare actions. We didn't have direct contact with these people and it was a little random. This is something common with the precarious workers, the fluctuation between the companies. After leaving the work, we were waiting to see how events would unfold. When we spoke with the agency, it took a week to receive a response and we had to accept the delay because they said that a solution between the boss of the agency and the boss who contracted the services was needed. We got the salary we were struggling for and we thought that it was what we were supposed to have. We discovered that the hourly rate that they paid us was less than for others. It would have been nice to go to the agency to ask before going to the builder because the employer told us another amount. It is explained in the documentation. At first we thought it was a victory but then we saw it wasn't exactly so. Apart from other problems we felt uncertain about the possible consequences of some of our actions. And we had the feeling of having a certain resignation to the employer with the passing of the days. The other conflict was with a temporary employment agency who tried to cheat and not pay salaries. That was in the summer of 2002 and two comrades took part in this conflict. There were 15 students contracted by the agency to apply labels to soft drink bottles. When the work was almost done the manager came and realized that there were labels missing and said that they need to find these labels. This was impossible since they were inside a pile of papers. The students met and decided that they would not do that and demanded that the agency pay for the labels that were already applied. We were hoping that the agency would take a position and communicate it to use but when they came the agency told us we had to wait another week but the good news in that after this week our claims were fulfilled and we didn't need the boycott and other actions. We thought it was luck and in other cases it would not be enough to wait. Another of the lessons is an example of self organization.

The morning session was closed at 14:00. The afternoon session began at 15:50.

Greenway

ZSP: We are going to speak about 3 conflicts but to focus on one. We had a conflict at a café in Poland and in the

network of vegetarian restaurants, Green Way and next week we will have another conflict in another restaurant. In these three places, they use student labour, the turnover is very high, many work only for a few months. They used workers without contracts and they abuse the trial work contracts. If we speak about the temporary contracts, this came up in these three conflicts and what we found is that in this industry they are using this in an unregulated way, despite the fact that these contracts are actually regulated. For example, there is no such thing like working for free, neither during the trial periods nor training but many times the bosses don't pay people saying that they are in trial periods. The longest unpaid trial period we heard about was 2 months. In these periods they don't pay the workers anything and in the restaurant in Warsaw they try to charge the worker to pay for this trial period. A comrade went to work and the employee told him that if he works a certain period of time he will not be charged for this training but if he was fired he would have to pay. The comrade refused and he was successful but the rest of the workers could not. We don't know what the result will be because we are only now going to make protests. In the café bookshop, an interesting detail is that this bookshop was alternative, even though it is in the center of the city. The owner is a member of Attac, a social democrat. One of the comrades was working at this bookshop. At this time she was not a member of our union. The funny thing is we were having meetings in this place and one of the workers understood what we were talking about in our meetings about workers' rights. She did not have a contract. Many workers there were on a trial period and found that the company encouraged this type of contract and working conditions convincing the workers of the advantages of illegal work for the saving the company would get. When we started it was a complicated moment because the comrade was fired and like the comrades from SolFed said, many times we are dealing with workers who have already been fired and this has its own dynamic. If they have been fired before any organizational work has been done, they try to get the support of the workers who are still there, but without being inside the company. This case became very ugly very quickly because the owner was a well-known social democrat and his bookshop was used by some liberals and leftists who quickly took his side. This caused a war of comments on the internet, on the radio and therefore it became well known and many people had an opinion on this matter. There was a lot of pressure on these people. People insisted on showing the necessities of precarious work. Unfortunately, one worker took the side of the company. Finally, the company decided on mediation. First they wanted to put their friends as mediators, then a union as a mediator, but one of the people from the union said that she had worked casually and saw no problem with this. We saw that it was impossible for them to be mediators. The situation improved because the company agreed to employee people on permanent work contracts. Nevertheless, the problem was that a few of the workers didn't want this and preferred to be on a temporary contract. We thought that a group of workers would be against this. Why? And we realized that we were dealing with a very neoliberal mentality, young people, without experience and some liked the "cool" atmosphere of the shop. We understood that we needed to have an educational campaign so that people learned their rights. We published a pamphlet which talked about this and the comrades from Wroclaw also started with the education campaigns and then what happened was what we want to happen, that more people joined the union. Amongst those were people from Green Way. We already had problems with them 3 years ago, then we did some propaganda. The ones who contacted ZSP joined us, they had heard about the first case and also they had unpaid trial periods and they had lots of problems with unpaid overtime, etc. We spoke with the owner to convince her and after there was no response we started a national boycott campaign. We had a few successes and they promised that they would stop this practice but then there was a problem that one of the workers had legal problems with the company. And there is a problem which many people can identify with. Every couple of months the staff turnover is quite high. It is a McJob and people only work there one or two months and everybody is dreaming of not being there. Currently this conflict is not resolved but we have no worker in the company. In September new workers arrive and we have to see this as a long-term struggle. When we were talking with the comrades from the Starbucks unions they said that this is a common problem. They had people who had been fired and it took them years to grow the union inside. And it is a question how to develop the union inside when people are no longer working there. We have to think how to attack this situation. We can leave that for the debate.

CNT-E: I would like to speak about how it is in Spain to compare the situation. Training and practice work have a one-month trial period. Workers earn money during this time but if during that month they do not pass the test, they are fired without compensation. The contracts, both in practice and in training, have a test period. The difference is that during the the first year people on these contracts earn only 70% as much as others in the same job. It is the main difference but it is just the different government policies.

ZSP: I can clarify that the trial periods can be from one day to 3 months and are paid. Students and people in their first job may earn 20% lower than the minimum wage. You have the right to vacation and notice period in case of dismissal. All this is according to the law but in practice, the employers do what they want. When somebody comes to us with a contract like that, we say that it is illegal but workers who don't know the law sign anything. They even can waive 50% of their salaries. If they have such contracts they can easily go to court and win. But

there is a great problem with mass unemployment in Poland, above all amongst students and older workers. These students, of workers from the villages have no idea and the companies invent illegal working conditions.

Secretary: Now we will hear about conflicts from Granada.

ASM and Hotel Vincci

CNT-E (GRANADA): We are from the local federation of Granada. We are going to talk about 2 of our many conflicts. We are not going to mention the conflicts about claims or the union sections. We are going to focus on the conflicts in ASM and Hotel Vincci as in both cases the comrades want to return to their work. In the Hotel Vincci a worker approached the union because he was fired while on leave. While he was on leave, he went to work to bring a security document and they made a scene there. When the document was to be submitted, he was at home. The police arrived because the employer accused him of assault. So he was fired and a restraining order was taken out against him. We decided to support this comrade because he had had a serious accident which made it impossible for him to do a lot of work and the company did not want to be responsible for this so long. The conflict began doing actions in front of hotels, boycott actions outside the law and acts of propaganda because the interesting thing is that this company lives off their image and we wanted to damage that image. Subsequently solidarity was called for from the other unions. The conflict was very difficult because the judicial route was exhausted and it must be carried out only by direct action. We have a clear position regarding the union activity of the CNT.

We will move on to the ASM conflict. We will explain it in more details. ASM is a courier company where a comrade, who is the secretary of the union works and he started the conflict. This comrade was militant in the union before the conflict started. He wanted to legalize the union section in ASM and that was when it all began. He was dismissed and the company claimed a lack of productivity. It turned out that the comrade did not want compensation but to be reinstated and we sat down and worked out a plan of action. We focused on making the company lose money and attacking its image. We made a lot of propaganda, a blog and groups on the social networking sites. We then started to make protests in front of the company offices locally and nationally. There was a lot of support from outside of Spain. Another point was to attack the relationship between ASM and other companies making a list of partner companies and sending a letter in the form of a little extortion because we asked them to stop dealing with this company. If they didn't react, we extended the conflict to these companies.

Once the conflict is extended, we called for faxes and other actions to be taken against these companies. The legal route was a work inspection, a claim made by the dismissed person and the issue of the private prosecution and accusing the company of violating the basic law of freedom of association. We're working on it for if it can continue and achieve something we will later inform people of the results. While we continue with the actions we continue to think up other imaginative ways to pressure the company. Many ideas were thought up although some were not very effective, such as posing as clients and making fake negotiations with the company. At that time the company responded and made contact with us by calling the secretary of trade union action of CNT to speak to us to ask for a meeting to find a solution.

We realized when the meeting did not come that he wanted us to stop these actions. Another mistake besides believing that the meeting would take place was when the company contacted the Permanent Secretariat of the CNT we should have asked him that the communication be directly with us. Since the company speaking with the Permanent Secretariat and the Secretariat with us brought some communications problems, we hope that saying this, other unions don't make the same mistake. In the situation we are in, there was no meeting and we are waiting for the court date on the 17th of September.

From these two conflicts, of all that are in the CNT, the most important is the following reflection: we think that currently there are some problems in some of the CNT sections regarding the struggle with big companies. When the CNT Granada has a conflict with medium or small companies, it is relatively easy to win, almost always by direct action. But when the CNT has a conflict with big capital, it often ends up in court, and this ends if the case is lost. It is something inherent in the activity itself. The conflicts that we have with Mercadona, such as we face, means it is very difficult to achieve reinstatement. Mercadona is big business and strong enough to withstand a conflict with CNT Granada or even against the CNT as a whole, with its pickets, propaganda etc .. The same with ASM and other large companies. The problem is that labour conflicts of this type have to be attacked economically and therefore protests and image-damaging campaigns are made, but the problem is that this does minimal damage to large companies. The reality is that we need a debate about monitoring the actions and solidarity actions and a marked strategy to be clear if it is not completely legal. It is really a debate that we are introducing since it is a question that paralyzes us in the conflicts with the big businesses. This is not to have an

illegal position since the CNT intends to maintain its position as a legal union. Rather it is to look at oneself and assess the conflicts it maintains, and how they are run and how we do not carry on so that the company loses enough money. What the big capital does not permit is having the CNT inside its company. They have the power to fire people when they want and we need a change so they do not feel they can do this. We think we have a problem that we do not approach the conflicts by assessing the current power relations. We have made the mistake of concentrating the conflicts on the image and some conflicts require that the company loses a lot of money. This is the debate that we should have when we talk about precarity and the union project, since if we don't, there will be nothing real but only good intentions.

ZSP: We think that these companies are so big that they can also be more vulnerable because they can be attacked from various sides and their image can be made worse.

CNT-E: The reality is that when it is a large company in the conflict, it is not the same as with a small one where you win more easily. We do not want to say that because it is larger, you can do more damage. A test for the comrades of the IWA is that our comrade reinstated at Mercadona achieved this through the court, so we cannot consider this to be a reinstatement achieved by the CNT. For us there are no more examples. For the comrades who work in the big companies, if you want more money you can get this, but not reinstatement.

FAU: How is the health of the worker who had the accident?

CNT-E: They have taken all possible legal means and the comrade is recuperated well from his injuries. The thing is that he was dismissed while on leave. That is not something which allows you to achieve reinstatement. In Spain it is possible to dismiss somebody freely. Reinstatement has to be achieved by other means.

ZSP: Is there legal protection for union representatives?

CNT-E: In case of union branches it is about the only way to get a dismissal annulled. There is another case, but annulling the dismissal in the courts is virtually impossible. We wanted to forward an idea. We do not expect that illegal activities be established in a formal way, but the specific question of ensuring that businesses will lose money should be in the hands of all unions. To avoid having to call on the phone to other unions to demand action, unions need to know that struggles are done to achieve the objectives.

SP-AIT: Are there workers in this struggle, not only comrades from work but also the clients? Is the campaign carried out only with the workers or also is it planned to mobilize the people in the area?

CNT-E: From the beginning we call for a boycott and explain the conflict to the people who deal with the business. ASM works with companies in all sorts of ways, not directly with people, so it was not possible to do it this way.

PA: ASM is no more than a business and behind these businesses are specific people.

CNT-E: When we speak of imaginative things, we are referring to things like this and if concrete people can be pressured by advertising and propaganda.

USI: I ask the CNT, which has an important history a century old, if it has asked when going down this path of labor rights claim is not going to claim something that is marginal in the problems of labor, labor issues. Because I think that a solution to precarity cannot be the management of marginal conflicts, but I believe that a solution to this problem is the creation of a strategic plan to build an alternative perspective. The Social Revolution works in everyday life. The resolution to these conflicts must be understood within a process that leads to the revolution, finding a link between the Social Revolution and everyday life. Finding this link can be a solution also so that young people can find something for their imagination and so that their thinking evolves towards a perspective for the Social Revolution.

CNT-E: The conflicts we carry out are not juvenile but they relate to the world of work for all the Spanish proletariat, since dismissal is something that is relevant to all workers. Our intention is to bring ideas to the workplace, our way of understanding life. The IWA brings forth the conflict through everyday practice and this is when the IWA proposes that the workers see another way of organizing themselves and other way of functioning in society. It is a debate beyond anarcho-syndicalism that we will come closer to the social revolution when class consciousness is more developed. We know that none of these conflicts are going to lead us to the Revolution, but it is the anarcho-syndicalist path, to generate awareness, since we saw the workplace was a good place for that, since that is precisely where the capital is. We try to combine labour conflict with the social. This conflict was about a demand for reinstatement, not for more money for the dismissed person because we think that this is a good way

to form the consciousness of the rest of the workers. We believe that raising awareness is an everyday, time-consuming and long-term process. We do this in the everyday conflicts. In 36, when there was more consciousness, more was built for the libertarian idea, but previously they had partly done this work. Many comrades come to the union for practical reasons, not for ideas. Helping a comrade knowing that in the future you could need support yourself.

PA: What can be done against the large companies? We are a small section and we find it difficult to talk about it with knowledge. It would be interesting to study other conflicts, even ones that aren't anarchosindicalist. We don't know if the CNT has done this.

CNT-E: Through direct action the image of the company can be damaged. It is done with protests, pickets and propaganda, also on the internet, by searching for what will make the firm lose money. But we have to take into account that the big companies can withstand this and it is important for us to study how to cause them to lose money without being so medial. There are comrades that have spent many years in the organization and can advise us, because their experience is quite important. We have learned one fundamental thing from these people and that is that all labour conflicts are distinct or at least they should be thought about in different ways. In the CNT, we always do the same: protests, posters, etc... We have to find other means. We understand that it is vital that we can articulate mechanisms that enable this struggles without having to put the comrades in danger. It is a very long debate and we do not have an answer because we are having this debate ourselves and this has to be resolved internally in each of the sections or at forums such as these. We are aware that there must be a change in mentality for us to change the situation and by radicalizing the actions we will change the situation. Now we are perhaps too peaceful at times.

SP-AIT: A few years ago I saw a poster made by the comrades at FAU. It said "stick capitalism where it hurts - at the workplace". There is a problem that we are starting but we are unemployed and don't have anybody in any companies. The anarchists and the anarchosindicalists should be directly the organizers of the unemployed, because all the time there are more and more of them. Capitalism cannot eliminate unemployment completely. It needs an army of reserve labor to force the employed to accept anything. We are in a different situation. Here in Spain there is a very important tradition; we are starting from zero. Together with the workers who are organizing the union in Porto, together with the unemployed. Capitalism is much more than the workplace. Therefore, knowing that anarchosindicalist work implies much strength and daily wear and tear, not to mention continuity, or alternatives or making anarchism into a lifestyle. We are seeing a situation which can not be exclusively anarchist. Anarchosindicalism is the fundamental thing. It is very important to act on the unemployed, not just on the workers. How do you see the possibility to mobilize the unemployed in Granada?

CNT-E: The assembly of the unemployed is important but it is a topic that hasn't been touched upon much. It is being done but we are bringing this up now. It looks more like an experiment than a useful tool. We must be careful because it can cause problems. Right now there are different unemployed assemblies in many of the CNT unions. They are doing this in Adra. In other unions they have tried and they do not work because there are many people and it is difficult to organize and it is tempting for other types of organizations. When you do this you hope that you can be open but then there is interference from parties, mainstream unions, etc., to manipulate them.

PA: To what extent is union activity in Spain legal?

CNT-E: 90% of the most basic activity is forbidden. For example, putting up posters, which is regulated by municipal ordinances. The want to attack the militant organizations with this.

PA: Can you specify what you were referring to with this change of mentality?

CNT-E: What we mean is that people become more involved in conflicts. An example is that putting up posters or making graffiti on the street is illegal, but people continue to do it. With the major conflicts, we would have to think of other solutions, less medial but more direct against the company. The actions though discreet, can attack the company directly and maximize their losses. The change of mentality is aimed the use of other actions debated in the unions. We do not propose anything new but it seems there is a lack intensity when dealing with conflicts and this is vital. There are many conflicts but if we take the one in the shipyards of Puerto Real, it was a struggle in which the radicalization of the conflict was what put the conversion of the shipyard at risk and this is what can be done so that many conflicts can win. We think that you can not win against big capital with spectacles, but with radical actions. The change of mentality can be attributed to such actions. The radicalization of actions is something that changes the mentality of the militants and the organization in general.

PA: We insist that such examples of these possible struggles be made to get some new ideas.

CNT-E: In the Mercadona conflict in the Local Federation of Granada we have come to a point where we cannot damage the image of the company any more. Let's suppose there is a transport of goods from the logistics center to supermarkets. With different actions the mentality of the militants has to change from making protests and spreading propaganda to other actions.

PA: Would the two ways complement each other?

CNT-E: In all the conflicts you have to use all the ways that can be used. These two types of actions do not exclude each other.

SP-AIT: The thing that can distinguish anarchosyndicalism from reformism is not only legality. Reformist unions in Portugal make illegal actions but they are still reformist.

Secretary: It is best to leave the exchange of examples for another day so that you can think about the possible ideas.

There is a 15 minute break.

Solidarity Federation

SF: I am Tom and I come from Great Britain. I am going to give a brief explanation of what we are doing, where we are and where we want to go. We are a small group of about 60 members in a country of approximately 60 million. Presently we are focusing most of our energy on propaganda. We are trying to gradually become more involved in actions and solving the problems we encounter. Now I will give some examples of the propaganda we are starting.

In reference to the labour situation and the bad conditions in England, we are making brochures explaining the situation. We also have a newspaper which explains how this all works, etc. Although we are a small group, we try to have members in each industry, education, etc., to have a network that allows us to combine in actions and other things.

For example, now one of the actions that we are taking is inside the educational system. Right now we are trying to coordinate to see how we can solve this labor problem. One of our major goals is propaganda. In this little booklet we have here there are some small tips about how to make actions. We think that this type of action is missing a little bit in the big unions.

We try to solve some problems through our organization, but the big trade unions reached an agreement with workers that they would be dismissed in exchange for economic compensation. We tried to prevent this but the major unions won. Despite the fact that the workers failed to keep their jobs, a few members who were dismissed organized themselves to inform other workers, above all to prevent scabbing. This is a little explanation of the experiences we have learned inside the education sector. One of the major goals now that we are trying to achieve through the members with more experience is that we are trying to make training for workers who are organized and from the outside. A target point we are seeing now is not only propaganda but also training. Not only for our members, but also for other workers. The main objective is to raise awareness of how to organize and put all of theories in practice. Although our main objective is to solve problems at the collective level, we have also found cases and always try to do our best to help comrades at the individual level. Although this practice is not carried to extremes, we try to go on a collective level much more than an individual one.

Masa

MASA: We are going to talk about different actions which were important for us. One action had to do with the Broadway Cineplex. The first action which we will speak about took place in the summer of 2008 and it was the first one which we achieved anything with. The comrade was a student who was working there as an intern. She was working seasonally for the summer, contracted by through a form of "student service" where workers are only temporary and paid 3 euros an hour. For the employees it is an amount that saves a lot of money on social security payments and cuts many workers' rights. Our comrade had worked there for 3 months and in the end didn't get even a single euro. We sent a letter to the employer and to the media. The employer sent a letter to the media claiming he had already paid. Following the publication of the article in a newspaper, the employer paid what he owed the worker. For them it was a great victory because they were thinking about continuing with actions and they didn't expect it. The following summer, the summer of 2009, we returned to have a conflict with these same theaters. There were 15 students with the same contract as before and they had been working for 2 or 3

months without getting paid. Having basically the same conflict again the next year and seeing that they didn't pay the workers, it was discovered that this was the usual practice of the company. One of the students joined MASA. The first thing that these 15 students did was publish an article in the local paper. They knew about the previous conflict and decided to contact us and they wrote about it on a liberal-left internet portal. At the beginning of the conflict, the local group from the city of Split contacted the employer and attempted to spread word about the conflict in different media. Speaking with the employer, he claimed it was not his problem, only the fault of student service and he tried to wash his hands of the matter. Finally they got in contact with the student service and found out that student service had complained to the company that they weren't paid. By the summer the students went on vacations and we saw that we couldn't fight for their conflict if they didn't want to participate. This would be the biggest problem we would face - the workers that treat us like a service company and come to us hoping that we will resolve the conflict for them.

The next conflict we are going to talk about is about a clothing store whose owner is in the local government of Pula. There were three temporary workers who hadn't been paid. They contacted MASA and made pickets outside the shop. Following this, they sent a letter to the employer and local newspapers which was later published. The employer said that she couldn't pay because she didn't have money. She promised to pay when she was paid by another person who owed her money. She took the letter she received to the police because there was a line in it that said that if she didn't fulfill our demands, there would be more actions. She went to the police and told them that this constituted a death threat against her. The police contacted the local secretary and threatened that they could end up in jail. Because of this police threat, the workers were afraid and took the advice of the lawyer to do everything by legal route. This was about 18 months ago and still there is no resolution to the conflict.

PA: What did the comrades say when they went to the police?

MASA: It was a mistake to go in the first place since there was no way to know who she was and what the police wanted was learn more about MASA. They asked many questions and not when the comrade didn't answer she was threatened with jail.

Babylon

FAU: Babylon is a cinema in Berlin with a big left tradition, where people were hidden during the fascist times. The current owner of the cinema got it because he is the son of a famous American communist who escaped the army and went to the GDR. Since the father of Timothy Grossman is in the left party, the cinema gets 300,000 euros support from the government. I was hired at the Cinema Babylon in 2007 and I found total chaos there because the boss is paranoid. He usually makes very short-term decisions and in a very arbitrary way, but since the local government supports him, they always allocate money. The staff consists mostly of students and artists, mostly precarious workers who liked to work there because they had very short contracts, or no written contracts. The boss ignores the legal rights of workers like pay during sick leave or vacations and contracted them and fired them illegally. This situation is normal in Berlin because there are lots of people who work this way. The cinema hosts film festivals because they are popular. Because of this situation, the staff created a work council in 2008 without the help of any union to deal with the problems they were having there. The repression of the work council started just after it was created. One comrade was sent to work alone in the basement. The key to the office was taken from another and they threw me out onto the street. The people from the work council were terrified and went to a major union it did not want to deal with people in precarious jobs. I thought that he had to leave the theater but I talked to another comrade and we thought about making a strike there. There was another comrade who had been working there named Jason who had been supported by FAU during his conflict with the cinema. During this time the workers started to gather in a nearby bar and most of the workers went. So they decided to make a press release with their demands. The first was to get paid more during festivals which Babylon took part in. The repression decreased for a while while the case was in court. At that time there were few people who could show the films but all the people who worked in projection had no time to work there. The boss, seeing the situation and the press release decided to give them vacation pay and the rest of the rights that they wanted. This was the first victory for the FAU Berlin and there grew to be 6 members at the cinema. They responded that sometimes justice serves some purpose. Then there was the first protest of FAU in front of the cinema. The first letter from FAU was sent for the festival. At this time a member of the union was dismissed. He begins to go into more details about the story in December when Andreas was dismissed. At that time there were more activists in the cinema, with whom to talk and explain their labour rights. A few workers were not interested because they were only there during studies. Then the situation got better. There were regular assemblies and they were getting more radical. As the festival drew near, they decided to use the occasion to say they would not work for less than 12 euros. The boss hired new people and even though the comrades were very united, the new people were very affected by the trial period. At this time it was not only the boss that put pressure on the staff but also the office workers. The boss's assistant also had a lot of influence and pushed for the dismissal. In this day, the comrade was working

alone and somebody who he did not understand well approached him. After his work he went to turn off all the lights and turned off one he shouldn't have. The absurd thing was that night a person was playing in the theatre who was in solidarity with them and he was playing a solidarity song for the workers of the cinema when the comrade cut the lights.

And this was the reason that Benoit was dismissed and there is a law in Germany that if you have been working at a job for less than 6 months, the boss can fire you without any reason. There were also positive sides to this because the comrade received a lot of support from the IWA and would like to thank people for this support now. One of the methods that was used to pressure the cinema was that many people sent them black faxes and when they got back from vacation they found a hallway full of black faxes. There is still one on the boss's door. There was a problem concerning the reinstatement campaign because the comrade needed money and a cinema which was an enemy of Babylon offered him a job and the comrade accepted. Another comrade thought that it would be possible to be reinstated in this case. The next action of FAU in the conflict was the elaboration of a proposed collective agreement for the cinema which was based on the agreement of the major union but with some improvements. The first meeting between FAU and the boss seemed to go well at first, although the boss said that the workers were parasites. In the end he agreed to wait for the FAU proposal and said that perhaps they can reach an agreement. Then the next thing he did was send a letter to the workers saying that they could not negotiate with the FAU because they were dangerous anarchists. This improved the situation, giving the conflict a romantic air. A strike was not possible then because there were workers with reduced contract periods and they wouldn't dare. We decided to use a boycott and this was the best weapon we could have chosen because the cinema has a very left-wing public and thus we could attack the image the cinema had. FAU was there all summer, every day and many people returned their tickets after finding out what was happening in the cinema. The boss was pressuring them not to return the tickets, but many did anyway. Then the first wave of repression started. The court prohibited us from boycotting the cinema. They threw some of us out, others went to work for other companies and some of the open-air cinemas that they boss had in the summer were closed. Then we also decided to do some actions against another open-air cinema owned by the same person. We tried to talk with the Senate and the government of Berlin. There was a meeting with the leftist party, conferences on the topic, etc. Then there were rumours that the major union wanted to negotiate an agreement with the boss of Babylon. We had a meeting with Verdi. This union has a rather high position and decided to undertake the conflict, although it did not fit the internal structure of its own union. This was how a long series of broken promises, intrigues, etc. began. Because the major union considered FAU to be "enemies". Verdi union only has one member in Babylon Cinema. Then there was a meeting called by the work council and the boss later declared it illegal. Members of FAU participated in this meeting on behalf of Verdi and the meeting agreed that both unions should sign the agreement together. The Verdi official said that it would apply the collective agreement from the cinema sector and that it had entered the conflict by a member of Verdi. The only member of Verdi was also a member of FAU and it was not him. At this time there was a big party before the elections in the cinema. The people at the party handed out leaflets in front of the cinema informing people that FAU were dangerous anarchists and that they had called on Verdi to negotiate the agreement. A little later there was a second court case where the bosses tried to prohibit FAU from calling itself a union. One of the reasons that the boss of the cinema alleged was that the FAU wanted to destroy the cinema using guerrilla methods and he showed false emails sent supposedly by the comrades of FAU.

And when FAU was already outside of the conflict it couldn't continue negotiating. Verdi came to the negotiations on its own accord without involving the staff in any way and without accounting to them. Three quarters of the staff wrote a letter to the Verdi official, but without any reaction.

At the beginning of 2010 Verdi signed a collective agreement and broke all of the promises it had made. The agreement was worse than others that Verdi had signed. At the first demonstrations we made, we carried a banner that said "For a handful of euros".

It was a hard blow to the public image of Verdi and the official lost his position. This was another step in the loss of any influence it had since the agreement signed between Verdi and the company should only apply to full-time workers and the 11 workers who were not full-time were forced to take contracts worse than before. The work council called another meeting and had two options. To join Verdi and force the signed agreement. Surprisingly the staff refused to join Verdi and requested that the agreement be applied to them without joining the union. The staff had decreased significantly, from 31 to 16, 8 comrades. The working days were cut so that there was less work and less to spend on salaries. Before there was a division between the precarious workers who had to get money from other jobs, from their parents, etc. FAU got back the right to call itself a union, but it doesn't have the right to be present at the cinema, to sign agreements with it, to participate in meetings, etc. There are continuing court cases against members of FAU for actions made during the conflict. Among the positive results, an agreement was reached, although with some disadvantages. The staff saw that it had to fight and discovered that fighting you can win something. It was its first labour conflict. FAU became much more known in Germany and grew significantly in Berlin and other places. In reality it is the only independent union. We also gained a lot of students from this conflict. The bad thing and the paradox is that the labour situation in the cinema

is worse than before. It is more difficult for the FAU to enter into struggles because of all the sentences it has. The good thing is that from the beginning there was a radical conflict from below because it came from the workers' meetings. The contact with other more radical groups was also rather important. Another negative consequence was that during the conflict, the union section of FAU took the role of the vanguard and the workers did not participate in a totally active way. However, all the workers organized in FAU are still in the cinema and they are still more than 25% of the workers. We also had many useful experiences and now we are in a bigger conflict, but still the route of collective agreements seems closed. Andreas thinks it will remain this way. Andreas also works in another cinema, a multiplex where FAU has established a presence. In the cinema the people are pissed off and want to fight for their rights, but the major union has said that until 50% of the staff joins, it will not move a finger. We have two members of FAU in the cinema. When the major union figures out that FAU is there, Andreas thinks that they will immediately become active. It is a function that we can play at this time. To push the major union to do what it should be doing. We can force them to do things together with the workers.

ZSP: At first when approaching Verdi, did you see any problems with these type of action?

FAU: Sure there is a ton of problems but now we have the same interests and we can use its force to get improvements through the force of the workers, forcing the union to accept.

ZSP: Do you see any other way to intervene in the conflict, not by collective bargaining?

FAU: Of course there is, but in this specific case the cinema is under a collective agreement, but for us, we have two members and there is no other option to pressure the company at the moment.

ZSP: Can you explain why the conditions in the cinema are worse?

FAU: Half of the staff were fired and although they have higher salaries, they work fewer hours and earn less money.

ZSP: Did you join FAU because of the conflict or because you can heard of them.

FAU: The major union showed no interest in our problems. Andreas talked with FAU, they offered options and Andreas joined.

SP: We did many actions in support of FAU and they were the first actions that we did as a union. So we are very aware of that union.

FAU: We want to thanks all the sections of the International for their solidarity which came at a time when we were totally drained. In Madrid we discovered that they is a cinema that has almost the same architecture as Babylon.

PA: Are there other possibilities to change labour contracts besides collective negotiation?

FAU: The German labour law is very repressive and only permits the large organizations to make collective agreements and therefore FAU cannot do this. There is a way of concluding agreements between the boss and the union as a legal entity and so this is a little way around the restrictions regarding collective agreements. Every time there is a bigger connection between workers who are dissatisfied with the way their union is working and FAU.

SF: There are tactics like those used by SolFed which allow for actions with only a few members, when there is only one affiliated member, they can make meetings in bars and organize actions which can be important.

PA: In the situation for the FAU at the cinema now, does it need the major unions to develop its activity?

FAU: No, this is in the specific case of the multiplex. The FAU continues with direct action and will continue to be independent and we won't lose ourselves in the struggle to sign collective agreements when we have to support our comrades.

Secretary: The secretary of KRAS has arrived. Tomorrow morning the presentation will begin at 10 with Ryanair. The comrades from Humanidad in Peru have finally received visas and will arrive tomorrow.

The session closed at 20:15.

The session opened with a new chair at 11:00

Ryanair

CNT-E (Zaragoza): The comrade from Ryanair could not come. He gave me something in writing. At the end of 2008, there were a total of nine employees at the ramp (eight operators and the supervisor) who were in charge of the physical or manual labour. There was also the office and billing staff which totalled about a dozen workers, subcontracted by a company called LESMA. The working conditions for both (the ramp operators and office workers) the same: € 1050 a month salary for those with more than a year on the job and full-time (160 hours a month), and hiring dependent on circumstances of production. The policy of the company is to maintain this type of contract for a year for each worker and then either renew it on fixed terms or to dismiss the worker covertly (by not renewing the contract).

At the beginning of 2009, the firm reduced the working hours for all the staff to 140 hours a month, which meant a reduction in earnings, which would work out to about €900 a month. A rumour spread that there would be a cuts in the ramp personnel, taking use of the above-mentioned non-renewal of contracts, using the economic crisis as an excuse. The reduction in working hours did not mean a reduction in workload (they only reduced the frequency of the Zaragoza-Alicante flight). On the contrary, they condensed the hours maintaining practically the requirements as before.

One of the ramp operators was a CNT member before he went to work at the company. On January 19 they formed the union section, which at first consisted of 6 of the 9 ramp employees, leaving out the supervisor and two other workers, who were never part because they exhibited "excessive sympathy for the company". This did not include the office staff because there was hardly any interaction with them during the working day and therefore there was less trust. The company was notified of the formation of the union on January 21 and of the name of the elected delegate, which a sheet of paper attached listing the demands of the assembly: a return to full working hours and indefinite contracts for the whole staff since the contract they had was fraudulent.

One negative circumstance that the company would take advantage of to create panic and doubts every time the the delegate was not there, which threatened to break the whole staff and defamed both the CNT and its delegate was the fact that the members of the union were workers without ideology or defined revolutionary consciousness, with the exception of the one who was in the CNT before. Once the company receives the demands, their legal department contacts the union to let them know that they have no intention of meeting them.

On February 20, the conflict with Ryanair began. The first action was a protest on February 28 at the entrance of the airport in Zaragoza. Given this, the company wrote a letter of condemnation against the CNT union section and protest. This letter was given to each worker to sign. At the end, all of the workers (from the ramp as well as the office) sign the letter, except the union delegate, who thus becomes the union's only member. The company sent the letter signed by the whole staff to the CNT hoping that this way they would withdraw their support of the union delegate. They also sent the letter to the delegate to harrass him. He also had frequent arguments with the manager during working hours.

In March the delegate brought a complaint against Ryanair in the Social Court in Zaragoza for contract fraud. This hadn't been done before when the section had six members because the majority of them were afraid to take this step. What was done was that a paper with the demands was sent in the name of the section by certified mail, warning that there would be claims, but compromising no names except that of the delegate.

On the 27th of March, the company unfairly dismissed the delegate, city a deliberate drop in his job performance. A little later, three operators lost their jobs when their contracts were not renewed. But soon the company had to hire new workers because it didn't have enough staff. All of this happened when the delegate was already out of the company and he did not know about this until he was reinstated.

Following the dismissal of the delegate, a second claim was filed for breaching the delegate's guaranteed protected status (for the dismissal to be annulled and the worker to thus be reinstated).

At the time when the union section was created, there had already been the possibility of layoffs. Therefore the union had already had reserved some assets, understanding that the conflict could get more difficult because of this. So the propaganda campaign in Zaragoza intensified. There were a number of protests held at the airport and in central places in the city. More posters were put up and the company was pressured in other ways. Two days of international pressure were held, on the 3rd of May and the 6th of June. (The latter was two days before the court case about the dismissal.) The goal was to make those responsible at Ryanair in Zaragoza feel nervous. This objective was achieved because the court ruling stated that none of the witnesses that the company presented were "valid". It should be pointed out that the two remaining workers of the six who had initially joined the union that were still in the company came to testify on its behalf. The ruling was in the union's favour. It found that the union delegate's contract was fraudulent and he should get indefinite employment at the company. It also ruled that the dismissal was made in retaliation for his union activity in the company, thus forcing Ryanair to reinstate him. The company appealed to the Supreme Court of Justice in Aragon and the delegate remained unemployed

during this time. When his unemployment benefits ran out, the Aragón-Rioja Regional of the CNT had to intervene, creating a solidarity fund to support the dismissed comrade. All of this money would be returned by the beneficiary later. The protests continued and the conflict came out in the bourgeois press in Aragon. Finally, on the 9th of November, at the request of the union, the Social Court order the execution of the reinstatement ruling and on the 10th of November, the dismissed comrade returned to work. Later that month the Supreme Court of Justice dismissed Ryanair's appeal, finalizing the court decision and setting a precedent about the illegality of this type of contract.

During the absence of the union delegate, union elections were held in the company, won by the supervisor, the only candidate, presented by the UGT. (Before the establishment of the CNT union in the company, there was no union representation at all.) After being elected, he would be used to sign new reductions in working hours.

The composition of the staff had changed: now there were two people amongst the ramp workers who had gone to testify against the CNT union, which they had once belonged to, the supervisor, the two he had never had contact with and three workers who were hired after the union delegate had been dismissed.

Growth in the membership had been until then impossible. But progress had been made in the normalization of the reinstated comrade's situation: when he was reinstated at first there were the same conditions as before his dismissal (constant tension with middle management, arguments and always some snags.) This made the other workers prefer not to get into the same conflict situation, despite the fact that they saw they could improve their working conditions.

Recently they have started to send queries on labour issues to the union delegate, which to some extent is a benchmark in the business, however these queries are done secretly, without the knowledge of the company. They have suggested to the delegate that he run in union elections. He answered no, arguing that what would be really effective calling a workers' assembly. It can be said that now he has some sympathy from the staff that he did not have when he was reinstated.

The positive points of this process have been:

- * All the preparations for the court case, starting from the formation of the union branch. In the current circumstances, one has to expect that it is very likely that a union delegate is dismissed. The written protests, with confirmation of receipt and the suit filed while still in the company, in addition to the actions like the protest on February 28, was decisive evidence for the court when considering if the dismissal was in act an act of repression.

- * Forcing the situation in every way to lead to the dismissal, after the union section reduced to a single person, as the delegate's contract ended on 30 April. The company could have simply not renewed the contract and it would have been more difficult to win the trial.

- * The approach of the conflict regarding the means of pressure used and the timing of when they were launched. The SOV from Zaragoza planned a long-term conflict, increasing over time, starting locally and ending internationally, successfully dealing with the situation when the worker affected by the conflict was in financial need.

The errors were:

- * Being overly cautious. To create a union branch it is necessary to just give one name, the union delegate's. This was done in this case, which created the possibility that many abandon the union. It is convenient not to give the company information about how many members a union has. If it were done the section would have been three members, not six (since only three, including the delegate, were willing to do this initially), but these three workers, having already declared their names, would have had more difficulty backing out, like two of them later did.

- * They did not predict that the operators could also go to court to testify. Although the case was won, this could have done a lot of damage to the union and above all the dismissed comrade, who could have lost his job forever.

SP: Is there any way to find out if the union members are close to us ideologically or are conscious of what it is?

CNT-E: They thought it would be nice and easy and when they came they were told it would be difficult, there may be dismissals and even so they decided to join. The first thing that the company did was to give them the letter to sign and they got scared and signed. From the 6, at least three were ready to continue with the conflict but their names did not appear as union members and so they had the chance to exit through the back door without the company knowing.

CNT-F: Ryanair didn't know who was part of the union but even so they were dismissed?

CNT-E: It's the company policy to let people go after one year with these types of contracts. The comrades thought that they wouldn't have to sign the paper but of course they were wrong. It is clear that those who left came to the union with the idea that it will solve the conflict for them and not with a real commitment to the CNT.

Startpeople

Now about the conflict with StartPeople. In the telecommunications industry. One day the company claimed that a payment they had already made was an error and asked the workers to return their salaries to repay the overpayment. Only one worker joined the CNT. The rest got nothing. Only the CNT started a campaign against the company. To date the court has ruled against the comrade and the appeal was rejected. At this time we are not sure if we are going to continue. A few weeks ago the company called the union to ask when we would stop and what we still needed to stop. The comrade now has another job and we don't know if we will continue the conflict.

The situation of the precarious workers in Russia

KRAS: The situation of the precarious workers in Russia is rather complex and you have to take into account that the immigrants are from countries of the former Soviet Union and Asia, in particular from China. They are called by the German term "Gastarbeiter". There is a report done in Russian that later will be translated and sent. A couple of figures to see the scale of immigration. In Moscow alone each year 2 million immigrants arrive and only 10% are legal. The majority of these workers are illegal and are invisible to the legal system. A few months ago we got in contact with workers from Central Asia, construction workers. We saw that there were special agencies responsible for bringing these illegal workers. They are not legal organizations, only illegal ones, mafias. They live in barracks and earn very little but for them it is a lot of money because in their home countries it is a lot. They are in the hands of the companies. They don't have any rights and the companies treat them as they like. On top of this, they cannot leave the work site because they don't have papers and they can be harassed by the police and pressured and blackmailed. A typical situation is that they are not paid or their salaries are delayed. If they try to protest they are told to go home. There have been cases of resistance but there have also been cases where people have disappeared and nobody knows if they returned home or "were disappeared". The workers ask what they can do but there is a lot of pressure and fear and they have to be very careful. We invited them to tell us their problems so we could publicize them in our newspaper. Sometimes they agree to talk but at other times they tell us that we have to talk to their supervisors. So we are faced with this problem of internal hierarchy and we do not really know how to tackle this situation. Sometimes we were better received and were able to distribute our newspaper. Sometimes we invited them to create their own unions but in most cases they cannot due to the precarious situation in which they live. We haven't got permanent contact with these workers because their mentality is to work a lot, earn a little money and then get out of there.

Two comrades who were working on two different construction sites wanted to organize a strike. In both cases there were mixed groups of workers, Russians and non-Russians and in both cases the foreign workers did not want to strike because they were afraid. In both cases the strikes took place but only partially since they were not supported by the foreign workers and the companies were able to stop them quickly.

Now about the non-foreign precarious workers in Moscow. Last year there was a spontaneous attempt to strike at a supermarket on the outskirts of Moscow. The majority of workers there were women with precarious contracts. During the crisis the bosses started to impose worse working conditions on them. As soon as we learned of the strike we got in contact with the strike committee to see how we could help. There were some problems with leftist groups and other anarchist groups that started to give out pamphlets calling for the social revolution. It was idiotism given the current anti-extremist laws in Russia and this could have put those workers in danger. What happened is that the representative of the company came but would not meet with the workers, giving the excuse that they were extremists. We tried to offer our help making propaganda related to the conflict. We helped them make more rational pamphlets so that people could learn more about the conflict and be more willing to support it. We shared our ideas, we left comments on the company website about the conflict, that there should be a boycott of the supermarket, etc. The bosses were nervous about these actions and they thought to take us to court. We proposed to the workers that since this was an international supermarket, they could get international help for their actions. The bosses tried to stir up fear and managed to isolate the strike committee from the rest of the workers, making some workers quit because they did not want to work in those conditions and they lost hope in the struggle.

The last thing that we want to say is that a few years ago an official union of immigrant workers was created from above, is pro-Putin and supports the government. We made an interview with the leaders of this union who said that they were immigrants so they didn't have a right to strike and wouldn't do it. There was an important reaction from many groups and associations about the creation of this union. One opinion we had of this is that the creation of this union divides the workers into immigrants and non-immigrants. It is certain that the immigrant population has its own characteristics but it is not correct to separate workers in this way. Some of the group of anarchists in Moscow approached these groups of workers and tried to create an alternative to the official union. One of the problems of KRAS is that currently it is not a legal association and it is very hard to become legalized in the current conditions. That is all and later we can provide more information on this.

SP: We know about the case of a Pakistani worker who committed suicide because of work conditions and we

organized a demonstration together with immigrant associations. The problem was that in the Brazilian immigrant associations, there were as many bourgeois people as poor workers, so that you cannot carry on union work since it is difficult to separate the rich from the poor. In any case in the end we ended up on trial for defamation of the head of the immigration service. We managed to get the head of this office fired. Beside these attempts to form a fake union of immigrants, are there any other associations or groups of immigrants? How do you handle the constant campaigns against the immigrant workers?

KRAS: We also had this problem with this type of immigrant associations when they tried to close a market in Moscow. This market was quite famous and many not rich people went to shop there because it was very cheap. It was an immigrant market, but owned by bourgeois immigrants. There were problems between the owners of the market and the government and it is most likely that it was closed because they didn't pay enough money to the government. An association to reopen the market was formed by the owners and workers of the market. So we couldn't support this, even though the workers just wanted to keep their jobs, because this could not create conflict between the workers and owners. Only some left party got involved.

PA: How did the conflict in the supermarket end?

KRAS: The bosses were able to put down the strike and many workers left their jobs.

PA: How long did this conflict last?

KRAS: The strike lasted one day but the conflict went on 2 or 3 weeks.

CNT-F: Were the people from the supermarket giving bribes to the government?

KRAS: These are two separate conflicts. In the case of the supermarket, it operated legally. It was in the case of the market which was a bazaar where there was mention of bribes to the government.

CNT-F: Does it happen in Russia like in France that the bosses give money to people who want to make a strike in order to shut them up and get them to stop the conflict?

KRAS: I don't know. If it happens, I have no information about it

CNT-F: Are spontaneous collectives uniting people for concrete struggles created?

KRAS: It is complicated. There are different groups of immigrants in Moscow. There are groups organized according to the regions they come from. They are hierarchical organizations differentiated above and below. They do not to syndical activity. They are more specialized in things like human rights, etc. In the market we were talking about before, there was a spontaneous mobilization to save the bazaar. On the one hand there were the workers from the market and on the other were the owners of the stands. If there had been a class-oriented organization during that time, we would have supported it.

PA: Do you still have contact with the workers from the supermarket? Did any of them join KRAS?

KRAS: Unfortunately no. We tried to keep contact with the head of the strike committee because this person was very disappointed by what happened and even left Moscow for a few months. Honestly, the fact that KRAS was not a legal organization meant that the workers did not approach us because of fear.

There is a five minute pause.

Immigrants in Poland & Poles in other countries

ZSP: We are going to speak not only about the situation of immigrants in Poland but also about Poles in other countries. In many cases, they do not have contact to organizations in the country they are working, so they contact ones from their home country. One of the cases that reflects the situation of the immigrants from Poland in GroenFlex, the name of a temporary work agency that contracts people from Poland to work in Holland. A worker contacted us because of a problem: he was contracted to work for 78 weeks as a gardener but what he encountered in Holland was something different. He was sent to work in a ship building company, even though he had no experience in this, had no prior training and none was provided. He had an accident during his first days at work. He lost consciousness and was 24 hours in the hospital. The bosses did not want to pay because there was no

insurance, even though this was guaranteed in the contract. After having worked just 6 days he was told to go back to Poland. They did not want to pay him for his work. He had earned for only 6 days, not 78 weeks. Upon returning to Poland he got a hospital bill for more than 2000 euros. He was in a desperate situation; he hadn't had enough money to return to Poland or to pay the hospital. He desperately asked for help since he didn't know what to do. What we did was to review the contracts so that we could know what to do. The legal situation was very complicated. In fact, he had signed two contracts with two companies, one Polish and one Dutch, with different conditions. The Polish contract was not binding, it was only a preliminary agreement. The Polish contract had promised work in gardening but when the comrade arrived in Holland, they did not respect what was in the contract. Upon arrival there they sent him to another company to sign another contract which had nothing to do with the other. In this contract it was written that he could work not only in gardening, but in any other job that the employer said. They added other clauses that said that he the worker did not agree to do as he was told, he would receive nothing. It was an exclusive contract since if you were working for this company, you couldn't work for any other. It stipulated that workers would have to pay for their rooms and any health-related expenses. The agency in Poland was approached and there was a complaint with the work inspectors. The inspectors said that they couldn't do anything since there was only a preliminary agreement signed in Poland and the binding one was the Dutch one. They deliberately created this situation. When the workers returned, they cannot sue the company in their countries for the work contracted in another country. I spoke about the possibility to sue to company in a Polish court, not having to travel abroad: it actually is possible but the procedures are not clear and there is no lawyer who knows how to do this. The EU law was implemented this way deliberately in Poland so that nobody could do that. No lawyer would take charge. The only possibility was to hire a lawyer in Holland and take legal action there. This worker will a debt of over 2000 euros could not afford such legal fees. It was clear that there was no legal option so he decided to make more direct actions against the company. The first thing was to find out about what the actual situation was for our comrade while he was working in that company, since he was staying in a hotel and didn't know exactly where he was working. Besides making pressure on the temporary work agency, there was pressure on the boss in the Dutch firm. We got a description of the routes from the hotel to the work sites. I was able to make a search on google maps about where these sites were. There were two shipbuilding companies and one was possibly the work place. I downloaded the images from the ground level so that he could recognize the place and he did. Once the work places were located, more pressure could be made against the employers. We got in contact with an anarchist group in Amsterdam to work together on this conflict. These activists in Amsterdam helped up to make the pressure campaign.

There was an occupation of the office of the temporary work agency in Poland. On the same day, the support group in Amsterdam went to the hotel where the workers were staying with informational pamphlets and the owners of the Dutch company Eurocontract were also visited by the activists. This had a great impact on the bosses and the television crew as well. There were about 30 people on the occupation. Although they were reluctant, the bosses finally talked to us, including in front of the cameras. They were impressed and ashamed of the conditions of the people who were working in the temporary employment agency without insurance. The bosses of the company in Holland sent faxes promising to pay the hospital bill of more than 2000 euros and they really did that. Also, all of the workers of GroenFlex received a medical insurance policy. Although there were more demands, this is what was achieved. Another thing is that the contracts be signed by the Polish company, not the Dutch one and that the description of the workplace be well defined in the contract. Many of the problems are related to how the laws are made as the health and safety training should be made by the employer but they do not specify which one (the agency or the end user). The law says that an agreement should be made between the temporary employment agency and the end user. The workers does not have access to this agreement since it is a contract between the two companies. There is no information about who should give this training in any of the papers signed. Another problem in the contracts it was impossible to take them to court. One of the things was also that the stipulated that the employer is no obliged to pay the worker if it finds no work for him; even though they invite them there to work, they have no responsibility to find them a job. This is a very serious problem and we are thinking about how to fight for this in future campaigns. For now, the situation is more or less satisfactory for the worker. He never received any compensation but he didn't have to pay for the hospital. He is seeing is there is any possibility to take this case to court.

The workers are seeing that there is a possibility to fight for the labour rights. Other people contact us indicating that they have had problems with a temporary work agency, although none of them have decided to do a campaign. If we look at this conflict in GroenFlex we see problems in common with other conflicts which involved immigrants. In these types of contracts we find a problem that various firms exist and many times they don't know which is the valid contract. Usually they are contracted through an agency and there is another company which signs a contract that has nothing to do with the original. Many times the conditions they offer change, they are transferred to other jobs and it is difficult to protest is there are problems, especially when the employer fires them and their visas are for one employer, their visas are cancelled and they have to leave the country. When their contract ends, they have only a few days to leave the country. The people may not know where they were working or for whom. It is typical to live in barracks or hotels outside the city and the employers

take them to another site to work. They are not given training, they do not know where they are located or what project they are working on, they have language problems and difficulty communicating.

For the Groenflex case we thought of what actions could be done. There was an action in Poland and in Holland. We spread information about this case in the internet, on immigrant forums, on the radio, in local papers in Holland. We gave out pamphlets where the company was based, trying to convince people and other companies not to do business with GroenFlex, informing them about what Groenflex was doing. The comrades from Holland got in contact with workers from the zone. It was an effective action but it would have been much more if more workers had wanted to pursue claims.

One of the problems of the immigrants in Poland is that they come to work for one season or for temporary work. There were some conflicts with construction workers and bus drivers. There was the case of 51 Chinese construction workers who were on different construction site, had problems receiving their salaries, made a strike and were fired. They had no money to return to China. As soon as you are fired, your visa expires and you have to leave the country. They asked for help at the Chinese embassy but didn't get it. They set up a camp at the embassy and that's how we met them. We were studying the maps with them but they could not locate the sites because they had never seen them on a map. When we brought them photos of the construction sites, they immediately recognized where they had worked. They were working for the biggest construction company in Poland but of course through a subcontractor in Poland and of course through a subcontractor with which they had an agreement in China. In this puzzle of companies nobody was responsible and they were all putting the blame on each other. As a result of the camp and a few actions we made they were told they'd be paid and that the company would pay for half of the cost of the trip to China, with the embassy paying the other half. At the time when they were camped out at the embassy, the workers did not want to leave there because they were afraid of being deported. There is something that Priama Akcia commented. When the worker is afraid, we don't want to act as an avantgarde. But, in some cases, when this fear is legitimate, you might still act. There was a protest at the office of the construction company. It was very effective since people who were coming to buy flats went away without buying anything. This conflict was covered in the press. The image of the company is important. It is a very effective action since you are preventing the people from entering to buy a flat and this can affect the construction company in a notable way. More actions will be carried out in the future, but this year this company had no new construction and no new foreign workers.

When we talk about the treatment of immigrant workers, we are talking about two different groups. There is a big difference between those who have been in the country a while and those who come to do temporary work. There is also a difference between those who do a temporary job every year and those who come for a time and then leave the country. Many times when you work with these people, you see that what they want is to come to the host country, work, earn some money and go home. They are treated badly and know they are being cheated, but they know that they only have a month left and so they endure. In the period of time they are there, they may not have opportunities to make any actions. We came in contact with some workers that were picking strawberries in Spain and were not receiving their complete salary and I told them about the possibility to contact CNT-E. They said that they only have a month left and they would do anything. They wanted to finish the work and return to Poland as soon as possible.

We consider there to be 3 categories of immigrants:

The first are the long-term immigrants who have been for a while and it is easier to organize. By everything I have read, these workers are easier to organize in unions. It is easier to organize actions, strikes, etc. The long-term actions are easier with people who have been some time in the country. Something which is very important is that they have a common language and common workplace.

Now there is more contact with short-term immigrants. In the majority of the cases, they do not plan to stay long in Poland, so we cannot organize with them long-term. They are more likely to make spontaneous actions. We sometimes have to work in an individual way with these people since it is the only way to work with them currently. We cannot allow this situation that people are dismissed and then new ones are contracted to occupy their places. For example, in Poland, a group of Ukrainians working on construction. They were not paid and they made a spontaneous strike. In a week the construction company had new workers. What we thought is that we have comrades in Ukraine and we informed them. They helped us get an article in the papers and information warning Ukrainian workers who wanted to work in Poland about the company and informing them of their rights and what to do if they are cheated.

The actions that can be done are: informing the potential new workers so they know what is happening, so they know what they can find in the company before going. Using the internet and papers to get to the workers, giving out pamphlets at the temporary work agencies since not all workers have access to other media. The bosses will also know in such a way that the workers are informed.

For example, the comrades in Kiev said, let's go with the workers and try to get their salaries. Sometimes it happens that they are in such a desperate situation that they have to find another job quickly and go to work at another company. Even though they are being cheated, it is difficult to make actions of this kind. We would like to discuss with the sections to know if they have had similar cases with immigrants with the concrete objective of finding solutions to the concrete problems of the immigrant workers, above all the illegal ones since they can be faced with deportation. How can we help them and get them to participate in our movement without posing a risk to the workers?

SP: The relation between workers. The ideal thing would be to have a working group specialized in immigrants and how can connect directly with the sections in their counties. We have Ukrainian workers and they should make contacts with the workers here to see what they should do. There were about 20 workers in Oporto, they couldn't do anything. They work 12 hours a day. They want the most immigrants as possible to come to they can exploit them more.

There were people from Romania, Brazil, Africa, Belarus. They came to a communal meal but they were very afraid. They had 12 hour working days without any day off until the end of the work in two months. They were working with a subcontractor in Lisbon. Speaking with them, it turned out they were afraid if you had contact with other workers from their home country. After two months of work, they disappeared. A working group would be very important to inform about such points.

ZSP: The work has to be coordinated better in the IWA. In many countries they can help us. For example, a comrade went to work in Germany and they didn't pay him. We contacted FAU and they helped in an effective way. They even had comrades who spoke Polish.

CNT-E Are there coordination problems? Problems between the temporary work agencies in Holland / Poland. Problems with the Polish workers in Huelva? How should the immigrants coordinate with the IWA in the country where the immigrants are working?

ZSP: The workers who contacted us had a problem that they did not know the language. We told them to contact the CNT in Huelva, but in the end they didn't because they didn't know the language and gossip like "those are the ones who kill priests".

SF: We were working with cleaning workers. It was usually illegal workers but long-time ones. It is something normal in the economy. They are not used to organizing but recently they tried to do so. They haven't tried in a while since the employers work together with the police. They set traps for the immigrants, inviting them to meetings about health or work and there they met the immigration police who detained them and deported many of them. It is a problem because their way of unionizing was started by the reformist leftists and is imported from the United States and doesn't work well. They workers come to realize that the unions are limiting them and they decide to organize and find solutions closer to what we are trying to do. A clear example of how the state works is that everybody knows that they are illegally in the country but they only come after them when they start to organize.

ZSP: I know the situation you are talking about. The things that happen in these reformist unions are scandalous. I have 4 pages of denunciations from France about how the people are self-organizing but the French CGT tried to take over and put the immigrants in a worse situation. Something similar happened in Italy. Concerning your question, I have no answer. It is something I've been thinking about a long time, speaking with people who work in different countries. From what I see, only when there is a large number of workers involved in the topic you can take action. An example is the day of immigrants in Italy or the First of May in the US. This is when they all unite, say we are going to work and organize. If they are only five people, they are replaceable. If anybody has any ideas ...

One idea would be to have leaflets in different languages with information about rights and about the IWA sections

It is proposed that people who have ideas propose them and make a list of them.

Table: The next session will start at 15:30. A pause for lunch at 14:20.

The conference starts against at 15.57

CNT-F: This is supposed to be a presentation of the CNT, so I will make a review of history and talk, therefore, about some past struggles. The CNT in Pau has existed for about 20 years. At first it was practically a students' union, without precarious workers. But the CNT in Pau started to work on precarity from the beginning, working with temporary work agencies. At the beginning, we encountered two important problems. The first is that the workers had an attitude that we were to assist them and we are to work with the workers, not for them. The second problem is that there were no precarious workers and they were removed from the reality of the work. In 1995 some of the students became precarious workers and went on to dedicate themselves to this specific field. In 1998 a union of the unemployed was created,,,,... because at this this there was a struggle in the traditional unions dedicated to getting Christmas pay for the unemployed. This quickly transformed into a struggle at the national level and the traditional unions were not present in temporary work. It was a rather self-managed struggle. In Pau, during this struggle, the population already knew us for some years and were aware of how the CNT works and when we proposed they function in a self-managed assembly, as a sovereign assembly with recallable mandates, that is how it started to work in Pau. Functioning with assemblies of 60, 80 people, they made marches, occupations of a bank, chamber of commerce, etc. The main problem in this type of situation is how to stop the traditional unions from capturing this movement. This assembly was rather strong and the inter-trade union tried to get them but they were quickly marginalized.

A relevant example is with the occasion of a march. The Inter-trade union proposed that their flag was at the head of the march but the people from the assembly refused and some 60 members of the unions started to march but the assembly didn't follow and were left with about a 1000 workers and members of the traditional unions who did not want to march with its leadership. Thus, in this movement the traditional unions were rather marginalized because they were not able to respond to the ideas of direct action which came from the assembly. Because the way these unions function don't permit the workers to express them. There was another constant problem because if there was self-management at the local level, at the national level the traditional unions, using the media, had the voice. To counteract this we need a national coordination of the local assemblies, but it occurred too late because the movement was coming to an end. Because the grievances of the movement remained very general, about bonuses, about money..... and when the government agreed to pay, the movement ended.

In Pau the people stopped coming to the assemblies, except a few comrades from CNT Pau, some Trotskyists and independents who tried to use this assembly as a political tool. Suddenly, many of the people who remained in the assembly decided to join the CNT and leave the assembly and create a union of unemployed inside the CNT. I'll explain a little the strategy the CNT-AIT Pau used to develop this movement.

We continued making daily action, we were present in the struggles. had posters and sticker in the city. We continued going to the temporary work agencies. We went to occupy the offices, make actions, propaganda, etc. We had a few solidarity actions with individuals, because there are few people that come to the union and ask for help. The first strategy for developing we used was to create a committee outside the CNT with the same function but without ideological content. Functions with a sovereign assembly, with an open committee and without ideological content. It worked but it is very complicated to have a strong nucleus with the unemployed, since they don't have work and if they find work they don't come..... Also the problem was that as the committee did not have clear ideological positions, there is no long-term perspective. The majority of the people get border and think it is not serving their interests and leave. They radicalize in other organizations or join the CNT. This committee decided that since in the end there were only militants from the Pau union that it would wind up and function from inside the CNT. And this section continues this work from before and has gained the respect of the rest of the workers. In France, to have union rights you have to participate in the union elections, but through struggle the CNT gained these union rights but of course without participating in the union elections. These rights are inside the work agencies, putting up leaflets and accompanying comrades to the administration. And the CNT got this because the traditional unions are totally absent in the precarious environment and they make no sense because the strategy of capitalism is not to give anything to the workers and the main unions cannot support themselves this way, they can't buy the social peace. The unemployed got rights by fighting and not with the traditional unions. Also, in Pau we have a union of precarious workers just inside the education section, because the precarious workers in the private sector are isolated. In the administration there is an unseen boss and work situations which can go on for years. There are contracts in education for 3 years. The work of the unemployed section supports the struggle against the administration. At first we intended to develop this section inside the CNT and then the external committee was created. This external committee is also an open one that accepts the presence of unions if they accept the autonomy of the workers and the decisions of the assembly. In reality, in Pau, besides the CNT a traditional union is supporting this committee. This union supported the committee because it is the main union in education and could not explain to its militants why it wasn't supporting it. They

don't want to leave the CNT as the only which support the committee. This committee had been working since 2004 and continued working in 2009. We had a struggle with the precarious education workers.

We had a struggle and the committee called a strike with 300 people and some 60 of them came to a march. And all of these people were threatened with dismissal for going to the demonstration. This struggle was interesting because the majority of the people who came were mothers and it was the first time they had participated in a struggle. These people were not accustomed to fighting for their rights wound up occupying the provincial employment office. They stayed until the police came to throw them out. What we think is relevant is that it was not an advance decision to occupy this place in order to talk to the media. This shows that people who are not used to struggling can radicalize and start to take direct action. This committee also carried out legal actions. But this is done after trying direct action and always it is the workers who ask for it. Currently there are 4 members awaiting a court case for 10,000 euros. They are 200 more workers who potentially can ask for this compensation. The limits of this committee are the same as in the previous one. The lack of ideology and the difficulty of getting new members. The major problem is that the people mobilize very late when there is urgency. Sometimes it is too late. In addition, the committee has to always explain that it is a mechanism to support the precarious workers and not an element which fights in its place. There are also people who contact the committee without knowing how it functions, with their own interests and who leave when their own problems are solved. Are there any questions?

CNT-E: I don't understand the relation that exists between the CNT-F and the committee of the precarious workers. Why did you choose this type of strategy? Why didn't they integrate directly into the CNT like the other committee did?

CNT-F: At fist we tried to do this in the CNT-F put it didn't work. The precarious workers have a great mistrust in the unions. We thought that people would have less fear that they would fall into a trap with a committee that is not from the union. The first intention was to help the workers to organize. Suddenly the people came to fight for their own problems, yes, but they came to the union. There was a limitation that they didn't have clear ideological content and the only thing it could do was to directly defend the workers. But this committee of precarious workers always works through direct action. With experience we have seen that two things happen:

1.-The traditional unions don't support the committee, except one. The only one that does did it to save appearances. This allows the people in the committee to see how things really work. Nobody supports them, it is the CNT-F that is loyal. Some active militants from this committee joined the CNT-F.

The person accredited by the International Secretary of the CNT-F: These committees allow them to see that the CNT-F is the only loyal union that defends the rights of the workers and not their own benefits.

ZSP: Was creating a committee outside the CNT for a concrete problem or can this be used for other actions in the future?

CNT-F: We also ask that. About precarity, these types of committees have a short life because of the peculiarities of the situation. Therefore it is difficult to maintain them over time. In the case of education the people have the same boss and in our province there are some 1000 precarious workers in this sector. They usually remain some years in their job. Thus they are in a common sector with time to organize their struggle. The major advantage of these types of committees is that they permit the people to have self-managed struggles without fear of the ideology of the CNT and their prejudices towards anarchism. The limitation is that there in an absence of ideology in the committee on the part of the people. It seems good but on the other hand is also a disadvantage since this can limit the action of the committee. These committees allowed some people to come to the CNT-F and join. But the presence of experienced CNT militants inside these committees is needed to immediately denounce the attempts to recuperate them by other unions.

SP-AIT: The people who leave the committee and join the CNT for the first time, do they receive any special training for them? .

CNT-F: Of course this is an education union in the city. It also gives ideological education. This education / training is done through conferences, libraries, internal talks and open discussions. For the precarious and non-precarious workers. The CNT-F has a very clear position on anarchosyndicalism. In fact, those who come to the CNT-F come interested in the concept of anarchosyndicalism. And if they are not interested, they stay in the committee of precarious workers without joining the CNT-F.

Chair: A comrade in the audience raises a doubt. He indicates that he came with the endorsement of the Foreign

Secretary of the CNT-F and that his comments appear in the minutes as CNT-F. Translations problems, important point.

Situation in Norway

NSF: When we are in plenaries and conferences of this type we get information about the working conditions in other countries. Generally, in sections like Spain, Italy or France, there are more union rights which give more chance to negotiate and carry out a struggle. The examples from Spain, in all forms, show that there is a strategy of union repression against the unions of the CNT. Without wishing to be paranoid, this seems like a coordinated action against the CNT. The same happened in Norway in the 80s with union militants. One after another was dismissed or repressed. We have here a report about a struggle that developed in the 90s in SAS. We won't go into details but one of the comrades had an anxiety attack and had to go to Brazil. I am not going to say that it is much easier to be a syndicalist in France or Italy than in other places but the example of FAU shows that we have to look for other ways to carry out union activity. In Norway it is very easy to be a union. Anybody can call themselves a union. The problem is the practice because union activity cannot be developed. In the place i work, the most militant and largest union has 150 people, the next has 90, but they operate without the right to carry out union activity about conditions. In the 90s in Norway, there was a proposal that a committee would need to have 90000 members to gain union rights. In the end this idea was not implemented but it serve to crush the workers organized in the petroleum sector. They were very militant and they joined one of the representative confederations. Another problem when we have struggles in the social peace since when they make an agreement, they are obliged to have a period of social peace. Social peace includes not just the social peace itself, but also excludes any type of union activity including outside the workplace on the part of the workers. When a company has an agreement, after two years the workers can go on strike, but if they show their effectiveness against the interests of the company, the state intervenes. These are the conditions that we are working in in the North of Europe. The real example is a little the same that we have been hearing from other sections here. A worker came to NSF six months ago because his contract was changed from indefinite to a temporary one. He came to the NSF because one of his friends joined recently. First they went to another Federation that has 60000 members only in Oslo. This union told him that it was a very difficult case and they were trying to get 8000 euros for the workers. At first everybody was really enthusiastic, until the first problem arose and then all the negotiations finished. When the conflict came to NSF we rejected the idea to take it over because we thought that the company would successfully sue us. In this sense, we shouldn't limit ourselves to legal methods, but go further. Then we made a pamphlet to give out in the workplace. They were very desperate. It was the beginning because we also got contact with the Polish section because there are many Polish workers in Norway. We wrote a fax and a mail telling them that they are mistreating the workers and we informed them that the Polish comrades have a black list of companies. The lawyer from the company said that the comrade was handing out the leaflets ought to be sued. They were very aggressive to the point that the hired one of the best law firms in Norway. In NSF, we don't have lawyers, support was asked for people with low incomes. This help would have been received 10 years ago, but not now. In this case the lawyer took the part of the company. There is still no result to the conflict. In Norway vacations are in July and we will see what happens later. They offered the worker 1500 euros for the moment. The worker could not accept the money because if he did, he would have positioned himself against the actions which were made. Nevertheless, for us in Oslo arriving at this point was a success in putting direct action into practice. The worker took the position of not accepting the money from the company. One of the comrades that joined recently pointed out that ELA, the union with 60,000 members, did not receive any offer of money. In this sense, it was seen that if the workers took on the struggle outside of a legal structure, they could achieve more success than if they had done so inside the legal/ official framework. Any questions?

FAI: There was much talk here of the workers' right to strike. The strike is the only tool that the workers have, although the laws try to regulate them in one way or another.

PA: How does the state intervene to break strikes?

NSF: It is a rather subtle system of intervention. It is the parliament that decides to intervene in the strike to safeguard the law and peace. Therefore the unions try to avoid this by calling strikes that have no effect. They know that if the strike is effective, the employer will shut the company and then get the state to help. In this sense you can also include the media intervention, taking interviews with a man whose father died without having anything to do with the strike. Basically they try to gave unions with union activity. This will provoke more repression but it will also be more difficult to act against it.

PA: Was it a decision of NSF that the organization would not sign the pamphlet and it would be done by the friends of the worker?

NSF: I don't remember exactly but the idea of the worker was to protect the comrades who were still in the workplace. He had already resigned and he wanted to protect them.

Day Three

Sunday August 15

Theme B – Self-managed companies and cooperatives in the framework of capitalism as reclamation of the Class Struggle

The session begins at 11:07.

Chair: The comrades from Peru are arriving at 13:00 in Madrid, and they'll be brought directly to the conference by car.

CNTF: The minutes say that Paco from Paris was supported by the international secretary. After speaking we see there was some confusion. The comrade has a mandate from the union from Gap and this information will be given at the end of the conference. We want this to be in the minutes.

USI: The paper is called "Anarchosyndicalism, a perspective and social transformation". How can a libertarian and self-managed union contribute to the organization and to struggles? And the answer is to work on three levels: 1 the cultural level, 2. the level of the social struggle and 3. self-management. To clarify about the cultural level, the "cultural war batalla cultural" a campaign to recover solidarity and class union.

We want to read the proposals, such as the self-managed project, which is part of a strategy to be discussed amongst the organizations of the IWA.

This means the recomposition of the social fabric.

For us, concrete selfmanagement realities means to reassemble again the social tissue on a solidarity basis, which is the most typical and specific element of our conception of trade union. So, it is the immediate creation of an economic and cultural circuit, which must be alternative to capitalistic logic, which is able to replace progressively, in economic and social life, the idea of solidarity to that one of profit, mutualism to market competition. A meeting place, a plice for facts-propoaganda more than words-propoaganda of our libertarian principles and which, at the same time, would give the possibility to live, and not only to survive, by generating an income, not elicited through exploitation, but freely created thanks to solidal cooperation.

We must provide new cathogories of workers - precarious, compartmentalized workers, immigrants, unemployed - with a credible job alternative, which could also be an opportunity of redeeming their lives, that are, knowingly or not, exploited.

We must build up an alternative by creating well-functioning, selfmanaged realities in the sectors of production, distribution and in the services, and by making those workers who are inclined to quit their condition of exploitation come closer to these realities; this would give more strength and dignity to those who, on the contrary, would remain highly blackmailable by the proprietorial system, and moreover would be an effective answer to unemployment and a brotherly hand to lend to inmigrants, who, as in the past, could open new horizons beyond national borders, towards other countries in which mutualism could solve many problems.

Selfmanagement is not a philosophical theory, but something to create concretely, at first hand, by facing reality, constantly experimenting hipotesis of work, till starting a concrete way, which grows and asserts itself as intrinsically valid. A clash will be inevitable, as these realities will suffer an attack and opposition, aimed to nullify all kind of results. We must prepare ourselves to face this clash by activating concrete and actual projects, not only empty words. Selfmanagement fights against oppression concretely through Emancipation and not through politicking violence, which has historically born more oppression, but through a language of Freedom, and if necessary, by defending strongly and resolutely what we would have built: which Prodhoun called "Revolution of Capacities".

Direct action is not a frontal attack to power, but a full participation to the building up of an Emancipation process.

A network of solidarity, cooperation and mutualism But how can we start to build in facts, a solidarity network? In Italy there are no companies in which workers have replaced their bankrupted bosses, like the Zanon,

in Argentina. In Italian trade union culture one expects to find a boss to negotiate with, and not to find workers able to manage, organize and produce by themselves. The very circuits of cooperatives, formally widespread, is in reality made

up of production and/or consumer companies (small, medium or even very big ones) which chose the form of cooperatives just to obtain advantages guaranteed by law, but that in facts are nothing but private companies, where the earnings turn into profits for few people. In this case, a typical case is the role of the so-called "fellow-workers", who formally has a share of the gain, but that in reality is a subordinate worker, only sharing losses and with less rights than a common subordinate worker in a private company. Not even the practice, very widespread nowadays, of Solidal Purchasing Groups (collective purchase right from the producer) can avoid being trapped in commercial logics and in institutionalization.

First thing to do is to connect all these small selfmanaged realities, both in the production and in the consumer field, which already exist and are in danger of closing down, because of their being too scattered, against market logic and too high costs of distribution. The second step is to create new ones, or in any case to foster the creation of other realities, on the basis of simple solidal patterns (Selfmanaged Popular Stores, basic tools to shorten the distance between producers and users, supporting local productions who respect quality and work employed), to get to more complex ones:

libertarian production or consumer cooperatives, popular ambulatories, popular libraries, solidarity funds, etc. Creating selfmanaged realities which could bring an income for those who are employed in (and not profit) and benefits for proletarians, and linking them in an efficient and capable network, but in opposition to capitalist logic made of market and exploitation.

In this process our union can do a lot, by enclosing our selfmanagement project in the strategy of defense of proletarian interest on the workplace and, where there's no work, in society.

We are not telling or saying anything new: workers' movement, in Italy, had three souls, the resistance leagues, the mutualist one and the cooperative one. The matter is retrieving that originally libertarian tradition, and updating it. But it must be done now, quickening our step, and not only by talking about it.

IN the end, it's to be said, in a strong manner, that all we assert it's meaningless if it's not linked to the defense of territory, of common goods and to the defense of Environment; a revolutionary process cannot do without an armonious recomposition of our relation with Nature and Landscape.

A union of cooperative workers has been formed in USI at the national level.

Comments or questions on this ?

SP: In Porto this is very important because a few months ago an initiative started in a factory. They created a website for "social, self-managed economy". There is also a tradition which has been lost in Portugal, where many workers occupied plants, creating a network of self-managed factories. This was on April 25 1974. Now there are some cooperatives but they have closed themselves in. But we have good roots. In Portugal it is complicated to create a cooperative from the legal point of view; it takes up to 12 people to form a cooperative.

In the 1920s, some fishermen decided to fish on a steamboat and as the law on cooperatives was still very strict at this point, before the dictatorship, and they decided to make a normal company but with an anarchist internal statute. So there was a comrade who did the administrative and accounting work, on a rotational basis and everybody received the same final product. No cooperatives do that nowadays. On the contrary, they follow the capitalist logic. If cooperatives are made in the anarchist spirit, they would be very different from the current cooperatives. In Porto we have two projects in mind: a self-managed bar and another to collect PET and maybe we can do some gardening. The problem is that the unemployed are very unstructured and maybe we have to start with the ideological part. If we could have more direct contact with the comrades from USI it would be beneficial. On the front line is always the class struggle, but now it is working to survive (and experience later).

We want to deepen the work with the Italian comrades.

It is interesting to study what happened after the revolution of 74, because these attempts at self-management are recent, but it was primarily a response to the employers. The main problem of this self-management was the infiltration of the political parties. They infiltrated or made associations with the same names to cause confusion. The economic part was that there was no money to run the company and the workers asked for money from the state. Sometimes they got it, sometimes no. The problem was also that they didn't make the product at the same site, but they were made at various sites and therefore it was difficult to have a presence at all these sites. On the other hand, clients went directly to the bosses and only bought if the business was not self-managed but was ruled by capitalist norms.

We can say that it was political and economic sabotage that tried to destroy the attempts at self-management in Portugal. And all the attempts from this time encountered this problem.

In one factory in Porto, the bosses wanted to sell all the machinery to Romania. The workers avoided this,

buying the factory for one euro but they now have got a boss.

USI: What is happening in Italy. When we tried to open some self-managed stores, where there were mostly food products, a big corporation invented the "farm market", which was a way of directly cutting this initiative. The idea is to send the product directly from the farms to the customers. Another example is the infiltration of the left parties. What happened is that one left party started shops with the same name but completely changing the basic idea, being normal shops, entering into consumer logic having the lowest prices. It is necessary to say that this was possible in Italy because, unfortunately, the anarchist movement has paid little attention to such initiatives, with only a political vision of anarchism. Another important success, at the end of the 70s, a group of young people from Cremona went to the countryside to start organic farming. Now, 30 years later, this cooperative is called Iris Bio and it is one of the most important organic farming companies internationally. And organic schools and universities from the US go to study organic farming there. Another important thing is the factory which was going to close, where they produce whole-grain pasta. This factory was going to close because of the crisis and the cooperative bought it and it became part of the cooperative. The workers from the factory are now part of the cooperative and the staff has increased. In September Iris is going to start a foundation with the aim of constructing a system of collective property. It will be in September when there is the national festival of USI and this cooperative will present its project there. And this will be an occasion to improve relations between USI and IRIS and to work together. It is important that in Italy we created a union of Arts and Crafts comprising all the small self-managed experiences, and also we have created a union of cooperative workers.

CNTF: In France we haven't gone so far down the road. There are many cooperatives in our region but all with a capitalist scheme, albeit with better working conditions. We don't have an example of people making cooperatives like Iris. Some people came to us to create a consumer cooperative. The idea was to buy cheap food to help people in precarious circumstances. We wanted to create a tool to let them buy below market prices. A few comrades entered this cooperative and they use our space to make meetings. We also put this group in contact with farmers who were members or friends of the CNT. There are some that grow expensive things, so they can let this group use some land so they can produce vegetables themselves. This attempt ended because the first who came were middle class people who had a client attitude and laughed when we proposed that they work, but we don't think it was a bad idea.

FAI: A question about the cooperative Iris. The comrade said that the cooperative is made up of people with the same rights inside the cooperative. When the cooperative expands, do the new members have the same rights as the ones which were in the beginning or do they come in as wage labourers?

USI: What happened is that the anarchist comrades that founded this cooperative wanted the new workers to be equal like everybody else. However it turned out that the old factory workers wanted to be wage labourers, not cooperative members. And the mutualist proposal now in Italy is totally new, however, before fascism, it was something normal.

FAI: For me this is a capitalist cooperative, because you can't have wage labourers.

USI: In a society where all relations are capitalist, these capitalist relations extend everywhere and certainly if there are wage labourers it is not self-managed, and therefore these workers have established this foundation to promote collective community. The IWA is a revolutionary organization and all of us who are here it is because we have paid for gasoline or a train ticket to the capitalist society. The tools used to work the land are bought in capitalist shops. The important thing is to establish new relations and the road to the future we want.

SP: The comrades are conscious that there is a problem because in anarchosyndicalism are fundamentally organizations of workers. Add to that action against the bosses, elements of economic defense. In Brazil for example, an organization like X (note: name not understood / recorded in minutes) is making organizations. They are developing organizations to feed the favelas, with agriculture. They are specific projects.

CNT-E: We have a paper from the Education Union from Granada that has a small part on cooperatives, as you could all read. The summary is that we do not believe that cooperatives can be a means to enable revolutionary change. We do not see it like this. We see cooperatives more as a means of self-defense. To respond to employer's repression. For example, in the case of dismissals or black lists when people cannot find work in their city... We don't think that you have to stop working in capitalist enterprises to build cooperatives. We do not have to leave the capitalist companies to start cooperatives because we want to participate as much as possible in the class struggle in capitalist enterprises. In the example given for this company, Iris, which now has two types of workers, one the one hand cooperative members and on the other employees, this already existed in the history of

the labor movement. For example, in France in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, there was a company of people making glass and they had the same experience. This company turned out to be a capitalist enterprise. What is important is the fact that first they had cooperative members, then employees started coming in on different conditions and after many years, the cooperativists were the masters and the others, workers. It is also a question, or a reflection on the subject of organic farming, because everything is also in our presentation. Cooperatives are in the capitalist market and must sell their products to the capitalist market. In the case of organic farming, it costs more money than traditional agriculture. This is also a problem because they have a niche in the capitalist market and this presents a problem for the working class, which is at a disadvantage.

PA: Basically we have two questions: what does USI mean by mutualism and do you try to create another market, for example, of "fair trade" and a change of relations? But the comrade doesn't know very well where the difference is between one thing and the other.

FAI: I would conclude that I would not like to get into this debate which is not appropriate for this discussion. In this social order that we have, all the projects that we make are valid projects. The struggle is positive but we always will have to fall into capitalism. We make a production cooperative but we don't make anarchist distribution networks. If the distribution network is capitalist, the project will stay half finished. Our alternative is always the same and it is the struggle without forgetting about building a libertarian society.

USI: Mutualist structures are in the history of the workers movement. There were strikes in the past that lasted for months and were made possible thanks to mutualist structures organized by workers themselves. This allowed the striking workers' families to survive. We do not mean that revolution is in co-operatives. We mean that support, mutualist cooperation tools must be developed in order to support struggles at work centers, so that both things acting together can strengthen the workers movement globally. While experiences of struggle at work, together with the build up of mutualist instruments are enlarged, the possibilities to begin to experience real embryos of new truly libertarian generations will increase. What we are doing is trying to build up a joint project towards social revolution. Do not forget that in the Spanish civil war, the self-managed experiences of production allowed the fight on the front to go on. Regarding the answer to the CNT-E: what we are trying is to give to those proletarians who don't have access to quality products, is the possibility to get it. The project also includes the purpose of allowing the small producers, for instance the peasants in the area where they live and who produce very good olive oil, to access a market which is saturated by transnationals. This way, the mutualist network can get the producers out of the transnational logic of the market in which they cannot sell their products and, at the same time, give people the possibility to access to products that they cannot find in normal markets. This is not revolution, we all know this, but it is a first step to regain our capacities, our knowledge, our dignity and to realize that we can start a path leading us to revolution. To be able to experiment with situations and to understand first hand that it is possible to live without employers, without masters, is the first step to begin to understand that a way towards revolution is possible. If we do not understand first hand that we can be self-sufficient, not continuously dependent on market logic and capital, through specific experiences, we will not reach revolution for sure. There is a difference between the prisoner and the slave. The prisoner does not imagine being free. Capital is producing slaves, people who cannot even think about being free. To the PA comrades: in the history of the workers movement there were many solidarity and mutualist experiences, attempts to build new relations at work to build up a new society. We have, of course, to avoid starting experiences that can risk getting into the capitalist logic again. We have to select the methods of solidarity that can evolve towards a specific support to struggles. At the same time we support the experiences of the struggle with these characteristics.

CNT-E: We are unhappy with the method of this debate. It is a monologue from the USI comrades. It is not possible to enter into a rich debate this way. I have missed a lot of ideas the comrades have mentioned and with which I do not agree.

Chair: Can you propose an alternative method?

CNT-E: Trying to concentrate the ideas to give more possibilities to participate. The answers are almost an avalanche, continuous, making it impossible to participate.

CNT-E: There is problem in what the USI proposes about this topic of cooperatives and the question of distribution of quality products. Although you present it in a given way, there is a problem with the permanent antagonism in the society we live in, as if the society we live in and the capitalist relationships were a sort of raft of oil with peace and harmony that I cannot see nor perceive. What I see is a war of all against all. These social tensions I perceive, called "class tensions" by some (although I think that the concept could be discussed but I do not want to start with it) are the questions between exploited and exploiters. It is a tension coming from the very

beginning of human existence. These relations relate to cooperatives also. History does not end just because some comrades have been able to establish an “equal” production relationship. Such as you explain in your speech and such as the comrade from Granada stated, in some cooperatives there are cooperativists and workers. This reality is not free from deep contradictions and this affects our organizations. I will focus on just two questions and will not take much time:

1) You have spoken about a reality that you have to take into account. The reality of Italian cooperatives is very specific. I will not mention questions such as the influence of the Communist Party in North Italy. Here we all know Italian history and what these cooperatives turned into. This is to show that it is not a matter of incomprehension on our side. We understand you. Now I will tell you two other things:

1. There is no way to compare the collectives in Spain in '36 with the Italian cooperatives. For one reason. It is not in a patriot spirit. The collectives in Spain were established, not only because of war needs, but because it was an ideal since the 19th century. There were attempts not only in 1936 but in 1933 in a nearby village called Favero. I mean that we should not confuse the libertarian communist ideal with the use the war conditions gave to collectives. War needs made the anarchist ideal used as a tool to get food to the front, since it is more efficient and effective. The self-managed model of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists is efficient under the ethical approach and the efficiency approach. The last think I will say is not in controversial, but there is a matter that I guess will make you think. You have commented something that has made me think of Spain. In Italy important strike movements were able to resist thanks to the support of cooperatives for a long time. In Spain, in the Basque Country or Asturias and other areas in the North and possibly in the South –but I mostly know the northern ones – during the Franco years there was a strike called “Lesaka” the most important strike in Franco’s era. This strike was able to resist thanks to the social structure those days. People then not only worked in factories, but they also had their orchards, hens, rabbits –it was the social structure of those people. When I was young we had hens and rabbits –that would help us resist. What has happened is that the Capitalist system has destroyed, within our working class, all possibility of resistance and self-sufficiency. To conclude –it’s high time I did- a more general thing: we, the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, have sometimes the tendency to believe that reality will adapt to us. To believe that political and social realities will adapt to us. And this is something that the Spanish anarchists have paid dearly for because in fact, the initiative in '36 was in the military and not in the anarcho-syndicalists. That is, the military and the “reaction” imposed us their war conditions. It means that, in the anarchist ideal, it is society as a whole which mobilizes in order to fight capital and masters and offer the results for the benefit of community. And to conclude, we need open eyes and open ears also to social realities other than ours. We have to adapt to those realities understanding the patterns imposed by the capitalists. In the industry and finance market, they are who set the tone. Cooperatives, in such a complex and antagonist reality, are a sort of sailboat lost in immensity and sometimes wrecked.

PA: I do not think our questions are being answered and thus, if the USI comrades agree, I will ask them again, the first one about the topic of mutualism and the second one about the abolition of wage work in cooperatives.

USI: We thought the comrade had asked if there are wage workers in cooperatives and if these go to the market with their products and what the future of cooperatives is. When will there be a real change in workers relations? When the change in these relations will take place, in order to make them different than in capitalist companies? We are aware of the fact that the cooperative movement has taken directions that go against the original idea. We know that there is Berlusconi behind cooperatives. There are the building cooperatives to build the TGV. As for the workers movement, also in history we see that part of trade unionism chose the reformist way; and our role is to make people see the mistakes in reformist action and to attract people towards a different position of struggle: ours. As in Italy, throughout the world, mainstream unions representing a big part of the workers support capitalism and this sort of system, maintaining a system of death. Exactly like cooperatives in Italy have become a capitalist instrument, this workers movement, so to say, has become a tool to support capitalism. Just like we support direct action in the sense of direct participation in union struggles at the workplace, we also want to support the cooperative experiences that, according to us, must stick to the same principles –ours - which make up part of the union struggles we support. This way both things will go together and will improve the conditions of the workers movement. Class struggle is also changing. There are new elements. Middle class elements are also increasing and they realize that capital is destroying life in a general sense for its own profit. It is not only workers, not only the working class realizes this. We are now gambling with the possibilities of the planet to survive and this is a new element in our conflict with capitalism. Talking about mutualism, capitalists are supportive of each other; our idea of solidarity is not the same, this is an idea towards the buildup, in common life, of the realization that only a solidarity-based society can save the planet. There are examples of support of mutualism as a solution for the troubles of the planet, for instance T. Ferrari, a university teacher of economics, who after the Marxist concept of economy, has evolved a mutualist concept of economy which is closer to the

libertarian idea. To conclude, as anarchosyndicalists we should speed up the revolutionary process by learning of the positive elements in our experience that we can profit from and support them, both in the vindication level of the struggle at work and in the cooperative experiences.

SP: There is a question I do not understand. In Brazil they made a social movement, the Colonia Sicilia, in th 1890s which was set up with the idea to spread the anarchist ideas and principles but they were not able to, as there was no social uprising movement. In the 80s a lot of people absolutely fascinated by the alternative movement tried to build up an alternative parallel economy to be integrated in capital, since there is no other system. Then in Brazil we have seen the capitalist attempts from landless workers to occupy the land and work it but they were repressed by the authorities. This way, the ideas presented here seem to tend to create parallel economies rooted in social movements and this is why we are so interested to know what sort of cooperatives are being built in Italy. We think they must be on the short scale and as a survival option but they cannot create a real alternative to the capitalist economy. Do the comrades believe that cooperatives, assemblies and the rest of related activities are not second line? I remember that in Germany the concept of “social, ecological and market alternative economy” has appeared – still within the normal market as they cannot cut relations between the market and product. We are very interested about the details of how they are doing in Italy. We know there are comrades in Italy who manage bookshops, cafes and small shops but they are still within the market logic and obliged to compete in rates. Thus, don’t you think that we really have to focus more in fighting capitalism since whatever we build up inside it will still carry capitalist patterns?

USI: In recent years a new peasant movement in Italy has appeared. The USI Union Arte e Mestieri is trying to organize this movement to avoid its assumption by capital and market logic. This attempt goes in the direction of being a movement struggling against capital, uniting worker movements. Our goal should be, since a revolutionary movement does not exist, to connect the experiences in this direction. Similarly, the environmental struggle cannot be put apart from the struggle against capital since it is destroying the planet, and the work towards cooperativism cannot be separated from the struggle against capital.

CNT-F: It is hard to find a logical link between all the elements in discussion. There are revolutionary movements but they are hard to find. We need some sort of tools to allow us to grow since states have got repression. In this sense, one of the tools we can use is the internet as this allows us to connect all these experiences and make the movement grow. We have to try to avoid state pressure and capitalist repression. We agree with the Portuguese comrades regarding the mutualist idea that will allow us to advance in the destruction of capitalism. In France, every time that we support people with food and networks, it also helps with the spreading of ideas. It is an example to say that we are not Red Cross. Trotskyists and Marxists criticize us for this and they see it in the sense of using other peoples' needs. The main problem is visibility or invisibility. Other organizations such as CGT carry out this sort of activities looking for visibility in the media; we have the idea of not seeking media attention. We are now seeing that, in France, they use anarchism to support capitalism, and they call themselves anarchocapitalists and are beginning to grow by using our concepts to continue with capitalism. We have to use mutualism as a tool for daily struggle. As for the environmental issue, it is important to think about water, the end of oil and gas, etc.

PA: The strategy of USI, is it to support cooperatives or to create them?

USI: Both things. There are existing projects that we have to support since they have their libertarian ideas. The first step is to create a network to relate to these existing experiences. We also think it is important to inspire new experiences of cooperative work. This strategy goes hand in hand with our vindication and union direct action. We also think that the creation of cooperatives is also direct action, which goes hand in hand with vindication direct action.

CNT-E: We think that cooperatives are in capitalism and in the market. They are a tool just to not suffer so much from the capitalist system. As a worker defense tool it cannot lead to transformation; action has to take place in the workplace where there is confrontation with the system. Cooperatives have to be supported as a defense, but struggle in workplaces has to be encouraged.

USI: It is a legitimate opinion but in work there is class conflict and it has to be done; but when you come from work and go to the supermarket, you give your money to the capitalist market. And we try to build up a specific reality so that, instead of going to the supermarket, you go to a different shop where you will meet a producer, not a business man. There is also the problem of how to steal unemployed people from the temporary work agencies. We can also try something so that the unemployed workers do not need these.

CNT-E: They have to be supported, but they are integrated and work through the system –thus there is no shock and without shock there is not social transformation.

CNT-E: There is an experience in Madrid that we would like to comment after years of approaching consumer and orchard groups. There was a federation of groups that meet in the union locals. In this group there are many people paying their money and 5 people earning a salary and working the fields to share the products afterwards. There are two main problems in this structure. One, as the French comrade commented, the few militants in the organization that afford the money - and the second one is that a employer-employee relation appears between those who pay the money and the five who work. Many became aware of this employer-employee relation when a labor problem arose with a worker. Based on this experience, some of these movement people, also militants in the CNT, have tried to change the pattern holding assemblies inside our spaces and with the interested affiliated. They have got some land on the outskirts of Madrid and there are comrades who work the land in a militant attitude – such as we devote 8 hours per week to union militancy, they devote some of their militant time to it. And also all the militants in the union devote a few days a month to the crops. We can say that after four or five months, the experience is much more positive than with any other structure and we see real food in the union every week –and this helps us to avoid buying in the supermarket and gives us a sort of food resistance box.

CNT-E: This summarizes a practical and also real activity. This means that the realities of current precariousness imply that people cannot buy food because they have no money. It makes people to look for solutions both in an individual and organized way. Recycling, for instance, or the second project that seems more interesting to me –it means that with the situation of impoverishment in Europe, these experiences can be multiplied. And it will evolve so that the people participating can federate amongst them. The problem of cooperatives is that we talk about existing institutions and the idea is to create for them a federation super-structure. This is a problem that will appear in Italy since the nature of the existing cooperatives is neither anarchist nor mutualist and it seems that they are trying to establish a tendency work. Why, then, don't we look at the new realities that people create and take them into account in order to incorporate them to our realities? Because, in case these realities remain in time, they will be absorbed by the system. It is Sicilia's history –you cannot be out of reality. Reality produces self-organization experiences and the rest is just to try to take the possible from the system.

USI: We agree with what you have commented in the sense that what we said before was to put together the cooperative union and the union that tries to gather the self-management experiences to save them from perishing into capitalism. The issue of quality is because we want to improve living standards with quality products. We would like to recall what the Portugal comrade said about cooperatives in Italy: they are capitalist companies. We do not want to speak about the cooperatives which are legally identical to any other company, but about the ones with a horizontal inner structure.

SP-AIT: I am fed up of hearing talk about “sustainability” - for whom? General self-management. It is not possible to speak about self-management without speaking about social revolution.

USI: Also in Italy they speak about sustainability but this has nothing to do with what we want to support. Revolution is a complex process and we have to acquire every possible experience, to assume all the experiences that will enrich the revolutionary movement towards social revolution.

CNT-E: Once again the problem is the lack of interest on the side of some sections -and going on with the debate in these conditions seems inadequate. The positions of Italy and Spain (Granada) are clear enough. If the rest of Sections have nothing to add we'd better end up the discussion.

ZSP: We have been asking to speak. The ways of the debate have ended up in a conversation and we have felt excluded.

SolFed: We have very different opinions in our organization and we are far from reaching consensus. Given the very strong positions put forward here, we do not feel comfortable in giving our opinion as we would not be representing the SolFed.

At 14.50h a lunch break takes place. Third Day in the Afternoon

cooperatives in Russia

KRAS: We will speak about the current situation and the cooperatives in Russia and the position of KRAS in this respect. The idea of the cooperative was used often as a slogan during the Perestroika period in Russia, But what the anarchosyndicalists have as an anarchist idea is something completely different. It was more like

the structure in Yugoslavia under Tito where there was a workers' structure inside but there were managers who made the economic decisions.

This means that the workers continued in a wage labour relation but the relation between the workers and the management could allow them to negotiate things like prices, etc., that is to say there was some agreement.

Then at the end of the 80s there were a lot of cooperatives but in reality they had wage labourers.

This was a catastrophic experiment and the collapse of the Russian economy helped.

The second part was the privatization of the 90s. There were different models, without getting into detail but I have written something and will send it later. In all of these distinctive models we center on privatization around a model that was supposed to be an improvement for the workers. In this model the companies were converted into ones with shares which the workers were supposed to get.

What happened in reality was that the shares wound up in the managers' hands, not in the workers'.

Since 1998 there has been something called a popular company which is an evolution of the previous kind of company but where the workers have at least 75% of the shares and no one worker shareholder could have more than 5%.

This company functioned on a capitalist model and functioned along the lines of the market. The profits that were given depended on the shares and in our opinion this is not an alternative to capitalism.

The topic of self-management and cooperatives were highly devaluated amongst the working class. Because of this, over a couple of years, the workers have only had conflict in the companies related to the topic of shares in the company.

In the 90s we could hear slogans about workers' control. There were a lot of times when the capitalists bought all the shares just to sell off all the assets and wind up the businesses. The workers thought that this idea of management would make them lose their jobs and so they were opposed to such ideas.

So in the great waves of the social movements of the 90s, when we contacted people and tried to help them, we heard about Workers Control about the shares. But this did not result in workers' control anywhere. Other slogans were, for example: re-nationalize the companies or to transfer the companies to new management when they wanted to close down the companies.

Many Marxists were supporting the workers with these slogans but we could not support them. Last year there was a conflict where the workers were supporting control of the company. It was a company northeast of Moscow with about 500 workers and they demanded that the government give the shares to the workers. It was funny because there was a Stalinist group at this factory who initiated these demands and they were expelled from the party for being „anarchosindicalists”. Of course they were not but they tried to get some help from leftists groups and asked for ideas about the self-management of the company. The majority of the groups that answered proposed that they start a popular company but KRAS proposed a cooperative where all are equal and which has a horizontal structure. In the end this project was never realized but we wrote a proposal and have a clear position in this debate. There are three points:

- 1.- We are interested in self-managed practices here and now when these are not based on capitalist principles but on relations of self-management and equality. We are talking about production, housing and different communes around Europe or kibbutzim, or attempts to create egalitarian cooperatives which for us means the equality of all the participants, equal division of the profits, making decisions in general assemblies, not made by management and not having waged labourers. Any other form we think is capitalist.
2. We look at the experience such as it is. There are experiences of practical self-management, sometimes it is the only way to survive, but we cannot take it as if it is a road to anarchist society. The experience of the kibbutzim showed us that these communities can little by little enter into the logic of the market, reforming themselves and losing their anti-capitalist essence, producing what the market requires. They are forced to take money from the banks, they are designed to be more competitive, taking faster and more effective decisions, each time taking fewer decisions in the general assembly and forming new management teams of technocrats. The next thing is renouncing the principles of equality and as they cannot leave the market economy, sooner or later they are condemned to it. The only way is to extend communism outside the commune or company. For us, these cannot happen without some form of social revolution.
- 3.- So we do not tell the workers that they should fight to take the company or demand re-nationalization. The change of the bosses will not change exploitation or the wage labour relationship. It is all the same who is the boss, the state or a private company, this production is capitalist and it is they who decide what to produce and get the profits, the state is a big capitalist. This is how we are different from Lenin and Trotsky.

If the workers demand the factory, what do we tell them? We think that it has to be like in Argentina or the example that we just made. We have to take into account that claim for workers' control is a positive thing and at times it is the only way to keep jobs. We don't have the right to say that this is not important and that they should wait until the social revolution to resolve these problems.

Another example, if anybody wants to start an agricultural commune, we say that this will not work and in the end they will be capitalists. There is a debate among anarchists and the left about this and the anarchists were

under the influences of the leftists who said that it is not worth it and it would fail. Our stance is that we don't have the moral right to say that they can't do this, but we have the obligation to inform them about the consequences of this. What we can say is that the cooperative is formed on a libertarian basis.

To sum up, the intention to form a cooperative in a company can serve to gain experience but it is not part of the road to a new society.

Questions:

Is this a topic that is not only in Russia but also in Europe? Do you know about the situation in Yugoslavia, Poland and the Czech Republic? In Poland there was a very popular idea that was exactly the same process as in Russia but with a difference. When this started to happen in Russia, the companies fell into the hands of the management very quickly. In Russia they also deliberately lowered the value of the company so that the workers had shares that were worth very little and the people sold them for a few dollars without realizing that in a few years the value would increase thousands of times. In the first years of privatization in Poland, there was a similar process which is actively continuing today. At first there was not such a savage privatization and many workers took part of the companies. But buying part of the company was a dangerous transaction. We had the opportunity to talk to people about these conditions. For example we talked to some bus companies where the workers wanted the shares. If the company had debts, the debt went to the workers, and so the workers had to take loans from banks.

Meeting with Humanidad Newspaper

My name is Alfredo and my comrade Jimmy. We have travelled almost 24 hours from Lima to be with you. We would have like to be here earlier but the cursed Spanish Embassy did not allow it.

I would like to know who I am speaking to. (The delegates present themselves.)

We apologize for having made you present yourselves because surely you have already done this but for me it is important to know who we are talking to. We have a publication "Humanidad" (Humanity). We have brought as many as possible. It is almost 3 years old and is published in Lima, Peru. We have spent many years, some of us up to 40 trying to merge different experiences of anarchism and syndicalism. In the course of the history of the paper we approached different movements of workers. For us it was a challenge to maintain contact with them because we are not a union and the central unions in Peru are corrupt and manipulative. They are vertical organizations and many times negotiate with the bosses and the state and this is against our principles. I explain this because for us it is very important to be at this meeting. I say that it is important because as far as I know the history of the Peruvian movement, this is the first delegation from Peru which has visited an IWA conference. It is important that we know each other and you shall see that we are flesh and bone and we have hands to work, we want to cooperate.

In Lima we are close to a federation of bakery workers, "the star of Peru", with more than 120 years of history, with anarcho-syndicalist origins, one of the organizations that fought for the 8 hour day, where many anarchists could organize themselves with other workers. Currently, the federation is almost historical because its militants could not recruit or organize young people, and also currently the organization does not have an anarcho-syndicalist line, but despite that they give us a space to meet. The communication and the network that we can generate after this meeting is important because there is a union of young people in Peru and they are against the union central, but with our possibilities and the forces we have we cannot offer more tools of organization and we have to learn from your experiences to take this back to Lima. I am going to conclude this brief presentation thanking you for the time you have listened and now my comrade Jimmy will explain about the experience with Tomito's and others. Thanks and we are proud to meet you face to face.

Good afternoon comrades, international friends. One of the first things that attracted me to anarchism is this principle of internationalism and it is exciting for me to be at this meeting with all the people from different parts of the world. I would like to delve into the topic of precarious work. Perhaps we need a little presentation on the characteristics of the country. Precarious work is connected to the topic of changes in the forms of capitalist production and to understand the topic of labour precarity it is necessary to understand this. Also it has to do with the development of the nation-state in Peru. In the Peruvian society, like in other "developing countries" there was a distinct development of capitalism. The introduction of the market in the community was not the same development as in Europe or the United States. We can add the topic of racism to this. The Peruvian national state was formed by a criollo elite, excluding the great majority of indigenous people. The introduction of the market developed in different ways in the communities. This would be a short summary from the nineteenth century onwards. The Peruvian labour movement began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Let's say that at this time anarcho-syndicalism had a strong presence until the appearance of Marxist parties. The history of anarcho-syndicalism until 1936 is more or less known. It seems that after the 8 hour working day was achieved, the movement was no longer in a guiding role. From 1930 onwards, there has been more of a movement linked to Marxism. It gained strength after the 60s 70s and 80s. You could say that this shift of power relations was

parallel to the social transformation that took place in Peruvian society. There began a processes of migration of people of indigenous origins to large cities such as Lima. Starting from the 60s and 70s a generation of young people began to mobilize and radicalize, either as students, industrial workers or in the peasant movement ... this questions the model of the haciendas and landowners (landlords). Parallel to this, there was the development of a strong labor movement and the most critical period of this stage started in the 80s with a process of political violence led by radical Maoist groups like Shining Path or MRTA groups of the Guevarist tendency and aimed at the Peruvian State. This was a very traumatic stage and caused great transformations in the society, with the number of deaths in the civilian population at about 70,000, between the dead and the disappeared. And I would like to emphasize this topic of political violence because it will definitely leave its mark on the workers movement, especially at the level of repression against the leaders/ This reached its high point in 1992, but well before the assassination of key leaders of the CGTP (the largest union, influenced by the Communist Party) with the murder of Pedro Ulca. This is in the 90s with Alberto Fujimori which means the combination of labour reforms and neoliberal economics, the opening of the market, privatization of companies and some anti-labor and anti-union laws. The movement that had been rather strong until then, because of the assassinations and the reforms, saw an enormous decline in the rate of unionization, most of all because the people who had lost their jobs had to find ways to survive, what they call the "information economy ". Throughout the decade of the 90s until 2005 there was a kind of silence or disappearance of the labour movement, above all because in many cases, to be a unionist, due to the trauma of political violence, was a type of stigma, of being subversive and putting your life at risk. In recent years there is a historic moment in the workers movement, you can say it is connected with the new economic model that comes with neoliberalism and which is based on the export of raw materials or with manufactured goods for export.

In the last ten years there a movement of workers connected to this model of export has been developing, which can be divided into two important sectors: textiles and agricultural export, consumer products that are sent to the markets of Europe, the US and Japan. 2007 was an important year. There was a process of economic growth, in official terms and the macroeconomy but this did not necessarily mean any improvement for the great majority of the population. The level of inequality increased while the growth rate did as well. At the same time in both sectors in 2007 there were important and almost spontaneous mobilizations of workers, although no connection was established between both sectors, which are geographically separated. This mobilization was spontaneous because it was not directed by either political parties or unions, because there were no unions in these companies. There were significant mobilizations of both textile workers and women agricultural workers. The main workers in the agroexport are women because they, due to male domination, are more submissive and are less likely to form unions and because their work, although better than a man's, costs less. This mobilization process was moderately recorded by some media and NGOs. The movement ended in the creation of unions in the companies, but the bosses especially in Peruvian society are much more authoritarian than in other regions, which could be connected in some way to the topic of racism.

These unions were made to virtually disappear by the business, illegally laying off workers but because of the economic power they have, they can pay fines for their actions against trade unions. The reason from the mobilization has been the extremely precarious working conditions. There is a special labor regime for this sector that allows workers to be recruited for two to three months, because these are export jobs and depend on demand, this depends on the temporary law from the 70s. It was a temporary law, but has been in existence for more than 30 years. This is the reason that employers can dismiss so easily, because they simply do not renew the contract. Another characteristic are long working days. We are talking about 16 hours a day, seven days a week. There are times when you can work 36 hours straight, without overtime pay, without social security, without parental rights and even not being able to take a break to go to the restroom. Almost like the labour conditions in 19th century England. Another characteristic is that there are very young workers, without any union experience, or any experience in parties or politics of different sorts and they are overcoming obstacles thanks to some NGOs or activists who have managed to form unions. The best known cases are in the companies "Camposol" and one that I know more is the textile firm "Topitop". This company has strongly grown with shops around the world and companies like Zara, Inditex and GAP outsource their production there. They are therefore in the consolidation of the unions, but many companies with the same labour conditions still have no union.

USI: I would like to know if in Peru there has developed any movement similar to the Zapatistas?

Humanidad: You can say that the Zapatista movement in Mexico has some very particular characteristics that cannot be found in other regions of South America. One of the recent debates was why, unlike Ecuador or Bolivia, there was not an indigenous movement in Peru. Until recently, when in 2009 with the slaughter of Embaú in the Amazon, from which a type of indigenous movement of the Amazon appeared. It became very strong and organized, fighting against the mining and extraction companies, oil drilling, but not could be said to share characteristics with the Zapatista indigenous except for the vindication, but without formation of a guerrilla movement. Have resorted to direct action taking oil plants and blocking roads.

USI: Does any movement exist in Peru which aims to create self-managed cooperatives?

Humanidad: There was an historical experience, promoted, ironically, by the military state, at the beginning of the 60s, with the change of the model of productive with the end of latifundism. It is very common to encounter cooperative markets, for example I studied in a cooperative school. There are religious groups which work with big cooperatives, state banking workers, teachers. "La Derrama Magisterial" is an enormous cooperative. Normally there are credit and consumer cooperatives. The best time for the anticapitalist cooperatives developed in the 70s. We are talking about companies that produced furniture, for example "Muebles Revol" (revol short for revolution) a transport company "Enatru". Currently there is a hotel which is self-managed by its workers, "Hotel Bolivar". There are also many outside of Lima like these three or four examples, for examples with producers of coffee and sugar which came after the end of latifundism. Currently they are plans to organize food coops and service coops. It is difficult to consider all the cooperative experiences to be revolutionary ones, and also the topic of self-management is a topic that we always are going to discuss because it is an alternative inside the capitalist system that we want to destroy. Then, the creation of self-management in work and the personal sphere, for example in my case I am an independent worker, I don't have a boss, but in the end the boss is Capital and it is very difficult to believe that I am making any change because in the end I am accountable to capitalism, to what we want to destroy.

CNTF: Do the workers organize against the corruption in the companies?

Humanidad: That's correct. There was a criticism of the CGTP y they wanted to organize themselves.

CNTF: These groups intend to organize amongst themselves ?

Humanidad: In the case of the textile industry, there was a process of mobilization by themselves, without even knowing what a union is because of the age of the workers. There wasn't any coordination between groups. It developed in the same year, in the same months, but without communication. They were in different cities, The people who made these groups have little education, little access to new technologies, few possibilities to voice their views, so they are connected by poverty, disorganization and social exclusion - they are the characteristics you can find. If it rather difficult for a person from the North to organize with a person from the South. Only 6 percent of the working population is unionized and the non-unionized have a strong rejection of the unions. The word "union" generates rejection and young people from the 90s to 2000 had their hands tied and with a shot in the head, it is difficult to think that we would have militant unions today.

Due to the growth of the economy a new re-organizational process is developing, rearticulated where unionization rates are increasing. Over the past five years, the unionization has doubled, but this has decreased since the economic crisis of 2008 due to increased unemployment.

CNTF: Do you think that these spontaneous movements will continue over time? How do you organize to support this movement?

Humanidad: I would say that they are spontaneous in the sense that they arose themselves because of their conditions, they weren't directed, but have led to the creation of some unions in some factories and are trying to become stronger amongst themselves, forming coordinations or collectives of about 10 unions from different factories against the central unions. For this we need to clarify that thanks to the development of international union action with a federation in Spain they managed to pressure the company by urging its clients. They are in the process of coordinating themselves more. Also set up a network with the IWA. We have contact with some groups but there is a limitation because we are only an organ of spreading information and we need to become an organ of organization. In some issues there is union information.

CNTF: What about repression and organizing on the Internet?

Humanidad: In the past five years the police have established a computer crimes division, the main problem is that the comrades do not take security against it. They continue using Hotmail, yahoo, gmail which are private companies that sell information, there are few private servers run by comrades. A real thing is that many, or most trade unionists and leftist groups are living in the 70's, with its colors and form and that generates a rejection because the younger generation do not see themselves reflected. There are some websites that collect indigenous struggles, for example servindi.org One problem is that many are working with foreign companies receiving funding, for example peru.indymedia.org was established in 2001 and served to spread some things but the project remained unfulfilled.

USI: The issue of racism has influenced the labour movement. Are there any types of racism in the working classes?

Humanidad: You could say that it influences everything in Peru. There is a huge bibliography about this. The entrepreneurial class come from a different ethnic background than the majority of the population, they are the descendents of Englishmen, Italians, Japanese... they are part of the elite. Even among workers, racism determined many things, even inside the left. Machismo and homophobia. It is rather difficult to control because it is a cultural question. One organization cannot change this. It is our intention with Humanidad but Lima has 9 million inhabitants and we publish 1000 papers.