

October 19, 1961.

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

THE 5TH WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS IS BEING
PREPARED EVERYWHERE

In less than two months' time the 5th World Trade Union Congress, the convocation of which was decided upon in February 1961 at the 22nd Session of the W.F.T.U. Executive Committee, will be opened in Moscow.

The agenda consists of two main items:

- 1- The activities of the W.F.T.U. and the present tasks of trade union organisations for peace, against imperialism, for peaceful co-existence, universal and complete disarmament and the economic and social demands of the workers.
- 2- The development of trade union activities and solidarity to aid peoples fighting to end colonialism.

The 40th Session of the Executive Bureau of the W.F.T.U. drew up a Draft Programme of Trade Union Action at the present stage which was widely circulated. The text of the Draft Programme, approved by the 23rd Session of the Executive Committee, has been widely distributed on all five continents and in many languages, so that trade union organisations and workers can discuss it before it is submitted to the 5th World Trade Union Congress. In many countries it has been used as a basis for discussion at different levels by trade union organisations.

A Draft Social Security Charter, drawn up by the International Trade Union Commission for Action on Social Security, which the W.F.T.U. convoked for this purpose in March 1961, will also be submitted to the Congress for approval. This important document is also being discussed in many countries at the present time.

The discussion on these Drafts to be submitted to the Congress is but one of many aspects of the preparations, and indicates the high level of these preparations.

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MOSCOW, today radiant with the brilliant prestige of the enormous social, scientific and cultural achievements of the Soviet peoples, is already preparing to welcome the highest representatives of the international trade union movement. It will give a hearty welcome to more than a thousand delegates, of different points of view, who will come from all parts of the world to participate in the Congress.

The first incomplete information we have received shows the deep interest already being taken in the 5th World Trade Union Congress by the workers, whether they belong to trade union organisations affiliated to the W.F.T.U. or not.

In Latin America broad preparatory committees have been set up in several countries, including Mexico, Argentine, Brazil, Chile and Colombia. It has to be emphasized that these are not only National Committees; they work also in the industrial areas on a local or even works level. They collect funds among the workers so as to be able to send their delegates. They popularise the Programme of Trade Union Action, which has been published in Spanish and Portuguese, they organise signature-collecting campaigns expressing the workers' support for the 5th World Trade Union Congress.

The representation of the workers of all Latin American countries at the 5th Congress is therefore already assured.

In India, Indonesia and Ceylon, the organisations affiliated to the W.F.T.U. are organising wide discussions on the aims of the Congress.

The workers and trade unions of Japan, Australia and New Zealand, although not affiliated to the W.F.T.U., are responding to the Appeal for the 5th Congress and are setting up their delegations of observers. In Japan, for instance, a united preparatory committee is collecting signatures and the funds necessary for the journey among the workers. The national centre, SOHYO, which has 4 million members and is not affiliated to any international organisation, wishes to send a large delegation of observers to the 5th World Trade Union Congress.

In Africa, as well as in ^{West Asia,} ~~the West and Middle East,~~ 22 affiliated and non-affiliated trade union organisations have already expressed their support for the Congress and announced their intention to send delegations.

From Europe also, the significant news which we are continually receiving leaves no doubt about the wide echo of the 5th World Trade Union Congress among the broad masses of workers and on the unity-building character of the preparations.

In the socialist countries, a Plenary Session of the Central Council of Trade Unions has generally been devoted to the preparation of the 5th Congress.

The Draft Programme of Trade Union Action at the Present Stage, which has been widely published and popularised, is being used as a basis for discussion in numerous meetings at all levels of the trade union movement, including work place meetings, for the preparation of the Congress and especially for the election of delegates.

Published by the
W.F.T.U. Press Department

No.244

November 11, 1961.

I.R. 1052
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Edition.....
PRESS COMMUNIQUEMESSAGE FROM THE W.F.T.U. ON THE MONTH OF
ACTION FOR AN AMNESTY IN SPAIN

The Permanent International Secretariat of the West European Conference for an Amnesty for Spanish Political Prisoners and Exiles, which met in Paris on March 25 and 26, 1961, decided to observe November 1961 as a Month of Action for an Amnesty in Spain.

On November 10, 1961, the World Federation of Trade Unions has sent the following message to the International Secretariat:

The world Federation of Trade Unions, speaking for 107 million members, wholeheartedly supports the decision of your Secretariat to make November a Month of Action for an Amnesty in Spain.

Under the pressure of the struggle of the Spanish people and of international public opinion, Franco had to decree a partial and conditional amnesty at the beginning of October. But all these measures have nothing in common with an amnesty for which all justice and freedom loving peoples of the world are pressing together with your Secretariat. Under these measures the overwhelming majority of detained persons are still kept in prison and tens of thousands of Spanish political exiles are not allowed to return to their country without risking to fall victim to the worst possible cruelty.

Moreover, the Franco Government invoking the shameful emergency law passed in September 1960, has unleashed a new wave of persecution and arrests, during the past few months directed against hundreds of Spanish workers and citizens whose only crime was that they demanded a better and free life.

The W.F.T.U. which has always supported the workers and people of Spain in their just struggle, again uses this opportunity to express their fraternal solidarity. It energetically demands an end to the persecution and imprisonments and insists on a genuine and complete amnesty for Spanish political prisoners and exiles.

The W.F.T.U., true to its traditions of working class solidarity, will make further efforts during this Month of Action to bring the struggle for an amnesty in Spain to a successful conclusion. In this spirit it calls on all its affiliated organisations and on all workers and trade unions throughout the world to express solidarity with the Spanish workers and people

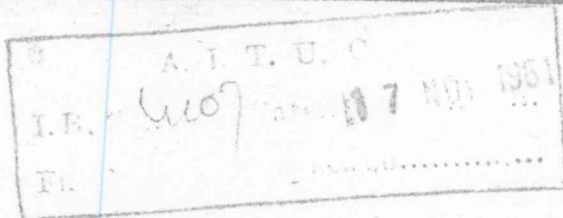
and to be united in their growing efforts to bring about the triumph of the just cause of the Spanish workers and people.

We wholeheartedly wish the International Secretariat for an Amnesty in Spain every success in fulfilling the noble task it has set itself and assures it that we shall continue to support it with all our might".

Published by the
W.F.T.U. Press Dept.

No.253

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS



November 14, 1961.

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION AND LEGAL COMMISSION DEMANDS INVESTIGATION IN THE CASE OF IMPRISONED TRADE UNIONISTS.

A certain number of Sudanese trade unionists, amongst others SHAFIE AHMED EL SHEIKH, General Secretary of the Federation of Sudanese Trade Unions and Vice-President of the World Federation of Trade Unions, have been imprisoned since December 1958. As early as December 21, 1958, the WFTU lodged a complaint with the International Labour Organisation and called on the workers of the world to demonstrate their solidarity with the Sudanese trade union movement.

A further step has been taken by the International Trade Union and Legal Commission for the Defence and Extension of Trade Union Rights and for the Protection of Victims of Repression against Trade Unions. This Committee has been set up on the initiative of the WFTU in March, 1961. On November 8, 1961, Elena Teodorescu, the Committee's Secretary sent the following message to the President of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces at Khartoum:

" The International Trade Union and Legal Commission for the Defence and Extension of Trade Union Rights and for the Protection of Victims of Repression against Trade Unions, formed on March 10, 1961, at a meeting attended by representatives of trade union organisations and lawyers from various countries and continents, has asked us to draw your attention to the following:

In February 1959, a Military Tribunal, appointed by the Supreme Council of the Sudanese Armed Forces, sentenced Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, Shakir Mursal and Taba Ali Mohamed to 5 years imprisonment each, Cassim Amin and Mohamed Abud Omar to two years, and Hassan Mohamed Salih and Aved Sharaf El Din to one year's imprisonment.

According to our information, the Military Tribunal met in closed session, the counsel for the defence did not receive authorisation to carry out his work under normal conditions, and the accused were prevented from calling witnesses for the defence. The imprisoned trade union leaders were charged with having had relations with the World Federation of Trade Unions and with having ensured the publication of its monthly review "World Trade Union Movement" in Sudan in Arabic. Cassim Amin was sentenced to

two years imprisonment for having written an article for this Review more than one year before the present Sudanese Government came to power.

The prison sentences passed against these leaders have aroused anger among the workers of the whole world. Hundreds of messages of protest and requests for their release were sent to your Government. Copies of these messages were placed at our disposal.

This anger of the workers is completely justified for they cannot understand why Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh should be punished so severely solely because of his international trade union activities, which he had previously carried on over a long period, and because of his relations with the W.F.T.U., a great international trade union organisation with 107 million workers in its ranks from capitalist, under-developed and socialist countries.

In the conclusions contained in its Report No.48, the I.L.O. Committee on Freedom of Association stressed that any charge against a trade unionist must be made before an independent and impartial body /paragraph 84 of the mentioned report/. The Committee, further, advised the Governing Body of the I.L.O. to draw your Government's attention to the importance the Governing Body has always attached to the principle of a fair trial by an independent and impartial legal body in all cases, including those of trade unionists accused of political and criminal offences which are not regarded by the Government as offences with any bearing on their trade union function /paragraph 90 idem/.

These recommendations and conclusions of the Committee were approved by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

In spite of all this, your Government is still detaining Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, Shakir Mursal and Taha Ali Mohamed in prison. We have been informed that they are exposed to extremely bad treatment; they are in the same prison as ordinary criminals.

We are certain that the workers of the world, and in particular the Sudanese workers, regard these imprisoned trade union leaders as fighters who are waging the most vigorous battle against colonialism and imperialism, for the preservation of the national independence of the Sudan, for its independent development free from any pressure and interference by the imperialist powers; and for a happier life for the workers and people of Sudan. That is why all workers feel that their continued detention can only weaken the ranks of the workers fighting imperialism.

In view of these circumstances the International Commission for the Defence of Trade Union Rights has asked us to approach Your Excellency with the request for consent to allow an inquiry commission to visit Sudan in order to carry out an inquiry into the case of Shafie and his colleagues with the aim of obtaining their release. The inquiry commission would be composed of:

Mr. John Hostetler, lawyer, ENGLAND.

Mr. Matsumoto Yoshiaki, lawyer, JAPAN.

Mme. Elena Teodorescu, Secretary of the International Trade Union and Legal Commission.

We hope your Government will grant entry visas to the members of the inquiry commission and will co-operate with them on their arrival by offering them all the necessary information on the mentioned cases, and enable them to establish any contacts they might need with Sudanese trade unionists, including the imprisoned trade union leaders. "

Published by the Press Dept.
of the WFTU.

No.253 .

A. J. ...
I.R. No. 444
Date: Nov. 17, 1961

November 17, 1961.

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

The WFTU protests against
repression in Iran.

On November 16, 1961, the Secretariat of the WFTU sent the following telegramme to the President of the Council of Ministers of Iran.

Greatly indignant about the new wave of repression unleashed since the beginning of November by the Iranian authorities and particularly about the arrest of 90 militant workers and patriots in Ispahan, the WFTU protests vigorously on behalf of its 107 million affiliated members against this violation of human liberties and rights.

These arbitrary measures, taken against the patriots fighting for a better life, for democratic liberties and against corruption, cause great concern to the world trade union opinion and to all people of goodwill who demand the immediate liquidation of the inhuman regime imposed on Iran since 1953.

In solidarity with the fight of the people and workers of Iran we emphatically demand an end to this repression, the satisfaction of the legitimate economic and social demands of the Iranian workers and the release from imprisonment of the militant workers and patriots arrested lately in Ispahan.

Published by the Press Service
of the WFTU.

No. 256

November 18, 1961.

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PRESS COMMUNIQUE

MESSAGE OF THE W.F.T.U. TO THE CONGRESS OF THE
LEBANESE TRADE UNIONS

The Secretariat of the World Federation of Trade Unions has sent the following telegram to the Lebanese Trade Unions at present in Congress at Beyrouth:

"On behalf of its 107 million members, the W.F.T.U. warmly hails the 2nd Congress of the Lebanese Trade Unions.

The Congress and its Draft Programme are of great importance for the Lebanese trade union movement, particularly at this time when several struggles and actions of the workers and of their various trade union centres are being waged for economic and social demands of the greatest importance.

While wishing full success to your Congress and, through you, to all Lebanese workers and trade union centres in their joint action, the W.F.T.U. reaffirms its long-standing feelings of friendship to the working class of your country and expresses once more its support and solidarity for the Lebanese people and workers in their struggle for the improvement of their living conditions, the strengthening of their national independence and for the consolidation of world peace".

November 20, 1961

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PRESS RELEASE

MESSAGE OF THE W.F.T.U. TO THE 18TH CONGRESS OF JAPANESE
TRADE UNIONS

On November 27 and 28, 1961, will be held in Tokyo the 18th Congress (extraordinary) of the General Council of the Japanese Trade Unions (SOHYO). The Secretariat of the W.F.T.U. has sent, for the occasion, the following message to SOHYO :

"On behalf of its 107 million members, the World Federation of Trade Unions wishes to send you its brotherly salutations as well as to all participants to the 18th Congress (extraordinary) of the SOHYO and, through you, to all the workers of Japan.

The W.F.T.U. hails the great economic and political struggles the Japanese workers have waged since your last Congress in August. It highly values the importance of their broad united actions to prevent once more the adoption at the last parliamentary session of the famous Bill of Law for the Prevention of Political violences. It values also their vigilance in face of the attacks against their fundamental rights.

We have followed with interest the various mass actions of the Japanese workers against rationalisation which is one of the most common means of over-exploitation in the countries under monopoly and imperialist rule. We want to hail also the joint action of the miners and their trade unions of Japan and France. It stands as a typical example that the will of the workers to

co-ordinate their actions in view of their common interests can overcome the differences of international affiliation.

The unity of action of the workers is especially needed now that the threats of war in the Far East and in Europe provoked by American imperialism and its allies represent such a serious danger for the workers of the whole world.

Along with their class brothers of all countries, the Japanese workers are playing a role of great importance in the defence of world peace. In the same spirit we are convinced that the 5th World Trade Union Congress which will be held on the call of the W.F.T.U., a few days only after your own Congress, will bring a great assistance to all workers and particularly to the Japanese workers in their economic and social demands, their trade union and democratic rights, national independence and world peace.

While wishing your Congress full success in its work, we want to assure by the same token the Japanese workers of our entire solidarity."

November 21, 1961.

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28 NOV 1961

PRESS RELEASE

ON THE EVE OF THE Vth WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS,
LOUIS SAILLANT, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE W.F.T.U.,
SENDS AN OPEN LETTER TO SHAFIE AHMED EL SHEIKH,
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE W.F.T.U., IMPRISONED IN SUDAN
SINCE 33 MONTHS.

On November 20, 1961, Louis Saillant, General Secretary of the W.F.T.U. has sent Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, General Secretary of the Sudan Federation of Trade Unions and Vice-President of the W.F.T.U., the following message:

"Dear Brother SHAFIE,

Imperialist and reactionary rule, by keeping you in the jail of El Obeid, has managed to deprive the Sudanese as well as the international trade union movement of your collaboration for already 33 months. It has also prevented from sending you this letter through normal channels. That is why I have to make it an open letter.

In a few days, 1000 trade union leaders from all parts of the world will meet in Moscow for the Vth World Trade Union Congress. Many of them were among the ones who enthusiastically voted at the 4th Congress for your nomination as vice-president of an international trade union organisation which groups today more than 107 million workers. These leaders, along with those who joined them in recent years, doubtlessly deplore your absence at a time when they will meet within the greatest international trade union congress the world has ever known.

We hold as untenable and odious the accusations uttered against you.

All your struggles and the example you have set of a loyal son of the working class courageously defending the interests of his class and never wavering a moment in the face of the greatest sacrifices, will certainly find response within the Congress and will inspire it towards achieving the most equitable and effective solutions.

To you and to all your fellow-prisoners, I send my warmest greetings and those of the leaders of the W.F.T.U. We sincerely hope that the struggle of the Sudanese workers, the concerted action of the workers of Africa and of the other countries, supported by the militant solidarity of the W.F.T.U., will contribute to soon bringing to an end the repression against the trade union movement in Sudan and will allow you to resume your place among us.

Let it be known to you, dear Brother Shafie, that while you are sitting in jail the workers of the world tender you their brotherly feelings, their militant solidarity, and that there are no walls so high as to prevent you from being present in our midst, in the heart of the workers, at the Vth World Trade Union Congress.

With brotherly feelings,

Louis SAILLANT

General Secretary of the W.F.T.U.

Published through the
Press Service of the W.F.T.U.

Nº 259

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

December 22, 1961

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

MESSAGE FROM THE W.F.T.U.
TO THE C.G.T. OF FRANCE

On December 21, 1961, the Secretariat of the W.F.T.U. sent the following telegram to the C.G.T. of France:

"The workers and the trade unions of all countries warmly greet the successful strike and powerful united demonstrations called and organised by the C.G.T. and the other trade union centres of France, to put a stop to Fascism and to force peace in Algeria through negotiations. These new demonstrations, which have taken place in spite of the brutal repression ordered by the Gaullist Government, are proof of the militancy and growing unity of the French workers and of their will to do away with the fascist activities of the C.A.S. and the colonial war from which these activities stem.

"On behalf of its 120 million members, the World Federation of Trade Unions send its warmest greetings to you and to all the French working class. You may rest assured of our most fraternal and total solidarity in the steadfast struggle you are waging in unity against the fascist peril to force an end to the Algerian war through genuine negotiations with the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic and to win restoration of democracy in your country.

Published by the Press Service.
of the W.F.T.U.

No.261.