

An urgent appeal from Polish miners: Don't shoot at workers

Bogusław Zietek, "August 80" free trade union,

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Don't shoot at workers!

Don't use state institutions against protesters!

On 12 February the courts ruled illegal the strike by several thousand miners at Jastrzebie Colliery Company (Jastrzebie Spółka Weglowa, JSW) in southern Poland. On the same day, a demonstration of miners' wives and children marched through the town supporting their loved ones in struggle.

The authorities will stop at nothing to break this strike, which has already gone on for 16 days. Special police detachments sent against the miners have tried to crush the protest with unheard-of brutality, using anti-riot weapons firing 37mm anti-riot rubber bullets, water cannon and tear gas without any good reason.

More than 20 miners have been wounded, some of them seriously. At the same time prosecutors have started charges against the protest organisers, threatening them with financial consequences bound up with "losses" the company suffers affected by the strike. Among those charged are the trade unionist Krzysztof Labadz, one of the leaders of the strike at "Budryk" mine which lasted 46 days seven years ago.

The striking miners are demanding the sacking of the company managing director, Jarosław Zagorski, whose management has brought to company to the very brink. Even though the government holds more than half the shares, it will not give

way. The miners and their families are determined. They are defending their jobs but also the right to protest of all Polish working people.

We call on trades unions and social organisations across Europe to support our struggle and to send us letters of support. Only international solidarity, as with Greece, can force back the diktats of the neo-liberals who rule us. Only together can we face up to their anti-social offensive in Europe.

Boguslaw Zietek,

President of the Free Trade Union "August 80" (WZZ "Sierpen 80").

Send solidarity messages to: darekzal74@gmail.com