

Cyprus

Dear comrades,

This is an important meeting of our General Council. We have come here to adopt the draft report which will be presented to the 9th World T.U. Congress. This is a very important job for the Congress, for the W.F.T.U. and its future.

The work of the present meeting of the W.F.T.U., with the work done by the 15th session of the Bureau in New Delhi and with the work that has to be done by the proposed commission for the preparation of the Documents will lay the foundations for a successful Congress.

In general I would like to say that we agree and support the ideas and the line of the document presented here by the Secretariat of the WFTU. It is a document based on the very useful discussion we had in New Delhi. I would however like to make some further comments.

We very often say that some new conditions have come to maturity. This no body can deny. It is also very correct to say that as a consequence of the new conditions new possibilities arise. The Document underlines that there are new possibilities especially in the field of unity. If I am allowed to convey here both the positive and negative experience we have gained in Cyprus, I will tell you that it is not always very easy to note and in time mark down what new possibilities, or all the new possibilities, which arise from the new conditions. I will add that some times even if we note the new possibilities created, and even if we talk so much about them, we fail to take advantage of them in full and in time. And this is the most important thing of all: To take a timely and full advantage of the possibilities created by the new conditions.

The Document is urging an extensive debate both before and during the Congress around these questions. The authors of the document are anxious to see the 9th World Trade Union Congress contributing to and accelerating the process of unity. Here again I will convey to you our experience. In the performance of a task so important such as this the success of a Federation, whether national or international depends on the response of its affiliated unions or its affiliated centres. I am not underestimating the role that has to be played by the Secretariat and the leading bodies of the WFTU, but we believe that the contribution of the WFTU, in the acceleration of the process of unity is up to a great extent the sum total of the contribution of its affiliated national centres. We do not believe that we can successfully accelerate the process of unity on an international level, if there is tension and disunity on a national, regional or industrial level. This is where lies the great value of the work for unity of the national centres. When a national centre works successfully for unity in its own country or for the development of bilateral relations with centres of other countries, it is offering a service to the cause of international working - class unity and international Trade Union Unity.

Chapter V of the Document has attracted our particular attention in Cyprus. The first thing I have been instructed to say is that we fully and unreservedly endorse the proposal about the main and central slogan of the Congress:

"To do everything possible towards the unity and solidarity of workers and Trade Unions in the present struggles and for a future of peace and independence for all peoples where:-

freedom, wellbeing, economic and social progress will flourish"

We find very correct and extremely useful the ideas contained in that part of the document, that

- we must be scrupulously careful in search for subjects for unity; This means not all subjects are suitable for the acceleration of the process of unity. In fact there are subjects which if raised may cause setbacks to our efforts for unity.
- Very careful in helping rapprochement;
- We must be aware of the choice of favorable moments. Not all moments are favorable for initiatives.

We shall try to apply these useful ideas in the local Cyprus conditions and in particular in rebuilding the disturbed unity among the Greek and Turkish Cypriot working people.

If we succeed in this, we believe we shall offer the best of our contributions for the success of the main slogan of the 9th World Trade Union Congress.

Chapter VI is not a less important part of the document.

We need the W.F.T.U. and we must keep it by all means. Its existence has been justified and is being justified by the new conditions. I would say that its existence is justified everyday. But we agree that we must take a good look at ourselves. There is only one thing that we should never change in the W.F.T.U. Its democratic, mass and class character. Otherwise we must always consider its improvement, we must always work to bring it closer to the model required by the changing conditions.

We of the Pancyprian Federation of Labour believe that in most of the cases, our critics - and we mean those who criticise the W.F.T.U. in goodfaith - in most of the cases, they are wrong. This is why we underline the suggestion made in the document that we must reexamine the way in which we express and apply our correct policies; We must see whether our propagande is as effective as it should be; We must see whether we are making ourselves well known.

Finally a few words on the specific proposals made regarding the Congress.

First on the question of the Documents. We agree with the proposal to have four principal Documents, i.e. (i) The policy Document (ii) The Charter of economic and social Demands (iii) The Charter of T.U. rights and (iv) The Declarations on the question of halting the armaments race, on disarmament and peace.

Second we agree on the method proposed for the elaboration of the documents. Cyprus is willing, if proposed and agreed by the General Council, to work on the Preparatory Commission.

The proposal to hold the Congress in Prague is supported by our Federation. The invitation of the Czechoslovak Trade Unions is yet another example of their spirit of support for the W.F.T.U. and for the cause of the international working-class.

Dear comrades,

Before concluding, I take this opportunity to once again thank the WFTU and all those national Centres who during these difficult three years of the history of my country have found ways and means to express their solidarity and support for the struggle of our people against its enemies, for the defence of its territorial integrity, its sovereignty and independence.

Dear comrades,

Yours solidarity is still required. Because Cyprus continues to be the victim of foreign invasion, the invasion of the Turkish military forces. The workers and the people of Cyprus have confidence in you, in the WFTU, in the international working - class. We believe that we shall have your continued and mounting solidarity for the independence, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus.

Thank you.

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