



# 18th World Trade Union Congress

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***First Day of Works***

The first day of works of the 18th Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions concluded with great success on May 6th, 2022 in Rome, Italy. 419 delegates from 93 countries of the 5 continents participated on the first day; 234 with physical participation and 185 virtually.

The participants of the congress kept a minute's silence, commemorating the militants and comrades who passed away. A cultural intervention took place and a Video Report of Action for the period 2006-2021 was presented. Also, the WFTU Anthem was sung in English and Spanish.

36 delegates took the floor and participated in a constructive discussion, analyzing the challenges faced by the workers, exchanging experiences, and discussing about the struggles to come and the role of the WFTU.



## Openign speech of the WFTU Gen. Sec. George Mavrikos

Dear comrades and fellow militants,

Dear colleagues, brothers and sisters in every corner of the planet.

We greet the 105 million members of the WFTU who live and struggle in 133 countries of the five continents. We greet all those who are on strike and mobilizations these days, we greet all the delegates who take part virtually because of the pandemic, we greet and thank all of you who, despite the many difficulties, are here present and participating in the works of the 18th World Trade Union Congress.

Allow me also to express my appreciation and thanks to USB for playing a leading role in the organization of the Congress in Rome, Italy, and for making it happen in very good conditions. We remind you that in Italy, in Milan, the 2nd Historic Congress of the WFTU took place in 1949, where the leading role of the dedicated WFTU militant Giuseppe Di Vittorio, President of the WFTU from 1949 until his death in 1957, emerged. The USB is today for the Italian working class their class consciousness, the militant vanguard, the one who expresses and carries on the most glorious traditions. The USB is the hope for all the suffering workers of Italy and we call on the workers of the country to follow and support it. We send from this podium a message of peace and peaceful dialogue to the peoples of the Russian Federation and Ukraine and we ask the end of the war. We demand that the US government and its allies finally stop adding fuel to the fire. We know that the root causes of this war lie in NATO's expansionist strategy.

We call on all trade unions and all trade unionists not to relax. The dangers of a general conflagration and a worldwide military conflict are real. Governments like those of Britain, United States and Australia are constantly adding fuel to the fire. With the global propaganda of the capitalist-owned media, they distort reality, propagating that NATO is sending weapons for democracy...

Dear colleagues, In the pre-congress period we tried to inform the workers broadly. We published everywhere the central document with the title: "Theses and Priorities". We utilized as much as possible live communication within the sectors and inside the workplaces.

We gathered comments, suggestions and criticism. Now, here in Rome, for three days we will discuss all the issues of concern to the World Working Class and the Trade Union Movement. We have managed to establish open, democratic and vivid discussions, with confidence in supporting our opinion. This is the kind of congresses that the WFTU holds. This is the kind of congresses that the class-oriented, militant Trade Union Movement must hold. And we are sure that we will have such a congress, worthy of the seventy-seven-year history of the WFTU. Because here we are gathered manual and intellectual workers and employees, workers of art and culture, working women and youth, farmers and workers of the countryside, migrants, refugees, landless farmers and indigenous people.

In the ranks of the WFTU, in the ranks of the militant trade unions, is gathered the most active and the most honest part of the trade union movement. Cadres who have been fired from their jobs for their trade union and political action, militants who have been persecuted by employers and governments, pioneers workers who give their lives every day for the universal interests of the ordinary people.

These are the basic characteristics of our vanguard, the basic characteristics of the members and cadres of the WFTU. That is who we are. That is who we all must be.

What does the yellow, compromised trade unionism has to contrast with our own honest cadres' team? Bureaucracy, Elitism, Corruption, Labor aristocracy and careerism in the courts of the bourgeoisie. They are servants of Danone, of the IMF, of the imperialists and the multinationals. That's who they are. That's the kind of leadership they have.

Dear friends and comrades,

I began my introductory speech with our cadres, our fighters, because I deeply believe that the treasury of the WFTU, the treasury of the class-oriented trade union movement is its people. Our people, our cadres, along with our line and action are our fundamental strength. It is an invincible force.

All this has been proved and confirmed in practice, in life itself, in the last 17 years. In December 2005, we took over a WFTU heavily wounded and seriously ill. Its buildings and assets in the Czech Republic had been confiscated. It had been evicted from its headquarters and was housed outside Prague in a house located in a field. It was slandered and despised. It had financial debts of \$200.000 and a staff that was old and bureaucratic. The average age was 70 years! It was in general a fearful mechanism and mostly without real contact with the trade union base. Today our Central Offices team has an average age of 35 years and are conscious militants of the WFTU.

Few at the time believed that under conditions of persecution, terror and panic the WFTU could stand up again. And yet we did. We achieved it. It turned out that Ernesto Che Guevara was right when he said and wrote "we must be realistic, we must demand the impossible." The course of 17 years is not a miracle. It is neither the result of a divine prayer nor the consequence of a natural phenomenon.

How did we achieve this big progress? The great leap, as Comrade Quim Boix called it? How is it that today we manage to deliver an organization of 105 million members in 133 countries of the world, whereas in 2005 we received one of 48 million?

First: by the **belief**, the deep belief that in the modern world, the working class needs a weapon of its own. It needs its own tool to elaborate its strategy and tactics; strategy and tactics for itself as a social class with a particular historical mission.

Against the reformist, revisionist concept that claims that there is supposedly no Working Class today and identifies the Working Class with the manual workers of previous centuries, we have answered and are answering scientifically that in the modern world with the great changes and technological progress, two basic social classes remain: The capitalists, the exploiters on the one hand and the workers and employees on the other. Of course, the working class is also evolving, developing, acquiring more knowledge, is more educated than before, has accumulated more knowledge and experience and its basic needs are constantly expanding. All these changes exist and we take them into account. But despite all these changes, the basic criterion remains: Exploitation. The production of surplus value and the stolen sweat that goes into the pockets of the bourgeoisie.

So we move forward with the belief that in the modern world there is social injustice, there is social exploitation which is even crueler and we still believe that the present Working Class with its great knowledge and experience is closer and holds the switch of the production process in its own hands.

Second: With **collectivity** and the common militant position of the great majority of our members and cadres. What we have achieved did not come as a result of a single person. It came mainly as a collective effort, a common pursuit and a common stance of all of us. Together we built this edifice. We do not nullify the role of personality. We know that in social history personality certainly influences developments. But it is the masses that write the developments, the progress, and the move forward; it is the collective groups who do that and not kings, cardinals or princes.

Third: We paid attention to the base and we tried not to lose touch with the base; with our unions, with the workers, the unemployed, the immigrants, the refugees, the homeless and the excluded. We reinforced internal democracy in our operation.

I personally visited 87 countries over the 20 years and some of them many, many times. Members of the Secretariat and the Presidential Council have done the same. Many more of our TUIs and R.O. cadres travelled and were close to the base.

With all these contacts we were getting strength from the base and giving courage to the struggles. We were trying to have our ears and our eyes open to the struggles and demands of the base. This is how one gains the trust of the base and the base becomes more militant, more aggressive because they realize that they are not alone in their struggles. We loved and supported the base of the WFTU and the base is returning its love and appreciation.

Fourth: Utilizing **criticism, self-criticism and emulation** which are indispensable for our progress and improvement at collective and individual level. As WFTU cadres, we must objectively analyze the situation every time. We must have objective knowledge of the reality in our sector, in our region, in our union and in the world, as the WFTU leadership. To achieve this level we need self-awareness, critical and self-critical examination of our decisions and actions. We have a duty to foster collective emulation, militant ambition for improvement and global personality development in our cadres. And above all, our basic law

was and will be the obligation to learn from our mistakes; to study our weaknesses and our mistakes; to analyze them. The intelligent fighter learns from his mistakes. The frivolous never!

Fifth: In this two-decade course, we have walked by utilizing our rich **history**. With its positive and negative points, with its forward and backward steps; with its dignified compromises and its unacceptable concessions; with its great successes and its few but existing mistakes.

For us today, historical experience, both positive and negative, is a positive asset and a positive weapon for the present and the future. And to build tomorrow you need to utilize the experience of yesterday.

The usefulness of the history of the trade union movement at sectoral, local, national and international level is great today. And at the same time defending ourselves and counterattacking against the dirty attempt to rewrite history is a key task.

We were defending and we defend the historical truth. So we did with special courses on the history of the trade union movement, so we did with special seminars, with book and poster competitions, with publications, articles and speeches. In 17 years we estimate that over three thousand of our cadres, mostly young people, have attended relevant seminars.

Sixth: We took over the WFTU in a state of paralysis, so the immediate task was **action**. That is why we launched the slogan "Action - Action - Action" at the 15th World Trade Union Congress in Havana, Cuba.

We could not waste time with introversion, inaction and endless discussions. We stressed that we will bring the WFTU back to life "in action". It was through action that we would prove whether and what we could achieve. And we developed all this rich action that you all know, that is described in the texts and main documents of our Congress and is available in our "Statistics 2005 - 2022" Handbook, in our videos and publications.

So the lesson and the conclusion is action, the action with our goals and priorities. In action over the past years we have organized trade union education and many trade union training courses.

Seventh: We relied **financially** only on our affiliates, on the base, on the ordinary workers. We received the WFTU in December 2005 with a financial debt of 200 thousand dollars. Today we deliver WFTU without any debt. We don't owe a single penny! And I would like to thank from this podium of the Congress all the organizations that during all these years have supported the WFTU from their "want". Their support was giving us strength. Today we cover all the expenses of the 18th Congress from the affiliation fees and financial support exclusively from WFTU affiliates.

Dear colleagues and brothers,

After the overthrows in the international balance of power that occurred in the period 1989-1991, the International Trade Union Movement was also faced with great difficulties and great challenges. Those developments gave rise to serious debates, conflicts and confrontations within the trade unions. We can say without exaggeration that the situation was unprecedented. We saw trade unionists and movements in panic. We saw some hiding out of fear, others changing their beliefs overnight, others lowering and hiding their banners, their history, their flags.

The changes of the century had taken place and we were all faced with world-shaking events.

I was present in 1994 on behalf of the Greek class trade union movement, as the then General Secretary of the ESAK, at the crucial congress in Damascus, Syria. And I feel the need to thank the GFTU - Syria and the then President of the country Hafez Al-Assad, even though after 28 years, for accepting and bearing the multifaceted costs of organizing the 13th Congress of the WFTU during a period of persecution against the WFTU.

It was an existential Congress. The discussions were on complex and central ideological, theoretical and organizational issues. Such as whether there was a reason to keep the WFTU or whether it should be dissolved and we should all go to the ITUC (ICFTU then). Like whether the Working Class exists or not, like whether class struggle exists or has been abolished by class collaboration and many more. It was a generalized conflict because both poles, both lines, were strong.

At that congress friendships were broken, fraternal unions were divided, and each of us chose sides. The majority position at the congress was to keep the WFTU and to try to modernize and preserve it. During that tough internal conflict, great personalities played an important role, among them the Cuban General Secretary of the CTC, Pedro Ross, the Vietnamese historical communist CU THI HAU, General Secretary of the VGCL, the Indian Mahendra, President of the AITUC, the Syrian Izz al-Din Nasser, leader of the GFTU and many others, like the Syrian Adib Miro, like trade unionists from Libya...

If I mention these, it is because I want to underline that since we took over the leadership of the WFTU and until today, those who have been constantly attacking the WFTU, the WFTU line and the action, are the leaders of mainly European trade unions who left the WFTU at that time. Their attacks are dirty, slanderous and in collaboration with dark and suspicious mechanisms, also with utilizing international organizations, capitalist governments and the international bourgeoisie.

All those leaderships that left the WFTU have followed for 30 years a path of integration into the capitalist system. They joined the ITUC and the ETUC, saying that they would supposedly change these mechanisms "from the inside". After thirty years, what is the conclusion? Who changed in the end? Who was transformed? Let everyone draw their own conclusions.

We always have our door open. Every militant union is welcome. For seventeen years **we have consistently promoted the unity of the working class and all workers**. Building solid unity is our daily task. **Of course we all know that the word unity has suffered in the vocabularies of all the languages of the world**. It is the most overused word. Like a sweet candy, everyone has it in their mouths: both those who sincerely want it and seek it and those who hate it but pretend to seek it.

**But unity is not an "empty tunic". It is not a colorless, odorless and tasteless drink. It has a specific content every time.**

Take the Palestinian issue for example. The Palestinians are asking for unity, for alliances and international support to get their own independent state. Israel, on the other hand, is also asking for unity, alliances and international support, but to drive the Palestinians out of Jerusalem.

Take the example of Cuba. The North Americans and all the imperialists are calling for unity to isolate Cuba. And all of us are calling for unity, organizing campaigns and joining forces and efforts to support Cuba, the CTC and the Cuban People. We call for unity with the objectives of Cuba, against the objectives of imperialist unity. **So the key is always to ask: unity with whom and with what goal?** Those are judged in time and place. It is in this way that we have tried to face the needs of the times over all these years, supporting over the years the unity first and foremost of the working class itself, its alliances with the poor peasantry, with the youth and with the progressive intelligentsia that is enlisted in the goals of the vanguard social class. This unity, our unity, class unity, aims at satisfying the contemporary needs of workers and at the same time demanding social changes that will go as far as the overthrow of capitalist exploitation. On the contrary, the pseudo-unity of the reformists, the bureaucrats, the Labor Aristocracy and the so-called "neutrals" aims at the make-up and beautification of capitalism and at class-collaboration. It aims at captivating the trade unions in class-collaboration and in alignment with the imperialists.

Dear friends,

The WFTU and its founding congress in 1945 has been identified with the most progressive and universal worldview formulated and founded by the giant of the World Thought Karl Marx with the help and collaboration of Engels.

On the basis of these principles we tried to proceed for the last 17 years; by strengthening the characteristics of Internationalism, International Solidarity and solidarity among the Peoples of the world. We have relied on the rich internationalist history of the WFTU which has supported the struggles morally, materially and in every possible form. The Internationalism of the WFTU on all continents, in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Central America is renowned and recognized both by friends and enemies. Many times we have stressed that Internationalism, Proletarian Internationalism among workers and the Peoples, is the nuclear weapon of the Class Trade Union Movement. We stressed and continue to stress that no one must be alone in their struggles. We stressed and continue to emphasize the right of every People to decide on their own and democratically on their present and future.

During these 17 years, we have never claimed to be neutral. They generally present themselves as neutral, independent or without a "patron" those who swing once this way and once that way. Those who want to look good to everyone, those who are afraid to take a clear position on something or who take a position with opportunistic criteria.

We are neither neutral nor independent! We are 100% committed and dependent on the principles and values of the class struggle, on the history and sacrifices of our heroes, on the need for the emancipation of the working class. And because we are who we are, we are not afraid of imperialist threats. The imperialists and the international bourgeois class are afraid and worried about the strengthening of the WFTU. That's why they always use the same anti-democratic measures like eg. in 1952, when the renowned president of the WFTU, Giuseppe Di Vittorio, was banned from traveling to the United States to speak before the UN; similarly today, the General Secretary of the WFTU was banned from entering the United States for the same reason; in the same way they continue with rigged trials against our cadre, Cliff, in Los Angeles and against our leaders in all the capitalist countries.

All these years we have sent them – and we are sending them once again from the podium of the 18th World Trade Union Congress – the message that we are not afraid of them. We do not forget or forgive their crimes.

The WFTU of today will either be respected or feared. There is no third way.

So we organized four international campaigns and material support for the Palestinian People. We organized a global strike against Israeli merchant ships in all the ports of the world. We organized children's camps for young Palestinians, campaigns for the release of prisoners in Israeli jails, interventions in international organizations for the right of the Palestinian People to have their own independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital on the basis of 1967 borders. We organized similar initiatives of internationalism and solidarity to Cuba and the Cuban People and together with many other movements we achieved the release of the 5 Cubans who were imprisoned in the US prisons. In all international forums we repelled the slanders launched by yellow union leaders together with the anti-Cuban mafia living in Miami. And so we will continue until the blockade is abolished and the land of Guantanamo is returned to Cuba. We had the same position for Venezuela, for Bolivia, against the coup in Brazil and everywhere. In every corner of the world the internationalist stance of the World Federation of Trade Unions became known.

The years I am talking about were marked by many imperialist wars. Those who claimed that the overthrows of 1989-1991 would be in favor of international peace turned out to be hypocrites. The politically foolish nonsense of the despicable figure of M. Gorbachev that we would all live as brothers in a common house was proved hypocritical too. Two wars in Europe, in Yugoslavia and the Russia-Ukraine war, and the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali, Libya, Syria, Azerbaijan and elsewhere, confirm that imperialism is a danger to the Peoples and the workers.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine brings to the surface issues that are always topical and always useful for the workers and the Peoples. We remind you that NATO's war against Iraq was "for democracy", NATO's 79-day bombing of Yugoslavia was "for freedom". In Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, in all places where the USA, the European Union and NATO attacked, it was because NATO is in love with democracy, as they tell us!!!

And all major mass media are rallying around these lies in order to fool the People. Wars like the present one are fought over resources, over energy roads, over ports and seas. Moreover, now in Ukraine we are witnessing another serious event: the close cooperation between neoliberals, neo-Nazis and social democrats. In Ukraine the mask of hypocrites is coming off. For example, in France everyone is happy that Marine Le Pen's neo-fascist formation lost and at the same time they support the neo-fascist government of Ukraine and the neo-Nazi battalions. On the one hand, they supposedly accuse Orban of Hungary of being a racist, but at the same time they support the racist Polish government. Also look at the example of Italy and Greece where they approve the participation and support of governments by racists and neoliberals like Matteo Salvini, Panos Kammenos etc.

So the support and arming of neo-Nazis in Ukraine proves the true face of the USA, NATO, and the European Union. All of them, with this attitude, legitimize Nazism. That is why we are ringing the alarm bell.

Behind all these black mechanisms at trade union level is dragging the ITUC and its subsidiary in Europe, the ETUC. They have chosen side. They have always been with the imperialists.



They supported the imperialist wars in Iraq, applauded the wars in Libya and Syria, in Afghanistan, and made statements in favor of NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Once more, they now stand by the side of NATO imperialists. They shamelessly support the neo-Nazi forces and become a servant of the strategy of the USA and its allies who want the Russian Federation defeated, the People's Republic of China isolated, India and all countries that do not align with their plans captivated.

Now they want to redraw borders, dominate the Arctic and space. This big picture comes to confirm in our days that tolerance of the phenomena of neo-fascism produces great dangers for trade unions and workers, and also that cooperation and alliance with social democracy captivates the trade unions and deprives them of their founding objectives. History teaches that it is a deadly mistake for trade unions to participate in intra-imperialist rivalries and to choose an imperialist camp. Besides, it becomes more and more clear that the most consistent and most effective anti-fascist struggle is the one that leads to the emancipation of the workers and to a socially just society.

As a firm anti-imperialist Trade Union Organization, the WFTU has opposed these wars, organized major initiatives, massive anti-imperialist, anti-fascist rallies and international forums. We were in the war zones in Yugoslavia, Syria and Iraq. During the war in Syria, we went to Damascus many times. Today, when the risks of a generalized war are growing, it is necessary to intensify our struggle for the end of the Russia-Ukraine war and the resolving of all disputes through negotiations. Our main task now is to strengthen the voices and action for the dismantling of NATO. It is NATO that sets the fires of wars everywhere.

Our proposal to announce the 1<sup>st</sup> of September of each year as an international action day of trade unions for peace and friendship among the Peoples is both timely and realistic. We choose and propose September 1 because on September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany started the World War II which cost the lives of 85 million people. It is therefore worth agreeing that we are reviving and reactivating an earlier decision taken by the WFTU in the 1980s.

Dear comrades,

Another slogan that we launched over the last years was that in the world we live in **our hope lies in our struggles**. And indeed the workers' struggles brought about many concrete results. Without the struggles that took place on all continents the losses for the wage earners would have been greater. Through the struggles both the solution of some immediate demands, the defense of rights and gains and the repulsion of privatizations, dismissals, anti-workers changes and others were achieved. But the most important gain from the struggles was and is the understanding by workers that our power lies only in the class-oriented struggle. Furthermore, as much as class consciousness is raised and broader masses understand that the limits within the capitalist system are not unlimited, this is also a great gain. The worker who will see from his own experience that the struggles go beyond the satisfaction of his contemporary needs, reaching the conflict and direct questioning of the exploitative system, this worker becomes a stronger and more conscious militant.

As a result of all these struggles and rich actions came the organizational strengthening of the WFTU with the establishment of the Working Women Committee, the Youth Committee, Immigrants Committee, the Legal Advisory Committee, etc.

Over the past years great fights of all forms of struggle have been organized. From the simplest protests, petitions, rallies, to more elevated and more complex forms such as work stoppages, strikes, factory occupations, etc.

I will not mention countries because there is a risk of forgetting a country, a sector or a strike. After all, we all know that on all continents the working class came out and fought.

But let me make three exceptions. One, the great strikes in India, with 200 million demonstrators on one occasion and 260 million on the other, were strikes that gave strength and courage to the whole planet.

The other was the militant strike of the landless farmers in Curuguaty, Paraguay, led by comrade Villalba, which was stained with the blood of militants and heavy sentences that forced the WFTU leader to spend 12 years in prison, in inhumane conditions that we saw with our own eyes during a visit inside Asunción prison.

And the third, which is not one but many together, is the bloodstained strikes by Palestinian workers who resist the Israeli army's checkpoints and stand up to Israeli terrorism.

Dear colleagues,

As WFTU we have highlighted the need to defend the **right to strike**. It is a sacred right, gained with the blood of our comrades. The international bourgeoisie demands the abolition of the right to strike, putting so many and such obstacles that it will be impossible to organize a strike. We stress from this podium that we will defend the right to strike and the rights to democratic and trade union freedoms at all costs.

Comrades,

For an international Trade Union Organization like the WFTU, our struggles start from the streets, the public squares, the factories and our voices reach the International Organizations we participate in. We have discussed in previous congresses and we have decided to utilize our presence in the International Organizations to promote and point out the workers' issues. We have no illusions about the current role of the International Organizations, particularly after the changes in international balance of power. Today the International Organizations are controlled by the US governments and the European Union.

Remember how many resolutions the UN has taken to stop the blockade against Cuba. A lot. What is the practical result? Empty words. On the contrary, it took only one decision for the imperialists to attack Libya. And the war was waged. This is the picture today. However, we can, without illusions, use our presence in the UN and the FAO and UNESCO and the ILO to reveal the truth from the point of view of the ordinary people.

Following this tactic over the previous years, we highlighted within the international organizations the murders of pioneers trade unionists in Colombia, the employer brutality against farm workers in Foggia, Italy, the government responsibilities of France with the attacks in Gardanne, we fought within the FAO against high prices in basic foodstuffs, we highlighted within UNESCO the defense of mother tongues and local dialects which are world heritage.

Within the UN our persistence and our interventions for working women have had a significant impact. And of course in both the UN and the ILO we have consistently exposed the dirty role of governments and employers against Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Iran and every People who demand to decide for themselves for their present and future.

Colleagues,

Our struggles and our attention included all the demands that concern the toiling people in every corner of the planet. During the period of the pandemic we revealed that "the King is naked" and that the poor paid with their lives for the shortcomings in public health care.

At the same time we insisted on the importance of defending democratic and trade union freedoms while governments, under the pretext of the pandemic, are sharpening their anti-democratic attacks through teleworking and the generalization of part-time work.

The issues of climate change, the utilization of water resources, the need for decent housing, access to clean, potable water for all the residents of Africa, public and free health care, as well as our struggle against child labor have been for many years the frontline of our demands and our central claims on the Action Days established since 2008 and organized every year without fail.

But allow me to underline our struggles for **health and safety conditions** within workplaces. It is our basic principle to demand that every worker returns home healthy, safe and sound. To return from work as they left home for work. We mourn victims every year. Crimes are committed by employers, by the monopolies and their governments. Three hundred and one miners were buried in Soma, Turkey and the President of Turkey, Tayyip Erdogan, said it was God's will!!!! No, it was not God's will. It was a crime of the Employer. In Dhaka, Bangladesh 1.400 female garment workers were buried under the ruins of the old factory. In Qatar, over 6.500 workers have lost their lives in the World Cup works. Everywhere on all continents the situation is tragic. The ILO estimates that 2,3 million men and women lose their lives due to accidents or occupational diseases every year, that is 6.000 deaths a day. Worldwide there are 340 million accidents in the workplace and 160 million victims of occupational diseases are recorded every year.

Governments and capitalists are the moral and physical perpetrators. These incidents are crimes, not the result of weather phenomena. For we know well that in fires it is the poor who are burned, in floods it is the poorest that are drowned, during earthquakes usually it is the poorest that are crushed. The real cause of such crimes lies in the thirst for profits.

As trade unions we have the sacred obligation to daily raise our awareness and demands for workers' health and safety. Not only when such crimes occur. Prevention is valuable, so this is a daily duty for us.

Dear brothers and sisters, colleagues

After five years as WFTU Vice President and 17 years as its General Secretary, I am deeply convinced that the world Working Class and all the workers of the world need the WFTU. They need a WFTU that gives hope, inspires and defends their interests. Without the WFTU the situation for workers and the trade union movement would be much worse and with more difficulties than we have today.

Think about what the WFTU has contributed to your own countries from 1945 to the present day. Everywhere present and always by the side of your peoples and your trade unions. Think about how many trade unions the WFTU helped to found in the early and difficult years.

Think what leaders had emerged in your countries and in your sectors, who gave their lives to the class struggles. Do not forget that the most advanced workers' and trade union claims were presented and claimed in the banners, publications and demands of the WFTU. We all have a duty to spread and to defend this historical truth, and to expose the liars and counterfeiters who methodically spread lies through the various Friedrich Ebert foundations, through the various NGOs that, for the most part, are mechanisms of corruption of the workers' consciousness.

Comrades, in conclusion I want to say to all of you, to all our members, that I am optimistic that with unity of all our ranks and by strengthening the class-oriented characteristics of the WFTU, by strengthening our action on what concerns workers today we can meet the demands of the times.

The Russian revolutionary pioneer poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote: "the future will not come by itself" in his great poem with the general title: "Pull the future out of the mud!". It depends on our action to pull the future out of the mud of capitalism. The future of all of us cannot be capitalism. The future belongs to the world of work and of struggles. For a world without exploitation of man by man. Let us continue united in our militant line, in the tested line of class struggle and proletarian internationalism.

To pull the future out of the mud!

VIVA LA FSM ANTICAPITALISTA

VIVA LA FSM ANTIIMPERIALISTA



# Speakers of the 1st Day of the Works



**World Trade Union Congress**  
Rome, Italy 6-8 May 2022

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