

GEORGE MAVRIKOS WFTU SECRETARY GENERAL THE ILC PLENARY COLLECTED SPEECHES

ENGLISH



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INTRODUCTION

The book you are holding in your hands is a collection of speeches by the WFTU Secretary General, George Mavrikos, delivered from the ILO podium in Geneva, from 2006 to 2019. The WFTU chooses to issue it in this congress year for many reasons: not only because this year marks the end of a historic period in the WFTU life, i.e. the phase of its **reconstruction, development and strengthening** after the disintegration that followed the setbacks of the 1990s, but also because the class trade union struggle itself is entering a new historical phase, with new complex ideological and political challenges, new tasks and new dilemmas for the young class militants.

Therefore, this short publication has multiple goals:

1. To be a **useful document** for any militant, journalist or history scholar who will be able to see in the following pages what were the burning questions of each year, how they were expressed in a place that was not a favorable environment for class forces and how, in the midst of the avalanche of daily developments, the class criteria of the WFTU could discern what was worth saying on that world stage.

In other words, the book also fulfills a necessary **educational function**: that of cultivating in the young fighter the ability to distinguish the key issue, the primary question in his daily actions but also to expose it with courage in the hostile environment in which he usually acts; that is, the class unionist must say things as they are, even in a hostile environment.

2. This compilation is **undeniable testimony of the upward course** of the WFTU; a course that was the product of the collective effort of millions of workers around the world from 2005. It serves, therefore, as evidence of the revitalization of an organization whose enemies described it as “clinically dead”. It is enough to look at the central problems that the speeches deal with and it is understood that in the first years they start from questions of survival and the formulation of an autonomous policy for the workers, to later escalate in complex elaborations, in higher tasks for the world proletariat.

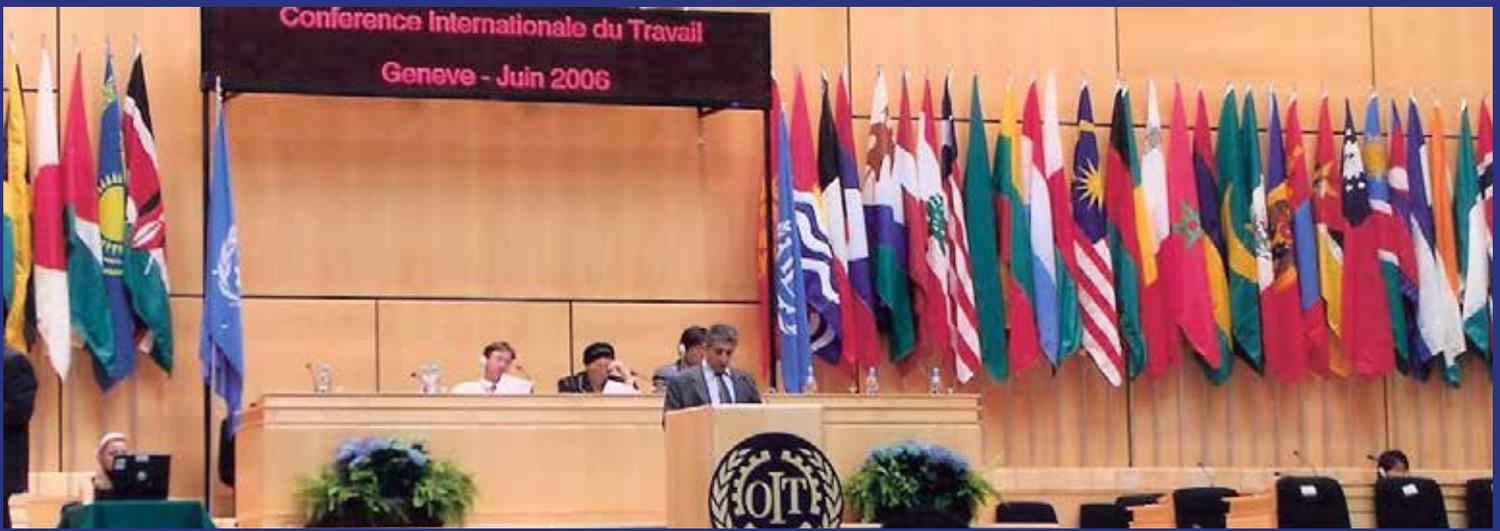
3. This book is at the same time an **ideological-political manual** for all young trade unionists: within only 5 minutes given for each speech, it was made possible to fit complex ideological-political issues that concerned and still concern the international trade union movement: what is capitalism, what does class unity mean, what is the role of the yellow union leaders, what does practical internationalist solidarity mean and how do the imperialists redistribute the world.

In fact, at another level, the speeches also fulfill an even more important ideological and political function: they show the anti-worker character of international organizations, the negative correlations within them for the working class and how we should act in these spaces. The WFTU, without underestimating the usefulness of its intervention there, “did not deify” the ILO, did not kneel before it, nor did it feed illusions among the workers about the new role of the ILO as of 1991. On the contrary, it unmasked, revealed, warned.

Thus, it is with these reflections that we deliver this small publication to your hands and critics. Before each speech we chose to cite a brief explanatory introduction in which a small auxiliary comment is made on the historical-trade union context in which each speech was delivered.

We wish you a good reading.

Christoforos Giakoumelos,
WFTU councilor, jurist



95th ILC - 2006: A New Imperialist World Order vs Class Unity of the Working Class: The Challenges of Tomorrow

Introduction: This speech was delivered few months after the historic 15th WFTU Congress held in Havana, Cuba. WFTU has just started its new upward course and the WFTU General Secretary sets the tone for the struggles to come: class unity of the world working class against imperialism and its goals.

Dear colleagues,

We live in a period of growing poverty and unemployment. Exploitation of children, women, of economic immigrants is getting stronger. The removal of rights related to social security and labour relations, the absence of trade union rights affect the workers and bring large profits to monopolies and transnational corporations.

Nowadays, the aggressiveness of the US Government is unleashed under the pretext of the defence of democracy. The interest of the USA in democracy is not genuine. They use it as an excuse, in order to threaten Syria, Sudan, North Korea, Belarus, Venezuela, Bolivia. The embargo against Cuba and its people is continued for about 40 years. Are those practices interpreted as democracy?

Today they use the need to prevent the spreading of nuclear weapons as a pretext to invade Iran, tomorrow to invade another country.

Why does all this occur? Who truly believes that the US Government is interested in democracy, elimination of nuclear weapons, human rights, or the world peace?

The real causes are deeper. The reasons are:

- > The distribution of spheres of influence
- > Control of energy sources, markets and routes
- > Control of Europe's energy map

- > Competition between the US and the EU for the control of Eurasia
- > Economic, political and military hegemony in the world.
- > Building alliances between the US and the EU
- > The aim of stopping closer ties between China and Russia.
- > Control and guidance of the peoples' movements on all continents.

This is the truth. These are the real reasons.

Today the role of the World Trade Union Movement against all these developments is to unite all workers independently of their gender, colour or religion. To unite and organize the struggle of workers. To resist the choices of capital.

We want a world without exploitation of man by man, a world without wars, unemployment and poverty for the popular strata.

In order to succeed those aims, we need unity and action. The WFTU is open in common action with all the Workers' Trade Unions, in central and regional level, willing to fight for the rights and the contemporary needs of workers.

Poverty, unemployment, exploitation, environment, nuclear weapons, imperialist wars in general as well in regional level can form the basis for our initiatives. An additional basis will be the need for Trade Union rights, democratic freedoms, for the right of every people to self-determination.

The unity which is promoted by the WFTU is a militant unity. It is also a class unity for all workers against monopolies and imperialists.

Our action against multinationals, against monopolies, is also a chance for all workers. We are ready to proceed to activities and undertake initiatives.

Thank you.

08.06.2006





96th ILC – 2007: ”Decent Work” & Hypocrisy of International Organizations: A working class perspective

Introduction: At the time the speech was delivered, the ILO had just launched the slogan for “Decent Work”. The WFTU General Secretary seeks to define what decent work means for the working class in the 21st century, debunking imperialist lies and unmasking the hypocrisy of International Organizations.

Dear friends

In the ILO Documents and reports, in the report of the ILO Director General the question of decent work is the main issue. No one disagrees with the basic need for decent work. We need though to clarify what we mean by decent work from a scientific, methodological and sociological aspect. The general reports and generalizations cannot enlighten the problem. The World Federation of Trade Unions supports the question for decent work and at the same time we consider it necessary to invite all parties to clearly and openly define the meaning of this question. We assert that in the 21st century, the world working class is facing serious attacks from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and international capital. And because of those attacks, the rights of workers are strangled and held back. Workers rights are removed. At the same time, the poverty of ordinary people is getting worse and profits for multinationals are accumulated as well.

Under those economic and social conditions, what should be the parameters, which define “decent work»? First of all, we mean stability at work. To be certain there is work for all. The work to be paid regularly and the worker to receive a satisfactory salary. To work five days per week, eight hours per day and to have social security cover. Conditions of health and safety to be followed in all workplaces. Workers’ children to have access to a free education and health system. To resolve the problem of housing for working people. Workers to have trade union and democratic freedoms, the abolition of child labor and exploitation. That is work without the exploitation of man-by-man.

Without having clarified on these specific terms, any discussion about decent work is just words. Take the example of Colombia. During the last ten years, two thousand four hundred trade unionists have been murdered. In Philippines more than eight hundred and fifty murders of trade unionists have been recorded in recent years. In Iraq, the occupation forces are killing thousands of innocent workers. What

means dignity and decent work in these countries? What is the practical value of words and promises without any meaning?

In the third world countries tens of million of people live and work for one dollar per day. Two hundred million immigrants live under conditions of complete penury. In the European Union today unemployed people are more than twenty-five million. For all these people the meaning of decent work is identified with the right to live. A right, which has been eliminated by the capitalist barbarity. Another serious impediment for the workers in many countries are the huge debts especially of third world countries. It should be remembered that 20 per cent of the world's population possess and enjoy the world's wealth, while 80 per cent live in misery, famine and disease. The figures are devastating. Africa's debt is about \$230 billion. For Asia, Africa and Latin America, these debts are creating poverty, exploitation, and the political and military dependence of these overcharged countries. Last year People's Republic of China has given a bright example by canceling 31 African countries' debts totaling US \$1.27 billion. Let's follow their example.

For the WFTU the necessity to cancel the debts of third world countries is a central point. It deals with the struggle for decent work. Debts are killing ordinary people. Approximately 10.5 million children under 5 years of age still die every year in the world and today nearly all child deaths occur in third world countries, almost half of them in Africa. Another scary fact is that, according to the WHO, life expectancy in developed countries is 71 years while the third world's life expectancy is approximately 38 years! Why does this situation continue in the 21st century? How decent it is for people to die with such ease in the 21st century? Who is responsible for this situation? How responsible are the governments of those countries? What about the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the USA, the European Union? Do they have any responsibility at all? And if not, who is responsible? Whose fault is it? Or may be we have to blame those who die.

Dear friends, we consider as a serious mistake the fact that Colombian Government accused for continuous violations of labor and democratic rights has been exempted from appearing in the Standard Commission because of pressures from employer's side. While this happens a progressive and democratic government, as it is the Government of Venezuela that cares for the workers and has proven it with actions, is been taken to the Standard Commission. Why? Is this transparency? Is it justice? Is it equity? We condemn both facts.

We express solidarity and support with the workers of Belarus who face a decrease of their living standards because of the policy of the European Union against their country. In conclusion, for the World Federation of Trade Unions, for all militant and class oriented trade unions of the world it is a serious, contemporary duty to unite all working people, men and women, irrespectively of religion, color and language. Let's all unite, fight for and demand the satisfaction of people's needs in every country. Let's all unite and organize the workers' defense and counter-attack.

Thank you.

16.06.2007





97th ILC – 2008: STOP the monopoly within the ILO !

Introduction: As the WFTU grows stronger under its new leadership, it struggles to break the monopoly of the yellow trade union leaderships within the ILO. Through this speech, the WFTU General Secretary demands equal and proportional representation, democracy and transparency at all levels within the ILO, without exclusions or discriminations.

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and as they have logic and conscience, they have to behave fraternally one to the other.”

This is the way the article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, created in 1948 starts. Then, we have to wonder:

Those millions of human beings dying from hunger and lack of water in the World, aren't they protected by the Declaration?

Those thousands of people and children living in conditions of slavery or semi-slavery are not included in the Declaration?

The eight hundred million of migrant workers who live in conditions of complete penury, earning half a dollar per day, what can they expect today from the Declaration?

The big debts of poor countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the exploitation of their wealth-producing resources by the transnationals are in conformity with the Declaration?

The war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the attacks of Israel against the people of Palestine and against the people of Lebanon, don't they violate the Declaration?

Dear friends,

All this underlines that as we are in the 97th International Labour Conference, we cannot forget that unfortunately, we still have serious lacks and massive violations of the trade union rights all over the World.

An other negative exemple which must also not be repeated in the future are the recent elections in the Governing Body held a few days ago.

The first article of the Universal Declaration that I read to you in the beginning of my speech, talks about the principles of “equality in rights”, talks about “logic”, talks about the principle of mutual respect. Are these principles reflected today in the composition of the ILO Governing Body? Were these principles taken into account? Is there equality? Is there any logic?

The WFTU being the oldest international trade union organisation founded in 1945 and having a rich militant history and activities, is today excluded from the Governing Body of the Workers Group. Is this fact in accordance with the principles and priorities of UN and of the ILO? Does this fact reflects any respect for democratic and trade union rights?

We all understand that this situation is detrimental to the ILO’s prestige, objectiveness and representation. We want an ILO with polychromy, pluralism and open to all ideologies. Without exclusions and discriminations.

The WFTU together with the independent trade unions and democratic trade unionists will continue its struggle until the end. It will develop an intense action with main demands:

- To change the elections’ mechanism, to become a democratic and proportional one.
- The monopoly of the one to come to an end.
- All the international organisations and the independent ones need to be represented on the basis of their arithmetical power. Through proportional representation and rotation system. Without exclusions and without anyone to be treated unfairly.

To end, from this floor today, we wish to declare in public that in the forthcoming elections for the position of ILO’s General Director we decided together with our affiliates and friends to support the re-election of Mr. Juan Somavia for this position.

We are certain and we hope that in the next three years with his personal creative efforts the positive steps for the representative composition of the Governing body will be accelerated.

Dear colleagues

The WFTU since its 15th Congress follows a new uprising course. It lives in a new period.

We are open to act jointly with trade unions in international, national and local level for the interests of the working class against the monopolies and the capital. We are open to undertake common initiatives irrespectively of ideological differences, of color, race or language. To resist poverty, hunger, thirst, exploitation. To resist wars and to act for the friendship of the people and the international peace. This is for us the true meaning of the Universal Declaration and this is how we pay tribute to the 60 years of its Anniversary.

Thank you.

10.06.2008





98th ILC – 2009: The world in the face of a new capitalist crisis: What is the workers' response?

Introduction: In 2009, the massive world capitalist crisis broke out. The world was changing dramatically; a new capitalist offensive against workers' achievements had begun to unfold and the WFTU General Secretary sets hereby the basic pillars of the workers' counterattack. He also expresses the WFTU internationalist solidarity with the Palestinian people, suffering from the Israeli aggression during the 2008-2009 Gaza Massacres.

Dear Mr President, dear colleagues

a. The economic crisis: the realistic and necessary targets.

On behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) we believe that the worries, the thoughts and the anger of the world's working class due to the widespread attack against its rights and achievements are fully justified. The capitalists and the capitalist governments use the economic crisis to remove rights of the popular layers. As a solution to the economic and financial crisis, they encourage the strengthening of the monopolies and the banks with public, state money, while at the same moment, they reduce wages and pensions, they increase unemployment, they increase poverty. They close the way for a decent future for the young generations. They use as basic tools the privatizations, the blow of social security, the black and undeclared work, the exploitation of migrants.

The rise of racist and neo-fascist parties in the recent elections for the European Parliament is a loud bell that nobody should ignore. The economic crisis leads the workers in mistaken ways. One more example is what happened last week in Peru where the government has killed 240 natives in the Amazon. The case is typical and shows what many people mean when talking about green development. To kick out the indigenous farmers from their land and to be exploited by monopolies. This is the modern capitalist world. Profits for the few, poverty for the peoples. The World Federation of Trade Unions has undertaken several initiatives for the action of trade unions against the consequences of the economic crisis. We organized an International Trade Union Conference in Portugal, a Conference in Nepal, in Belarus, in Cuba, in Nigeria, etc.

Our central proposals are:

- * Drastic reduction of military expenses
- * Increase of social spending on today's social needs
- * Support the living standards of workers
- * Stop the privatizations
- * Support of the self-employed and farmers.

We call upon all workers and all unions throughout the world to fight together for these goals which are both realistic and necessary.

b. The situation in Palestine and the Arab region.

Dear Colleagues

For years now the people of Palestine suffers from the attacks and threats of the Governments of Israel. And along with Palestine, Lebanon, the Syrian Golan, the people of Iraq, Sudan, Iran, are also targets of Israel. We all have a good reason to wonder : how far this aggression will go? For how many more years the army of Israel will kill children and women? Until when Israel will refuse the establishment of an independent Palestinian state?

The WFTU since its foundation until today is on the side of the Palestinian people. Alongside with the Arabs. Not with words but with action. And today we say that peoples can live peacefully. All peoples must live in peace. A basic condition for this is the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Arab territories. To put an end to the occupation

c. The situation within the ILO

Dear representatives of the international trade union movement,

For the last three years, here, from this podium, we firmly support that the ILO must implement both to its functions and organs, the UN principles, the principle of equality, of proportional representation, democracy and transparency. The lack of these characteristics, hurt first of all the ILO itself.

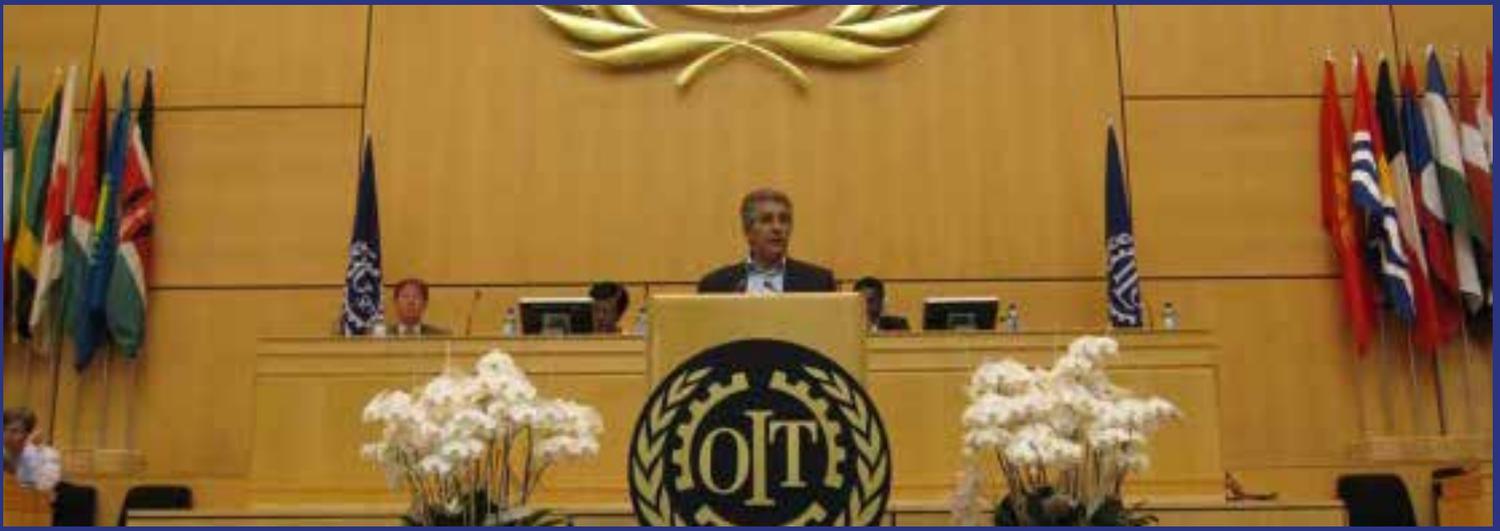
The requests we put are fair and realistic. They need to answer us after all: in the ILO Governing Body, is it fair for a trade union with 20,000 members to participate as Titular member and the ACFTU with 200 million members not to be a titular one? Is it realistic that a trade union with 70,000 members is amongst the Titular members and the WFTU with 70 million members to be excluded? We wait for a reply. For an effective answer.

We will not stop until a fair and mutually acceptable solution is given. This would be in favor of workers, would be in favor of the international trade union movement and for the ILO.

Thank you

17.06.2009





99th ILC – 2010: Workers must not pay for the crisis!

Introduction: As the world capitalist crisis is getting deeper and more brutal, the WFTU General Secretary exposes in a Marxist analysis the mechanics of the capitalist crisis, highlights that all bourgeois governments-either neo-conservative, liberal, or social-democratic- follow the same anti-worker recipes and underscores that the workers must not pay for the crisis.

Ladies and gentleman, I would like to start my intervention at the Plenary session of the 99 ILC with a criticism to all those who exonerated the government of Colombia and condemned the government of Venezuela. Those are unacceptable decisions that reduce the ILO prestige. They show that injustice, darkness and secret negotiations prevail instead of objectivity. We condemn those trade unionists who betrayed their class and agreed on those decisions.

Dear Colleagues, in 2009-2010, we live in a period of global crisis of the capitalist system. This crisis is deep and embraces all areas of the system: the economy, politics, society, culture, environment, even the personal relationships of the people.

All governments are either neo-conservative or social-democrat ones and follow the recipes and the directions jointly decided in Brussels and Washington. Take a look at the governments of Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain, everywhere they follow the same policies: they attack on workers, remove trade union and labour rights, forward redundancies, poverty, privatizations.

The ILO data have shown a big rise in unemployment and poverty rates. In Greece, the social-democratic government reduced the wages of civil servants by 25%, it doubled the lay-offs percentages and increased the retirement age by five years for women and three years for men. Currently it is reducing all pensions by 40%. It is selling public assets, abolishing collective contracts, increasing taxation on ordinary people, etc. In Britain, the conservative government follows the same policy. Two weeks ago they announced cuts on public spending by 7 billion euros. In Spain already the salaries of civil servants were decreased by 5% as a first step and other measures will follow. In Germany, the famous car industry OPEL announced 8000 layoffs in Europe and at the same time reduction of 265 million euros during 2010 in the annual salaries of workers. The same situation exists in Portugal, Romania, Denmark, everywhere. The situation is the same in the USA, in Asia and all continents.

This financial crisis of the system is very deep. We believe that in the years to follow, the crisis will further worsen and become deeper. This situation creates and exacerbates the competition between

monopolies and multinationals. Between states. Between the EU and the USA. The conflicts on the rate between euro and dollar are hard and will continue. The strong intra-capitalism rivalries embrace the roads and pipelines of gaz and energy, the control of new markets for new spheres of influence etc. You all follow the confrontation that takes place between Germany and France about who will capture Africa and Middle East. You see what happened in Haiti immediately after the recent earthquake. The socialist Cuba has sent 1.600 doctors. The USA sent 16.000 soldiers. Take a look at Latin America, at the militarization of Colombia to hit the Bolivarian processes in Venezuela, in Ecuador, in Bolivia and elsewhere. Look at the brutality and the crimes of Israel against the Palestinians, against the Gaza Strip, against all Arab People. Crimes which are committed with the tolerance and the hypocrisy of the International Organizations.

Look at Mexico, where the government is attacking SME trade union (Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas). In headlines, this is the picture of the capitalist system today. Is there a cure? Is there a way out? The international capital is attempting to control the anger of the people by changing governments, by changing people and putting businessmen as Prime Ministers. With a paid propaganda they are trying to convince workers that the IMF has pro-workers and social purposes. The ruling class tries to convince that the crisis and the difficulties are temporary.

Us, the World Federation of Trade Unions, we do not believe this kind of analysis. We use the analysis done by Karl Marx for the cyclical crises that keep coming back. Because crises lie in the DNA of capitalism. Even the slightest development, any development rates may occur in the coming years, will be low, temporary and weak. And most of this development will be based on the bleeding of workers, on the poverty among the unemployed, on the uncertainty of youth for the future. Any little development will be based on social ruin. So far as World Federation of Trade Unions we have organized many seminars, meetings with specialists and we have also organized major struggles. The hope for workers lies in the struggles, in involving young people, women, immigrants, indigenous people in these fights. In Europe, Asia, Latin America, the people march on the streets and demand.

Today everybody understands that the crisis concerns everyone. The crisis is everywhere. So the coordination should be generalized. Coordination, cooperation – Internationalism and solidarity. Not each one alone but all together, in all countries, all workers, all the unemployed. All together to fight with modern demands to respond to the current needs.

Based on today's data we ask:

- The workers not to pay for the crisis. Dismissals to be prohibited.
- To stop the expenditure on military equipment and this money to be granted to the unemployed and the poor.
- To take action now on erasing the debts of Third World Countries.
- Free and Public health, education, food and water for all.

Our organization, with these main objectives, but also with others corresponding to the needs of each continent and each country, is going to hold on September 7, 2010 the International Day of action of the trade union movement. We urge all fighting trade unions to act, to participate, to join us.

Through small and big struggles, the international working class will understand that the future of humanity can be drastically improved only through the abolition of the exploitation of man by man.

Thank you

16.06.2010





100th ILC – 2011: Capitalist crisis: Who is to blame? What is to be done?

Introduction: The speech was delivered just a few months after the 16th World Trade Union Congress, celebrated in Athens, Greece. The WFTU, equipped with new decisions and analysis, comes to destroy capitalist lies on the causes of the crisis. At the same time, the WFTU General Secretary makes an open call to the young generation to join the union ranks, condemning yellow trade union leaderships which overall discredit the union world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues

Two-three years ago when the new crisis of the financial system had appeared, we heard the analysis of several people who were trying to convince us that we had to put the blame for the crisis on some golden boys and the casino-capitalism and other such nice and pleasant comments. Then the same analysts have tried and are still now trying to convince us that we must put the blame on the bad Greek workers, on the bad Portuguese workers, to blame the Spanish people, the Italian citizens, the Irish, the Belgians etc. All these analysis have one single goal: to hide the truth from the workers. To hide the fact that the crisis is a deep crisis of the capitalist system and multiplies the inter-imperialist and inter-capitalist rivalries for the control of new markets, the redefining of the borders, the control of countries and wealth producing sources.

This is the truth. This is the reality.

- See the conflict between Euro and Dollar.
- See the conflict for the head of the International Monetary Fund.
- See the conflicts in North Africa.
- See the imperialist barbarity against the people of Libya.
- See the strategy of U.S. and NATO for the so-called New Middle East.

Us, the members and friends of the World Federation of Trade Unions, organized two months ago in Athens Greece, the 16th World Trade Union Congress and we discussed all these relevant and critical issues. 828 delegates from 101 countries openly, democratically and in a militant way have analyzed the contradictions of the contemporary world, we drew our conclusions and we adopted our new tasks.

- Based on this rich discussion we note that the crisis of the capitalist system is paid by workers, the crisis exacerbated the contradictions between trusts, cartels and groups of states; it gives birth to wars and creates states puppets of the United States and their allies. It increases the inequality and competitions.
- The crisis is used by all the capitalist governments to reduce wages, to cut pensions, to privatize public property, to generalize the part-time work, to abolish collective bargaining and collective agreements.

- The capital's propaganda that through anti-popular policies will create growth and course of recovery is a myth.
- See for example Greece where this policy has increased the official unemployment from 7% to 18% and has decreased "the growth rates" from 3 % to minus 4%.
- See what happened in Ireland, where the unemployment rate was last reported at 14.6 percent in April of 2011.
- See Portugal, where the 1st quarter of 2011 the unemployment was reported at 12,4%.

Overall in Euro-zone countries is confirmed that the so called growth is weak, temporary and very fragile. On average in EU countries is about 0.6% without any dynamic. In Japan is foreseen around 2%. In the U.S. despite the great promises, OECD predicts that a weak growth will be around 2.6% while U.S. debt will rise to 107% of GDP and unemployment to 8.8%. What does this data mean? It means that the capital and its political officials are unable to provide a viable solution in favor of workers. The crisis exists in the DNA of the capitalist system.

In front of this situation, the trade unions in the world and the workers must and have the duty to resist, to struggle, to unite all workers regardless of political, religious and other differences. All workers we belong to the same social class and we can fight together. We can fight to defend the achievements of our people. We can fight to meet the contemporary needs of the workers, of the immigrants, of the homeless, the unemployed etc. To struggle for a public social security, for education, for health, for democratic and trade union freedoms. To promote all current demands, while calling the workers to find a real way out in a world without exploitation of man by man.

Dear Colleagues, across Europe and around the world there is turmoil within the people, there is indignation, there is disobedience, there is fear and there is optimism. There are difficulties and opportunities at the same time. It's a positive sign all these gatherings of young people mainly through Face book in the Internet. We are not snobs towards any struggle or any movement that comes out in the streets and the squares. On the contrary, the organized struggles around the world are helping young people's concerns and indignation. At the same time we need to emphasize that these phenomena are not new, we recall May 1968 in France, the time of Marcuse, of Woodstock etc.

The World Federation of Trade Unions calls upon all young people to join the trade unions, to fight in organized way, to see the role of the working class which is a protagonist role in the struggle for social liberation. We have the duty as a class oriented trade union movement not to leave without assistance the new generation; to help to define goals in the struggles, to organize its fights, to recognize its adversaries and to cooperate with friends; to convert spontaneously into a conscious, organized and collective movement.

About all these serious, critical and timely issues it should be held here in the ILO, democratic, open, fair and deep debates. Unfortunately, the monopoly that prevails in the administrative level and the undemocratic exclusion of WFTU from these bodies does not allow it. But we will continue our struggle for a militant, internationalist trade union movement and solidarity. We will continue to tell people in all countries that we need to hit the trade union bureaucracy and the trade union tourism we are sorry to see here in Geneva with trade unionists that come as tourists and spend money for workers. These are images that alienate people from the trade union movement. People in the workplaces is working hard, they get exhausted, they sweat to produce goods, and there are some trade union bureaucrats who exploit their sweat coming to Switzerland for personal promotion and trade union tourism.

Against these negative phenomena, the trade union cadres of WFTU, its affiliates and friends, other independent trade unionists and other trade unionists who belong to some other international, we have the duty to strike these phenomena that harm the trade union movement, change its character, its role and mission and hinder the younger generation to feel attracted by the trade unions and get organized in the struggles.

Thank you

08.06.2011





101st ILC – 2012: Only the workers can save the workers!

Introduction: That year's speech was delivered amidst harsh situation for the world working class; new imperialist wars were devastating Syria and Libya, unemployment was rampant, trade unionists and strikers were being killed in many countries. The WFTU General Secretary exposes the ILO's ineffectiveness and calls upon the workers to take their fate in their own hands, as they have nothing to gain from capitalist promises.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ILO congress is being held again this year in conditions of deep crisis of the capitalist system. Deep crisis affecting all levels and sectors: economy, political, cultural and environmental life. The EU is in deep crisis in Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Belgium... etc. The crisis is now reaching the center of the EU as it knocks on the door of France and sends messages to Germany itself. The crisis is affecting almost all EU countries and increasing the risk of competition between countries. Germany is trying to build its own alliances with Russia and other countries. And France is trying to build its own alliances as well. Competition between these capitalist states for control of new markets, new borders, control of oil and gas pipelines and energy pipelines will pose serious risks to peace and the people. 120.000 people were killed in Libya due to the control of wealth-producing sources.

In Syria, the emirs, kings and sultans of the Persian Gulf, along the same line as the Turkish government, supply the Syrians with weapons to kill each other. The imperialists are pushing South Sudan to make new demands day by day. The situation is dangerous in Somalia, Nigeria and the Falkland Islands. The slander of the US and the EU against Venezuela and the harsh blockade of Cuba, as well as the situation in Palestine and Afghanistan, all add to the picture of imperialist interventions.

As workers and class-oriented trade union movement, as WFTU, we have the obligation to expose the conspiracies of the exploiters and to inform the workers of the militant spirit of the struggle for internationalism and the constant struggle against the imperialist wars. WFTU members and friends held important struggles last year. They focused on the fight against unemployment, since unemployment is a social phenomenon resulting from capitalism.

Unemployment affected everyone, especially women and young people. The figures show that 75

million young people are looking for work. The ILO expresses wishes, generalities and vague promises. And for a long time we heard beautiful words about dignity, equality and democratic rights ... etc.

Today, ILO leaders, there are 200 Palestinian children prisoners in Israeli jails; what did you do to get these children their freedom, to have a life and a decent future, a decent job in their country? Today, in Central America there are 4000 children thrown out to join drug trafficking gangs .. how many times did you intervene? Today alone, about 1.500 children will die due to lack of access to water and related diseases. What were your interventions and how much did they affect?

In Greece, 2350 poor, retired and unemployed people have suicide in the last two years; how did the ILO denounce the Greek government? Today, 52% of the unemployed in Greece and 50.5% in Spain are young. The WFTU sent a letter to the ILO to intervene against the dismissals of young people and you did nothing about it. Thousands of young people are suffering from HIV because they do not have access to the medicine. The average age has dropped to 20 in Botswana, 16 in Swaziland and 13 in Lesto Zambia over the past decade. In Swaziland, young people are being persecuted by the state and an anti-democratic regime, trade unionism and trade unions are being criminalized. In Kazakhstan, trade unionists and strikers are being killed .. in Malaysia, trade unionists are being fired .. in Colombia, trade unionists are being killed every day as the ILO put out Colombia from the Standards Committee.

Workers are dying every day in the mines in Chile and Peru; what are the protection measures imposed by ILO? The right to strike is under attack continually. The attack on the workers of the Hellenic Steel Company who have been on strike for 200 days and the workers of the French Unilever who have been on strike for 600 days, proves it. In Panama, Panama Canal workers are banned from striking.

As for us, for WFTU the words dignity equality social justice are not generalities. They have a constant depth and substance, and for this reason our regional offices and the TUI members of WFTU develop action in all sectors and areas.

On October 3, WFTU declares a world day of action under the slogan “food, clean water, books, medicine and housing for every worker and all the people.” We choose this content because we deeply believe that it is a crime in the 21st century for workers to die of hunger and thirst and for people to live on the streets, for millions of students to have no books and for the sick to have no medicine. We consider a the fact that crime both the multinationals and the monopolies rob the countries’ wealth-producing resources and leave the peoples in misery. This world is not fair, this world is not democratic. As WFTU we will continue the struggle to change it and build a world without exploitation of man by man.

12.06.2012





102nd ILC – 2013: Action, action and action against capitalist barbarity!

Introduction: As the first years of the crisis have passed, devastating results for the working class are more than evident: multinational companies have become even richer, while capitalist blows to the workers' income, trade union freedoms and right to work have become even more violent. Through his 2013 speech, the WFTU General Secretary calls upon the world workers to step up their struggle against the exploitation and capitalist barbarity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The living and working conditions of the working people today are more difficult since the last ILO Conference. Extremely high unemployment, reduction in salaries and pensions, privatizations in all sectors of the economy, criminal policies of the employers regarding the lack of safety in the workplaces, state violence and imperialist aggressiveness are prevailing. It is characteristic that while the produced wealth is increasing and the markets are full with products of all sorts, that while the profits of the multinationals and the majority of the employers remain extremely high, the rights of the workers are being eliminated. These are the characteristics of the deep crisis of the capitalist system.

At the same time, this shows that capital is taking full advantage of the crisis to increase its profits at the expense of popular masses. The situation for the working class in all continents is getting worse:

In Bangladesh criminal policies of the multinationals and the local employers continue to kill workers, in Turkey the state violence and the anti-worker attack is escalating, in Costa Rica, strikes in the public sector are prohibited, in Panama, strikes are prohibited to the workers of the Panama Canal, Chile is an example for many countries as it is violating basic ratified conventions for 14 years now. In Kazakhstan, in the Gulf countries, Guatemala, there is almost no freedom of association. In Colombia, metal workers and miners are attacked constantly. The workers of the GLENCORE multinational were on strike for 98 days and the multinational treated the workers like criminals, MICHELIN closes down factories in Cali and Chusacá. But, disregarding all that, the ILO excluded Colombia from the list. The European working class is pushed to poverty by the policies implemented by the European Union and the governments in favor of the employers. The workers and people of Africa are living in extremely bad conditions while their natural resources are stolen daily by the multinationals.

The right of 8 hours stable and secured work, the right of sectoral and national collective bargaining, the right to strike, the right to social security and pension, the right to public education and healthcare are in the epicenter of the attack launched by the IMF, the World Bank, the European Union and the governments that support them.

As the World Federation of Trade Unions, representing currently 86 million members in 126 countries, we will not stop defending these rights. We will continue organizing international activities and action days, we will continue denouncing these policies globally, we will continue getting organized on the ground to block them, we will continue calling our members and friends in the front line of the struggle for the rights of the working people. Unfortunately, the role of the ILO and its Regional Offices does not help in this direction. On the contrary, the Regional Offices of ILO in various continents, as example in Central America and Middle East, follow a policy of discrimination against some workers, favoring some other parties. They create difficulties and obstacles for many trade-unionists. This has to stop. The role of the ILO Regional Offices is to treat all workers and their representatives equally. We are asking the discriminations against the members and friends of WFTU to stop. We are asking for proportional representation.

As World Federation of Trade Unions we will continue to call the international trade union movement in joint struggles against the exploitation and the capitalist barbarism. For a second year in October 3rd 2013, we call all the trade union organizations to organize militant demonstrations, strikes, rallies and other activities for the right to food, clean water, medicine, books, housing for all according to the people's contemporary needs. At the same time, we call upon all militant trade unions with internationalist spirit and solidarity to stand on the side of the Palestinian people in their struggle for their own independent homeland. To defend the right of the people of Libya, Iraq, Syria, Mali, Venezuela, Honduras, Paraguay to decide on their own on their present and future, rather than NATO or the imperialists to decide for them. To demand the end of the blockade of USA and their allies against the Cuban people.

Taking the floor here at the ILO, it's our duty to express once more the respect and appreciation of the WFTU for the the Working Class of Greece, that resists with important class struggles, shows its disobedience and fights against the barbaric, anti-people policies.

We condemn the Government of Greece that fired out of the blue and overnight 2.660 workers of the Greek Public Radio and Television and closed down the Greek Public Television and the Greek Public Radio with a dictatorial decision.

The workers and the two millions of unemployed in Greece must know that they're not alone. We are on their side.

Thank you

18.06.2013





103th ILC – 2014: 5 Points on our current trade union duties

Introduction: 2014 was marked with the further deepening of the capitalist crisis and the new developments in Ukraine. The WFTU General Secretary focuses on 5 essential points that the militants of the class-oriented union movement should emphasize on: struggle against unemployment, protection of the right to strike, health and safety measures in the workplace, protection of trade union freedoms and representativeness in the ILO organs.

On behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions that today represents more than 90 million workers in 120 countries we consider that on a global level the situation of the working class is constantly deteriorating.

The deep and prolonged crisis of the capitalist system generates poverty, unemployment and suffering for the workers and big profits for the capitalists. We are very worried about the rise of the neo-fascist political parties in Europe, about the strengthening of racism and xenophobia. It's the duty of all unions to isolate the fascists in every sector and in all workplaces. At the same time, the rivalries within the imperialist system generate wars, conflicts, imperialist interventions. We can see the results of these interventions in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine and elsewhere.

The imperialists intervene in order to win spheres of influence, routes of energy transport, steal the natural and economic resources that belong to the peoples of the third world. That is the situation today. Facing this situation, as WFTU we want to stress – from the floor of the 103rd ILC- the following 5 points:

Point no.1: We call for struggle against unemployment. The unemployment kills the dreams of young people. The unemployment is an enemy of the trade union movement and an ally of the capitalists. The WFTU has declared October 3rd 2014 an International Action Day against unemployment. We all must take part in this struggle, with a concrete program and initiatives.

Point no. 2. : The right to strike is in danger. Governments and the bourgeoisie have their own lecture of Convention 87. Their aim is to abolish the right to strike and place conditions that make strikes impossible. It's the duty of all of us to defend the right to strike. Strike is a unique weapon in the class struggle and even more in our times, when the attacks against the rights and conquests of the workers are

constant. It is a right, registered in the Convention 87 of 1948 and in national laws. It's wrong to send this issue to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Point no. 3 : About a month ago, on May 13th 2014 in the town of Soma in Turkey more than three hundred of our brothers lost their lives, because the mine they were working in didn't have the necessary health and safety measures. The employer's thirst for bigger profits killed more than three hundred workers. For the WFTU, the struggle for health and safety measures is a basic priority. For the international class oriented trade union movement, worker's Life is the most important principle. So, the struggle for health and safety measures is a first grade priority, along with the struggle for salaries, the struggle against unemployment.

Point no. 4. Today, while we are discussing here in Geneva at the 103rd ILC thousands of our brothers, our colleagues are imprisoned. In Colombia 9 thousand five hundred fighters are unjustly imprisoned. Among them, WFTU cadre Huber Ballesteros, unionist in agricultural sector. In Paraguay, Rubén Villalba, cadre of our affiliate MOAPA, is in jail. We have persecution of trade unionists in Malaysia, Kazakhstan, in Greece the strikers of Hellenic Halyvourgia were convicted in court. In Chile, lock out is still in force, unionists are laid off every day. In Peru, unionists from civil construction and other sectors are receiving threats, attacks and get murdered. A few days ago, the striking contract workers and their families at the Puttalam and Galle plants of the Holcim Company in Sri Lanka were attacked by hired thugs with swords and clubs for exercising their right to strike. We demand that the ILO intervene immediately for the release of Huber Ballesteros in Colombia, Ruben Villalba in Paraguay and of all imprisoned activists.

Point no. 5: Dear friends, the last point we would like to stress in front of you is the lack of representativeness in the ILO. Today the WFTU has 90 million members. According to the proportional representation, it should have 5 seats, 5 Titular members at the Governing Body. These seats are occupied by others through antidemocratic and non- transparent procedures.

This is neither a good image for the trade union movement, nor for the ILO itself. We will continue to raise our voice. We will continue the struggle for representativeness, transparency and democracy until the end. We have presented in written and verbally our concrete proposals to the Director General. We are open and ready for a real and just solution. We ask the support of everybody in this effort that during the next time period will take new forms.

Finally, from this tribune we send internationalist message to the heroic Palestinian People, the Cuban People, the peoples of Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Lebanon and all the peoples and we say that we'll be by their side with a fraternal and internationalist spirit. We assure the workers of Portugal and Greece that we'll continue to be by their side in their various struggles against austerity, against the Troika, the IMF, the EU."

10.06.2014





104th ILC – 2015: STOP imperialist blockades!

Introduction: In 2015, the WFTU celebrated its 70th anniversary and its General Secretary, on this special occasion, chose to openly speak against imperialist sanctions, blockades and embargoes, highlighting who profits from these policies and that it is always peoples and workers who suffer the consequences.

A week ago, the World Federation of Trade Unions held in Brussels, inside the European Parliament, an important International Trade Union Conference about the consequences on the workers and trade union movement of the policies of embargoes, blockades and discriminations imposed by the EU, the NATO, the USA and their allies.

The participants of the Conference proved with evidence that these policies of the imperialists against peoples and countries have always the workers, the youth, the women and the pensioners as their final victims, depriving from millions of workers the hope that they can build their future with dignified work.

It was also proved that the embargoes, blockades and discrimination have nothing to do with democracy and freedom. These words are used as an excuse. They use them hypocritically. In reality, we are talking about competition within the capitalist system, about rivalries and contradiction within the imperialist system, which happen for the control of the markets, the definition of new borders between countries, for new energy pipelines, for the profits of transnational corporations and of the monopolies.

- So, as a result of the imperialist interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria, thousands of women and children die in the Mediterranean Sea. For all those people, dignified work remains a mere declaration.
- As a result of the ongoing and long lasting blockade against Cuba, the peoples of the whole world are deprived of the great achievements of the Cuban Revolution in Medicine.
- As a result of the blockades and the policy of Israel against the Palestinians, the Palestinians still don't have their own homeland, with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- As a result of the sanctions against Russia, poor farmers from Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and elsewhere cannot sell their products, while Russian workers are losing their jobs.
- As a result of the discrimination against Iran, Venezuela, the peoples in other countries are deprived of cheap oil.

Another thing that proves the hypocrisy of the imperialists is that from the ILO list of countries whose governments are accused, Colombia, Israel and the USA are missing. In these countries, governments violate basic human rights, since trade unionists are assassinated, there is discrimination even concerning who will enter a public transport bus, policemen who kill African Americans, firing without any reason, are acquitted.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, that celebrates this year its 70th anniversary, will steadily continue in all international forums intervening based on its principles, its internationalism, the values of international solidarity. It will continue standing by the side of the People of Venezuela and the efforts of the government of President Nicolas Maduro Moros until the final defeat of the imperialist efforts.

It will support the right of the Syrian people to decide democratically for themselves on their present and future, without external intervention of thousands of foreign mercenaries from the five continents.

We will continue to demand the punishment of those responsible for the death of 48 innocent people in Odessa, Ukraine, when neofascists set the building of the Trade Unions on fire.

We will continue to express our solidarity in practice with the imprisoned trade unionists in the prisons of Asuncion in Paraguay. We demand the immediate release of Colombian trade union leader Huber Ballesteros, who is still imprisoned in the Colombian prisons.

We are ready to cooperate, coordinate and support Peoples and unions who are victims of blockades. We must fight together to stop the blockades, embargoes that aim to plunder the natural and economic resources.

We must uncover the geostrategic games that generate unjust wars and millions of refugees.

We must steadily promote the position of the class oriented trade union movement that the natural resources must belong to the peoples, be social property and function for the improvement of the live of the ordinary people.

Only through the struggles of all of us, will we be able to build a future with dignified work for all.

The WFTU stays loyal to these principles for 70 years now, and based on those principles that today have a more timely and rich content, we call upon all militant trade unions to fight together.

09.06.2015





105th ILC – 2016: Internationalism and solidarity are our nuclear weapons!

Introduction: The heroic workers' struggles were escalating all over the world and in his 2016 speech, the WFTU General Secretary expressed the WFTU internationalism and solidarity with unions and people who were at the forefront of the struggle. In the speech he also calls upon class unions to actively show their solidarity with refugees and immigrants who are the main victims of imperialist conflicts.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, representatives of trade union organizations,

On behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions, I want to express our internationalism to the workers of France, who have been organizing strong, massive mobilizations against the anti-labor policies of the Francois Hollande government. The law promoted by the French government, attacks rights that were won through workers struggles.

We extend our solidarity to the people of Brazil, who is struggling against the antidemocratic, parliamentary maneuvers of the bourgeoisie; we unite our voices with the heroic Palestinian people who suffers from the Israeli politics. We are on the same side with the peoples of Syria and Venezuela who are in the crosshairs of the imperialists and the capital.

Today, in all European Union Countries, the attacks of all governments against the workers and against trade union rights are generalized. This policy is centrally planned; it is a central strategic choice of the European Union and the monopolies.

In fact, these strategies have one aim: to convert us into modern – day slaves. Slaves without salary, labor, social security and democratic rights.

At the same time, state violence, the persecution against the trade union movement and those who fight in the first line of the struggles, is getting stronger and stronger.

Right now, as we are speaking here in Geneva, fighters of the World Federation of Trade Unions are in prison, because they fought defending the workers.

In Colombia, elected union leader Huber Ballesteros is in jail for 3 years now.

In Guatemala, Julia Amparo Lotan, a vice-president of WFTU, is in prison for over a year, facing fabricated charges. In Paraguay, Ruben Villalba, a leader of rural workers, is held in prison for over 4 years now, for organizing the struggles of his sector.

We will not let these comrades alone, not even for a moment, until they are free. The WFTU is proud for these cadres and their proud and militant stance.

Also, a central problem for the working class today, and not just for European workers, is the defense of the life of the immigrants and refugees, who are trying to save themselves by leaving the war zones. The main reason of this situation are the imperialist wars, imperialist interventions, who aim to steal the natural and economic resources of the peoples.

This image of the millions immigrants and refugees, side by side to the antilabor and antipeople policies of the governments, is exploited by xenophobic, racist and neofascist political forces. Neofascism is again threatening the peoples.

Who can close his or her eyes and ears facing this situation? Who can wonder “For whom the bell tolls?” The bell tolls for everybody.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, that is preparing for its 17th World Trade Union Congress on October 5 to 8, is developing a modern, militant, uniting, class oriented strategy in order to give the answer for the workers and the class oriented trade union movement's part. We are saying to the governments and the multinationals: We will not let you make us slaves of the 21st century.

We are telling to the world working class: united, with class unity, like brothers, we will make unions stronger, we will make participation of the youth in the unions stronger and having internationalism and solidarity among us as our weapons, we can successfully organize our defense and offence. Until the elimination of exploitation of man by man.
Thank you.

06.06.2016





106th ILC – 2017: A class-oriented union stance is an anti-imperialist stance

Introduction: The glorious 17th World Trade Union Congress has just been celebrated few months ago in Durban, South Africa. In this speech, the WFTU General Secretary points out that while the dark reality of contemporary capitalism pushes the workers to deepen and broaden their economic struggles, these struggles must be directly related with anti-imperialist union action. That is the kind of trade union movement the world working class needs.

Dear Colleagues, on the behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions, we would like to extend our warm greetings to all representatives of trade union organizations of workers. We live in a time period in which life, life quality, work and working conditions for the working class and the poor farmers are getting worse and worse day-by-day in all capitalist world. The situation for all workers is crucial; the younger generations, the young workers, the young scientists and the young farmers are living in uncertainty and insecurity about the future. The WFTU tries to organize the resistance and the struggles of trade unions in every corner of the planet, with the aim of defending the rights acquired by workers in every country and sector.

From this podium, we condemn the trade union persecutions in Kazakhstan; we express our solidarity with trade unionists in Colombia who suffer from the violence of paramilitary groups; especially we stand by the side of Colombian trade unionists who struggle against the efforts for dismantling of their trade unions. By the side of the workers in Honduras who struggle for collective bargaining agreements, by the side of Teachers in Mexico in their struggles against the education reforms, we express our solidarity with the ex-Braceros and with our brothers in Angola. We express our solidarity with the teachers and the working class in Turkey who suffer the consequences of the anti-democratic policies of the government of Turkey. We condemn the anti-labor policy of SAMSUNG multinational and we support the Samsung General Labor Union and its General Secretary Kim Sung Hwan who was in prison for 3 years because of his trade union activity.

The situation is complex and uncertain. The severe poverty and high unemployment generate a lot of difficulties in the development of struggles.

But we have no alternative. It is our duty to unite all workers according to the social class they belong to and to organize our resistance, sometimes through the defense, sometimes through the attack; with a flexible and clever strategy so as to have concrete positive results for the benefit of workers.

Along with the struggle for our financial, social, democratic and trade union rights that we must carry-out, we must also strengthen our action against the strategies of imperialism, of multinationals and transnationals that cause bloodshed to many peoples and force millions of people to abandon their country, region and home.

As WFTU, within the international trade union movement, we have at the forefront of our struggles our solidarity and internationalism with the peoples and the countries that are suffering imperialists interventions.

- Venezuela is today targeted by the policies of the US and their allies.
- Cuba continues to suffer from the criminal US blockade that lasts more than 55 years.
- The Palestinian people still live without having their own country, while thousands of Palestinian children are imprisoned in the jails of Israel.
- The Syrian people suffer from the attacks of thousands of mercenaries who have been recruited and supported by imperialists.
- The peoples of Iraq, of Mali, of Libya, of Afghanistan, are suffering from undemocratic policies.
- The Gulf region is on fire because of the economic rivalries and intra-imperialistic antagonisms.
- The people of Mexico experience racism and the threats of the US President, who threatens to build a wall and persecute all economic immigrants.

This is the outline of the dark reality of today's capitalism.

Under these circumstances the world working class, all workers, we need a militant, efficient and active trade union movement. We need trade unions that will have courage, that will withstand, that will be democratic; that they will pay attention to the base of their members and that will unite all workers irrespective of religion, color, gender and language.

In today's framework the theme of "Building a future with decent work" is more accurate than ever and can be achieved only through class oriented struggles having in their center the satisfaction of workers contemporary needs.

The trade union movement also needs a representative ILO, without exclusions and discriminations; with equal treatment of its member trade unions, with democracy and transparency.

In this direction the WFTU has created and distributed a text of general principles. We will continue our fight until the current unilateral picture of the Governing Body comes to an end. Proportional representation, equality and transparency are the preconditions for decent work and decent relations.

Thank you.

12.06.2017





108th ILC – 2019: The hope lies in our struggles

Introduction: The speech was delivered in the framework of the ILO's 100th anniversary. The WFTU General Secretary points out that every positive development for workers' rights inside the ILO during the first period of its existence came as an achievement of the workers' struggle, while the historical rollback after the 1990s was the result of the workers' struggles recess. He concludes by saying that any positive development for the world working class will only happen through the struggles of tomorrow.

Dear friends, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

100 years since the founding of the ILO have been completed this year, and this is an opportunity to make an objective evaluation from the perspective of the World Working Class. To draw the true conclusions from the side of the militant trade union movement. To assess the results.

We believe that the ILO history is divided into two main periods. From its foundation until 1990 and from 1990 until today. In the first period, it played a positive role in general and often worked as a mechanism of protection of workers' rights. The international correlations benefited and supported the role of the ILO, with the decisive role of the Soviet Union, of the People's Republic of China, of many other socialist countries and of the non-aligned countries' movement. Those favorable correlations had an important ally by their side. The militant trade union movement, with the leading role at that time of the World Federation of Trade Unions. They had by their side the great class struggles of all workers.

The successes in establishing remarkable achievements such as: Collective Bargaining Agreements, social security, social expenditure, improved salaries and working conditions of the working women, working time, wage increase, progress of democratic and trade union freedoms, was the result of these circumstances. Trade unions were established in every corner of the planet.

No matter how much ink is being spilled by modern slanderers, the truth will always shine.

Following the 1989-1991 overthrows and the changes that took place, the situation and role of the ILO, as well as of all International Organizations, also changed.

These days here, in the annual Conference, Ministers, Prime Ministers, arrived, they used big words, empty promises, and tried to present a picture of virtual reality.

Before 1990, employers did not want to hear about the ILO. Now they consider it their ally and friend. Why? Everyone should think and give the answer on his own.

But whatever words some people say, the truth is at the workplaces, where workers suffer from state violence and authoritarianism, from unemployment and lay-offs, from black labor, from privatizations, from poverty and capitalist barbarity. The truth lies in the Mediterranean Sea, where mothers and children are being drowned in their effort to escape imperialist aggression.

This picture is also a result of the role played by the ILO and of the current situation within the leaderships of the trade union movement.

Since 1960 the blockade against Cuba continues. What did the International Organizations do?

In Soma, Turkey, on 13 May 2014, 301 workers were killed. What did the International Organizations do?

In the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh on 24 April, 2013, 1.132 girls and women were murdered. What did the ILO do?

In Colombia, over the last three years, 600 trade union militants have been murdered. Who was punished for these crimes?

In Chile the government undermines with anti-democratic methods the independent functioning of the CAT. What did the responsible Office of the ILO do?

What have the International Organizations done to protect the workers of Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen from the imperialists? Only words. This is the picture.

Today, Heads of States come here and tell us that black is white. Mr Macron, who attacks and beats the protesters, who fires 1.000 workers from Centrale à charbon de Gardanne, whose Member of Parliament, from his party, Mr. Mohamed Laqhila, threatens to close the functioning of the Trade Union Centre of UD CGT 13, came here a few days ago and presented us a false reality. Both Mr Macron and Mrs Merkel see the ILO today as an ideological mechanism in favor of their policies. This is the truth. This is the real picture. At the same time, they strengthen the phenomena of neo-fascism and xenophobia with their anti-workers policies.

This picture only by today's workers can and must be changed, with their united, class-oriented struggles. By strengthening the unions at the base. By enhancing trade union democracy. The hope lies in our struggles.

18.06.2019



