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The Supreme Court rejects the CNT appeal and sentences prison to the 6 union members of La Suiza

Confederación Nacional del Trabajo

3 July 2024

The Supreme court notified the sentence this monday in which it ratifies the conviction to the accused colleagues.

The CNT is going to appeal in all the possible instances, at Spanish and European level, so that justice can be done in this case, which suposes a terrible attackon trade union work. “We are uncomfortable for the system. Our field is the street and what we cannot do is to renounce it. It is embedded in our DNA and that is what we will continue to do. The comrades will not be alone at any time, and although we believe the sentence is a bombshell for trade unionis, we wil continue to be on the side of the workers”, said Erika Conrado, secretary general of CNT, upon hearing the sentence.

The magistrates at the Second Chamber of the High Court, presided over by Manuel Marchena, have rejected the cassation appeal lodged by the CNT trade union for the 6 La Suiza cases,

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ratifying the prison sentences of three and a half years and a compensation of 125,428 euros for the employer.

In 57 pages, Supreme Court ruling 626/2024 rejects the appeals lodged and upholds the convictions of the six female colleagues for a crime of serious coercion and another against the administration of justice. The proven facts refer to rallies that took place between May and September 2017 in front of the bakery in question, rallies that were communicated to the relevant institutions and which are an integral part of the campaigns that any trade union organisation carries out.

The history of the conflict between CNT Xixón and La Suiza began in 2017 when a person, then an employee of this bakery, went to the union to present her case: the company owed her overtime and holidays. The union tried to negotiate with the employer, but in the face of the employer's stubbornness, the union began its usual campaign of complaints, and in June 2021, the controversial judge Lino Rubio Mayo sentenced five women and one man to three and a half years in prison and ordered them to pay compensation of more than 150,000 euros.

Protesting in the street, handing out leaflets and sharing slogans with a megaphone, acts that can be circumscribed to the development of a normal and usual trade union action, end up being repressed by the Criminal Court of Xixón with the argument that the bakery ended up closing due to the inference of these protests, something that first the Provincial Court and now the Supreme Court endorse.

The Supreme Court's ruling, which is known today, does not, however, stop to assess the bench penalty and the procedural ordeal to which these comrades have been subjected for seven years and which is now continuing in the worst possible way, is serious for one simple reason: from now on, anyone who demonstrates against a company can find themselves in the same situation. Trade unionism is not a crime, although the sentence made public by the Supreme Court today calls this into question. Since the conflict began, all the unions of CNT

as well as other friendly organisations have been involved in a campaign of solidarity with the 6 workers of La Suiza. That solidarity does not end there, just as this process has not ended today either: in 2022, while waiting for the Supreme Court to admit the appeal, a massive demonstration of CNT unions and friendly organisations marched through the centre of Madrid, reminding that trade unionism is not a crime. The scene was repeated in mid-June in another demonstration in Xixón, attended by CNT unions from all over the country. On Tuesday 19 June, when the appeal began to be considered – and the sentence was handed down – a hundred or so comrades from CNT unions in the Community of Madrid demonstrated outside the Supreme Court to get the message across once again: “Trade unionism is not a crime”.

The voice of the 6 of La Suiza and the CNT is not silenced today. We repeat once again: unionism is not a crime. And now: all out on the streets.