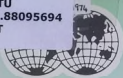


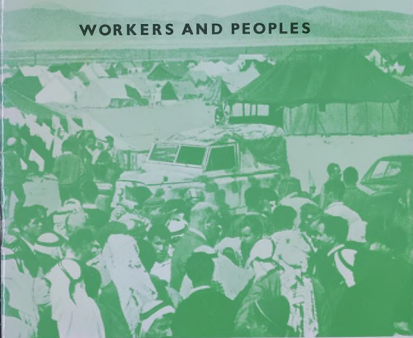
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THE WFTU

AND

THE STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB WORKERS AND PEOPLES



NOVEMBER 1974

BULLETIN OF THE WFTU

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**THE WFTU
AND
THE STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB
WORKERS AND PEOPLES**

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World Federation of Trade Unions

CONTENTS

	page
EDITORIAL — by Ibrahim ZAKARIA, WFTU Secretary	3
4th CONGRESS OF THE GENERAL TRADE UNION FEDERATION OF IRAQ	5
WFTU COOPERATION WITH THE ALO WILL AID THE GENERAL STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB WORKERS	8
A CONSTANT POLICY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE JUST STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB PEOPLES	11
DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE ARAB WORKERS	12
EGYPT: THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	13
FRIENDSHIP SEMINAR IN SYRIA — by J. TEHLE, Head of the WFTU Education Department	14
WFTU PROTEST AGAINST THE REPRESSION IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK	15
LEBANON: THE WORKERS' AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT PLAYS AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE — by E. ELBOEIRI, FENASOL General Secretary	16
THE WFTU AND ARAB OIL — by AHMED EL AAMEL	19
DECLARATION ON RAW MATERIALS AND DEVELOPMENT	22
IN MEMORY OF SHAFIE AHMED EL SHEIKH	23
REPRESSION IN THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES	24
AGAINST REPRESSION IN BAHREIN	26

EDITORIAL

NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR THE ARAB TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

by Ibrahim ZAKARIA, WFTU Secretary

When the first issue of this Review went to press, the conditions imposed in the aftermath of the 1967 Israeli aggression against the Arab countries still dominated all aspects of life in this part of the world. In contrast, today, the situation has changed completely. As a result of the 1973 war, which the partial liberation of Sinai and the Golan Heights and due to the fighting spirit of the Arab masses and armies, the struggle which

It must also be noted that the support of these organisations confirmed the class character of this struggle. They have contributed and will always contribute to the validity of this concept. It is, in fact, an essential pre-condition for achieving the desired objectives and for the establishment of close links between the struggle for national liberation and the struggle for the introduction of social changes.



Within the framework of the technical assistance given by the socialist countries to the Arab countries, many future specialists take courses there, like the ones in our photo.

has been affecting this region for a quarter of a century has opened new and increasingly sure perspectives.

The problems of the region can only be resolved by removing the crime which was perpetrated against the Palestinian Arab people expelled from their native land (with recognition of their legitimate rights to regain their native land and to self-determination), and by the total and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

The way to achieve these objectives is through a diplomatic, political and ideological struggle, both at a regional and international level. In this situation the unity of all the groups within the Arab liberation movement, as well as their alliance with their natural friends, assumes a vital importance. Soviet-Arab friendship is the touchstone of this alliance. The Arab trade unions continue to play, as in the past, an important role in their countries' defence.

At the present time the tasks of the Arab trade union organisations are diverse and complex.

In fact, these organisations must, on the one hand, engage in the struggle for the liberation of the occupied territories and, on the other, fight, both separately and together, in order to win for the trade union movement its rightful place in society. This means that they must participate in decision-making with regard to the building of a national economy and the planning of development. They should also assume responsibilities for the implementation of these decisions.

If they are to accomplish these tasks, trade union organisations must enjoy all the rights and freedoms and get rid of the tutelage imposed on them by certain countries.

It is this which has earned them the respect due to the realisation of the important role which they could play in the world trade union movement. It would also result in the strengthening of



Wrecked Israeli tank in the liberated area of Sinai.

international trade union solidarity with the just struggle of the Arab workers and peoples.

It is also understandable that the Arab trade union movement attaches great importance, both on the local and regional levels, to the problems of trade union training and working-class culture. These problems are, in fact, vital to the whole trade union movement which hopes to graduate from the stage of issuing simple slogans, to a commitment to a policy concerning all aspects of life, and to the mobilisation of the working masses for the support of these policies. At the present stage these are the needs of all the revolutionary trade union organisations not only in the Arab but in all other countries.

We warmly applaud the efforts made in this field by the Arab trade union centres and by the ICATU, and we reiterate that the WFTU is willing to contribute to the implementation of this vital task.

Last May, 116 national, regional and international delegations took part in the 4th Congress of the General Federation of the Iraqi Trade Unions. In addition, the 5th Congress of the Palestinian Trade Union Federation was held in August and followed by the 18th Syrian Workers' Congress. Foreign delegations attended both Congresses.

How can we interpret these facts?

It is the usual practice for the representatives of foreign trade unions to attend international Congresses. Although there is nothing new in this, it must be noted that under the present conditions, in this case the significance lies in the growing number of these delegations. The wide spectrum of the delegations' international affiliations and their political outlooks is a proof of their growing resolve to unite and develop solidarity. It is a healthy sign which has a bearing on the present political situation.



International solidarity with the legitimate struggle of the Arab people takes practical shape. A consignment of medical supplies from the GDR for the Syrian Arab Republic.

What is also new is the growing conviction that the cause of the Arab workers is just and must receive greater support.

When a trade union organisation sends a delegation to attend a congress of the Iraqi centre it is a sure sign of its awareness of the fact that the great revolutionary changes in this country and, especially, the struggle against the constant attacks by the international oil monopolies, contribute to the worldwide struggle of the workers against imperialism and the multinational companies. It can also be said that a trade union organisation which sends its representatives to a Congress of Palestinian workers, does so because it is, at least partly, convinced that the Palestinian people have the right to live in their country and not be scattered in various refugee camps.

The delegation to Damascus certainly witnessed remarkable examples of the endurance shown by the Arab armies confronted by the enemy forces. It saw at close quarters the great efforts made by the Arab peoples to reconstruct the liberated town of Kuneitra, and for the development of their country.

Thus international solidarity with the struggle of the Arab workers and peoples daily gathers momentum. One of the important additional factors must be stressed in this context, namely that through its policy and actions, the Arab trade union movement supports the struggles of the workers in other countries. A convincing and far from unique example of this is their active solidarity with the people of Chile.

What then is the meaning of this commendable and reciprocal solidarity? In the final analysis, it cannot fail to consolidate the cohesion of the forces of the world trade union movement and to assure progress towards world peace and justice.

4th CONGRESS OF THE GENERAL TRADE UNION FEDERATION OF IRAQ

The important feature of the 4th Congress of the Iraqi Trade Union Centre, which was held from 21st to 25th May 1974, was the impressive number of its foreign participants. In fact 116 international, regional and national delegations from 3 continents were present. The WFTU was represented by a delegation led by Brother Enrique Pastorino, President of the WFTU.

We reproduce below the speech made by the WFTU president at the opening session of the Congress, and also an article by Ahmed Azzam: "The FGSJ comes out in favour of a socialist development."

Speech by Brother Enrique Pastorino

I bring you the fraternal greetings of more than 150 million workers throughout the world organised in the national centres affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions. I convey the greetings of the international working class to this 4th Congress, to the workers and people of Iraq who are waging a determined struggle for the defence of their national rights, and the defence of their natural resources against imperialism and reaction.

The presence of our delegation at this Congress constitutes an expression of combative solidarity with the struggles of peoples for national independence, liberation, progress and

peace, against oppression of the monopolies, of imperialism and its agents. It is an expression of solidarity with the just cause of the Arab peoples in their struggle against Israeli aggression, for the full sovereignty of the territories occupied by the aggressor, for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people. Consequently, we are in total solidarity with the people and workers of Iraq who are defending their revolution and achievements.

Ever since its foundation in 1945 the WFTU has followed with great interest the problems of the Arab workers and the struggles of the peoples of this region. Delegations from Arab organisations, particularly from the Palestine Trade Union Federation were present at the Consultative Congress of our Federation, thus participating in the foundation of our international organisation. Since then the WFTU has done its utmost to fulfill its international mission as regards the struggle of the Arab workers and peoples, and it is proud to be able to rely on the active participation of the trade unions of various Arab countries, namely the General Federation of Iraqi Trade Unions.

In this region the forces of progress face two great challenges:

On the one hand Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and refuses to recognise the



Opening session of the congress which took the form of a demonstration of international solidarity.

legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine. It is thus acting as a basis of imperialism and of the monopolies against the national sovereignty of the Arab peoples and their right to control their natural wealth and resources.

On the other hand the oil monopolies and imperialist governments who support them resort to all possible means to continue their monopolistic domination of the national resources of the Arab peoples.

The Arab peoples are dealing severe blows to imperialism and imperialist monopolies. Such victories could not have been achieved without the heroic struggle of the Arab workers and peoples, without the important changes in the balance of power in favour of socialism and of the movement of national liberation and national progress. These changes in turn being due to the successes achieved in all spheres by the socialist countries and to the struggle of the working class and of the movement for national liberation.

In Iraq the revolutionary process aiming at the consolidation of sovereignty and the application of necessary social changes is going on. We are with you, dear Iraqi brothers, in this just struggle you are waging against imperialism, against reaction and the oil companies who try to maintain their exploitation. We greet the nationalisation of the oil industry and the measures for the defence of the national wealth of Iraq. We greet you as a great achievement and the proclamation of autonomy of the Kurdish people within the Republic of Iraq, thus applying in practice the democratic principles sealing the friendship between the two peoples of Iraq. We express our total solidarity with the just struggle you are waging to protect the Iraqi revolution against imperialist and reactionary plots endeavouring to abolish the revolutionary régime in Iraq.

The WFTU supports energetically the just measures taken by the Arab countries in defence of their national wealth against the domination of capitalist multinational monopolies. Your struggle against the exploitation of monopolies goes beyond the frontiers of your country and has international dimensions. In fact, in the world today, at a time when production is becoming increasingly international and multinational corporations are extending their influences in capitalist and developing countries, the problems of development must be envisaged at the international level. This is why our Federation has seconded the convocation of an extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss the questions concerning relations between raw material producing countries and industrialised countries, and it has sent an official delegation to this session. In our opinion, in order to render more efficient all action aiming at the elimination of the control exercised by capitalist countries over the prices of raw materials and derived products, the participation of the trade union movement as of a powerful social force has become indispensable.

The action of multinational corporations, the interference in the internal affairs of states, their coordinated policy at world level against the interest of workers and peoples, all this demands united action and solidarity of workers and their organisations. The 8th World Trade Union Congress, held in Varna, Bulgaria, last October,

has confirmed this essential need for solidarity and unity of action against monopolies and imperialism, for the defence of the sovereignty of peoples and of the vital interest of workers.

Solidarity with the peoples, victims of aggression, unity in the struggle for national liberation, against capitalist exploitation and against imperialism, such is the basis of our action in all domains.

— To overcome our common enemy, imperialism and the monopolies;

— To open up new prospects of social changes for the building of a just society, without exploiters and exploited.

Dear Brothers,

Allow me once again to reiterate the greetings and solidarity of the international working class and its active support for the just cause for which you are fighting.

Long live international solidarity of peoples!
Long live the unity of the international working class!

Long live the General Federation of Iraqi Trade Unions!

The FGSJ comes out in support of a socialist development

The presence of a wide spectrum and variety of political tendencies of the Statutory Congress of the United Iraqi Centre provided an opportunity for a great demonstration of solidarity with all the Arab peoples and in particular with the peoples of Palestine. The WFTU delegation, led by its President Enrique Pastorino, had a warm reception.

At the opening session of the Congress, which was held under the slogan of "The strengthening of unity in the national and patriotic struggle of the Arab working class, and the speeding up of the socialist transformation of society", Badran Fadel, General Secretary of the Centre, presented a lengthy report of the Centre's activities in the last three years.

The report states that, in the period between the two congresses, the Centre's success in strengthening of the ties of friendship and co-operation between the Iraqi workers and the Arab and international working class, has been its greatest achievement. The result of this co-operation was the effective support for the struggle against the machinations of the reactionaries, imperialists and Zionists and for the recovery of the natural resources of Iraq.

The activities of the Centre, aimed at maintaining relations with all trade union organisations everywhere, are an example of the international solidarity of the Iraqi trade unions. The following figures are included in the report: 20 joint communiques and agreements with various centres, 382 delegations of Iraqi trade unionists visited friendly organisations in various countries, 185 foreign delegations were received by the Iraqi trade union organisations.

As regards its relations with the WFTU, the governing body of the Centre considers that the World Federation of Trade Unions has effectively helped to unite the efforts of all the workers everywhere in their struggle against imperialism and for the strengthening of solidarity with the struggle of the Arab peoples.

In order to consolidate its relations with the

international trade union movement, in January 1973, the FGSJ had invited the general secretary of the WFTU to Iraq. This visit resulted in a profitable exchange of views and in the strengthening of the friendly ties between the two organisations.

At the conclusion of the Congress the delegates of the Iraqi trade union organisations elected a new governing body and adopted unanimously a final policy statement concerning the three aspects of national, Arab and international policy.

On the national level, the statement emphasises that the 17th July 1968 revolution, led by the Arab Socialist Resurrection Party (BAATH), has guaranteed the democratic rights and the equality of economic and social opportunities for the working class and for the broad masses of the population thus giving the proof of the popular character of this revolution. In effect, the Congress was of the opinion that the consolidation of the revolution is the guide-line of the political strategy of the Centre. As regards the revolution and the social changes taking place in Iraq, the workers' present task is to give political support to the revolutionary programme and to the consolidation of the national unity of the Iraqi people—Arabs, Kurds and other national minorities—which was formed by the Progressive National Patriotic Front.

In order to safeguard the achievements of the revolution, in particular the nationalisation of oil, the working class is asked to prove its vigilance by being on its guard against the conspirators and by taking full responsibility in the interest of all national patriotic forces for the development of production.

At the regional Arab level the statement takes up the slogan of the Congress (consolidation of the unity of the national and patriotic struggle of the Arab working class). It is this unity in their struggle which will pave the way to the unity of the Arab peoples and in that way help them to

achieve social and democratic progress and socialism.

In this connection, the statement considers that the cause of Palestine forms the pivot of the liberation struggle of the Arab people. It rejects all solutions dictated by American imperialism whose aim is to harm the interests of the Arab peoples and to serve the cause of reaction, imperialism and Zionism. The Congress also pledged its moral and material support for the Syrian Workers' Union in their just struggle for the liberation of Palestine.

At the international level, the Iraqi trade union movement is firmly convinced that the working class and all the people throughout the world share a community of interests in their desire for liberation, progress and socialism.

The Congress, therefore, recommends:

1. The strengthening of international solidarity and of the leading role of the WFTU in defence of all peoples' national and democratic rights and of the rights of the working class to be free from capitalist exploitation, misdeeds of imperialism, racial discrimination, neo-fascism and Zionism;
 2. Wider co-operation with the friendly socialist countries, the Soviet Union in particular. On this subject the Congress denounces all attempts aimed at sowing seeds of discord on the field of Soviet-Arab friendship;
 3. The most active support for the struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America against imperialism;
 4. The defence of human rights laid down in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.
- The Iraqi workers have achieved important successes under the leadership of their Centre. The 4th Congress will surely mark a new stage on the road to progress which the FGSJ has followed since the day it was founded.

WFTU COOPERATION WITH THE ALO WILL AID THE GENERAL STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB WORKERS

The recently established relations with the Arab Labour Organisation opened a new field of cooperation in the context of the WFTU solidarity with the struggle of the Arab workers. It was, at the invitation of Dr. Tayeb Lahdiri, ALO Director General, that a WFTU delegation, led by its General Secretary Pierre Gensous, was present at the third Annual Conference of the ALO, which was held in Rabat from 2nd to 12th March 1974.

The General Secretary of the WFTU also visited the ALO headquarters in Cairo between 24th and 26th May 1974 at the head of a delegation. A joint Statement was adopted at the conclusion of the meetings between the two

parties. In this Statement the fields of cooperation between the WFTU and the ALO were clearly defined. Dr. Tayeb Lahdiri was invited to visit the WFTU headquarters in Prague where a draft agreement between the two organisations would be examined and, at a later date, submitted to their respective leaderships.

The ALO delegation was also invited to take part in the work of the international conference on the multinational companies, held in Damascus from 30th to 31st July 1974.

We publish below the speech of the WFTU General Secretary, to the 3rd Annual Conference of the ALO.

This is the first time that the WFTU has been present at a meeting of the Arab Labour Bureau. We are glad to be present and we would like to take the opportunity to express our deep thanks to the Director General of the Organisation and of the Bureau for his invitation and for having thus offered us the occasion of speaking to you. We hope that our presence among you today will be the prelude to a new period of cooperation between the WFTU and your organisation.

The fact that a WFTU delegation is taking part in this session, even more so, the cooperation between your organisation and our Federation are, in our opinion, quite normal. Since it was set up in 1945, the WFTU has, in fact, followed closely the problems of Arab workers and the struggles of your peoples. On this subject, it is sufficient to mention that the Arab trade union organisations, and particularly the Palestine Federation of Labour, took part in the founding conference of our Federation. Thus, they participated in setting up this great international organisation.

The WFTU is proud to state that it does everything possible to fulfil its international mission in regard to the struggle of the Arab peoples and workers. Thus, it has contributed to the great changes which we have seen in the political and social situation in the Arab countries. The struggles of the Arab peoples are striking still stronger blows at imperialism and against the international monopolies. Such impressive victories would not have been won without the heroic struggles carried on by the Arab peoples and workers and without the great changes which have taken place in favour of socialism and the movement for national liberation and social progress, and this is thanks to the successes won in every field by the socialist countries and to the untiring struggle carried on by the working class.

However, despite the big steps forward which have been taken, the forces of progress, socialism and peace are having to face up to challenges from imperialist forces, monopolies and reaction.

Colonialists and reactionists continue to sully the soil of the African continent and other regions of the world. Monopolies and multinational companies still form states within politically independent states. Imperialist aggressions are going on in a number of countries.

In your region, the world of progress has to face up to two situations.

On the one hand, Israel is still occupying Arab territories and is refusing to recognise the legitimate right of the Palestinian people. Thus it is acting as an outpost of imperialism and of the monopolies against Arab wealth.

On the other hand, the oil monopolies and the imperialist governments which provide them with help and support, are making every effort to perpetuate their grip on the resources of the Arab peoples.

In the struggle being undertaken to face up to these two challenges and to those which result from the effects of colonialism, the Arab Labour Bureau can be justly considered as one of the tools necessary for the battle being carried on by the Arab peoples both in the political and social fields.

The draft documents presented to the present session by the Director General reflect the various fields in which the organisation operates and the problems relating to labour and the workers. These questions as a whole concern problems of freedom from the yoke of the monopolies and the speeding up of development.

The problems relating to development and which are at the centre of the questions being discussed at the present session, have been discussed by the representatives of 210 million workers who met in October last in Varna on the occasion of the 8th World Trade Union Congress. They concluded that in order to overcome real under-development it was necessary to fight for:

- agrarian reforms which would abolish all farms and all vestiges of colonial and feudal ownership and would guarantee the land to those who work it;
- industrialisation directed towards extending the internal market and raising the standard of living of the people;
- the creation and development of a state sector of industry and the abolition of private monopolies;
- conditions of reciprocal equality in trade with developed capitalist countries and price stabilisation of products exported by the developing countries;
- the elimination of discriminatory blocs and the removal of obstacles which prevent the rapid development of trade between the socialist and other countries;
- the re-allocation of military expenditure to economic and social development;
- national sovereignty for every country based on its natural resources and on the right of developing countries to see that foreign capital is used in conformity with the national need to expand, and the right to nationalise undertakings belonging to foreign capital;
- national legislation to be applied to all questions of nationalisation;
- the training of managerial, technical and supervisory staffs at all levels in order to prepare for and ensure the construction of a real independent national economy.

In our opinion, in order that this struggle should be crowned with success and should attain its ends, the problems relating to trade union liberties and to the contribution of the workers to drawing up development plans and applying them, is vital.

Furthermore, in the contemporary world, where production is being more and more internationalised, and in which multinational companies are extending their tentacles throughout capitalist and developing countries, the problems of under-development and of development must be faced on an international level.

In this context, we support the proposal put forward by President Houari Boumediene on the calling of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss problems of relations between countries producing raw materials and industrialised countries in an attempt to eliminate the control exercised by the capitalist countries over the prices of raw materials and over those of the products which they use. As we have indicated to the Secretary General of UNO by letter, we think that in order to make this action still more effective, the trade union movement should be brought into participation, since with its 300 million members it has become a powerful social force which has to be taken into consideration.

In the same way as the Arab workers, their brothers in other countries are struggling against the oil monopolies. The fight of the world's workers is at one on this subject of rejecting the monopolies' policy of domination and exploitation and in favour of relationships among countries being based on principles of non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual interest.

The WFTU and its affiliated organisations are fighting the present themes of bourgeois propaganda aimed at getting the idea accepted that the Arab peoples are responsible for the energy, monetary and economic crisis which is today undermining certain countries.

Yes, there is a crisis in the capitalist countries. In all fields. But it was there long before the decision of the oil-producing countries. It is the crisis of a whole system. It is within this very system, the capitalist system, that the reasons and those responsible for the crisis must be sought. Workers in the capitalist countries know this very well, they who today are carrying on great struggles to win their demands. Yes, there is a crisis in a certain kind of international relationship based on the domination of one partner by another. There is a crisis in this field because the people in countries producing raw materials are less and less prepared to accept the plunder of their national wealth and because they want to dispose of it in full sovereignty in order to create economic and social progress in their country. We

say that they are right and that they can count on the solidarity of the WFTU and of all workers who are members of it.

The WFTU maintains fraternal and continuous relations with the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions. Arab trade union organisations take part in drawing up our policies as affiliated members. The WFTU supports with all its power the struggle of the Arab peoples and workers to liberate the territories occupied by Israel and for recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and to decide their own future themselves.

Within the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of Palestine, we try, in cooperation with national, regional and international centres, to encourage the world trade union movement to give still more support to the just cause of the Arab peoples and the people of Palestine against imperialism, Zionism and reaction and for a better future. We are conscious that our task is not easy. But the progress that we have made in this field during the past few years encourages us to persevere. As we make no division between our struggle in the world trade union arena and the struggle going on in every Arab country for social progress, we consider that our cooperation with the Arab Labour Bureau, particularly in the fields of trade union liberties, social insurance schemes, trade union training and problems of migrant workers, etc. will help our general struggle to mobilise the international trade union movement of which I have spoken.

In wishing every success to your session and a big extension of our cooperation in the future, we would like once more to thank you for having given us the opportunity to speak at your assembly.

A CONSTANT POLICY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE JUST STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB PEOPLES

A resolution on the Middle East which reaffirms the WFTU standpoint with regard to the struggle of the Arab workers and people is among the documents adopted by the 10th session of the WFTU Bureau. The text of the resolution states:



In a playground in Damascus children play on the wreckage of a shot-down Israeli plane.

The Bureau of the WFTU held in Prague on 14th and 15th May 1974 reaffirms the full support of the WFTU for the just struggle of the Arab peoples for the liberation of their occupied territories and for the implementation of their complete economic independence and for sovereignty over their natural wealth. It warmly hails international solidarity campaigns with this struggle.

Blocked by the United States of America, Israel persists in its war-mongering, aggressive and expansionist policy in spite of the condemnation of world public opinion and UN resolutions. In this connection we need only point to the dirty war which it is waging today in the Golan Heights in Syria and in the South of the Lebanon and which is opposed with strength and determination by the Syrian people and by the Syrian Arab army.

The WFTU has already stated, on several occasions and reaffirms again today that peace can only be established in the Middle East if Israel withdraws completely from all occupied territories and fully recognises the legitimate national rights of the people of Palestine to regain its national homeland and to decide its own destiny.

The WFTU which welcomes the successes won by the Arab peoples, condemns the conspiracies

organised by imperialism and the reactionary forces in this region. These moves find an echo in the actions of the reactionary forces in Northern Iraq backed by American imperialism and its agents. The WFTU considers the declaration by the régime of the autonomy of the Kurds in Iraq to be a major positive patriotic achievement. It welcomes the many revolutionary achievements of several of these countries.

The WFTU launches once again an urgent appeal to workers everywhere to strengthen their solidarity campaigns with the struggle of the Arab peoples and the people of Palestine. In these days when the WFTU Bureau is meeting, our brothers in Syria are waging fierce struggles against the Israeli occupants in the Syrian Golan heights. In the name of millions of the workers belonging to our organisation we send our warm and fraternal greetings to the Syrian patriots and declare our conviction that the just cause of the Arab peoples will triumph. We who are convinced of the courage and determination of the Syrian people declare that we are with you, Syrian brothers. For its part, the WFTU commits itself again to make every effort to continue its consistent policy of solidarity with the just struggle of the Arab peoples.

Prague, 15th May 1974

DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE ARAB WORKERS



The legitimate right of the Arab people of Palestine to return to their homeland and to self-determination must be recognised.



Wounded civilians after the barbarous Israeli attack on the village of Sbeinah in Syria.

During the last two weeks, following the crimes perpetrated by Israel against the Arab peoples and in particular against the people of Palestine, the WFTU had to address itself several times to workers and their trade unions all over the world and also to UN Secretary General, protesting against the genocide and denouncing the repression and the murderous raids against the civil population in the Lebanon, on the West Bank of Jordan and in Syria.

However, the Israeli government turns a deaf ear to all these protests and carries on its criminal policy.

The air-, land- and sea-raids which, in practice, have become an everyday affair against the Lebanon continue and dozens of Palestinians and Lebanese have been massacred and their homes

destroyed, Syria is exposed to the continuing aggression. The number of arrests and tortures is increasing on the West Bank of the Jordan.

The Israeli authorities have recently arrested about 400 patriots some of whom have been savagely tortured. This is the case in particular of:

— Mahmoud Abdul Fattah, Secretary of the Building Workers' Union of Ramallah;

— Mohammed Abu Garbyah, Secretary of the Shoe Workers' Union of Jerusalem;

— Yakoub Farah, Secretary of the Tailors Union of Jordan;

— Atallah Rachmawi, Member of the Administrative Committee of the Building Workers' Union of Bethlehem;

— Khalil Hijazi, Treasurer of the Public Service Workers' Trade Unions and member of the Confederal Bureau of the General Federation of Trade Unions of the West Bank of Jordan;

— Husni Haddad, Secretary of the Engineers Trade Union of Bethlehem.



Foreign journalists view the wreckage of an Israeli helicopter shot down over the Sinai desert.

These arrests, tortures and massacres constitute a challenge to progressive world opinion and to all universally recognised humanitarian principles. At the same time, the tension created by the continuing Israeli aggression against the neighbouring Arab countries seriously threatens peace and security all over the world.

For this reason, we invite workers and their trade unions everywhere to vigorously denounce the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli authorities and take all possible initiatives to compel them to end the aggression, recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, withdraw the Israeli troops from occupied territories and thus put an end to a dangerous situation which threatens the future of mankind.

Prague, 24th May 1974

EGYPT: THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In an important resolution adopted at a meeting of its Executive Committee on April 13, 1974, the General Confederation of Labour of the Egyptian Arab Republic stated that the public sector must remain the firm rampart of the country's economic and social life. Any attacks on this sector—by conceding a share to private capital—will be categorically opposed by the workers.

This resolution, the most important sections of which we print below, reaffirms the desire of the Egyptian workers to oppose any attempts to usurp the socialist gains which have been made by the people's revolution:

"The Executive Committee considers the time has come to clarify this question in order to define the attitude of the working class. The public sector represents the outcome of a long struggle by the Egyptian people against foreign monopolies and those local capitalists who cooperated with them.

"The public sector was created to abolish the monopolies and the domination of the regime by capital, to achieve social justice and to reduce under-development. It is the main foundation for all economic development and cannot be left to the mercy of private capital or to foreign exploitation.

"The Executive Committee emphasises that any

attempt to return to the former conditions in any form whatsoever is categorically rejected. The workers will rise up against any activities which threaten the socialist gains of the Egyptian people's revolution.

"To permit private capital to take over certain public sectors would mean that a proportion of their profits would be seized by capitalists to the detriment of the people, who are the sole owners, and would go against the fundamental principles on which the public sector is based. Furthermore, the workers of these enterprises would, sooner or later, be deprived of the benefits which they at present enjoy.

"Faced with the dangers which threaten the economic life of the nation, the Executive Committee feels it must adopt a firm attitude on this issue. It draws the attention of all political and people's leaders to the need to remain vigilant and in this way to remove any misunderstanding or wrong interpretation.

"However, the General Confederation of Labour favourably welcomes any offer by private local capital, Arab or foreign, to contribute through making investments in the draft plan for economic development, on condition that these initiatives are integrated into the framework of the general state plan and are subject to current legislation."

FRIENDSHIP SEMINAR IN SYRIA

by Jaroslav TEHLE, Head of the WFTU Education Department



During one of the many fraternal talks at the "Friendship Seminar".

An important educational action in the field of trade union training took place in Damascus, Syria, under the title of "Friendship Seminar". It provided the opportunity to reiterate the ties of international solidarity which unite all the workers everywhere with the Syrian people in their struggle against the Israeli aggression.

Trade union leaders from USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, GDR, Egypt and the WFTU, as well as 35 Syrian trade union leaders who hold positions of responsibility in the regional and branch unions and in the Central FGST's office, took part in this seminar organised by the General Federation of Syrian Trade Unions from 15th to 25th April 1974. Some of the Syrian unionists have already attended trade union courses in the socialist countries.

The opening speech was given by the president of the Syrian Centre, Brother Mahmoud Hodid, who thanked the foreign participants for their important contribution. He stressed that this meeting will give the Syrian trade union leaders the opportunity to get acquainted with the problems of the international trade union movement and with the experience gained by the unions of other countries, especially the socialist countries, and the chance to use this knowledge in their future trade union activities.

These aims were achieved. In the course of the seminar, the foreign unionists explained certain problems of the international trade union movement and summed up the efforts made by their respective centres to strengthen all trade union organisations' actions both on the national and international level. In addition, trade union representatives from the socialist countries summarised their experience, particularly with re-

gard to trade union participation in the economic management of their socialist undertakings. Other experience gained from the work and struggle of the Egyptian unions, were the subject of a speech made by the lecturer representing Egypt.

For their part, the WFTU lecturers presented the following subjects:

1. the international trade union movement and the problems of unity at the present time;
2. the role, struggle and activities of the WFTU for the improvement in the standard of life and the deepening of class consciousness of the working class everywhere.

The foreign guests at the Seminar received a warm welcome. A full programme of excursions and meetings with the workers and their unions was organised in order to give the guests the opportunity to appreciate the high level of consciousness, enthusiasm and fighting spirit of which the workers and people of Syria gave ample proof in face of the Israeli aggression. They were also able to witness the extent of the workers' efforts to build their country and the efforts of the Syrian government to guarantee the freedom, peace and sovereignty of Syria and to transform it into a modern and progressive country.

The efforts made by the Syrian centre with regard to trade union training deserve a special mention. They are a proof of its great commitment to the unions' effective contribution to the task of building the country. For this purpose they have at their disposal a permanent central institute which organises yearly courses for trade union leaders, and, in addition, four branch institutes in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Latakia. There are plans for two-months courses for trade union leaders who will remain on full pay throughout their studies.

Aware of their responsibilities to the trade unions in other Arab countries, which have less educational facilities, the Syrian trade unions also organised in their central institute six-months courses for the unionists of various Arab countries, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, South and North Yemen and Eritrea. As one of these courses coincided with the Seminar, the participants of the latter were invited to lecture at the course. These lectures were highly appreciated.

The results of this seminar were more positive than was expected. They are bound to have a still greater impact once all the participants return to their countries where their daily activities will be enriched by what they have learned from the experience of other friendly trade union organisations.

WFTU PROTESTS AGAINST THE REPRESSION IN THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN

The Israeli authorities have unleashed a further wave of repression against patriots, workers and trade unionists on the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Many patriots and trade unionists, including Abdallah Al Rasmawi, Secretary of the building workers' union at Bil Sahour and Adnan Dagher, member of the same union at Ram Allah, were recently arrested illegally and savagely tortured.

The WFTU protests most strongly against these actions:

- calls on all workers and their trade unions

to protest vigorously against these arrests and demand an end to the repression.

— calls for the satisfaction of the Arab peoples' demands for the evacuation of the occupied territories and for the recognition of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

By campaigning in support of this just cause, the world's workers and trade unions will not only be serving the cause of peace and justice in the Middle East but also the cause of peace and security throughout the world.

Prague, 10th June 1974

LEBANON THE WORKERS' AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT PLAYS AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE

by Elias ELBOEIRI, General Secretary of the FENASOL

In the course of the last two years of struggle for demands, the most important victory of the Lebanese working class and of its trade union movement was achieved on 28th August 1973. The 24 hours strike organised on that day has affected all the economic sectors of Beirut and of the provinces. It coincided with workers' demonstrations and with various initiatives through which the broad masses of the Lebanese population protested against the sky-rocketing prices. The galloping inflation—one of the worst in the world—was in reality initiated by the monopolies which lost no time in exploiting to the full the rising prices of certain world commodities. Thus the inflation has affected the cost of rented accommodation, drugs, school fees and other services.

As for the government, which did nothing to

halt the inflation, it promptly slapped out the general strike in order to prevent it from spreading. To this end they decided to increase wages by 5% and raise the NMW to 225 L.L. (Lebanese pound) backdating the increase to May 1973. Owing to these measures, the strike was postponed till 28th of September 1973 so as to give the government sufficient time to meet other demands.

Contrary to all expectations, the government only used this delay in order to come to an agreement with the right wing opportunist trade unions and, with common consent, to postpone for the second time the date of the general strike till November 1973. These plans were frustrated by the 6th of October war which was started in order to compel the Israelis to leave the territory occupied by them since the June 1967

aggression and to restore to the Palestinian Arab people their right to return to their country and decide their own destiny. These events have led the working class and their trade union movement to abandon temporarily their struggle for demands. It was then a matter of top priority and of patriotic and class duty to mobilise all moral and material efforts in order to consolidate the liberation front.

In contrast, the Government has attempted to use this war to its advantage by trying to ignore or sweep under the carpet the workers' demands. Monopolies' share-holders and grasping big merchants exploited the armed conflict in order to raise prices and make exorbitant profits. They withdrew the essential commodities from the market with the obvious aim of making frantic and highly profitable speculations. At the same time the employers, protected by article 50 of the Labour Code, resorted to unwarranted dismissals under the pretext of an economic crisis provoked by the war.

The opportunist right wing of the trade union movement came out in support of government schemes. This opportunist movement had no intention to defend the economic and social interests of the workers, and stood by while the big business was in the process of passing on to the shoulders of the working masses all the disastrous consequences of the crisis.

Owing to the vigilance of the working class, and to the support from the progressive forces which are loyal to the interests of the workers within the trade union movement, led by the National Trade Union Federation of the Lebanese Workers and Employees (FENASOL), the actions of the workers and of their unions soon brought positive results. It is thanks to these actions that the decision to organise a general strike on 6th February 1974 was carried out.

In order to make this action ineffective, the government once again resorted to similar steps. It promptly increased the wages by 10%, raised the NMW to 275 Lebanese pounds as from 1st January 1974, and promised to meet other demands, the most important of which concerned measures to curb the prevailing domination of the monopolies and of the big business and also measures to bring down the high cost of living, through rent reductions and through the important of basic foodstuffs by government-controlled agencies.

The aim of these concessions, made by the government with the consent of the right wing trade unions, was to postpone the general strike until 2nd April.

However, the joint machinations of the government and the right wing unions failed to prevent the workers' actions. The workers, mobilised by the progressive unions, launched a number of initiatives to demonstrate their disagreement with the decisions of the CGT, the organisation grouping all the trade union centres. A number of strikes took place in South Lebanon and in the industrial districts of Beirut. As a result, the right wing unions became increasingly more isolated, while the progressive trend continued to gain ground. The government too was compelled to reduce rents by 15% and promised to meet other demands at a later date.

In that manner, the 6th of February strike gave an impetus to the development and strengthening of the class and mass actions and struggles for concrete demands. These actions took various forms, such as: mass meetings of workers in factories, discussions organised in the districts, etc. They have all culminated in an historic mass demonstration, organised by FENASOL, held on March 27, in which 50,000 workers took part. Other similar actions took place in support for the following demands:

— Effective measures against the high cost of living consisting, among others, of sanctions against the monopolists, including imprisonment, import of basic foodstuffs by the state and exemption from customs duties of goods sold by the food cooperatives run by the trade union centres. All this can only be achieved by repealing legislations which sanction the existence of monopolies, in particular the legislation No. 34, which was promulgated in 1967.

— Amendment of the article 50 of the Lebanese Labour Code concerning imposition of dismissals of workers, especially in the private sector, so that the workers do not claim their right to benefit from the agreement on the adjustment of wages to the rising cost of living, for fear of dismissal. The struggles for the repeal of this article date back to 1950.

Apart from these two main demands, the workers also claim: the right to a full paid sick leave from the first day of incapacity, an increase of the family allowance from 60 to 75 Lebanese pounds per month, tax exemption for workers earning 6,000 Lebanese pounds per year or less, reduction of municipal rates for those who pay less than 2,000 Lebanese pounds annual rent, and social security benefits for agricultural workers.

In result of these activities, the working masses, led by the progressive wing of the trade union movement, achieved an historic victory. In a document signed jointly with the representatives of the CGT on the eve of the general strike which was called for 2nd April 1974, the government undertakes to revise article 50 of the labour code and of the legislative decree No 34, before the end of May 1974. Full time agricultural workers will also receive social security and sickness benefits as from 1st July 1974. Other demands were also met.

This great victory is another proof of the leading role played by the working class in the struggle of various other social groups with small incomes. It also demonstrates the independent role of all the progressive forces, in particular of the FENASOL which is the most important centre of the country. In spite of this recent victory, the working class knows that in order to win its demands and create new trade union structures in place of the present obsolete ones of the CGT, it must continue the struggle against the employers and the financial cliques. These future struggles will have two main objectives:

1. To continue the struggle under various forms in order to ensure that the demands which were already accepted are fully implemented,



50,000 workers took part in a march in Beirut on 27th March organised by FENASOL.



FENASOL leaders heading the 27th March demonstration.

and to achieve new objectives with the aim of winning a higher standard of living for the workers.

2. To adopt new and more progressive structures within the organisation of the trade union movement, and in particular within the Govern-

ing Body of the CGT, and to ensure that they reflect the real strength of the working class and its organisations. In this way the progressive forces concerned with the cause of the workers could assume a leading role, which is theirs by right and in fact.

Strikes and loss of working hours from 1st May 1973 to 1st May 1974

Strikers	Approx. number	Cause of strike	Date of strike	Length of strike	Last working hours
General strikes					
Lebanese workers	280,000	Against high cost of living	28. 8. 1973	one day	2,240,000
Workers in Tripoli and in Salda	15,000	Solidarity in reprisal against the incidents in Tripoli	19. 12. 1973	three days	360,000
Part of the labour force in El Maklas	3,000	Solidarity in reprisal against the incidents in Tripoli	21. 12. 1973	one day	74,000
Strikes in the industrial region					
Workers in El Maklas	10,000	Against high cost of living	6. 2. 1974	two days	160,000
Workers in Salda	4,000	Against high cost of living	6. 2. 1974	one day	32,000
Workers in Tripoli	12,000	Against high cost of living	2. 4. 1974	one day	96,000
					Total: 2,912,000

THE WFTU AND ARAB OIL

- Firm support for the peoples' right to dispose freely of their natural resources
- Vigorous condemnation of vilification of Arab peoples

by Ahmed EL AAMEL



The refinery at Homs in the Syrian Arab Republic in flames following an Israeli air-raid.

The economic situation in the capitalist countries is continuously worsening, parallel with the general crisis of the current system. The effects of this crisis carry serious consequences for the way of life of the working class and the whole working population of those countries. These consequences can be seen in galloping inflation, in upsets caused by the monetary crisis, in creeping recession, in fresh unemployment, in the constant rise of prices and in the continual decrease of purchasing power.

The energy crisis has in fact become part of this situation which is overlaid with problems and has put the monopolies and their supporting governments in the dock. However, the latter are determined to prevent this crisis as resulting solely from the embargo imposed by the producing Arab countries and from the legitimate increase in the price of crude oil decided by all

the oil-producing countries, including the Arab countries.

Indeed, the embargo was only an economic weapon against those countries which have supported the aggressive policies and actions of the Israeli war-mongers, that is, against those countries which have many times used and abused economic blocks to control the developing countries which are seeking autonomy.

As for the increase of source of the price of oil, it is a measure which has only been made necessary by the continual increase in the price of products from the industrialised countries, while the price of raw materials remained the same or even slumped.

Making the most of any excuse, the economic circles and officials of different capitalist countries seized upon these measures as justification for raised taxes, restrictive measures and even

unemployment. At the same time, their profits were growing, causing overall price increases.

In this way the oil crisis was exploited to the utmost with the aim of intensifying anti-social policies and massive dismissals, closing frontiers to immigrant workers, putting pressure on wages and introducing other "austerity" measures, so as to make the workers pay for the crisis. Everything was done to disguise the overwhelming responsibility of governments and the big international oil companies in this crisis, which is not, in fact, of recent origin.

It arises from the policy based on the all-powerfulness of the big international oil cartels which have divided the world market between them, systematically applying the law of maximum profit. With the active complicity of the imperialist governments, they suppressed energy sources in the producing countries, regardless of the interests of the peoples of those countries who are trying to build up an independent industry.

The capitalist governments and the international cartels have waged a campaign of vilification against the Arab countries which for centuries have been bled white and deprived of their natural wealth. For such circles, the natural resources of those countries only serve

as inexhaustible reserves of oil and profit. And, in the opinion of those circles, they should be maintained at all costs in a state of underdevelopment so that their shameful exploitation can be continued.

The action of the Arab oil-producing countries is an important proof of their frustrated desire to free themselves from the imperialist domination of their economy. At the same time it has shown the depth of the crisis which once more proves the failure of the capitalist system, its economic weakness and its powerlessness to solve the problems of contemporary society.

The working class all over the world has not fallen into the trap set by the obvious attempts to divide the workers of the developed capitalist countries and the workers of the underdeveloped countries. Their struggle is determinedly directed against the monopolies and the countries which support them. The world's workers have well understood that the monopolies only are responsible for this crisis and have not let themselves be divided.

The WFTU, which has always struggled in the interests of workers and peoples all over the world, has taken an unequivocal stand on the

matter of the energy crisis, a stand which genuinely reflects the aspirations of the working class.

This stand was confirmed once again in the Declaration on Raw Materials and Development unanimously adopted by the 10th Session of the WFTU Bureau, held in Prague on 14th and 15th May 1974 (the text of which we publish on the following page).

Brother Pierre Gensous, WFTU General Secretary, also spoke about this matter in the report presented at that session. He said that the plan to use the partial oil embargo and the rise in prices of the production stage had been conceived by the monopolies to try to overcome certain effects of the crisis which worried them and to increase their profits. "On the other hand", he continued, "they wanted to make the Arab peoples responsible for the crisis, for the rise in prices, for unemployment... to create a gap between workers in the developed capitalist countries and workers in the Arab or

other under-developed countries and to restore class collaboration.

"The struggles of the workers thwarted these aims and continue to do so. They are constantly directed against the monopolies which are the ones really responsible for their present difficulties. These struggles have given rise to new reasons and new possibilities for united action and more active solidarity between workers in the industrialised capitalist countries and workers in the under-developed countries, because the collusion on the part of the international monopolies, made more obvious during the "oil crisis", has also made the need for a class-based, international united front more obvious" stressed Brother Gensous, adding "The present struggles and their spread to all countries show that the struggle of all workers has an increasing tendency to reach beyond national frontiers. They show that white action in the enterprise and in each country remains essential, it joins and becomes part of a vaster struggle, that of all workers throughout the world against the monopolies and against imperialism."



The 62 million dollar oil refinery at Basra in Southern Iraq built by Czechoslovakia, with an annual capacity of 3.3 million m tons.

DECLARATION ON RAW MATERIALS AND DEVELOPMENT

The present problems concerning the exploitation of raw materials are situated in a broad political, social and economic context. They result from the relations between the highly-industrialised capitalist countries and the developing countries. The recent developments reflect the desire of the Third World countries to achieve independent economic development and the revaluation of their products.

The policies of the giant monopolies seek to limit this development by making them restrict themselves to the role of suppliers of raw materials and food products and keep them as essentially single-crop and single-product economies.

Those who suffer above all from the very serious repercussions of the pro-monopolist and pro-imperialist policies are the workers and the broad mass of the working people.

In view of the situation, the workers of the Third World are entitled to demand respect for full sovereignty as well as the inalienable right to dispose freely of their natural resources and to develop their national economies.

In the course of this struggle the awareness is growing and developing among the workers and other sections of the people of the need to establish unity of action by all countries of the Third World.

The recent special session of the UN General Assembly on raw materials and development convened on a proposal from the developing countries, reflects the changes taking place in the field of commercial and economic relations between the highly-industrialised countries of the capitalist world and the countries of the Third World.

The documents adopted with the support of the socialist countries, in the face of opposition from the capitalist countries, show the determination of the developing countries to establish a new international economic order based on the control of their natural resources and the limitation of the domination of the monopolies and multinational companies over the price of raw materials and the way they are handled.

The establishment of a new kind of relations between the developed and developing countries would give the latter the advantages resulting from the expansion of international trade and would help to develop their respective economies which are currently in a permanent state of deterioration. Such a development would have positive effects on employment and would conform with the interests of workers and people.

The WFTU itself has launched a number of actions in this field in favour of an end to trading relations based on inequality, the nationalisation of firms belonging to foreign monopolies in the developing countries, the nationalisation of key industries in the developed capitalist countries and a reform of the international monetary system.

The WFTU submitted a memorandum containing the same demands to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Raw Materials and Development.

It is in this spirit that the WFTU Bureau urges all affiliated and friendly trade union centres to support the aspirations of the workers of the Third World countries to overcome underdevelopment and achieve social progress within the framework of independent economic development.

IN MEMORY OF SHAFIE AHMED EL SHEIKH



Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh among the Sudanese workers.

Three years have passed since 26th July 1971, the date of the assassination of the great trade union leader, Shafie Ahmed El Sheikh, General Secretary of the Sudanese Trade Union Federation, Vice-President of the WFTU and winner of the Lenin Prize for International Friendship.

The WFTU pays ardent tribute to this exemplary trade unionist who died for the cause of freedom and justice.

It notes that today the authentic revolutionary trade union movement, which Brother Shafie worked tirelessly to build, has managed to reorganise.

The recent strikes in May this year, at the electric power station in Khartoum and in the

textile industry with the workers occupying the plants, as well as the daily actions in support of demands, testify to the unshakable will and correct line of the Sudanese workers.

The WFTU expresses its complete solidarity with the Sudanese workers' struggle for democratic rights and better living standards.

Once more it demands the government of Sudan to reinstate all trade union leaders and members in their former jobs, reestablish the unified labour code drawn up with the workers' participation in 1970 as well as to respect the workers' freedoms and rights and the independence of the trade union movement.

Prague, 23rd July 1974

REPRESSION IN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Maitre Felicia Langer, member of the Israeli bar, spoke at the press conference organised by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers in Paris on 29th May 1974. Her report was distributed to the journalists present at this conference. We include it here to illustrate the repressions and tortures suffered by the patriots who struggle against Israeli occupation and for the national rights of the Palestinian people. "As a barrister, I am mainly placed in political trials of both Arabs and Jews, before the Israeli Military Tribunals set up in the territories occupied after the June 1967 war and also before the Military Tribunal in Israeli itself.

In the light of my experience which is based on hundreds of cases with which I have dealt over a period of 6 to 7 years, I must state that the ill-treatment of my clients in the course of their interrogation is now a general rule. On many occasions I saw the signs of tortures and beatings on the bodies of my clients. I am ready to appear before any commission as a witness on this subject. I have complained to the Israeli authorities and tribunals, but until now, there was no impartial inquiry and in the course of all these years the standard answer to my complaints was: "Your complaint is without any foundation." I would like to mention that not a single journalist, not a single member of Parliament or representative of Amnesty International was allowed to inquire or to investigate the occasions of ill-treatment although they were authorised to do so by the UN Commission. I have great difficulties in seeing my clients. They are often secretly detained for longer than a month at a time, as is especially the case when the authorities want the signs of ill-treatment to disappear.

In fact I went to England and France at a time when a new wave of mass arrests was ordered on the Western Bank. These new arrests mainly affected communists, people suspected of communist affiliations or members of the Palestinian National Front (Gabbha el-Watanyeh). The number of people arrested has risen to about 100. Apart from those latest arrests, several hundred people who were detained after the October war are also in prison under various charges.

On the West Bank, the struggle for the retreat of the Israeli army has recently assumed greater proportions. The National Palestinian Front — in whose ranks are communists as well as members of the NLF (QLP) is considered by the Palestinians and by the inhabitants of the West Bank to be representative of the Palestinian people and as such entitled to participate in the Geneva talks.* But instead of negotiating with them, the occupants do all they can to liquidate them. In order to justify the massive arrests of

communists at the time when in Portugal communists came out of prisons and join the government, they insinuate that communists participated in murders.

I was prevented from seeing my clients — whose names I will mention later — and I have not managed to obtain either a temporary authorisation to see them or *habeas corpus*. The reason given to me by the General Prosecutor was that my visit would be used as a pretext to pass on information. In other instances I was implicitly accused by the General Prosecutor of serving as a liaison for my clients, instead of being only their counsel for defence. It is for the first time that such an argument was put forward before the High Court of Justice. This happened on 13th May 1974 and as on the following day I left for London, the hearing was postponed till 16th May 1974. I still do not know the results. My clients are:

1. Mahmud Shakarat, East Jerusalem — Teacher
2. Gosan Haleb, Nablus — Student
3. Mouhammad Al Hak, Nablus — Chief mechanic of the Nablus municipality
4. Abed el Moged Hamdan, Beif Lehem — Teacher
5. Saleiman el Nagab, Ramallah — Worker
6. Adel el Bargouty, Ramallah — Peasant
7. Atallah Bashwame, Beif Lehem — Worker
8. Houany Hadad, Beif Lehem — Mechanic
9. Habel Hagazy, Nablus

(Some detained in May 1974, others at the end of April.)

Because no charges were brought against those who were imprisoned on the strength of an administrative order, the authorities were not obliged to give any further reasons for their arrests than the three words: "reasons of security".

I am defending, at present, more than 30 detainees (new ones, as I have already explained). Some have been detained three months, others six and some as long as one year, without any definite charges having been brought against them. Some of their names, apart from those I have mentioned already are:

1. Farouk el Safety
2. Moussain abu Garbie
3. Yacoub Farran
4. Ibrahim Odeh
5. Hasan Abu Kader
6. Gosan Harb
7. Abdullah Syriony
8. Ayad Nemer
9. Mouhammad Abu Garbie
10. Haidagab Abu Arkoub

I have other clients, whose families have appealed to me quite recently, in fact a few days before my departure. I would like to give you some details about the clients included in this second list.

Clients number two and three have been imprisoned for three months and were arrested for the third time this year under the suspicion of being communists. They were released for a short period and re-arrested again. I saw Hassan Abu Kadeir in a prison in Jerusalem. He seemed morally broken. On 8th May he complained that he was beaten on his naked genitals and that having beaten him all over, the interrogators made him run across the room on all fours shouting "beep-beep". They threatened to castrate him. No charges were brought against him, except that he had to pay for being a "dirty communist". All this took place in East Jerusalem.

Abdullah Syriony disappeared for two months and the police refused to admit that he was arrested. Two months later they admitted that Abdullah was in the Ramallah prison. He has now been in solitary confinement for two months. While he was interrogated, he was sent naked at night into the prison courtyard (in January 1974 while it snowed in Ramallah). He was beaten all over, especially on the genitals. He was suspended by the hands and put under a shower of ice-cold water. No charges were brought against him except that he was suspected of being a communist. He was imprisoned for six months by a government order.

Ayad Nemer, one of my new clients, was brought before me on 8th May to the office of the Ramallah prison. His face was swollen all over and covered with open sores. I asked him in front of the guards, who tried to prevent him from speaking, what happened to him, and he explained that it was the result of a beating he

had received. The interrogator kicked him on his face and all over his body. Other prisoners, who were interrogated by me after I saw Ayad, told me that they saw him after his arrest and that he was then in a perfect state of health. Ayad told me that he was beaten after being seen by the representative of the Red Cross. I demanded that he should receive a medical examination.

I would like to mention that the families of the clients to whom I had no access are very anxious about the fate of their arrested relatives.

Another such case among my clients is Khaled el Ashab of East Jerusalem on whose body I saw signs of beating and whose face was swollen. I have asked the High Court of Justice for a humane treatment for this client.

Hadijah Abu Ashaab, a 27-year old widow from the Hebron district was arrested in January 1974 without any charges being brought against her. I was prevented from seeing her but I managed to do so by subterfuge, asking for her release on bail which can only be obtained if the cases when the warrant for arrest is served by the government all demands for bail are refused. She was brought before the judge and I managed to exchange a few words with her. She showed me traces of nail scratches on her neck and explained that an interrogator tried to strangle her. Also in front of the judge, she showed me strands of her hair which was pulled with roots from her head. She had this hair in a plastic bag and I tried to submit it as evidence to the Tribunal, but the judge (it was in Hebron) refused my request. After two weeks she was released without being charged. Later, on 6th May, she was arrested again for being an alleged communist. I could not obtain the permission to see her and no one wants to tell me in which prison she is being detained.

* The statement of Maitre Langer is only based on certain tendencies among the members of the Palestinian Front on the West Bank. With regard to the representation of all Palestinian people, it must be stressed that the majority of Arab and socialist countries only recognise the OLP as having the legitimate right to represent the Palestinians as such at the Geneva talks.

AGAINST REPRESSION IN BAHREIN

The authorities in Bahrain are continuing to use repression against the workers who are struggling for their legitimate demands and also to refuse the working class its rights to organise trade unions.

The WFTU has often protested to the government of Bahrain, and the 8th World Trade Union Congress unanimously adopted a message to the Council of Ministers of the State of Bahrain in which it condemned the persecution and expressed its solidarity with the working class and people of the country. The Congress also demanded the release of imprisoned trade union

leaders and officials and respect for international labour conventions on trade union rights and freedoms.

Taking advantage of a report prepared by a delegation from the CGT of Kuwait on the subject of the workers' conditions in Bahrain (which we publish below), the WFTU wrote to the Chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission to ask him to use his influence to see that the government of Bahrain gives up its flagrant violation of the principles laid down in the UN Charter and in the Declaration on Human Rights. We also publish the text of that letter.

Report of the delegation from the Kuwait General Confederation of Labour on the workers' conditions in Bahrain

Following instructions from the Executive Council of the Kuwait CGT to ascertain the facts of the conditions of the working class in Bahrain at a time when workers' strikes are taking place and trade unionists and workers are being arrested by the authorities in Bahrain, a delegation from the Kuwait CGT paid a short visit to Bahrain, beginning on 1st July, in order to learn both the workers' and the government's points of view. On the first day the delegation met a number of trade unionists. On the second day, it met the Bahrain Ministry of Labour and Justice and learnt the government's point of view with regard to the situation.

The workers' point of view can be summarised as follows:

The government gave a wage increase to about 17,000 civil servants and workers in the public sector, back-dated to 1st April 1974. A tremendous increase in prices followed, but workers in the private and mixed sectors received no rise.

The flow of money caused by this back-dated wage increase has only increased the already exorbitant prices (the same thing happened in Kuwait when the civil servants' salaries were raised). Because of the increase in prices and low wages, the workers in the private sector have been unable to provide for their needs and have felt wronged. Between 1st April and the beginning of June this year, there have been 28 strikes for higher wages. These strikes included those by the workers of the ALBA Company (Bahrain aluminium) and the recent dockers' strike. All these strikes were spontaneous. They were due to the sense of injustice felt by the workers and to the absence of trade unions.

The Bahrain trade unionists explained that one of the causes of the complexity of the crisis is the attitude of the authorities to trade union activities and attempts to escalate confrontation instead of looking for solutions. In addition, the authorities refuse to negotiate with the trade unions and do not recognise them.

The government's point of view is as follows:

It admits that there has been a rise in prices and a deterioration in the level of wages in other sectors. The demand for higher wages is justified. The government is not against the working-class demands presented by the workers. However, it believes that there are political groups at work behind these demands. According to it, claiming the right to organise trade unions is in itself a political demand. At the present time, it cannot allow trade unions to be set up until a new labour code is published. The government maintains that the current labour code, and in particular the 3rd section concerning trade union freedoms, has been suspended.

After learning the opinions of both parties, the delegation arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Asking permission to set up trade unions is not a political demand, but rather a demand for which the working class all over the world is struggling, because the trade union is the guarantee of the workers' interests against the arbitrary authority of the employers.

2. The alleged suspension of the 3rd section of the labour code, which is what the government maintains, is not confirmed by any decision, law or declaration on such a matter. On the contrary, the National Council has issued a recommendation requesting the government to continue to implement the 3rd section of the current code until a new one is in operation.

The government has rejected the National Council's recommendation even though the Minister of Labour, on behalf of the government, had already promised the previous delegation from the Kuwait CGT that trade unions would be allowed within one month. As yet, this promise has not been kept.

3. The alleged manipulation of workers by political groups is belied by the dockers' strike in the port of Salomon. Indeed, all these workers are Iranian, they have no working permits and the Bahrain labour code does not apply to them. Their strike took place when all the trade union

leaders were in prison. This is proof that working-class strikes are due to worsening living conditions and to the low level of wages.

4. The delegation noted that the information media in Bahrain play a role in twisting the facts and they invent false accusations, even against those who have nothing to do with the current situation. For example, saying that a wedding was a workers' meeting, in order to justify a campaign of arrests.

5. It is clear that there is an obvious contradiction in the government's point of view as given to the delegation. On the one hand, the government recognises that the workers' demands are legitimate because of the high cost of living, but, on the other hand, it contests them on the grounds of manoeuvres by political groups.

We learnt the names of some of those detained in Bahrain:

1. Ahmed El Zawadi, employee of the WALCO company, who returned to Bahrain two months ago
2. Youssef Elagagui
3. Dr. Abdel Hadi Khalaf, member of the National Council
4. Abdallah Elrashid
5. Mohamed Elsayed, lawyer
6. Abbas Awagui, president of the builders' and construction workers' union
7. Derbas Saliman, vice-president of the builders' union

Dear Sir,

We should like to draw your attention to the following facts with regard to the situation in Bahrain, where there are serious violations of democratic freedoms and trade union rights.

Towards the end of June 1974, after many workers in Bahrain, particularly at the ALBA aluminium factory, went on strike for higher wages because of increased prices and inflation, the Bahrain authorities arrested a number of strikers.

Learning about this flagrant injustice through the world press, the WFTU protested to those authorities, requesting in particular the release of the imprisoned strikers.

Recently, thanks to other reliable sources (chiefly the report of a delegation from the Kuwait Trade Union Federation which visited Bahrain and met workers' and government representatives), we found out that:

1 — the authorities in Bahrain, while recognising that the wage demands of the striking workers are justified, refuse to meet these demands;

8. Ismael Eloui, secretary of the builders' union
9. Fakhry Eloui, president of the electrical workers' union
10. Goafar Awagui, member of the electrical workers' union
11. Abdel Wahed El Sheik, president of the aluminium workers' union
12. Hamid Awagui, vice-president of the aluminium workers' union
13. Abdel Raddi Yaacoub, worker from the ALBA company
14. Ahmed Sanad, worker from the ALBA company
15. Hamza El Shamos, worker from the ALBA company
16. Eloui El Sayed, health worker
17. Ali Elmanes, airport worker
18. Ahmed Zeinelabedin, worker in the BAPCO company (Bahrain Petroleum Co.)
19. Mamoud Fadi, Telegraph Company worker
20. Ahmed Shaalan, employee of the El Zayani Company
21. Amin Mohamed, electrician
22. Hamid Marhoon, ALBA worker.

The CGT delegation
Hussein Saka Abdelatif
Ali Abdel Rahman El Kandari

Letter to the Chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission

2 — these authorities continue to detain, on false pretexts, the strikers whose names appear on the enclosed list;

3 — on the same pretexts, they refuse the workers the right to set up their own trade union organisation, with the result that, in spite of efforts by the workers and promises from the authorities, all trade union activity in Bahrain is currently forbidden.

In view of these flagrant violations by the Bahrain government of the principles contained in the UN Charter and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the WFTU requests the UN Human Rights Commission to take effective steps to condemn the antidemocratic actions of the Bahrain government and to call on that government to release the imprisoned strikers and meet the justified demands of the workers with regard to higher wages, better living conditions and trade union freedoms.

Yours faithfully,
José Vigo
WFTU Secretary

Prague, 25th July 1974.

