

World Federation of Trade Unions: What it is and what it wants
Ideological and political issues of the International Trade Union Movement
16 Speeches - by the General Secretary, George Mavrikos

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Introduction

In August 2012, we organized at the Central Offices of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Athens, a high-level course of trade union education with the participation of 15 trade union leaders from South Africa.

During their stay in Athens, the comrades realized in their own eyes the great progress of the WFTU, its new course and its reconstruction as a modern, class-oriented and internationalist-antiimperialist Trade Union Organization.

When the comrades returned back to South Africa, carrying the materials and the documents of the course in Athens, we decided to continue the courses in regional and sectoral level.

For the preparatory work of these courses we many times discussed and utilized at the Regional Office of the WFTU for the English-speaking Africa, the speeches

of the General Secretary of the WFTU published in the WFTU website.

This is how we ended up with the book that you hold in your hands: we started gathering speeches of the General Secretary to utilize for our seminars and trade union education. After a while we decided to do this in a more methodical way, with better preparatory work since the needs for trade union education are continuously growing.

This is the basic reason why we felt we need to print this publication containing 16 speeches of comrade George Mavrikos.

We apologize for any mistakes or errors to the speeches since we included them as they were published at the WFTU website.

As the Regional Office of the WFTU, we believe that we selected speeches which are contemporary, valuable and will assist the trade unionists to gain knowledge enhancing their class consciousness and their militant characteristics.

These are speeches written with a plethora of simple examples facilitating the better understanding of the arguments and the meanings.

Our era is an era of ideological battles within the internal of the trade union movement and we strongly believe that these speeches can equip and further build the militants dedicated to the class-oriented trade union movement struggling for the betterment of the lives of

the workers and aiming to the abolition of the capitalist exploitation.

The selected speeches also depict the contemporary issues regarding the strategy and the tactics for the working class, the values and the priorities of the labour movement, its historic experience and the lessons that we must make use of for the present and the future.

Each speech can be used as a separate trade union seminar.

The selected speeches as you will see have been delivered in various countries and in a long period of time which is another element that shows the internationalist character of the WFTU. The internationalism and the rich action are basic characteristics of the new upwards course that the WFTU has started at the 15th World Trade Union Congress held in La Havana, Cuba in 2005.

The photos of this book have been taken from the WFTU Website.

*Lulamile Sotaka,
Head of the Regional Office of the WFTU
for the English-Speaking Africa
October 2013*

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The WFTU and our Youth

The speech was delivered on May 2nd, 2005 in La Havana, Cuba to 250 students from all Latin American Countries, Africa, the Caribbean and Central America on the occasion of the visit of George Mavrikos to the “Lázaro Peña School”. Coordinator of the meeting was Ramon Cardona, Regional Secretary of the WFTU in Latin American and the Caribbean. During this period G. Mavrikos was Vice-President of the WFTU and Coordinator of its European Office.

“The class trade union movement must always pay great attention to the development of young trade unionists able to lead the working class to victory. The renewal of cadres is necessary so that older and more experienced trade unionists can work with young and enthusiastic fighters.

The **first key** element a young trade unionist should have is a good knowledge of the problems of his workplace, a good knowledge of the problems of his sector and the overall problems of workers in his homeland. If he doesn't know their problems well it will be difficult for his colleagues to trust him. The working people are interested in their wages, their pensions, the education of their children and expects the trade unionist to know about all these matters and is able to offer real solutions to them. The knowledge of these problems and their changing nature, and the willingness to be actively involved in solving them is the key characteristic for the militant trade unionist. Unlike us, the bureaucratic and reformist unions create trade unionists who have never worked in the sector in their lives. They don't know how the worker and his family live, they

don't know his worries and problems. Such a trade unionist can not feel the anxieties and the needs of the ordinary people. He pretends. He will tell lies to the workers and he will only be interested in money and his career.

The **second characteristic** of a militant trade unionist should be his faith in the working class, and its role and mission to be the leading class that can unite all the popular layers and lead to the elimination of exploitation of man by man. Over the past 150 years there has been much discussion and thousands of books were written in every country on the role of social classes.

Today new theories are continually claiming that a social class analysis of society is no longer valid and thus trade unions are not needed, that the working class doesn't need any political leadership and that each individual should only fight for their own narrow self-interest. All these theories are answered by Marx and Engels.

Today in the 21st century it is certain that the working class is not the same as the working class of Marx's time. Today's working class is more educated and closer to the heart of the production

process. It is more familiar with the use of new technology. It has a high cultural level. These are all new elements that make it more effective in its struggles.

At the same time the working class of the 21st century shares a basic element with the working class of all times: exploitation. Off the back of workers' efforts big capital enriches itself. The super-value produced by the working class is greater than in previous generations, making the theft against it even more stark. So the need for trade union struggles to be enriched with political and economic theory is even greater.

The class oriented trade union movement needs trade unionists able to understand the leading role of our class. To have the ability to analyze the current trends, to draw conclusions and compose solutions. To defend the working class and its role, its ability to unite the poor peasantry, the progressive intelligentsia, the youth and women in common goals for the overthrow of capitalism and the capitalist state.

For all these reasons, the trade unionist has to study, to develop his ideological level, to obtain

the Marxist Theory for the history and the role of the social classes.

A **third requirement** of the militant trade unionist is a knowledge of history and an understanding of the values, traditions and culture of the labor movement. Without the knowledge of yesterday, without the experience of past successes and mistakes, the course in the present and future is difficult.

In each country the labor movement has its own history with struggles and sacrifices - efforts and results. The knowledge of that history teaches the principles of solidarity, collective action, responsibility, integrity, pride, dignity, etc. And a labour fighter has to put "WE" above "I". Only then will they be ready to give their all for the society and for social progress. Today when the consumerist Western lifestyle influences youth with individualism, with thirst for money, with distrust of other people, with lies about the history of humanity, while the media distorts history and writes lies, our principles and morals have considerable relevance and superiority. A trade unionist who cares about himself is dangerous for the working class. A trade

unionist who cares for his colleagues is useful in many ways.

The **fourth element** that I personally emphasise is internationalism and international solidarity. The trade unionist needs first and foremost to fight inside their own country. To develop struggles in their own country. At the same time they must pay close attention to developments around the world. To be informed, to have contact with the international trade union and political movement. To feel the pain and suffering of workers in each country. To feel the difficulties of the guerrilla fighting in the mountains of Colombia, to be able to feel for the worker in the shipyards of Japan, the woman fired from her job and the young man who is unemployed. But mainly he must be able to teach his colleagues and the entire working class to practice internationalist solidarity in every way. The class-oriented trade union movement has much to be proud of in that part of history. The struggles of W.F.T.U. on the side of the people of Korea against the imperialist intervention, the protests in support of the people of Vietnam against the North-Americans, on the side of the common people against dictatorships in Chile,

Spain, Turkey, Portugal, Greece, etc., along with the armed movements in Cuba, Nicaragua, Sahara, El Salvador, Nepal, etc. Our position against wars in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia. Our firm stand on the side of the Arab People in their struggle against Israel and for the justification of the Palestinian struggle. The solid position against racism and apartheid, in South Africa and other places of the world, is a great lesson for the younger generations.

Also, the solidarity and coordination between sectors and trade unions of different countries that organize to resist the attacks of the anti-labor monopolies and multinationals. The dominant element of proletarian internationalism is now an uncompromising attitude towards the imperialists, against capital and the new globalised order of things. The struggle for peace and friendship among peoples and the right of every people to freely determine their own government.

Today there is also **corruption**, selling out of labor struggles, labor aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy which are diseases of reformism. There is a vital need to expose and fight against corruption

and especially the causes that give rise to these phenomena. Our fighters, the revolutionary trade unionists have the obligation to lead by example, with their characteristics of honesty and fairness. To prove daily that the capitalists can not buy us. That principles, history and ideas, cannot be bought nor sold. Wherever we see evidence of corruption we have the duty to expose and condemn corrupt trade union officials.

The global trade union movement has thousands of examples of fighters who gave their lives for the interests of the working class and on the other hand, it has thousands of examples of compromised trade unionists who sold out the workers struggle to pursue wealth and became instruments of the bourgeoisie and corporate interests. The future belongs to the movement that will bring out uncompromised, steady and honest fighters.”

2

60 years since the Anti-fascist Victory

The speech was delivered in La Havana, Cuba on December, 4th 2005 in a meeting that took place a day before the opening of the 15th World Trade Union Congress. Dozens of trade unionists from all Continents attended it and the text of the speech was circulated to all the participants of the Congress. In the 15th Congress of the WFTU there were 870 delegates from 87 countries present.

“One of the biggest historical events of the 20th century, the Second World War (1939-1945), was sealed with the popular victory against the fascist imperialist bloc of Germany – Japan – Italy and their allies.

The Second World War lasted for 2,194 days and spread over an area of 22 million square kilometers. More than 110 million people joined the ranks of the regular armies. The fatalities during the war, both military and non-military, reached 50 million people, most of whom were workers and poor peasants.

The WFTU wishes to honor all those who sacrificed their lives, who became invalids or who in any way struggled against the invaders, in the battlefields, in the cities, on the mountains, on the high seas and in the air, in illegal work. All the anonymous fighters in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans, the Mediterranean. They all had their share in bringing about the victorious outcome.

We wish to lay a wreath of honor to those who perished from starvation, to the millions of

victims in the infamous concentration camps, in any place of horror, in which the exploitation of man by man reached an apogee with the total disregard of human life.

In this grand popular victory the contribution of the Soviet Union was decisive and instrumental. The sacrifices of its people, of the Soviet state and of its armed forces, the Red Army, have been recorded as an eternal monumental epic.

The WFTU honors the contribution of the national liberation movements in the occupied capitalist countries, in cities and villages. It honors the heroic partisans and the “International Brigades”, the fighters in the occupier countries, the movements in the Latin American countries that amassed help for the Soviet Union.

The national liberation movements pinned down hundreds of enemy divisions. They inflicted significant destruction upon the occupying armies with their heroic struggle, which was aimed simultaneously against both the governments of the “Axis” and their politico-military institutions in each occupied country.

In a series of countries in Asia and in Africa,

India, Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Morocco etc, which were under the colonial rule of Britain, France and Belgium, the antifascist struggle aimed at the same time towards the elimination of colonialism.

The popular movements in Yugoslavia, in Greece, in Italy were among the most massive in the occupied European countries. The national liberation movement in Albania and the antifascist movement in Bulgaria were also very important in the Balkans.

In all of these movements the working class played the leading and decisive role.

The Second World War, in a similar vein as the First (1914-1918), was born in the womb of the capitalist system, as a result of the greater sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions for the re-division of the world. It is for this reason that it was not carried out exclusively as a struggle between the two opposing sociopolitical systems, socialism and capitalism, although the common enemy and target of all capitalist powers was the Soviet Union.

The crisis of 1929-1933 accelerated the rearrangements in the balance of forces, leading to the further militarization of the economies of the

most powerful capitalist states.

The “national socialist” parties, despite the fact that they were parties serving the interests of the monopolies, with deep anticommunist – antipopular, openly terroristic and racist policies, managed, on the basis of a series of factors, to trap in their ranks sections of the working class and of the petit bourgeois strata, thus achieving a broad popular base.

A basic factor which contributed to this was the socioeconomic condition of the workers. The sudden and extensive pauperization, as a result of both the economic crisis and the crisis in the administrative capacities of the conservative parties, created the conditions for a more reactionary, chauvinistic turn of the popular forces and of the youth, to a significant extent due to the policies of the social democratic parties themselves. The armies of the unemployed and the famished laid their hopes on the “national socialist” parties.

This war was one of the biggest crimes of imperialism against humanity during the 20th century.

The Soviet Union shouldered the main burden

of the struggle.

As a whole, on the Eastern Front, 607 German divisions were either destroyed or captured, a fact which means that the Nazis sustained there four times as many casualties as they did on all other fronts combined (North Africa, Western Europe, Italy).

The human sacrifices of the Soviet Union exceeded 30 million, including the invalids and the injured. 20 million Soviets lost their lives, including the cream of the cream of the youth who sacrificed what was most valuable to them for the salvation of the socialist motherland. Comparatively, the fatalities for Britain reached 375,000, while those for the USA 405,000.

The destruction which the Soviet Union sustained was enormous: 1,710 cities were converted to rubble, 70,000 villages and small towns were burned to the ground. 32,000 industrial enterprises and 65,000 kilometers of railway lines were totally or partially destroyed. 98,000 kolkhozes, 5,000 sovkhoses and Machine Tractor Stations, as well as thousands of hospitals, schools, institutions of higher learning and libraries, were plundered.

Following the victory of the counterrevolution in the socialist countries (1989-1991), a concerted international effort for the revision of the history of the Second World War was inaugurated, forming part of a more general and long-lasting plan for an ideological offensive.

This effort attempts to reduce or erase the contribution of the Left movement among the peoples of the whole world. It aims to poison the consciousness of the younger generations and to make them indifferent and passive on a mass scale to today's crimes of the imperialist world order. It represents, basically, an international ideological and political scheme of the forces of capital.

The "centers" of "historical revisionism" consciously hide the fact that the unjust wars spring out of the veins of the capitalist system.

At the same time they keep silent about the fact that the Soviet Union made significant and long-term efforts to avert the onset of the war. That it followed with consistency a policy of peace, because only peace could serve its interests for constructing a socialist society. Having abolished exploitation of man by man, it had also eliminated

the incentive for any participation in the division and re-division of the world. The Soviet Union was forced to conduct a war that imperialism caused and that she herself did not wish.

The new facts that are coming to light, corroborated by bourgeois historians as well, prove that the assertion of the “historical revisionists” and of the opportunists that the Soviet people acted during the war under the duress of a centralized and authoritarian political system is an assertion that constitutes a class-based pro-imperialist propaganda.

An explosion of personal initiative, such as the one exhibited by the large majority of the Soviet people during the war, a dedication to the goal and a conscious discipline of such magnitude cannot exist under conditions of terror against the people. Moreover, military operations of such depth and scale as those that were carried out by the Red Army would be impossible to conduct without the ability for autonomy in action and free choice of the political and military leadership in each locality.

No falsification can erase the heroic feats of Stalingrad, of Leningrad, of Moscow, of Kursk, of

Sevastopol, of all the heroine cities.

Perhaps the biggest lie written by the imperialists today is that the outcome of the World War II was supposedly judged by the “D-Day.” This is a big lie! The Normandy invasion took place in June 1944. The war was then almost over.

The people know that the most heroic and crucial battles were those at Stalingrad which began in August 1942 and ended in February 1943. In the battles of Stalingrad 1.5 million people were killed, 5 000 tanks were destroyed and 3,669 military aircraft were shot down. In Stalingrad the Nazi’s defeat was overwhelming. Marshal Zhukov wrote in his memories that “in the land of Stalingrad the unit measure was the meter not the kilometer”.

The Soviet Union was requesting since 1942 from the West to confront the Germans. The West and the USA made promised but never opened the front with the hope tha the Nazis’ would beat the Soviet Army and would overthrow the Soviet Union. With long delay in June 1944 they opened the front in Normandy when they realized that with its victories the Red Army was about to reach Berlin. This is the real historical truth and all these fake tv series

manufactured by USA as well as movies promoting the US propaganda will never be accepted by the working class.

It is the duty of the workers and of every progressive scientist who respects the truth, of each and every working person, to resolutely oppose: the falsification of history, the attempt to “de-ideologize” historiography that is being orchestrated by the imperialist centers, the malicious and sycophantic identification of communism with fascism, of Stalin with Hitler, despite the fact that they are well aware of the real facts.

Sixty years after the end of the Second World War, WFTU calls upon the International Working Class to ponder and to look in depth into the lessons of history. The conclusion that should be reached is that capitalist barbarity cannot represent the dream and the future for the working people. Through their struggles, the people can abolish exploitation of man by man. They can raise obstacles to imperialist wars.

The WFTU will continue its efforts for providing information, particularly to the younger workers, the younger generation, so that it can help its struggle

to obtain a solid grounding.

From the 15th World Trade Union Congress we pledge the continuation of our unwavering struggle for Peace, International Solidarity, Friendship among Peoples. For bringing to the forefront the leading role of the Working Class for progress and democracy.

**NEVER AGAIN FASCISM – NEVER AGAIN
WAR!”**



Berlin, Brussels | September 13, 2007

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The WFTU and the working women

The speech was delivered on the occasion of the International Conference for the Working Women organized by the World Federation of Trade Unions in the European Parliament in Belgium, Brussels on September 13th, 2007 with the participation of 95 female trade unionists from 62 countries.

“Dear Friends and Comrades,

On behalf of the Secretariat of the WFTU, I would like to welcome you to the international conference of working women which we are organizing here in the European Parliament in Brussels. We welcome you all and reserve special greetings to the large number of representatives of unions who are friends of the WFTU. We appreciate the presence of all friendly organizations.

We feel great joy and satisfaction that this initiative has been taken up with such enthusiasm by all the militant unions in the world. Your mass participation in the event confirms this. Participation would have been even higher if it were not for the financial burden associated with plane tickets.

Today there are 95 women trade unionists in attendance from 62 countries, representing in total 80 trade unions. We have also received messages of support from many trade union organizations that could not be with us today for objective reasons.

Following its 15th congress, the WFTU has undergone a radical renewal. This renewal can be seen in our theses, in our strategy and tactics, in our activity. Even if less than 2 years have passed

since the last congress in Havana, some of the initiatives of the new leadership of the WFTU should be underlined.

1. The international trade union conference on the “Social Phenomenon of Economic Migration in the 21st century” which was also held here in Brussels, on the 29th of May 2006, with participation of many academics and dozens of trade union organizations from around the globe.

2. The two councils of the “Friends of the WFTU” that have been held in Geneva, Switzerland (in 2006 and 2007), with the participation of trade union organizations friendly to the WFTU.

3. The European trade union conference on the topic: “The Truth about Darfur” with representatives from 24 European countries.

4. The Solidarity Conference with the people of Lebanon, held on the 10th of September 2006, in Athens, which condemned the imperialist policy of Israel and the USA.

5. The defence of Cuba and Venezuela in the ILO against slanderous attacks.

6. The joint organization with the ACFTU, OATUU and ICATU of the International Trade Union

Forum of Beijing.

7. Our energetic participation in international organizations, in the UN in New York, in UNESCO in Paris, in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN in Rome, in the ILO in Geneva, etc.

And of course, besides these activities, special attention has been paid to sectoral congresses which have been organized and will be organized in the construction sector, in Transport, Energy, Public sector workers, agricultural production, Metalworkers, Tourism, etc.

The activity which has been carried out by the WFTU during the last 2 years has had concrete results. In the last 20 months, 32 trade union organizations, have submitted applications to join the WFTU. Moreover the prestige, the influence and the presence of the WFTU are consistently on the rise. Everyone can see that it is growing stronger in all 5 continents. Our friends feel satisfaction- our opponents are concerned.

Within the framework of the new path being forged by the WFTU, we are here today to discuss a very important issue - the problems and the position of working women in the modern world. I believe

that the holding of such an international conference on this issue comes at a critical time in the struggles of the international working class.

For us in the WFTU, in the class oriented trade union movement, the role of the working woman is crucial. The role of working women in the production process, in the trade unions, in the political struggle can provide additional strength to the popular struggles now and in the future.

The class oriented trade union movement has always had a firm position and fought for equal rights for working women, for equality at work and in every aspect of life. It struggled to stop the enslavement and trading of women, for the right of women to vote, for their right to participate in trade unions, in political parties, in government and state positions, for the participation of women in social and cultural activities.

Many of these rights were realized in the socialist countries, where the working woman achieved the status she was entitled to.

Unfortunately, following the counterrevolutionary developments in the period 1990-91, the international correlation of forces

changed to the detriment of the progressive forces. The USA and its allies enforced a new imperialist world order and in this way many of the rights and gains of women and men were taken away.

Today in all capitalist countries, the working woman is the object of harsh exploitation. She works mainly in part-time, uninsured, and temporary jobs. She is being paid less than what men are paid. She has a smaller pension. She is the first to become unemployed. In many countries violence against women is on the rise, prostitution is spreading, economic migration is separating many mothers from their children, their husbands and deprives them of the right to education, to cultural activity, to free time. All these are consequences of the so-called globalization, consequences, that is, of the renewed and expanded aggression of the monopolies and transnationals against the peoples.

According to the European Union statistical data (Eurostat), two-thirds of the 800 million illiterate people globally today are women. Among the children that do not attend school, 3 out of 5 are girls. According to the same data, thirty one percent (31%) of working women in Europe are employed in

part-time positions.

The data also reveal that around one million people annually fall victim to sex trafficking, 900 thousand of whom are women and girls.

The conditions for women are extremely bad in all continents. In Africa, AIDS is spreading among the female population, in India around two thousand pregnancies are being prematurely terminated daily, because families wish to have only male offspring. Around ninety percent (90%) of the victims of the armed confrontations and wars are non-combatants, among them the large majority women and children.

The data and the numbers speak for themselves. They reveal the true picture of the so-called “female issue”.

Dear friends and fellow militants,

There are some who claim that the “female issue” is a problem that concerns the two genders, that it is a problem between women and men. This is a big lie. The same forces argue that the causes for the inferior position of women in today’s society are... biological and psychological!!!! This constitutes another big lie.

The “female issue” is a social phenomenon linked to the historical progression of human society. It includes a multitude of economic, political and cultural discriminations against women in all spheres of social, family and personal life.

It was Marx and Engels who first proved, in their works and in their analysis, that the fundamental cause for the unequal social position of women lay in the mode of production of the society. It lies in the system of exploitation, in the system of private property of the means of production.

The position of the woman in each historical epoch was modified according to the prevailing system.

In the primitive communal system, where there was no private property, the position of women was equivalent to that of men. Child-bearing even gave women a social precedence. It was the period of Matriarchy.

In the slave-owning system, even the women of the upper classes, the free women, had a secondary and decorative role in the household and in society.

In the feudal system, women were considered

to be the possession, the property of men. The male property owners had the right to abuse, to sell and to transfer through inheritance their spouses. At the same time, the women of the dispossessed classes, not only were enduring the same sufferings as their male brethren, but were also prey to the customary abuses of their feudal lords.

In the capitalist system, the mass entrance of women in the factories, in industrial work was, in essence, a progressive phenomenon. Productive labor constitutes the basis for female emancipation. However, despite the intense struggles and the significant gains of the popular movement, it became apparent that the equality of women could not be achieved under capitalism.

The socialist societies that were constructed during the 20th century laid the basis, through the socialization of the means of production, for the promotion of women's equality. Women attained full rights in employment, in maternity, in education, in housing, in sports, in health, in politics.

On the basis of what has been outlined above, it becomes apparent that when we speak of the "female issue" we speak of the additional

exploitation and the oppression that women endure from society as result of their gender (that is, a combination of societal and gender discrimination). These discriminations have mental, cultural and moral repercussions, since women are prevented from developing their abilities in full and from attaining full equality. These negative repercussions concern the women of the working class, of the poor peasantry, of the self-employed strata, while the women of the bourgeoisie find the means and the possibilities to solve these problems.

The solution and the way out is found in the common struggles of women and men against the social system which gives birth to the exploitation of men by men.

We have the duty to fight in political and trade union level for the small and bigger problems until the deliberation of the working class.

The attention and the interest of the WFTU for the issues of working women will continue and develop in the future. Following the successful completion of this International Conference:

-The conclusions of the Conference will be discussed in all trade unions that are members or

friends of the WFTU.

- Secretariats for Working Women will be formed in all trade unions, in all places of work. They will plan activities, they will coordinate struggles.

- The conclusions and the demands of this Conference will be sent to all International Organizations and governments.

- During 2008, Conferences of Working Women will be held in every continent.

- Women's Secretariats of the WFTU will be formed for each continent.

- The proceedings of this Conference will be published in book form and we urge every trade union to try and translate it in the language of its country.

Today and tomorrow we will discuss openly, democratically, vigorously. We will exchange experiences and enrich our understanding. We will report on what is happening in our respective countries. We will make proposals and set goals for our activity. We should prepare our counterattack, women and men together.

In the materials which you have been given there is a draft resolution which you should read

and up until tomorrow morning anyone who wishes to can propose amendments and make comments. We want to leave tomorrow afternoon with a clear message to take back to our countries and our unions, with a common axis for our future activities. Let us base our work on this resolution.

On behalf of the WFTU we welcome you and declare the conference open. We invite you to speak, to express yourselves freely, confident that this conference constitutes a positive step in the history of the peoples' movement.”



India, New Delhi, November 28, 2007

4

About Unity

The extract comes from the speech of the General Secretary delivered in New Delhi, India on November 28th, 2007 during the meeting of the members and friends of the WFTU in Asia and the Pacific.

“(…) The fact is that the subject of unity was and is a fundamental issue about class trade union movement from its birth until today. The working class in order to achieve its objectives needs to conquer first and foremost its own unity as a social class. The unity of working class, the unity among all parts of the same class is a condition in order to achieve after a while the coiling and the unity around it of the poor farmers, of the self-employed, of the progressive intellectuals and of the new generation. The unity that is pursued by the class movement ought to have class features. To unify a social class and its allies in the struggle against the class of capitalists. Always to take into consideration the correlation of power. **This is class unity.** A unity that is not occasional, not one day of great importance and the other day of less importance, not a unity of summits, not an end in itself. It will be a unity that can and will support the struggle of the workers for their direct problems and for their long term problems. For the present and the future.

So it is true that both WFTU and ITUC are talking about Unity. Do they want the same thing? WFTU f.e in Latin America promotes the unity

among all popular classes in order to defend the Cuban Revolution, to defend Venezuela and Bolivia and their efforts. At the same time, to the same continent ITUC promotes a unity around its main objectives which are the subversion of Cuban Revolution, the subversion of Hugo Chávez, the subversion of Evo Morales and through all these subversions to succeed the victory of capitalism. A simple example. USA President Barack Obama wants to unify all peoples to support the Imperialistic war that makes to Iraq and Afghanistan. While the International class Trade Union movement wants to unify peoples against wars and Imperialistic politics. Look at the efforts of Israel which wants to unify forces against the struggles of Palestinian People and is looking for allies all over the world while also the Palestinian People want all peoples to unify with them in their own objectives for the fair and heroic struggle that they do. So it is understandable that unity is not invisible, is never colorless and odorless. It has always a specified content. And the content has primary importance. As far as the question of the comrade is concerned about the possibility of the unification of the WFTU and ITUC,

the answer is no, this cannot happen because they are expressing two different worlds, two different ideological approaches, two different political visuals. Radical differences. We struggle for the elimination of the exploitation while they struggle for the makeup of capitalism. This shows everything. We are struggling for socialism, the leadership of ITUC are crusaders of capitalism.

Even if certain leaderships will decide suddenly to unify mechanistically, extortionate these two organizations very soon the life itself will dissolve this unification because it will be without principals, without ideological and political basis, it will be adventurism. It is not a coincidence that for two centuries exist and act in international and local level inside working class two main currents. WFTU express since 1945 the one current and ICFTU (now is called ITUC) express the other. And before 1945 equivalent organizations were existing. This is what historical experience says, this is what Marxist analysis teaches also to the contemporary capitalist world. Because today still there are two main social classes. On one side there is working class with its allies, poor farmers, self-employed,

progressive intellectuals and on the other side there is bourgeoisie and monopolies. So the question is with the peoples or with the monopolies will we construct unity?

As in all basic fronts so around unity exist and clash two lines inside trade unions. On one side there is the class current and on the other side there is the reformist current. Both currents talk and write lot of things about unity. It is absolutely right that both currents want unity. Their essential difference exists to what kind of unity and why they want unity. What they want to do with unity and with what purpose.

The class current wants unity in order to strengthen the fight of proletariat against monopolies, against multinationals and their political representatives. In order to accumulate quantitative and qualitative forces that will clash imperialism, will connect the fight and the struggles of the workers for direct problems with the radicalization of the fight and the elimination of the exploitation of human being by human being.

On the contrary the reformist current wants to join the workers to its fight for modernization

and support of capitalist system. To unify working class and its allies in the line of class cooperation and compromise with imperialists and system administrators. To join wage earners behind and down of the strategy of socialdemocracy. For this reason, their unity is in essence summit movements, is tactics of expediency, is dealing movements behind the back of workers and secretly under the table.

So the unity that is pursued and promoted by the reformist current is a “unity” dangerous for the real interests of workers and the trade union fighters ought to always illuminate the workers and put the critical question about unity with whom and with what purpose.

For the class-oriented trade union movement, for the international working class, for the WFTU, the unity of thw working class and the alliance with the other popular strata is a matter of strategic importance. For opportunism, for the trade union bureaucracy and for the leadership of the ITUC, unity is a tactical move, a manoeuvre for the support of the objectives of the capital.”



Katmandu, Nepal, 1 May 2010

5

Unity of Action Unity with whom and for what purpose

The extract comes from the speech delivered at the 2010 May Day Rally organized by CONEP in Kathmandu, Nepal where the General Secretary responds to a question referring to the issue of “unity”:

“(…) Now let’s discuss the question posed by the comrade about the position of WFTU for the unity of action and if WFTU can act with trade unions that belong to ITUC. The class trade union movement and therefore WFTU from the first day of its foundation was and is in support of the unity of all workers. Our objective is to join all workers regardless of color, religion, language and political position this is an objective of strategic importance. To join all workers in the base of the interests of the class that they belong to. To join all workers in an alliance with the landless and poor farmers and self-employed in an unity against capital and exploitation.

Based on these principals we give first our hand for common action and cooperation with every militant trade union either it is member to WFTU or not. Namely we pursue that always our common action will have a content that express and appeals to our objectives.

Take the example of International Action Day that WFTU had announced for the 7th of September 2010. It shows the importance that the class movement gives to UNITY OF ACTION. At

7th of September we call all trade unions, either they are members and friends of WFTU or they are members of ITUC, to struggle together with objective and central slogan «we workers must not pay for the capitalist crisis- all expenses for military equipment must reduce drastically». We want all trade unions in our side. To unify our action with a specific aim. With a specific content. We have achieve this in India. There all big organizations regardless of where they belong have announced Strike for the 7th of September answering to the calling of WFTU.

Another example: Last month, at June the WFTU announced three days of strike in all ports of the world against the merchant ships of Israel in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Namely we called all trade unions of the world in three-days of UNITY OF ACTION with specific content: anti imperialistic-international. And indeed in many ports acted and participated also trade unions that don't belong to WFTU. We didn't say to trade unions that belong to ITUC it is prohibited for you to join! If we said such a thing it will be a mistake.

A third example: At 1st of April 2009 again

WFTU had called over to five continents in two-days of action with central slogan “For workers rights against exploitation”. In 49 countries many activities were organized like demonstrations, strikes and protestations. They also took part trade unions that are not members of WFTU. This shows that our line coils people, that is dynamic, is realistic, is right.

On the opposite side, the ITUC many times has called trade unions to join the slogan either “for mutual respect of Palestinians and Israeli people” or “stop Israel the excessive use of violence against Palestinians and the Palestinians to stop the threats against Israel....”. Putting the victims and the perpetrators in the same position. With these “cunning” slogans, the ITUC support the policy of the Governments of Israel and at the same time pretends to support the Palestinians as well.

Whoever agrees with this kind of objectives, whoever supports this kind of content for the sake of common action is making a mistake. This is opportunism and retreat without principals.

Our Marxist Theory has taught us that when it comes to the issue of unity we have to consistently respond to the question: “unity with who and for

what purpose”.



Greece, Athens, October 2010

6

The Congresses and the leaderships of our Sectoral Organizations

The speech was delivered to the meeting held between the WFTU leadership and the leadership of its sectoral Organizations, the Trade Union Internationals (TUIs) in Athens, Greece on October 30th, 2010.

“Last year the same meeting was held for the first time and we had all agreed to meet us again to exchange views, thoughts, reviews, and to coordinate our actions on the current issues faced by the working class in key industries. This year is the second time we meet this way and this period has two characteristics that must be borne in mind. The first is the crisis of the capitalist system and the second is the preparation of the 16th World Trade Union Conference to be held April 6 to 10, 2011 in Athens.

A.The financial crisis - the branch organizations of the WFTU.

The economic crisis did not occur randomly or is the result of bad handling of some governments. The economic crisis is a crisis of the capitalist system, it is deep, will last and will bring negative effects on the working class in total. The exit from this crisis, whenever this might happen, will be sluggish, weak and temporary. The crisis will come back.

In circumstances of crisis, governments

neo-conservative or social- democrats are trying to load the burden on workers: unemployment, poverty, layoffs, black employment, privatization, commercialization of public services such as health, education, transport, social security etc.

All sectors of strategic importance are facing problems because of this policy of the capital. The capital tries to exploit the crisis to concentrate all production in the hands of few, to achieve the centralization of capital, while it gains from the crisis.

So in such a landscape, the role of TUI's is major. Their role is multiple. The key tasks should be:

- To analyze the crisis in their sector based on Marxist theory. To show workers in their sector the ideological, political and social characteristics of the crisis. To give an ideological weapon to employees. To insist on the motto "WE WILL NOT PAY THEIR CRISIS".

- To coordinate the forces and friends of the WFTU. To organize the sectoral struggles. To organize internationalist solidarity in practice. To help those in struggles in moral and material way. To embrace all workers, all specialties in their sector.

- To promote positions with perspective of exit from the crisis, in favor of workers at the expense of capital. To cultivate the perception that capitalism is rotten, cannot provide solutions to benefit the working class. To submit proposals for immediate solutions, immediate action, while stressing that the real solution is a world without capitalist exploitation.

In the sectors of strategic importance in the last 10 years serious internal upheavals have been made. Acquisitions are made, mergers, alliances, conflicts, intra-capitalist rivalries, regional rivalries, etc. The TUI's of the WFTU as class oriented tools and cadres should be familiar with their sector, to analyze the reality, to promptly inform their members.

There is a big and immediate need for a better action within multinationals. To coordinate our forces, to be present, to not let workers in multinationals isolated and alone to face the aggressiveness of large multinational employers.

- To promote, raise the industry to the positions of the WFTU. To highlight the history of the class oriented trade union movement and the history of WFTU. To use arguments and concrete examples

of who we are and why we fight.

- To bring new members to the family of WFTU. This is a core task of TUI's and too often this task is forgotten.

Some of our TUI's are working well under these specific objectives. Some others are still far behind their potential. We need all of us to move forward and have even better results. Without doubt we have made steps of progress over the past 5 years. But we need to move with quicker steps and to be bolder. We need to set up new TUI's in critical sectors of the manufacturing process.

B. In front of the 16th World Trade Union Congress

The Presidential Council of the WFTU has decided the 16th Congress to take place in the capital of Greece, in Athens, with an important history of workers struggles, to be open, democratic, class-based Congress of the international working class. So now we get all the necessary steps to achieve our goals. Thousands of suggestions have arrived at headquarters, hundreds of pages of proposals, of texts, of thoughts, etc. The success of the 16th Congress is a collective responsibility of us all.

The struggles that currently are being developed in France, Portugal, India, Germany, Brazil, South Africa, Greece, England, Pakistan, Palestine, and the struggles of the last five years should send their air and spirit in our Congress.

It is important for the class-oriented trade union movement, for us, for its cadres to have always clear in our heads what kind of Congresses we should do. For example last June the ITUC held its Congress in Vancouver, Canada. But it wasn't a labor Congress, it was a Congress of mechanisms, of bureaucrats, without democratic elections, with no parity, with decisions which were taken by 4-5 people long before the Congress. It is noteworthy, why they chose to hold their Congress in the more expensive city of the world and a city that is not recognized for its trade union struggles.

We, the current leadership of the WFTU along with all our members and friends we will organize a Labor Congress. A militant Congress. In our Congress the hearts of workers, of poor people, of homeless, landless, immigrants, young people and women will beat.

In the last five years the entire WFTU family

has organized major international, thematic, sectoral and regional conferences. We ask all our sectoral organizations to continue and persist their Congresses in the sectors to be useful ideological, organizational and trade union big events. To be open to discuss all the issues:

1) The TUI's of the WFTU needs open, democratic and class-oriented Congresses that will discuss with critical spirit the action of the past five years and the current problems under conditions of capitalist globalization. Their Congresses needs to adopt resolutions that will reflect the current priorities for the millions of members of the sector.

2) Their leadership needs to be elected under objective criteria such as:

- To be members of the sector and militant ones, men and women, of all ages, no matter of their color, race, etc.

- To represent big and alive trade union organizations, that is, unions with action.

- To be able to organize activities, to be class-oriented and experienced.

- To be democratic, uniting, with collective spirit, resistance and strength to criticism and

auto-criticism, to believe and to openly support the WFTU.

-All regions and continents to be taken in consideration.

These criteria will keep us away from subjectivity, from mistakes and bureaucracy. These criteria are a basic crucial tool for our work.

All the above are to be applied to 100% for the Regional Office Congresses and the World Trade Union Congress. We can do everything at practice because there is accumulated rich experience and militant disposition.

Immediate issues for the 16th Congress:

- The TUI's to register their representatives on time.

- The TUI's to send their financial support, EUR 5,000 on time

- To send a list of all members with full addresses (email etc) to send them directly from the headquarters all materials and publications of the WFTU.

- To organize debates in their sector for the 16th Congress, to send their Reports to be included in the materials of the Congress. To provide correct

and many reports in the Media about the Congress in Athens.

- To participate in the preparation of the documents and make suggestions for their branches.

- To send their proposals for the new leadership of the WFTU in time and make fearless and with comradely spirit criticism for the delays, the failures and mistakes.

- Those who have decided to take the floor in the Congress to be register as speakers in time. (135 speakers are estimated to speak).”



France, Strasbourg, 13 September 2011

7

Trade Unions, International Law and Imperialist Wars

The speech was delivered in the opening of the International Conference of the WFTU held in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on September 13th, 2011.

“The struggle against militarism and imperialist wars has always been an integral part of the struggle of the trade union movement; the criterion for the separation of coherent class-oriented forces from the reformists. The position that the imperialist war is a continuation of the imperialist policy by military means, that it is the other side of the policy of the capital that hits the conquests of working class, must be a fundamental basis in the leading of our actions. The experience of the First and Second World Wars is rich and useful.

Nowadays, the outbreak of the global economic crisis of capitalism leads to a sharpening of inter-imperialist rivalries, as each bourgeoisie is trying to emerge from the crisis and recover previous levels of profitability, not only at the expense of the workers they are exploiting but also at the expense of other capitalist competitors. An example of such rivalries are the various war scenarios and diplomatic maneuvers that imperialist centers are carrying out against the people of Palestine, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Sudan, Latin America, the battles for sources of oil and natural gas and their respective pipelines; but also the open, brutal imperialist intervention (Libya,

Iraq, Afghanistan). Their aim is to burnout capitalist competitors, cutting them off from sources of raw materials and markets, but also the destruction of labor and popular movements in these countries.

All this is the living reality of capitalism, which does not hesitate at anything to get out of its crisis. Without the pioneering and active intervention of the labor movement against these plans, without changing the correlation of forces in each country and globally, imperialism will continue to threaten the planet every moment with new rivers of blood, massacres even more brutal than the “limited” wars of nowadays; it will change the borders of the countries, it will divide countries to shape its “puppet” states.

20 years after the reactionary changes in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, life itself proved false, in a resounding way, the arguments of those who defended that these changes were “positive developments” that opened the door to a world of “peace and prosperity”.

The International law known by the people in the period of active presence and action of the socialist system in international affairs, no longer

exists. It has been trampled across the length and breadth of the planet by the imperialist boot. It has been fully substituted by the imperialist doctrine of “pre-emptive attack”, the “anti-terrorist” campaign. International intergovernmental organizations have been transformed into a ‘fig leaf’ for promoting the interests of the U.S., NATO and other imperialist forces on the one side and, on the other, into a field of controversies and temporary compromises between the major imperialist powers.

Military expenditure is continuously increasing. According to published data, 2008 was a new absolute record on war spending that reached worldwide nearly \$1.5 trillion! The increase in military spending over the last 10 years was 45%. The U.S., under the pretext of “fighting” terrorism have carried out large military invasions and occupations of countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and they are already planning new ruthless adventures against new countries and nations such as Iran or People’s Republic of Korea. NATO is expanding and keeps being adjusted and it is already being used in bloody, criminal plans against the peoples in numerous corners of the globe.

The EU for its part cannot under any circumstances constitute a peace prop for the people. As an alliance of capitalist states, through the Common Foreign and Security Policy, it constitutes the so-called 'European army' and opens its own round of imperialist interventions, in cooperation with NATO.

Within this environment of sharpened aggression of imperialism, the labor union movement and the peoples of the world have to be extremely careful with a series of voices that speak about the need for "new" international relations and international intergovernmental organizations, "global governance", about a "new architecture" of the international system that would supposedly prevent conflicts without harming the foundations of the capitalist system. Nice words, and beautiful speeches hide imperialist aggression. They hide that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, which means that the dominant element in the stage of imperialism is also economy.

For example, the ruling circles of Russia today, are consistently seeking a "new architecture" in Europe, where a role would be given to Russia and

its regional agreements. To achieve this goal they are trying to take advantage of the contradictions within the EU and NATO in terms of the competition for energy sources and other business plans.

Moscow is seeking to increase its role in European affairs, strengthening and deepening its ties with NATO, the EU or at least with some of the leading forces of these coalitions.

Today's Russia is a big capitalist country, having vast natural reserves, nuclear arsenal, infrastructure inherited from the Soviet Union and skilled manpower. And it is trying to upgrade in the international imperialist system.

It must be clear for the side of the working class: inter-imperialist rivalries will become more exacerbated and they will emerge for raw materials, energy and its transport routes, for market shares. The monopolistic competition is leading to local or generalized military interventions and wars, as the forces of imperialism use every available means to promote the interests of their own monopolies.

International intergovernmental agreements in each level are just reflecting the correlation of forces of the moment; the agreement of the different

forces each time to share the loot. They can never be permanent, fixed, inviolable, because the correlation of forces will always change due to the uneven development of capitalism. Moreover, there will always appear new causes for new agreements. They can never be peace loving, because no matter how many or what imperialist powers have every time the leading role in international organizations, the military means, the rivalries and the exploitation of workers will always be the bread-and-butter of the capital.

The labor movement cannot face today the UN, the ILO and the International Law with the same measures and the same standards we used when the USSR and the socialist system were there. And this is because in the past there was a possibility of restraint and inhibition of some anti-popular projects. The invocation today of positive decisions of the past will objectively lose weight as they will not be applied and as long as next to them will appear new, overtly aggressive decisions, such as the one that surrendered to NATO the right to intervene in Libya or occupy Afghanistan; the sanctions against DPR Korea or Iran for their nuclear

program; decisions regarding the disarmament of the Lebanese resistance; also all the new decisions of the ILO that in the name of modernization entitle transnational corporations to abolish labor rights in labor relations, social security and wage rights.

We should not forget that the positive decisions taken by the UN in the past could be a reference point for the people, they could have facilitated their struggle. However, it does not mean that they were always implemented, that they were applied by the imperialists. We know for example that the fair decisions of the UN Security Council on Cyprus, Palestine, etc. remained on paper and they were not implemented because they conflict with the interests of the U.S. or other major imperialist powers. But no positive decision of the UN, nor the existence of the USSR could alter by themselves, without radical developments within the various countries, the grid of dependence and interdependence that characterized and still characterizes the world imperialist system.

The integration of the former socialist countries (land, raw materials and labor force), which for decades had been cut off from the world capitalist

economy, in the world imperialist system increased the inter-imperialist rivalries and, of course, made infinitely worse the situation for the labor movement worldwide. That is why international law has radically changed for the worse over the past 20 years. As long as international law is formed only by capitalist states and NOT as a correlation between capitalist and socialist countries, it can only be worse for the working class and the people. The example of the ILO is also characteristic. The current monopoly that exists within the ILO reflects the current correlations.

Today the labor movement cannot ignore these changes and remain trapped in demands for “democratization” of the UN or the International Law. These demands are mainly used by bourgeois forces to support the upgrading of their global position and to consciously mislead the popular forces with the idea that they can supposedly guarantee a peaceful world without harming the foundations of capitalist society. The persistence in past forms that do not reflect the current reality, in an institutional obsession for international organizations, not only does not help the development of the class struggle

today, but also undermines it.

It is also false the position of certain forces that characterize imperialism as just the “autocracy” of the U.S. and see the strengthening of the EU as a counterweight! Such views ignore that the EU, since its foundation, was designed and built as a union of capitalist countries. It serves the strategic class interests of European monopolies in their competition with the other imperialist powers; the need for an iron fist against the movements of the working class and the popular strata. Internally, in each country, it crushes systematically and planned all the conquests and basic rights of the working class.

The reactionary, imperialist character of the EU cannot be changed no matter how many countries join it, or what political makeup wears. The people worldwide have nothing good to expect from the EU, as revealed by its position on all international issues all these years (Iraq, Afghanistan, sanctions against Cuba, etc.).

The people of North Africa, the people of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, will soon realize that the so called “Arab spring” was neither revolution

nor was it a spring. They will find out step by step that the EU, the USA and their allies, having used dictatorships for decades to plunder the natural resources, oil, gas etc., now they are adjusting their strategy and tactics by supporting new leaders, but who have same policies. And unfortunately there are unions that support the capitalist modernization of the system, while the right thing would be to continue their struggle for democracy and freedom, combined with the objective to overthrow the capitalist system, to change the strategic direction of their countries. The W.F.T.U. supported all the popular uprisings in North Africa, against dictatorships and called upon workers not to get trapped in the maneuvers of imperialists.

In conclusion, the labor movement has to say NO to imperialist centers regardless of their geographical location and to continue the struggle for the immediate interests and needs of workers without losing perspective, which is the need of overcoming-overthrow capitalism, the abolition of exploitation of man by man. This is the only way that can prospectively allow the development of interstate relations and alliances for the benefit of

the people.

History offers rich positive and negative experiences on the position of class-oriented trade union forces against imperialist wars to be used.

It is known that with the beginning of World War I (1914-1918), many reformist trade union leaders betrayed the working class and allied with the capitalists of their country to fight against the Working Class of other countries.

Opportunist leaders like Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann in Germany, Victor Adler in Austria, P. Reno del, J. Gent, M. Saba in France, others in England, Sweden, G. Plekhanov in Russia, etc. All of them together with big unions supported the war spending in their countries with money coming from workers. In certain countries they participated with ministers in governments that made war against other peoples. With such wrong position, the reformist trade union leaderships trapped, captured workers in the plans of the bourgeoisie in their countries. They pushed workers to kill workers from other countries so that the monopolies in their countries would gain new markets, new spheres and new colonies.

And more recently there are many similar examples. For instance, the position of the British union TUC that supported the war of England against Argentina in April-May 1982 for the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands, so that the British capitalists could earn more profits from the exploitation of the resources in the area of the Malvinas. The same happened with the NATO war against Libya in our days. The reformist trade union bureaucracies of England, Italy, France, Germany, Sweden, Holland etc. allied with the governments of their countries and supported the NATO bombing against the people of Libya, aimed at helping the bourgeoisie of their countries to plunder the oil, gas and rich subsoil of Libya. On the pretext of “democracy for the Libyans” they allied and supported the imperialist war.

Same examples exist from the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia (August 2008) and elsewhere. Israeli trade union Histadrut keeps the same anti-labor positions years now by supporting the war machine of Israel against Arabs, against the Palestinian people, to the detriment of peace and

friendship among peoples.

In all cases, the positions of bureaucratic trade union leaders betrayed the true interests of the Working Class, their country and the world Working Class, which is a single class.

The class labor movement in such cases has the duty to see all workers of all countries as brothers, as a single class with the slogan “Proletarians of all countries, unite”; to turn the imperialist war into a struggle for workers’ power.

Under this general umbrella, class-oriented trade union movement of workers, must uncover the war plans and aggressiveness of imperialists. To struggle for peace, for international security, friendship and cooperation among peoples. The WFTU has moved in this line steadily from the very first moment. It expressed its position and acted against the NATO war against Yugoslavia, the imperialist war against Iraq and Afghanistan, the Israeli war against Lebanon, the USA, NATO and EU war against the people of Libya. This position of the WFTU and all class-oriented unions was Internationalist, working-class and class-oriented.

Unlike the ITUC and opportunists that with different “excuses” every time supported the imperialist wars, supported NATO and the USA in all the above cases. It is a very old tactic of opportunists to use “particularities” as an excuse for either ally themselves, either support, either tolerate imperialists’ plans. Militants and class-oriented unions must take into account “particularities”, “correlations” but to relate those facts with the GENERAL interest and the STRATEGIC target of working class and its allies. Not forgetting that imperialists are the monopolies and transnational corporations and that anti-imperialist struggle means a struggle against bourgeoisie and capitalist exploitation.”



Peru, Lima, 16 November 2011

8

Power to the People

The speech was delivered at the Inauguration of the 13th Congress of General Confederation of Workers of Peru (CGTP) in Lima, Peru on November 16th, 2011.

“Dear colleagues,

It’s a great honor and pleasure for the WFTU to be here today, together with various representatives of the international trade unions and trade unionists from Peru. We are particularly happy because we are celebrating a historic event, the 13th Congress of CGTP Peru, a militant, class-oriented, historic organization that has been a member of the WFTU for many years. The WFTU has led the class struggle for the interests of the working class all over the world for 66 years. Another historic event that happened this year was the 16th World Trade Union Congress in Athens, Greece, April 6 – 10th, in which more than 828 trade unionists and 101 countries participated.

We are proud of the 16th World Trade Union Congress, because it was a big celebration for the working class where trade unionists from many countries met, discussed various problems, and exchanged opinions and ideas. We are proud because it was a congress that took place during a serious economic crisis of the capitalist system, but the talks managed to range over all the main present-day problems of the workers during a period

of a crisis. It was an open and democratic congress, where all people had the right and the opportunity to express their opinion freely, to suggest their ideas, to make criticisms and to vote when we were choosing the new leadership, and also to participate in the voting for all the final decisions and documents. The congress managed to choose a new leadership, which has all the prerequisites for reviving the WFTU via initiatives for action and class struggle. We are sure that the new leadership of the WFTU, working on the new decisions taken during the congress, will continue its way based on the principles of:

- The 'class line'
- Proletarian internationalism
- Anti-imperialism
- Class unity
- The goal of creating a world with no exploitation of man by man, a world with no capitalist barbarianism

Dear comrades,

We live in a period that has three basic characteristics. The first of them is the deep and prolonged economic crisis of the capitalist

system; the second is the imperialist aggression of the USA, NATO, the EU and their allies, and the third is the important struggle of the working class and the people for their lives, for their present and for their future.

Comrades,

We encounter all around us markets full of stocks and unimaginable wealth that belong to the few. We see productive forces being destroyed, and we see the debasement of the working class (the main productive force). Increasing unemployment, decreasing GDP and world trade are being registered, and also an increase in the number of workers all over the planet living in poverty and misery, both in the developed capitalist countries and even more so in the so-called developing countries. At the same time, it is known that the incredible possibilities of science and technology could ensure common prosperity of the people.

Each honest and conscientious worker, each trade unionist who respects himself and the co-workers that he or she represents, should in these conditions accept the conclusions of Karl

Marx, the great intellectual of the working class, conclusions which prove that the capitalist way of production is not everlasting and is historically over. Marx found out through his work that an economic crisis reveals the main contradiction of capitalism – the contradiction between the social character of production and capitalist ownership of the means of production and the appropriation of the goods that are produced. In periods of crisis, the whole mechanism of capitalist production is brought to its knees under the pressure of the productive forces created by the same capitalist kind of production. Engels underlines precisely the fact that ‘the productive forces rebel against the relations of production which have already grown old and been left behind...

Means of productions, means of existence, available workers, in other words all the productive forces and the social resources are in abundance’.

In spite of the optimistic notes that the representatives of the capitalist system skilfully put forward whenever even the smallest sign of a positive development in one economy or another reveals itself, in spite of their estimates of growth of

the world GDP in 2011, the economic capitalist crisis continues in its catastrophic way. It gives birth on the one hand to poverty, unemployment, uncertainty of the people, and on the other to enormous profits for capital. According to official data from October 2011, unemployment in Europe is continuing to rise, and more specifically:

Spain 22,6%
Greece 17,6%
Latvia 16,1%
Ireland 14,2%
Portugal 13%
France 9,9%
Italy 8,5%
UK 8,1%

This is official data, and according to a decision of the EU if a worker has worked even for one day during the last month he is not included in the percentage of unemployed!!! In other words – the reality is much worse than these percentages.

This crisis of capitalism is deep and is constantly deepening, becoming more serious and giving birth to hard intra-imperialist competition. Competition between the euro and the dollar over

which should be the leading currency; this is one of the competitions that defines the strategies between the USA and the EU.

Inside the EU, intra-capitalist competition is also becoming more serious and inequality is increasing. On the one hand, France is trying to find allies in the Mediterranean area and, on the other, Germany is doing the same with countries in northern Europe and Russia.

In the region of the Middle East and Asia, the results from all this are the wars on Iraq, on Afghanistan, on Georgia, the threats to Iran and Syria, in North Africa – the imperialist war on Libya for control over its petroleum resources and natural gas.

Today we don't know where this serious intra-imperialist competition will lead. In Europe, there are already many people who believe that in the near future the EU won't be like the present-day EU. It may change, it may break up or some may try to turn it into a federation like the USA. The capitalists fear that crisis might break out in Italy, in Spain and maybe in France after that.

Based on all these contrasts and all this

compulsion, we see unequal capitalist development between different countries and between different areas.

The Crisis in Greece

Within these boundaries, the EU and the USA are making use of the crisis in Greece. Greece is a country with population of 11 million people and with a national debt of 340 billion euros, which is around 140% of GDP.

This debt was not created by the workers, by the farmers, by the women or by the youth. It was created by enormous military expenditure for NATO, by capitalist loans that have been lost, by the 15 billion euro cost of the Olympic Games in 2004, and by the break up of industry and agriculture that led to an inevitable increase in imports and decrease in exports. At the same time when the Greek debt is 340 billion euros, there are 620 billion euros in deposits of Greek capitalists in Swiss banks!!! And while the Greek people are not to blame for the debt, the Greek governments, together with the EU, the IMF and the European Central Bank are violating

the workers' rights to insurance and to payment, they are privatizing all the public assets, and they are slandering the workers and the Greek people! They are trying to humiliate the Greeks by saying that they are just consumers, that they are lazy, etc., presenting lies and defamations in the Greek and international mass media.

They are slandering a nation that in modern political history has fought against fascists and imperialists.

In 1940-1944, with a population of 7 million, Greece struggled bravely for four years against German and Italian fascism, a war that led to 220 000 victims (more than the UK, with a so much bigger population, sacrificed in the course of the whole second world war). The Civil War raged from 1946 to 1949. Many fought heroically but lost. The result was that 75 000 partisans withdrew to the socialist republics and 35 000 more were thrown into jail in Greece by the reactionist regime.

The same working class that struggled against the dictatorship imposed by the USA in the period from 1967 to 1974, the same nation that in two years has organized 16 general strikes and is

opposed to capital, the IMF and the imperialists. In this fight, the Greek working class has yielded four victims, but has not taken fright or stepped back. It goes onward and forward.

This disobedience and the pugnacity of the Greek people have scared the EU, Merkel and Sarkozy, and all capitalists. A few days ago, the EU and the USA together with the Greek capitalists set up a government of social democrats and neoliberals in order to be able to oppress the workers' resistance.

Some comrades who are here with us today, like Valentin Pacho, who has been living for the last six years in Athens, have become acquainted with many Greek workers. Valentin has visited a lot of factories, has spoken at many demonstrations and to thousands of workers. 35 days ago he made a speech as a member of FSM, outside the Greek parliament building at a demonstration of PAME. Comrade Ramon Cardona has also visited and has spoken at various workplaces, at demonstrations and with many comrades. They can convince you of the basic characteristics of the workers in Greece.

We know that in each country the workers

are hard-working, and are trying to do their best. It is unfair and wrong to believe that they are to blame, and not the antisocial policies and those who oppose the workers.

The new government of social democrats and neoliberals shows that social democracy these days is marching more and more to the right of the political spectrum, and it has identical strategies with the conservatives, imperialists and capitalists.

This government today is continuing with its crimes against the Greek people, stealing public assets and the natural resources of the country, and is trying to convince the Greeks that the IMF loves Greece, that bankers give away money to workers. Nobody believes their fairy tales. The Greek workers know that the monopolies speculate resolutely. The so-called 'help' from others is just a big lie. A few days ago for example, Germany was buying from the markets at 2,4 per cent interest, while on the same day it was lending the same amount of money to Greece at 5,5%!!! At the same time, another lie is that the problems of the Greek people are due to the big national debt. There is a big debt in almost all the capitalist countries. Here are some examples:

- USA \$ US 15 trillion
- U.K. \$ US 10 trillion
- France \$ US 6 trillion
- Germany \$ US 5.6 trillion
- Japan \$ US 2.8 trillion
- Italy \$ US 2.7 trillion
- Australia \$ US 1.2 trillion
- Canada \$ US 1.1 trillion

The Greek debt (340 billion euros or \$ US 533 billion) is used by the upper class to impose new taxes, to cut salaries and pensions, to raise the pension age, to discharge 30 000 public servants this year and 75 000 more in the first half of 2012.

What is important, for all these reasons, is solidarity, internationalism, and ethical support for the working class of Greece. They are needed, and they need to be strengthened.

Our Strategy

The trade union movement and the working class movement in general should create and support a strong ideological front of resistance to those who try to confuse the workers about the

causes of the economic crisis and the ways out of it. Of course, these voices which try to hide the truth and to present alleged painless ways out of the crisis, which would combine the interests of the capitalists and the workers, are not a new phenomenon in the history of the working class movement. From the beginning of this movement, from the time of the first capitalist crises, illogical voices like these have emerged. Their final goal is to convince everyone that capitalism itself is not to blame for the crisis, and to stop the workers understanding that unless capitalism is overcome the crisis will continue to be their companion and tormentor.

Having in mind the reaction of the different social forces to the capitalist economic crisis, it is again corroborated that the working class in each country cannot progress, cannot plan its own, independent way of meeting its needs without a major clash with and separation from the opportunist and defeatist forces inside the trade union movement. It's not the time for self-deception that the leaders of the yellow trade unions might change direction, might be forced by the working class in a positive direction, and might lead the class struggle.

All honest workers who still follow them should be convinced to join us, to join the WFTU, the united front of the working class and the trade unions, which is open to all who want to get involved in the class struggle. These workers should integrate with our actions, our goals, our principles.

The economic crisis with the hard sufferings that it brings to the working class is a big, complex opportunity for the workers to understand the power that they have, to organize their struggle, to put their priorities and their needs for social and economic progress on to the agenda.

This is a serious opportunity to understand the historic boundaries of the capitalist system, the anarchy of production, the confrontation between social production and consumption, which grows stronger as the standard of living and the consumption of the working class decreases.

It's an opportunity to realize the vital necessity of nationalization, central planning and public control. It's the right time for restructuring the workers' movement in order decisively to implement and impose policies or measures that will be against the capitalist logic and the arithmetic of the owners

of the public means of production, fighting for the power of the working class.

Here is an opportunity for the workers' movement to become a motive force for transformation, and not a firefighter. A prerequisite for this is a change in the situation of the working class movement, a defeat for the policies and for the trade union powers of employers' syndicalism, reformism and opportunism that have not ceased to fight for the benefit of the capitalists and for strengthening the corporate groups. A precondition for this is that the people must understand their own power, because nations that have goals and fight to achieve them have enormous, undefeatable power.

Imperialist Aggression

The deep crisis of the capitalist system and the intra-imperialist rivalries have created a great threat to international peace and friendship among the nations. These rivalries have led to an enormous increase in military expenditure in many countries, and all this is paid for by the workers.

Some data about the military expenditure of the 10 countries with the highest expenditure for 2010:

1.Saudi Arabia	11.2% of GDP
2.United Arab Emirates	7.3% of GDP
3.Israel	6.3% of GDP
4.Iraq	5.4% of GDP
5.Kuwait	4.4% of GDP
6.Russia	4.3% of GDP
7.Angola	4.2% of GDP
8. Columbia	3.7% of GDP
9.Chile	3.5% of GDP
10. Greece	3.2% of GDP

It is worth mentioning that Libya was bombarded with 16 000 shells in the course of the war there. There were more than 75 000 victims, the damage done in Libya was catastrophic, and now the imperialists will steal Libyan petroleum and other resources in order to 'rebuild the country'.

The international economic crisis speeds up the process of building up arms in an attempt by the monopolists to find a way out of the crisis. A characteristic sign of this is the enormous increase in the military expenditure of the developing

countries, in other words the countries with the most serious economic problems. The big imperialist powers, which are also the biggest military manufacturers, make some of the poorest countries spend tremendous amounts on arms, while millions of people are starving to death. Guns become an instrument of compulsion; having in mind that in order to secure the economic help of 'the rich', 'the poor' have to buy guns from them. A typical example is Pakistan, which, two days after the terrible catastrophe caused by floods and the millions of homeless people, decided that it was more important to buy weapons costing \$1, 28 million for its defense system than to bother about the disasters.

According to data for the period 2004-2008 (International Peace Research Institute – SIPRI) sales have increased by 24%, and it should be remarked that the developing countries have taken a dangerous path of arming themselves. Selling weapons is an instrument of compulsion, because if the developing countries want to be helped by the developed imperialist countries, the former have to continue buying from the latter.

As far as the achievements of the military industry are concerned, according to data from 2007, the five biggest defense technology companies (Boeing, BAE Systems, Lockheed, Northrop and General Dynamics) gathered a net income of \$12, 8 billion.

The demand of the WFTU is: 'Put an end to the course of arms purchases. Spend the money on the needs of the poor and the unemployed, not on nuclear weapons'.

All foreign troops must leave the territories that they have occupied. All nuclear weapons must be destroyed and banned. The imperialist military organizations and unions must be demolished by the people. The same must happen with NATO. A stop must be put to imperialist interventions. We must say no to war and yes to peace.

What kind of International Trade Union Movement do we need?

Under these conditions, an important question is 'What kind of international trade union movement does the international working class need these

days?’ The role, the pattern, the strategy and the tactics of the international trade union movement were seriously discussed for the first time in 1864, when Karl Marx set up the First International Working Men’s Association. Those discussions were very serious, deeply ideological, theoretical and practical. Two basic, contradictory strategies clashed. The first suggested that the trade unions should be mass organizations of the working class that would struggle for a better standard of living, for work, for the rights of the workers, and would continue to fight until the liberation of the working class from exploitation. The second strategy suggested that the trade unions should be mass organizations of the working class that would cooperate with the feudalists, the capitalists and the imperialists to improve the standard of living and to modernize the capitalist system. In brief, these were the two strategies. From these different strategies there have emerged the different tactics, the differences in the essence and in the kinds of the trade union actions and struggle.

These serious differences were the main reason for the dissolution of the Second International.

They are also the reason for the positions of the trade unions these days, for example their positions on the Cuban revolution, on the fight for the Palestinian nation, and on the imperialist war on the Libyan people.

These basic topics, the ideological and political platform of the international trade union organization, were seriously discussed at the first congress of the WFTU in Paris, France in October 1945. At that congress two ideas and two theories clashed. The first was that of the USA, the UK and their allies, who hypocritically claimed that the new trade union organization 'should not be involved in politics'. The second theory, supported by the Soviet trade unions and by the trade unions in countries from all around the world stated that the emerging international trade union organization as a class organization should get involved in everything, in economics and politics, and in the liberation of the working class.

When in December 1949 the trade unions of the USA, the UK and their allies, under the guidance of the CIA, split the FSM and founded the ICFTU (the present-day ITUC), the strategic differences

soon became clear.

The ICFTU supported all the dictatorships around the world (Guatemala, Chile, Panama, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, Portugal, Greece), the apartheid regime, etc. The FSM, on the other hand, has always supported revolution and progress, and has always been against the imperialists and against capitalist exploitation.

Today, in the period that we are living in, we know that the proposals of the FSM concerning the economic crisis in the capitalist system are an attempt to unite the workers so that it is not they who will pay the crisis, but the capitalists who created it. We are searching for a unity that will unite the workers against the monopoly companies, a unity that will unite the workers against capitalist exploitation, a unity with goals and demands that will not get lost in modernizing the capitalist system, but that will lead toward a socialist perspective.

The FSM expresses its opposition to the privatization of sectors of strategic importance. The FSM demands a free public health system, free education, and abolition of all the public debts of the third world countries. It supports Venezuela, Cuba,

Bolivia, Palestine and the people of Syria, while the ITUC has exactly the opposite views; it collaborates with the G20 and the IMF.

The WFTU fights for democratic and trade union rights and freedoms. It does not do this in the way that the democratic NATO bombed the people of Libya 'to ensure democracy', and not in the way that the democracies of Sarkozy, Berlusconi and Hilary Clinton caused the death of 75 000 Libyans for the 'democratization' of Libya.

We as the leadership of today's FSM claim that, under the conditions we live in, the international working class and the people need an international trade union organization which will basically have the following main characteristics:

1. Class orientation and revolutionary thinking, which will emphasize that we're talking about an organization of workers that steadfastly fights against capital and against imperialism.

2. Democratic and open dealings with simple people; reforms at all levels, supporting leaders who will come from the basis of society, who will be honest, will respect criticism and self-criticism, and also discipline, leaders who will fight bureaucracy

and corruption.

3. The kind of unity that will unite all workers, irrespective of sex, color or religion; it will unite workers, poor farmers and the youth in order to include them all in the fight against capital and the monopolist companies; it will unite them in the struggle and teach them not to step back or give up.

4. Its international character, workers' solidarity, cooperation and support (both ethical and economic) for each country's working class, for each branch that fights for its freedom, for its trade union and democratic rights, for its life and rights.

5. The use of all kinds of class struggle, from the simplest to the most complex; launching ideas and goals that will demand satisfaction of the present-day needs of all workers, and will at the same time lead to a class struggle to end the exploitation of man by man

6. The use of international organizations to implement the ideas of the workers; coordinating the actions of different movements that are fighting for the same goals

7. Education for the working class, especially so that the workers will love the history of their

nation, the traditions, the culture and the history of the international working class movement; providing an education to make the workers cleverer as a class, to believe in the values of the class struggle, and to know the class struggle.

These are some of the most basic criteria, and we believe that the struggles in recent years have been about these issues. The big strikes in Chile, Greece, Mexico, India, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Brazil and many other countries show that the ideas of the class struggle are understood and supported by the workers. Most of these struggles (both in their kind and in their essence) draw on the rich experience of the international trade union movement. Through all these struggles, millions of workers have understood that their future is not capitalism but socialism, and that overcoming the weakness that emerged in the first attempt at implementing it will give essential and lasting solutions to the problems of the people.

For such a militant trade union movement, thousands heroic trade unionists of the working class, sacrificed their lives. Amongst these heroes is also Petro Huilca, trade union leader of CGTP

and cadre of the WFTU who was murdered by the reactionary forces.

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the WFTU, I want to reassure the people of Peru, the working class and the leaders of the CGTP, that we will continue to support you, to be by your side.

On behalf of the WFTU, acknowledging the important role of the CGTP in the WFTU, allow me to give this present to the CGTP, to its General Secretary - Mario Huaman.

Viva CGTP! Viva WFTU!"



9

The corruption of Trade Unionists: A social phenomenon

The speech was delivered in Santiago, Chile on November 19th, 2011.

“The long strong influence of reformism and opportunism in the labour trade union movement demands from the class-oriented movement the ability to search and precisely understand the social roots of this phenomenon, in order to effectively confront the forces that cultivate it.

Already, since the 19th century, Karl Marx underlined, in his critic towards the English trade unions, the possibility offered to the English bourgeoisie by the industrial monopoly in the international market to buy off and incorporate numerous layers of the working class, especially amongst the skilled workers.

During the first years of the 20th century, with the complete formation of the monopoly capitalism, Lenin observes the expansion of this phenomenon to other powerful imperialist states as well. The capitalists had the opportunity to buy off upper layers of the working class, thanks to huge super-profits which they manage to ensure from the export of the capital and generally from the activity of the large monopoly groups. He names this labour aristocracy as “agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers’ movement”, true trustees of the capitalists,

conductors of reformism and chauvinism; Which means, he focuses both on the class position and the class consciousness of this layer and he emphasizes on the fact that if the economic root of this phenomenon, as well as, its political importance are not perceived as such, the labour movement can make no steps forward towards the solution of its practical duties.

A characteristic example is the government of Spain, which takes massive amounts of money from the workers' yearly taxation and "returns" them to the leaderships of CCOO and UGT. In 2010, the highest amount these organizations have received from the central state budget of Spain reached the 10 million Euros. Part of which was transferred for "trade union investments" to Central and Latin America...

This way, the reality proves by itself, that the widening and the deepening of the capitalist relations of production in the era of imperialism multiplies the phenomenon of labour aristocracy and the division of the working class in the internals of a country, as well as, the intrusion of petty-bourgeois perceptions and positions in the trade

union and political movement.

Giving prominence to this phenomenon timely brought in the forefront the necessity of an acute confrontation with the interests of these layers, the way they appeared in the labour trade union movement, and of the struggle in favor of the unity of the working class in class-oriented direction.

It is important to underline that the attempt to corrupt and incorporate layers of the working class is not limited to the direct materialistic part of the bribing (extremely high salaries, paychecks “under the table”, etc.). The bourgeoisie has taken special care and still does, so that the “well-behaved” reformist employers and workers will find warm profitable positions in the “bourgeois-submissive” trade unions, in various committees of the ministries, in International organizations, even in the parliaments. It is this trade union and political bureaucracy with a labour source and origin that plays the role of a battering ram for the strengthening and the preservation of corporatism and reformism in the labour trade union movement. The history and the role of the yellow trade unions over the last 100 years prove their exceptional utility

for the capital, mainly due to their ability to appear as representatives of the workers, as part of the working class.

The existence of labour aristocracy cannot be statically perceived as a social phenomenon that is limited to developed capitalist economies or specific sectors of the economy or specific enterprises. While the development of capitalism expanded and deepened in the whole world, the labour aristocracy emerged and consolidated in countries it never existed before. For example in Greece, its expansion was connected with the dirty role of the institute of corruption “Friedrich Ebert” and the projects management mechanisms and funds of the EU, at the level of reformist trade unions amongst others. The setting of trade unionists with salaried positions in various committees of “social partnership” are substantial forms of creating a modern labour aristocracy.

During 1998-2000 in Austria, the Central Trade Union OGB was convicted from the courts for corruption at the BAWAG Bank because it presented 1.5 billion euro as expenses for “trade union investments” in the Caribbean... Today this

role of the Austrian is played by leaderships of the the Spanish, the Belgian, the French, the Dutch trade unions.

It is becoming clear that the mechanisms of the bourgeois state work additionally to the mechanisms of the capital in order to stabilize and broaden the sold-out layers of the working class.

We have to be careful not to incorporate simplistically into the labour aristocracy any high-wage employee working in sectors with high labour productivity or any worker who undertakes the basic surveillance tasks of the modern process of capitalist production. Such kind of simplistic processes, obscure the issue, divide instead of unite the working class. For example a skilled high-wage worker who works under the unsanitary conditions of a mine or in the ship repair industry, with an executive role and under large labour intensification, cannot be classified as labour aristocracy.

The possibility that was provided to the capitalist forces by the rapid growth of capitalism, in much more countries than before, to buy off layers of the working class should not give the class-oriented trade union movement the impression that this

social phenomenon can expand indefinitely. That is because the capitalist world as a whole, especially the old and the extremely developed one, works with a contradictory manner. On the one hand, each capitalist country tends to break every barrier which stands on the way of the motion of capital in the global market, in favor of its own monopolies, by using part of the superprofits for the buying off of working class layers. On the other hand, however, the intensification of the competitiveness in the global market, forces each bourgeoisie to reduce the price of the labour force in its country, in order to improve its place. Thus, the management policy of the capitalist system is obliged today, to take restructuring measures (flexible labor relations, privatizations of state-owned enterprises and services, reduction of wages and lay-offs of civil servants etc.) that objectively affect some layers of the labor aristocracy as well.

The latest developments, with the international capitalist crisis that strikes the lives and the rights of millions and millions of workers and employees all over the world, clearly highlight the timeless role of the reformist-yellow trade union leaderships in the

promotion of the capitalist interests.

For years before the new round of the capitalist economic crisis, those trade unions used to play an insidious role undermining and weakening the massiveness of the labour trade union movement, by cultivating the perceptions of “social partnership” between the working class and the capitalist, by denying the participation in meaningful militant initiatives (strikes, rallies etc.), by transforming the trade unions in bureaucratic structures and mediating foundations between the capitalist state and the employees, by keeping pace with the employers in the striking of the combative calls of the privary level –in the factories, the enterprises, the workplaces.

They signed numerous collective agreements, not just below the contemporary needs of the working class but even below the inflation, thus contributing to the further intensification of the exploitation of the workers they are supposed to represent. In all these ways, they cultivated a spirit of fatalism, an acceptance of the “less harm done”, e.g. the reduction of wages or working hours instead of the job losses.

So it came so natural, that with the outburst of the capitalist economic crisis a remarkable part of the working people who used to follow out of habit or fear or even out of superstition, the sold-out trade union leaderships, would find itself with no provisions, unable to react to the sweeping attack of the capital against their rights.

From their side of the story, the yellow trade unions followed, as expected, during the years of the crisis the same way as before, the course of continuous retreat. They adopted the interpretations for the causes of the crisis of the various apologists of the capital, exculpating the capitalist system, they projected the need for more “sacrifices” by everyone if only they are “fairly shared”, they signed degrading collective agreements in the name of avoiding the “national economy’s bankruptcy”.

Once more, with the positions of various forces towards the capitalist economic crisis, it was proven, that the working class in national level can expect no progress, cannot draw its own independent course for the satisfaction of its needs, without the decisive collision and crush of the forces of compromise, of “social partnership” and of

defeatism in the trade union movement.

There is no space for illusions today, that the yellow trade union leaderships can change path, can be pressured from the labour masses into positive course, can be put at the head of the class struggle. All the honest working people who still follow them need to be convinced to put aside those leaderships, to kick them away from the trade unions, for them to rally on the side and within the class-oriented trade unions in a unified front of the working class.”



Greece, Athens, Peace and Friendship Stadium (SEF), 10 Apr 2011

10

Closure of the 16th World Trade Union Congress

The extract comes from the closing remarks of the General Secretary at the 16th World Trade Union Congress on April 10th, 2011 in Athens, Greece were 828 delegates from 101 countries participated in.

(...) Already 65 years passed since the foundation of the WFTU in France, Paris on October 3, 1945. During this course of 65 years the WFTU was present in all small and big developments around the world. Great action, big successes, seriously positive impact on the global working class and the trade union movement. There were also mistakes, weaknesses and delays in this great course but they could not reduce the overall positive course. There were also difficulties that at some moments put in danger even the functioning of the WFTU.

But what kept and keeps this organization alive? What helped to overcome the obstacles? What are the reasons why the WFTU after going through great difficulties in the 1990's managed to stand up against persecutions, against injustices, against slanders and anti-labor approaches?

There are three main reasons:

1. The firm belief of WFTU in the working class, in the vanguard role of the working class to liberate society from capitalist exploitation. The firm belief that together the working class in alliance with the poor farmers, the self-employed, the landless

and the progressive intelligentsia can claim a better present and a brighter future. In this course of 65 years, of course, the working class did not keep the same characteristics of 1945. It acquired new characteristics, new possibilities, new knowledge, new needs, new qualitative and quantitative features. But all these new elements did not change for a moment its main characteristic, which is that this is the class exploited by the capital. This is the class that generates the surplus value that enriches the capitalists. The belief in this solid Marxist position helped the WFTU to stay upright and to struggle in any kind of conditions.

2. The acceptance and respect for the principles of class struggle, for the principles of class-oriented struggles gave the WFTU the moral, trade union and political superiority over international trade union organizations that were converted into branches and servants of monopolistic and transnational corporations. In all WFTU Constitutions the commitment to militant principles was underlined. And it was not a coincidence that in any period when such principles were violated by an occasional leadership, the WFTU went through

difficult moments.

3. The effort to closely relate the struggle for the current, immediate problems with the political perspective and political way out. The insistence to relate the economic struggle for survival to the struggle to overthrow the exploitative capitalist system. The willing to serve with its tactics, its strategic purposes. To open new paths across the old and rotten capitalism in order to propose the alternative of a new society, free of exploitation of man by man. Instead of the rotten colonialism to propose its abolition. Instead of racism and fascism to propose the slogan "Proletarians of all countries, unite."

These three factors made the difference in favor of the WFTU against other international trade union organizations whose life, action, tactics and goals are extinguished within the limits of the capitalist system.

And today here from the floor of the 16th World Trade Union Congress we make a call upon you to strengthen even more the above three elements. Under the present conditions of deep crisis of the capitalist system, it is necessary to keep the wheel

firmly, to meet the demands of the times and the contemporary needs of workers and popular strata. We call you to work as we worked in the previous five years with confidence and boldness; to pay even more attention in the new period, to care and persevere even more in order to strengthen the necessary foundational characteristics of all unions, affiliates and friends of our great family; to open up new paths with innovative ideas, pioneering action, innovation, radical initiatives; with our eyes and our minds towards the future. In order to move steadily ahead we should not forget:

We are Internationalists

Proletarian internationalism, labor solidarity and support, struggle coordination and international cooperation, the struggle against imperialism and imperialist wars have a main role in the founding principles of WFTU. In the last years we have improved our activity in these areas but we still have serious deficiencies and delays. We ask all WFTU affiliates and friends to develop their reflects and self-motivation in the practical expression of internationalist solidarity. A good example is the

quality and quantity in expressing solidarity with the Palestinian People and their struggles. And a negative example is the great struggle of the workers in the Panama Canal who struggled to demand their right to strike. We asked for solidarity but you were delayed. At the same time we should never forget that by developing class struggles within our own country we are helping to strengthen the class conception at international level too. So first we are judged by what we do in our country, and after by what we do outside at international level.

We pay attention to the preparation of struggles

Until now we pay always and everywhere the attention needed to prepare struggles. This task is fundamental. First, to formulate the right demands to unite all workers. The demands to reflect the current needs of workers. To give perspective and a way out, to radicalize. Secondly, to choose the right format and the right time, at the right period. The aim is the form of the struggle to bring out the content and the timing to create problems for the employer.

Third, to organize timely information for workers and to provide wider information and publicity to strengthen solidarity and moral and material support. If the company is multinational we should evaluate in advance the international coordination and mutual help.

We respect the democratic functioning

The open, wide, democratic functioning is a key characteristic of the class-oriented trade union movement. We ask you to try to constantly improve the democratic functioning. With control to the leaderships by the affiliates. With fraternal emulation. With respect to collectiveness. With criticism and self-criticism. With democratic and free elections. With open general assemblies, with democratic functioning of the Executive Committees. With workers' control and open war against bureaucracy, careerism and corruption.

We pay attention to and we respect the base

A strong WFTU, powerful unions means to be strong in the workplaces, in factories, in the

working class neighborhoods. We will build a strong WFTU when we are strong at the base. With stable, qualitative and quantitative relations with workers. Strengthening from the bottom means hitting the bureaucracy of the routine. Strengthening the base will help new cadres from the base to stand out and emerge. New cadres are new blood for the trade union movement. We will become stronger at the base every day by affiliating new members to the unions and you know that so far the participation and the number of members are in low levels.

We take care of youth, women, migrants

The situation within the trade union movement will improve as long as more young people, women and immigrants get involved in the life and activities of trade unions. With boldness and courage we must elect in our leaderships young workers, women and immigrants. We must reject discrimination against working women. We must hit xenophobia, racism and neo-fascism. We can use the conclusions and final resolutions of the International Conferences organized by the WFTU for Young Workers in Peru in 2009, for Women in Brussels in 2007, for

Immigrants in Belgium in 2006. Remember what was said and written by Karl Marx “social progress can be measured by the social position of the female sex.” Do not forget that the new generation will organize the big struggles tomorrow. The new generation will build the new society.

We educate, we train our cadres and also workers

Especially nowadays, education, trade union training and seminars are becoming more and more important. In modern conditions for the proper and efficient organization of the struggles, it is required more knowledge, more information, more preparation. The task of training is immediate in order to get better in the struggles. In this framework, the knowledge of the history of the national and international trade union movement is a positive help. The history gives us both positive and negative conclusions. These conclusions can be used for the present and the future. We learn to recognize our mistakes and to correct them; to face our weaknesses with courage. We defend the history of WFTU and the history of workers' struggles

against slanderers. We uncover those who distort historical facts and rewrite history in favor of the interests of the capital. We do not copy the history. We are taught and enriched by the lessons of our history to be more effective in the class struggles of our time.”



Greece, Athens, 13 August 2012

Two lines in constant contradistinction

The speech was delivered in the framework of the 1st WFTU Trade Union School to South African Trade Unionists at the Central Offices of the WFTU on August 13th, 2012.

“It is easy even for the common reader of the trade union history to realize that -already since the infantile age of the trade union organizations, from the appearance and the concentration of the young working class, the contradistinctions ultimately led to the crucial issue: What line will the trade union follow? Will it be a class line or not? Depending on the majority current of the period and the organization, the one or the other line was imprinted in its constitution: Line-orientation: Struggle or Compromise?

Therefore, the issue did not emerge on 1989-1991, but can be traced back in each period of the movement and in each respective country and internationally as well. It finds expression and formation in the various periods by the opponents of the Class Line, according to the occasion, the direct objectives and priorities which the forces of the governmental and employers trade unionism are prioritizing as dominant. Thus, since the era of Kropotkin and Bakunin, this current is taking different names such as Reformist and at times as Modernizing or Collaborationist, Autonomous, Independent and whatever name is imposed by the

needs, maintaining however an unchanged, common feature of contradistinction and confrontation with the line of Struggle and Class Unity. At the same time, it continues the concealment, the distortion and the slandering of the accumulated experience of the popular movement which safely leads to the conclusion that every existing labour right is a result of struggle and every loss of right is synonymous with the weakening of the struggle and the defeatism.

Hence, in our times, the efforts that the forces of collaboration intensively develop the last decade, are not an invention but an adjustment, a modernization, a make-up and a new wrap of a well-known and old-fashioned ideological platform which nowadays is unfolding into a fierce attack utilizing the objective and subjective difficulties of the Trade Union Movement, backed by the tremendous material potentials provided by the internal, European and international correlation of forces.

These forces estimated that with the rapid, temporary, retreat of the international labour movement, the immense difficulties that the popular movement faced in the period 1989-1995, this would

be a huge opportunity to modernize, to emasculate, to change its physiognomy and characteristics. They believed that they may succeed what for a century they predecessors did not.

The arguments that they projected and continue to use are plenty and various. They use national, regional and sectoral characteristics, peculiarities; they use multiformity in their methods and tactics. They insist in five basic axes of arguments:

1. That «the Working Class is different today». That it has no relation to the Working Class of the beginning of the century, that it must throw away the cap, wear Ray ban glasses and see things in their real dimensions.

2. That the Trade Union Movement needs to find “new forms of struggle”, more modern, more effective, more attractive for the Mass Media, in order not to provoke the society and not to expose the country in the international scene. Basically, that now the solution to the problems will not come from the strikes, the occupations, the demonstrations but through the “Social Dialogue”.

3. Readjustment of the content, the essence,

of the movement's demands, emerge of realistic goals, plausible demands, "abandonment of the maximalistic logic" that the class-oriented movement projects; Acceptance of bourgeois perceptions about competitiveness, productivity, development.

4. «Against the formation of fronts»: The coordination and common action of the movement of the workers and employees with the movement of the small-shop owners, the youth and the poor peasants, as well as the coordination amongst the different sections of the working class must be avoided because... they project a logic of forming fronts and... terrify the unorganized wage earners.

5. «The inefficiency of the struggles» characterizes this period of the movement and the mobilizations have no use as they will not bring tangible results for the wage earners. The reduction of the participation and the strikers reveals this specific problem.

The class-oriented current in the trade union movement of the Working Class exposed and continues to persistently expose the real aims of this argumentation and has underlined the following in brief:

1. The contemporary Working Class has many new characteristics and simultaneously continues to maintain many elements that are timeless. The accumulated militant experience of the contemporary Working Class, the elevated level of education, the knowledge and access to information that characterizes it, the cultural and the general social level, the relation and access to the new technologies and the technical-scientific revolution not only maintain it as the pioneer class qualitatively, but continuously broaden and enhance its role in the heart of the productive procedure.

Important new sections of the working class hold neuralgic sectors of the production, which can instantly paralyze it and put it out of order. All those and many more characteristics, while they enhance the role of the particular class for the change of the society, at the same time they do not change the main feature of the class systems that separate the society in classes, the exploited and the exploiters, the plebeians and the patricians. Thus, the current Working Class -with or without a cap- will not seize to remain the class which is being exploited by the Capital, even more intensively in our times. Hence,

it has every reason to continue its struggle, until the abolition of the exploitation of human by human and the liberation from the capitalist barbarity.

2. Already since the prehistoric era and up to the end of the 20th century, it has been confirmed repeatedly that the developments, the progress, the important changes are not determined by personalities, by kings and princes but by groups, by collectives. According to Karl Marx: “The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles”. The personalities, the personality of each individual, off course play a role, they affect positively or negatively an event, a moment, by it is not them who define the outcome of a situation in the perpetuity.

The Marxist analysis correctly insists that the progress of societies, the political-social developments, the transition from one era to another is defined by the movement and the action of the masses; and by “masses” we mean the unified group formed by individuals – personalities who have common or similar perceptions, ideas, opinions and objectives; and as “action” we do not mean of course the well-behaved discussion in the

round tables of the ministries and the funny-talk in the halls of the parliaments, but the contradistinction, the confrontation, the conflict between the social interests, between the different and contradictory classes or the sections of these classes. Thus, the representatives of the Social Dialogue and the Class Cooperation aim far ahead. Initially, they aim to persuade that the exploiters and the exploited can come to decisions in common spirit, can jointly utilize the new forces of struggle, the symposiums, the seminars, the conferences. The well-known theory of the “social partnership”! Seamen and ship-owners, industrial workers and industry-owners, bank-employees and bank-owners... all brothers and sisters! Furthermore, they try to slander the struggles and the militants and isolate as marginal, the class-oriented, militant trade union movement which without excluding any form of struggle, with creativity and inventiveness utilizes old and new forms of struggle in order to accomplish its goals, to gather forces and to achieve small and bigger victories.

3. About the deformation of the “realistic” and the “plausible”, the class perception taking

into consideration the correlation of forces can do nothing else but define the ambitious and difficult demands that reflect the will and the needs of the working class. It would be self-trapping and self-captivity to only consider as realistic and plausible the consolidation of exploitation, to accept as natural the rise of profits and super-profits for the capital and as unnatural the need for increases in the wages, the salaries and the pensions. At the same time, a movement that wants to drive the working class towards its liberation is obliged to dream, to be innovative, to exceed the limitations, to combat the incumbent perceptions and to crash them. According to Che Guevara: “Let’s be realistic, demand the impossible!”.

4. The national and international socialdemocracy in cooperation with the capitalists negatively affect the trade union movement in many ways with various theories and methods of corruption and distortion of trade union consciousness. Amongst those theories, a prominent one is the effort for the fragmentation of the Working Class (blue and white collar, wage earners, premium employees, low wage earners, public – private employees etc.).

In the condition of deep capitalist crisis, the fascistic perception of the “social automation” is projected, where the demonstrations of the students must be automatically confronted by the parents, the parents mobilizations must be confronted by the teachers, the movement of the seamen comes in contradiction with the travelers and the habitants of the islands, the farmers and the track drivers, the employees of the public sector must come in confrontation with those of the private sector. This cunning maypole of the supposedly insuperable differences within the same class, as well as amongst the popular strata, is a modern expression of the policy of “divide and conquer”. The class-oriented forces in each struggle must project the many, meaningful and essential common issues and to realize that, especially in this period, the coordination and the enhancement of the political characteristics of the struggles, are amongst the basic preconditions for an effective struggle. The movement must not be afraid of the formation of Fronts, in the contrary it must realize that the Front of Monopolies-Multinationals can only be combated with a socio-political Front. In such a front the protagonists shall be the Working Class

and its allies.

5. All the struggles of the workers had over the previous two centuries, significant, positive results. Salaries, Pensions, labour relations, Collective Agreements, Social Security, working conditions, social and trade union rights and other benefits did not fall from the sky. Neither were they ceded by the bourgeoisie. Those were the outcomes of a long, hard and bloody class struggle. No struggle was in vain. The only struggles that were lost were the ones' that never happened. Even the most limited struggle is definitely going to bring some results. It will either prove the need for the unity of the workers in the struggle, the role of the collective action, the character of the bosses and the government, the necessity of the strengthening of the class-oriented forces or it will reveal, to the consciousness of the popular strata, the importance of coordination, intensification, confrontation and the value of dedication to the aim. It will expose the role, the limitations, and the filthiness of the capitalist movement, the need for the overthrow of capitalism, the need for the emancipation of the working class. Nor is it the correct way to measure

the results with a scoop. Because, results are not only the additional gains, but also, in periods as the one we live in, results are also what the movement manages to safe-guard, to maintain, to salvage. Moreover, in many occasions, the time between the seeding and the harvesting might be long, but the norm proven by the history of the labour movement is that the harvesting will definitely come, sooner or later.

6. The essence of all this contradistinction amongst the two lines that are in conflict throughout the historical course of the Trade Union Movement, can be distinguished by a careful reader also from the works of the founding Congress of the WFTU and the conflict between the two competing perceptions, from their positions about the program and the struggles, from the positions about the constitution, the priorities and the strategic objectives that each side was promoting. Since the first and Founding Congress of the WFTU, the class-oriented trade unions from India, from Cuba, from Africa, from China, from the Soviet Union, ideologically, politically and trade-unionly confronted the British, the Dutch, the Norwegian etc. trade

unions, in the two main issues that were discussed at the Founding Congress. The Colonialism and the struggle against fascism. In both issues these two different lines were expressed. Those differences together with the Marshal plan were the true basis that led the compromised trade unions, the supporters of colonialism and the exploitation in burden of the people of the Third World, to divide WFTU and to found in 1949 the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions).

The history and the course of the trade union movement of the Working Class in its most central phases, reaffirms in its essence the assertion about the timeless and continuous contradistinction of these two lines in the movement, the line of subordination on the one side and the line of struggle on the other side; a contradistinction that embraces the trade union movement in national, regional, sectoral and international level.”



South Africa, Johannesburg, 18 September 2012

12

It is time for the class-oriented trade unions to come home

The speech was delivered at the 11th National Congress of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) on September 18th, 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa where the Congress took the resolution for COSATU to affiliate to the WFTU.

Dear comrades,

Three years have already gone by since your last Congress. During these three years, the relations between the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the trade unions of COSATU have become more strong. Together with NEHAWU, three more unions have joined the ranks of the WFTU, NUMSA, POPCRU and CEPPWAWU.

We met in the same struggles

During these years we met in the same struggles. We organized common struggles in solidarity with the people of Swaziland, of Palestine, of Cuba. Trade unionists from South Africa travelled in many countries for the activities of the WFTU and exchanged experience with other comrades around the world for the difficulties and the prospects of the struggle. We all became more rich and more effective in our trade union struggle through this debates.

In the 16th World Trade Union Congress, with the participation of 828 delegates from 101

countries, comrade Mike Makwayiba, President of NEHAWU was elected as a member of the WFTU Presidential Council. This historic Congress became the platform for discussions and resolutions for the class-oriented forces around the world. They discussed the contemporary acute problems of the working class and the new victorious path that the world labour movement must follow against the capitalist brutality and exploitation.

Our young comrade Lulamile Sibanda was elected in the recent Youth Conference in Cuba as a member of the WFTU Youth Secretariat.

In February 2012 the WFTU Presidential Council took place in Johannesburg of South Africa. It was the first time that the Presidential Council Meeting was convened in South-African land since the foundation of the WFTU in 1945.

Our common action and the great internationalist role of the South African unions was intensified with the opening of the WFTU Africa Regional Office in South Africa under the coordination of comrade Lulamile Sotaka. This office operates now under the guidance and support of all the WFTU affiliates in South Africa. This

office operates not only for South Africa. Its main objective is to strengthen the relations between the trade unions in Africa, their common action, their mutual support. This office is working to strengthen the struggle against the plundering of the African wealth from the foreign and local monopolies.

Comrades,

From the 10th Congress of COSATU until today, the presence of the WFTU in South Africa and the role of the South African unions in the ranks of the class-oriented movement have been enhanced.

In this 11th historic Congress of COSATU, the affiliates of WFTU are inviting their mother-body, COSATU to collectively follow a road they have already tested. The way has been paved by them so that COSATU can find its position inside the family of the WFTU. To take the historic and important decision for the international trade union movement and affiliate to the World Federation of Trade Unions.

A result of a mature debate

Comrades,

This discussion is not a new discussion. This debate has matured. This resolution will come after a mature, rich dialogue. A dialogue where everything has been said. At your International Policy Conference of COSATU which took place on May this year, you discussed this issue in a responsible and sober manner. Through commissions and through the plenary you proposed that COSATU must become a member of the WFTU. Today, with this long debate as a background, with the resolution of the 10th Congress of COSATU and with the suggestion of the COSATU International Policy Conference you come to collectively and democratically take a final decision.

An important conjecture for the international working class

The time when this debate takes place is not incidental. The current condition that the international trade union movement and the international working class is dealing with adds extra weight to this decision.

Today, more than ever, the globalized

capitalism with its excessive profit, with its huge amounts of profit, is incapable to provide to the working people. It can't provide them with work, bread, shelter, water, clothing, books.

It shows, however, great capabilities in organizing the war against the international proletariat. It takes back all the labour rights that had been gained by the class-oriented trade union movement during the past decades. It hammers the workers with dozens of anti-labour measures in the name of the capitalist crisis. It organizes new imperialist wars, unleashes fire against the people for the control of the energy resources, for the oil. Once more the capitalists and their governments are redesigning the borders and the maps. Once more they spill the workers' blood for the interests of the multinationals.

The main difference today is that the international labour movement is "caught off guard". It is "disarmed". The class of the capitalists with its agents in social-democracy and in the trade unions has managed to divide the workers, to weaken the unions around the world. It has managed to impose reformist leaderships, to impose an opportunistic

line and compromise with the class enemy and his governments.

The level of rottenness of some trade unions in Europe and the USA is such, that the workers see no difference between the unions and the companies of legal counselling. Those come to substitute the unions with a simple monthly subscription fee. Even cheaper than what the unions ask for. The workers of Europe and the USA do not see the trade unions as the militant revolutionary unification of workers that will struggle with all means for their rights, for the solidarity and the collectivity amongst the workers. The workers do not see those unions as the school of the revolutionary struggle. In the contrary they see these unions as bureaucratic mechanisms of collaboration with the bosses. As mediators between the government and the workers. As companies or as departments of the Ministries of Labour.

And all these coincide with very bad conditions within the International Organizations (like the ILO, the UN), negative conditions that makes our own struggle more difficult, more complex.

Why we need powerful internationalist unions

But, today, more than ever, the working class

needs to construct powerful trade unions. Unions that will unite all the workers in the industry, in every working place irrespectively of their position in the production. Today we need trade unions that will organize the struggle in every form with determination and combativeness for the conquest of labour rights. We need a consistent and constant front against reformism, against opportunism, against corruption. We need in international level a unified militant front of the proletariat against our common bosses.

Today the trade union movement has to respond to more complex issues.

The simple trade union struggle for the increase of the salaries in one sole factory has to confront a series of hard arguments against the workers:

- The bosses threaten the workers that if they don't accept to work for peanuts they will take their factories and their investments and move to other countries. The same arguments, however, are used in every country to keep the working class in chains. This argument will continue to be used no matter how low the wages will drop. The same argument

is used by the bosses even in countries like Nepal of Asia where the monthly salary is about 700 Rand (About 62 Dollars)!

- The imperialist wars, the poverty, the hunger, the natural disasters, the unemployment. All those, force masses of workers in labour migration. Even in South Africa, there are many immigrants from Asian countries who come to find a job although the unemployment is very high. The immigrant workers are the most terrified workers; they are the most exploited workers. This fear can become a great danger for the existence and the power of the trade union movement. It's more difficult to organize the migrant workers. It's more difficult for the unions to have access to places where immigrants work. It's more difficult to organize the struggle in such workplaces. The fear and the need makes the migrant workers to accept lower salaries, casual jobs, jobs without health aid, bad working conditions. This, then, becomes the measure for all the workers. Local and migrant workers are forced to work with worst working conditions. The price of the labour forces drops.

So can the simple trade union struggle be

isolated by the internationalist struggle?

Can the struggle in one country be isolated with the essential solidarity amongst the workers of the world and their struggles?

Can the struggle against one multinational be successful without the coordination between the workers in various countries who work for the same bosses?

Can the struggle of the unions be successful if they don't coordinate their action with common objectives?

Today the proletarian internationalist struggle has an increased role. The cooperation between the national and the sectoral trade union organizations around the world for the coordination and the class orientations of their struggle is vital.

Why the ITUC cannot play this role

And I am asking you comrades,

Can those sell-outs, the European trade union leaders, the spineless agents of the bourgeoisie in the trade union movement, the corrupted servants of the Ministries of the USA, of Germany, of England and the servants of the Scandinavian social-democracy of class peace take upon their

shoulders such a heavy duty?

No way!

Can an organization like the ITUC, which works for the salvation of capitalism and modernization of the capitalist system, express the interests of the workers?

No way! Never!

In fact this is proven by the long history of the ITUC (ICFTU). The history which today continues to repeat by receiving money from the IMF and World Bank, having in its leadership the Israeli Federation, defending the war against Iraq, against Libya, having never supported any strike, no single real labour battle.

Offering only money and seminars of opportunism in the trade unions around the world to keep them captive in the collaboration with the multinationals and the governments that serve them.

These organisation has not changed since its formation in 1949 as a splinter of WFTU.

Comrades,

The discussion that is taking place for this subject in South Africa is not a new discussion. The

arguments that are used in favour of the ITUC are not new arguments. Actually, these arguments are so old that they have received their response since 1920 (!) when the trade union movement was taking its first steps. Lenin himself in 1920 gave answers to the same arguments.

Lest remember some of those arguments:

- Some comrades use the argument that ITUC can change (!!!). Although it has not changed the last 60 years. To become some thing else than what it is now. However, the truth is stubborn. The opportunists around the world have always used this argument that they can transform a reactionary organization into a “left” organization. In the end, those organizations that fell for this argument, did not manage to change an inch from the central policy of ITUC, on the contrary they were integrated to it. Organizations like the CGT of France, the CGIL of Italy, the CCOO of Spain -who had, in the past, strong bonds with the working class and they had millions of members while being affiliated to the WFTU- today in the ITUC they have lost these great class-oriented characteristics. The bureaucracy, the corruption, the compromise has taken over

their leaderships. The labour masses are hoping for them to find again these old values.

Believing that you will transform an international organization that was created by different materials into something else is like trying to plant a tree in the ocean. Or better, to stick your head in the mouth of a shark believing that from inside its stomach you can beat it.

Learning from our history, building the future

Instead, The workers of the world and our ancestors of SACTU built WFTU with many sacrifices and struggles. They protected with passion its class-oriented characteristics for it to grow and to become, day after day, more capable to lead the international proletariat in this struggle.

There were circles outside the working class that tried to destroy WFTU in 1949 and in 1991. No matter how much they tried to weaken the trade union movement and to deprive it from an international center, they did not succeed. They failed! The WFTU is alive and is getting stronger.

It will become stronger as long as in national level the class oriented forces gain ground over the collaborators. The trade unions around the world

have embraced this new course of the WFTU. They have recognized its value. More than 150 organizations have become members of the WFTU the last 6 years.

Our collective leadership which consists from the trade union organizations of Cuba, India, Greece, Venezuela, Nigeria, Brazil, Vietnam, Sudan, Palestine and others, is a leadership that proves daily that from top to bottom the WFTU is an organization of the working class.

Comrades,

- There are some who are using Lenin to hide their true aims. They distort and use some parts of his writing while they hide the rest. There is an argument based on what Lenin wrote in 1920 in the known article to the German communist about leftism, the infantile disease of communism. Their argument is that communists must fight within reactionary unions.

Firstly: Lenin talks about the infantile period, for 1920 according to the conditions of his own era. Those who mechanically transfer the conditions of one country at a given time into another era, another country and another time for the movement, are

purely dogmatists. This is a dogmatic mistake.

Secondly: The supporters of such an opinion confess indirectly that ITUC is a reactionary organization.

Thirdly: Lenin says “now we have the immediate task to guide the labour masses in a new position that secures the revolution”.

Is ITUC struggling for the revolution? Does ITUC have anything to do with socialism?

Fourthly: Lenin emphasizes that: “This struggle must be waged ruthlessly, and it must unflinchingly be brought—as we brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions”.

For all of these tasks that Lenin demands, what did those who participated in the reactionary organization achieve the last 60 years? Nothing! All these years the real power was in the hands of the USA, the UK, Germany, Australia etc.

Fifthly: It was Lenin himself and the resolutions of the 3rd Communist International in 1921 that invited all the unions around the world to abandon the yellow international organization of the day, the

International of Amsterdam and join in masses the Red Trade Union International (RILU), who Lenin himself played a pioneer role in its foundation. RILU, the Red Trade Union International is the ancestor of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Someone would consider that more than 100 years after the first steps of the trade union movement, the workers would be dealing with a different environment. Someone would argue that today we must change our orientations and modernize our words. Forget about capitalism, imperialism, exploitation. Start talking about class peace, democratic capitalism or other empty phrases.

But If someone reads the resolution of the 3rd Communist International about the tasks that the Communist Parties had undertaken in 1921 someone would believe that this document was written today. It was actually the 10th of the 21 preconditions for a communist party to become a member of the Communist International that it would defend and support the Red Trade Union International and “wage a stubborn struggle” against the yellow compromised Amsterdam International.

Or they would not be accepted as members.

Today, in 2012 we must learn from our history in order to take a decisive step forward to the future that we must build for the working class today. To learn from our true history and not from distortions.

The contribution of WFTU to the liberation struggle

With equal respect, we study and learn from the great history and the great struggles that the heroic SACTU and the rest of the affiliates of WFTU organized in common. Struggles against apartheid, for the rights of the black workers, for the recognition of the first non-racial unions, for the recognition of SACTU, for the freedom of the imprisoned comrades, for the boycott of ships, communications and transactions of the inhuman apartheid regime. The WFTU was then strong and present in this long struggle. The trade union-members around the world and its millions of workers responded to every appeal of the WFTU for solidarity to the South African workers.

Moses Mabhida our leader, Mark Shope, John Gaitsiwe, Moses Kotane, Leslie Massina, J. B. Marks and the living legend Eric Mtshali with

their relation with WFTU they played a great role in the organization of African trade union movement, in the creation of the first trade union in Africa and the foundation of the first All-Africa Trade Union Federation (AATUF).

What kind of trade union movement do we need today?

With this great history and experience in our shoulders, comrades, we have to respond to the key question of our times. What trade union movement we need in national and international level to fight effectively for the interests of the working class against the monopolies, against the multinationals? To win battles and to improve the living conditions of the workers and the poor people. To pave a new course where the wealth will belong to those who produce it.

To respond to this question, we as WFTU, study the new conditions of the capitalist development and the capitalist crisis and as WFTU we struggle to educate our members and friends to form trade unions with specific characteristics that will be able to fill the shoes of the intense tasks of the contemporary struggle

We need trade unions that will be:

- Class oriented and revolutionary organizations of the workers struggling against the capital and against imperialism

- Democratic in operation and worker-controlled.

- Unions that will have leadership that comes from the ranks of the working class. Leadership that respects criticism and self-criticism. Leadership with proletarian discipline that will be dedicated to the struggle against bureaucracy and corruption. Leadership that will be often renewed.

- We need unions that will struggle with determination against the discriminations of workers according to race, gender, religion etc.

- Unions that will promote the alliance between workers, farmers, labour youth and working women.

- Unions that will fulfil their internationalist duties of proletarian solidarity with the people fighting around the world against imperialism.

- Unions that will educate the generations of workers with the history and the lessons of the international and national trade union movement and the struggles of the working class.

- Unions that will intervene in the International Organizations, that will demand solutions in favor of the workers, that will demand democratic and trade union freedoms and will defend any remaining positive international collective agreement.

With such unions we can bring closer the strategic goal of the socialist society. This kind of unions is what WFTU is struggling to build. Not compromised unions, not unions that are only legal consultants, not unions departments of the ministries of labour, not trade unions members of the Boards of their multinational companies.

Unions that will struggle for that “one extra slice of bread” until the working class gains the whole bread that it produces itself and distribute from “everyone according to his work, to everybody according to his needs”.

This is why we have taken the resolution from our Presidential Council in South Africa to call the unions around the world to join forces, to unite their voices and take the streets of the world on the 3rd October 2012 to demand adequate food, clean water, decent housing, proper medication, qualitative education for all the people. To demand

the end of the plundering of the natural resources from the transnational corporations. To demand that the wealth will belong to those who produce it.

The role of COSATU in the international arena

The international working class has been in the corner for too long. It is our task as progressive unions to join forces for a decisive step forward. For the strengthening of the international class-oriented trade union movement.

As WFTU, as an international class oriented organization with 82 million members in 120 countries, we don't want a COSATU spectator. We want a COSATU pioneer in the construction of the contemporary class-oriented trade union movement. We want a COSATU pioneer in the revival of the African trade union movement. We need a COSATU in the leadership of the international trade union movement on the side of the healthy forces around the world.

All of us believe that capitalism cannot solve the problems of the working class. Capitalism produces poverty, unemployment, hunger, slums, privatizations, state violence, wars, diseases, environmental disaster. Capitalism produces profits

for the few and misery for the many.

Only socialism can liberate us. Lets build it now!

The working class can become the giant that will sweep away the exploiters.

This is our duty. We have to lead the struggle of the working class to conquest the wealth for the benefit of the whole society!

Our struggle will be victorious!

Comrades,

In conclusion allow me, on behalf of our 82 million members in 120 countries, on behalf of this large class-oriented family of the WFTU, to express our respects to the thousands of heroes of this country who offered their life in the struggles for freedom and social justice.

Allow me to express our outmost respect to the South African Communist Party for its heroic struggles, for its honourable history, for its rich action and its vanguard role. As WFTU we are proud that legendary leaders like Mabhida was apart from a leader of the SACP also Vice-President of the WFTU. We thank you comrades, fellow communists, for the appreciation that you showed towards WFTU and

you continue to do so. All of us together we can make WFTU a strong, active and more effective class organization. An organization that will unite all workers to the overthrow of capitalism, until the end of the exploitation of human by human.

I wish you a successful Congress!

Thank you.”

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Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?**



Denmark, Copenhagen, 14 November 2012

13

Theories about the “independence and the neutrality” of the trade unions

The speech was delivered on November 14th, 2012 , in Denmark Copenhagen at a meeting of Danish Trade Unionists organized by the BJMF (Construction).

The reactionary changes globally over the last 20 years and the temporary dominance of the forces of capital and reformism at the political and ideological levels revived old theories about the “independence” and the “neutrality” of the trade unions. These perceptions claim that the coordination of the struggle of the workers in a class-oriented direction limits this struggle, subordinates it to political priorities and traps it into paths that are not serving the interests of the working class of each respective country. Naturally, the forces of capital and their supporters in the reformist trade unions are not only satisfied by such perceptions, but promote them and maintain them as, supposedly, modern and progressive.

In no case are these theories new theories. They are old theories. Such theories were expressed in the interior of the WFTU, even from the first Congress in 1945 in Paris, when the representatives of some trade unions, in particular the British and the Dutch, demanded that WFTU remain neutral towards the issue of colonialism, using the fraudulent excuse that “it is not a trade union issue”.

The confrontation was hard. The British and the Dutch were vehemently confronted by trade union leaders like the Indian S.A Dange, the Cuban Lazaro Pena, the Chinese Liu Chang Cheng, the Soviet Kuznetsov and others. After the vote, the resolution of the founding Congress of the WFTU says: "it would have been an uncomplete victory if the people of the colonies and the territories of all the countries were deprived by their rights in self-determination and national independence."

At each historic turn and retreat, the trade union movement had to confront such voices that urged it to adjust to "the new realities". Historical experience, however, proves that the great achievements of the trade unions and the working class have been accomplished when the trade unions were guided in their economic struggle by a clear orientation regarding the final objectives of the class struggle, when they strengthened their international proletarian coordination in opposition to the internationalized forces of capital and its agents in the trade union movement. The degeneration of trade union leaderships, such as the one of CGT France or CGIL Italy, who were

once class-oriented and rooted in the factories and the working places, is a result of such a retreat from the historical lessons of the class struggle. And the problem is not the degeneration and bankruptcy of the trade union bureaucracy, but the illusions that it cultivated in the working masses, the disarming of honest militants, the orientation towards “social partnership” and “class conciliation and peace”.

This is why several specific questions are worth answering once more.

a) “Independence” and “neutrality” vis-a-vis the final goals of the struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism and the abolition of the exploitation of human by human?

Although the trade unions can certainly not initiate such a revolutionary change, only through such a change will they accomplish their basic objective. The current full-frontal attack of capital against the achievements of the working class, its effort to exit from the economic crisis by shifting the burden on the workers, prove that any achievements and gains of the economic struggle can only be defensive, temporary and in danger of being reversed, if they are not linked to the broader

class struggle for a different power which will work exclusively in favor of the working class and its allies.

Isolated from such a political struggle, the trade unions can only develop within the working masses an economistic consciousness, which is doomed to be subordinated to bourgeois ideology, as it aims only to improve the position of the working class within the framework of capitalism; as it exhausts the objectives of the working class only to the financial improvement, either of the salaries or of the pensions etc. Those are improvements that the governments can cancel at once e.g. through the taxation of the working people. For this reason, the pioneer representatives of the working class, Marx and Engels, already in the middle of the 19th century, underlined the necessity for the workers to struggle not only against the consequences of the capitalist system, but, at the same time, against the system itself. They highlighted the role of the trade unions as “an organized force for the overcoming of the system of wage labour and capital”.

Historical experience itself has clearly shown that only where the economic struggle of the

working class in the trade unions was harmoniously combined with the political struggle for power, in coordination with the respective revolutionary parties, was it possible to abolish the exploitation of human by human. Such a combination in the struggle, not only does not limit it, but it facilitates wider strata of the working class to overcome superstitions and illusions, to free themselves from bourgeois ideology, to help in the construction of a real United Front of the working class towards the promotion of its common interests. Such a unified movement cannot be built through artificial welding or high-level agreements, but only in a direction of revolutionary change of society.

b) “Independence” and “neutrality” vis-a-vis the proletariat of other countries and its class-oriented trade union organizations?

During the last two centuries, the needs of capital for more and more markets for its commodities pushed it to expand in all corners of the globe. “The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country” (Communist Manifesto). The internationalization of

capital, which has intensified and multiplied since then, in the era of the transnational monopolies and imperialism, has added new tasks and duties to the working class, aside from the old ones. The labour movement wrote in its flags, next to the slogan for the abolition of the exploitation, the slogan: “proletarians of all countries, unite.”

Does this erase the old tasks of the working class in each country? No! The struggle of the working class against capital is (at least in form) first of all national. The proletariat of each country must finish its “business” first and foremost with the bourgeoisie of its own country.

However, the internationalization of capital’s activities creates new necessities for an international coordination of the action of the working class to confront: the common global strategy of the capitalists against the workers (IMF, EU, World Bank, OECD etc.), the activity of the large monopoly groups in many countries globally, the intensified danger for armed conflicts and human sacrifices of the working class, due to rivalries between the different parts of capital.

Does this international coordination of

the proletariat abolish the peculiarities and the particularities of the class struggle in each country?

The class-oriented trade union movement and its international organizations never underestimated the particular tasks that the uneven development of capitalism in the various countries forces upon them. However, they never feared to highlight the common principles and objectives that ought to be the background of each consistent class struggle and that determinately unify the interests and the action of the proletariat internationally.

In our days, the hypocrisy of all the opportunist forces in the trade union movement has been exposed. Look at the positions taken on the imperialist attack against Libya in 2011, when 135,000 people were killed. The leadership of ITUC, the trade union leaderships of CGT France, of CGIL Italy and others like the British TUC, the German DGB, trade union leaderships from Netherlands, from Sweden, supported the imperialist war. Why? Their main goal was for the bourgeoisie in their own country to win a bigger share from the plundering of the oil, the natural gas and other wealth-producing resources of Libya. From this plundering of the

wealth of another People, the opportunists take a small share, through privileges or through their salaries.

See the position of the sold-out leadership of CCOO Spain in the crisis that took place on April 2012 between the two states of Argentina and Spain, when there was a threat for a military confrontation triggered by the “nationalization” of the Spanish monopoly Repsol-YPF by the government of Argentina. This Spanish monopoly is stealing for 14 years the oil of Argentina. The leadership of CCOO agreed officially and in writing with the Spanish government, the capitalist owners of Repsol-YPF, with the European Commission and with all the other thieves involved! Why? Because it gains from the plundering of the natural resources and the exploitation of the working class of Argentina. Though salaries, though privileges, it gets a share of the loot.

In both the abovementioned examples, the hypocrisy of the opportunists who only in words talk about international solidarity and internationalism, while in reality they exploit the international proletariat, is obvious.

c) “Neutrality” of a class-oriented trade union towards the WFTU and the ITUC?

The necessity of struggle of the working class in each country against the power of capital itself (not only against its results) and the necessity of international coordination in the same direction make it clear that the above question must be answered in the negative. The position and the actions of ITUC and its basic organizations at the national level prove that they have nothing to do with the real defense of working class interests, even the immediate defensive ones, let alone the long-term ones. So, no class-oriented trade union that respects its role and its mission, no true trade unionist who wants to remain part of his class, can be captured in such a fraudulent dilemma.

No one can claim that “our union is.. independent and decides on its own”. This means it decides on its own to be with the servants of the IMF and the World Bank? What do all these excuses mean? Whom do they convince? No one!

The same mistake is done by some comrades who propose the unification of WFTU and the ITUC! This is as if someone would propose the unification

of a revolutionary communist party with a social-democratic one, or even with an ultra right-wing one. Like someone would try to unite oil with water.

The workers have to realize that WFTU and ITUC have two different historic roots, two different strategies, different objectives, different ideologies and theoretical basis. It is impossible to unite these two distinct lines, the one promoting the struggle against Capital and Imperialism and the one leading to subordination to the objectives of Capital and of Imperialism.

However, if we do assume that at some point some bureaucratic leaderships would move forward with such a process of artificial welding, it is for sure that the next moment, the process for a new international class-oriented organization would begin, because its existence is an objective necessity.

A general conclusion

All these theories that come and go have as a central aim to justify the retreat, the compromises, the abandonment of the principles of the class

struggle. They have as an aim to create excuses for the collaboration of trade union leaderships with the monopolies and their governments.

Finally, all these efforts aim to hide from the ordinary people the truth: that those trade union leaderships have lost any contact with the real interests of the working class and that, at the same time, they are dangerous for the working class of the other countries.

We have the duty to expose in the eyes of the workers those trade union leaderships and that political line. Until we drive away all those types of “leaders” from the trade unions, as Lenin was writing and underlining.”



Greece, Athens, 12 December 2012

14

The rewriting of history as a profitable enterprise for the labour aristocracy

The speech was delivered in the framework of the 2nd WFTU Trade Union School to trade unionists from Latin and Central America at the Central Offices of the WFTU on December 12th, 2012.

“Over the last years, there has been an intensifying organized effort for the rewriting of history, aiming towards the distortion, the counterfeiting, the oblivion and the slandering of key historical moments. This organized effort is developing all around the world and is centrally planned, funded and based on specific ideological orientations. It serves the short-term and long-term goals of the Capital and the Imperialists.

Their effort is unfolding in all fields of the public life and all its levels. The culture, the science, the political and the trade union level, the ideology, the economy, the language, the religion, the traditions, the customs, etc.

The overthrows in the international scene that took place in the period 1989-1993, forming new international correlations of forces and the temporary retreat of the world labour and revolutionary movement, are, objectively, facilitating the Capital's plot for the rewriting of history. It is not by chance, that they target first and foremost the events before and after the World War II, they choose and attack the history of the Soviet Union and the other former Socialist countries, they insist on the rewriting

of the history at the level of Internationalism, of International Solidarity and the civil wars.

For this plot they utilize:

- The publication of new books
- The publication of new books for pupils and students.

- The production of movies for the cinemas, the TV, Video, Video-games and toys.

- The organization of Congresses, Conferences, Seminars, Educational Programs.

- Articles in all types of Mass Media.

- The manufacturing of historical resources though the internet.

Let me remind you that 65% of the movies imported and projected in Europe are produced in the USA.

Mechanisms and tools

For the implementation of all these plots, the bourgeoisie, the capital and the imperialists utilize young and older scientists' who, with monetary compensation, develop "researches" which they then appear as scientific work and present them as "new data" of the historiography, they supposedly

discover new documents. Young historians put their souls in the market, targeting a career of riches; cadres of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who, enjoying a life with bourgeois habits by cashing their scientific knowledge though smearing themselves with corruption and lies, manufacture together with the imperialists “new” facts and “new” documentation.

In all the countries of the Eastern Europe after 1993, hundreds of “foundations”, “institutes”, “think tanks”, and “working groups” have been formed and founded. The European Union and its mechanisms are processing various methods and are the mastermind of all this campaign. The coordinating role on behalf of the European Commission has been undertaken by the group “Reconciliation of European Histories”. At its last meeting (September 2012) this group was concerned to find ways for “the better coordination in the teaching of the history of the 20th Century to the member-states of the European Union...”. In similar spirit it has published the “declaration of Prague”, “the program of Stockholm” etc. In this general effort, International Organisations are also participating actively, such

as the ILO.

All these mechanisms are interrelating with other individual and specialized mechanisms that feed and complement one another. For this project, the counterfeiting, the oblivion, the rewriting of the history at the level of the International Trade Union Movement, important role is being played by special institutes, old and new institutes in Europe, such as:

1. The **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)** which was founded in 1925 from the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) and was named after the social-democrat politician and first Prime Minister of Germany with the SPD, Friedrich Ebert. Its headquarters are in Bonn and Berlin. It is controlled by the German state, it has 19 educational centers throughout Germany, it has offices in 103 countries of the five continents. **Its budget for the year 2010 was 137 million Euros and was funded by the Federal Ministries of Development and Cooperation and the European Commission¹.** The FES officially belongs to the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).

2. In the same country, Germany, the German Party of the Greens has its own institute under

the name Heinrich Boll which was also funded by the State Budget with the amount of **48.9 million Euros**².

3. The Left Party “Die Linke” owns the institute Rosa Luxemburg which was funded by the State Budget of Germany with **30.3 million Euros only for one year**³.

4. Important role is also played by the foundation named Konrad Adenauer (KAS) which with an annual budget of **160 million Euros** works in 120 countries in Europe, the Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and the Latin America⁴.

5. A champion in the region of Latin America, the Caribbean and the Central America is the leadership of CCOO of Spain, which has founded and is utilizing as a corruption tool the institute PyS (Paz y Solidaridad).

H PyS is a network of NGOs which were being founded in each prefecture (autonomia) of Spain by the CCOO since 1989. Today there is a network of 17 organizations (one in each prefecture of Spain) that are working under the guidance of the central Paz y Solidaridad and are completely controlled by the labour aristocracy that is ruling today the

leadership of CCOO.

The PyS has close cooperation and is being co-funded by the programs of the Agencia Española Cooperación Internacional al Desarrollo (AECID), from the department of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the “International Cooperation and Development”. Hence, it works as a mediator transferring state money of the Spanish state for propaganda in South America⁵.

Its aim is to “promote the human rights and support the class-based democratic trade unionism in the countries where it is active”. I.e. it promotes reformism, class cooperation and the distortion of history.

The example of Nicaragua is one of the most typical. During the revolution of Sandinistas, the WFTU supported by all means –morally, materially, politically- the **Sandinistas**, while ICFTU (ITUC) supported by all means the **Contras**. Today the “professors” from Spain teach that the “international trade union movement supported the Revolution of Sandinistas”, thus, though this general and vague teaching, they completely exonerate the collaborators of the Contras and the Imperialists. In

this way, they manage to keep FNT (Frente Nacional de los Trabajadores) captive in the ITUC!

The PyS in 2008 had in their hands more than 12 million dollars. The action plan of the Pys in Andalusia includes countries such as: Morocco, Mali, Senegal, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, the regions of Cono Sur (Argentina, Chile ec.), the Comunidad Andina (Peru, Colombia, Bolivia).

The leadership of CCOO has been accused many times for corruption and enrichment. It uses the old left history of the CCOO for today's business. In Spain, the Spanish governments though the state budget provide every year many millions of Euros to the trade unions of CCOO, UGT and others with the aim to use this money for the "education" of the trade union movement in Central America, in the Caribbean, in South America etc. In the state budget of Spain for the year 2010 this amount reached the 10 million Euros. Also important sums are also secured though the European Union, the International Labour Office (ILO) and other International Organizations. The last years in Spain leading trade union cadres have been accused for corruption and plundering of huge amounts of

money.

6. A similar institute was founded in 1993 in South Africa under the name NALEDI (National Labour and Economic Development Institute). The particular institute operates today as an NGO. The NALEDI cooperates in common programs as a permanent partner with Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (SASK) which is funded by the Finnish trade unions, the government of Finland and the European Commission⁶.

7. All these mechanism and many more have their branches within the Central, National, Trade Union Organizations, within the institutes and the scientific research groups. Elsewhere observably, elsewhere secretly, underground though NGOs. They use the same persons, the same manufactured “sources”.

Simultaneously, they have a strict division of labour, they build special structures and branches, and they plan specific programs for specific countries and specific sectors.

For example, the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) has undertaken in its task specific countries such

as: Moldova, Rumania, Bulgaria where it has found “scientific teams”, “directors” etc. All these operations are being funded heavily by the state agencies and huge amounts are being spent. The Labour Institute in Greece received as a funding just from the European Union the outrageous sums of 5.5 million euros in 2010, 5 million euros in 2011 and 13.5 million euros in 2012.

8. Within the same framework, the Turkish State provides significant amounts though its mechanisms for the control of the trade union forces in countries such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Albania, Bulgaria etc.

9. There are central trade union organizations, the more characteristic being in the countries of the North Europe such as Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland etc., which operate together with the state services to plan and intervene in the internal of Trade Union Organizations mainly in countries of the Third World. And it is worth to note, that while these “trade unionists” in their countries have not organized the last decades any important struggle, however, they travel around in countries such as Nepal, South Africa, Mali, Chile and elsewhere to

“teach” the younger trade unionists of the countries of the Third World.

- In Sweden, the last general strike took place in 1980. Since then, for the last 32 years no general strike has taken place. In the contrary, the Swedish state provides every year huge amounts to the Central Unions to develop “special projects of trade union education” in dozens of countries around the world, especially the Third World. In a period of one year, the 2011, the Swedish state funded with 108 million Krona (about 12.5 million Euros) the organizing of 124 programs of trade union education in 94 countries.

- In Switzerland, the only general strike took place in 1918 at the anniversary of the October Revolution. Since then no strike has taken place. Also since 1937 there is an agreement between the state and the Central Trade Union (today UNIA) known as “Labour Peace” which is constantly being modernized and enhanced. There, the labour aristocracy organizes many seminars with an orientation towards the financial and legal issues.

In 1997, the Global Labour Institute (GLI) was founded in Geneva which is also active in the five

continents and holds seminars in the countries of the Third World with a huge funding.

For the workers in their countries they have “forgotten” what struggle is but they never get tired travelling around in the countries of the Third World.

- The Labour Aristocracy of Denmark, which lives in burden of the Danish working people, has formed a modern army of paid trade unionists who travel around the Third World, live in luxury hotels and “teach” trade unionists from countries of the Third World. Above are the annual salaries of the top leadership as it appears in their official website for 2011: H.B President 165,624 Euros, L.R Vice-President 130,148 Euros, E.H and M.K, Secretaries 120,736 Euros⁷!

- Similar is the picture in Norway, in Finland, in Netherlands etc.

The tactic of the European governments has already started to be used by governments in other continents as well. Similarly the same tactic is used by some Regional Offices of the ILO.

They use the leadership of many Trade Union Organizations which they have transformed into mediators, agents, dealers of the interests

of the bourgeoisie. In reality, these Trade Union Organizations have lost their character and have been transformed into tools of captivation for the ordinary workers. The leaderships of these Trade Union Organizations usually use “left” slogans, pretend to be internationalists, utilize their ex-militant past, they use fake words of struggle but in the crucial movement they always serve their funders. These unions and their leaderships are mechanisms of the capitalist state.

Furthermore, all these governments and the bourgeoisie utilize a large number of NGOs for their aims. In the USA alone, according to James Petras there are more than 65,000 NGOs working for the government.

The methods they use

The most common method used is the distortion of specific events. They select a historic event and then they change its facts, make it up according to their needs and then advertize it hoping that the older generations will biologically seize to exist, there will be no living witnesses and the younger generations, that have not witnessed

the events, will be manipulated more easily.

Let's see a few general examples outside of the trade union spectrum:

- The whole capitalist world claims that the Invasion in Normandy was the crucial defining moment of the World War II. I.e. they use an existing fact –the invasion in Normandy- and add “specialists”, marshals, directors and writers to manufacture convincing arguments that the invasion in Normandy was the most important, the crucial, the defining moment. With a quick look on the internet, one will notice that there are more than 216 books internationally dedicated on this purpose, there are more than 32 movies and innumerable soap-operas in the television. All those are repeating the same point one way or another, that it was not the Red Army who defeated fascism, that the battles of Stalingrad, Moscow, Sevastopol were of minor importance and that the Victory was defined by this “smart” move of the western governments to invade Normandy, which they call D-day! To achieve their goals they hide the fact that the landings in Normandy took place in June-August 1944 when the end of the war had already began. They also

hide the real casualties of the war because from the real numbers indirect valuable conclusions can be made. E.g they hide the fact that the casualties of Britain were 375,000 deaths, of the USA 405,000 deaths and only the Soviet Union had 20,000,000 deaths in combatant and civilian population. The Red Army had the most military losses (65%) amongst the Allies (Britain and USA had about 2% each). The siege of Leningrad was the most bloody in the human history.

- Another typical example from the same period is the international campaign of slander against Joseph Stalin. Numerous articles, books, movies etc. have been manufactured for this purpose. Amongst others they claim that J. Stalin: “did not love his children” and that “he never liked as a father his son Yakov”. All these slandering campaign was manufactured to hide the truth. What is the truth?

Yakov Dzhugashvili, son of Stalin, was a Lieutenant of Artillery of the Red Army fighting in the front line of the battle. His unit was surrounded by the Nazi troops; they were captured and transferred to the military concentration camp in

Germany. According to the data, from April to June 1942 he remained captive in the concentration camp in Southern Bavaria and later in March 1943 he was transferred to the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen, where he was held at the special camp "A." Hitler later sent a telegraph, to Joseph Stalin asking for the release of the German Field Marshal Friedrich Von Paulus, who was arrested and held captive, in exchange for the release of Yakov. In his written response Joseph Stalin responds: "I will not trade a Marshal for a Lieutenant. In our army all of them are my children. You have in your hands not only my son but thousands of my sons. Either you will free them all or my son will share the fate of the rest". Yakov Dzhughashvili was shot in his attempt to escape the concentration camp in the end of 1943. This is the truth.

There are many other similar examples. The Trade Union Movement is used to confront such manufactured slanders. We will only refer to two such examples from the same country, South Africa. The one took place some months ago; the second refers to a previous period.

- Based on the vivid discussion in the internal

of COSATU South Africa, for the disaffiliation from the ITUC and the affiliation to the WFTU, there was a special debate organized in the framework of the National Conference of COSATU for the International Issues that took place on May 2012, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The main debate on the issue was based in a research prepared by the NALEDI Institute on the international scene, the scenarios of international affiliation and their consequences. They manufactured a document which was anticommunist with many slanders against the Soviet Union and against the history of the international communist and progressive movement. It even went on to undermine the role of the SACTU, the South African federation which organized the trade union struggle against the apartheid and was affiliated to the WFTU thought-out its existence, as well as the role of the WFTU in this struggle. It hid the relations of ICFTU with the capitalist states. It accused WFTU for not giving away to the publicity all its members, that WFTU is divisive because it does not accept to dissolve itself and become assimilated to the ITUC. This document stated clearly that if COSATU disaffiliates

from ITUC and becomes member of the WFTU, the trade unions of Europe will stop funding it with large amounts and they will also stop funding other trade unions in Africa.

The document presented as fraud facts extracts of interviews which were anonymous in their majority while the key informant was a 76year old commentator with his extracts from his articles on the internet. I.e. this commentator wrote articles on the internet, which were then presented as legitimate sources.

- In the same case, the ITUC is trying to hide the fact that during the apartheid in South Africa, the ICFTU supported, materially and substantially, the racist trade unions of the white workers which did not accept the affiliation of black workers nor did they believe that they should have the same rights with them. In the book that was published in 2012 by the WFTU and the WFTU Africa Regional Office entitled: "The South African Worker and the WFTU. Shoulder to Shoulder" many facts and documents are revealed about this case.

Today, there is an effort to cover up the role of Institutes such as the African-American Labour

Center (AALC) which used money of the government of USA and the CIA to buy off trade unionists, to divide the common action of the workers, to weaken the struggle against apartheid which was beneficial for the multinationals for a long period. There is an effort to present these methods of bribing as an expression of solidarity, to enhance the role of the capitalist governments and to reduce the value of the real solidarity expressed by dozens of trade unions and progressive organizations, the role of the Soviet Union and the Peoples Democracies. The counterfeiting of history is used in order to distort the contemporary conclusions, the current struggle.

In the modern era, where the internet has gained an enhanced role in the circulation of information, huge parts of the youth consider the web-sources and the encyclopedias of the internet as valid sources of information. The modern methodology of rewriting the historical truth is heavily conducted through the internet. Typical example is the Wikipedia.org an “encyclopedia” which is constructed by the users of the internet

and it is based in the common belief that since the information provided for each word are not questioned thus it has to be true.

Their objectives

The following question arises for all these trade unions and governments: Why are they providing such huge amounts of money? Is it out of love for the workers of the Third World? NO. Is it out of care for the trade union movement? NO. The truth is that they are interested to control the consciousnesses and the minds of the workers and the peoples in order to exploit politically, economically, military and geo-strategically the countries of the Third World as well as the rest of the world since the labour aristocracy of the developed countries is also gaining from this exploitation. This is why they teach, they organize seminars, they find organs, agents, in the leaderships of the trade unions; they assist the formation of a Labour Aristocracy and a labour bureaucratic elite.

For this strategy they need their “own” history. They manufacture it with the methods we described

previously.

Their objectives are many, polymorphic and long-term. The interests that are hidden behind this operation have nothing to do with the past. They refer to the present and mainly to the future. Their objectives for the trade union movement target the a) consciousnesses and minds of the workers, mainly the young ones and b) the pockets of the trade union aristocracy. Especially in periods of deep capitalist crisis the capital prioritizes the blocking of the development of the class struggle, the blocking of the radicalization of the popular masses and the young generation. This way they try to trap the workers in the muddy waters of opportunism, of social-democracy, of the continuous retreats and compromises. All these aim for the longevity and the perpetuation of capitalism in order for the system to overcome its difficulties and for the exploitation to remain intact.

These attacks always target the Working Class, as a whole class; its composition, its characteristics, its position in the productive process, its historic role.

For the imperialists to achieve their objectives,

the historic struggles of the Working Class and the popular resistance must be slandered. The heroes and the fighters of the working class must be stained, reduced and eliminated and instead, the traitors, the organs of the bourgeoisie, those who bended over capitalism must be projected and honored. They must convince the young workers that they should not fight for their rights, in the contrary they must believe that the solutions will be provided by the collaboration with the capitalists and imperialism. They try to convince that socialism and capitalism are similar socio-economic systems.

The history can be a laboratory for the future

In conditions of deep crisis of the capitalist system, the capital exploits the people, the countries, the wealth-producing resources. The operation of “rewriting the history” aims to exonerate the exploiters, to exculpate the capitalists and to prevent the working class from orienting its struggles towards the overthrow and the abolition of the exploitation of human by human, to prevent the People from demanding the control of their own

future.

For the class-oriented trade union movement and the World Federation of Trade Unions the history is not a memorial. The history is not only for the historians. The history is not to be kept in shelves. The WFTU embraces the Marxist thesis that the “history of all hitherto societies is the history of class struggles.”

We all have the duty to study the history of our people, the popular struggles, the struggles of other People and the Working Class, the course and the history of the International Trade Union Movement; to know the history, to know the truth, to learn.

We have the duty to expose the plots of the bourgeoisie and the labour aristocracy; to inform the workers, to inform the base of the trade unions; to trust the workers of the base, the base of the trade union movement and to ask them to drive away from the leaderships of the trade unions those traitors of the working class.

The history can be a useful tool in the contemporary class struggle. We want the history, its lessons to become a useful tool in the modern daily struggles. We want the history as a witness to

the moral, political and trade union superiority of the international working class.

As an important Greek University Professor has noted: “we want the history to be a laboratory for our future”.

1. <http://www.fes-ethiopia.org/pages/about-fes/facts-and-figures.php>
2. https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download_de/foundation/201301_Brochure_Heinrich_Boell_Foundation.pdf
3. http://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/stiftung/Annual_Report_2013.pdf
4. http://www.kas.de/upload/dokumente/jahresbericht2011/Namen_Fakten_Bilanzen.pdf
5. <http://www.pazysolidaridad.ccoo.es/pazysolidaridad/Conocenos:Presentacion>
6. http://www.akava.fi/en/current_issues/the_trade_union_solidarity_centre_of_finland_sask_has_multiplied_its_reach_during_its_first_25_years_of_action.6211.news
7. <http://www.lo.dk/>



Russia, Moscow, 22 February 2013

15

WFTU: What it is and what it wants

The speech was delivered at the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in Moscow, Russia on February 22nd, 2013.

“Dear comrades and friends,

On behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions allow me to convey a greeting to the Congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and wish to you Congress every success for the benefit of the Working Class and your People.

It an honor and joy for the delegation of the World Federation of Trade Unions to be in the country whose Working Class, who trade union movement, whose trade union cadres where the heart and the mind of the World Federation of Trade Unions from 1945 to 1990. As the current leadership of the WFTU, we are proud for the role of Trade Union Movement of the Soviet Union and we are grateful its internationalist contribution and its progressive role in the International Trade Union Movement.

What is the WFTU and what the does WFTU want

The WFTU was founded in October 3rd, 1945

after the end of the World War II and under the impact of the defeat of fascism and the victory of the Red Army.

The foundation of WFTU was a mature outcome of the evolvement of the Labour Trade Union Movement in national level and expressed the necessity for an international coordination, the necessity for proletarian solidarity and common action of the International Working Class against the capitalist exploitation.

The WFTU is the organized, progressive section of the International Trade Union Movement and has as its main central objective the improvement of the living conditions of the International Working Class, the struggle for the demand of general trade union liberties, the simultaneous struggle for the overthrow of the barbaric capitalist system.

The long experience, positive and negative, the hard struggles of the Workers and the People from the era of Spartacus until today, confirm two basic timeless conclusions:

Firstly, that as Karl Marx wrote: “the history of all hitherto existing societies is a history of class struggle” and secondly that the International

Working Class cannot defend its short and long term demands and its class oriented objective if it does not have except from a political vanguard, its own strong, well-organized and theoretically equipped Trade Union Organ. Such an international Trade Union Organization, an international coordinating centre, which will have strong stable roots with the base, which will work for the base and will be empowered by the base. This is the role that the WFTU is obliged to play and is playing in the International Trade Union Arena.

We are proud for the course and the action of the WFTU from 1945 since today. It defended Socialism from the first moment of its foundation; it stood actively with moral, material and trade union solidarity to all the people who fought in a peaceful manner or in an armed struggle for their independence and liberation, it facilitated the survival of dozens of thousands of militants of the trade union movement who were under persecution and threat in Africa, in Latin America, in Central America, in Asia, in Middle East, in Europe, in the Caribbean and elsewhere in every corner of the world. We are proud because the most radical

slogans of the trade union struggles and action were written for the first time at the banners and the documents of the WFTU.

At this long and hard course, the WFTU was never afraid to recognize its mistakes, to make open self-criticism to the simple workers, to fight against its own weaknesses and delays. For the international class-oriented movement, criticism, self-criticism and emulation were and continue to be vital forwarders.

The WFTU since the first moment of its foundations confronted the hostility of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

In 1949 with the initiative of the governments of the USA and Britain, the first frontal attack was carried against the WFTU with the dirty manners of the CIA, the Intelligent Service and their counterparts.

Their initial aim was the dissolution of the WFTU and when it failed, they withdraw from the WFTU and moved to the disruptive move to found the ICFTU. The second effort took place in 1956 initiator of which was the Ministry of State Security of Austria with use of provocative methods and an

occupation by the police of the Central Offices of the WFTU in Vienna they seized all the archives. This effort of capitalism also failed.

In the years after the overthrows of the period 1989-1991, the WFTU was in a very difficult situation. It had to confront a fierce attack by Europeans and other opportunists from France, Italy, Spain etc. aiming for the dissolution and the integration of the WFTU to the ICFTU, i.e. the trade union organ of the USA, the European Union and the International Capital.

The plots of the opportunists failed and despite the great difficulties, the political persecutions and the anti- communism, the WFTU remained stable and maintained its historic course. There were forces that stood up and kept the WFTU alive.

After the 15th World Trade Union Congress that took place in La Havana, Cuba our organization started again to grow, to become stronger, to develop action and to regroup.

Today it has more than 82 million members in 120 countries of the world. It is present in all continents; it is present in all basic sectors of the production.

Two years ago, in April 2011 we held in Athens, Greece, the 16th World Trade Union Congress. It was an open, democratic, class-oriented Congress which took important decisions and formed the new objectives for the International Class-Oriented Trade Union Movement in the contemporary conditions.

According to these resolutions, what the WFTU objectives today are:

- The enhancement of the class-oriented, the militant characteristics of the trade unions in all the levels, in all the sectors. To accomplish this, the line of the class collaboration must be defeated; we must need to conduct an open war against the trade union aristocracy, the trade union bureaucracy and careerism.

- The strengthening of the class-oriented unions in the work places, in the monopoly groups, in the multinationals, in the big industries. In traditional and modern sectors of production. The activation of the workers strengthens the unions.

- The strengthening of our ties with the base, with the ordinary workers and the enhancement of the democratic functioning of the trade unions. With elected leaderships that will be accountable

on the base, which will express the base and will be supported by the base. Leadership that will respect the collective decisions and will promote the collectivity.

- The enrichment of Internationalism and international solidarity which are the tool of all the workers, especially today that the local, regional, sectoral and trans-sectoral coordination of the labour struggles is so necessary. The active defense of the people who struggle for their rights. For the right in the self-determination of their present and future.

- The constant pursuit for the Unity of the working class independently of any differences. The unity of the working class is a precondition for our class to build its social alliances with the poor peasantry, the self-employed, the progressive intelligentsia.

- The faith in the role of the working women and the working youth which can give new blood, new dynamics, new life and action to the trade unions. Their election in leading positions and the constant renewal of the leading core of the trade union organizations is vital.

- The utilization of the rich experience, positive and negative, in the forms of struggle and the content of the class-oriented struggles, the combination of the economic with the political struggle, the pursuit of demands that unify the workers and are in harmony with the contemporary needs of the workers and the popular families. The combination of defense, offence and the reserves.

- The continuous care for the ideological support towards the trade union cadres, through trade union education, international exchange and trade union programs that will enhance their faith to the fair struggle of the working class and the necessity of the class struggle; that they will assist the realization of the need to defend and strengthen the class-oriented characteristics of the trade unions.

- The necessity for each union to gain its financial independence without dependence from the bourgeoisie, from the international institutes of opportunism and the international centers of corruption. The financial dependence of the trade union gives birth to other dependences. The healthy financial self-reliance is the one that is only based in

the membership fees of the workers.

- The ability of each trade union to study the developments in its field, in its sector, and to utilize the developments for the promotion of the labour interests in all basic fronts of struggle, for the solution of all the labour demands, social security, salary demands and trade union demands.

- The understanding that the capitalist system has surpassed its historic limits, it is rotten and thus the solution and the real way-out for the liberation of the international working class cannot occur from the make-up and the modernization of the capitalism, but through its overthrow.

- The active participation to the struggles peace, friendship and cooperation between the workers and the people, the struggle against the phenomena of racism, xenophobia, neo-fascism. The consistent struggle against the imperialists, against the imperialist wars and capitalism which is the economic base of imperialism.

Dear comrades and friends,

We shortly described to you what the WFTU is and the WFTU wants. You have a clear picture of

our organization. We have nothing to hide.

We are ready to strengthen our relations with the working class of your country and to renew our fraternal relations with the people of Russia. The WFTU owes much to the Russian People and showing our gratitude we are ready to support in any way the strengthening and the class orientation of the trade union movement of the Russian Federation.

The strengthening of the relations between the WFTU and the Working Class of Russia and its militant trade unions is today more necessary than ever.

The deep capitalist crisis in Europe and the whole world, the restoration of capitalism, the poverty, the large labour migration and the anti-labour attack against the achievements of Russian people demand coordination and internationalist solidarity between our unions.

At the same time the intensified inter-imperialist competition, the imperialist wars and the aggressiveness of the monopolies and the multinationals impose upon us the high task of without further delay action through the ranks of the

WFTU.”



Brazil, Sao Paolo, 22 August 2013

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Opening new roads

The speech was delivered at the 3rd Congress of CTB Brazil in Sao Paolo on August 22nd, 2013. CTB is a trade union organization of 6

million members.

“Dear comrades of CTB,
Dear working people of Brazil,
Comrades and friends from all over the
American Continent,

We salute the Congress of CTB, a militant trade union Organization which steadily defends the interests of the working people in your country and the region.

CTB supported and continues to support the World Federation of Trade Unions in the new dynamic course that the WFTU has been driving over the last years with remarkable steady steps for the interest of the international working class.

New members from all the continents have been organized in the WFTU over the last seven years.

International Action Days have been organized by the WFTU for all the crucial issues that concern the working people. CTB has successfully participated and organized activities in Brazil during those days and we want to congratulate you for one more time.

The WFTU has been organizing international Conferences, Meetings, Forums in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and the formation of common positions and action in international level.

The WFTU has intensified its efforts for the organizing of trade union training programs, particularly useful in the contemporary conditions of the class struggle.

The WFTU is stabilizing its presence and intervention to the International Organizations such as the UN in New York, the FAO in Rome, the UNESCO in Paris, the ILO in Geneva.

The WFTU publishes useful and rich materials in international level and it generally has a modern, dynamic, trustworthy image which more and more organizations are trusting as the line of class struggle gains ground and becomes stronger.

We have made important steps, the WFTU is alive, it is active, it has presence, it has a voice, it has class-oriented direction. We all agree. We all recognize this upward course. This is the truth. Some are very worried by this course. But off course, all our friends, all our members are very happy, they feel proud for this course which is a result of the

common effort of all our members and friends, of all our cadres in all continents and sectors.

On behalf of the entire leadership of the WFTU I would like in this important Congress of CTB for us to thank all our cadres in their countries and in their sectors who fight steadily, honestly, without being afraid of the difficulties and the autocracy of the capitalists and their governments.

We are committed to continue this course.

However, we cannot be satisfied when in international level the international working class is being pressed up against the wall by an endless attack against the labour rights, the working hours, the collective bargaining, the social security, the retirement ages and rights, the free public Education and Health systems, the cheap and safe housing etc.

Can we be satisfied when our colleagues lose their lives every day in the work places from fatal occupation accidents or when parts of the working class and the popular strata are suffering from the imperialist aggressiveness and the competition for the wealth-producing resources in Africa, in Asia and in Latin America?

Can we be satisfied when despite the enormous productive possibilities and the existing needs of the population, millions of youth people and other workers are out of the production, of the creativity and the contribution to the society, by being unemployed?

Can we be happy when the multinationals around the world are having a blast with the oil, the diamonds, the gold, the uranium, the agricultural production, the water, the air, the natural and mineral wealth instead of solution being provided to the critical social problems?

In such times, it is the duty of each upstanding, conscious and determined class-oriented trade unionist to seriously think: why the workers' problems grow but the response of the workers movement is not growing, according to the expectations?

Today, we need to realize why there are increasing millions of unemployed, homeless, people living in poverty, great masses of the young generation facing a precarious future, yet however a significant part of these popular strata doesn't actively participate in the trade union movement. Do they not trust the collective action?

We are in conditions of deep and prolonged capitalist crisis but the workers' struggles, the participation in the struggles and the results of the struggles are not growing according to the needs.

Only the class-oriented movement can put, discuss and project such thoughts and such perspective with those characteristics,. Though this debates we can bring the trade union movement in international, regional, national or sectoral level closer to the formation of a proposal that will be contemporary and vital for the revival of the trade union organizations; for the enhancement of their great role as schools, as tools that will provide solutions to the workers' problems and will bring the success of our struggle for the abolition of the capitalist exploitation.

The 16th World Trade Union Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions which was held on April 2011, in Athens, Greece discussed upon all those burning issues and concluded, after a widely collective and substantial discussion, in some meaningful guiding principles for what kind of movement we want and what kind of movement

we need. What must we change, what must we leave behind and how we must move forward with boldness and faith to our principles and the experience of the movement in all continents.

Because we all agree that the reconstruction of the international class-oriented movement into a movement strong, class-oriented, massive, equipped with the past experience in order to avoid traps and mistakes and a movement determined to lead the popular movement into the clash with monopolies and capitalist, with powerful elements of internationalist solidarity and with the given perception that the national struggle is interacting with the international struggle, is more than necessary.

It is our opinion that the methodical and decisive organizing of new members into the trade unions is a basic provision for the reconstruction of the trade union movement.

The working class must be organized into the class-oriented trade unions. The trade unions must be the voice of the working class, its genuine representative and they must have increased presence in all the basic crucial sectors of the

economy, the large industries, the place were large parts of youth, women, migrant workers work in. Special attention must be given for the organizing first and foremost of the most deeply exploited and hard working part of the working class.

Our trade unions must daily strengthen their open and democratic function, they must provide space to their members to express their opinion and contribute actively in praxis, they must enhance the criticism, self-criticism and the comradely emulation. Their administrations and leading positions should include young people, women and migrant workers. Life-long leaders should not exist. We don't want trade unions that are closed, unions of a small elite which shares the positions, the travelling and the benefits. We must strike careerism, bureaucracy and corruption. We must strike individualism and project the values of collectivity, common class-interest, humanitarianism and brotherhood.

A crucial provision for the reconstruction of the class-oriented trade union movement in all levels is the role of the base. We must help the base become the real protagonist, the base should make the decisions. If the base is in the position to control

and evaluate then, we believe, the course for the revival and the reconstruction of the trade unions will be shorter and more successful.

The formation of class consciousness is the next essential provision. The class oriented trade unions must unite the workers per sector and per region so that they can form class conscious bonds amongst the workers; That we are all part of the working class, class brothers actually, irrespectively of our position in the productive line.

It must be realized in depth that besides the high prices, the corruption, the waste of public money, the kickbacks and the tax-free policy for the businessmen, the exploitation of the working force is something much deeper and much bigger. It is our future versus the profit of the capitalists. The worker must think as part of his class and be determined and equipped in each turn of the struggle.

The cultivation of class consciousness helps us unite all the workers in a entity that is based in the common interests of our class. We are able this way to unite all the workers for the immediate, direct demands as well and at the same time to unite them for the ultimate victory over the system of the

capitalist barbarity.

The class consciousness will put aside the extremist racial theories that aim to divide the working people into local and foreign, it is the one which will protect all of us from reformist delusions; it is the one that will give us confidence in the hardest times of the long and difficult struggle that we are conducting.

At the same time, a basic provision for the reconstruction of the working class movement is the selection of stable and real allies. Allies of the working class are all of those who are harmed by the monopolies and their activity and are not exploiting labour force. The construction of a powerful and effective popular movement cannot become a reality without the alliance with the poor farmers, the self-employed, the youth and the women of the popular strata. The accumulation of forces around the working class, its goals and objectives is a basic precondition for the way forward.

Finally, there is a day to day need for the enhancement of the internationalist character of the working class. Each struggle conducted in national level reflects upon and lightens the way for

dozens of countries, it strengthens the international movement. Each national trade union as part of the international class-oriented trade union movement has a duty towards the international working class to struggle with all its forces for the intensification of the struggle in their country. Additionally, each trade union which feels the difficulties, the attacks, the threats and the obstacles of each struggle must see the need to become a supporter of the struggles conducted in other countries even in other continents.

This way it empowers its colleagues to continue fighting and it spreads fear and worries to the governments and the employer.

In an era where there is great interconnection and interrelation between the countries and their economies as well as intensified activity of the multinationals in all sectors, the development of common struggles plays a crucial role. The effort that the WFTU has been working on, to strengthen the TUI's is a very important effort with significant role for the present and future.

Dear comrades and friends,

The effort for the reconstruction, the revival, the strengthening of the class-oriented trade union movement is a continuous, uninterrupted process so that in each era we can successfully express the real interests of the working people, to defend and effectively demand their contemporary needs in the lives of all wage-earners.

By intensifying the characteristics that we shortly presented, we believe that we can make our trade unions more alive, more attractive, more effective for the contemporary expectations of the working people in all corners of the planet. By enhancing these elements and further more of them according to the level of each country and sector we can be optimistic that we are doing our duty towards our time and that we are simultaneously building the foundations for the next generations to step on.

All these provisions become meaningful and powerful when they have a steady compass. When we know where we want to go. And we want to bring the New that is born today in each small or bigger strike, in each small or bigger demonstration; we want a society where prosperity, creativity, productivity and solidarity will take the place of the

rottenness of profit, of the imperialist wars and of the exploitation of human by human. We want a society where the working people will have the power and authority and where exploitation will be left behind.

With these thoughts, I wish every success to your Congress and once more we commit in front of you that as WFTU we will continue our common course and our common comradely struggles.

Thank you”

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was founded in Paris, France on October 3rd, 1945. Since its foundation up to nowadays it has played a significant role in the course of the international workers trade union movement. Though difficulties it has continued its course always on the side of the People who struggled and fought for a better tomorrow. Always on the side of the working class and in the first line of the class struggles.

During the period 1992-2005, the WFTU faced many challenges, serious obstacles and difficulties. The 15th Congress which was held in La Havana, Cuba in December 2005 was a critical turning point for the WFTU course. A new dynamic, contemporary, internationalist and militant course is being observed since then. The new leadership provided the WFTU with a new impetus, a stronger militancy and rich action in every corner of the world. The WFTU was reconstructed.

The historic 16th World Trade Union Congress held in April 2011 in Athens, Greece was a new vital step forwards for the WFTU.

Today all, opponents and friends agree that WFTU is a course of continuous development. This course started from Havana and continues until today.

Tomorrow, WFTU must become more strong. This is what the needs of the working people demands and this is the main task of all the members and friends of the WFTU.

George Mavrikos comes from the island of Skyros, a small island in the North Aegean Sea of two thousand citizens. His parents were farmers. He lived in Skyros until he was 15 years old (1950-1965) and then he moved in Athens.

He got involved in the grass-root movement from his school years. During the 7 years of dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974) he was fired twice from his work in textile factories due to his trade union and political action. He participated in November 1973 in the Polytechnic uprising of students against the dictatorship in which 27 militants were killed by the guns of the army and the police. He worked for 14 years in big factory of agricultural machinery where he was elected chairman of the workers union.

In 1982 he was elected as organizational secretary of the Athens Labor Center (EKA). During 1985-1986 he studied in the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences in Moscow. He was a member of the European Social Fund in the European Union. From 1993 to 1998 he was elected General Secretary of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE). During 1999-2007 he headed PAME (All Workers Militant Front). In 2000 he was elected Vice-President of the WFTU and Secretary of the WFTU Regional European Office. In the 15th Congress of the WFTU in Havana, Cuba, he was elected General Secretary. In 2007-2012 he was elected Member of the Hellenic Parliament with the Communist Party of Greece. In the 16th Congress of WFTU in Athens Greece, George Mavrikos was re-elected General Secretary of WFTU.

