

International Shorts (WS44)

Workers Solidarity Movement

1995

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Awareness League

The Awareness League in Nigeria is to become the first African section of the IWA. Readers of Workers Solidarity will remember the League from the reports of the jailing of four of its members by the state for opposing the military coup there. The international appeal launched on this occasion raised nearly \$2000 dollars, saw pickets and demonstrations in many countries including Ireland and resulted in the publication of over 54 articles in languages including Japanese and Hindi. The four comrades were released.

Anarchists operating in what's called the 'third world' face extremely difficult conditions. European anarchists returning from visits to Nigeria have described the extreme poverty and repression the A.L. operates under. This has included raids on meetings and the arrest and detention of all those attending. The need for all sorts of material aid including literature has been stressed.

We have sought to provide solidarity by printing one hundred copies of the A.L.s manifesto and sending them to Nigeria. Their opening paragraph reads

"The AWARENESS LEAGUE, NIGERIA, was founded as a social libertarian organisation inspired by and committed to the ideals, principles, objectives, goals, ends and purposes of revolutionary socialism and anarcho-syndicalism".

The appearance of a large anarchist organisation in Africa will play a vital role in spreading the idea of anarchism throughout that continent. It also underlines the relevance of anarchism for those struggling everywhere in the world, from the richest to the poorest of countries.

Asian unions check out anarchism

Discussions have begun between anarchists and two Asian trade unions, the National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh which organises 5% of the 1 million textile workers of Bangladesh and the GEFONT trade union federation of Nepal. The NGWF calls itself an "independent revolutionary union organisation". GEFONT was a (pro-China) Communist Party oriented federation but following the collapse of the USSR and solidarity from anarchists during the recent battery strike is now developing contacts with anarchists.

Moldavian anarchists freed

Over the last few years Workers Solidarity has responded to appeals launched on behalf of two Moldavian anarcho-syndicalists, Igor and Tamara. They had come under severe state repression, first from the Stalinist regime and then from the 'new' nationalist one. This included frequent raids by the secret police, physical assaults, threats and the killing of the family dog. Political activity in such circumstances was impossible and there was a real danger that either or both of them would be killed.

We were pleased to hear that they had been granted exit visa's and had arrived in Germany in late July of this year. They are being helped to construct a new life by the German anarchist group FAU (a section of the IWA, anarcho-syndicalist international).

This provides a good example of how international support even where it is limited to letter writing and embassy pickets can get results. Anarchist organisations around the world took part in this activity. On getting their visa, the Moldavian anarchists were told they were lucky that they had so many international friends.

UN Report

The 1994 Human Development Report issued by the United Nations reveals that

- “Between 1960 and 1991, the share of world income for the richest 20 percent of the global population rose from 70 percent to 85 percent. Over the same period, all but the richest 20% saw their share of world income fall – and the meagre share of the poorest 20 percent declined from 2.3 percent to 1.4 percent.”
- The military budgets of developing countries totals \$125 billion annually, just 12 percent of that would make it possible for a billion people to visit a healthcare professional, prevent two million children from dying of preventable infectious diseases every year, provide proper diet for 192 million malnourished children and access to safe water to 1.3 billion people.
- In 1993, more than 35 million persons in industrialised countries were seeking jobs.

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