

# FROM FRANCE TO EUROPE

## FINALLY THE SOCIAL STRIKE!



**PARIS**  
**21-22-23**  
**OCTOBER**

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# Content\_

Welcome to all participants of the transnational social strike (TSS) meeting in Paris!

With this reader we want to contribute to a hopefully fruitful coming together. We start with a few brief voices from „old and new“ groups on their expectations to our meeting. Afterwards we present the full program including the descriptions of our plenaries and workshops. Following the calls for the Paris meeting we have printed some further platform-statements, which have been published in 2016 and in the end of 2015: about the 1st of March action day and from the Poznan meeting last year October. We added some analysis and reports which have been written by TSS-member-groups (precarious disconnections, plan c, tie) last days and weeks. And before we end the reader with short presentations of most of the participating groups, we collected also a few texts from outside our platform process. We think, these texts touch topics and key points of main axes of our meeting (amazon, hospital strike, transnational organizing of migrant labour etc.) and thus might contribute to the deepening of our discourse. In this spirit: lets have three days of vivid exchange and productive debates!

the reader-team from Frankfurt on 19.10.2016

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## Brief Voices on Expectations for Paris\_

After nearly two years of discussion and exchange „towards the transnational social strike“ with meetings in Rome, Frankfurt, Poznan and Paris and a decentralized action day at 1.3.16:

What do you expect from our meeting in Paris to call it a „success“ afterwards?

What are your focal points or key challenges concerning contents, structures and/or activities?

„I would like to see:

- 1) the birth of working groups on various specific aspects of transnational strike which will work through online tools after the meeting
- 2) one of these groups could focus on discussing concepts and approaches to social strike, perhaps contribute to the development of new perspectives through analysing current experiences and possibilities across Europe
- 3) interaction between different participating (in this meeting) organisations that can be maintained after the meeting, and potential for new interactions through making available a ‘map’ of the different organisations, their details and focuses, via the TSS website or a new website attached to the TSS website.“

S., Plan C (Scotland)

„Success would be to develop a political imaginary in relation to how our activity and conditions from diverse places can find a common articulation and resonance. We are forming these relationships but we should take care in understanding that there are political, historical and cultural differences that we need to work through rather than assume we can generalise. Organising on a transnational space needs to be part of organising on a metropolitan space- unless we build strong capacities and resources to do this locally it would be hard to have the impact transnationally.“

A., Plan C London)

„For us it is the first contact with TSS, so we are mainly interested in getting to know it, the groups, discussions, strategies and people to be afterwards able to think if we could sensefully participate or it can foster our work or not. I will also report to whole FAU and to other local groups about the meeting. We are a small group, so participating on our own in special international structures could also be too much keeping in mind that we have to run our local stuff as well. But anyway it will be a new experience, so for the moment we think: let’s check it! It is also clear that we in Halle for the moment concerning the topic „strike“ cannot not do more than symbolic actions, but maybe there are also different ideas how to sensefully contribute. One strong reason why we participate is the special focus on thinking struggles against european border regime / racism and against neoliberalism / labour struggles together. We hope that we can get some good input and inspiration here. It could help us to better local contacts with e.g. antiracist groups. Migration and labour, as well as the other topics like care work or logistics are important topics for the whole FAU in general and also for the international partners of FAU (basically CNT Spain, USI Italy). So mainly hope the get new contacts, get to know people and get input for our local work and future plans!“

FAU Halle

„Everyday we try to build our strength on the shop-floor, but also try to look beyond singular workplace to make bridges and to share tools useful in class struggle. Our everyday syndicalist experiences have taught us how important is to not only think but also act simultaneously locally and internationally. We hope that the meeting in Paris will give us the opportunity to exchange experiences and build even more powerful force against our bosses. However, we keep in mind that the strength of transnational platforms comes from their roots in the day-to-day resistance and face-to-face interactions. We want to discuss and understand how transnational platforms contribute to the development of class-oriented social movements.“

Inicjatywa Pracownicza, Poland

„We think that the meeting place in Paris is a key element of this year meeting, as it was last year Poznan: the participation of the protagonists of the French movement against the loi travail is telling of the need to build transnational connections, in order to give strength and continuity to national movements. This is in our view one of the key challenges of this year meeting. Besides we think we should make the TSS the transnational project, in which migrants, precarious and industrial workers that challenge the European neoliberal order can recognize themselves. The meeting should help us making a step forward in this direction, also by finding a common voice on the current situation and common European claims.“

Precarious difconnections

„In the last 20 years Slovenia granted only 476 asylums. Facing xenophobic and incompetent government and total absence of any official infrastructure or at least existing foreign communities, activist were forced to organise all aspects of help for about 200 migrants, staying in Ljubljana. What we expect from the TSS is to talk to other activists and collectives, who are dealing with similar issues – nationalistic society, lack of infrastructure, creating of economic base for activism, political organising of migrants and similar. We found ourself in a quite new situation for us and we would need to here some what other collectives around Europe are doing.“

Social Center Rog Migrant Community

„For me a real progress depends to a wider and stronger commitment on a vivid working process in the frame of TSS and to interconnect our important and necessary discourse with concrete practices and conflicts on the ground. Be it a caravan on logistics, be it a common mapping of strikes and struggles for a better circulation of experiences, be it a summer school on migrant labour.: I hope we are able to develop and tackle such initiatives, which crisscross the european space and which are needed to root our platform on a more continuous level.“

h., no one is illegal, Hanau

# Program\_

## FRIDAY, 21st October

Bourse du Travail, Rue de Château D'Eau 3, metro: République

18h Welcome of the Participants

18.30-21h Roundtable: From France To Europe. Building The Transnational Social Strike.

Speakers from Sud Solidaires (France), Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires (France), Nuit Debout (France), Workers' Initiative (Poland), Precarious difconnections (Italy)

## SATURDAY, 22nd October

Bourse de Travail, Saint-Denis, rue Génin 9/11, metro: Saint-Denis – Porte de Paris

10-13h Workshops Session\_

1. Migrant Labor Struggles and Mobility Regime

organized by No One Is Illegal (Germany), Social Center Rog Migrant Community (Slovenia), Migrant Coordination (Italy)

2. Welfare, Care Work and Social Reproduction

organized by Plan C (UK), Alt åt alla (Sweden), Workers' Initiative (Poland), Precarious Difconnections (Italy)

3. Logistics And The Perspective of a Transnational Social Strike

organized By Amazon Workers (Germany), Deliveroo strikers/IWGB (UK), Precarious DifConnections (Italy), Workers' Initiative (Poland), Sud PTT (France)

4. Precarization And Unemployment

organized by Commission Economie Politique – Nuit Debout (France), CNE (Belgium), Precarious Difconnections (Italy)

14.30-18.30h General Assembly\_

1. Slot (14.30-15.30h) Our Oppression, our Commonalities

2. Slot (15.30-16.30h) Transnational and Social. The Challenge of the Strike

3. Slot (17-18.30h) Our Collective Field of Struggle

## SUNDAY, 23rd October

Bourse Du Travail, Saint-Denis, Rue Génin 9/11, Metro: Saint-Denis – Porte De Paris

10-14h Final Plenary

## Friday Roundtable\_

### From France to Europe. Building the Transnational Social Strike

The last months have seen France turned upside down by the movement against the loi travail. We have greeted it as a prolonged and massive experience of social strike, for the combination of strikes in key sectors of the economy and a social mobilization that filled the streets, the squares and the metropolitan space. While mainly directed against the loi travail, the mobilization has also addressed its world, that is a wider spectrum of issues having to do with the ways in which precarity hunts both labor and living conditions, depriving people of their possibility to choose over their future and move around autonomously. The approval of the loi travail, in line with many other labor reforms in Europe, the escalating social and political tensions which are crossing not only France but all Europe, the transnational character of austerity measures and EU crisis management pose us the problem of how to turn the French mobilization and its novelty into a transnational chance. As Transnational Social Strike Platform, after the first annual meeting in Poznan, the transnational day of coordinated action of the 1st of March and a first assembly in Paris we have now to ask ourselves, if we recognize that the loi travail is a national expression of the European neoliberal policies, how to overcome the national dimension of the struggles against these policies. In order to think together at how to change this state of affairs, we need to discuss two different sets of questions: the first one is what we can learn, as a European movement, from the French mobilization in terms of methods and tactics, limits and strengths; the second one concerns the challenges we are confronted with in the transformation of the national scope of the mobilization into a transnational one. We thus invite the speakers and the audience to discuss the following questions:

- in which way the struggle against the loi travail has challenged the traditional forms of organization, meaning by this unions, social movements and parties? How the unions have been pushed to more radical stances over the months and which were the limits of their radicalization? How the problem of precarization has built the common point around which different antagonistic drives have converged? How has the connection between struggles inside and outside the workplaces been carried on and what difficulties have been met?

- how to overcome the gap between the European dimension of the neoliberal attack on labor and lives and the national confinement of our counterattack? how can we build strong and stable connections that are not simply the sum or coalition of the already existing initiatives, but are turned into a real convergence through a shared transnational project? how to build convergences with other strikes across borders like those in the logistics chains, such as Amazon, or the strike of Polish women? what are the key issues/claims that can help consolidating a transnational movement against precarization?

## Saturday's Workshops\_

### 1. Migrant labor struggles and mobility regime\_

organized by No One is Illegal (Germany), Social Center Rog Migrant Community (Slovenia), Migrant Coordination (Italy)

The first TSS meeting in Poznan in 2015 has been a first opportunity to discuss the crucial role played by the European government of mobility in contemporary processes of precarization that affect not only migrants, but all workers. Government of mobility is exercised both on the border and inside the States, where we see the experimentations of new instruments to control the pace, direction and status of migrants movements more than to stop them. The government of mobility aims in fact at producing hierarchies and differences, starting from the one between 'economic migrants' and 'asylum seekers' down to the multiplication of legal statuses and the blackmail of the residence permit, which affects in different way the life of both migrants and precarious workers, internal and external migrants, long-dated and new comers, as asylum seekers and refugees. The huge movements of migrants towards and across Europe clearly points to the necessity of finding forms of struggle and of connections between migrants and precarious workers, far beyond solidarity and the simple assistance provided to the new comers. The question of how to organize migrant labor starting from the protagonism of migrants themselves is still on the table.

The experiment of transnational mobilization of March 1st 2016 took up this challenge and it was an attempt to recognize the political centrality of migrant labor in the overall process of precarization and the struggle against it. Starting from these outcomes and from an evaluation of previous mobilizations, the workshop aims at discussing concrete proposals to foster a regular process of transnational exchange and communication. New convergences between migrant and precarious workers are in fact being produced by a European process of informalization of labour obtained through the lowering of wages, the financialization and dismantlement of welfare and the regulation of labour mobility on the sole base of the needs of the capital. These dynamics are operating at the political and administrative level, sustained by institutional racism, and can be understood only with a transnational outlook.

Building on the accumulated experiences and the shared analysis, this workshop aims at understanding and mapping the current transnational transformations, identifying lines of convergence and political priorities, and imagining new possibilities of connection among struggles thus triggering a political process of organization.

We therefore propose to focus on three main issues:

1. European resident permit: concrete proposals on how to use it as a claim in the different situations where migrant struggles occur and as an instrument to organize migrants and refugees in the different positions in which they can fight against government of mobility and exploitation of migrant labor.
2. The dismantlement of welfare and the general precarization of labor is affecting both external and internal migrants. How is it possible to link their struggles so that they can foster each other?
3. Migrant struggles occur at the borders, in the welcome centers, in the suburbs, in the various labour sectors etc.: how to link these different struggles? Concrete mapping would help delineating differences and commonalities, knowing that a transnational coordination has to tackle the differences in statuses and also the different national/regional conditions that are weakening the collective power of migrants. Mapping should contribute to foster the transnational circulation of struggles and experiences of (self)organization. Meeting appointments and mutual visits among migrants working in same or related sectors in different countries could also help in this direction.

## 2. Welfare, Care Work And Social Reproduction\_

organized by Plan C (UK), Alt at alla (Sweden), Workers' Initiative (Poland), Precarious Di|Connections (Italy)

The workshop starts from the multiplication in different European countries (such as Scotland, England, Sweden, Germany, Poland) of struggles that involved doctors and junior doctors, nurses, kindergarten workers, precarious workers of social services. Even though these struggles often concerned some specific local or national controversy (reforms of national welfare systems and consequent cuts in wages, privatizations, precarization of labor contracts) they all point to a common process of transformation of welfare which affects all European countries. We can speak of a double precarization: on the one hand, social benefits and welfare services are precarized, since they are increasingly cut, monetized and used as means to create hierarchies and differences among those who can (or cannot) benefit from them. From this perspective, as the spreading rhetoric concerning the struggle against "welfare tourists" shows, welfare reforms are also a powerful instrument to govern mobility of internal and external migrants. On the other hand, and consequently, those who work in welfare and care systems – both public and private – are increasingly precarized, since cuts on wages and the worsening of working conditions are necessary consequences of both privatization and financialization of those systems. These transformations are also based on a specific sexual division of labor: while care work is mostly performed by women, whose exploitation is supported by an ideological 'feminization' of care, produced by a long-lasting and flexible patriarchal order, the monetization and privatization of welfare system entails both an intensification of the double labor – productive and reproductive – of women and their employment as waged workers, mainly migrant, inside homes. The fact that a big part of care work that requires flexible working hours and low wages is done by migrant women, compelled in this sector also by the blackmail of the residence permit, shows a global chain of exploitation that creates hierarchies among women.

Starting from these assumptions, care work displays its centrality inside the process towards a transnational social strike insofar as it concerns paid and unpaid labor and the transformation of welfare systems as a part of an overall process of precarization. Furthermore, care work shows the centrality of women's and migrants' labor inside the general reorganization of social reproduction, intended as the production of both a precarious workforce and precise social and sexual relationships. The Polish #blackprotest, that is the strike of women against the abortion bill, shows that it is also possible to think how the social strike could directly address the political conditions of women's subordination and exploitation and the neoliberal organization of the sexual division of labor on a transnational scale.

After the workshop on transnational chains of care held last year in Poznan during the 2015 Transnational Social Strike meeting, we want to continue this discussion in the attempt to provide a transnational frame and a political connection to the existing local and national struggles, and to create the conditions for future initiatives that are able to cross the borders:

- How to build a transnational initiative concerning welfare, care and social reproduction, even beyond the local and national dimension of the existing struggles and their fragmentation?
- How to organize effective struggles in the field of care work that take into account the precarious condition of care workers and patients/users, but also the isolation of those workers who perform their labor inside the domestic space?
- Which are the common claims that could help to connect transnationally the struggles over welfare, care and social reproduction?



### 3. Logistics and the perspective of a transnational social strike\_

organized by Amazon Workers (Germany), Deliveroo Strikers/IWGB (UK), Precarious Di[Connections (Italy), Workers' Initiative (Poland), Sud PTT (France)

Logistics is not only transport and distribution: it has changed the way in which production and labour are organized and distributed across different places, regions and states. Thanks to hyper connectivity, the management of mobility and the capacity to coordinate time and space with the large use of software and apps, the effect of the logistical organization of labour is that of breaking the classical working day into measurable tasks. Thanks to logistics, the pressure over the labour force takes different forms and speeds, adjusted following the needs of the companies. Inside the logistics industry itself there are very different working conditions: from the large warehouse to the single pony express, from a collective contract to individualized task-work. This complex dynamic requires new tools of analysis and new forms of organization in order to be effective and bring our capacity beyond the single controversy.

Together with a deeper and pervasive exploitation of the labor force logistics has also been the place of an innovation in the labour struggles over the recent years, like the migrants workers involved in multiple strikes in Italy, or the Deliveroo, Ubereat and Foodora's delivery struggles. The logistics industry is in fact a portion of a larger reorganization of labor that connects different places, and conditions, such as that of being a migrant workers or not, a male or a woman. A big question in front of us is how far a power that can be gained at the level of a single issue or industry, can be deployed to gain results against the political conditions of exploitation. The challenge to fight across borders is one of the main one, albeit not the only one. The ongoing attempt made by Amazon workers to organize jointly between the workers employed in Poland, Germany and France is an example of how the interconnections of production require new strategies of struggle. As we saw in the last months in France joint strikes in transports or transportation services such as the post sector have been one of the pillars of the movement against the loi travail and its world. At the same time, experiences such as Deliveroo are an example of how the logistics sector itself is criss-crossed by different forms of organization of labor, where software and apps are becoming new tools to command the labor force. We need then to learn from the recent strikes conducted by Deliveroo workers in places such as the UK, in order to understand how to confront the seemingly immaterial power of algorithms.

A space that allows this discussion to bring together experiences from different countries, on the one hand, and to see beyond the borders of unionism, on the other hand, is very much needed. Workers in the logistics sector are subdued to a specific organization of production that, at the same, increases the pressure and control over their performances and sometimes gives them a relatively higher leverage if confronted with other sectors where precarisation has left small room for collective organization and to hit the profits. Nevertheless, the idea that it's all about blocking the flows is limited, as companies and supply chain are able to bypass the single chokepoints redirecting their networks to other sites. How to organize inside the logistics sector, and how to use this particular leverage as part of a larger strategy, is one of the question that will be discussed during the Transnational Social Strike meeting organized in Paris the 21-22-23 of October.

Given the fact that logistics is not just an industry, but also a form of reorganization of labor and production, it must be understood in all its implications in order for a strike to be also "logistic". What was before organized around single places is now stretched along regional and global chains of mobility. What was before a relatively homogeneous labor force is now a matrix of different conditions. How to fight back in a way that can connect and intervene at this scale is an open challenge, but a crucial one for a project such as the Transnational Social Strike, which aim is to overcome the national divisions, and to politicize labor struggle in order to damage the pillars on which this unequal and unjust society is grounded. In order for a strike to be "logistic", we need to think together how to link the classical interventions inside the work places with a variegated strategy of coordination, actions and blocks on time and to the point. How do we confront the fact that logistics workers are employed across Europe, but are paid differently depending on national divisions? How do we understand the cuts in social benefits as part of the different conditions under which workers live in reason of their nationality, gender or contract, even when employed by the same company? How do we connect the role of mobility and the attempt to govern it by restricting the freedom of migrants? How can a transnational social strike be also "logistic"?

## 4. Precarization and Unemployment\_

organized by Commission Economie politique – Nuit Debout Coordination des Intermittents et précaires (France), CNE (Belgium), Precarious Di]connections (Italy)

European Union organizes social dumping ; the competition between peoples, which seeks to harmonize our social models on a lower base. One of the axes of Transnational Social Strike platform regards the question of the organization of the social struggle in front of a more and more massive precarization of the work.

In Europe, while the employers exploit wage differences between countries through a social dumping of transnational scale, reforms such as the Loi Travail in France, the Jobs Act in Italy, the Peeters law in Belgique, show a common tendency, supported by the EU, to make the workers always more exploited.

If it is true that there always were sectors particularly affected by social insecurity, today it is not possible anymore to speak about « insecurity » as a category opposed to that of the « stable workers»: the precariousness affects the workers in factories as well as schools' workers, in the sector of the auto-entrepreneurship, the cleaning sector...

It implies not only a deregulation of contracts, but also an attack against the social rights (an increasing part of salaries is being used to buy services which used to be guaranteed) a set of rules intended to put each worker in the obligation to accept any employment, whatever the remuneration and the working conditions.

In this situation, the unemployment is one of the pillars of the blackmailing on labor and a tool of precarisation of workers: to dismantle the unemployment compensations, or to limit its access, submits the workers to an almost total availability to capital. This unemployment blackmail leads to a type of democracy which could be summed up in making a free choice between unemployment and precariousness. With no employment protection, counting often on what one earns day by day, the strike seems to precarious people something impossible.

What is the unemployed capacity to participate to economic ? blockage? How to organize and coordinate strikes when transnational firms put into competitions workers of different production places separated by thousands of kilometers? One of the challenges at the basis of the social strike is to build the conditions that allow also those who are in a condition of blackmail to express their refusal of labor and exploitation.

When worker's rights are not frontally attacked employers bypass the workers status in order to precarize them. Uberization accelerated by technological progress is a symptom of the future status of workers if we do not mobilize. Without social rights, without unemployment benefits or any employment protection these new kinds of production relations allow capital to avoid to finance welfare state and to develop an intra-national social dumping between workers inside and outside the firm. These new relation of production is making the social strike and the coordination of workers even more difficult;

In this workshop we would like to discuss and share experimentations of new and old forms of struggles that have been able to build connection among different faces of precarity, producing new convergences, to think about how to overcome the national divisions and the divisions between sectors that contribute to weaken the collective power of workers, how to build common claims and connections between the inside and the outside of the workplace, that allow to refuse the availability to exploitation that is imposed by the European reforms. We have to share about our different social models and think about new social rights in order to build the social harmonization, by the high level, that we fight for.

# Saturday Afternoon General Assembly\_

## 1. Our common oppression and commonalities.

Since the crisis began, the idea of a Europe of rights and freedom has vanished, even when used as cheap propaganda. The austerity measures, the Greek crisis, the tensions between Europe and its member states, the particularly harsh relationship towards newly arrived migrants, the process that led to “Brexit” in the UK and the increasing nationalism of Eastern European countries show the extent of the crisis in the EU.

Nonetheless, besides the political weakness of Europe, there are strong common tendencies — the Neo-Liberal attack on the labor force, attacks on living conditions and on freedom of movement — that are carried on by the Left and Right alike, for the benefit of capital. Faced with this it would be deceptive to think that the retreat to the national level can be a way to fight against this Europe or even against nationalism and right wing populism.

Europe is the space of our common oppression, but Europe is also the space where we find our allies and comrades to fight back, such as the migrants, precarious and industrial workers that challenge the Neo-Liberal order of Europe and its borders.

Our urgent problem is how to consolidate a transnational movement that addresses not only this or that government, not only the EU as an institutional asset that needs to be democratised, but the very basis of the Neo-Liberal constitution of Europe, made of capital movements and of State policies.

What are the pillars of this Neo-Liberal Europe we need to address and confront? What are the strategies and approaches we need to assume?

## 2. Transnational and social. The challenge of the strike.

The strike has been at the centre of the most powerful counter-attacks against the Neo-Liberal constitution of Europe: the joint strikes of migrants in the logistic sectors in Italy, the 2015 wave of strikes in Germany, the Junior Doctors strikes in the UK, the massive social strike which took place in France and the recent strike of Polish women against the abortion ban are clear examples of this.

Each of these strikes challenged to some extent the traditional borders of strike action, but remained mainly isolated. The task of the Transnational Social Strike Platform is to find ways to make each strike become the moment of a wider process of communication among different fragments of the by now thoroughly precarious and mobile working class.

Our problem is how to let each strike develop strong connections in society and across borders, going beyond the single controversy and addressing both the wider political conditions of exploitation and the transnational connection of each work place with many others.

What are the social and transnational elements of existing strikes we need to rely on? How do we combine the strikes as localised events of insubordination and the strike as a process of organisation able to overcome the fragmentation produced by precarity and by the transnational character of social production and reproduction?

## 3. Our collective field of struggle.

The challenge that we are faced with is how we can take a step forward as the political articulation of the field of struggle opens up by the wave of strikes and insubordination criss-crossing the European space.

This challenge seems to have two sides. We first of all need to discuss methods and tactics that allow us to make our local contexts of struggle into the «hubs» for transnational connections.

Second we need to intervene where and when the European Neo-Liberal constitution is challenged by insubordinate labor, offering to isolated struggles and to anyone seeking to make their voice heard the infrastructure of a wider connection on the transnational level and of a common discourse that is able to give solidity to this connection.

For both of these tasks, the question is how can we articulate and embrace common European claims (for example: European minimum wage, European welfare, European residence permit) that allow us in the first instance to counter isolation, making the transnational dimension heard in each local struggle and, secondly, to oppose Neo-liberal Europe with our own program of insubordination, intervening directly on the material points of collision with capital. How can we build a common voice and find common terms that can be used and recognised by everyone: migrants, precarious and industrial workers, that can increase the power of their own insubordination to Capital?

# Building the Transnational Social Strike\_ Towards the 21-23.10. Meeting in Paris

The approval of the loi travail and the government's authoritarianism do not stop the French movement. This movement aims high: it does not only fight a single law, but also its entire «world», that is a world of precarization of life and work, a world of powerlessness imposed on precarious, migrants, workers and students. Now the challenge is to continue struggling against this world. We need not to lose the uprising potential which has filled the streets, the workplaces, the schools and the theaters. We need to give continuity to the power that turned the strikes in the workplaces into mass social strikes, with the demonstrations, the occupations, the widespread refusal of precarity in each place in which it is produced. We need to continue struggling together, by overcoming the divisions that separate us inside the workplaces and inside society, by creating connections between different conditions of precarity.

We believe that all this needs to be done also by crossing the French borders and by building transnational connections. With the measures imposed by the loi travail, we become more and more equal, as far as the material conditions of precarity are concerned, to the Polish and Spanish industrial workers, to the migrants who cross the Balkanroute, to the German, English and Italian precarious workers. It's time to turn this equality between different conditions of exploitation into a collective power able to be poured down over those who precarize us. We need to fight against the logic of precarization based on division and competition. It is not enough to struggle on the national level to keep those rights that the law destroyed. The loi travail in France, Hartz IV in Germany, the jobs act in Italy, the loi Peeters in Belgium: the attacks on workers' rights are clear all over Europe. We have to turn upside down the mechanism according to which a conquest in one place becomes a loss in another place.

What is happening in France is unprecedented. The collective refusal of subordination to wage and employers has been the center of gravity around which different struggles have revolved: the struggle for a material democracy, against the police repression attacking demonstrators and unionists; against the repressive state of emergency. Unprecedented connections have been possible because it has been clear that a fight for real democracy needs to tackle the fake alternative between precarity and unemployment. Through the strike as a mass refusal of work and of an exploitation, convergences between migrants, precarious workers, students and unemployed have been experimented in order to overcome the existing divisions. The struggles in the factories, in the streets and in the schools have been able to disrupt the production of value and the circulation of profits and to block whole cities in their daily modes of operation. In order to defeat the «world» of the loi travail, the strike needs to be at the same time social, logistical and metropolitan.

The challenge we are confronted with now is to relaunch the political power of the strike and of the convergence of the struggles on a transnational level. The Transnational Social Strike Platform, a transnational network of workers, activists and unionists that organize themselves to build an opposition to the neoliberal European constitution, is the place in which the convergence of the struggles that took place in the last months in France can be amplified and expanded. The TSS Platform must become a space of organization where the different conditions of precarity can build common demands and a shared discourse able to be also a reference point for those millions of women and men who struggle everyday against precarity. The Transnational Social Strike Platform is the opportunity for us to share our experience of struggle of the last months with all Europe and beyond. It is the chance to aim at a transnational mobilization inside and outside the workplaces, to move together towards the transnational uprising of living labor. This is the only possibility for us to turn the chant of rebellion reaching over from France to the precarious, migrants and workers throughout Europe into a real collective power. The French social strike can and must become a transnational social strike. For all these reasons we think that, after the great mobilization of the 15th of September, that has initiated a new season of struggles, the meeting organized by the Transnational Social Strike Platform, taking place in Paris from the 21st to the 23rd of October, will be the occasion to discuss about how to continue on a bigger scale the struggle against the loi travail and its world.

TSS Assembly France

# From France To Europe. Finally The Social Strike!

## Call out for the Transnational Social Strike Meeting.

What is happening in France goes well beyond the French borders. While the proposed labor bill clearly confirms that precarization is at least a European issue, the struggle against «the loi travail and its world» realized what we are aspiring to and looking for: a mass social strike. More than ever, today the question is how to bring this struggle and uprising on a transnational scale.

This step is necessary and unavoidable. The «loi travail» is only a fragment of a wider project aiming everywhere at depriving millions of people of the possibility of refusing a present and a future made of exploitation. The Greek austerity package, the Jobs Act in Italy, the Hartz IV in Germany, the loi Peeters in Belgium are just few examples, which all go in the same direction: cuts in wages and welfare, the financialization of retirement benefits, the production of a migrant labor force compelled to work at any condition and price in order to obtain a residence permit and to pay the «debt» of welcoming policies, the creation of a disposable labor force at the mercy of the employers entitled by the State with a despotic power. Even the decision of the UK to leave the EU will affect workers both in the UK and all around Europe. National policies are not simply national anymore. The increasing mobility of labor and the transnational organization of production make each city, country, workplace inhabited by transnational dynamics. Precarization concerns all generations and sectors, it is a general condition fed by differences and hierarchies that cross and produce borders.

Against the convergence of European labor policies, against the illusion that the re-nationalization of political initiatives and anti-immigrants policies are the answer, against capitalism and neoliberalism, we need to build a transnational convergence of struggles. The massive social strike happening in France shows the way. Strikes in each sector of production and services have been coupled with a massive mobilization in the metropolis, they involved also the precarious workers who are not represented by the unions and have been able to interrupt both the production of value and the realization of profits. Experimentations going in this direction in Europe in the last years – the strike of migrant labor, the strikes in the logistic sector and along the chains of production and care work – have been brought to a mass dimension in France. The logic of solidarity and the division between the struggles inside and outside the workplaces have been overcome by means of a common political goal. The plea for more democracy, for justice and social rights, against police repression have found in the opposition to the despotism of wage and of the employers a common point of convergence and a political priority. Now it's time to bring this movement to a higher level, knowing that the struggle against precarization does not and cannot end with the opposition to national laws.

Starting from the message of revolt that reaches all corners of Europe from France, after a first assembly in Paris, the Transnational Social Strike Platform invites workers, activists, unionists and European networks to meet again in Paris from the 21st to the 23rd of October to discuss how the social strike in France can pave the way to a transnational uprising of living labor against precarization. We need to consolidate a common space of convergence and organization where precarious, migrants and industrial workers can recognize themselves, where different conditions of precarity can meet and confront, where to build a common discourse and claims that can become a point of reference for millions of people who daily and increasingly refuse exploitation and precarity in Europe and beyond. To seize the transnational potential of the current mobilization we need to bring Europe to France, so that France can be brought to Europe and even farther, in a transnational day of actions and strikes where we can make a step forward for the organization of the uprising of living labor in Europe and beyond.

find the call in 9 other languages:

[www.transnational-strike.info/2016/07/07/from-france-to-europe-finally-the-social-strike/](http://www.transnational-strike.info/2016/07/07/from-france-to-europe-finally-the-social-strike/)

# From France to Europe. Building a Transnational Social Strike

## Report of the Paris Assembly – 11th June 2016

Participants: Coordination des intermittents et précaires (France), NuitDebout (Commission general strike, Commission on political economy, Commission democracy), Sud Solidaire (France), Clap (Rome, Italy), Precarious Dis-connections (Bologna, Italy), Plan C (UK), Alt åt Alla (Sweden), Worker's Initiative (Poland), Interventionistische Linke (Germany), activists from Scotland, Netherlands and Brazil.

From France to Europe

A report of the ongoing mobilization was made by the French comrades, starting from the necessity of going from France to Europe, that is of expressing the transnational potential of the French movement, also concerning its experimental character in terms of connection between social movements and trade unions. The commission for the general strike has been active in the past months in turning the democratic aspirations of NuitDebout into struggles on the field of strike and labor, that is also finding connections with unions and workers' protests outside the square. The difficulty, felt on a national basis and even more on a European level, is how to build a «we», in a situation where no ideological basis is shared. The commission for political economy underlined the need of stressing the commonalities among the countries in Europe in terms of attack on labor and social rights. The CIP (Coordination des intermittents et précaires) stressed how the mobilization against the loi travail has been able to make different struggles converge, while the strategy of the government has been that of producing divisions among sectors and categories, improving the conditions of some workers at the price of the others. It has also been stressed that beside the loi travail, the transformation of welfare systems (such as the reform of unemployment benefits) and the management of migrants' movement were some of the main instruments to cause divisions among workers and to increase the control over the labor force. In this frame, the necessity of overcoming national borders and the division among categories and professions is crucial, as well as the necessity of going beyond the simple organization of labor through unions.

Striking in precarious times: what do we have in common?

The loi travail is very similar to other laws enforced in Europe in the last years. Even though in each country there are specific ways of institutionalizing precarity, there is also a common trend in Europe that should become the starting point of our initiative. This makes a change of perspective necessary, first of all for all of us who have been mainly engaged in organizing on a national or local level. This is true especially for the unions that are usually stuck on the national context and on the organization of labor into categories, which has been substantially overcome by the growth of mobility and precarity. The struggle for the defense of national bargaining is telling of this predicament. While it can gain important results on the national level, what do we do against the fact that, for instance, a good collective bargaining in France can mean a decrease in wages and working conditions in Poland or elsewhere along the production chain, in order to make the book balance?

The challenges of striking in precarious labor conditions are many: each person changes many jobs through his or her life, not only inside one category but very often changing sectors and kind of jobs. Beside this mobility from one work to another, there is an increased mobility in space: more and more migrants are looking for better conditions inside the European space. On the one hand, this brings about an increased fragmentation: inside a workplace many different and temporary conditions coexist. On the other hand, one can see that, in this overcoming of sectors and professions, in the education, in the constructions, in logistics as in the spectacle, labor is becoming more abstract, which means that the particular conditions of workers are generally turned into a complete availability to labor. Beside this, while what we see is fragmentation and differences, it is clear that in the transnational chains of production and reproduction there is a coordination, that relies on these differences to make more profits. The problem of finding commonalities is also a matter of imagination: how do we name this new condition, effective at the same time as a set of differences and as an homogenization of labor? How do we offer an accountable narrative in which precarious, migrants and industrial workers can recognize themselves? How can the Transnational social strike platform become the general frame in which the different experiences of insubordination and refusal of exploitation can find a common point of reference?

One way of producing this identification and convergence is to endorse some common claims, such as the European minimum wage, the European basic income and welfare, the European residence permit without conditions. This would allow us also to address the political conditions that produce and help generalizing precarity: the welfare system is used in many countries lately to produce a total availability to work, no matter how bad the conditions are;

the system of social contribution is becoming a financial system which allows the production of profits while bounds workers to their condition of precarity; likewise the provisional nature of the residence permits for migrants puts them in a particularly precarious position in the job market. The claims should be understood as tools to be used to produce communication among sectors and places, making the different conditions converge around some common key issues.

Outcomes\_

Towards the October meeting

The Paris assembly has been a first moment of confrontation looking towards a bigger two days meeting in Paris in October. This meeting is meant as a step forward in terms of involvement and construction of common priorities and practices. It is also understood as a meeting place for several subjects who are actually trying to organize themselves on a transnational level: a meeting among Amazon workers from Poland, Germany and France is already expected.

Some ideas on the axis around which to build the meeting were put on the table:

- Common claims/common European program. It was underlined that the discussion on the claims should not be separated from the discussion on the working situations. Being understood as «tools», both for organizing and against the isolation of workers produced by governments and employers, the claims should be first of all «used» as instrument to involve and organize workers, more than simply be «asked» to some institution.

- Transnational chains – not only of production but also of reproduction. Which other situations a part from Amazon, also beyond the logistics sector, can we involve? Eg. junior doctors in the UK, the workers of the health services who struggled in Sweden, the workers of migrants' «welcome centers» who are organizing in Italy.

- New practices and forms of strike.

The priority is at the moment that each group thinks locally

- 1) at how to engage in the involvement of new collectives, workers and unions for the meeting;
- 2) proposals for topics/axis of the meeting in itself.

Provided that we cannot at the moment launch an initiative for the autumn, we nevertheless think it is important to make a practical step towards a transnationalization of our struggles by proposing and discussing a common European initiative. This should be intended not just as a step forward in comparison to the 1st of March, but also a practical opportunity to enlarge the movement we see in France in terms of transnational coordination, connections with strikes and convergence with other struggles in Europe.

Final document\_

As an outcome of the assembly and as proposed by the Commission political economy, we will write together with the French comrades a document underlining the need of expressing the transnational potential of the French mobilization. While it is true that we don't know how the French movement against the loi travail will continue, the better way to seize the day seems to think at how to go on and how to build paths of struggles that last, beyond the approval or refusal of the loi travail in itself. In this perspective, the document is understood also as a launch of the October meeting. A group of the participants to the assembly will draft the document and share it with the coordination mailing list. It will be the finalized in a Skype call, where we need to decide also the date of the meeting in itself.

## Looking back\_

# 1st of March 2016: On the side of migrants! A first step towards the Transnational Social Strike

## Report of a Day of Coordinated Actions throughout Europe

The sense of something new, starting from migrants' struggles

The 1st of March 2016 more than 20 cities in eight European countries mobilized in the action day called by the 1M Transnational Social Strike Platform. Many different events, demonstrations, actions and assemblies took place with the aim of practically showing that it is possible to overcome hierarchies and divisions by being united against borders and precarization.

The 1st of March has been powerful not so much for its numbers, but because one thing has been made clear: the process towards a transnational strike cannot but start politically from the migrants that in these months are challenging the European constitution, at its borders – in Idomeni as in Calais, along the Balkan route as at the Italian-Austrian border, in Lampedusa as in Denmark – and in the workplaces and society, where they are changing once and for all the existing composition of labor. To start from migrant labor does not mean just to show solidarity but to engage in a common struggle. Against the European government of mobility and the crisis regime, the 1st of March shows the possibility to overcome divisions by asking all together a European residence permit without conditions, along with a European minimum wage, welfare and basic income. This has led many that were not part of the transnational social strike process to join us on the 1st of March.

A varied day, from Munich to Rome, from Edinburgh to Warsaw

**1M Berlin** Many actions and demonstrations during the day have been able to address several sides of the current government of mobility that, attacking both internal and external migrants, operates in many ways: through fences and welfare cuts, through laws on asylum and the threat of expulsion, through cuts in wages, special economic zones and austerity policies.

The streets of Munich have been occupied by Bulgarian migrants asking for housing and basic rights for all. Most of the protesters sleep rough in Munich. Nevertheless they work in the construction and cleaning sector, sometimes without papers. Often they have to struggle against wage theft. The city thinks their precarization is their fault, according to the well known habits of institutional racism: they are EU-citizens, but they are denied even the most basic rights. In Berlin a strikers' walk on the workers' side, by Blockupy activists, unionists, internal migrants and students, behind the banner «let's strike together» occupied the streets of «the city of mini-jobs and precarity», stopping in front of significant places of exploitation: the so called «mall of shame» where Romanian migrants were cheated out of their wages, the university offices and the ministry of finance.

In Poznan, following the lead of a common statement of German and Polish Amazon workers denouncing the working conditions inside the warehouses and affirming the need of coordinating across borders, a sit-in was organized in front of Adecco, one of the main temp agencies hiring for Amazon. Temp agencies are handling workers as if they were commodities to be bought and then thrown away when they are not necessary anymore. In the case of migrants the agencies not only hire them but also gain the power to administer their residence permits and accommodation. During the action we could also hear the voices of workers who oppose the abuse of civil law contracts and outsourcing, especially in sectors such as art and culture, education, construction sector, work at a height, cleaning and cleaning services etc. In Edinburgh, the march in solidarity with migrants stopped also in front of Amazon offices, to say clearly that «temporary does not mean submissive!». Amazon workers took part also in the city walk organized in Frankfurt and gave speeches in front of the local branch of Adecco in solidarity with the Polish colleagues.

The protest and the following assembly was composed by refugees and migrant workers, by grassroots unionists and unemployed, who gathered to unite what borders and exploitation divide. In Warsaw a «Saint Precarious» procession brought in front of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies the testimony of precarious, migrants and impoverished workers; in Paris and Dresden leaflets about the need of union organizing and striking on a transnational level were distributed. In Italy more than one thousand people took the streets: in Bologna migrants, refugees, precarious and industrial workers shouted loudly that precarious and migrant labor in all its forms – in the workplaces, at home, in



the hospitals, in the agricultural fields – is part of the same system of exploitation. Migrants and precarious workers employed in the welcome industry in Rome said loud and clear, in front of the immigration offices and in the streets, that it is essential to connect our struggles in order to cause a real transformation and to build a powerful strike. One day before, in Foggia, the migrant agricultural workers asked to stop the slavish conditions in which they are forced to work, due to their bosses' greed and exposed the silence of the institutions as one side of institutional racism. In Padua, a sit-in in front of the immigration office, on the cry of «let's cross the struggles, let's open the borders!», protested against the way in which residence permits and asylum requests are handled; in Cesena the migrants hired in the logistical firm «Artoni» demonstrated their opposition to the attacks on wages and freedom of association they suffered in the last months.

Many other actions around the issue of migrant labor, refugees and precarity took place in Mantua, Benevento, Rimini, Naples, Brescia and Empoli. In Leiden, Lesbos and Ljubljana groups took part last minute to the call for a 1st of March organizing actions against border and precarization. While people in Vienna were discussing in an open assembly about the «Calais Jungle», activists from Stockholm brought inside the Ikea shop the watchword of the Transnational Social Strike, expressing the need to organize against the transnational chains of exploitation.

A long way ahead towards a transnational social strike

On the 1st of March migrants have made clear that they are not a marginal issue: they are at the center of the European stage. Their voice resonated in many corners of Europe together with the voices of many others, precarious, students, industrial workers and unemployed. From the richness of this day we gain a reassured belief in the fact that the way to fight against the borders that divide us is to build unprecedented connections and to experiment new forms of transnational struggle. This shift in discourse and practice is what we want to keep and learn from this experimental 1st of March.

Nonetheless, we know that the Transnational Social Strike has still a long way ahead. We know that in order to build the conditions of possibility of a powerful transnational strike we need to overcome the borders between old and new forms of organization, for instance through the definition of common claims across different working conditions, groups and countries. The migrants' storm, the disorder they are producing in an already unstable labor market challenges in depth the traditional forms of social activism and labor organization. While we try to deepen this disorder caused by migrants all around Europe, turning it at the advantage of migrants, precarious and industrial workers, we want to keep tackling the issue of organizing the unorganizable, of making a transnational social strike something real. We know that the right to strike and association is under attack in many countries of Europe. We know there are many ways to strike against the government of mobility and exploitation nowadays: the strike against the hierarchical nature of border control in Idomeni is a powerful example of how strike can spill over the domain of labour. We know that the migrants' assault against the internal and external borders of Europe is at the moment the most significant form of strike against the new European order. We also know that we need to challenge the divisions between an abstract and a material right to strike: beyond the complain about the attack against trade unions and the right to strike, the transnational social strike cannot be a property of the few, but will need to go against every kind of division among workers.

Making it real: for building a large transnational social strike meeting

What we need is a practical guide towards a transnational social strike that is up to the current transformations of labor. We want to build it together with migrants, refugees, precarious and industry workers, activists and unionists. After the first of March, we know the transnational social strike process can open new possibilities and connections, starting from our local struggles. We will bring the perspective and the claims connected with the Transnational Social Strike in our daily activity, we will support the growth of new groups around this common project and we will foster transnational communication. We also believe that the transnational social strike is a concrete possibility for all groups and collectives that want to change the current Europe. We call everyone that wants to unite forces against the present situation to join us in building a large and open meeting. After the kick-off in Poznan and the experiment of the 1st of March, the meeting we have in mind wants to take a step further towards the construction of a collective «we» that can lead us closer to a transnational social strike. We want to do it involving all those that have participated in the 1st of March, all those that have watched at this day of action discovering for the first time the process towards a transnational social strike, all those that are looking for a new path to unite and empower our struggles.

We have no identity nor a past to defend, just an open process to storm the present.

# On March 1st\_ Act up, protest, strike ! Against precarization and temporary employment in Poland

Inicjatywa Pracownicza (IP, Workers' Initiative)

The text was written in February 2016 for the international days against borders and precarization. Since that time situation in Amazon has slightly changed. In May and June Workers Initiative organised a strike ballot, in which 2000 workers took part, voting for strike action (30% of total workforce). It wasn't enough to organise legal strike but it showed that at least 1/3 of workers are determined to fight for better working condition. In September the company raised wages to 16 zł/h and introduced seniority bonus. Amazon has also increased the number of permanent and temporary employes.

In 2014, Amazon opened three distribution centers in Poland: two in the suburbs of Wrocław and one near Poznań. In all of its warehouses the company hires on average 3,200 permanent workers and a similar amount of workers on temporary work contracts. During peak times, when the work load increases, workers hired through agencies make up 2/3 of the entire crew. These workers are hired by three of the largest temporary work agencies in the world: Adecco, Manpower and Randstad. Adecco is the only agency to hire more than 750,000 workers at about 100,000 companies per year. Before the winter holiday season Adecco recruited about 8,000 workers for Amazon in Poland. According to the company's statistics, at least 20% of them return to Amazon for each peak time.\* The other agencies also recruited thousands of workers. Some of them only worked a few days in the warehouse. In the autumn, the agencies interchangeably fired and hired workers again. They learned about their dismissal or about their contract not being extended on the day before, and sometimes while still at work. New workers were automatically hired in their place. The largest wave of dismissals took place after the holidays, when over a few days about 2,000 people were fired from the warehouse near Poznań. More people were let go in January and February. Still, that makes for considerably fewer dismissals than last year, when after the holidays the majority of agency workers were fired. The situation this year is a result of, among others, the pressure that the union has leveraged on Amazon. Agency workers also took up individual attempts at condemning the work relations at Amazon, for example: they sent letters to the media denouncing company practices, they set up a facebook page making fun of the work and employment conditions, they consciously boycotted the tempo-forcing norm system and they regularly didn't show up for work. The Workers' Initiative (IP) launched a campaign against temporary employment in November 2015. Along with the groups that support us we organized pickets outside of agency offices and information actions at various workplaces. We addressed a demand to Amazon that workers should be hired on permanent work contracts or at least that IP should be included in deciding on the percentage of workers that can be hired on a seasonal basis. This demand was supported by a petition signed by over 600 workers. We collected the signatures in a few days and only during one work shift. In the same time period, we entered into a collective bargain with all three agencies, demanding that they stop using contracts shorter than three months, better work conditions and higher wages for temporary workers (most of our demands were the same as the ones we presented to Amazon during the collective bargaining we entered into with the company a few months earlier). It turned out then that probably the Workers' Initiative is the only union in Poland that entered into collective bargaining with the agencies, even though they have been active in Poland since 2004. It shows that the problem of temporary employment is not addressed by mainstream unions which are not interested in supporting agency workers.

AMAZON HIRES and instantly fires

After the largest wave of dismissals Amazon began recruiting again. Already in January, representatives of the affiliated agencies started a telephone drive to look for candidates who would replace the people fired earlier. Adecco's advertisements encouraged people to apply for work at the warehouse offering them, among other perks, meals for 1 zloty, free transportation and.. **A PERMANENT WORK CONTRACT!**

This sort of information makes a mockery of workers. A big rotation is the basis of Amazon's employment politics, and the company does not hide this fact. Recruitment to Amazon takes place not only in Poznań and Wrocław, but above all towns located at a distance of even 150 km from the warehouse, where unemployment is much higher. Some workers spend 6 hours commuting to and from work each day. Most people hired at Amazon are either over 40 years old, students or under 25. Temporary workers usually receive monthly contracts, extended or not depending on needs of the user firm, the worker's productivity, the quality of their work, frequency and the manager's mood. Permanent and

temporary workers earn the same hourly wage of 14 zloty, pre-tax. But people hired through the agencies do not get the social package that includes employee benefits, vouchers from ZFSŚ (the social services fund), medical coverage, additional insurance or training courses. Employment through agencies is regulated by the law on temporary employment that makes certain aspects of the labor law more “flexible”. Agency workers, for example, are bound by shorter periods for their notice of termination, vacations are counted differently and in the case of being fired due to the employer’s fault, they do not receive a send-off package. There is also no limit on the amount of contracts, based on which they can be hired by the same employer. Amazon is not the only company that takes advantage of this situation. H&M, for example, also hires a part of its workers through Adecco on week-long civil agreements. Meanwhile, at the German automobile parts factory MAHLE near Ostrow Wlk workers hired through agencies (also Adecco) until recently were forced to sign a new contract each work day.

We have to organize together

In Poland most agency workers are hired in industry and warehouses. Amazon, H&M or MAHLE are only three examples among many of a-couple-thousand-worker companies that use agency services. The agencies are present in relatively new production companies, in which the structural bargaining force is very high, but the workers did not yet sufficiently organize in order to eliminate this form of hiring. A similar situation exists in Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria and Argentina. There is also a very large percentage of temporary workers in manufacturing in France, Belgium and Italy.

In Poland, temporary workers are also migrants, mainly from the Ukraine. They work in construction, factories located in the Special Economic Zones and in agriculture. During the first half of 2015, over 400 thousand migrants, the overwhelming majority from the Ukraine, came to work in Poland as part of the government’s temporary work program for migrants from the East. In this program, migrant workers are attached to their employers and are unable to freely move from one job to the next. They work for wages lower than those offered to locals. Temp agencies are involved not only in employing migrant workers, but also in organizing their documents to stay in Poland and their housing in worker hostels. As they are obliged to leave Poland every 6 months, temporary migrant workers are often isolated from the local workers. With few contacts between them, it is difficult to develop the basis for common struggle.

The division into permanent and temporary significantly weakens workers. It allows for increasing the pressure on everyone, including those hired permanently, with full right to stay and limits the possibilities of self-organizing. Workers function under constant pressure of losing their source of income or being deported. They also constantly have to compete with one another in order to receive another contract, which allows the company to maintain its desired productivity and to discipline the crew. Because of the rotation, the workers do not know the warehouse or each other very well, which makes it easier to rouse conflicts among them. It is also more difficult to build unity among workers who are employed by different companies based on slightly differing provisions and who often have diverse problems and demands. Yet solidarity between permanent, agency and migrant workers is necessary in order to effectively fight for better work and pay conditions. Protests organized on shop floors only by permanent workers can easily be pacified if they are not met with support from the temporary and migrant part of the crew. The same is true in reverse. Further, temporary employment is a form of intensified exploitation, which breaks the strength of all workers. That is why the demand for direct employment as well as the resistance against the agencies concerns us all: both those hired through agencies and those with permanent contracts, migrants, the unions, solidarity groups and all organizations that struggle against exploitation. “Temporary” does not mean “submissive”!

[www.ozzip.pl](http://www.ozzip.pl)

# Final document from the 1st Transnational Social Strike Meeting

More than 150 people met in Poznan for the first Transnational Social Strike Meeting.

The new normality of austerity and precarity, the transnational chains of exploitation and the centrality of mobility and migrant labor requires a new transnational initiative.

The strike is a political practice and a tool to be re-appropriated and reinvented: labour and social struggles must find a common political ground of connection.

1st of March, 2016 is proposed as a day of decentralized actions against a government of mobility that produces precarity and poverty for all, and of experimentations towards a transnational social strike.

Working groups are established in an open process, next big meeting planned in 2016.

From the 2nd-4th October 2015, more than 150 activists, union members, workers, migrants, women and men, from Poland, Germany, Italy, France, Bosnia, Slovenia, Switzerland, UK and Lithuania, gathered in Poznan (PL) for the first Transnational Social Strike Meeting. We shared the need to develop a new strategical perspective in order to connect politically where exploitation and borders divide. The transnational social strike is the name of this process and the ultimate goal. What do we mean by transnational social strike and why to start a process towards this goal? Against the changing power relations inside working places and society, we understand the strike as a political practice and a tool of struggle to be re-appropriated and reinvented. We need new forms of political action and new claims capable of addressing both the social dimension of exploitation and of working conditions, within production and the sphere of reproduction. Strike can become a mark of insubordination that crosses the established borders of activism and syndicalism, countries and regions, economic sectors, across society and workplaces. Even for those workers that are not practically and legally able to strike, because of the law or their precarious working and living conditions. New things are happening, and we have some concrete examples in front of us: from the experiences of strikes in Amazon warehouses and in logistics, in kindergartens and care-sector, to the Italian experiment of social strike in 2014 from support actions, such as that of Blockupy in occasion of the textile workers' strike of 2013, to new forms of social unionism.

Not with standing these experiences, the strike is nowadays mostly a practice limited to local and sector-oriented disputes: a thing for permanent workers, specialists or union members, often used by trade unions only for the sake of negotiation, with poor effects even when successful. At the same time, the very right to strike is under attack in many countries of Europe: the workers that can strike are less able to and the issues that can be addressed are increasingly limited. While workers' struggles are still strongly dependent on traditional forms of organizing and on the limits of trade unions' activity, the anti-austerity movements, which are growing in many European countries, have been able to raise new demands and to initiate new processes of mobilization. Nevertheless they are, even when involving unions, mostly unable or unwilling to address issues related to living and working conditions and to communicate with workers' struggles. Overcoming the limits of present forms of organization means to cut across the artificial division between labour and social struggles, and to bring organization on a transnational level, coming to terms once for all with the fact that the national level of action is by now clearly insufficient to build an effective power. Labor and social struggles must find a common political ground of connection.

We are conscious that this program is full of complexities, which need to be further discussed and brought to light. We know there are limits to overcome also in our own local structures. We experienced in the Poznan meetings and already in the preparation process, that it is not easy to keep a balance between local and transnational activities and that we still need to increase the commitment to mutual political communication. We know the transnational social strike will become real only when a larger agreement will be reached around key issues. But we believe these are the complexities we need to face, these are the limits we need to overcome: it is time to dare a new path where we can share a common strategic perspective and a common political discourse beyond our national belongings. Assuming this common starting ground, we elaborated some first points of common analysis, some common priorities and a proposal for common actions. On this basis we invite all groups, unions and collectives to join us in an open process.

### Common analysis

We understand AUSTERITY as a new political normality where financial instability is used as a tool to foster political programs of competitiveness based on cuts to wages, welfare benefits and on changes in the regulatory framework of negotiation between workers, unions and employers. PRECARIETY is the norm – low and insecure wages, fear of being fired, increasing discipline and worsening of labour conditions, employability and unemployment, uncertainty for the

future and workfare policies. Precarity produces, inside and outside the workplaces, fragmentations and new hierarchies. Companies and employers organize along TRANSNATIONAL CHAINS of exploitation – from industry to logistics, from transport to care – taking advantage of national differences in wages and welfare benefits, of the sexual division of labor and of the current lack of communication and of clear common interests among workers. The growing relevance of migrants and the so called “refugee crisis” in Europe has revealed how struggles around mobility and MIGRANT LABOUR are a fundamental battlefield. We have seen an unprecedented display of migrants’ power, capable to storm physical borders and to bring the crisis into the core of Europe. Building on years of institutional racism against non-EU migrants, there is an attempt by the EU and its member States to channel and exploit people’s movements via papers, residency and welfare restrictions in order to make them profitable for governments and employers. What formerly has been experienced by non-EU migrants is increasingly affecting also internal migrants and all the workers through a new government of mobility.

#### Common priorities

We recognize the struggle on wage, on welfare and on the freedom of movement as the key to fight against the exploitation in the workplaces and to politicize and connect struggles and disputes transnationally. Given the political centrality of migrant labor, it is the moment to bring the battle for the freedom of movement at the European level, thus claiming an unconditional European visa for all migrants and the right to residency, that guarantee the right to stay and move inside and outside the Europe for all. Against the cuts in welfare benefits which are used politically to constrain workers’ movements, and to reinforce the exploitation of women both in the workplaces and within the home, it is the moment to claim European welfare benefits, equal and guaranteed across Europe and a basic income, for all people and based on residency and not on nationality. Against the differences in wages between countries, used by companies, employers and governments to play groups of workers against one another, it is time to discuss and to claim a European minimum wage as a tool to build transnational solidarity and strength among workers. We are conscious that these claims raise problems and questions: from the issue of who we should address with these claims, to the means to translate them at the local level, due to the very different working and living conditions. But we recognize the need to develop common priorities. Therefore, the discussion will continue on how to use common claims as tools to coordinate the struggles and on how to find thereby transnational intersections among local day by day struggles.

#### Common actions

**ENGAGEMENT:** the workshops held in Poznan will continue to operate as working groups, with the aim of deepening our common analysis, of strengthening political communication, sharing and coalescing experiences, conducting inquiries, mapping and connecting the local struggles to the transnational strike framework. The transnational social strike process is intended as a reservoir of tools, experiences and tactics to politicize labor struggles, to connect social and labour struggle, and make their claims heard well beyond each group’s and union’s capacity. It is a space of communication and encounter where different figures of labour can think together about how to build new effective struggles as well as the conditions of possibility of the transnational social strike. Whoever shares the goal and general framework of this process is invited to join us. In order to become real, the transnational social strike has to be made heard throughout all Europe and beyond as the mark of a wave of insubordination.

**EXPERIMENTATIONS:** we propose the 1ST OF MARCH, 2016 as a day of decentralized actions, strikes and experimentations towards a transnational social strike. Why the 1st of March? On the 1st of March 2010, after a call from France to organize a migrants’ “24 hours without us”, in Italy a nationwide strike of migrant labour and against the immigration law took place. This was the first national political strike called outside the traditional forms of organization. It involved migrants and Italians, activists, autonomous groups and was characterized by a creative use of union sections and by different forms of action. Given the political centrality of migrant labour and the inspiring experience of the 1st of March 2010, we propose 1st of March, 2016, as a first day of decentralized and coordinated actions and strikes in order to take a clear stance against a government of mobility that produces precarity and poverty for all. Besides, given that LOGISTICS is one of the most relevant sector of the contemporary reorganization of labour and production across borders and a strategic sector for the transnational social strike process, we will support the already started activities to organize and transnationalize the struggles in places such as Amazon and other logistics firms.

**ENLARGEMENT:** the transnational social strike process is not a collective nor a coordination among the proposing groups, but a political platform with the goal of involving more groups and people across Europe and beyond towards a common goal. We will meet again physically at the beginning of next year. We will use any opportunity to meet and discuss in connection with other networks, such as Blockupy. In order to bring the process a step further, we then plan to organize a second meeting before next summer. Working groups, physical meetings and initiatives such as the 1st of March are all steps towards the transnational social strike and for enlarging the process.

# Reports of the Poznan Workshops 2015\_

## Migrant labor, the Government of Mobility and the Transnational Strike

organized by Precarious Di]connections (Italy), Berlin Migrant Strikers (Germany), Syrena collective (Poland), No One is Illegal (Germany), Rome Social Strike Laboratory (Italy)

The starting point of the workshop has been the necessity of a common frame for understanding the current relation between mobility, austerity and precarity. This common frame is so much necessary as much the living and working conditions of external and internal migrants in Europe are widely different. Inputs provided a clear picture of this complexity, starting from Poland (the headquarter of Frontex offices, which is both a place of departure towards other European countries, and the place of arrivals of thousands people coming from East as asylum seekers and then employed in specific sectors such as construction) to Germany (where internal migrants are excluded from welfare benefits and the people recently arrived during the so-called «refugees crisis» are going to be employed in a condition worse than that of other workers, both in terms of wage and social services) to Italy (where the residence permit is granted only to those who have a labor contract, so that migrants are daily blackmailed within and outside the work-places). At the same time, different experiences of organization and struggles have been shared: from the German counseling centers, where information and support is provided for both internal and external migrants, to the massive solidarity and support in crossing borders that occurred in the last months, to the occupation of job-agencies (which manage the sans-papiers labor force) in France, and the strike of migrant labor organized in Italy on March the 1st 2010.

Given this complex situation, the participants shared the idea that mobility is a crucial dynamics of present time, that recent massive movements of migrants against and across the borders show, and the EU institutions are trying to govern it according to the exigencies of labor market for lowering wages, dismantling labor and welfare rights, creating hierarchies and divisions among workers according to their legal status and undermining the very possibility of organizing against exploitation. From this point of view, migrant labor is politically central because it is a lever for producing a more general transformation of the working conditions of all. The policies enacted for governing the mobility of migrants in the last decades are now applied also to EU citizens and internal migrants who are becoming a laboratory for experimenting workfare policies.

The recent border crisis between countries that are member of the Schengen area shows that migrants' movements both towards and inside the EU are questioning the same distinction between internal and external migration. While differences exist on the basis of citizenship and status, what is clear is that we need political tools to address all these differences together, first of all through the organization of a political communication among internal and external migrant workers, and non-migrant ones. In order to do this, the people who attended the workshop agreed that it is necessary to go beyond solidarity, which is a way of supporting migrants' struggles and movements from outside, and turn it into an organizational process. For instance, concerning the so called «refugees crisis», we have to be able to communicate that questions such housing or health do not simply concern «welcome policies», but rather the conditions of the reproduction of this massive new-come labor force, and that their management will affect everybody just in the way in which workfare policies are used to govern internal migrations. This political understanding of mobility and migrant labor can be the base for creating the conditions for a connection of migrant and non-migrant workers towards a transnational social strike. In this perspective, we shared the necessity of defining three main claims that can be the base for shared initiatives across the borders.

A European minimum wage, a European basic income and welfare system based on residence, and a European residence permit independent from labor contract and income levels. Concerning the last claim, it was recognized as a valid tool to produce common interests across different conditions, and to intervene in the political tension opened in Europe by recent migrants' movements. The idea of a minimum duration of this visa has been considered a limit and thus discarded. Given the increasing discretionary use of residency as a way to limit the access to welfare and basic services against both external and internal migrants, it was proposed to add to the claim for a European residency permit the right to residency for all. These claims can be the starting point for connecting people that are divided both through their legal statuses and their working conditions, and a tool for politicizing the choice of migration which is often an individual one. Furthermore, on the base of this shared claims, we may start processes of organization that can go beyond both the communitarian organization of different national groups and the single work-places. Lastly, these claims can be used in order to enlarge the process of the transnational strike, starting from mobility and the political centrality of migrant labor. We agreed that it is necessary to involve other groups and subject and to push for a direct involvement of unions, both the grassroots and the major ones.

Finally, we agreed that the people of the workshop should remain in contact so as to deepen both the knowledge and map the different conditions of migrant labor and mobility in different countries and the communication towards

further initiatives. Particularly, the necessity of involving other groups and to organize a bigger workshop on these issues in the next transnational strike-meeting was remarked, but also the possibility of working together for the organization of coordinated initiative on March the 1st, starting from the formulation of common discourses and campaigns that can foster the political communication and visibility that could pave the way for the transnational social strike.

## The Transnational Chains of Care

organized by Worker's Initiative (Poland), Plan C (UK)

The workshop (Organized by Worker's initiative and Plan C) is presented in two parts: one first part where problems in care sector, paid and unpaid labor and different struggles are set, and a second part where we discuss how to link these struggles. Starting with the sharing of strike experiences of nurses and kindergartens workers, at the beginning of the discussion we tried to imagine which practices can succeed. In Poland, in the years big workers' marches substituted the practice of "leaving the beds" of the patients in the hospitals, which forced the doctors to take on the work of the nurses.

The question was: how to go on strike where at stake there is the health of the patients or the safety of the children? There is a problem between the reproductive situation, precarious working conditions and the high costs of the services. For example, we have the paradox of the care workers (e.g. nurses, kindergartens workers) who earn such a little amount of money that they need to get a second job, and at the end of the day the care worker can't take care of his/her own family.

There emerged the issue of how to create alliances locally, i.e. nurses and social workers together with parents or doctors. In these cases, some key points enter in the game, such as the power roles and the sexual division of labor. Alliances should also be built with other workers who support the strike. For example, in Poland the bus drivers went on strike together with the nurses and in Germany care workers supported the strike of Amazon workers. There is also the necessity of continuing organizing in the already existing networks, for instance the federation of trade unions in Poland.

We had clear that the transnational chains of care are about work: waged work, not emotional, lovely work or a women's task. These chains are transnational because they call into question the national dimension of welfare. In fact, many careworkers are migrants. Moreover, welfare is in turn used as a blackmail for migrants, both internal and extra EU migrants, i.e. as a means to create hierarchies between national citizens and those who are not entitled to receive any welfare measures (housing benefits, unemployment benefits) and therefore forced to work under any condition and for whatever wage in order to survive.

Networking is important and can be achieved thanks to research and comparisons, comparing wages and working conditions of different workplaces, different branches of care sector, and even different working sectors. This should be done not just locally but also in a wider transnational perspective, taking the process toward a transnational social strike as the place where to start building the above mentioned alliances and networks between different figures of labour. It is also important to point out the responsible authorities who manage the care sectors. The local work of organizing should be connected with national and transnational one, trying eventually to centralize the struggles and to determine which institutions to address.

Two strategies were put on the table: carrying on particular/concrete struggles, or demanding more general common claims. As an attempt to bring together the very different situations of carework, we discussed about the proposal of reclaiming higher wages and a minimum level of welfare; the two things should go hand in hand and should be claimed on a European level. The demand of EU minimum welfare for everyone was proposed as a tool to escape the new regionalization of welfare aiming at creating hierarchies between those who are entitled to housing, child-care, unemployment benefits and those, internal EU and external migrants, who have to accept whatever wage and working conditions in order to survive.

Minimum welfare is also about the ratio of patients/care workers; pupils/teachers; patients/doctors. This ratio is very different around Europe (for example in Switzerland there are 16 doctors for 1000 patients, while in Poland just 6) and should be taken into account inside the struggles. More specific demands around carework and welfare – against privatization, externalization and outsourcing, reorganization of the social sector, for better working conditions and higher wages, better ratio patients/careworkers, social recognition of care work – can be used to structure the claim for a EU minimum welfare.

During this strike, there patients were fully understanding the struggle and they didn't have anything against the nurses. In 2000, the doctors collaborated with the nurses, taking some of their responsibilities. Now this is harder, because therapeutic teams divide responsibilities: the transition from socialism to neoliberal capitalism benefited the doctors, and there is a huge gap in the salaries: 1 month of work of a nurse costs the same as 20 hours of work of a doctor. The 70% of the personal at the hospital are nurses.

## Additional and related texts\_

### We can dare. The time of the transnational social strike is now

#### Precarious Di]connections

From 21 to 23 October the second meeting of the Transnational Social Strike Platform will be held in Paris. The meeting takes place three weeks after the strike of Polish women against the proposed reform of the abortion law and few months after the French great uprising against the loi travail and its world. In both cases the strike went beyond the institutional practice of the trade-union initiative. It was politically more meaningful than the temporary interruption of a relationship of power in the workplaces. The first, great French strikes against the labor bill pour out into the streets and the squares millions of people, giving voice to the refusal of a brutal domination on the present and the future of entire generations. The strike in France was social because it connected segments otherwise hit by the loi travail and the European austerity. Polish women showed that the strike as a watchword keeps its powerful appeal even outside the workplaces. The claim for free abortion did not simply produce great demonstrations and a stretch on the restrictions imposed on the right to strike. It redefined individual positions and challenged sexual and social hierarchies, establishing connections that led so many women and a lot of men to take a stand against a way of governing which doesn't involve only Polish society. The strike in Poland was social not because it defended a less or more universal right, but because the revolt of a part of society asserted a difference against a general order of social and sexual relations. From East to West, in these last months, crossing borders and in radically different contexts, the strike was the condition that allowed men and women, precarious, industrial and migrant workers, to take a stand directly and in mass against the political conditions that establish their oppression and their exploitation.

From more than a year the Transnational Social Strike Platform has been operating in order to turn the strike into an opportunity of political articulation of the differences that characterize contemporary living labor, and therefore a chance to establish a shared perspective for the subjective refusal of the conditions of our oppression. For this aim, the strike must be logistic, industrial and metropolitan. These are the ways in which women and men, precarious, migrant and industrial workers clash with the accumulative wrath of capital and the coercion of social reproduction. These are the three frontlines where every day individual and collective strategies of insubordination clash with the ones enacted by the European governments in order to assure the domination of capital. In this field of tension, in which the mobility of labor faces the mobility of capital, the impact point can always change, as well as the subjective behaviors of precarious, migrant and industrial workers. Therefore, in each one of these junctures the strike can take a different shape, remaining however a practice to escape from the daily coercion and to hit the different faces of the collective master, to widen and deepen the connections with all those who share the same conditions of life and work. The distinction of the strike in three different dimensions (logistical, industrial and metropolitan) is thus directly political, because it highlights several forms of the social labor, grabbing them in their different impact points with capital. This distinction doesn't involve only the category of waged work, but aims to give expression to specific and essential positions within social production and reproduction as a whole, from that one of women – who, with their domestic work, are forced to bear the contemporary transformations of welfare and its neoliberal reorganization of sexual hierarchies – to the one of migrants, whose work is governed by a political authorization and by an institutional racism that impose them duties that other workers merely don't have. On the other hand this confirms the practical failure of universal categories that claim to unify works by identifying a more or less diffuse character, as it may be their content of knowledge. Fragmentation and isolation are the fundamental characteristics of contemporary social labor. Knowledge, direct command, the overall organization of labor constantly aim at this result. It is up to us to produce the political force that can oppose this reality.

Logistics, industrial and metropolitan do not refer either to the combination or the coordination of three different sectors (sorting and transport, production of goods, services), or, consequently, to three different types of strike (the interruption of traffic and flows, of the assembly line, of the order of cities). Logistics, industrial and metropolitan are three modes of capitalist organization that we need to be able to attack simultaneously. Logistics is not simply the service infrastructure for sorting raw materials, means of production and goods in the global market. It is the logic that capital assumes in the process of its constant globalization. Capital discovers logistics when it needs to chase profit and when it has to find new labour force to exploit. Its tireless search produces the conditions of exploitation inside hubs and ports. However, carriers, dockworkers, sailors or delivery workers are not the only ones to face and rebel against logistic command. The latter extends its grip on all the organization of labor. What for capital is the spatial extension of its domination, for us is an unceasing intensification of exploitation. It is the constant rating of what we do, it is the



bar code that brands us in order to make us compatible with the other commodities, it is the algorithm that fractions our work indefinitely. Logistic is for us an «uberized» work that turns us into seemingly independent entrepreneurs, fractions of labor commanded by the immanent logic of capital. Logistic is for us capital's claim to detain an absolute command on time in order to ensure the unceasing movement of its global traffics. Against this absolute time, social strike is then logistic because it does not only disrupt the flows, but also because it is the refusal of the unceasing theft of time and of all those procedures that discharge on the single worker the social costs of production. Logistic strike happens in precise places, but above all it happens wherever the rejection of the full and constant availability of one's own time manifests itself.

The logistic command employs its own strength in a particularly merciless way on the industrial work that for us, and by empirical evidence, is not a leftover. During the Brexit and the struggles against the loi travail someone found out that the working class still exists. The white American working class was held responsible even for the ascent of Donald Trump. Far from the myths of the right and the left, we simply register that the manufacturing work is not disappeared. Someone materially produce commodities not only in the far Chinese or Indian factories, but also in Europe. Not by chance, the former meeting of TSS was held in Poznan with the aim to establish contacts and connections with those places where the industrial work is outsourced or where is coming back after its journeys in the East. What forms of capital do industrial workers have to face? As always, they encounter the harsh law of the factory, in which the logistics command defines the time of profit through the time of the transnational value-chains. They face the reality of relocation, which on one side of the border is used as a threat to constantly worsen the working conditions while, on the other side, leads the way to a new exploitation and to new struggles for the workers. Across and along the borders, the workers' labor is mobile and precarious, with no certainty and with minimal insurance, if any. On both sides of the border, the mobility of capital requires a systematic intensification of the time of exploitation. Industrial strike, then, means to interrupt this time, challenging the source of profit, but also the social isolation of the factory. For the industrial work – more than ever – the strike means to establish connections that will combat the idea of the industrial workers as a perpetual social surprise.

The industrial workers are not outside of the metropolitan space. Together with the service and the high-tech service workers, they give shape to a conflictual geography, where social production and reproduction – insofar as they do not coincide with the boundaries of the city – establish a systematic and unbalanced connection between different figures of the living labor. In the metropolitan space, a multitude of workers and employees has the opportunity to meet the political face of the capital, one that administratively forces them to suffer their condition. In this space, welfare has no longer the function of producing a relative equality among citizens, but it is solidifying differences between different figures of the work, by assigning them functional positions as much in social reproduction as in the government of mobility. In the metropolitan space, in exchange of wage or rather for free, in schools, in hospitals or at home, women provide the general conditions for the reproduction of a work force that is transnational, even when it can be promptly located. In metropolitan space migrant labor is governed by European, national and local laws, purporting to make it a separate segment of the work force and fully available to exploitation. Metropolitan space is therefore a space of movement in which the precarious in a Spanish call center, the workers of a textile factory in Poland, domestic workers, the porters of a French goods depot, the sailors of a cargo docked in Piraeus, the migrants forced to work for 1€-per-hour wages to pay the price of entrance in Germany can recognize themselves as equals, despite all the differences of their works and their lives, starting from the refusal of the political and administrative conditions that force them to subordination and exploitation. In the metropolitan space the different jobs can go beyond the wage coercion, beyond the hierarchies that accompany them, against the political forms which authorizes them. The strike is metropolitan because it gives voice to the refusal to be the fragments of an order, going over the same differences imposed by work. The metropolitan strike is a strike against labor and the divisions which it imposes. Strike in the metropolitan space means to pay back to capital its fragmentation as a common project.

For all these reasons, the three dimensions of the strike cannot be separated. The logistics, the factory and the metropolis constantly refer to each other. They are tangible signs of the mobility of capital and of the opposite and unruly mobility of millions of men and women as well. It is not sufficient to lock a hub of distribution to sabotage the profit circuits, when the logistics infrastructure is able to adapt in times increasingly rapid reactivating its flows. It is not enough to stop production in a whole industry on a national scale, when a segment of that production will continue to operate across the borders and within each factory figures of labor intertwine, not falling into a single category. You cannot imagine a figure of labor that is hegemonic and able to bring politically together all the others, when the work of an Italian creative or a French engineer depends on the production of microchips in the dorm factories in the Czech Republic or the domestic work of a migrant woman. Therefore, the logistic, industrial and metropolitan strike is social because it turns the global connections of exploitation in a constant and systematic communication among the different segments of social production and reproduction. The social strike is not a general strike, whose aim is to interrupt

production in a single moment through the simultaneous and confederate action of different categories of workers and professions. The strike is social because it connects subjective experiences of insubordination against labor that otherwise would not communicate. The strike is social because it creates a level of communication that did not exist before. The social strike connects the different times of the mobility of the living labor. The social strike hunts the apparently quiet dreams of capital and European governments.

We believe that this is the bet of the Transnational Social Strike Platform. It can simply be neither a network nor a coalition, even a European one, of different parts of social movement, or the sum of their different claims. It is a process where the refusal of the logistic, industrial and metropolitan oppression that already crisscrosses Europe in a fragmented and unconnected way, can recognize a common political direction. To find out common claims – that is a European minimum wage, a European welfare and a European unconditioned residence permit – is therefore necessary in order to identify the points of impact against capital, to affect the time and the space where it tries to impose its domination, but also to attack the neoliberal politics of the European Union that systematically establishes the political conditions of that domination. Through these claims, the separation imposed by capital among distinct segments of a value chain that goes from Poland to France, or from Germany to Greece, can be overcome, while single and specific moments of insubordination can be linked in a common process. To demand a European minimum wage means both to clog the logistic strategy of capital, which moves across the borders running behind a cheap labor force and to impede the blackmail imposed in the factory of mobility. To conquer a European welfare means to refuse the hierarchies of the metropolitan space and to oppose the sexual division of labor which supports social reproduction on a transnational scale. To obtain a European unconditioned residence permit means to refuse the full availability to labor which would be otherwise imposed to millions men and women, who are forced to renounce to decide over their own lives in order to have the possibility of remaining in Europe. Against the presumed opposition between an isolationist and renegade East and a West in search of redemption, these claims aim to establish the connections in virtue of which the already existing daily insubordination could be turned into a collective, social and transnational process where we can refuse the oppression that divide us. The European social strike is possible. We can contrast the time of capital and its government with our times. We can have the courage to dare.

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# Time of strike, time of uprising: France, or rather Europe \_

## Precarious difconnections

Since months, France is the theatre of the biggest social strike of Europe. In order to contrast the loi El Khomri, thousands of workers refused to work and new strikes are continuing to interrupt production and services. The flows of transports, commodities and oil – with the prolonged block of refineries – are a field of struggle in the whole country. The opposition to the labor bill triggered a mass politicization, whose starting point is the refusal of the capitalistic domination over the present time and the future of entire generations. The strike in France is not simply a practice institutionalized through the unions' initiative. Rather, it lives in the streets and in the squares, it triggers a movement that is addressing Europe beyond its local roots and the national dimension of the opposition to the proposed bill. «To learn from France» means for us to turn France into the focus of a reasoning about possibilities and limits of an experience which has to do with how to overcome the impasse of the social movements' political initiative, how to think Europe as the minimum field of that initiative and how to bring the strike on a transnational level.

The French mobilization against the loi travail combines the time of strike and the time of uprising, because the strikes themselves are a huge uprising against the proposed legislation and because the occupation of Place de la République and of dozens squares throughout the country was born and rooted just over the wave of the first strikes. Consequently, the strike is not simply the momentary break of a power relation inside the workplaces, but is rather a productive event. It allows the constitution of a political space where hundred-thousand men and women are able to push forward their demands, so much that the Valls' government – truly fond of emergency procedures – had to call for the 49.3 article of the constitution in order to overcome the opposition to the law and is continuing to repress, through a stubborn and ineffective brutality, every huge mobilization. If the struggle against the loi travail et son monde is not only the struggle against one bill, but also against a destiny made of precarity and oppression, it is necessary to think the French movement in the long time of the social strike, also beyond the national dimension of the opposition to the reform of the labor market.

What is then the social strike? It is at one and the same time an industrial and a logistic strike, because it interrupts the continuity of the chain of value and it prevents the movements of commodities, people and profits; it is a metropolitan strike, because it runs over the capitalist metropolis and transforms the hierarchies that aspire to impose a universal and perpetual availability to labor. The social strike is the uprising of living labor against its own overall condition. This is why to privilege one of these struggles over the others means to misunderstand the contemporary condition and composition of living labor in Europe. After all, the diffusion and importance of the strikes are making increasingly topical and realistic the watchword on blouqe tout.

What is at stake is not only the possibility of realizing a general and prolonged strike [grève générale reconductible], as a part of Nuit Debout, many grassroots unions and some sections of the CGT are demanding, and as some sectors are actually doing. While this proposal concretely addresses the problem of how to «block the country» and to exercise an effective power against the governments' authoritarianism, it also runs the risk of reproducing old logics and blind spots, caused by the confederal organization of labor and by the idea that the strike exclusively concerns specific places of production and services. Not all labor, in fact, is organized inside unions and can be durably localized in this or that work-place, in this or that profession. Consequently, to think the social strike means to create the conditions that allows to abstain from work also those who have flexibles, intermittent or casual labor contracts, those who do not have a labor contract, those who bring that contract in their pocket together with a residence permit. All these figures occupy an eccentric position with respect to the traditional organization of labor. While the union is still a central tactic of conflicts for men and women at work, it is not able to grasp the different forms of insubordination and refusal of exploitation that in the last months enlivened the metropolis of Paris and the French cities, from the occupation of squares in the name of democracy to the violent upheaval in the streets. The problem, therefore, is not how to represent all the figures of labor, but how to connect effectively and not occasionally the hundred-thousand men and women who are refusing to work in order to block the enactment of the loi travail and are uprising against «its world».

The long list of picket lines organized by the Nuit Debout's Commission Grève General to support the labor disputes underway – at the Renault's as well as at the Goodyear's plants, in shopping malls as well as in fast-food restaurants – clearly shows that a part of the square faces the problem to make this connection immediately productive, to support and extend the visibility of labor struggles, to pull Nuit Debout out of Place de la République so that its political character does not limit itself to the square's perimeter. Yet, solidarity does not solve the problem of the multiple faces of the social strike. It indeed risks to reproduce the split between those who fight inside and those who fight outside the

workplaces, without acknowledging that the square is crossed by hundreds of precarious workers who are wondering how to express their insubordination to work and its political conditions when it is not possible to strike. In front of this situation, not even to reproduce several minor labor disputes can make the square a tool to bring class struggle out of the place where it is a daily practice, in order to tackle the social and political conditions of exploitation. Still, this must be the aim if we want to force the «unionist vision of the strike», breaking the logic of labor categories, in order to create the conditions of a political strike that does not consist in the opposition to a law proposal and to the government supporting it, but it is an organized and massive practice able to run over society starting from the refusal of work as domination.

We believe that this aim must be pursued on a transnational level. Both if the loi travail will be rejected or will pass thanks to the ordinary suspension of the procedures of representative democracy, the struggle against precarity cannot involve just one country and not even end up in the opposition to one reform bill. Wherever in Europe the political conditions of precarity go beyond the rules that govern the labor market because they concern wage as a power relation, the changes of the welfare policies, the government of mobility and the border regime. By now the new European logistics crosses the whole space of the EU. It's no more conceivable to fight austerity and the crisis regime in an exclusively national or even local dimension. At the same time, it's no more conceivable that the transnational level of the campaign can be brought about only thanks to a random coordination, however important, of single struggles and mobilizations. Therefore, the urgent question is how to transform the French uprising in a tool to accelerate the political communication between subjects that in different ways, in every place of Europe, undergo precarity inside and outside the workplaces.

This communication cannot limit itself to 150 types, that is just to the level of campaigning, in order to be effective. An hashtag is for sure able to make clear the simultaneity of a transnational initiative as such as the 15M, at least to those who have already shared the initiative. Yet, the proliferation of reflections developed by many groups, that all over Europe are looking at France, shows that it is necessary to build a common political discourse, able to engage and mobilize even those who are not already part of an organized political path and who haven't had yet the chance of protagonism provided by Place de la République. This is not so much a matter of unveiling the «toxic narratives» of those who, on the side of the government and the EU, try to sell austerity and precarization as necessary processes for the general interest. The French uprising has already essentially interrupted those narratives. This is why it was silenced by international media to prevent a domino effect beyond its borders. Building a common discourse means to give a content to the democratic demands in France as elsewhere, beyond the horizontal forms of conducting assemblies and beyond the exportation of electoral experiences brought about in a more or less successful way, as in Spain. The convergence of the struggles cannot end up in the homogenization or in the random coordination of different local initiatives. To give a content to democratic demands – claiming a European minimum wage, a European welfare and income and a European residence permit without conditions – means to make democracy not the mere, temporary gathering of unsatisfied individuals or citizens, but a mass and partisan practice that allows precarious, migrants and industrial workers to win increasing shares of power in order to materially transform, in France as in the rest of Europe, their conditions of precarity. The social strike as a transnational practice, as a process able to catalyze the refusal of exploitation expressed in the strikes, in the occupation of the squares, in the violence on the streets, must become the reality that puts the basis for this democratic uprising in Europe.

# 'Every Strike Acts as an Accelerant': A Conversation about the Social Strike

Plan C

A few excerpts of a longer interview from May 2016, full text here:

[www.weareplanc.org/blog/every-strike-acts-as-an-accelerant-a-conversation-about-the-social-strike](http://www.weareplanc.org/blog/every-strike-acts-as-an-accelerant-a-conversation-about-the-social-strike)

Plan C has an ongoing commitment to the Social Strike as a strategic and theoretical orientation. This interview hopes to contribute to that process by focusing on the experiences of struggle and the ideas generated by struggle that the Social Strike is based on. Maybe we should start by outlining the lineage and the history of the Social Strike as an idea. In my mind, the first precursors of the Social Strike are probably autoreduction movements in Italy in 1974-75. What kind of history do you see behind the term?

The Social Strike has gone through various terminological changes over the years. Negri talked about the 'Metropolitan Strike' in 1995 after observing a three week-long French transport workers strike, during which he noticed how social life adapts to crises. For example, there was the problem of routine. Cities run on trust. We trust that a bus will turn up, that a train will turn up, that we can get to work – and once that kind of level of trust goes people have to find alternative means of organising social life. There was a huge amount of self-organisation going on just in terms of people getting from A to B. So there was a form of cooperation between the workers, who were making the strike by not going to work, and the service users, who were making the strike through self-organisation. But like you said, there are roots in the Italian struggles of the 1970s. In 1976-77, in Turin, Lotta Continua used the slogan: Take Over the City. They basically recognised that there was a limitation to workers' struggles, especially when there was co-ordination between landlords and factory owners. At that time, that when workers won higher wages from the bosses it was just basically absorbed in higher rents taken by the landlords. The linking of struggles in the productive and reproductive spheres was an idea that really emerged out of the Autonomia movement in general. And so whilst it might not be explicitly called the social strike, there is quite a long history below the surface. (...)

You talk about who's getting involved – who is the Social Striker? Socialised worker, multitude, surplus populations, precariat, working class. . . is there even one composite revolutionary subject that you could identify?

EuroMayDay is another precursor of a lot of the contemporary social strike stuff, and one that was quite heavily concerned with questions of subjectivity. So basically when we were having radical May Days in London in 2000/2001 they featured about 10,000 people, and that inspired a lot of similar May Day demonstrations across the world, away from the tradition labour movement organisation. In Italy a group of activists in Milan decided to do a May Day in a shopping centre, and talk about precarity and the changing nature of class composition and so on. And from that developed a set of discussions on a European level on treating May Day as a historical reference point for workers' struggles, but also trying to understand the necessary departure from that history in the contemporary context. And a lot of discussions of precarity developed from that – the term precariat was actually coined as a joke by activists in Milan, as they were going through this process in 2002/2003. EuroMayDay was the first time that we managed to establish a European network to talk about these issues distinct from major trade unions, and work on questions of inclusivity and the construction of revolutionary subjects. There was a lot of radical cultural production, looking at personas and who is invisible and marginalised in struggles. A lot of this focused on migrant labour, women, precarious workers, elderly people and the like. These were the subjects, the potentially radical subjects, that were excluded from traditional struggle but still central to capital accumulation. So when we talk about subjectivities, I always think about that really, looking for people who are excluded, without excluding the people who are already included, like organised labour. (...)

So, the big question, how do you define the Social Strike?

I would define a social strike based on, first of all, a realisation of itself as a political project. It's something that has to be thought about, before it can exist. I'd also define it in terms of a strike which doesn't contain itself based on the

current configuration of struggle, that looks beyond current constraints, like the historical baggage of workers' struggles and trade unionism and its incorporation into mechanisms of labour management. Social strike both critiques and transcends that absorption, its completely against the co-management of labour and capital, and so it's inherently a lot more radical. In terms of the social aspect of it, its a strike that attempts to articulate the social character of conflict. So referring back to J30 2011, then we had strikes in a period when everyone was talking about anti-systemic politics, but the strike was really only about pensions. The trade unions only opposed the more aggressive elements of capitalism, rather than articulating the social reasons why people go on strike. These demands are constrained within a legalistic framework – they don't talk about time, quality of work, desire, and doesn't talk about all the other components of someone's life, and all the people who are not going on strike. So for me, social strike is this generalising process of antagonisms that goes beyond the initial conflict between labour and capital in direct production and into society. (...)

It seems to me that the major problem facing us now, in a way, is that there are very few forms of associative forms of life available to us. Neoliberalism tends to have demolished them, and has left us with a poverty of community and association. We need to recompose the communities and subjects that will then exert power by striking. Do you agree with that analysis?

Completely. When some of us in London starting talking about social strike stuff, we looked back at the origins of the strike as a concept and a tactic. We looked all the way back to William Benbow, in the 1830s, and how he envisaged the strike being both the withdrawal of labour, and also a process of composing an alternative system. The first attempt at a general strike in a UK context was to be called the Grand National Holiday, in August 1840. It never actually materialised, but it imagined instituting a new system through the time recovered from work. I think Social Strike very much draws on that dual character of both withdrawing labour but then also developing autonomous infrastructure that allows you to live differently, even if only temporarily. There is a process of creating an alternative system, and every strike acts as an accelerant for the construction of this alternative. That, for me, is really fundamental.

So Social Strikes could function as accelerants for the construction of those forms of life that we now lack?

For sure, this has been this history of class struggle for the last thirty or forty years. Movements of rupture can open up a hole, and change all of social life. This is what happens when you have struggles that go beyond a narrow focus on pensions or wages. The example I referenced earlier of the transport strike in Italy in 2004 and the occupation of a social centre that came out of a socialised strike shows this dual character really well. Social Strikes are as much about constructing an autonomous social life as they are about withdrawing labour.

Finally, where is the Social Strike project at today?

Currently lots of people involved in the Transnational Social Strike platform are in Paris, viewing the ongoing struggle there through the lens of the Social Strike. They've written some really good articles on the situation there. I think that's the most exciting node of development at the moment.

[www.weareplanc.org](http://www.weareplanc.org)

# Solidarity along the supply chain: From production to retail, workers unite!

ExCHAINS, June 2016

## Workers along the Global Supply Chain: Strengthened by New Strategy!

»The new negotiation strategy can strengthen our union work!«, says Prathibha Ramanath, trade unionist of Indian GATWU, in a video conference with German works council colleagues of H&M and Zara, and Bangladeshi trade union NGWF. The video conference was organised by the ExChains network of TIE Global for 250 H&M works council members, 30 Zara general works council members, and Asian garment trade union activists, to be able to have a direct mutual exchange. The discussion made clear what the ExChains network is all about: «We want to work together as colleagues, and to support each other by common activities«, says Amirul Haque Amin of the Bangladeshi garment workers union NGWF. A new strategy was developed within the network to make this mutual support happen. Workers at garment supplier factories, together with their unions, develop demands and work out ways to negotiate them locally with the factory owners. Issues might be very specific, such as access to drinking water or clean sanitary facilities, but also more comprehensive, such as demands for higher wages or shorter working hours.

With their actions and negotiations, the factory workers also target the multinational corporations who are sourcing from their factories. H&M and Zara/Inditex are two of the most important companies sourcing from Bangladeshi garment factories, and are also sourcing from India. »Some demands we can push through directly by ourselves, for other demands we need to transgress the factory level and include the corporations in negotiations. It is them who have the deepest impact on our working conditions«, Prathibha explains the new approach. Anna Bischoff, Zara general works council president, confirms: »We, the works council members and union activists in Germany, can support Asian garment workers' negotiations by confronting German management with their demands and by informing our German fellow workers.« Thus, the negotiation power of local workers and their unions can be strengthened. »Meeting our colleagues from production, as made possible by the video conference, is important if we want the joint strategy to become a success«, adds Saskia Stock, H&M general works council president.

The new strategy shall support local trade unions in increasing their negotiation power and their ability to push through more important demands. First winning experiences of GATWU in Bangalore indicate that the strategy works, says Rahtnamma, union activist and worker at Texports Creation, during the video conference: »By joint actions and negotiations we were able to keep the factory janitors from being fired. Additionally, we won three free Sundays per month.« Such gains strengthen all workers in their struggles. According to Umesh, worker and trade union activist at H&M supplier Shahi Exports, the experiences with factory level negotiations encouraged him and his colleagues to stand up against social security cuts: »Our wins in the factory showed us what we can achieve when we stand together. The government finally had to withdraw the planned cuts. This was a victory for all garment workers.«

During the coming weeks and months, the trade unions working together within the ExChains network will establish specific demands to the suppliers of transnational garment corporations and start negotiations and factory floor level actions. In Germany, the network will create public awareness of the strategy and win further works council activists for the network, specifically at Primark and Esprit. The new strategy is also part of a newly established ver.di working group »Young Fashion«. Amin from Bangladesh stresses that the new strategy relies on mutuality: »We will clearly support German retail workers' struggles and demands with actions in Bangladesh.« For the Asian garment workers' unions, this South-North solidarity work is not a new experience. Most recently, in the spring of 2016, the Indian GATWU organised a video with activists stating their support for German retail workers threatened by layoffs when Zara wanted to close down five stores in Germany. In their struggle against the closures, the Zara workers also received support from their German colleagues of the H&M general works council whose members paid a visit to one of the five stores concerned. At the same time, a number of H&M colleagues participated in Zara workers' protest actions. The general works council of Esprit, too, became involved and sent a video support message. Saskia of H&M emphasises: »Mutual support in concrete struggles is a central element of the new strategy – in any place along the supply chain.« But such actions are merely a first step of the new strategy for strengthening trade union and works council work in the globalised garment industry. Trade unionists and works councils want to work together on issues of ExChains, health-compatible working conditions, and the strengthening of workers' self-organisation. For example: The H&M general works council campaign for decent working conditions in Germany and all along the supply chain. It was launched at the H&M works council reunion and links the struggle against precarious and health-damaging working conditions in Germany with the struggle for improved working and living conditions in the production countries. For, in the words of general works council president Saskia: »After all, we are all facing the same company in different places on the globe: there in garment production, here in garment sale. We understand: If we want decent working conditions all along the supply chain, we must join our struggles.«

# Greetings from LabourNet Germany to the participants of the meeting of the Transnational Social Strike Platform in Paris

LabourNet Germany

Dear friends and comrades in struggle,

We greatly appreciate being invited to participate in the meeting and wish you both a success and a good time! The political response to a project like „Fortress Europe“, with its closed borders and authoritarian domestic regimes, can't be addressed adequately at the national level. Transnational networking is critical when it comes to struggling against the continuous attacks on our living conditions. With this meeting, social and political struggles from all over Europe come together, and we're glad to support this any way we can. However, despite our plans and contrary to the meetings in Frankfurt and in Poznan, due to a lack of financial resources and staff we unfortunately can't take part in Paris.

Partly due to a long time planned meeting with alternative unions in Japan (railwayworkers, freeters) and South Korea (truckers, migrant union). But mainly due to a new campaign we are currently organizing, and to which we want to draw a little bit of your attention, because it is a campaign against recent developments that have dire consequences for the rest of Europe – as, for example, the so-called Hartz laws (2005) had – by breaking the resistance of many workers and strengthening Germany's lead in the effort at driving down or “dumping” wages.

With this campaign we want to target a development that may be little known internationally: The German Trade Union Federation (DGB) and all of its 8 affiliated member unions are once more engaged in bargaining with the two most important employers' associations of temporary work agencies – which we call slave labor agencies. The scandal for trade unionists is that the federation is participating in the employers' goal of destroying the “equal pay” standard, in Germany and eventually elsewhere in Europe.

This is possible through an amendment to the German law on temporary work that allows regulations to be altered through collective bargaining. The German government is currently considering a new law that they say will better regulate temporary work – another lie, because this new law would allow exceptions to stay in place against equal pay and equal treatment (even after 18 months of employment, which seldom happens). All time since such laws exist, member unions of the DGB have participated in lowering them by using this option to bargain – and we have struggled against this without success. All of the 8 trade unions participating in this round of bargaining have official positions in favor of „equal work, equal pay“ – and all of them blame the expansion of temporary work and criticize that it increases precarious work in general, puts pressure on workers and weakens them in labor struggles. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to stop the DGB from bargaining around temporary work. Our position is that collectively bargaining agreements should never be below the standard set in the law. In our campaign – already supported by more than 400 trade unionists – we demand a stop to bargaining, cancelling immediately all existing agreements and a massive mobilization against additional concessions in the new law. A similar campaign, which also demands the prohibition of temporary work, has already won the support of nearly a thousand people. Increasing temporary work and sinking wages even further in Germany will have an international impact, because the deregulation of the German labor market will only deepen the European crisis. Therefore, we call on you to sign the open letter of protest ([www.labournet.de/?p=100678](http://www.labournet.de/?p=100678)) and to draw attention to this development and to mobilize in your respective countries against this broken solidarity of the DGB!

With comradely, brotherly and sisterly greetings,

the staff of LabourNet Germany, October 2016

P.S. And, of course, we will continue to publish about the transnational social strike at [www.labournet.de](http://www.labournet.de)

The meeting point for all left-wing trade unionists, both waged and unwaged



# Confronting Amazon\_ Through creative actions and cross-border solidarity, Polish workers are undermining Amazon's anti-union playbook

Excerpts from an article of Ralf Ruckus in Jacobin from April 2016. Full text here: [www.jacobinmag.com/2016/03/amazon-poland-poznan-strikes-workers](http://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/03/amazon-poland-poznan-strikes-workers)

Since its humble beginnings as an online bookseller, Amazon has become a household name – synonymous with endless product choices and same-day shipping, all sustained by a vast logistics network that spans continents. Amazon – which now has more than ninety fulfillment, redistribution, and sorting centers in the US – began opening warehouses in Europe in 1999. Five years later, it moved into Asia, establishing centers in Japan and China, and now India – bringing its total number of warehouses to more than two hundred. What's peculiar about Amazon is that the company's enormous size isn't matched by huge profits. So far it has dumped most of its surplus into building facilities, creating product lines, and developing new technologies. But that's where the oddity ends. While Amazon's sales revenue and employment figures still lag far behind Walmart's – about \$90 billion and 150,000 workers, compared to Walmart's \$490 billion and well over two million employees – the two giants share a core philosophy about work relations. The more you exploit workers, the retailers agree, the bigger your profit margins. Amazon warehouse workers, however, are beginning to fight back. One of the key sites of struggle is Poland, where employee strikes and work slowdowns are upsetting ossified unions and Amazon management alike. But can workers in the Eastern European country go toe-to-toe with an international behemoth?

## Amazon in Poland

Germany and the United Kingdom continue to anchor Amazon's European expansion. But Poland is playing an increasingly critical role in the company's push to serve the German market, its second largest. In fall 2014, Amazon built three new fulfillment centers – large warehouses where products are picked, packed, and shipped to consumers – in western Poland. One center is located in Sady, near the city limits of Poznań, and the other two are close to the city of Wrocław. In the lead-up to the warehouse openings, Amazon announced it would bring on six thousand permanent workers and up to nine thousand temporary employees during peak times. When the Poznań fulfillment center opened in September 2014, shop-floor workers were hired directly by Amazon on three-month contracts and then became permanent workers a few months later. New hires had just a few days of training before they were turned loose on the warehouse floor, and starting in October, Amazon began hiring workers through a handful of temp agencies. Employing a mix of permanent and temporary workers is central to Amazon's workplace model, which divides workers between those employed by Amazon itself on a permanent contract (marked by a blue badge) and workers that temporary work agencies bring on for a few weeks or months (marked by a green badge). Off-peak, temporary workers constitute at least half the workforce, and during the busiest stretch (November through January), they at least double the number of permanent workers. The male-to-female ratio in Poland is fairly equal (although this varies by department), and most workers are either in their twenties or over forty-five, reflecting the characteristics of the broader labor market. For twenty-somethings, working in the Amazon warehouse is typically a first-time or seasonal job; for older workers it's often a last-ditch attempt at employment. Most workers are Polish, but a few come from other countries, such as Ukraine. Foreign employees generally work as janitors, or fill subcontracted positions in the warehouse or in cafeteria. In the Poznań warehouse, the workweek is divided into four ten-hour day and evening shifts, plus overtime. Shifts are Sunday to Wednesday, Monday to Thursday, and Wednesday to Saturday; workers switch from the day shift to the night shift every four weeks.

Like other logistics companies, Amazon organizes its departments according to “inbound” and “out-bound” work. Inbound tasks include unloading trucks with forklifts, unpacking and scanning goods, and stowing products in the warehouse; outbound work involves picking goods from the shelves to match customer orders, and packing, loading, and shipping the products. Both departments rely on conveyor belts, scanners, and computers, but most of the work (grabbing and scanning items, running from one spot to another in the warehouse, checking information on handheld scanners) is “unskilled” and done by hand. Amazon's model of work organization isn't entirely new. Even before the introduction of computer-controlled systems, catalog companies like Sears used an analogous system in its warehouses. But the Seattle company has capitalized on the standardization of transport systems (containerization), the mainstreaming of online services (ordering via central online platforms), and the Taylorization and restructuring of warehouse work (digital surveillance, scanning codes, computer-controlled conveyor belts, stowing and picking robots) to capture an increasing share of the retail market. And like most other big companies, Amazon's organizational innovations depend on squeezing as much work out of employees as possible. At Amazon, every department in the fulfillment center

sets an hourly quota. The company doesn't reveal how quotas are determined. While managers say they calculate the minimum pace for individuals based on the average output of 90 percent of the most productive workers, they don't divulge how the collective target – the rate demanded for all workers – is set. All of the workers in the warehouse must reach the target to get a wage bonus. The minimum performance level, meanwhile, is used to pressure individual workers. Those who fail to meet it have a "feedback talk" with managers and then face termination if they don't improve.

#### Organizing in Poznan

In Poznań, workers were initially trained by Amazon team leaders from abroad, and the Polish workers who were employed as team leaders were sent to learn at fulfillment centers in the UK and Germany. This interaction gave Polish workers firsthand information about wage levels and working conditions abroad. As one explained, "Amazon tells us: 'You are the best workers in Europe!' We ask: 'Why, then, do we get the lowest wages in Europe?'" After a few weeks on the job, some workers and team leaders in Poznań began discussing their dissatisfaction with the working conditions, as well as possible ways to organize and fight for improvements. (...) Within a year, the IP section at Amazon's Poznań warehouse grew from 20 members to more than 350. Most are permanent shop-floor workers (a minority are temp workers, and a few are team leaders). Amazon only knows the 15 names of the elected IP shop stewards, who are statutorily protected from dismissal; the rest are kept secret to prevent management retaliation.(...)

#### Networking in Poland and Beyond

....After an initial meeting in March 2015, several cross-border meetings between activists and Amazon workers from Poznań, Bad Hersfeld, Brieselang, and Leipzig have taken place. The gatherings, attended by ten to thirty workers (and a number of their supporters), have made it possible for workers to correct misconceptions and find common ground: Polish now workers see that German warehouse workers share the same grievances, and German workers are no longer afraid the company will relocate all of its German warehouses to "cheap labor" Poland.

#### Work Action

The cross-border meetings have also facilitated labor actions. In late June 2015, in response to a Verdi strike in Germany, Amazon management in Poznań tried to make Polish employees work overtime to pick up the slack. The tactic was nothing new. In the past, Amazon had shifted the handling of orders between fulfillment centers during strike days (as well as in the face of supply or delivery problems, or delays due to bad weather). But this time, workers in Poznań knew the impetus for the forced overtime and publicized it widely on blackboards, banners, and flyers. In Poznań, tensions had been rising for months, and many employees had strengthened their relationships with each other through collecting petition signatures and working on the IP organizing drive.

#### Challenges in Poznan

After a year of organizing efforts at the Poznań fulfillment center, workers are facing five major challenges. First, problems of communication and assemblies. IP's Amazon workers have found it difficult to have a general assembly – a necessity since all workers are never off at the same time, and most IP members work the same shift. Furthermore, after working a ten-hour shift, enduring a commute of up to four hours, and juggling family responsibilities, workers are often too exhausted to attend meetings.

Second, the relationship between permanent workers and temporary workers. (...) A third challenge is exhaustion among permanent workers. Over the past year, some of the permanent workers most active in IP's Amazon section have quit their jobs out of frustration or because they found better work elsewhere. (...) Fourth, there's the balance between effective strategies and legal boundaries. The IP can't claim official responsibility for wildcat actions, and the legal work it carries out – such as the stalled negotiations with Amazon – have had little effect. Wildcat actions, however, exert direct and immediate pressure on Amazon even if they include more risks for the workers involved. The larger question, then, is this: how do workers negotiate the tension between the limitations and predictability of official union actions and the efficiency of disruptive wildcat actions in the context of a long-term struggle against a company like Amazon? Finally, workers have had to fend off Amazon's attacks. Generally, the company's strategy toward unions has oscillated between largely ignoring workers' efforts and actively bashing unions. While IP's organizing did not disrupt the labor process at Amazon's Polish warehouses, the slowdown in June 2015 had a marked impact, and a range of other factors – including the contentious collective bargaining process, open conflicts at Amazon employee assemblies, and a range of media reports critical of the IP – have sparked increasing tensions between Amazon's management and IP's shop stewards.

....To that end, Amazon workers from Poland and Germany converged in Berlin last month for their most recent cross-border meeting. And they've begun reaching out to Amazon warehouse workers in countries like France, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Spain. Amazon is a formidable foe, so they'll need all the help they can get. But over the past year, Poznań workers have shown how solidarity and organizing have the potential to bring even a multinational giant to heel.

# ‘More of us is better for everyone!’ Struggling for a nurse-to-patient ratio in German hospitals

Healthcare working group of the interventionist left (iL)

As healthcare working group of the interventionist left (iL), we participated in the labour struggle at the University Clinic Charité, in Berlin. This is a short summary of our experiences trying to develop a common practice out of a common perspective between patients and staff.

While the German health-care sector had long been organised in a mostly non-commercial way, privatisation, competition and a lack of investment characterise the past decade. In 2004 a new financing system was introduced for hospitals (DRGs = diagnosis related groups), which remunerates hospitals with a lump sum per case (i.e. diagnosis). This sets the incentive for hospitals to treat as many patients as possible with the least costs possible. As a result patient numbers have increased considerably, while nursing staff – one of the biggest cost factors – have been cut, implying a significant intensification of work. The result is worsening working conditions and a deterioration in the quality of care. These are what we identify as the everyday manifestations of the contradictions produced by the capitalisation of the hospital sector. For us these contradictions are the starting points for developing struggles.

In the normalisation of austerity and crisis, we experience difficulty in mobilising protest. What has been key at the Charité was the collectivisation and politicisation of the individualised experience of failure. Many nurses feel they are no longer able to care for their patients in a way that is satisfactory for either side. But often this is an experience of personal shortcoming, compensated by longer working hours or not taking breaks. The care sector is furthermore a special territory for working struggles as there is not only the relationship between the employer and the employed, but also that between the caregivers and caretakers. This social relationship adds a strong gendered dimension to this exploitation in the form of calls on the ‘caring nature’ of the (mostly) female nurses to ‘sacrifice themselves’ for their patients, while at the same time devaluing their work as superfluous care that is rationed and badly paid.

In response to these conditions of struggle, nurses in the trade union ver.di organised collective emergency calls whenever patient were put in danger due to the lack of sufficient staffing. This practice developed an understanding that it was not a personal problem, but the conditions of work that endangered patients (“If you really care about your patients, you go on strike!”). They further developed a form of strike that avoided a division between patients and staff: they restricted their right to strike by telling the employer one week in advance how many nurses would go on strike and how many beds or wards needed to be closed in order to guarantee patient safety. Through this method, the responsibility lay with the employer to cancel or delay those operations and treatments that were able to be scheduled or move them to a different hospital. In this way beds or whole wards were ‘barred’ in advance so that nurses would not ‘strike against patients’ but against empty beds.

The strike at the Charité was special in many ways but there are two distinct parts that allowed it to open up a perspective beyond the concrete achievement of their goals: the progressiveness of their demand and the declared intention and commitment to lead this not just as a labour, but as a social and political struggle.

For us the demand for a fixed patient-to-nurse ratio has great progressive potential because

1. it makes working conditions and the intensification of work part of labour struggles and fought its legitimacy not only against the bureaucrats of their own trade-union, but also through two courts where the lawsuit put forward by the Charité was dismissed.
2. it isn’t just a quantitative demand for more nurses, but a ratio between nurses and patients. Through this it not only improves the conditions of work at present, but introduces an instrument that also prevents future work intensifications.
3. it changes a system in which the budget determines the staffing, to a system in which the needs (i.e. the number of patients) determine the number of nursing staff.

The nurse-to-patient ratio thus proved an easy-to-understand and widely supported demand, which allowed us to explain and criticise the marketisation of the healthcare sector, while at the same time point to a utopia in which health-care is organised according to needs and not according to economic interests. In this way the demand opened up a common perspective for nurses and patients and the opportunity to fight for it in a broad social alliance. This alliance

started in 2013 and invited parties, NGOs, activists, patients and other professions with the slogan "More of us is better for everyone", uniting all these actors with a common goal. Our attempt was to develop a joint practice within this shared perspective.

In the first year, the alliance worked mainly as a support network that was called in by the trade union activists when there was news in the negotiations or support needed. We helped by doing telephone organising, going in tandems over the wards to mobilise people and by accompanying the struggle with publications, events and social media. However, we quickly realised that the solidarity practice of "your struggle is our struggle" didn't work to involve many people. Meetings mainly had the purpose of spreading information and sharing tasks but didn't give room for strategic discussions. Further, the rhythm of our meetings was much too dependent on the logic of the trade union negotiations; thus we were unable to develop any initiative or dynamic of our own within the alliance.

This is why we decided to try and change the alliance so that workers from other hospitals, medical students, patients and other people could organise and articulate their own interests as an active part of the struggle. This wasn't just a structural question of having regular meetings and opening up and rotating the preparations of the meetings, but mainly one of practice. We had to take the struggle onto a political level to allow people who didn't work at the Charité to become active and develop a speaking position of their own. So we started a political campaign to include a nurse-to-staff ratio into the legal requirements for hospitals to be funded by the public health insurance.

In spite of the fear that the working struggle and a campaign for a legal solution might delegitimise one another, the two levels of struggle actually worked out really well to support one another: during the strike the Charité tried to accuse the workers to act against their patients' interests; in response, we were able to organise a 'patient press conference' in support of the strike, countering the employers intended division between the particular (i.e. the workers') and the public interest. On the other hand, the media attention of the strike helped to make the political campaign more visible and bring the discussions about the marketisation of our healthcare sector and the need for a political change into the public discourse.

So to conclude, what did we achieve?

Firstly, the success at the Charité has been an important empowerment process for many and succeeded in bringing about a first contract that regulates minimum staffing requirements. The ratios depend on the severity of the patient impairment but reduce the average number of patients per nurse roughly from 5 to 2 on intensive wards and from 12 to 9 on normal wards. In addition the contract also establishes a new committee that ensures the implementation of these requirements.

Secondly, the success at the Charité improved the conditions of struggle for hospital staff not only there, but nationwide. The new form of strike, the enforcement of binding staff requirements, the massive public support and the increased confidence and organisational strength of the profession have created a wave of organisation and resistance in hospitals across the country. In April, many more hospitals went on strike in Berlin, Saarland and Hamburg to warm up for intensified strikes this summer/autumn.

Finally, we managed to create an alliance of workers, patients and political groups that continues to try and organise a political process within and around these developing struggles. The idea was and is to generalise from the particular by linking up different interests and perspectives. And while we all know this works well in theory, the past three years have allowed us to develop an idea of what it takes to also fill this rhetoric with a practice.

[www.interventionistische-linke.org](http://www.interventionistische-linke.org)

## Moving forward in solidarity\_

### Introductory text from the brochure about the „Sezonieri“ (seasonal workers) Campaign in Austria and beyond

Sezonieri Campaign

Autumn 2013: about 70 landworkers from Romania and Serbia decided to down tools in October. With the help of highly visible protest, they drew public attention to their unbearable working conditions. Over a month earlier, in August, Romanian and Hungarian landworkers had got in touch with the trade union Pro-Ge in order to struggle against their exploitation. About a year later, the Sezonieri Campaign for harvest workers in Austria kicked off: »Sezonieri« stands for »seasonal worker« in Romanian. What does the campaign aspire to? Why has it become necessary to run this campaign? And what preliminary conclusions can be drawn from three years of campaigning work? An editorial on an activists' view of the Sezonieri Campaign, its activities, goals and obstacles.

The examples of struggles for land workers' rights raised above highlight what seems to be a widespread practice in this sector: wages being driven considerably below collective bargaining agreements, violations of legal maximum working hours, withholding of special allowances for overtime, accommodation of workers in substandard housing – partly under forceful conditions – raising the suspicion of the prevalence of human trafficking. All of that is happening right next door – in the realm of the production of our highly praised local vegetables. However, both earlier cited examples are somewhat striking, especially since these groups that fought for their rights are hardly being ascribed any ability to organise and struggle. To say the least, seasonal and harvest work range among the most precarious forms of migrant employment. Both cases underline that the enforcement of rights is possible, despite highly unfavourable conditions: in Burgenland the workers represented by PRO-GE reached a settlement agreement of more than a few thousand euro. Likewise the other workers, represented by the Chamber of Labour, concluded an out of court agreement in which the employer in Tyrol guaranteed additional payments amounting to roughly 110.000 euro.

Harvest, seasonal work, and the labour market in agriculture

The legal constructs »harvest work« and »seasonal work« (described officially as »temporarily admitted foreign labour forces«) are temporary work relations which do not offer any longterm perspective for employment. Harvesters and seasonal workers (from outside the EU) require work permits; their issuing of which is limited to regulated contingents specified for each federal state. Meanwhile the majority employed in agriculture are mainly (temporary) migrants and commuters originating from so-called new EU member states of Eastern and Southern Europe who, currently with the exception of Croatian nationals, benefit from free access to the labour market. During work-intense periods agriculture and forestry is the sector ranking highest with regard

to the share of employees of migrant origin. According to official statistics 17.287 out of 29.697 persons employed in agriculture and forestry at the end of June 2015 did not hold Austrian citizenship. The situation is even more complex with regards to collective bargaining agreements. Depending on the federal state, as well as the type of business (farm, garden centre, winery etc.), different types of collective bargaining agreements apply. However, they all share a commonality: the legally binding – but in practice all too often violated – minimum wage for unskilled agricultural work is low, ranging from 6,70 to 7,30 euro gross – meaning prior to deduction of taxes and social insurance contributions.

Thinking about agricultural politics and labour struggles together

Not only is Austria characterised by a vicious circle in agricultural production, price pressures generated by wholesale are pushing agricultural businesses to produce for less money, there is also little organised resistance, mainly initiated by small-scale actors. European and national agricultural policies are primarily about increasing cultivated land, however the disastrous price policy for agricultural products leads to a systematic over-exploitation of labour forces – be it of relatives working in the family enterprise, or of employees. Whereas large businesses manage to maximise profits by adopting this strategy, the smaller ones can hardly sustain their economic survival. Moreover, »organic« and »regional« production does not guarantee fair production. »Fair trade« is an established term when it comes to importing products from overseas, but such discussions are completely absent when turning to the apple of Styrian origin, radish from Tyrol, or grapes produced in Burgenland. The Sezonieri Campaign aims at addressing the inclusion of labour rights and anti-racist debates in the realm of agriculture and, conversely, at the inclusion of agricultural concerns in the sphere of trade union work.

## Sezonieri Campaign – activities and goals

The Sezonieri Campaign is a joint initiative run by a range of actors based within the trade union, migrant, and agricultural contexts. The main goal is to raise awareness about existing collective bargaining rights, labour and social law, as well as to offer support in enforcing these rights at the individual and collective levels. Secondly, the Sezonieri Campaign supports labour struggles and processes of self-organisation. Thirdly, the campaign aims at improving the living and working conditions of employees in the agricultural sector in significant and sustainable ways, rather than on a temporary basis.

We circulate information in a range of languages, offer a phone line, proactively get in touch with workers in the fields, campaign with large banners in the border regions, give legal advice and support, and do media work. The collaboration between members of trade unions, employees of NGO's, and activists is crucial for our work. Although the diversity in organisational cultures and working styles may be challenging at times, it is precisely this mix in competences that makes this campaign successful. Being activists based in various social and anti-racist struggles, the Sezonieri Campaign represents a concrete practice of standing up against precarity and enabling a context that enhances our capacity to act in solidarity.

## Sezonieri Campaign – successes and challenges

One and a half years after these 70 harvesters had pulled out of their workplaces in Tyrol, we visited some of them in their home district Sibiu, in Romania. We were interested in documenting, some time having passed, how they had fought for their rights and learning what conclusions they retrospectively drew. All warmly welcomed us; the reflection on this struggle however could not have been more different: some considered they had lost their chance to work in Austrian agriculture because of their militant reputation; this was considered problematic especially since they were facing economic hardship without any revenue from working abroad. Others were happy being finished with seasonal work and considered it a better choice to stay at home with their children. Some would advise others to stand up for wages and social rights anytime; others were reluctant to advise others to struggle since they considered it to be a great effort with an overall dissatisfying result. A more lengthy exchange with Sorin Oprişiu, who was involved at the frontlines of this protest is featured in this brochure. Two former harvest workers, who had filed a court case for another struggle (equally located in Tyrol), are now active members of the Sezonieri Campaign.

Throughout the campaign PRO-GE successfully managed to struggle for wage claims that were denied by employers (a harvester shares her ongoing case on page 19). In part, the campaign achieved further, but more indirect improvements – for instance through strengthening the negotiation powers

of harvesters by providing legal information; or by raising public pressure and thereby forcing employers to give in to workers' demands. Workers in agriculture are now using the knowledge disseminated as part of this campaign on minimum wages, maximum working hours etc. in order to achieve some punctual improvements in their work relations. But even so, challenges persist: our lack of competence in various languages creates occasional hurdles; we are facing the difficult tasks of building trust and continuous organisation in a sector characterised by the permanent movement of its workers; we have so far not found enough points of leverage to exercise pressure more systematically in order to move beyond successful singular case work and achieve enduring changes in work and social relations. Finally, the goal to create social spaces for, and supporting, the self-organisation of workers in trade unions is yet to be reached.

## Welcome to the Strawberry Harvest ...

Against this background we hosted a forum on trade unions, (migrant) agriculture work and unionising entitled »Welcome to the Strawberry Harvest! Your minimum Wage is ...« at the end of May 2016. Throughout two days colleagues from trade union, activist, and agricultural backgrounds based in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland exchanged experiences and discussed unionising work in agriculture. In order to analyse and compare challenges and strategies, and to learn from international best practice, we aim to share and spread this knowledge and a few contributions more in this brochure.

[www.sezonieri.at](http://www.sezonieri.at)

## Group Descriptions\_

### Allt åt alla, Sweden

Allt åt alla (everything for everyone) is a nationwide collective that is part of the Swedish autonomist movement. From north to south in Sweden we have local groups, in a dozen cities. In Allt åt alla we all have different local contexts, and we therefore use our organization as a tool to bring our different struggles together. What connects our local struggle is our common platform – building upon the abolition of class society. We are struggling in our cities and at our workplaces. We struggle against neoliberal housing policy in our neighborhoods and we create commons for everyone's right to the city. We are struggling at our workplaces to raise class consciousness, pushing forms of struggle beyond the framework of traditional trade unions.

### Amazon Solidarity Group, Berlin

We are loose group of people from different political currents, students and (mostly office) workers who got together to support the organizing attempts of Amazon workers in Brieselang near Berlin and other cities in Germany. The group started around the end of 2014. We organized several public events to discuss the strike actions at Amazon warehouses with a broader audience, did some public actions during rallies and larger demonstrations, leafleting. One of the main activities was facilitate Amazon workers meetings in Poznan and Berlin. We also supported Amazon workers during legal fights against the non-extension of their work contracts in courts which we believe were due to workers participation in union organizing at their workplaces. In the recent months the group has not been very active, but some of us are still focusing on supporting workers meetings between workers from different countries and outside the bureaucratic union structures, translate leaflets and so on. Our aim is to increase mutual support among working people to fight back without getting lost in official union hierarchies.

### ARS - Autonomous Workers Union, Bulgaria

Anarchism, in particular anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalism, was an important political tradition in modern Bulgaria, repressed and destroyed by the Stalinist regime in the 1940s-1950s. In the 1990s, survivors reestablished the Federation of Anarchists in Bulgaria. The Autonomous Workers Union grew out of an affinity group within it. It was officially established in 2010 attracting over 100 members and as many sympathizers since then. The first sections were in Sofia and Kochan (Gotse Delchev region), the newest is in Varna. There are individual members in Vidin and Burgas as well.

ARS came together out of a pressing need to fight against the intensifying attack on labor in the years of so called "transition" to capitalism when traditional trade unions' role was clearly compromised. The absence of organized resistance against over 30 years of anti-social policies made workers in Bulgaria the poorest and most disenfranchised in the poorest and most corrupt country in the EU, according to official statistics, which do not take into account the neo-feudalism reigning in the vast realm of undocumented labor relations.

We aim to provide access to legal consultations and defense for members and unaffiliated workers and to defend the labor and human rights of our members in the face of state institutions, employers and juridical courts. We have at different times created producer-consumer cooperatives and mutual-aid funds. Our most pressing goal is to broaden the organization's base.

ARS is vocal on issues concerning the privatization of public services, calling for socialization and workers' control. During the mass protests in the winter of 2012/2013 ARS took position against the electricity monopolies and against capitalism, coming in conflict with the nationalist factions that dominated the rallies in Sofia. In Varna, this protest wave precipitated the formation of the ARS section in the marine capital. In January 2013 ARS participated in the road blockades in solidarity with the strike at Vazovski Machinostroitelni Zavodi AD (the largest enterprise of the military industry in the country). While big part of our members are precarious workers, we often are engaged in workplace disputes with small businesses, organise pickets etc. We also organise campaigns with migrant workers. As an organisation, we participate in many grass roots ecological campaigns against private construction companies, and also facilitate community organisations in neighborhoods.

[www.arsindikat.org](http://www.arsindikat.org)

[www.facebook.com/AvtonomenRabotniceskiSindikat](https://www.facebook.com/AvtonomenRabotniceskiSindikat)

[arsindikat@gmail.com](mailto:arsindikat@gmail.com)

## Berlin Migrant Strikers

“They called for workers... humans arrived“ - The collective Berlin Migrant Strikers was born from the desire of a heterogeneous plurality of Italian migrants in Berlin to share, from a common reading of their own subjectivity, analysis and social practice. From this point we started two years ago to investigate our present reality made of insecurity „individualism, exploitation. A present time in the heart of Europe, that we all share as migrants in spite of differences of sort. We are a collective that creates its subjectivity starting from the material conditions, we share work-related problems, welfare issues but also living questions and a collective social imagination. What is constantly economically exploited and valorized is precisely our migrant condition and this is also the basic thing that we all have in common, so the idea of the migrant strike could not miss from the horizon of our practices of struggle. That is why we adhere to the path of the Transnational Social Strike. Moreover, in these two years of activity, we tried to redefine, through experiences and experiments and studies, the classical tools of conflicts, in order to adapt them to the current changing conditions: how to rethink role and forms of the union? How to produce counter-imagination in the era of the absolute subsumption? How to cope and claim for the welfare rights? What the migrant body and relations can tell from a genderized perspective? How can technology be taken, shared and used to emancipate people from the exploitation and put into new patterns of cooperation? Since two years we organize free info points of advice and orientation in the world of the Hartz IV, legal advice and general bureaucratic counseling. We have built campaigns and direct actions against the exploitation of migrant labor, in particular the sector of gastronomy where migration and black work and exploitation often go together. We experiment every day forms of mutualism and cooperation, self organized welfare, and look for a way to organize collective happiness, keeping at the center of our practice the horizon of a liberating desire more than the narrative of real (or false) needs.

[www.facebook.com/berlinmigrantstrikers](http://www.facebook.com/berlinmigrantstrikers)

## BASTA! Berlin

is an initiative of unemployed people of different origin in Berlin. We decided to stand up for our own interests, instead of letting other people decide for us. We think that social protest needs more social centres and open rooms that sustain solidarity. Our consultation room is a public room in which solidarity can be experienced. Our personal experiences of poverty, housing shortage and mass unemployment are a collective, a political problem. We do not need to face this alone. And we should not except this passively. Together, we strive to build a strong social structure “bottom-up”. One that stands for our interests in public and that helps to defend them in the Jobcenter. BASTA! is open for everyone who seeks a politically biased consultation, accompaniment, support and/or organization..

[www.basta.blogspot.eu](http://www.basta.blogspot.eu)

## Blockupy-platform, Berlin

We are a local network of diverse movement-oriented groups and individuals, which was founded for the Blockupy-mobilisation to Frankfurt. Together we want to overcome the crisis-regime in Europe and its politics of austerity. Our goal is to establish transnational democracy and solidarity from below. Our focus lies also on the local situation in Berlin, where we try to support different groups and actors of social struggle and bring them together. Currently we try to work out possible connections between these local everyday-struggles and transnational mobilisations in the frame of Blockupy. We explicitly reject all forms of racist or nationalist division, conspiracy theories or antisemitism.

## CIP-IdF (Coordination des Intermittents et Précaires d’Ile-de-France)

We are many: intermittent workers, temps, precarious workers. We are not fighting for some special privilege - unemployment compensation benefits that would be reserved only for artists and creative workers. We are not trying to preserve the local folklore: that of our cultural exception, granted by Gods. We’re not talking about some handout gifted thanks to the goodwill of the minister of Culture or of a local official. We’re fighting for rights. What social rights? The right to get some income, during the time we are not working. Social rights give you the right to choose your job, or at least to refuse those jobs which sacrifice your dignity.

## CLAP, Italy

The Chambers of Autonomous and Casual Workers (Camere del Lavoro Autonomo e Precario) were born in Rome, putting together different fights and self-organized groups. Today, the Chambers are organized locally in Rome, Padua and Naples, beyond the formal restrictions of job categories, and they are based in occupied social centres. Our objectives are:

- Organizing and support self-organization of the non-unionized workers, of the workers without any rights, casual and informal workers, not paid interns, unemployed and self-employed workers.
- Fighting for new labour and welfare rights, as the right for a basic income for all, especially for who has no income.
- Encouraging solidarity among workers and unemployed, especially through new forms of mutualism as an alternative to isolation and solitude of the contemporary way of working. Our main self-organized services are:



- Legal assistance and organization of union dispute in the working place
- Tax and retirement planning
- Training on law regulations for self-employed and autonomous workers

We have in these years organized dispute: in social cooperatives for social services (many involved in the corruption scandal of 'mafia capitale'); in the outsourced care sector; organized campaign against not-paid internship and the payment through voucher. We have been founder of the Social Strike initiative in Italy and in the Transnational Social Strike Platform. At the beginning of the last century, the emerging unions in the USA use the slogan: 'An injury to one is an injury to all', to organize the non-organisable, and we still believe that this is the case today. [www.clap-info.net](http://www.clap-info.net)

#### DiEM25

is a pan-European, cross-border movement founded by Yanis Varoufakis, Noam Chomsky, Slavoj Žižek, Srećko Horvat, Sandro Mezzadra and many others. We believe that the European Union is disintegrating. At the same time as faith in the EU is waning, we see a rise of misanthropy, xenophobia and toxic nationalism. DiEM25, calls for a pan-European campaign of disobedience against transnational elites. Our actual campaigns are about Transparency, Refugees, European New Deal.

#### dversia, Bulgaria

dBEPЦИЯ (dversia) is a platform for independent left political journalism – a free quarterly online magazine for social, political and cultural analyzes, photography and unpopular perspectives. Our endeavor has emerged from and is still driven by our belief that – at least in Bulgaria – there is a pressing need for progressive media, which:

- 1) would provide in-depth critical analyzes situated on the frontier between journalism and academia, thus rearranging the dominant perceptions of the established fields of knowledge-production;
- 2) can expose the defects of the neoliberal order, building alliances between different groups of people in the process;
- 3) is capable of demonstrating and disseminating the possibilities for collective action today beyond and against the imaginable models.

In our work, we combine academic, journalistic and activist approaches to various topics. We translate, initiate various campaigns (such as the one in support of the online platforms Libgen and Sci-Hub or in relation to the Rojava revolution in Northern Syria) and organise debates with students and other interested groups not only in Sofia (where most of us are based) but also in other cities. A long-term aim is to develop a more international outreach through collaborations with other groups and collectives.

[info@dversia.net](mailto:info@dversia.net)

[www.facebook.com/dversiamagazine](http://www.facebook.com/dversiamagazine)

#### FAU Halle (Saale), Germany

is the local group of „Freie Arbeiterinnen und Arbeiter-Union“ (FAU – Free Workers Union). FAU is an anarchosyndicalist trade union federation. It consists of independent, local unions. All decisions are made at the basis of members. In Halle we are students, temporary workers, so called „mini jobbers“ (with max. 450€ income) in logistics and gastronomy and more. We try to build up and foster local member-oriented union structures in our region based on solidarity and direct action. In the last time we mainly struggled for and with so called mini jobbers, whose employment usually lacks the respect of basic German labour law and rights and for temporary workers. In the next future there are plans to network and cooperate with antiracist groups to build up support structures also for migrant workers.

[www.fauhalle.blogspot.de](http://www.fauhalle.blogspot.de)

contact: [fauhal-kontakt@fau.org](mailto:fauhal-kontakt@fau.org)

#### FAU Hamburg, Germany

is an anarcho-syndicalist trade union federation consisting of local syndicates and groups. It is the German section of the International Workers Association (IAA). At this stage the FAU consists of around 60 groups, organized locally and by branch of trade. Because it rejects hierarchical organizations and political representation and believes in the concept of federalism, most of the decisions are made by the local unions.

[www.hamburg.fau.org](http://www.hamburg.fau.org)

#### Frankfurt Lab, Germany

is a circle of activists to discuss and support (local) working struggles beyond the limits of traditional paths of social and labor fights and organization. We are active in: social work net, TIE, no one is illegal, iL and notroika.

Inicjatywa Pracownicza (IP, Workers' Initiative), Poland

was formed in Poland in 2001 first as an informal group of worker activists willing to unite and fight at their own workplaces and to support other workers' struggle. In September 2004, IP was established as a formal but independent and grass-roots trade union. Creation of IP was a reaction to crisis of the Polish official union movement – to its bureaucracy, passivity and links with the anti-social and anti-workers governments.

IP gathers either workers from various industries (e.g. the health service, the shipyard industry, transport and logistic, construction industry, commerce, public administration, art and culture workers) or precarious workers, like those from temporary agencies, students and unemployed. Inicjatywa Pracownicza organizes workplace activity, but also joins larger mobilizations and protests, and runs campaigns outside the workplaces through direct actions, leaflets, publications, and conferences, educational events. Outside Poland, IP has a regular exchange within the "Red and Black Coordination" of anarcho-syndicalist trade unions.

interventionistische Linke, Germany

„Interventionist Left“ is an open process of organization of a network of radical left groups and individuals coming from the non-dogmatic and emancipatory currents within the German speaking left. We are activists in social movements and involved in anti-racist, feminist and climate struggles as well as in antifascist and anti-war activities. We want the left do be engaged, be part of social movements and broader alliances. We try to argue for an anticapitalist perspective in all these struggles, try to deepen fractions within the system and use windows of opportunity for action. We prefer to be active on a practical level, even if we sometimes make mistakes and learn out of them, instead of being lost in the cynicism of pure critique. We struggle for a radical left that is oriented towards a revolutionary rupture with capitalism, state and all forms of oppression and discrimination. We want a new, social and radical left, an interventionist left that is struggling for hegemony and organizing counter-power.

Iskra, Slovenia

»Iskra« is a progressive youth organisation that is focused on elimination of systemic problems that young people face under capitalism. We actively struggle against the reduction of scope and quality of public education, elimination of student and workers' rights, spreading of precarious work. Besides that, we are also active in the fields of feminism, open source and ecology and we strive to improve the political representation of everyone who are studying, are yet to study or have already finished their studies and are facing the labour market. Although most of our members are students, we do not limit ourselves to the confines of the university. We are well aware that for most people trouble starts only after finishing their studies, as studenthood still brings us relative stability that does not exist later, when we are forced into a fierce competition against our peers for a small number of available jobs that often don't even include basic workers' rights. The members of »Iskra« don't fall for the »such are the times« blunder and believe a more promising future can be attained if we act collectively. Therefore, our main goal is to build a broad movement, based on principles of democracy and solidarity, that will be able to achieve such a future.

[www.studentska-iskra.org](http://www.studentska-iskra.org)

ISM, Germany

The International Student Movement (ISM) is an open platform for cooperation, coordination, communication, and collaboration between different individuals and groups involved with the struggle against the increasing commercialization of education as well as for free emancipatory education. It was initiated in 2008 following an International Day of Action against the Commercialization of Education (Nov. 5th 2008).

The ISM is generally open to everyone – no matter whether you are a student/pupil, parent, lecturer/faculty, or staff/worker, unemployed, – everyone who supports the collective struggle is welcome. The ISM has always been and will always be independent of any political party, union, or other institution.

[www.global-ism.space](http://www.global-ism.space)

no one is illegal Hanau, Germany

Our group exists since 1992 in support of refugee and migrant struggles, we combine individual counselling in a local refugee-cafe with continuous political campaigns and initiatives against deportations and for open borders. We were also co-founders for MigrAr Rhine-Main, a counselling point in Frankfurt to support migrants, whom are denied their (full) wages. We are active on a germanwide but also on a transnational level, since 2009 in the network welcome to europe and since 2014 also with the hotline for boatpeople: watchthemed-alarmphone. Practical activities on flight and migration, for the unconditional right to stay and for freedom of movement against the modern border- and apartheid-regime are the key-issues of our political work. Rooting in this we are continuously searching for interconnections to other social movements in a comprehensive approach for global social rights. In this perspective we also participated in the blockupy coalition since its beginning in 2012. Contact: [kmii-hanau@antira.info](mailto:kmii-hanau@antira.info)

#### Plan C, UK

is a national membership organisation, network and perspective. We have local groups in 8 cities and towns which are active in developing strategy and tactics to aid the development of social struggles. Since 2015 we have been involved in developing ideas around the social strike with an emphasis on how we can weaponise social reproduction politics. Our members are also active in Picket Profiteers (an attempt to spread actions against private health companies during the Junior Doctors strikes), student rent strike organising, supporting co-operatives, anti-fascism and workplace organising in and outside unions. We have also been one of the main groups involved in solidarity in the UK with the Kurdish struggle in and around Rojava, Syria.

[www.weareplanc.org](http://www.weareplanc.org)

[info@weareplanc.org](mailto:info@weareplanc.org)

#### Precarious Di]connections, Italy

is a collective made by precarious workers, migrants, women and men, who put precarious and migrant labor at the centre of their political intervention, understanding precarity and mobility as the global and comprehensive conditions of contemporary labor. Our wager is that of breaking the isolation of workers starting from the differences that divide them and to connect the disconnected, to produce communication where it is lacking or seems impossible. It includes a regional Migrants Coordination, active on the connection between immigration laws and the exploitation of migrants in the workplaces, and a collective of precarious workers, Insubordinate Labor, which builds communication and organization among the different faces of precarious labor. We had an active role in the migrants' strike on the 1st of March 2010 and we are part of the Italian coalition for the Social Strike.

[www.conessioniprecarie.wordpress.com](http://www.conessioniprecarie.wordpress.com)

#### SamoRog, Slovenia

is part of Autonomous factory Rog, a new place and collective, working with refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the people active in our group have years of experience in minority struggles, some came as activists last year in the time of Balkan refugee koridor, and some were part of koridor, so there are different ideas on organization, politisation, and goals of our movement. Since we opened our place in july we are trying to turn from humanitarian approach towards more organised work with migrant community, and to build a common economic ground that will enable us to continue to work together even in case of eviction.

#### Social Work Net Frankfurt, Germany

is an alliance of political active colleagues who work in different enterprises and associations of the social sector in Frankfurt. Those social services companies are in concurrence to each other for public commissions. For that reason and also as in the social sector nothing is produced and expenses can only be saved by firing and cutting wages most of us are paid under the tariff standards and some are threatened by unemployment. We try to fight against this since 2011 with some success on the level of local government. Some of us are near to unions, others are very far from them. We are connected to support each other in conflicts with the companies.

[www.frankfurternetzwerk.blogspot.eu](http://www.frankfurternetzwerk.blogspot.eu)

#### Sud Commerces et Services, France

Our union was created in 2002 with the help of the Union Syndicale Solidaires and increased their overall in the retail sector. Today, our union has 30 sections and, in sum, we count more than 300 members only in Paris (1.000 in all country). Examples of our presence: Apparel: Burberry,- Retail chain: Carrefour, Departement store: Fnac and Virgin Mégastore, Perfumery: Sephora,-Fast-food: KFC and Pizza Hut. Since 2010, we take part in a committee that is composed of four different unions in the retail industry and is called le Comité de Liaison Intersyndical du Commerce de Paris (CLIC-P). Together, we are fighting against the extension of the opening hours in the region of Paris.

also announced to attend\_

attac (Germany), Avprivatisera Hagsätra och Tidningen Brand (Sweden), CNE (Belgium), Convergence des luttes #jour-retnuitdebout (France), Coordinamento Migranti (Italy), GAS (Grupo de Acción Sindical - Labor Action Group, Berlin, Germany), Independent workers of Great Britain, KöZ (Turkey), nuit debout Karlsruhe/libertäre Gruppe Karlsruhe (Germany), Precários Inflexíveis (Portugal), Precarious Workers Brigade (UK)/Boycott Workfare (UK), SI Cobas (Italy), Migrant community, Union syndicale Solidaires (France), TIE (Transnational Information Exchange).

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