

HOLLAND DESERVES BETTER!

During the trade union demonstration dd 2 October – a joint initiative of CNV (Christian National Confederation), FNV (Federation Dutch Trade Unions) and MHP



(Federation of Medium- and High-level Executive Staff) – no less than a quarter of a million people assembled at the Museumplein in Amsterdam (the Netherlands). They expressed their dissatisfaction at the economy measures of the Balkenende government, which are a frontal attack on the social system in the Netherlands.

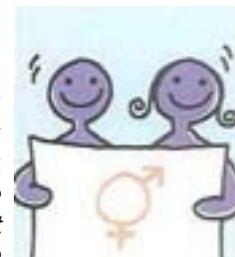
“The government does not opt for community of interests, does not opt for solidarity. It opts for a society in which everybody has to manage on its own, for a society in which everyone acts for him- or herself, for a insurance society. We reject this society”. In these words Doekle Terpstra (President of CNV and Treasurer of WCL) voiced the opinion of the demonstrators. What the trade unions and the people do want, is:

- to strengthen the reintegration of disabled workers and to secure the income of those who come under the WAO;
- to properly regulate the early retirement and the career of everybody;
- to protect the Unemployment Act; each worker pays a contribution and must therefore be sure of an income if he unexpectedly loses his job.

CLAMT: “WHAT KIND OF WORKERS’ MOVEMENT DO WE WANT?”

A few weeks before the important Congress of the CLAT - *Central latino americana de los trabajadores*, regional organisation of the WCL for Latin America - the CLAMT expresses to wish to see equality of men and women become reality. The CLAMT - *Comisión latinoamericana*

de mujeres trabajadoras - expressed its positions and points of view in its publication “Informativo”. The CLAMT is participating in the preparations of the CLAT Congress and contributing to the reflection on the trade union movement in general and the CLAT in particular in the globalisation age. *“What kind of trade union movement do we want?”* is one of the questions the CLAMT would like to answer. The world, ruled by globalisation, is changing. To be able to fulfill its mission, the workers’ movement too will have to adapt itself in order to defend the workers and the most vulnerable groups. The CLAMT also points to the necessity of strengthening the notion of solidarity at all levels. The organisation then raises the question of gender equality from the grass-roots level up to the decision-making structures as a necessary condition of a positive change for pertinent answers to the challenges of globalisation. Finally, the CLAMT launches an appeal to the working women. If these women believe in the Commission’s work, they must unite to get stronger and their share must grow. *“We cannot believe in a democracy without strong, militant trade unions, and protagonists in society”*, they added. We can be sure that they will be heard.



FIRST MEETING OF THE NEWLY-ELECTED WMCW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER

The new Executive Council of the World Movement of Christian Workers (WMCW) will gather for the first time in November 2004. During this meeting, the WMCW will define, among others, the scope of action of the guidelines to be adopted, under the theme *“Paths of hope for decent work in a new society”*. According to the WMCW, after four years of hard work, the organisation will submit a “White Paper” to the decision-making bodies and national, regional and international organisations, in order to ask governments to deeply commit themselves to promoting decent work for all within a society with solidarity-based values. Norbert Klein, from Germany, ended his term as Secretary General. The new team of the International Secretariat – elected by the General Assembly for the 2004-2008 period- is integrated, among others, by Sister N’dong, from Cameroon, as Secretary General. Brother Paul Edwards, from Great

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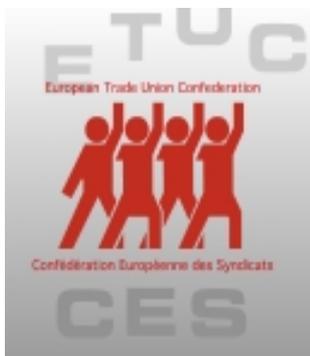
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Britain, will start working in the General Secretariat in 2005, and until then, he will carry out some specific missions. "All our actions will be hallmarked by the continuous commitment of the WMCW to fostering international solidarity among its members and among all workers", said the WMCW. We wish them good luck in the future!

ETUC: "PROPOSALS TO REVISE THE WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE ARE UNACCEPTABLE"



John Monks, Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation, clearly expressed the ETUC stand. This international organisation considers the proposals of the European Commission to revise the Working Time Directive as unacceptable and totally out of proportion. In fact, Brother Monks expressed his disappointment regarding

the Commission's decision: "It has largely caved into pressure from certain Member States and employers' lobbies on key issues (...) giving employers a unilateral right to organise working time over 12 months, and practically ending protection for on-call workers. (...) The fact is that individuals without union help will be under huge pressure to work longer. The Commission has sided with the general employer offensive on working time", said the Secretary General of the ETUC. In other words, the European Trade Union Confederation regards the current proposals as totally out of proportion. Besides, it puts forward proposals that are in clear contradiction to its obligations, notably to improve living and working conditions and ensure that improvements will be maintained. The ETUC highlights that while Community law obliges the EU to limit working hours for every worker, the maximum of 48 hours is further 'flexibilised', and a new maximum of 65 hours per week is introduced. This takes us to the debate on the Social Europe and the profit-oriented approach that places the economy at the heart of everything. For more information: www.etuc.org.

COMPLAINTS

Social struggle in Paraguay

Paraguay's National Front for Sovereignty and Life is a Front integrated by five workers' federations and is aimed at strengthening the fight against the neo-liberal model imposed by the Government. Nowadays, there exists a deep conflict between the Government and peasants. The objective of this National Front is to make it possible for all peasants to own a parcel to grow their crops, and to foster a deep agrarian reform. Unfortunately, the measures taken so far seem to go in the opposite direction. Some roads have been blocked and private properties grow throughout the country, thus limiting the cultivable land available. Unless the situation changes within a month, the Front will call a national strike.

Colombia:

stronger repression against trade union leaders
The Latin American Commission for the Rights and Freedoms of the Peoples (CLADEHLT) disseminated

this piece of information. Last 13 September, Brother William Millán Monsalve, Deputy Secretary General of the General Confederation of Democratic Workers (CGTD, our Colombian affiliate and member of CLADEHLT for the Andean Zone), received several death threats. According to CLADEHLT, this is not the first time that William Millán Monsalve receives such threats. In a letter addressed to the Colombian Government, Brother Willy Thys, WCL Secretary General, asked for an investigation to be opened to establish the truth. This event increases the list of repressive actions faced by Colombian trade unionists. It is worth noting that after this wave of anti-union measures in Colombia, and in order to oppose them, Colombian confederations summoned a solidarity meeting called "SOS World Unionism and the murder of Colombian trade unionism", from 15 to 18 September. Willy Thys, WCL Secretary General, attended the meeting, together with the members of the CGTD, our Colombian affiliate, the ICFTU and the ISF.

NEW FACILITIES FOR BATU

The inauguration of the new facilities of SATU (Solidarity of Asian Trade Unions Foundation, Inc.) – which will be used as the new headquarters of BATU (Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists, WCL's regional organisation in Asia) – took place last 12 September. This ceremony was honoured with the presence of Willy Thys, WCL Secretary General, and Luc Cortebeek, WCL Vice-president and ACV-CSC President, among other participants. We wish BATU members good luck in their new headquarters.

Schedule of activities

October

- 10-12: European Section (Oct 12th 2004) + European Seminar: "Consolidation of WCL European organisations. New challenges and union response" (Brussels);
- 18-23: WCL Confederal Board (Casablanca);
- 28-30: CNS Cartel Alfa (Romania) – 6th National Congress (Bucharest);
- 29-30: CLAC (Canada) – 2004's National Convention (London / Ontario).

November

- 31/10 - 06/11: WFCW – Congress + seminar (Indonesia);
- 12-14: LCGB (Luxemburg) – 57 National Congress (Strassen - Luxemburg);
- 15-18: ILO – Governing Body (Geneva);
- 19-21: International Council of the World Social Forum – Seminar on the United Nations (Padua / Italy)
- 21-27: Congress CLAT (Brasilia);
- 26-27: ELA (Spain) – 11th Congress (Bilbao).



Trade Action

ILO: PREPARATORY TECHNICAL MARITIME CONFERENCE CROWNED WITH SUCCESS

In the previous Teleflash, we were pleased to announce the organisation of the Preparatory Technical Maritime



Conference. This Conference was successfully closed on 24 September. In fact, the ILO has taken an important step towards the creation of new international labour standards, which will provide some 1.2 million seafarers with a "Charter of Seafarers' Rights", thanks to the strengthening and consolidation of several labour standards adopted since 1920. The new version of the Convention will be submitted for approval during the maritime session of 2006's International Labor Conference. This Convention is fundamental, for it aims at consolidating key principles, rights and standards that already exist in 60 Conventions and Recommendations elaborated over the past 80 years. *"The current version of the Convention aims at guaranteeing decent working conditions for all seafarers around the world and focuses on all aspects of their lives. Many obstacles have been overcome and important questions have been answered during this Preparatory Conference"*, stated Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, Director of the Department promoting this new ILO instrument. It is worth noting that the maritime industry transports 90% of the world's trade and it is considered to be "the first truly industrialised industry in the world". For more information on this Convention, go to www.ilo.org (Source: ILO).

PROPOSALS ON THE REFORM OF THE EU'S SUGAR POLICY JEOPARDISE THE ECONOMY OF ACP COUNTRIES

As we all know, the agricultural policy reform proposed by the European Union is detrimental to the economy

of ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific). However, the proposals on the sugar policy reform are even more worrying, for they may lead to a 37%-fall in the price of sugar. From Mauritius, the Organisation of Artisans Unity informed the World Federation of Agriculture, Food, Hotel and Allied Workers (WFAFW) about the dramatic effect of these measures on its country. The proposal submitted by Franz Fischler (EU Commissioner for Agriculture) on the deregulation of part of the sugar sector will have disastrous consequences for the economy of that country and will even affect development programmes. Furthermore, the Mauritian organisation fears that thousands of sugar workers will lose their jobs as a result of the implementation of this sugar policy. The WFAFW supports its stand and will elaborate a document on this issue during the ACP workshop on Sugar, to be held as a follow-up to the European Commission meeting on Sugar Policy, on 4 October in Brussels. In the meanwhile, the WTO issued a new regulation compelling the EU to revise this controversial policy.

INFORMAL ECONOMY AND COOPERATIVES IN MAURITANIA

On the occasion of a seminar on Sustainable Development in Mauritania, representatives and members of the Free Confederation of Workers of Mauritania (CLTM), as well as representatives of DOAWTU, Belgium's ACV-CSC and the WCL, defended the position of their organisation and the future of Mauritania. Mauritania faces a difficult situation,



but the CLTM is a strong organisation with great credibility. In order to solve the informal workers' problem in that country, the CLTM supports local and regional cooperatives working in the construction, textile and fishing sectors, among others. The CLTM even supports local groups in the middle of the great Sahara desert. All these grass-roots cooperatives have the same purpose: to improve



productivity and create a market approach, thus improving working conditions. This is a good example of grass-roots trade unionism: to bring hope and the possibility to have a better future even to far-away places.

47TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION

From September 8 to 11 2004, the city of Geneva hosted 93 Ministers of Education and some 2000 participants, including representatives from social organisations. Brother Gaston De La Haye, Secretary General of the World Confederation of Teachers (WCT), also attended the conference. Although the main theme of the Conference was “Quality education for all Young People: Challenges, Trends and Priorities”, special attention was granted to secondary education. Four workshops were also organised on the following issues: “Quality Education and Gender Equality”, “Quality Education and Social Inclusion”, “Quality education and Competences for Life” and “Quality education and the Key Role of Teachers”. It goes without saying that the WCT mainly focused its attention on this last debate and highlighted the importance of education, sustainable development and the right to education. By the end of August, the WCT Euregion organised a seminar on higher education in the Balkans. Romanian, Armenian, Belgian and Dutch speakers participated in the meeting. Likewise, representatives from Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Moldova and Romania participated in the debates.

COMPLEMENTARY CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN GHANA

This year, two out of the six activities planned for Ghana within the framework of the VERBA project on “Capacity Building” were carried out. On 19-20 August, trainers Eben

Aidoo and Kenneth Koomson trained the programme participants on the collective bargaining issue, in the GIDA-JICA training centre of Accra. On 26-27 August, participants gathered in the Ghana Irrigation Development Training Centre in order to deal with the issue of members’ recruitment. Among the participants to the programme, we may highlight the representatives of the following organisations: TGLEU (*Textile Garment and Leather Employees*), FAWU (*Food and Allied Workers Union*), *General Manufacturing and Wood Workers Union*, *General Manufacturing and Metal Workers Union* (GEMM), *National Lotto Receivers Union* (NLRU – employees’ sector), *Me-*



dia and Printing Industry Workers Union – Medianet (industry), GHEHOA (*Ghana Environmental Health Officers Association*) and JUSAG (*Judicial Services Staff Association of Ghana – civil servants*). The Secretary General of Ghana’s Federation of Labour, Brother Abraham Koomson, also attended these training sessions.