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**TIE-Newsletter July 2020****I can't breathe – Preface of a special newsletter issue**

This scream against oppression, but also for life, stands for our struggle as a whole. The racist violence and the current global crisis is a wake-up call. It illustrates that we need to conquer a world in order to live in solidarity, because our present reality is not unity but division. Despite all claims to the contrary, the current crisis has a face of class, gender and racist oppression. In Brazil or the USA, black people are two to three times more likely to die of Covid-19 than white people because of the social situation, access to health care and a broken public health system. We see increasing (domestic) violence against women and a questioning of women's achievements at work, in public and private life. In Brazil, a minister is calling for the confiscation of indigenous peoples' land for exploitation, explaining that "this is a good time to do so because of the lack of public attention". In India, we saw tens of thousands of migrant workers dying

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of hunger and thirst as they tried to return home, as they lost their livelihoods in the cities. The crisis also calls into question the relationship of capitalism with nature that causes these disasters, which are called natural disasters, in the first place. The crisis calls neoliberal policies into question because it shows that a neoliberal state that destroys a common good such as the health system leads to death. The system is incapable of meeting the needs of the people. And we are already seeing repressions in different countries against our movements, against trade unions and social activists.

After a successful international conference in January with the ver.di union in Berlin and an international meeting of the TIE Global Network in Frankfurt, the Corona Pandemic has also changed our work significantly. Below you find both, the joint discussions of our exchange in January and various experiences from the networks. One of the first common experiences in all countries was that workers feel isolated due to the pandemic containment measures and that trade unions find it difficult to facilitate collective experiences. Therefore, we decided in almost all networks to record short reports from workers as videos in order to break through this isolation and support common experiences internationally. On the other hand, we have started a process of self-understanding within the global network to understand the different dimensions of the current crisis, the consequences for workers in our respective countries and for global capitalism. The changes are reshaping the conditions of all our political struggles. Videos and our discussions in times of pandemic will be sent to you in the coming weeks. We want to share our experiences, invite others to a dialogue and contribute to a common discussion.

Support our network!

With our newsletter we also want to thank all our loyal friends, donors and supporters: Without your support, the TIE networks could not be as indepen-

dent and self-organized as we are. However, the current pandemic crisis presents us with major challenges. Various activities that finance generally our work could not happen due to contact restrictions. This endangers the organizational foundations of our network. Therefore, we ask you to support our work and to help us to maintain our independence in the future! Every contribution helps us to overcome this crisis and keep alive our international solidarity. Please, transfer your donations directly to the account listed on the front page or click the donation button on our website www.tie-germany.org.

Feedback and comments on this newsletter are always welcome!

Enjoy reading and solidary greetings,
TIE Bildungswerk e. V.



TIE Global

Building strategies along value chains: inspiring exchange within the network

On a rainy January morning in Berlin, over a hundred delegates representing various retail sector works councils and trade union activists from Germany were joined by trade union delegates from Bangladesh, Brazil, Columbia, India, South Africa, Spain and Sri Lanka to discuss the possibilities of workers organisations to enforce labour and human rights along supply chains of transnational companies (TNCs). This conference was a culmination of the continuing international cooperation of ver.di and the works councils with the various trade union organisations from across the world present on building union power together through concrete solidarity actions along the supply chain of TNCs.

Co-organised by ver.di, TIE Global and FES, the two day conference (29-30 January 2020) created a space for debate, discussion and learning from each other, especially between unions in the global north and those in the global south. The first plenary session set the tone of the conference in which, Valter Sanchez, the general secretary of IndustriAll Global Union, spoke about the negotiation instruments of Global unions, such as the Global Framework Agreements (GFAs) that can be used as a tool to hold TNCs accountable for their practices along the supply chain. Dithhi Bhattacharya, representing TIE Asia, and Heiner Kohnen, coordinating a national project of ver.di and representing TIE-Germany, shared their experiences from India and Brazil of building strong union struggle on the ground and connecting this struggle with supporting solidarity actions from works councils in Germany which strengthened



unions at both ends of the supply chain. The collective pressure was able to move the TNCs to negotiate with the unions on the ground. This approach focuses on developing and strengthening grassroots union power in sectors that traditionally have weak bargaining power as opposed to assuming that and outsourcing bargaining to campaign organizations.

Over the two days, several parallel workshops interspersed the plenary sessions focusing on sharing and improving collective strategies on specific issues and sectors. The issue-based workshops discussed and debated the bargaining approach, tools for it, on digitization and possible strategies to counter it. One workshop explored the possibility of connecting Amazon workers in Europe.

The Conference concluded with Stefanie Nutzenberger, the head of commerce, ver.di, presenting the Berlin declaration. The signatory unions committed to a decent and living wage, social security, safe and healthy working conditions, freedom of association and collective bargaining, effective measures against sexual or racist attacks, discrimination and exploitation, and equal pay for equal work for all workers along the supply chain of TNCs.

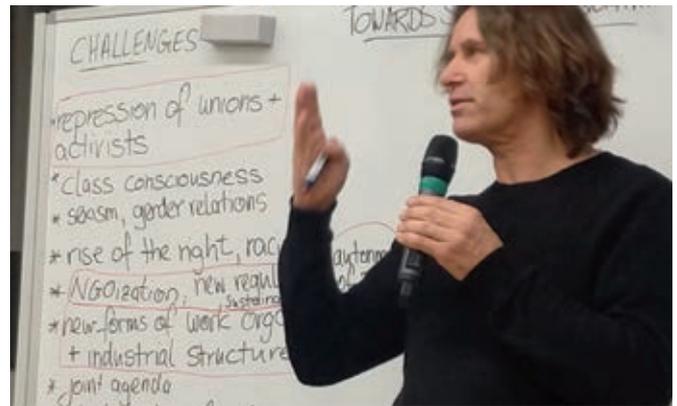
International Conference of TIE Global gives new strength

The two day conference was followed by a 3 day brainstorming meeting in Frankfurt of TIE Global in which the international trade union representatives were joined by works council TIE activists from H&M, Zara, Esprit and a comrade from Mozambique. For comrades from the wine network from South Africa and Zara in Spain this was their first international TIE meeting, while for the others, this was once again a coming together of long time comrades to discuss and debate the current political situations prevailing both globally and within each country to develop a common political understanding as a first step to-



wards brainstorming new union strategies and connecting with other unions to build a stronger global union movement. As a part of evolving this understanding unions from each country presented the challenges before them both at the plant level and at the national political level and the strategies and tools they adopt. Elements of commonality (as well as divergence) were summed up to open up the debate over the broader issues of the emergence of the rightwing across the world, of racism, of religious fundamentalism, of discrimination that enables the consolidation of power of capital.

One result of the discussion was what was called NGOization. It was felt that NGOs currently play a critical role in structuring power relations, especially in the global South. They fill the space created by the retreating state and at the same time act as a buffer between the donors (from the global North) and the so-called “beneficiaries”. NGOs risk to cushion the political anger against the ruling forces without really empowering the people or changing their situation. By occupying discussions within social movements, NGOs ultimately may control their agenda, the nature of the resistance and its outcomes. This was illustrated by various experiences in Brazil, South Africa, India and Mozambique. The discussion also revolves around the argument that processes of NGOization are part of imperialist strategies of the major economies of the global North.



The last day of the Conference was spent in group meetings of networks which worked out specific plans for the year ahead. Each group discussed how they could use various tools to expand their reach and deepen the political understanding within their organisations. The groups also discussed plans for exchanges between workers from different countries within a supply chain for strengthening the bargaining strategy. The groups also discussed expansion plans within the regions and the countries they worked in to include more unions and activists. Exhausting as it may have been these five days – they gave every participant a new lease of life to go back to their countries with memories of comradeship and confidence in the possibility of a different world.

ExChains Garments

Dignified living and working along the value chain – including in times of Corona

When clothing stores were closed in Europe in mid-March due to the spreading corona pandemic, workers along the

value chain were once again faced with the precariousness of their work. With the store closures, clothing companies





ExChains Garments

The TIE ExChains network aims to connect workers from the retail and garment industries in Europe and South Asia, working along the global supply chain. Mutual solidarity is vital to the global struggle against exploitation and poverty in this industry. In ExChains, TIE has been working with independent regional unions since 2002. These are today: FTZ & GSEU in Sri Lanka, NGWF in Bangladesh, GAFWU in Chennai / India, GATWU in Bangalore / India, the ver.di trade union in Germany and more recently the Spanish MIT and the Italian SI-Cobas.

We want to develop common strategies that promote the self-organization of workers and build a union practice along the value chain. The unions of the producing countries also work together regionally and develop new organizing approaches beyond punctual campaigns which, although they attract attention, cannot build a strong union counterforce within the companies. But also within the retail sector we are looking for new trade union approaches in the face of

cancelled orders worth billions of euros from their South Asian suppliers. Together with the lock-down measures that were also spreading in South Asia, this led to unemployment from one day to the next for the workers in the garment factories, a lack of income despite government payment regulations and insecurity. Many were initially unable to leave their cramped dormitories and neighbourhoods. The governments in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are responding to the crisis with restrictions on labour and trade union rights. But the lockdown had consequences for retail workers in the Global North, as well. Store closures were tantamount to unemployment, especially for temporary workers. Temporary upgrades of contract hours expired, and where there was no increase in short-time work benefits to 100%, part-time workers in particular had to be even more careful with their money. And for everyone, the central place of organisation, the company, was temporarily lost.

Solidarity between workers in the crisis

The crisis has made solidarity between workers even more necessary. In South Asia, trade unions from the ExChains network organised protests for the payment of outstanding wages and sick pay. They also called on the purchasing companies to take responsibility for the workers at their suppliers. In some cases, the trade unions were able to achieve success in negotiations at the company level and to fight for outstanding wage payments and reach agreements on sick pay and protection against dismissal.

But despite these agreements, the unions report that even in suppliers of large retail companies, such as H&M, Zara or Primark, outstanding wages are not paid in real terms and workers are threatened with dismissal. In Sri Lanka, for example, the supplier Regal Calibre Ltd. was producing for Primark until the crisis broke out, while in the Indian state of Karnataka it is the suppliers Gokaldas Exports and Shahi Exports who were producing for H&M, among others. Colleagues from Bangladesh reported on unpaid wage payments and labour law violations at H&M and Zara suppliers Shaboltext Ltd. and White Sweater Ltd. Trade unionists and works council members in Germany confronted the companies with the situation at their own suppliers and organised protest letters. Despite statements from most of the clothing companies that they were taking responsibilities for supply workers in the South Asia, the companies remain ignorant at first.

New attacks, but also victories of the trade union movement

In the meantime it has become clear that the crisis is being used to attack trade unionists and to break up factory unions. At the former Primark supplier Regal Calibre, trade unionists are dismissed under the pretext that there is too little work. In other suppliers in Sri Lanka, trade unionists are last called back to work. However, in mid-

precariousness, divisive tactics aimed at the workforce, low wages and the digital transformation of labour.



ExChains Orange Juice

As part of the TIE network ExChains, a network is also being built up along the orange juice supply chain. Workers from Germany and Brazil are involved. The experiences of the garment network play an important role in this. So far, the orange juice network aims to organize concrete actions at the workplace, put pressure on retailers and strengthen union activity in harvesting, processing and selling. In Brazil, rural unions of plantation workers and industrial workers are working together for the first time across organizational boundaries. Currently involved are representatives of rural and industrial unions, as well as German works councils at the retailers Edeka, Rewe, Lidl and Kaufland.

July, the FTZ&GSEU unionists and Primark works councils had a great success. After persistent joint struggles, a binding agreement was reached to set up a factory union, including time off work, with Regal Calibre. The company has also committed itself to negotiating working conditions and has made it possible to hold a monthly union meeting at the factory.

The Srirangapatna site of H&M supplier Gokaldas Exports continues to try to close. The machines were secretly removed and the transport for the workers* was stopped. The factory of one of India's largest garment producers is well organised in terms of trade unions. 900 of the 1200 workers are union members. This unionized factory has produced 100% for H&M. Yet it was the only factory the company chose to close, dismissing all the workers. The company has been met with resistance. A large part of the mainly female workers has been on a sit-in in front of the factory since early June. At the same time, their trade union GATWU is trying to legally prevent the closure. Along the value chain the workers receive support from works councils of H&M in Germany and Austria, as well as from various unions around the globe. Increasingly, H&M feels under pressure to influence Gokaldas.

Together for dignified work

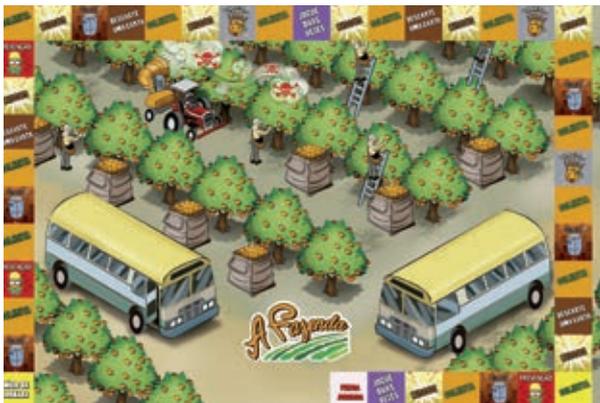
In production and retail, most of the workers have resumed work, with a significantly reduced workforce and theoretically under strict hygiene conditions; in practice, however, many things look different. For the workers this means additional burdens: the amount of work has increased further and there are hardly any short breaks to take a breath. In the retail trade, this is particularly the case at the cash registers, where customers are queuing up. In production, breaks are not considered in the planning of the assembly line work. At shift change, workers gather closely together at the factory gate, there is no running water or soap to wash their hands. "Now it is once again clear that the companies do not care about our health", say many works council members.

Therefore, they plan to present their demands for humane working conditions along the value chain together with their colleagues from South Asia and to organize joint actions. Short video clips are being produced to draw attention to the work-related health problems and to strengthen a common understanding between workers. In the video clips workers report on the effects of the Corona crisis on their work and lives. Together they develop demands on the purchasing companies and fight for decent work even during the crisis.

ExChains Orange Juice

Maintaining pressure on producers and retailers

Following the international TIE conference in Frankfurt, Brazilian trade unionists from the Orange Juice Network took part in a symposium sponsored by ver.di on the situation of orange workers in Heilbronn. This was a central moment to denounce the situation of orange juice workers both in agriculture and in the production of the orange juice value chain at Kaufland's headquarters in the global North. A meeting was also held with the management of the large retail chain Rewe. Both companies were presented with the results of their work so far. The Brazilian trade unionists demand to use more effective means to enforce better working conditions at sup-



ExChains Wine

The TIE-ExChains network is lately in the process of building a second agricultural network along the global supply chain in the wine sector. We draw on experiences from the struggles of Brazilian workers on orange plantations, from ver.di Handel and from colleagues in the German retail sector. The agri-

pliers. Wages are low in the sectors and especially the working and living conditions of the migrant workers are far from humane.

The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) also took part in a meeting, and they recognized trade unions as an indisputable actor in a multi-actor initiative to take on working conditions in orange juice. Previously, that role had been played by NGOs who are not connected to self-organization of workers on the ground. This is an important milestone in the on-going debate about the increasing regulatory influence of NGOs in the Global South. In addition, the relationship between workers from Brazil and Germany was strengthened, as they both struggle against precariousness.

Network develops game on pesticides

The Orange Juice Network has also developed a board game on pesticides. After the workplace mappings, the most important pesticides used in orange cultivation were identified. The game focuses on the effects of these chemicals on health. Since the workers play cards and dominoes in their shared flats on their day off, the network intends to build on this with its offer. How well this works is still to be evaluated.

Juice industry uses corona crisis

With the outbreak of the Corona crisis, the situation has also changed and worsened massively for the workers in Brazil. The trade unions have noticed a sharp decline in the recruitment of migrant workers from the North East at all three major orange juice producers. Companies justify this with the conditions imposed by the pandemic; for the migrant workers it means a lack of prospects. Various companies also use the situation to torpedo wage increases. They are exerting pressure for trade unions to include the text of a temporary government decree that allows for wage cuts and the suspension of employment contracts as general clause into collective agreements.

The trade unions do not see this as justified in any way. The sectors benefited enormously from the appreciation of the US dollar against the Brazilian currency Real and, according to reports in the Brazilian press, exports grew by 17% in the 2019/2020 harvest, with revenues rising by 4.5% to \$1.525 billion US\$. Oranges currently command one of the highest prices in the commodity rankings of raw materials. The state also promotes precarity. A law has been passed that allows



cultural workers' union CSAAWU, which is mainly organized in the Western Cape of South Africa, is part of the network strengthening the struggles on site and in the German retail trade. The new possibility of cooperation between South African and Brazilian agricultural workers and activists of the VidaViva network in Mozambique will enable South-South cooperation as well as international work along the entire supply chain up to the German food retail trade.

VidaViva

The TIE network VidaViva focuses on health issues to organize workers. Active members of the network report that work-related health risks are steadily increasing worldwide. Workers are told by companies that they should eat healthier and exercise better. The organization of work is being increasingly geared to efficiency, and the burdens continue to rise. In VidaViva, employees develop solidarity-based strategies to reduce stress and gain control over their daily work. However,

unlimited outsourcing, also for the orange industry. Some companies are already hiring temporary workers and plan to expand this in 2021. The migrant workers are not entitled to the benefits that permanent workers have earned, such as health insurance, food ration cards or profit sharing. Moreover, the wages are even lower.

Demands of the workers

Due to the aggravation of the Corona crisis, workers are now demanding special measures. "A crisis committee should be formed in the companies to regulate good working conditions and health protection. Trade unions must be part of this", explains one worker. In the case of the employment of migrant workers from the North east of Brazil, the contract should be signed at the place of origin to guarantee safety. Accommodation must also provide more space to socially distance. In addition, there must be twice as many buses to take everyone to work. The workplaces, tools and buses must be disinfected daily. Furthermore, the workers are demanding that collective agreements be negotiated as a condition for importing juice into Europe.

ExChains Wine

South African Agricultural Workers join the TIE network

At the international TIE conference in Frankfurt, the South African agricultural workers' union CSAAWU (Commercial Stevedoring Agricultural & Allied Workers Union) joined TIE. After a successful campaign in Sweden, CSAAWU was looking for ways to expand its international struggle about the most basic living conditions and workers' rights to the German retail sector since this is the second biggest importer of South African wines worldwide. Since TIE has many years of experience together with our German colleagues in the food retail in the ExChains orange juice network, CSAAWU's representatives and TIE decided to join their forces to wage their struggles together.

CSAAWU, founded in 2006, is one of the few trade unions in South Africa that actively organises agricultural workers. It's a union for all types of agricultural workers including seasonal workers, migrant farm workers and farm-based workers. Most of its members are organised on wine and fruit farms, but also in wineries and other industries. Rural workers often lack the most basic living conditions which is why



we do not just want to make workplaces healthier, but organize trade union resistance against ever new impositions on our lives. Since 2003, we have therefore developed various tools for educational work, self-research, risk analysis, worker-oriented benchmarking etc. in order to develop strategies in the workplace. In Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Colombia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Turkey and Germany, over 100 trade unions from various sectors are active in VidaViva.

Rail sans Frontière

Employees and trade union activists from Morocco, Senegal, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, France and Spain have come together to form the network *Rail Without Borders*. Meanwhile, contacts also exist in other regions, e.g. to North and South America. The network, founded in 2010 in Casablanca, supports and coordinates the struggle against rail privatization and for public services for all. The activists exchange information on the situations in their countries and support each other in labour disputes against repression, which is often associated with privatization. Their aim is for public transport companies to remain in or be returned to public ownership in order to safeguard workers' rights and to ensure that all people have reliable access to transportation.

CSAAWU has a broad approach on union work and fights for housing, clean drinking water and toilets, transportation, higher wages, freedom of association as well as health and safety issues. On a national scale CSAAWU is part of South Africa's second biggest trade union federation SAFTU which constituted itself as an independent trade union movement in 2017.

Fight against racism and inequality

In addition to workers rights and living conditions CSAWU's fight is a fight against the most unequal distribution of wealth within a society worldwide and against the continued racist power structures even over 20 years after the official end of apartheid. Thus, 87% of the country is still privately owned by white farmers. Since the beginning of the Corona pandemic, the situation for workers and the poorest social classes has drastically worsened. 18,000 workers in the wine industry have lost their jobs so far.

During the TIE conference there was a lively exchange of experiences and methods, such as health mappings and photo exhibitions (Vivencias), and further steps were decided upon. Currently, CSAAWU is part of the discussion on the Corona crisis and related actions. A first visit to South Africa with delegates from ver.di, VidaViva Brazil & Mozambique is planned – if possible – for the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021. Here, the cooperation is to be deepened and joint strategies on the struggles along the supply chain are to be developed. Since Brazilian and South African companies make use of hazardous pesticides in agriculture affected workers will work on joint counterstrategies. The labour migration from Mozambique to South Africa and the associated intensified exploitation is another point of intersection. The next and decisive step will be the direct exchange of South African workers and their German retail colleagues in South Africa. This is planned as soon as the corona situation allows it without health risks.

VidaViva

Counter inequality through digitization in Brazil

At VidaViva Brazil, too, the corona pandemic dominates the work. Trade union action is even more difficult at this time, as it is more complicated to hold meetings while keeping the risk of infection low. To be able to deal with collective problems at all, conference calls have become commonplace. One finding of the exchange is that the situation of the workers is completely ignored in the discussion about Corona. Therefore, the network decided to produce a series of videos in which workers themselves talk about the effects of the crisis on their lives, their health and their work. The aim is to create space for



New forms of movement building

Almost everywhere trade unions and workers' initiatives face major challenges. Precarization, global production networks and new forms of work organization have profoundly changed the field of wage labor. Workers also formulate new needs and requirements for the unions, who find hardly any answers. Networks like ours are also confronted with these new questions. Together with other initiatives, grassroots groups and trade union activists, we are looking for ways out of the crisis of the trade union movement and for answers to the challenges we are facing as a result of the current social upheavals. So, in a joint initiative groups of precarious workers from many countries in Europe are looking for new ways of trade union organization which can tackle these issues. In addition, we are trying to establish a common practice locally in the *Lab of precarious workers (PrekärLab)* in the Frankfurt area in Germany with activists in the fields of unemployment organisation, social services, retail and others in precarious areas.

a deeper reflection on how the current upheavals are changing industrial relations. The videos will be shared in social media.

An example from the reports is the upheaval in the education sector. Thousands of children have no face-to-face teaching due to the pandemic. The Ministry of Education has decided that teaching will be digital. The measure greatly increases inequalities, as thousands of students do not even have access to the Internet. Teachers are also overwhelmed because they have to work from home and learn to use new technologies. According to the VidaViva network, this process is particularly dangerous because the pandemic will enable the Bolsonaro government to push ahead with a campaign already planned to introduce distance learning. In addition, the public education system is being dismantled and privatisation is being encouraged. Home office is also being expanded in a wide range of areas. This is already leading to an increase in mental illness due to the dissolution of work boundaries.

Fighting the oppressive responses to the Corona crisis in Colombia

In Colombia, there is currently a lot of pressure on the government from companies to lift the strict curfew. Particularly on the Caribbean coast, where the death toll is rising and the health system is overburdened, this demand seems not only out of the question but also inhuman. In some cases, trade unions themselves carry out tests in factories in order to isolate and treat sick people, while the companies ignore the health risks and even worsen working conditions. In Colombia there is a bonus payment every six months amounting to half a month's salary for all workers. This bonus is to be abolished. So here, as in other countries, the workers are not only affected by the pandemic itself, they are also threatened with greater impoverishment. In the universities the normal operation shall start again in August, while there shall be no upgrading of the health system. The hospitals are overcrowded and partly collapsed, meanwhile football fields are used as infirmaries. But the pressure to act according to economic interests is enormous.

Mobilization for citizens' rights and health

Since this situation is unacceptable, resistance is formed mostly through individual actions. One trade union from the network has organised demonstrations despite the current ban on assembly. Activists were exposed to massive police repression and many comrades were arrested. Repression makes the struggle more difficult but does not prevent it. Furthermore, the network VidaViva Colombia has produced a series of video interviews. They are to be used to mobilize workers and to counter the pl-





Grassroots unions in Europe and worldwide

Since 2003, grassroots unions and organizations from Spain, Greece, Switzerland, France, Germany, Poland and Belgium have been working together in the "Réseau Européen des Syndicats Alternatifs et de Base". The impositions of capital operating across borders are being countered by union activists in the network. The network fights for the preservation of public goods and services for all, for employment rights, for equal distribution of social wealth, for social transformation rather than domination of global corporations and financial markets.

The participating unions and organizations are committed to the principles of independence, self-organization and grass-roots orientation and deliberately question the current social and economic capitalist system. Beyond the borders of Europe, grassroots unions also work together in the International Labor Network of Solidarity and Struggles (ILNSS), see also www.laboursolidarity.org.

anned attacks. As in other parts of the TIE network, the videos tell of the lives, health and work of those affected and the changes in the situation during the Corona crisis.

Rail sans Frontière

New hope for the lifeline Dakar – Bamako

Railway workers in Senegal and Mali, together with the unions and the user and citizens' initiatives of the Cocodirail, continue to try to put pressure on the governments of both countries with road blockades, hunger strikes and protest marches. No wages have been paid to the workers for ten months and there is no money to restore the road. Now necessary loans are to be obtained from the World Bank for this lifeline. By the end of the year there could be a billion-dollar loan for the necessary investments along the route. Everyone hopes that it will work but is sceptical until the work begins. The 1200 km long railway line from Dakar to Bamako has been shut down since 2018. The private operating companies had always postponed necessary infrastructure work. Since the states have regained ownership, they have been looking for funds for the investments.

Local activists are getting both financial and political support by the network rail without borders, especially by the CGT and Solidaires from France. Mahamane Thienta, who has been working for 37 years for the Dakar-Bamako-Express, is one of the founders of the network. He was invited to France in May by the CGT and the network and reported on the current situation. Next year, in April 2021, the colleagues want to report on the reopening of the Dakar-Niger-Express at an international trade union meeting in Dijon. That is their great hope.

Further waves of protest in France

Slowly everyday life in France is somehow getting back to 'normal' despite Corona. Two issues, public services and racism, remain a top priority for citizens and trade union activists, however. There is great concern about the future of public services, especially the health care system. For many citizens, it is not acceptable that working conditions in hospitals continue as before the pandemic. The Corona virus has not changed the need to improve working conditions and funding in public hospitals. Therefore, many workers and activists are taking to the streets and demanding a radical rethink. The common theme among social movement activists—from Attac to the Yellow Vests—is that health care should not be driven by capitalist profitability. Locally and nationwide, there are weekly protest actions in front of the hospitals. The pandemic has exposed the need of an effective social benefits system. On June 16, there was a nationwide call for action in all major French cities and tens of thousands of people came.

Also, the brutal murder of George Floyd and the general situation of police violence in the USA, especially among communities of colour, has sparked similar actions in France. Throughout France there have been large demonstrations against everyday violence of the police and authorities. These have been especially large in

Daimler coordination/ Auto

The Daimler coordination is an open network of union activists, which supports a regular exchange of information between left, democratically operating groups and activists from Daimler plants in Germany. We conceive ourselves as rank-and-file-oriented. Our aim is to look beyond our own work situation by adopting an internationalist perspective. We want to ban narrow thinking in terms of competitiveness, and we want to strengthen solidarity in Germany and beyond.

the suburbs where migrants live. This and the brutal action of the police brigades against the yellow vests before the crisis, provoked a broad impression of „Enough is Enough”.

New forms of movement buildings

From international solidarity live to the search for new digital connections

At the beginning of February, a successful awareness campaign took place in Frankfurt at Zara in and in front of the branch in the pedestrian zone. Some of the international colleagues from India and Sri Lanka, trade unionists from South Africa, Zara works council members and activists from *PrekärLab* jointly drew attention to the unhealthy and stressful working conditions along the value chain of the clothing trade. They approached customers and employees in all departments to discuss the issue. The reactions ranged from curiosity and disinterest to great approval and enthusiasm. The Management was less enthusiastic about the lively exchange between workers from different countries and consumers, who rarely communicate with each other so directly. These encounters – getting to know each other and identifying similar problems in everyday working life, international solidarity, and joint struggles – are the strength of such actions and therefore less welcome by employers. Outside the store, consumers in the pedestrian zone were informed by large cardboard blocks and conversations. “We were able to show that we are a community and act in solidarity”, the participants agreed.

Documentation and discussion of the Corona crisis

Following this inspiring and empowering joint action at the beginning of February, the implementation of further plans for local and international work was put on hold due to measures to contain the corona virus. An exchange between activists about the effect and newly emerging conflicts of corona measures in their lives led to a project of making short videos. The results can be followed up on the blog <https://corona-at-work.de>. The videos give precariously living people and activists the opportunity to make their experiences public. This is because the reporting by official media is more about the economy as a whole and the forms in which the virus spreads than about the concrete effects on individuals and groups. On paper, for example, it sounds positive if unemployment benefits are now to be paid out when there is an acute need due to the crisis without the normal complicated and time-consuming requirements. But what does the new practice really look like on the ground? This is what two colleagues who work in unemployment counselling reveal in their brief statements. In short: there are single simplifications, but they apply by no means across the board and, in case of doubt, must also be enforced against resistance of the authorities. If we can meet again in a larger group, we want to invite all persons and groups to a common discussion about the experiences and to potential common struggles.

