



TELE-FLASH

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FAREWELL TO YVES ARCADIAS

Yves Arcadias, former permanent official at the international department of the CFTD (France), deceased more than a month ago. Yves was a very active collaborator of the WCL in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in the implementation of the Trade Union Development Programme. A true activist in the struggle of the WCL in development issues, he always insisted on a strong link between justice and peace. Strongly devoted to the Euro-African inter-union cooperation, he considered negotiations the privileged way to conquer rights.

SEMINAR ON COMMUNICATION FOR THE EUROPEAN NETWORK

On 20-21 September last, the WCL organised in Brussels (Belgium) a seminar on the "Importance of communication and information for strengthening the European social dialogue". Around twenty representatives of sixteen trade unions attended the seminar. According to Mathieu Debroux, head of the Information Department, "it is the responsibility of the WCL to inform its member organisations in a clear, rapid and concise manner. In order to achieve this, however, cooperation between all the links in the information chain is indispensable. An effective communication network is therefore chiefly based on close personal contacts". Several communication tools (the written press, for example) and the modern technologies (like the Internet) are at our disposal, of course. That is why, after a brief presentation of the WCL's website, all the participants in the seminar could share their experiences, difficulties and needs in the matter of communication. The second day of the seminar was devoted to the suggestions from the guests for strengthening the existing communication network. Camelia Descalescu specified the coordinative role of the Bucharest Liaison Office, whereas Carl Vandoorne, Editor-in-Chief of Info CSC, pointed out the importance of personalised communication with the target groups of the trade union movement.

PALESTINE:

SUIT THE ACTION TO THE WORD!

The WCL has launched an international campaign in solidarity with the Palestinian workers and people. On 25-29 September, a delegation conducted a mission to the Middle East, in partnership with the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) and the General Union of Palestinian Workers (GUPW). The WCL's visits to the Workers' Houses of the ICATU, in Damas, and the GUPW, in Ramallah,

confirmed its solidarity with the workers and people of Palestine. During the mission, Willy Thys (WCL Secretary General), Eduardo Estevez (Deputy Secretary General) and Faustina Van Aperen (Director of the International Solidarity Foundation – ISF) support the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions, an organisation representing interests and aspirations for peace and justice of the workers and genuinely committed to the search of an equitable solution between Palestinians and Israelis. The Foundation – in cooperation with the WCL – has launched an international human solidarity campaign to make up for the enormous damages suffered by the Palestinian workers and their organisations. Indeed, the curfew prevents the workers from going to work and robs them of their incomes. Moreover, the destruction of buildings and infrastructures stifles every hope of social and economic development. That is why the WCL will organise direct assistance for 410 Palestinian families. A twinning of WCL and GUPW organisations and confederations is also in preparation.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE 'ALGEMEEN CHRISTELIJK VAKVERBOND – CONFÉDÉRATION DES SYNDICATS CHRÉTIENS' (ACV-CSC) FROM BELGIUM

On 16 October last, the ACV-CSC organised by way of prelude to its Congress an international symposium on inequalities and income redistribution within a global context. Luc Cortebeek, ACV-CSC President and WCL Vice President, welcomed Louis Michel, the Belgian Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as around 150 trade union leaders from all over the world.

Among the speakers Basile Mahan Gahé, President of the WCL and Secretary General of the Ivorian confederation *Dignité*, demonstrated extensively that in the opinion of the Africans economic globalisation was "the" source of the inequalities. "The wealth of the rich countries is built on the misery of the poor countries", he said.

Eduardo Garcia Moure, Secretary General of the CLAT and Vice President of the WCL for Latin America, stated that economic globalisation was in essence antisocial and antidemocratic. It ran counter to a globalisation in pursuit of the common good of all and caused on the contrary the worst inequalities. The CLAT Secretary General also denounced the living and working conditions of the populations, the exploitation of youth and female labour and especially the worst forms of child labour, still a topical issue in Latin America.

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Muchtar Pakpahan, WCL Vice President for Asia, denounced in no uncertain terms the globalisation-related oppression raging in the Asian developing countries. He underlined the ravages and perverse effects of the privatisation policies pursued by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Finally Michel Bovy, President of the International Federation of Trade Unions of Transport Workers (FIOT) and WCL Vice President for Trade Action, pointed out the growing technological backwardness of the developing countries, the consequences of the State's withdrawal from its role as redistributor of wealth and the growing privatisation to the detriment of the public services, in Europe like in the rest of the world.

We remind here that the ACV-CSC Congress denounced the militarisation of the international relations and the recourse to war for economic purposes.

ACV-CSC CONGRESS: STOP THE INEQUALITIES!

The ACV-CSC Congress was held in Ostend on 17-19 October. It had to define the organisation's stand to a theme of prime importance: the income inequalities. Luc Cortebeeck, ACV-CSC President, stated in this respect that "the wage scale is stretching. The tax reform (in Belgium) causes the inequalities to grow. It favours the high incomes and not in the least the 20% of the population living on social benefits". Willy Thys, for his part, denounced the attacks on the workers' rights in the third world, stressing that these workers are keeping a close eye on what is happening in the industrial world. It is indeed true that today each social decline, wherever it occurs, has worldwide repercussions.

BELGIUM AND MOROCCO COMBINE FORCES FOR 'EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES'

In 2000, in a joint Belgian-Moroccan ministerial declaration, a project for international trade union cooperation was adopted. The project is aimed at the "advancement of industrial peace and the prevention of social disputes in Morocco". Its three main goals are the advancement of the international labour standards,

the struggle against child labour, and equal opportunities. From the perspective of this last issue the WCL has just organised a seminar in cooperation with both its Moroccan affiliates, the *Union Générale des Travailleurs du Maroc* (UGTM) and the *Confédération Démocratique du Travail* (CDT). From 27 October to 1 November, nearly thirty trade unionists met in Bouznika, Morocco, to assess the globalisation and its effects on the Moroccan women workers. According to Kattia Paredes, head of the WCL Women and Work Department, "there is an urgent need to raise the awareness and to sensitise the women themselves, the political leaders and the decision-makers on the advancement of women's rights. The WCL, the UGTM and the CDT will combine their efforts to strengthen the Moroccan trade unions. The seminar was aimed to prepare and define a plan of action for the future.

NEW BOOKLET ON THE "INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS"

"The international labour standards are today the only international social legislation that exists. This legislation is indeed a key instrument for the advancement of social justice worldwide", says Willy Thys, WCL Secretary General, in his foreword to the new booklet on 'Standards'. The booklet clarifies the standard-setting system of the ILO and the position of the WCL to decent work, standards in the informal sector, women workers and the codes of conduct. An educational and practical reference work that will be available before long!

Schedule of activities

01-03 November: CSDR – 3rd Congress, Romania
06-09 November: European Social Forum, Florence
04-22 November: IIWE seminar – "Sustainable Development, Social Protection, Belgium
12-15 November: CFTC – National Congress, France.