

South African Worker and WFTU

Shoulder to shoulder



World Federation of Trade Unions
& WFTU African Regional Office, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Prologue

Dear comrades,

It is a joy, an honor and at the same time, a duty of the World Federation of Trade Unions to express its respect towards the heroic struggles of the working class and the People of South Africa who conducted hard class struggles for their political liberation, for the abolition of apartheid.

In that heroic struggle the WFTU from 1945 until today has been fighting shoulder-to-shoulder together with the pioneer militants of South Africa. The history of the trade union movement in South Africa from 1945 until today is simultaneously the history of the WFTU. The comrades who were martyrs in that struggle are also martyrs of the international class-oriented trade union movement of the International Working Class, are also martyrs of WFTU.

This book is the least we could do to honor the thousands who died in the struggle, for those who gave their life against the capitalist exploitation and the imperialist barbarity.

Dear brothers in South Africa,

No struggle goes to waste. The long years of struggle brought the results of the great changes in 1994. Great changes that need to be completed with radical overthrows in the level of economy, since we all know that this is the heart of the policy is the economy. We continue...

We continue the struggle for a society without injustice and class exploitation. For a society where the wealth-producing resources will belong to the Peoples and not to the capitalists and the multinationals. For a society in which the means of production will belong to the working people and not the bourgeoisie. For a socialist society.

The value of this book is to be estimated by whether the youth, the next generation of militants of the trade union movement, will derive lessons and experience from it, to continue the struggle with more faith and more boldness.

George Mavrikos
General Secretary of the WFTU
Athens, February 1st, 2012

Introduction

A look at the development of the trade union movement in South Africa

From the very beginning of its formation, the working class in South Africa was divided on the basis of race and skin colour. The main division, however, was between the white, relatively privileged, workers and the black, coloured and Indian workers, who undertook the most difficult, most dangerous and worst paid jobs. Those were the workers who had no rights. In addition, cultural and ethnic differences kept the English-speaking workers apart from the Afrikaans-speaking workers. The foreign and local bourgeoisie was able to exploit those differences to the greatest extent by buying off the privileged groups, consisting mainly of white workers, at the expense of the great mass of the African workers.

Throughout its history, the labour movement in South Africa, led by black, as well as some Coloured and Indian, class trade unionists, amongst them a small minority of white trade unionists, made efforts to construct a united common front against the exploiters.

Having inherited the racial discrimination imposed by the Dutch and British colonizers, the Nationalist Party government that came into power in 1948 formally established the basis of race discrimination. The population was categorized into three groups of white, black, and coloured/Indians, each with different levels of rights and restrictions on access to housing and residential areas. This system is known as apartheid. The "color bar" was legislated limitations on job availability and restrictions on which jobs one could do and with which salary according to one's race.

According to the statistics of 1962¹ of a total of 16 million population, 11 million were Africans (blacks), 3 million were Europeans (whites), 1.5 million were Coloreds and half a million were Indians. 70,5 % of the Africans (blacks) were relegated to the countryside to work in the farms or unskilled jobs while the majority of the other ethnic groups was found in the towns.

The formation of SACTU

Founded in 1930, the **South African Trades and Labour Council** (SAT & LC) was the matrix from which most of the forces, that existed in the movement of South Africa until 1980, were born. SAT & LC had in its affiliation various trade unions from different backgrounds. They ranged from conservative craft unions, White racist industrial unions, White dominated racially mixed industrial unions and non-racial industrial unions. No non-white person ever reached its leadership.

At the time of its foundation the regime was organising its first attacks against the progressive trade unions and trade unionists with the implementation of the Suppression of Communism Act. At the same time, new laws were passed that enforced the obligatory division of trade unions according to race. Blacks could not be in the same trade unions with whites and the black trade unions were not register by law.

The conservative trade unions, that implemented the policy of retreat and surrender, demanded from the South African Trades and Labour Council to enforce the color bar and suspend the African workers. When their demand was not accepted, they established organizations like Raad and SAFTU.

The **Koordinierende Raad van Vakunies** (the Coordinating Council of Trade Unions) consisted of Afrikaner trade unions that had left the former South African Trade and Labour Council in 1947 and had created Raad in 1948. Its members numbered around 55,000 from 14 trade unions, and were mainly white miners, builders and metalworkers who supported the apartheid regime with fanatical tribalism.

The **South African Federation of Trade Unions** (SAFTU) consisted of crafts trade unions that had left the former South African Trade and Labour Council in 1950 demanding that the color bar be included in its constitution. Even when SAFTU at some point accepted some trade unions for colored workers, its leadership consisted only of white people.

The **Federal Consultative Council of South African Railways and Harbour Staff Association** was a state company union that consisted of 7 trade unions and 86,000 workers. The unions of the white people who worked in the state transport sector took advantage of their privileged position to exert pressure for full implementation of the color bar in all kinds of jobs except for unskilled labour. Together with the Federation of Mine Production Workers (which had 3 trade union members and 22,000 workers) and with three other unions (with around 30,000 members), they formed the **Confederation of Labour**. This consisted of 27 trade unions and 183 781 members.

The statement of J. R. Benade², Secretary of the Federal Consultative Council of Railway Staff Associations is characteristic for the positions of these 'state' unions: *"If a job which has been handed over to a non-white again came into demand among white workers, it would be re-instated as white work"*.

The **South African Trades and Labour Council** dissolved in 1954 having accepted the color bar and not wanting to organize the struggle.

The progressive trade unions of SAT & LC grouped in the formation of the **South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)** which was the only trade

union organization which tried to unite the working class with consistency, no matter of color and which fought hard against the color bar and the apartheid since its foundation, with the support of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), in 1955.

SACTU was the historic successor of the first attempts to organize the black workers' movement in 1919, when the **Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU)** was founded by pioneers such as Clemens Kadalie, George Champion, etc. This was the first organization that united mainly black and coloured dockworkers, and even a few white workers. In 1930, before it was dissolved, it had a membership of 150,000 workers.

The **African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU)** was founded in 1941. It was one of the militant trade unions formed in the period of industrialization and urbanization within the framework of the World War II. At the same period of time, the **Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU)** made its appearance. It fought against the acute problems of the black workers, organized the first industrial struggles and rallies, and achieved the first victories managing in five years after its foundation to have enrolled 119 trade unions with a total of 158,000 workers. In fact, in 1946, CNETU exerted pressure so that the first heroic industrial action of the miners, which was suppressed by the policy, to turn into a general strike. In 1955, CNETU dissolved to unite its trade unions with the newly established SACTU.

According to its constitution, SACTU accepted registered as well as the non-registered (black) trade unions into its ranks, without discrimination on the basis of color and race, thus forming the first trade union organization without racial discrimination. It struggled to organize the masses of the African workers and to organize their struggles for a basic minimum wage, for their trade union and political freedoms, against the pass laws and all the apartheid legislation. It fought for the right of African workers to become members of trade unions, for the recognition of their trade union, for the right to work, to have residence, to protest and to strike. One of the most significant campaigns of SACTU was its struggle for a basic minimum wage under the slogan "A Pound a Day".

A short time after its establishment, SACTU sent its representatives to the Congress of the People, which adopted the Freedom Charter, the cornerstone document of the black political movement in South Africa and elected representatives in the Congress Alliance's National Coordinating Committee together with the representatives of the African National Congress (ANC) and the the South African Communist Party (SACP). SACTU become one of the most dynamic and most significant factors of the alliance as it could organize its most active part, the working class. Its calls for industrial action were able to aim a heavy blow at the heart of the regime itself.

For these reasons, SACTU and its affiliated trade unions were exposed to the fury of the regime. Hundreds of trade unionists were persecuted. Their activities were banned and they were imprisoned, tortured and forced into exile. The regime did not hesitate to go even further - it hanged trade unionists regardless of the international outcry.

In 1955, 156 leaders of the Congress Alliance were arrested and charged by the regime with high treason. They included the entire leadership of the Congress Alliance, many trade unionists from SACTU, e.g. Leon Levy, Stephen

Dlamini, Mark Shope, Billy Nair, Leslie Massina, as well as Nelson Mandela, leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) and President of South Africa from 1994, President Chief Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Secretary General of the African National Congress, Joe Slovo, and Moses Kotane, who later became Secretary General of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Six years later, and after the largest treason trial in the history of South Africa, all charges against the accused were dropped. It was not possible to establish a convincing case file against the defendants that they were "communist attempting to overthrow the regime".

Meanwhile, after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, when 69 people were killed by the regime at the demonstration organized by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), a breakaway of the ANC, the ANC and SACP established Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) – the armed movement that brought together several of the leaders of SACTU, many of whom had cooperated with or worked for WFTU.

After the mid 1960s, the regime was determined to dissolve SACTU, and many activists were forced into exile, while those who remained in the country had to work underground. This main blow by the regime affected the massive action of SACTU, but did not change its strategic goals. Those remained class-oriented until SACTU dissolved itself in 1990, and its trade union members joined the current Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

In the following phrase, SACTU (which from its beginnings had made clear that the struggle of the working class in the economic field is inextricably tied to the political problems in the country) condenses its class-oriented analysis and its consistency in struggle for the purposes of the working class: *"No amount of persecution and repression by government and employers has changed our basic policy of striving for the liberation of workers of all races from racial oppression, color discrimination and class injustices in every shape or form"*³.

While working underground and having its members persecuted, from the very beginning of its foundation, SACTU became a member of WFTU, and saw WFTU and its trade union members around the world as basic allies and supporters in its just and heroic struggle for the interests of the working class in South Africa.

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Among the dozens of anonymous militants who helped greatly to significantly strengthened the trade union movement in South Africa and the struggle against racial segregation for the liberation of the black working class were **Leslie Massina**, first General Secretary of SACTU, **Leon Levy**, a Lithuanian trade unionist who served as President of SACTU for nine years, **J. B. Marks**, elected

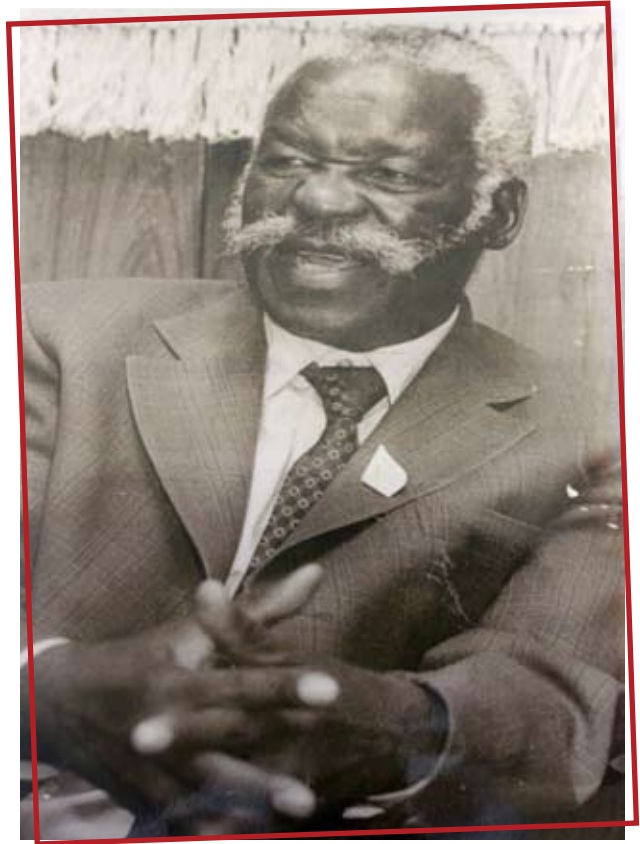
advisor of SACTU, **Billy Nair** and **Stephen Dlamini**, from the Durban SACTU, **John Nkadimeng**, first national organizer of SACTU and later a member of the National Executive Committee, and also **Ray Alexander**, the female founder and Secretary General of the Food and Canning Workers' Union.

A dominant figure amongst them was **Moses Mabhida**, a SACTU co-founder and Vice-President and a member of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Trade Unions, who also spent some of his exile years in the WFTU Central Offices in Prague until 1963, together with **Wilton Z. Mkwai**. Later on he was asked by the ANC to devote himself in the development of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. In 1979, the heroic Moses Mabhida, was elected General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

William Mark Shope, a Chairman of the African Laundry Workers' Union, acting chairman of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions, General Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), member of the African National Congress (ANC), was the man who replaced Moses Mabhida in his role as a representative of SACTU in the WFTU.

Eric Mtshali, a living legend of the SACTU who started working at WFTU headquarters in 1976 with the mission of organizing the trade union movement in several counties such as Ethiopia and Namibia and helped to revive the South African trade union movement in the 1980s.

Joe Molokeng was one of the leaders of Ekukhanyeni Youth Club and a founder of the South African Student Movement (SASM, March 1972), one of the seven arrested and accused in the NAYO trial on October 1975 and amongst those who prepared the ground for the Soweto Uprising in 1976. He



Moses Mabhida, a SACTU co-founder and Vice-President and a member of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Trade Unions

was an editor at the "World Trade Union Movement", a monthly review of the WFTU at the 1980s while working for the Africa Department of the WFTU.

The formation of TUCSA

The **Trade Union Council of South Africa** (TUCSA) was formed in 1954 by the conservative forces that remained in the South African Trades and Labour Council. TUCSA was soon transformed into a trade union that was an organ of the reactionary regime and helped it to manipulate the working class by taking part in the self-proclaimed 'fight against communism'. In its constitution, TUCSA officially banned the participation of black workers because only registered trade unions were accepted and the black trade unions were not registered.

TUSCA had close relations with International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the international organization which was founded in 1949 by the forces who tried unsuccessfully to dissolve WFTU. It was sponsored by ICFTU, and at least 11 of the trade union members of TUSCA were also members of the International Trade Secretariats of ICFTU.

According to data from 1972⁴, TUSCA consisted of 16 trade unions with a total of 186,478 members. Among these, 79,385 were whites and 107,093 were coloured and Indians.

In 1958 ICFTU went to South Africa to make contacts with the local trade unions. Following the organization's usual procedures of intervening in the internal affairs of every trade movement, the representative of ICFTU demanded from SACTU to sever all connections with the Congress Alliance, leave WFTU and have no contacts with it⁵. When the ICFTU representative received a negative answer from the SACTU leadership, it accused it of being a "communist" organization and clarified that it would receive no assistance or financial help in the campaign for the rights of the black workers. On the other hand, although TUSCA was 'anti-communist' enough for ICFTU, it was not accepted as a member only because it did not suit the international profile that ICFTU was trying to build. Thus, the chosen tactic was to seek out black anti-

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communists, who with the funding and guidance of ICFTU would play the necessary role in the weakening of SACTU. With the cooperation of TUCSA, the Federation of Free Trade Unions of South Africa (FOFATUSA) was established in 1959. It included African trade unions and became a member of ICFTU.

In 1962 TUCSA was forced by international

pressure and by pressure at the meetings of the International Labour Office to accept black trade unions as well, without losing its racial character. FOFATUSA was subordinated to TUCSA and its white leaders, who made the decisions. In 1966, FOFATUSA was dissolved and encouraged its unions to join TUCSA. TUCSA continued its anti-communist policy, depriving its trade unions of any militant consciousness and any ability to struggle. It opposed calls for sanctions and for a boycott of South Africa. Calls which WFTU persistently, mobilizing the UN and the International Labour Office in activities against apartheid in some of which, years later ICFTU was also forced to participate under the pressure from the international impact of the struggle against the apartheid.

As an example, in 1965 TUCSA issued a brochure in which it called on the Western union movement to abandon all forms of boycott, sanctions and exclusions from international organizations. It claimed that Africans had a high standard of living and good salaries, while the cost of living was cheap. The same logic echoed in all of its international contacts.

However, the increasing industrialization, the subsequent shortage of skilled manpower not covered by the migration of white people, the need raised by the competitiveness for cheap labour force, increased productivity and higher profits, were pressing conditions for the relaxation of the restrictions against the black workers. The aim was for black and coloured workers to be used in jobs where there were no longer enough white workers. The words of E. L. Klopfer⁶, Vice-President of the S.A Federated Chamber of Industries are characteristic enough: *"We have not yet got the White manpower to fuel the economic advance of the country"*.

At the same time, under increasing pressure from the international community and together with the strengthening of SACTU (despite the persecutions), TUCSA demanded from the regime that it recognize the black trade unions. This was not done to defend the rights of the black workers, but, as it proclaimed, to "save them from communism". TUCSA's Secretary General Grobbelaar says *"TUCSA has consistently advocated that all workers be allowed to form their own employee organizations, or alternatively, that they be admitted to the registered bodies under white control and guidance if necessary on a limited rights basis"*⁷.

TUCSA was inspired not only by the Vorster government but also by the instigating and inciting strategy of the Meany leadership of the American AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour – Congress of Industrial Organizations) and ICFTU⁸.

In February 1969, the annual congress of TUCSA once again decided to exclude the African unions.

The formation of COSATU

Following the gap that the blow against SACTU caused, from 1973 to 1985 and at the time of the outbreak of the great labour struggles, especially in the area of Durban, a growth in the establishment of trade unions could be seen. The Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) was founded, followed by the

Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU).

In August 1983, the United Democratic Front was established, a coalition against apartheid which was supported by SACTU. Many trade unions joined it - the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU), the General Workers Union of South Africa (GWU-SA), the Motor Assembly and Component Workers Union of South Africa (MACWUSA), the Media Workers' Association of South Africa-Western Cape (MWASA), and 13 more unions.

In 1980, discussions began about the need for a new trade union organization to be founded. On December 1st, 1985 after many debates about unity, and after the intervention of SACTU to persuade the trade unions to affiliate to the United Democratic Front (UDF), more than 760 representatives of 33 trade unions met in the Sports Hall of the University of Natal to proclaim the establishment of the new federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

The basic principles of COSATU were non-racialism, worker control, paid-up membership, one industry-one union, and international workers solidarity. From the very first days of its development it formed relations with the ANC and SACP.

COSATU played an important role in the democratic movement against apartheid, which flourished in the 1980s. It organized the struggle against privatization, against high prices of everyday goods, and against heavy taxation.

Nine trade union members of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) joined COSATU. FOSATU was a trade union established in 1979 that claimed that it wanted no contacts with political parties and that it concentrated on the struggle for 'bread and butter'.

The General Workers Union (GWU), the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU), the Cape Town Municipal Workers Union (CTMWU) and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) also agreed to join COSATU.

The Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), which was a member of ICFTU and the small Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) did not participate in the foundation of COSATU on the grounds that they were anti-racist and it was not possible for them to follow the non-racial policy of COSATU. They later merged and established the present-day National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), a member of ITUC, and also another organization that still exists today, the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA).

The largest trade union in the country, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), was created in 1982. In an article in one of the WFTU magazines (in which there were always news about South Africa) we read: *"the most significant new factor in 1983 was undoubtedly the participation of an up and coming National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for the very first time in wage negotiations with the Mining Board. This was also the first time that Black miners' wages were established for the entire branch through negotiations and not through a decision taken on company level, as before"*⁹.

In 1987 NUMSA was established to consolidate four different South African

metal trade unions: MAWU, MICWU, NAAWU and UMMAROSA. In the same year, NEHAWU was founded by workers in the education and health sectors, state and social services. The Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (CEPPWAWU) was established on February 24, 1999, when PPWAWU merged with CWIU.

At a summit meeting between SACTU (which had been continuing its cautious action from exile) and COSATU on March 19, 1990, SACTU led by its last general secretary J. K. Nkadimeng and its president Kay Moonsamy decided to dissolve itself. This historic organization urged its trade union members to join COSATU, which would be the future of the heroic class oriented trade union movement of South Africa in the post-apartheid era.

Chapter I

1945-1949: Foundation and attempts to dissolve WFTU

The necessity to put an end to the reactionary and inhuman regime of apartheid had become a matter of high importance for the international trade union movement and the International Organizations through the insistent intervention of WFTU. The struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism including the struggle against all kinds of segregation, racial and gender discrimination, and any other discrimination played a protagonist role at every Congress of the World Trade Union. The conditions for that were formed by the decisive role of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, the People's Republic of China (since 1949) and the international communist and worker's movement.

The representatives of the world working class took a clear position against racial segregation by adopting the second resolution at the First Congress of WFTU even before the official legislation of 1948 for the "separate development", a euphemistic term for apartheid used by the Nationalist Party.

The right of the working people to organization, to the freedom irrespective of any shape of segregation based on race, colour and gender, the right to employment and holidays with allowances, to adequate wages for better living standards (housing, food, etc.), social security with guarantees against unemployment, disease, accidents and old age became provisions for safeguarding the basic demands of the international trade union movement when the class-orientated forces prevailed at the Founding Congress of WFTU in 1945 in Paris.

In fact in order to show the high importance of the struggle of South Africa the Congress elected the representatives of the South African Trade and Labour Council who participated to the 70-member General Council, i.e. the right-wing leader of the Typographical Union, W. J. De Vries, General Secretary of the South African Trade and Labour Council and the right-wing Johanna Cornelius (Fellner), later General Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union¹⁰.

However, it was clearly stated in the press bulletin which was circulated after the Congress in the leadership of which the class-orientated forces prevailed that WFTU did not recognize him as the representative of the black workers and that the representatives of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (Transvaal) had been prevented by the government to leave the country and to be present at the Founding Congress: "The representative of South Africa, De Vries", feeling the need to respond to the unquestionable feeling of solidarity for the black workers that was expressed at the Congress, "has put the WFTU on guard, against the accusations of the colonizers praising the accomplished work of South Africa for the black workers". Further, the press bulletin concludes: "We do not know the position of the black workers as they were not present". In another article, the bulletin mentions that in South Africa "the 8 million black workers live in conditions of a concentration camp".



For the first day in the struggle

In 1946, the South African miners organize one of the greatest strikes in the history of the branch. The young WFTU published the events through its mission there, expressing immediately the solidarity of the international trade union movement.

The African Mine Workers' Union, a member of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions with a membership of 30,000 workers, and with its influence on over 200,000 miners, invited the representatives of the workers to a Special Meeting on August 4, 1946 at Newtown Square in Johannesburg. The President of the trade union, J.B. Marks reminded the over 100 workers' representatives the efforts of the trade union since its foundation in 1940, towards the recognition of the trade union and its right to negotiate about the rights of the workers and the right of audience regarding their demands in front of government authorities.

The trade union demanded through its Annual Conference of 14 April 1946: a minimum daily wage of 10 shillings, improvement of the food, a scheme regarding miners' residence and the recognition of the trade union. The empty of contents response of the Secretary of Chamber of the Mines that he would take into consideration the demands of the miners, led the 1.500 representatives at the special meeting organized on 19 May 1946 in Johannesburg to take a decision to organize a strike and to implement this decision which was unanimously voted at the Special Meeting of 4 August, the strike to start on 12 August 1946.

At the beginning, the difficulties in communication among the mines caused the sporadic commencement of the strike. In many of the mines all workers took part in the strike while in some only one part of the miners participated. The response of the police force was immediate. The violent attacks of the police at mines such as the West Rand and the East Rand, made many workers return to work. At the Sub Nigel Rand, the police encircled the 1.500 workers who had gathered there and it wounded 14 of the workers with their fire-guns, six of whom died.

When violence was not sufficient, the mine officials tried to spread confusion among the workers by spreading the rumor that they were the only ones who participated in the strike at national level.

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According to evidence gathered by the World Trade Union Federation over 50.000 workers from 11 mines refused to work from 12 until 19 August 1946 in spite of the terrorist methods used by the forces oppression. In total, 200,000 workers went on strike sporadically.

The leaders of the trade union and the most progressive

workers were arrested and taken to court from the very first day of the strike. Over 200 trade unionists had already been imprisoned by 15 August 1946, including J.B. Marks, President of the Council of the Non-African Trade Unions who was accused of inciting the native miners to refuse to work.

The police attack with fire-guns resulted in wounding many of the participants in the solidarity demonstration in front of the police offices that had been organized for the release of their three comrades arrested in Benoni.

Solidarity with the struggle of the miners was also expressed by other trade union organization such as CNETU which tried to call the workers to a general strike.

The conflict, which would cause the dissolution of the South African Trades and Labour Council a decade later, had already become obvious at WFTU which did not take into consideration the telegraph of September 6, 1946, signed as "De Vries", in which it was written that the attack of the police against the workers was acceptable.

The Secretary of WFTU, Louis Saillant carried out the internationalist duty of WFTU by sending a letter to the Prime Minister of South Africa, Marshal Smuts on August 23, 1946, in which he included facts about the situation of the African miners and asked for a meeting with the Head of the Government of South African to demand the implementation of the basic rights as conveyed by the Organisation of the United Nations for the native workers of the mines of South Africa. This demand for a meeting was rejected and the facts were rejected as false.

Despite all this, nothing could hide the hard reality the native workers of the mines lived through.

WFTU multipage report¹¹ on the miners' strike, the living conditions, the health and work of the gold miners and the economic situation of the mines states among other things: *"Each mine crowds hundreds of native workers confined in concentration camps or barracks where the workers sleep on pieces of concrete under strict police supervision. Most of the Africans take their own blankets to the mines. If they want a mattress, they have to pay for it. Meals are offered, but the amount is too little. This means that the workers are obliged to buy extra meals. The quality of food continues to worsen due to the rising living costs in South Africa. The average salary is 2 shillings and 5 pence and it has not been risen for the last forty years. All the hard work is done by the natives, while the European miners are employed mainly as supervisors. The monthly salary of a European is equal to the annual salary of a native worker".* The report continues referring to facts concerning the workers' health: *"Mortality caused by labour accidents is 1.5/1000" (...) "Pneumoconiosis kills hundreds of miners per year". (...) "The natives are entitled to check-ups free of charge, but they do not receive any compensation for not being able to work as is not the case with the European workers."*

Working for the unity of the African Working Class

The WFTU aware of the need for a common united struggle among the

working class of all the African countries had as its priority the task of contributing to the greatest degree to achieving this unity. This is why it organized the first large Pan-African Meeting of the Trade Union Organisation on 10 April 1947 in Dakar, Senegal. Sixty delegates from 25 trade union organisations from 18 countries took part in it. The trade union movement of South Africa was represented by 2 delegates, D. Tloome and J.B. Marks, this time representing the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (Transvaal). The South African Trades and Labour Council did not participate in this Meeting.

At this meeting, WFTU put forward as its priority and made it clear that it would offer every support necessary for the struggle of exercising freely and without any hindrance trade union rights, especially those that concerned the right for striking and demanding better living conditions for the workers of the African state.

The African Trade Unions, members of WFTU decided that WFTU would ensure the implementation of the decisions by sending regular missions to verify the situation on the African continent and by putting pressure through the UN in order to establish bodies that would impose respect for the right to form trade unions and the implementation of collective labour agreements.

It was decided that the first priority was the creation of trade union organizations which would embrace all the workers irrespective of race, religion or political beliefs at a branch, national and international level. The abolishment of any kind of race discrimination and the implementation of equal social and economic rights for all workers was of paramount importance.

The basic demands were defined as: the creation of a legal framework throughout the African continent that would guarantee equal rights and terms of work, a 40-hour working week in industry without cuts in payments, paid leaves, social security, unemployment benefits, benefits for multi-member families, cover for labour accidents, pension funding, etc., for all workers. Finally, it stressed the need for establishing Negotiations Committees.

This historical Pan-African meeting concluded with a resolution: *"The workers have the right to live in a peaceful and secured environment without the phenomena of poverty, misery and unemployment. The workers of Africa have the right to be free to choose any job and they should be paid on the basis of their work without any discrimination. Price control mechanisms should be established in order to stop the phenomenon of uncontrolled decrease of purchase power. To organize a quality and free of charge system of basic school education as well as technical schools and vocational schools. All African workers must have access to a non-military health system without race discrimination and public housing at logical prices"*.

The Pan-African Meeting recognized through special demands that there was discrimination concerning equal rights among white, black and coloured workers. The Meeting emphasized the need for uniting the workers regarding their work, payment and social and health cover. In this way, it had become clear that the African organizations of WFTU had been in direct conflict with the ideology of apartheid even before it was legislated in 1948, thus putting the foundation of the class-orientated unity on an international, but also on an African level.

The General Council of WFTU mentioned its decision regarding the Pan-African Meeting in Dakar in June, 1947:

"The General Council considers that this conference is an important first stage in the WFTU's activities in colonial territories. As was established at the Conference, racial discrimination is prevalent in African Countries, today as in the past, in matters of social legislation, wages, education and medical care. In several countries, South Africa, for example, laws protecting African workers do not even exist. At the same time they are subjected to repressive legislation which makes them no better than slaves without rights who are refused even the most elementary of human rights."

The General Council committed itself to publish and spread "as widely as possible" the decisions of the Pan-African Meeting stating: "The General Council delegates to the General Secretary the responsibility of undertaking all measures which will improve the operation of the WFTU Colonial Department and of establishing close and permanent links with trade-union organizations in colonial and trust territories, with the aim of furnishing them with practical aid when needed."

The General Council of the WFTU delegates to the General Secretary the responsibility of undertaking all necessary measures to ensure the application of the dispositions contained in points a, b and c hereunder which constitutes the basis of the WFTU's activity, as a consequence of the proceedings at the Dakar conference, and in the light of the resolutions passed at the London and Paris conferences.

The WFTU General Council now indicates that the WFTU will make representations to the British, French and Belgian governments on behalf of their African colonies and trust territories and to the South African government as well as the UN Economic and Social Council and specializes inter-governmental agencies.

The General Secretary will act in accordance with the central trade-union organizations in the countries concerned in making representations to governments and the UN.

The General Council has decided upon the following plan of immediate action by the WFTU:

a) right of association

1. The World Federation of Trade Unions decided to continue its efforts in the UN to achieve the general application of the resolution submitted to the Economic and Social Council concerning guarantees for the exercise and growth of the right of association, so much do these rights need protection in all territories in Africa.

2. The WFTU recommends the

The WFTU aware of the need for a common united struggle among the working class of all the African countries had as its priority the task of contributing to the greatest degree to achieving this unity. This is why it organized the first large Pan-African Meeting of the Trade Union Organisation on 10 April 1947 in Dakar, Senegal

workers of these territories to take measures to organize centralized trade union for each profession or industry, regardless of race, religion or political conviction

b) Social Legislation

1. The WFTU demands that the social principles contained in Article I of the United Nations Charter should be applied in Africa by the implementation of a new democratic social policy.

2. The WFTU demands the application of legislation governing industrial working hours as well as the implementation of the 40-hour week, simultaneously with the necessary development of modern technical equipment in all industrial enterprises.

3. The General Council of the WFTU asks all governments of African territories to assist in the creation of commissions with equal representation of all parties involved empowered to negotiate collective labour agreements.

4. It also demands the establishment of a complete social security system applicable to all workers, covering the right to holidays with pay and all social risks and accidents at work. For those countries dependent on a European State where there is already a social security system, the WFTU demands the application of the laws existing in the European State to African workers in the dependent countries.

c. Raising the standard of living

The General Council of the WFTU demands the elimination of differences in remuneration based on racial considerations and insists on the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work."

Concluding Remarks

The early years (from 1945 to 1949) after the establishment of WFTU, which only the American AFL refused to join, showed the strength of a united international trade union movement that acts in a class-oriented direction. In addition, WFTU was able to gain a consultative status on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and it took initiatives for the ILO Convention to adopt the right of association and the right of collective bargaining. The support and the dynamism that were injected into the struggles of the workers for the rights and demands of the international trade union movement, especially the support given to countries that had been fighting fascism such as Greece and Spain, to countries which were fighting colonialism, the united voice of the workers which was strengthened by the bright example of the workers' achievements in the socialist countries, all this scared the ruling class of the imperialist countries.

The successes of the World Federation of Trade Unions were annoying for the capitalists. The important and efficient interventions of WFTU in the whole world were annoying for the reactionary and fascist governments. This

is why they organized the dissolution of WFTU. It was the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) which stood at the helm of this plot. In his letter to the WFTU Executive Bureau, which held a meeting on 19 January 1949 in Paris, the TUC President Arthur Deakin demanded a “12-month cessation of all WFTU activities”.

Their argument for the “cessation of WFTU activities” was that WFTU was under the control of the communists and the Soviet Union. The demand of the British was rejected by the bodies of the WFTU which held meetings, hence the trade union federations of Britain, USA, Denmark, Netherlands and others disaffiliated from WFTU.

A few months later, in December 1949, they met in London to establish the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which united with the World Conference of Labour in 2006 to found the current International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The Italian CISL, which was a union of three anticommunist groupings who had left CGIL (the Catholic Christian Democrats, the Centrist Republicans and the Socialists), joined them after receiving a promise of many millions of dollars by the State Department. So did the Spanish UGT and the French “Force Ouvrière”¹², an organization which was founded with CIA money channeled through the American Federation of Labour (AFL) against the French CGT.

Since then, there have been two clearly distinguished lines in the international trade union movement. On the one hand, ICFTU, which expressed and will always continue to express the line of the class-collaboration, and which was to become the long arm of imperialistic plots promoting the interests of the bourgeois class, and trying to divide the working people. On the other hand there was WFTU, which expressed and will continue to express the progressive, militant trade union movement, which has a clear anti-imperialist character and would until the present day receive into its ranks trade unions and militants who are ready to sacrifice and give their blood in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and barbarity.

The World Federation of Trade Unions is proud of its rich history, throughout which it always defended the peoples who struggled around the world and the rights of the working class. It is proud to have provided its support in the foundation of class-oriented trade unions worldwide, and very proud that a very large chapter of its history is dedicated to its contribution to the struggle of the South African people, who fought heroically with many sacrifices for the liberation from colonialism and from the fascist regime of apartheid that followed.

WFTU is the only international trade union organization which since its foundation in 1945 in Paris with the participation of the South African trade unionists, has been a steadfast ally at the side of the class-oriented non-racial trade union movement in South Africa. WFTU has contributed to South Africa's struggle for its liberation from the oppression of apartheid, and has supported the black workers in their fight for their rights, to reclaim the wealth of Africa and the wellbeing of the African people.

WFTU was the only international trade union organization which has shouted the truth out loud about the inhuman living conditions of the black workers, the obvious injustices at the expense of the majority of the population of black,

coloured and Indian workers, the persecutions, arrests, bans and executions of trade unionists and leading militants of the trade union movement.

It was the only trade union organization that told the world the truth about the profiting of the multinationals at the expense of the African people, and it has never deviated for a moment from projecting anti-imperialist slogans that offered hope in the struggle of the workers of the world. WFTU ignited public opinion with its unceasing announcements, articles, publications and resolutions at Congresses and Conferences that broke the silence that some wished to impose internationally, because they had their own interests from the apartheid regime.

It struggled strongly not in words, but with great militant action, to support the struggling people of South Africa by mobilizing the international class-oriented trade union movement, expressing its proletarian internationalism and collecting financial donations. It organized the international solidarity and pressed for the implementation of sanctions against the fascist regime of the South Africa and the boycott of its economy and the multinational companies that profited from it. It organized dozens of International Action Days and Weeks dedicated to this cause.

The union members and the class-oriented trade unions of WFTU stopped ships, airplanes, financial transactions of states and companies, the supply and transport of raw materials to South Africa, the correspondence and communications; they carried out campaigns against the multinationals which had transactions with the regime, and put pressure to stop bank loans and export credits. They dealt a blow straight at the heart of this shameful regime, giving a breath of life to the South African fighters to continue their action.

First and foremost, however, WFTU was the only international trade union organization that struggled for the unity of the South African workers, and supported the foundation of the South African Trade Union Congress (SACTU), the historic non-racist trade union organization which became a member and a part of the leadership of WFTU from its very foundation. WFTU gave SACTU its full moral and practical support for all its actions. It fought for the recognition and legalization of the black trade unions and trade unionists. It supported their struggles, their strikes, and all the battles of the class-oriented trade union movement. It organized regular congresses and conferences in which WFTU boosted the international standing of SACTU representatives and called upon the world working class to action through international days and weeks of action in support of the struggle against apartheid.

Considerable support to the struggle of the class-oriented non-racial trade unions of the whole Africa, in the struggle of the African people against colonialism, and for returning the wealth of the African people to their own hands, was WFTU's contribution to the unity of the pan-African trade union movement that formed the basis for the first Pan-African conferences, the predecessors of the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) and the current OATUU (the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity).

WFTU insistently put pressure to all International Organizations. The protest followed one after the other. Not a single attack by the Verwoerd government on the rights of the workers was left without an adequate response from the World Federation of Trade Unions. At every International Organisation such as the

ILO and the United Nations, and at each of the initiatives that were organized representatives of WFTU and its trade union members with consistency, perseverance and class-oriented direction, participated and defended the rights of the African workers, revealed the brutality of the nationalist government and the apartheid regime. WFTU exerted enormous pressure on International Organisations to take measures, to organize joint interventions, conferences, campaigns and years with various themes of action.

A significant moment in the efforts of WFTU was the successful campaign to exclude the pseudo-workers' representatives of TUSCA, who in reality represented the South African government and the racist white trade unions, from participating in the conferences of the international bodies.

Chapter II

Always the voice of the workers

WFTU contributed a great deal to the South African liberation and trade union movement by presenting a clear anti-imperialist class analysis of the apartheid regime. It was an oppressive regime based on exploitation of one class by another on the basis of racial segregation. All the developments and events that took place throughout the period under examination here were analyzed with the same class-oriented approach.

Through the resolutions concluded at all its congresses, with its hundreds of statements and protests, WFTU brought the brutal actions of apartheid and the class exploitation of the black workers to the attention of the whole world.

At the WFTU Congresses, representatives of SACTU were elected to the its leadership. By taking the floor they addressed hundreds of representatives of millions of workers all over the world and issued their call for struggle.

After the Second and Third WFTU Congresses, resolutions were passed that condemned colonialism in all its forms and called for support in the struggle of the workers of South Africa. In-between congresses, statements and complaints were published in order to mobilize the nations in their empathy for the people of Africa.

At the Fourth World Trade Union Congress (Leipzig, October 1957) the representative of the recently established South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) took the floor to give first-hand information about how the government of South Africa was operating.

A resolution of the Congress on the tasks of trade unions in the struggle against colonialism urged workers and unions around the world to strengthen their common solidarity in this struggle. The Fourth World Trade Union Congress strongly condemned the actions of the colonialists in attempting to keep their rotten system alive, and expressed its full sympathy with and support for the peoples of countries fighting for their independence. From 1957, WFTU could foresee that the apartheid regime was a threat to the nations all around. An important task was to strengthen support for collecting donations for the 165 defendants in the Treason Trial.

With reference to South Africa, WFTU stated:

"This Fourth World Trade Union Congress, speaking in the name of 105 million organised workers of 81 countries, condemns before the whole world the inhuman policy of the South African Government based on racial oppression and on suppression of the rights of the workers and people of the Union of South Africa.

The aim of this policy is to perpetuate the brutal exploitation to which the non-white peoples of this country are subjected. Both racist legislation and police terror are used against the non-white people to deny them basic human rights, subject them to forced labour, maintain them in poverty and deny them all trade union and democratic rights. The Congress considers that the present policy of the South African Government constitutes a serious threat to the peoples of Africa in their struggle against colonialism.

*The Congress pays warm tribute to the workers of South Africa in their heroic struggle in defence of their rights, and appeals to all trade unions throughout the world to express their solidarity and, in particular, to give maximum support to the **'Treason Trial Defence Fund'**.*

Noting that international solidarity with the workers and people of South Africa has already been expressed in various ways by national and international trade union organisations of different trends, the Congress calls on the world trade union movement as a whole to take united action to demonstrate clearly to the South African Government that workers throughout the world are determined to put an end to racial discrimination and the persecution of their fellow workers in South Africa".

The Sharpeville Massacre carried out after a government order on March 21, 1960 was a black page in the history of Africa, and proof of the barbarity of the regime. WFTU immediately called on workers around the world to support the people of South Africa in their struggle against racial segregation. In a statement from April 15, 1960 WFTU called on the workers to show the government of South Africa and anyone who followed the policy of apartheid



WFTU called for maximum support to the 'Treason Trial Defence Fund'.

and racial segregation that such a policy has no place in the world.

The announcement highlighted that the UN should be pressured to fulfill its resolutions and to impose sanctions against the South African government. It also insisted that there should be a general outcry against the moral support that the imperialist governments were providing for South Africa by refusing to agree with the other Security Council members and condemn its racial policy.

WFTU's campaign in connection with the Sharpeville Massacre continued for a long time.

Three years after the Fourth Congress, while WFTU was mobilizing its members to show active support for the South African struggle, the 11th Meeting of the General Council of WFTU decided to set up the

International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the workers and the people of South Africa (see below). This Committee ended up to be the bastion of international solidarity with the workers of South Africa.

The first action decided on by the Committee was to organize an **International Day of Action** to take place on February 7, 1962. WFTU mobilized all of its forces and trade unions for this initiative. As a result, various important events were held in many countries.

On October 6, 1961 WFTU sent a telegram to the Minister of Justice of South Africa protesting against the unauthorized arrest of **Leon Levy**, President of SACTU. WFTU condemned the arrest and the violation of trade union freedoms, and protested on behalf of 107 million workers, calling for the immediate release of Leon Levy and the punishment of those responsible for his arrest. While the atmosphere in Africa was becoming more and more rebellious, the **Fifth World Trade Union Congress** (December 4-15, 1961) taking place in Moscow transformed itself into anti-colonial conference. Delegates from 97 countries, representing 143 million organized workers, condemned colonialism in all of its forms and declared their determination to fight against it.

The Fifth Congress reaffirmed its support for the All-African Trade Union Conference and for the establishment of AATUF, which had already taken place earlier and was a great success for the forces seeking unity:

"The struggle for African trade union unity on the basis of anti-colonialism, against the new forms of colonial oppression, against imperialism, feudalism and reaction, is a great blow to the splitters, represented by imperialism and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.). The latter has not given up its work against unity and should be firmly combated". At the Fifth World Trade Union Congress, the second issue on the agenda was a detailed report by the WFTU Secretariat on the development of the trade union solidarity in the struggle to eliminate colonialism once and for all. In the resolution concerning South Africa we can read:

"The Fifth World Trade Union Congress meeting in Moscow from December 4—15, 1961, strongly condemns, on behalf of more than 143 million organised workers in 97 countries, the despicable policy of racial discrimination of the Government of the Union of South Africa, aimed at continuing the brutal exploitation to which the non-white workers of that country are subjected.

The Fifth Congress warmly applauds the united struggle of the workers and people of the Union of South Africa against the racist regime, and the suppression of trade union and democratic rights, and for a better life.

The Fifth Congress warmly endorses all the efforts and activities of the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Africa, set up by the W.F.T.U., and the Congress expresses its full support for this Committee.

The Congress urges all the workers of the world and their trade union organisations to increase their active solidarity with their brothers in South Africa, and in particular to give mass support to the appeal of the International Trade Union Committee to make February 7, 1962, a great day of solidarity and action by the workers of the world and their trade union organisations with the workers and people of South Africa.

The Congress is sure that the courageous struggle being waged by the workers of this country, supported by increasingly wide and active international working class solidarity, will make it possible to put a rapid end to the disgraceful policy of apartheid in South Africa, and to win new and substantial successes in the general struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination".

In his speech at the Fifth World Trade Union Congress, **Moses Mabhida** (Vice-President of SACTU) stated that South African,

The Sharpeville Massacre carried out after a government order on March 21, 1960 was a black page in the history of Africa, and proof of the barbarity of the regime. WFTU immediately called on workers around the world to support the people of South Africa in their struggle against racial segregation. In a statement from April 15, 1960 WFTU called on the workers to show the government of South Africa and anyone who followed the policy of apartheid and racial segregation that such a policy has no place in the world.

British and American capitalists have turned the half a million miners into hostages. He shared untold stories of workers and peasants, stories about their brave struggle and described the cruelties of apartheid. The Congress chose **Moses Mabhida** as a Deputy Member of the Executive Committee.

With a telegram to the Minister of Justice on February 12, 1962, the Secretariat of WFTU denounced the prohibition imposed by the government on **William Mark Shope** (General Secretary of SACTU), required its immediate withdrawal and also respect for the trade union and democratic freedoms of South African workers without any distinction. On the occasion of the Seventh National Conference of SACTU, the Secretariat of WFTU stated in its message of greeting in April 1962: *"The WFTU and all workers in the world who by the great day of international solidarity on the February 7th, 1962 demonstrated their active support for the South African workers, know and highly appreciate the courageous struggle waged by the SACTU. They are by your side in your difficult and just battle against the shameful racial discrimination, for democratic and trade union liberties and for human living and working conditions. From the bottom of their hearts they wish you every success in your work and reiterate their complete solidarity. Long live SACTU! Long live the international solidarity!"* Another telegram of the Secretariat of WFTU to the Minister of Justice on February 7, 1963 denounced the fascist-like prohibition of the actions of members of 36 democratic organizations (including SACTU) through the Suppression of Communism Act.

With a declaration from February 12, 1963 the Secretariat of WFTU again denounced internationally and in the ILO, also with consecutive calls to everybody in the world, the repressive measures of the racist government of South Africa taken on December 28, 1962. These included the banning of members of 36 organizations (including the leaders of SACTU - **Leon Levy**, National Chairman, **William Mark Shope**, General Secretary and **Billy Nair**, Secretary of the local committee of Durban). *"The WFTU appeals to all the workers and trade unions who have always sided with the oppressed people of South Africa to express once again their most active solidarity with the workers and people of South Africa and to protest, in the manner they deem most effective, to the South African government, demanding the immediate repeal of this ban and the restoration of democratic and trade union rights".* In the Eighth Conference in April 1963, SACTU again had WFTU by its side. Another message by the Secretariat emphasizes the historic moment of the conference:

"The anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist forces in the world are scoring one victory after another. The colonialists are losing one position after the other in Africa, where they thought they had settled down once and for all.

This is no accident. Year after year the struggle of the people is growing, and the major part of Africa which has experienced untold hardships, has now won freedom and is winning economic independence.

You, who are at grips with apartheid, a particularly deplorable form of colonialism and social discrimination, suffer indignities every day while you are

fighting for the most elementary human rights.

Your organisation is under constant attack by the Government, which wants to destroy you...

At the same time as you are holding your Conference, a series of iniquitous laws has been passed by the Parliament of your country.

Rest assured, brothers, that the World Federation of Trade Unions as well as all its affiliated organisations are by your side, and renew their complete solidarity in your struggle for human rights."

A few months later, on June 12, 1963, the WFTU Secretariat condemned the new attacks emanating from the new fascist laws of the government under the title "General Law Amendments Act 1963". On the basis of this Act, the police could arrest anyone on suspicion of acts of political misconduct and anyone who might have information about such acts. 27 leaders of anti-apartheid organizations had already been arrested on basis of this Act. The arrests affected SACTU deeply. Six of its leaders were already in jail, including Leon Levy. In its declaration, WFTU demanded the immediate release of the prisoners, the withdrawal of all fascist laws and the elimination of the fascist regime. There were further complaints in the WFTU declaration of October 15, 1963:

*"The recent arrest of **Walter Sisulu** and his ten colleagues, who are to go on trial on October 29, 1963, has been condemned by the present session of the United Nations' General Assembly, which has demanded that the persecutions be abandoned and those imprisoned set free.*

The W.F.T.U. urges all trade unions and other democratic organisations in all countries to join in the world-wide protest against these trials and demand the immediate release of Walter Sisulu and all others imprisoned under the notorious General Law Amendment (Sabotage) Act, which carries the death penalty."

"In many parts of the world the workers and trade unions are stepping up the fight against apartheid; welcoming these actions, the Secretariat of the W.F.T.U. appeals to all trade unions regardless of affiliation to throw their whole weight into a massive campaign of protests, publicity and demonstrations, pressing for such specific measures as a complete ban on all arms exports to South Africa, so as to compel the South African Government to heed the voice of world opinion.

By such actions the trade unions and organised workers in other countries will aid the heroic fight of their brothers in South Africa, locked in unequal battle with a vicious regime, and help defend the rights and freedoms to which trade unionists and democrats everywhere are dedicated."

In a letter from February 5, 1964 to SACTU and the South African workers, in relation to the International Day of Action on February 7, 1964, the Secretariat of WFTU stated:

"On February 7, 1964 the Day of International Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Africa, the WFTU on behalf of its 120 million members, reaffirms its full support for the fight of the workers and people of South Africa against apartheid, for trade union rights and civil liberties, for higher wages and shorter working hours and for improved working and living conditions.

The WFTU appeals to all workers and trade unions, irrespective of their affiliation, to give their unreserved support, in the most effective form possible

in their various countries, to the struggle of the workers and people of South Africa against the policy of apartheid and for trade union and democratic rights.

The united and courageous fight of the workers and people of South Africa has already led to large-scale mobilization of the workers, trade unions and public opinion in Africa and the rest of the world. The wave of Solidarity is mounting day by day. Solidarity Day on February 7th, which precedes the meeting of the International Committee of Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Africa in Accra on March 9-11, is an important stage in the unrelenting fight of the international working class for the final destruction of colonialism and its after effects, mankind's greatest shame.

The WFTU takes this opportunity of once again sending the workers and people of South Africa its fraternal greetings"

In a telegram to the Minister of Justice on the same day, the Secretariat of WFTU denounced the government's efforts to crush SACTU by banning the actions of six more of its members. The complaints concerned: **R. Takalo, J. Mampie, C. Cindi, France Manamela, M. Lekoto, S. Naidoo.**

Informing the international movement in a statement on April 16, 1964, the WFTU Secretariat with great indignation denounced the decisions of the African courts to impose the death penalty on three trade union leaders (**Vuyisile Mini, Wilson Khayingo and Zinakile Mkaba**) and a life sentence on **Billy Nair**: "*The lives of important fighters against apartheid as the leaders of the national liberation movement such as Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu are in danger*" assumed the Secretariat of WFTU and called on "*all the trade unions to do what is possible to save the lives of the leaders, to help the jail release of the hundreds of political prisoners and the ending of the apartheid regime and racial segregation in South Africa*".

In another expression of the continuing efforts of WFTU (a telegram from the WFTU Secretariat on October 9, 1964, addressed to the Prime Minister of South Africa), the death penalty for the three leaders of SACTU was condemned. The annulment of the decision was demanded as well as the immediate release of the arrested men.

A similar telegram followed one month later, on December 28, 1964, to the Minister of Justice related to the death penalty on trade unionist Wilton Mkwayi and his colleagues.

International Solidarity Day took place for the fourth consecutive year on February 7, 1965. WFTU ensured that complaints would be heard all around the world about the criminal actions of the Verwoerd and Vorster governments, which received support from British and American imperialists. In that declaration, WFTU denounced the actions of the South African government and called for united and class-oriented international action.

(...) "Apartheid and this despicable system of oppression, racial discrimination and exploitation continue to press heavily on the people of South Africa, particularly those of African origin.

In the past 19 months, ending with December 1964, more than 140 political trials have taken place in the Republic of South Africa, affecting more than 1,600 persons of all races, particularly Africans. Some of the accused had been imprisoned for more than one year before being put on trial. The



WFTU 9th Congress, Prague 1978. From the left, S. Dlamini, E. Mtsali. Far right, Archie "Zola Zembe" Sibeko

prisoners were subjected to inhuman torture.

*Among those sentenced to death have been four members of the National Executive Committee of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, and of these three were executed on the 6th of November, 1964. The fourth, **Washington Bongco**, is at present in Pretoria Central prison awaiting execution. Three further are **Elias Motsoaledi**, **Raymond Mhlaba** and **Wilton M'Kwayi**. More than sixty officials of SACTU are serving terms of imprisonment ranging from five to twenty years. Thousands of other opponents of Verwoerd's racist regime are rotting in jail throughout South Africa.*

The year 1965 sees several trials in progress in many parts of South Africa against South African patriots of all races. Progressive lawyers are threatened within being struck off the register if they do not comply with the doctrine of apartheid and racial discrimination.

Early last month there was a new wave of arrests, with more than 20 people arrested in Paarl, near Cape Town, under suspicion of continuing resistance against repression. The resistance of the South African patriots against oppression continues with an ever rising force. The South African people, under the leadership of the National Liberation Movement, are preparing themselves for more bitter and sustained struggles that lie ahead. The struggle of the South African people against apartheid and racial discrimination is a part of the general struggle of the international working class and all progressive people of the world against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, old

and new, for peace and progress in the world.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which has always supported the just struggle of the South African workers and people for trade union rights and democratic liberties, as well as the decision to this effect taken by the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, resolutely condemns the inhuman and barbarous policies of apartheid and racial discrimination of the Government of the Republic of South Africa.

In the name of its 120 million members, the WFTU appeals to all trade union organisations to increase their moral and material solidarity with the struggle of the South African workers and people.

The racist regime in South Africa continues in existence only thanks to the support of the international monopolies, above all those of Great Britain and the United States, giving the South African drama an international character. This regime not only flagrantly violates the vital interests and human rights of the South African people, but also endangers those of the peoples throughout Africa and the whole world.

The WFTU suggests that your campaigns should be directed towards:

- the intensification of the fight against the South African regime of apartheid*

- Demand for the release of all trade union and political leaders and all political prisoners*

- Guarantee of trade union rights and democratic liberties of the workers and people of South Africa and the right to vote and be elected to all the machinery of the state*

- End all apartheid laws now in force in South Africa*

The WFTU is confident that common action by the workers and trade unions throughout the world will make an invaluable contribution to the just struggle of the workers and people of South Africa."

Similar decisions were taken at the 6th, 7th and 8th Congresses and at the meetings of the General Council. As it is referred to the book of comrade Sukomal Sen ("International Working Class Movement, 2011) on one of the crucial points of the 8th World Trade Union Congress, held in Varna, Bulgaria on October 15-22, 1973 was the "Challenge of our times: To fight and defeat the Apartheid",

while the 9th Congress held in April 16-22, 1978 in Prague discussed about the need to further intensify the solidarity towards the African people.

With a statement on April 16, 1964, the WFTU Secretariat with great indignation denounced the decisions of the African courts to impose the death penalty on three trade union leaders (Vuyisili Mini, Wilson Khayingo and Zimakile Mkaba) and a life sentence on Billy Nair

At the same time, dozens of announcements were made in the intervals between the congresses, making it clear to the apartheid regime that all of its actions would receive the relevant response from the international class-oriented trade union movement.

In an announcement in 1981, WFTU condemned the attack of the government of South Africa on Mozambique.

The 10th World Trade Union Congress, held in Havana, Cuba (February 10-15, 1982), issued the following statement:

"The World Trade Union Congress which gathered in Havana, Cuba on February 10-15, 1982 and which was attended by representatives of 269 million working people from 138 countries hails the great upsurge in the struggle of the oppressed people in South Africa – victims of the barbaric policy and practice of apartheid – and that of the Namibian people led by SWAPO for the liberation of their country. This struggle, in which ten of thousands of people sacrificed their lives, continues in a heroic manner and has won for itself the solidarity, respect and admiration of all progressive mankind,

It has become evident that if it was not for the wide-scale support that the racists of Pretoria received and continue to receive from the imperialist powers, in the first place US imperialism, the transnational corporations and the racist Zionists of Israel, for the purpose of each strengthening their own reactionary and aggressive ambitions, the independence of Namibia could have been hastened and countries like Zambia and Mozambique relieved of intimidation, threats and harassment. Of extreme importance in the region are the continued aggression against the People's Republic of Angola by the Pretoria racists, the occupation of her territory, and attempts to replace the popular government with counter-revolutionary elements, all of which are also the result of US imperialist support and encouragement for the apartheid regime. This policy must be seen as a threat to the peace of the African continent and to world peace.

The United Nations, the whole of humanity, having tried to persuade the South African racists to put an end to the occupation of Namibia, have rightly called for sanctions against South Africa in the face of the racist arrogance of its regime. This just demand, which has been warmly welcomed by the freedom fighters in South Africa, has been persistently sabotaged by the veto of the United States of America.

Apartheid has long been declared by the UN as a crime against humanity. The struggle against apartheid then is a noble task for the entire humanity.

The 10th Congress, which pays tribute to the fighters in Southern Africa, pledges the complete support of the Congress participants to the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the National Union of Namibian Workers and calls upon the workers of the world to intensify their efforts and solidarity actions for:

- the immediate release of all imprisoned political and trade union leaders.*
- the recognition of the right to organize for all the workers*
- the cessation of all acts of aggression against the neighboring countries of Southern Africa, especially against Angola.*
- the immediate independence of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO.*
- an end to the apartheid policy and its practices. Freedom to the oppressed black population of South Africa under the leadership of the African National Congress.*
- intensify solidarity and effective support to the ANC of South Africa and*

SWAPO of Namibia.

To achieve these aims, the Congress welcomes the initiative of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid to organize during 1982 an international conference to coordinate the activities of trade unions for implementation of effective sanctions against the regime of Pretoria. The Congress calls for concerted and united efforts to isolate the apartheid regime. It gives its full support particularly to the actions by trade unions in the countries whose governments are giving support to the racists and assure them complete solidarity. The year 1982, declared by the UN General Assembly as the Year of mobilization for sanctions against South Africa, should witness militant actions by trade unions at all levels, national, regional and international, for liberty, justice and human dignity for the oppressed people of Southern Africa."

In his speech at the 10th World Trade Union Congress, Stephen Dlamini (President of SACTU) accepted the importance of international solidarity expressed by WFTU and class-oriented trade unions around the world: "Over the years we have worked closely with the WFTU and have been able to build relationships of solidarity with our fellow workers from the socialist countries and progressive trade unions throughout the world. We have received a tremendous amount of material aid and incalculable moral support from the international trade union movement, from the host country of this 10th Congress and the socialist states of the world. We wish to express our thanks for the support and solidarity given to us by the world trade union movement. We are confident that you will continue to make the organization of opposition to the apartheid regime one of the main themes."

At the 35th session of the General Council of WFTU, held in Nicosia, Cyprus in April, 1983, after evaluating the situation in the southern part of the African continent the participants issued the following resolutions. They:

- denounced the criminal acts of the apartheid regime in Pretoria
- stressed that it should never be forgotten that the very existence and growing aggressiveness of the racist regime in South Africa are possible only because the US imperialists and other capitalist states are sabotaging the implementation of the UN resolutions aimed at wiping out apartheid in South Africa and freeing the people of the country
- stated that imperialist powers and in particular their transnational corporations, are preventing the establishment of real independence for Namibia.
- Pointed out that the Pretoria regime and its imperialist allies actively encourage and support mercenary groups which are responsible for the assassinations of militants and patriots and widespread massacres of innocent civilian populations in Angola, Mozambique and other frontline states.
- Reaffirmed its militant solidarity with the workers and peoples of South Africa, Namibia and the frontline states
- Appealed to all trade unions the world over to act more resolutely to implement the UN sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa
- Called upon trade unions the world over to further intensify their actions in order to defeat the apartheid regime, which is a shame and danger to all humanity"

A similar statement was made at the 36th Session of the General Council of

WFTU. In one of the resolutions of the 37th Session of the General Council with the participation of **John Nkadimeng**, General Secretary and **Aaron Pemba**, Head of International Relations of SACTU stated: *"The General Council calls upon workers and trade unions in all countries to further intensify their solidarity with the struggle of the workers and people of Southern Africa and demand:*

- *An immediate end to apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa*
- *The release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners.*
- *The immediate and total withdrawal of the racist regime's troops from Namibia, in accordance with Resolution 435 (1978) of the United Nations*
- *To call upon all member states of the United Nations, in particular the USA and Great Britain, to sever all cultural, sport and economic links with the racist regime and to impose sanctions, particularly an arms and oil embargo, until all structures of apartheid are completely abolished.*

The General Council calls upon the Workers' Group of ILO to convene an emergency meeting of the international and regional trade union organizations, to examine taking urgent steps of solidarity in the spirit of the decision of the anti-apartheid trade union conferences and to fully mobilize the forces of the world trade union movement to end apartheid in South Africa."

Stephen Dlamini, President of SACTU, participated in the WFTU meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria "on problems of world peace and trade unionism", on 24-27 October 1983, with the participation of many trade union leaders. In his speech on the decision of NATO to deploy new US missiles in Europe Dlamini stated: "deployment signals the beginning of the transformation of Europe and indeed

the whole world, into a merciless and silent grave". On the threat of the South African regime to the whole of Africa, comrade Dlamini said: *"the racists want to impose their dictate with a view to drawing all these states (the independent African states) into a so-called "constellation of States" controlled and dominated by them."* And he continued: *"as the minority state prepares for the intensification of its undeclared war, internally and externally, billions of dollars are pumped into a military industrial complex to perfect weapons of mass extermination. Not a single neighbouring independent African state has not experienced bombing from South African planes and agents. Presently, the western countries like the USA, France and Israel are busy helping the racist regime to improve and perfect its nuclear potential"*¹³

TOWARDS THE 10th WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS
(HAVANA, 10-15 FEBRUARY 1982)

ACT AGAINST APARTHEID AND ITS FOREIGN ACCOMPLICES



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
JANUARY 1982

In 1985 WFTU made the following statement: "[WFTU] stresses that the ways and recommendations outlined for achieving that goal are based on the premise that peace and security cannot be durable as long as colonialism, racism, fascism, imperialist aggression and alien domination continue to exist. The WFTU emphasizes that the continuing political, economic and military collaboration of certain Western States and their transnational corporations with the racist regime of South Africa encourages its persistent intransigence in defiance of the international community and constitutes the principal obstacle to the elimination of the inhuman and criminal system of apartheid in South Africa that prevents the people of South Africa and Namibia from achieving self-determination, freedom and national independence." While in the same year the General Council denounced "the brutal murders perpetrated by the racist regime against the people of South Africa who had been protesting against its apartheid-style elections, and the killing of striking coalminers and other workers defending their working and living conditions."

A message of solidarity with the people of South Africa was issued on May Day, 1985.

The resolution of the **11th World Trade Union Congress** held in Berlin, 16-22 September 1986, after declaring its solidarity with the workers in South Africa and condemning the regime and its imperialist supports, called for "the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria regime and the implementation of UN resolutions." There was also a call to the trade unions to campaign internationally for:

"- the lifting of the state of emergency and the immediate and unconditional release of all imprisoned political and trade union leaders and activists in South Africa and Namibia.

- The dismantling of the abhorrent system of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, immediate freedom for the oppressed black majorities under the authentic leadership – the African National Congress of South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organization

- The immediate withdrawal of all South African troops from Namibia and the immediate independence of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO, in accordance with the UN Resolution No. 435/78.

- The cessation of all acts of aggression by the racist regime against neighbouring countries in Southern Africa.

- Greater material support to the SACTU and the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) to carry forward their struggle for an end to apartheid and for the independence of Namibia.

- Increased material assistance to the trade union movement in Southern Africa." (...)

Speaking at the 11th World Congress of WFTU, the General Secretary of SACTU, who was also president of many initiatives, stated:

"Our delegation having briefly shown the negative effect of the arms race, wish to point out that SACTU views the struggle of trade unions for peace and disarmament as inextricably bound up with the struggle for national liberation, for social and economic interests and for that matter, SACTU has for many years under very difficult conditions and sometimes at the risk of the arrests and even death of our best cadres, fought for unity of the trade union movement in our country. Today, we take the opportunity of reporting to your 11th Congress



WFTU Poster of the 11th World Trade Union Congress, Berlin 1986

that though everything is not rosy yet in the trade union movement in our country, but we have the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the largest trade union centre in the history of the trade union movement of our country, which from its very foundation became wholly part and parcel of the liberation forces headed by the ANC."

On the same pattern, the 40th Session of the General Council held in Bucharest on October 28-31, 1987 *"hails the recent successful strikes" and "the unity of their struggle by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)" and amongst others condemns "the summary execution of **Wellington Mielies** and **Moses Jantjies**".* Further, the resolution on South Africa welcomes *"the united action by the international trade union movement, the trade union of the African continent and all peace-loving forces, in providing material and moral support during the just and successful struggle of the National Union of Mine Workers of South Africa"* and calls for more actions.

In a statement from 1987, WFTU condemned the assassination of Benjamin Moloise by the government.

In 1988, the General Council of WFTU organized a special debate on strengthening the actions of WFTU in support of the fight against apartheid, while at the 12th Congress held in Moscow in November 1990 a special resolution on issues in South Africa was adopted.

Chapter III

WFTU hammered the International Organizations with protests

WFTU hammered the International Labour Office and the UN with dozens of protests against the government of South Africa for its attacks on trade union and labour rights. However, even when the international correlation of forces was much more favourable for the international movement, the international organizations could not and did not want to do much beyond keeping irresolute positions towards the bourgeois governments and the working class movement. Due to relentless pressure from WFTU, its class-oriented trade union members, the governments of the socialist countries, the African countries that had gained independence and the blatant attitude of the government, the international organizations were forced to take some action. This action had nothing to do with the speed and the intensity with which they were willing to 'solve' issues that were connected in one way or another with imperialist interests for example in Cuba, Venezuela and more recently (for other reasons) in Libya and Syria. Having this in mind, the aim of the actions of WFTU in international organizations has always been to reveal the working conditions of trade unionists in South Africa, to raise awareness of the international movement about the situation, to isolate the South African government and the South African trade unionists, who were puppets collaborating with the regime. Another aim was to get international organizations, states and unions to take decisions on sanctions and boycotts against South Africa. One of the greatest victories of this persistent WFTU campaign was the exclusion in 1963 of the pseudo-representative of the workers of South Africa from ILC.

WFTU did not miss any meeting, seminar or conference of international organizations relevant to the problem of apartheid. At many of them it sent as its representative a member of its trade union member SACTU. In this way, WFTU gave its sister organization a rostrum on the international scene. Below you will see an overview of the multitude of WFTU's complaints to the Committee of Freedom of Association and to the International Labour Office (established in 1951). We should have in mind that WFTU took similar actions at the UN. In 1971 it gave life to the ostensible UN appeals for an International Year for Action to Combat Racial Discrimination and continued persistently the debate in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and in the specially created Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Complaints to the Committee of Freedom of Association of the ILO

ILO has recorded in its archives that the first of many complaints by WFTU was on March 31, 1952 and was addressed to the Committee of Freedom of Association (which had been founded in 1951) – Case No.63. It was about the prohibition by the Minister of Justice of the actions of **J. B. Marks, Gensen Poonen, I. Wolfesen, R. Fleet, J. D du Plessis and E. Sachs**.

*“The complainant, in a communication dated 31 May 1952, alleges that the Government has attacked and is attacking trade union rights on the pretext of suppressing communism, that on 20 May 1952 three trade union leaders of non European and three of European origin received notice from the Minister of Justice forbidding them as “named” Communists from taking any part in public life and, therefore, from carrying on trade union work. None of the persons concerned are known as Communists, but for their trade union work; and the intent of this step, according to the complainant, is to silence the militant section of the trade union movement. The complaining organisation states that it is unaware of the political views of these trade union leaders - Mr. **J. B. Marks**, of African origin, President of the African Mineworkers’ Union and of the Transvaal African Congress, Mr. **Gensen Poonen**, of Indian origin, Secretary of the Tobacco Workers’ Union, Mr. **I. Wolfesen**, of European origin, Secretary of the Baking Workers’ Union, Mr. **R. Fleet**, of European origin, Secretary of the Hairdressing Employees’ Union, Mr. **J. D du Plessis**, of European origin, Vice-President of the Union of Laundering, Cleaning and Dyeing Workers, and Mr. **E. Sachs** - beyond the fact that Mr. Sachs is not a Communist. The complainant states further that Mr. Sachs was arrested on 24 May 1952, while addressing a meeting, for a purely technical offence, was released on bail, was rearrested on 26 May for addressing another meeting and was still in prison when the complaint was presented on 31 May 1952.*

258. In a further communication dated 7 September 1953 relating in particular to the case of Mr. Wolfesen, which has been transmitted to the South African Government, the complainant reproduces the text of a document stated to have been sent to Mr. Wolfesen on 25 June 1953 by the South African Minister of Justice, in which the Minister calls upon him, pursuant to the powers conferred by the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950, to resign within 30 days from his position as an official and member of the National Baking Industrial Union and not to become again an official or member thereof or to take part in its activities and not to become an official or member of or to participate in the activities of any trade union registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act, 1937. The complainant states that the Government, by virtue of the Act of 1950, can attach the label of “Communist” to any persons whose activities do not meet with its approval and thus bar them from public life without bringing them before any court and without giving them any right of appeal. The complainant declares that the document mentioned above was sent to Mr. Wolfesen in the same week as that in which his union, together with another union, was placing pickets outside certain bakeries with the object of restraining the employers from contravening the five-day-week provisions of the collective agreement

in force with respect to the bakery trade. The Government's attacks on Mr. Wolfson, contends the complainant, constitute a deliberate attempt to interfere with the trade union rights of the workers by depriving them of their leader at a critical time - when the union was engaged in a dispute centred round the delivery of bread on Wednesdays - and constitute a flagrant violation of the workers' right to elect their union representatives and a denial to Mr. Wolfson, as a worker, of the right to join a trade union and to take part in its activities. The Government, concludes the complainant, is contravening articles 20 and 23 (4) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 2, 3 and 8 of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948".

After the answer from the South African government, the Committee came to the conclusion that this question was an internal affair of South Africa, and that it could not intervene. It just made the following recommendations:

"In so far as the South African Act of 1950 was enacted, as the Government contends, purely for a political reason, namely, that of barring Communists in general, as citizens, from all public life, the Committee considers that the matter is one of internal national policy with which it is not competent to deal and on which it should therefore refrain from expressing any view. However, in view of the fact that measures of a political nature may have an indirect effect on the exercise of trade union rights, the Committee wishes to draw the attention of the South African Government to the views which it has expressed in the above cases with regard, first, to the principle that workers, without distinction whatsoever, should have the right to join organisations of their own choosing and, secondly, to the importance of due process in cases in which measures of a political nature may indirectly affect the exercise of trade union rights. Consequently, the Committee recommends the Governing Body to communicate the above conclusions to the Government of the Union of South Africa".

On March 20, 1954, WFTU denounced the prohibition of the actions of 53 trade unionists and the order that they be removed from their positions in the unions as well as a prohibition on 39 of them participating in any open meetings or to having any contacts with the unions. Eight members of the trade unions were ordered to leave their positions in the unions within 30 days. Another 16 trade unionists were ordered to do the same, and to avoid public gatherings for a period of two years. WFTU's complaints concerned: **Israel Wolfson, Ronald Fleet, Daniel Johannes du Plessis, John Marks, M. T. Gwala, Ismail Ebrahim Bhoola, M. A Muller and correspondly Piet Huyser, Julie Wolfson, Gassim Amra, Nancy Dick, Ray Alexander, S. Rosenblatt, Haydee Le Roux, John Gomas, Joey Fourie, Gladstone X. Tshume, A. T. Mati, James Philips, Dan Tloome, Willie Kalk, Eli Weinberg and S.V. Reddy.**

The complaints of WFTU (Case No.102) that were sent to the UN and ILO were as follows:

"The WFTU raises one more time a serious protest about the violations of trade-union rights that has been committed by the government in South African Union.

First, WFTU draws the attention of the United Nations to some trade-union

leaders who have been dismissed by the administrative authorities. According to our information, 53 trade-union leaders have been subjected to measures of this sort and 39 of them have been forbidden to attend at all public meetings or to have a responsibility in a trade-union organization, in addition, several leaders have been under supervision.

These measures have stroke particularly the leaders of the South African Trades and Labour Council.

The WFTU has earlier protested against the signified order Emil Salomon, General Secretary of the Dressing Workers Federation to dismiss of his trade-union for 30 days with a ban of attending in all rallies except religious, social and leisure activities, the ban on leaving Transvaal for 2 years under three years of prison and the order to dismiss of all organizations in which he is a member.

Since, simile orders were given to:

ISRAEL WOLFSON, Secretary of the Federation of Dressing Workers, the federation treasurer of the African Trades and Labour Council

RONALD FLEET Secretary of the Federation of hairdressing Workers, executive member of South African Trades and Labour Council

DANIEL JOHANNES, Vice President of the Federation of Laundry and Dry cleaner's Workers

DU PLESSIS

JOHN JOSE MARKS, President of Mineworkers

ISMAIL EBRAHIM BHOOLA, Secretary of Pewter Workers

M.A MULLER, General Secretary of the Federation of Textile Industry Workers.

The trade-Union leaders have received the order to dismiss of all their function and the ban to attend in all meetings during 2 years

PIET HUYSER Organizer of the United Federation of Building Workers and Vice President of Trade unions Council.

Mrs JULIE WOLFSON, Secretary of the Federation of Jeweler and Goldsmith Workers and of the Federation of Chemical Industry and of the Federation of Glass Workers

GASS AMRA, Secretary of Chemical Workers in Durban

Miss NACY DICK, Secretary of Textile industry Workers in Capetown region

Miss RAY ALEXANDER, General Secretary of the Federation of Food and Canning in Capetown.

S.ROSENBLATT, President of the National Federation of Bread and Pastry and of the Association of employees of the Bread and Pastry Witwatersrand.

Miss HAYDEE LEROUX General Secretary of Candy Store

JOHN GOMAS Secretary of Chemical and similar Industry, Vice President of Industrial Council of Chemical Industry in Capetown

Miss JOEY FOURIE Secretary of Hairdressing Workers in Capetown

GLADSTONE X. TSHUME, Federation of Textile Industry

A.T.MAT Secretary of the Federation (non European) of Railways and Harbours Workers

JAMES PHILIP Federation of non European Workers Council of Transvaal.

DAN TLOOME, Secretary of the Federation of non European Workers Council in Transvaal.

WILLIE KALK, 22years old, regularly at the head as Secretary of the federation of Leather in Transvaal

ELI WEINBERG, Every year for 10 years unanimously reelected as General Secretary of Trade-traveler

S.V.REDDY, General Secretary of Pewter Workers.

The against M.M.GLADSTONE and A.P.MATI pronounced bans from participating in any organization "including an any employee of a company, industry, allied professions or occupations with the aim to rule the relations between them or for a member of them with their own employers or to defend or improve the interests of employees or of some of them in any company, industry, profession or occupation".

In addition, the WFTU denounces the violations of the trade union right, committed against the workers of railways , particularly in the follow of the creation of the Railways Administration and of the creation of a obeying to it trade-union.

The subscriptions have been deducted of the wages of the workers, although they never had requested their affiliation to this trade-union and the protests of the workers against the obligatory deductions have been punished by the Administration.



Geneva 1978. From the left Alven Bennie "BB Pemba", Eric Mtshali and Elizabeth a WFTU Official

For the creation of the Administration for the Personnel, the Administration has constantly refused to receive observations and demands of the Federation of non European Workers of Railways and Harbours of South Africa.

Along 1953, some members and militants of this Federation have been summarily dismissed after a 24 hours notice. Among them: the National President, the National Vice-president and 4 members of the National Executive Committee; the President and the Vice President and 4 others members of the Committee in Durban of the Federation, the President, the Secretary and 2 members of the C committee in Port Elisabeth ; the President and 2 members of the Committee in East London with also trade unionist delegates and militants in workshops who have no responsibility in the Federation.

A part of these trade unionists have served during a long time in the Railways. The President M.J.D.ROY have worked there uninterruptly, for 25 years and has been dismissed with a 24hours notice and before 6 years of his retirement.

In all these cases, the order of dismissals has come from the Office of the Central Manager of Johannesburg. The local managers have recognized that they have not recommended the dismissals nor transmitted any complaint against the work of any of these employees. The local managers do not know about the cause of the dismissal.

It is clear that the Railways Administration has dismissed these employees because of their trade unionist activity to prevent the normal running of the trade union thanks to the dismissals of the trade unionist leaders.

The third fact on which we draw attention of the Economic and Social Council is to the arrest of 300 workers of the factories of tin box and fruit in Wellesley, on the 21st of January.

These arrests are the culminate peak of the series of attacks against the rights of the workers of these companies, the employer who has systematically dismissed, since 1941, these among the workers who work for setting up a trade union in the company.

A trade unionist group had, however, set up a trade union in August 1953 and committed an action to apply in the factory the collective agreement that the whole industry has adopted. Attempting to hinder the development of this action, the employer lock-outed the workers, on 22th December, taking advantage to dismiss three activist trade unionist

Militants: Rachel Williams, Magret Bastiaan, et Anna Mc Kenzie. The protest of the workers against these arbitrary measures end to a stoppage of work of more than 300 workers, during January.

In the follow of this work stoppage, 180 workers including women and other younger than 16years old children were arrested by the police. According our information we have, 284 children are still detained in the prison of Kluidjet Kraal.

This is an unquestionably way of the governmental authorities to press through repressive police measures the employers to destroy every tradeunionist organisation in the company.

The WFTU underlines, in conclusion, the seriousness of the violations of trade union rights in South African Union. It considers that the legislations supported by the government of this country on trade union rights, aim to

subpress all trade union organization of African workers and to restrain , more seriously, the rights of the non European native workers.

The WFTU demands the whole restoration of the trade union freedoms in South Africa."

In complaint Case No. 189 of April 23, 1958, which followed the complaint Case 119, March 22, 1955, WFTU denounced the decision of the Director of the Non-European Affairs Department of the Town Council of Benoni (Transvaal) to issue a directive to the native working population which prohibited the reappointment in any job of workers who has been fired for participating in a strike or a demonstration, or for absence from work without the official approval of the Regional Employment Commissioner. While the directive also imposed the creation of special files for each local worker based on relevant data. The government of South Africa answered this complaint with a number of excuses, but also stated that the directive would be withdrawn. In the same case, WFTU also denounced the dismissal and victimization of 340 workers and the leaders of their trade unions at the Amato Textile Factory in February 1958. This happened after a strike that they had organized, following which the company had hired new staff through the State Department. With the answers that it gave, the government was unable to convince the ILO that this was not an anti-trade union policy. The Committee of the ILO still decided to raise the question of whether the strike was legal *"the question at issue would seem to be whether the strike in this case was a legitimate activity in respect of which workers should enjoy protection against anti-union discrimination"* and to propose that the Governing Body criticize the government of South Africa.

Another WFTU complaint (Case No.119), issued together with the Trade Unions International of Workers of the Food, Tobacco and Beverage Industries and Hotel, Café and Restaurant Workers, the sabotage of the offices of the Food and Canning Workers' Union in Capetown in the night of April 23, 1959 was denounced. The equipment and the archives of the union were dismantled. This was surely the work of the government, as it repeatedly prosecuted this union. The Committee and the government agreed that what had happened at the offices was just a common robbery, and the case was dropped.

The two organizations also criticized the dismissal of leaders of the Food and Canning Workers' Union in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Wolseley, Bonnievale, Tulbagh, Capetown and Paarl, and defined this as a new attack on the trade union. The government's answer was that everyone had the right to dismiss whoever he/she wanted, and that it had nothing to do with the problem. The Committee came to the same conclusion.

There was also a complaint about the arrests of union leaders for treason. Those arrested were **Ray Alexander, Frank Marguard, S. V. Reddy, Gus Coe, Betty du Toit, Sarah Wentzel and Becky Lan.**

Other complaints were made about: the decision of the Wage Board to propose deteriorated working conditions for workers in the food industry and a reduction in their wages; further specialization of the anti-labour and anti-union legislation and the Industrial Conciliation Act; the prohibition of action and the compulsory exile of Elizabeth Mafekeng, President of the African Food

and Canning Workers' Union to a farm in North-Western Cape Province, even without a court decision.

In the end all, these protests by WFTU received irresolute answers with no sanctions for the South African government. Even more astonishing was the position of the international organizations (and especially the position of the International Labour Office) relating to the Sharpeville Massacre. WFTU denounced the massacre on April 15, 1960 (Case No.229) as well as the arrests of trade unionists without trial. A year later, in its final report, the Committee concluded that the problem did not exist any more because all the people involved had been released: *„In these circumstances the Committee recommends the Governing Body to take note of the Government's statement that the state of emergency was lifted completely on 31 August 1960 and that all persons still in detention on that date were released”* (Report No.56). While in the conclusions of Interim Report No.49 the Committee came to the conclusion that the right to strike did not include strikes with political demands but only with professional demands: *„With reference to the allegations relating to the violation of the right to strike, the Committee has pointed out in a number of cases that the right to strike is generally accorded to workers and their organisations as an integral part of their right to defend their collective economic and social interests. However, it has rejected allegations relating to strikes by reason of their non-occupational character or where they have been designed to coerce a government with respect to a political matter or have been directed against the government's policy and not “in furtherance of a trade disputes”* In the present case, it is clear, from the complainants' own words, that the strike was called in protest against “the Sharpeville massacre” on a day set aside as “a day of mourning” by the African National Congress and was participated in, according to the complainants, by 95 per cent of the whole population - including, therefore, both trade unionists and non-unionists. In these circumstances, therefore, the Committee considers that it should follow its previous practice of not entertaining allegations regarding strikes of such a nature and therefore recommends the Governing Body to decide that the allegations relating to violation of the right to strike do not call for further examination”.

Two more complaints followed:

- A complaint presented by WFTU-SACTU against the South African Government, Case No.261, April 5th, 1961 Allegations relating to Measures Taken against the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Including the prohibition of SACTU to hold its Sixth Annual National Conference and the prohibition of William Mark Shope of attending all gatherings for a period of five years).

- Complaint presented by WFTU against the South African Government, Case No.472, March 3, 1966 (Including arrest and fine of 193 African Workers employed by the Bay Transport Company, the arrests of Messrs. Eric Zuma, Llewellyn Yava, Daniel Magongo, Milton Baleni, Alfred Qungani, Matthew Mpolongwana, Amoz Zembetha, Richard Klaas, Arnold Nphantana, and Welcome Duru and the solidarity confinement of Messrs. Zolly Malindi, Bernard Runa and Elyah Loza officers of SACTU.

Exclusion of South Africa from international organization

After this series of accusations and the astonishing criminal action of the regime (culminating in the Sharpeville Massacre), the International Labour Council and the UN Security Council for the first time recognized the problem in South Africa as a problem that was creating „international tensions“. However, the first Declaration was voted down on November 28, 1961.

In 1962 the proposal returned in the 17th General Assembly, put forward by 34 members, including the Soviet Union. The Security Council discussed the problems in South Africa in August 1963, and in the end proposed a selective trade embargo requesting its members to stop delivering and selling weapons to South Africa.

In 1963, in the 47th Session of the International Labour Conference, WFTU managed by a majority vote (135 votes in favour, 3 against, 57 absent) to eliminate the pseudo-representative of the South African workers from the meeting. With this success, the campaign to block the South African government and to keep it internationally isolated acquired new dynamics. SACTU, the representative of the class-oriented trade unions in South Africa, gained de facto international recognition. In the next year, WFTU succeeded with the withdrawal of Article 35 (known as the „colonial clause“) from the by-laws of the ILO after years of struggle.

At successful attempt at isolation preceded in the same year with a number of initiatives.

In a letter of July 18, 1963. Louis Saillant, General Secretary of WFTU, addressed the President of the UN Security Council and required the expulsion of South Africa from the UN. He wanted this demand to be presented at the Security Council and therefore also at the General Assembly.

The letter stated:

“The World Federation of Trade unions, faithful to its policy of opposition to all forms of exploitation based on class, colour, or race, has repeatedly drawn the attention of the United Nations Organisation and its specialised agencies, such as the ILO to the inhuman conditions under which the majority of the people of South Africa are living.

Under Apartheid, the official policy of the Government of that country, the Africans and Coloured are deprived of elementary human rights. All opposition to that policy, which

In 1963, in the 47th Session of the International Labour Conference, WFTU managed by a majority vote (135 votes in favour, 3 against, 57 absent) to eliminate the pseudo-representative of the South African workers from the meeting. With this success, the campaign to block the South African government and to keep it internationally isolated acquired new dynamics. SACTU, the representative of the class-oriented trade unions in South Africa, gained de facto international recognition.

is in contradiction with the Charter of Human Rights, is met with measures of terror and bloody repression. Nearly all democratic organisations opposing Apartheid have been banned and over 67,000 people, including women and children, are imprisoned.

The latest measure adopted is the 1963 General Law Amendment Act, which provides for the death penalty for all Africans taking part in a strike, which in any case has always been banned. Moreover, that law allows the police to detain any person without trial for a period of 90 days. The victims of that law may be kept in solidarity confinement for questioning. Their imprisonment may also be extended indefinitely.

In the international trade union sphere, organisations of all countries without exception keep demanding freedom for the oppressed people of South Africa. These organisations, especially those affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions, have never failed to mobilise forces against the racist Government of South Africa and extend support to the workers and people of South Africa.

On behalf of the 120 million members of the World Federation of Trade Unions and of all those who took part with the WFTU in joint actions in relation to South Africa, we demand that the Republic of South Africa be expelled from the United Nations and urge member States to repudiate all relations with the present Government of South Africa, especially those member States which now maintain relations.

Our aim is to exert thereby a moral, political and economic pressure upon that Government and help the people of South Africa force their Government to forsake its racist policy or withdraw in favour of a democratic Government which would guarantee the interests of the people”.

In another letter written by Louis Saillant to the President of the UN General Assembly Dr. Sosa Rodrigues from September 20, 1963, the General Secretary of WFTU pointed out that South Africa was accused of wanting to annex the British protectorate Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland. He called on the UN General Assembly to take the following actions: -call again on the member states of the UN to comply with the decisions taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council concerning the demise of colonialism, the apartheid policy and the termination of all military, economic and political relations with South Africa and Portugal. -other initiatives to be taken with the same aim, including sanctions but above all – the expulsion of South Africa and Portugal from the UN.

In his speech at the 47th Session of the ILC, Louis Saillant, General Secretary of WFTU, stated: “The era of colonialism is now drawing to a close, but colonialist practices still persist. They are tenacious, and they take a multiplicity of forms. The policy of apartheid so brutally followed in South Africa has aroused the indignation of the African delegates and of all the progressive delegates who have attended this Conference. The WFTU expresses its solidarity with the workers and the people of South Africa. Last year the WFTU challenged the credentials of the South African delegation. That challenge was unsuccessful, and this year we renewed it. The ILO should consider immediately the introduction into the Preamble to the Constitution of provisions to prevent the admission to membership of the ILO of governments which practise a policy of racial supremacy.

The future of the ILO depends on the contribution it will make to the solution of the major political, economic and social problems of our epoch which face the toiling masses of the whole world, the vanguard of mankind". Thus, with the intervention of the representatives of the trade unions of Cuba, the USSR and Ukraine in the credentials committee the isolation of the pseudo-representatives of the workers was speeded up.

Commenting on the success of WFTU in eliminating the pseudo-representative of the 47th Session of the ILC, Luis Saillant stated on March, 25 1964:

"For the World Federation of Trade Unions which fought and is still fighting tirelessly in all spheres of its activities including the ILO against the policy of apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa, this withdrawal registers one of its successes.

South Africa has now been compelled to leave the ILO just as previously it had to leave the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and other international bodies and agencies. This is a first result. The international trade union movement in general and the WFTU in particular will continue to put all their forces together with the other progressive forces throughout the world in the struggle for the complete isolation of the present Government of South Africa. This will no doubt make it easier for the workers and people of South Africa to put a final end to the regime of terror, regime of the worst type of exploitation, the regime of apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa" (...)

UN Special Committee against apartheid

Another initiative within the UN in which WFTU played a leading role was the **Special Committee against Apartheid**, to which it was elected for consecutive years by the ILC. This initiative functioned as an observatory for the actions carried out against apartheid. WFTU and its union members participated actively in that committee, pressing for more actions by the member states, employers and labour organizations against apartheid.

Debkumar Ganguli (Secretary of WFTU) stated at one of the meetings at the 71th Session of the ILC in 1985: *"Specific, decisive and responsible actions by the international community would produce tangible results in the Second Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and shorten the days of suffering of our brothers and sisters in South Africa and thereby contribute to the establishment of a free Namibia and a South Africa free of racism and apartheid.*

In conclusion, I would assure all of you that the 206 million workers who belong to the WFTU, will take a very active part in any measures to eliminate apartheid. This, we feel, is a moral obligation and we are determined to carry this out to the full". An international conference was organized by the UN Special Committee against Apartheid on May 7-10, 1985 in Arusha, Tanzania. WFTU participated in it, represented by Ilua Mackay from SACTU.

The conference was attended by representatives of the UN Special Committee

against Apartheid, the ILO, the UN, the High Commission against Refugees, WHO, OAU, government representatives of the GDR, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lesotho, Nepal, Sudan, Syria, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, National non-governmental organizations of Belgium, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Hungary, Japan, the USSR, the UK, the USA, and a representative of the UN Secretariat. The representative of WFTU started his speech saying: „*We are faced with a qualitatively different situation in South Africa than that which existed even six months ago. Every inch of South Africa is engulfed by the fires of resistance. In their determination not to be ruled in the same old way, the masses of South Africa are using various methods of struggle. There are students' boycotts, workers on strike, women and civil groups organizing around day-to-day issues and there are armed actions in support of the political demands being carried out by Umkhonto We Sizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress*”.

Chapter IV

Not words! Action!

As the South African movement against apartheid was becoming stronger, the fury of the fascist regime intensified aggressively. However, the death sentences, the arrests, the concentration camps, the banning on trade unions and all other progressive organizations, and the introduction of emergency legislation were not able to intimidate the oppressed people of South Africa, whose struggle had attracted international attention.

The international trade union movement, led by the World Federation of Trade Unions, was the first to show its support for this struggle by trying to strengthen the movement through all means available.

We can safely state that the South African workers were not left alone and isolated from the world during their struggle against apartheid. As soon as the news arrived at WFTU, it made sure all steps and measures were taken to make this effort known to the world. It issued announcements, wrote articles, transmitted radio interviews, denounced the regime to the ILO, etc.

Shoulder-to-shoulder with the South African workers

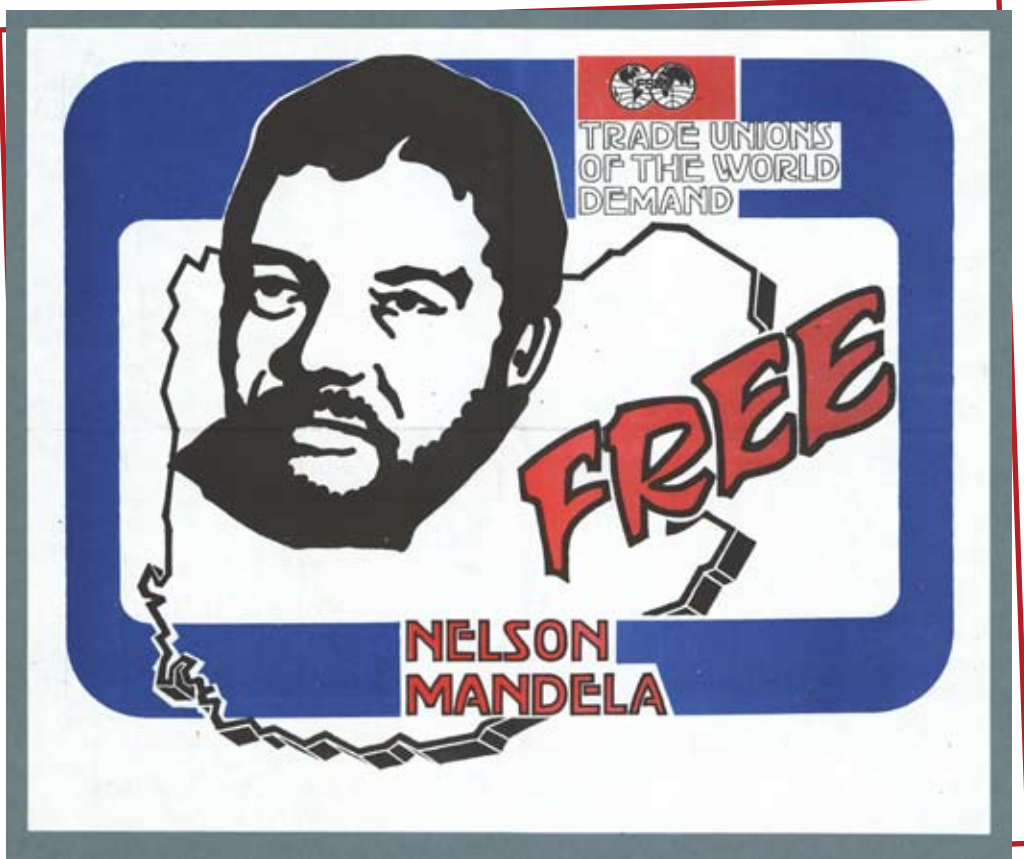
The trade unions had always found WFTU close to their side, since the beginning of their struggle. Such was the case concerning one of the historic industrial actions of the workers in the canning industry that was organised by the Food and Canning Workers' Trade Union, a member of the Trade Union International of Food of WFTU and the Secretariat of the Trade Union, headed by Ray Alexander, who was replaced by Becky Lan after the Union was banned in October 1953 in the Wolseley Fruit Canning Company in the Western Cape districts in 1950¹⁴.

WFTU stood by the workers in this struggle from the very first day, and organized a campaign of solidarity and material assistance when the first lock-out was organized. This soon turned into an industrial action, in October 1953, with the aim of implementing the collective agreements and in response to the daily arbitrary violence of the bosses. The industrial action was attacked violently by the police, while the employers tried to intimidate the strikers by threatening not to re-employ the trade union members. There were personal attacks against the strikers and their families, and many strikers were arrested while scabs were employed to keep the work going. Messages of solidarity kept arriving from the members of TUI of Food, the sectoral organization of WFTU, while a significant financial contribution was collected for the strikers' struggle¹⁵.

Despite the great losses, the legal cases that arose and the dismissal of workers during the strike, this remarkable battle forced the authorities to recognize the trade union and to sign collective agreements. After this hard battle, life would never be the same again for the workers of the canning industry; It had become a great school for the organized struggle of the trade unions, whose actions and demands have continued to set an example ever since.

Since then and with the foundation of SACTU in 1955, the collection of significant material contributions to keep the struggle alive and strong was consolidated. The financial assistance of WFTU kept SACTU alive. The money was used for strengthening the struggle, and for travel expenses to enable representatives to take part in international meetings all over the world and inform people about the conditions under which the people of South Africa were living. This financial aid was also given to support strikes and banned trade unionists.

The money came from the contributions of the class-orientated trade unions of WFTU worldwide, as well as from special campaigns organized to support the struggle of the working people in South Africa. An example among dozens of similar examples was when WFTU offered 400 pounds for the legal costs of the Treason Trial.



WFTU Poster of Campaigning for the release of Nelson Mandela

Activities of the sectoral organizations (TUIs) for the workers' problems

The WFTU sectoral organizations, the TUIs' were particularly active in solving the workers' problems in South Africa. The sectoral organization of Education (FISE) organized significant action against the class barriers in education promoted by the apartheid regime. Activities were carried out by the TUI's of Food, Transport and Metal at regional and branch levels.

Days of solidarity and joint actions were organized for many years in succession at regional and international levels, as were days of workers' action at the Bata factories in Africa, where workers in Zimbabwe by organizing themselves for the Third Day of Action in 1985 forced the managing director of Bata to agree to a meeting with the representatives of TUI: *"Why is it that Thomas Bata, who is an expert adviser to the UN Commission on Transnationals, does not apply in his factories in 90 countries worldwide the aims and objectives*

contained in the clauses already adopted by the UN?"

On the same day, there were other actions taking place in Congo, Zaire, Tunisia, Benin, etc., while in South Africa the Bata workers, who were already on strike, were able to hand the demands of the TUI over to the management of the factory.

The TUIs' responded actively during the days of action organized by WFTU. They mobilized the workers all over the world so that a boycott

of South Africa would be implemented in all fields of the economy. One of the most significant battles was the boycotting of South Africa from coal and petrol, for which the TUI's put up a heroic struggle.

As a result of appeals by WFTU over a period of many years for a total embargo on all oil shipments to South Africa, and the adoption of this proposal by the joint WFTU-OATUU Trade Union Conference against Apartheid (Harare, May 18-20, 1984), the proposal was also adopted at the Anti-Apartheid Conference held in Geneva in June 1984.

Later, the International Conference of the Maritime Trade Unions for dockers' and seamen's trade unions all over the world took place with administrative and financial support from WFTU. Present were the Indian great and class-oriented trade unionists who was for many years Head of the TUI of Transport, Debkumar Ganguli, WFTU Secretary on behalf of WFTU as well as the President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo and the SACTU General Secretary John Nkadimeng. This International Conference came to the decision to *"take direct action against the vessels of any companies involved in supplying oil to South Africa, including those unloaded in Namibia, in order to tighten the UN oil embargo and to increase the risks and costs of supplying South Africa with oil."*

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Use all forms of actions

In addition to strikes, protests and various actions to boycott South Africa by the workers of the class-oriented trade unions themselves, WFTU studied and implemented all kinds of protests in an attempt to become constantly annoying to the government of the regime on a daily basis. After sending dozens of protest letters to Ministers and to the Prime Minister of the apartheid governments asking for meetings but receiving negative responses, WFTU organized a further postcard campaign in 1986 in which 30,000 postcards from all over the world arrived at the offices of the Prime Minister P. W. Botha.

Educational Programmes

Educational programmes on the tasks of the struggle against apartheid were organized at regular periods for the cadres of SACTU. Workers were educated through educational programmes, seminars and material support, and lectures on the roots of racism and apartheid and on the action needed to combat these phenomena. For example, WFTU organized a seminar, in which 14 SACTU and NUNW cadres took part in October, 1985.

Similar seminars on issues regarding the apartheid were organized by WFTU for trade unionists from other countries in Africa, for example in Madagascar and Benin in 1991.

In addition, WFTU offered scholarships to trade unionists and workers who fought the apartheid regime in South Africa. For example, WFTU offered two scholarships for educational programmes on journalism to SACTU, one seminar for six trade unionists from South Africa and Namibia in Brazzaville, etc. in 1988.

Missions to South Africa

From 1947, when WFTU sent its first representative to witness the situation in the miners' historic strike on the spot, and to express the solidarity of the international trade union movement, dozens of missions took place in South Africa. For example, a WFTU mission went to South Africa in 1988 to express its solidarity and its active support for the striking miners and their struggle.

In addition, representatives of WFTU went to Namibia as international observers for the election procedures in 1989, and they also participated in the celebrations for the independence of Namibia.

It broke the silence with dozens of publications

WFTU includes in its bibliography dozens of publications which were printed in thousands of copies. They had great international appeal. They were dedicated to issues connected with the struggle in South Africa, aiming to tell the truth about the living conditions of the workers in South Africa, about the support that imperialist centers gave to its governments, and the persecution of all leading militants.

This long list of publications had as its final objective to mobilize the trade unions and the workers worldwide to express their practical solidarity and exert pressure to shorten the life of the fascist regime through each and every battle.

Among those WFTU publications, we devote special attention to the book written by **Moses Mabhida**, "For International Trade Union Action to End Apartheid. The course of South Africa", 1962, with an introduction by Ibrahim Zakaria, General Secretary of WFTU. In this edition, Moses Mabhida describes

and explains the consequences of each legislative measure against the workers in the daily lives of the South African workers which he experienced himself. The book also analyses the situation of the trade union movement in South Africa, and it concludes: *"The workers of South Africa, through their united determination and struggle, should go forward along this path of trade union unity, which will lead the forces of progress to victory over the fascist forces which now rule in the Republic of South Africa. Although this steep road to freedom has been strewn with the graves of their loved ones, the democrats of South Africa have never retreated. Instead, each fascist law, each new measure of bloody repression, makes them more militant, more firm and united, and brings forth a new crop of courageous men and women, who have pledged their lives to the struggle for the liberation of their homeland."*

A similar publication that calls for international mobilization against apartheid was published in 1973 by the TUI of WFTU in Education (FISE). The book was written by **W.S. Sigxashe**, and the title was "Join the struggle against apartheid!". Sigxashe was a member of the ANC and MK, a lecturer, a commissioner in the Stuart Commission, and First Director General of the National Intelligence Agency.

Dozens of other WFTU publications referring specifically to South Africa were distributed worldwide by thousands, in addition to the rest of the publications which refer to the whole of the African Continent.

- The weekly bulletin "Flashes" published dozens of articles each year. In 1988 alone, for example, it published 30 articles and studies on South Africa.

- A wealth of published material on South Africa, the struggle of the South African people and special issues that concerned the South African workers are included in "World Trade Union Movement", the monthly review of WFTU, and in the journal "World Trade Union News". Many of these articles were written by the cadres of SACTU themselves such as **Stephen Dlamini**, President of SACTU and **John Nkadimeng**, General Secretary of SACTU, **Eric Mtsahli**, a cadre of SACTU, and **Joe Kolokeng**, from the Africa Department of WFTU and leader of the Ekukhanyeni Youth Club.

A few extracts of the "World Trade Union Movement" are included below to give a more precise picture of what WFTU was telling to the world:

"It is clear that for the present rulers of South Africa, education is to ensure that the Black people are brainwashed, tamed and made to "realize" their inherent inferiority to white men and to accept gratefully their permanently low station in life. (...) Lack of sound education condemns the Black workers to live on the lowest rung of the ladder throughout their lives, with access, if they are lucky, to unskilled work. In many cases they are doomed to unemployment. But who cares? The show must go on! The bigger the army of unemployed, the better for the "bodies in the boardrooms because it provides them with a cheap labour force." **"Education and the black working class" by Eric Mtshali, WTUM No2/1982**

"The oppression of women has its history in the victory of private property over natural communal property. Therefore this question [of the emancipation

of women] is linked with the reorganization of society as a whole. And women have a role to play in transformation of society, because the struggle for their emancipation is a component part of the general struggle of the working class and the entire working people for a policy based on profound economic and social transformations capable of ensuring and stabilizing purchasing power, of improving the quality of life and labour of workers and their families. **"Black women workers under apartheid" by Eric Mtshali, WTUM No4/1982**

"Every year half a million South Africans are arrested and imprisoned and 100,000 prisoners are permanently detained in prisons throughout the country, where two capital hangings take place every week.

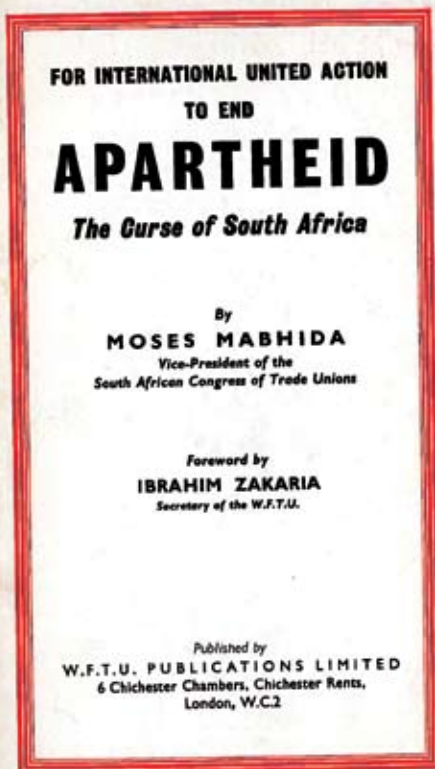
The reality of the South African situation today is characterized by arrests and police brutality. The death of Neil Aggett forms part of a pattern of odious and repressive measures carried out by the racist regime. Systematic and widespread torture and the killing of detainees flows from the repressive nature of the apartheid regime, which can only survive by the exercise of force and violence against its opponents." **"South Africa: Suicide or Murder", WTUM No4/1983**

"All these gains obtained by the Black unions were not easy. They resulted from the workers' staunch struggle. Proof is in the number of strikes in South Africa in 1982, which reached the highest point in 20 years. Around 142,000 workers participated in 394 officially registered strikes, causing a loss of

365,000 working days. The number of strikers rose by 40% compared to the recent record years. No white worker took part in these strikes"

"Faced with a reinforcement of apartheid black workers organize", WTUM No10/1984

"Taking into account all these factors, we believe the time has come to set up a Standing Committee comprising the OATUU, the NUNM (National Union of Namibian Workers), the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). This Committee would take actions along with a specific programme, meet regularly and go to all countries which continue to provide landing



or docking aircraft and ships going to or coming from South Africa” **“South Africa: Workers resistance grows”**, by Eric Mtsali, WTUM No 5/1985

“The widest possible unity of the trade unions in our country is of utmost importance at this critical period in our people’s struggle against the apartheid regime and the bosses. SACTU whole-heartedly welcomes the formation of COSATU. With the launch of the new federation, SACTU sees the real possibility for the building of strong, industrially-based unions in line with the SACTU policy of ‘One Union, One Industry’, ‘One country, one federation’. SACTU does however, stress that as long as the progressive apartheid regime exists, where the above-ground trade unionists face detention without trial, torture and murder at the hands of the police, the occupation of their townships and the brutal strike-busting tactics of the regime and bosses, there will always be a need for a SACTU”.

“New steps to advance united trade union struggle against apartheid”
by John Nkadameng, General Secretary of SACTU WTUM No3/1986

“The Freedom Charter was adopted among resolutions taken during the 5th Congress of NUM. The NUM further said that the fight of Black workers for political emancipation cannot be separated from the struggles waged on the factory floor for economic gain.

The NUM started that the abolition of the migrant labour system and single-sex hostel accommodation, along with health and safety struggles and the fight for a living wage, are central to the South African labour struggles and can be traced back to the days of the AMWU (African Mineworkers Union) under the leadership of its President J.B Marks.” **“Past and present struggles of South African Mineworkers”** by Joe Molokeng, WTUM No9/1987

“The founding of COSATU during the state of emergency was a remarkable feat by the workers and people of South Africa in advancing and defending working class interests despite brutal repression at the hands of the state apparatus” **“The struggles past and present of South African Workers”** by Horse Heichel, WFTU’s Young Workers Commission, WTUM No4/1988

“Under the most difficult conditions the trade unions were able to rally over 3 million workers and people to stay away from work between 6 and 8 June 1988. It was a clear demonstration of the determination of the people to replace the illegitimate racist apartheid regime with a non-racial democratic society.

These millions of people were also protesting against the banning of 17 anti-apartheid organizations and against the restrictions imposed on the COSATU. Among other issues, these restrictions prevent COSATU from requesting the release of their leaders, who are in detention (such as Moses Mayekiso, the General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), whose trial is still proceeding); from commemorating tragic events, such as the disaster of the Kinross mine, in which hundreds of Black miners lost their lives; from asking for clemency for those known as the “Sharpeville Six”. **“New ILO Action against apartheid”** by Gunther Goldberg, WTUM No8/1988

At the same time, “WFTU Calling”, the WFTU radio service, dedicated much time in its transmissions and programmes to the struggle in South Africa. In 1988, WFTU Calling transmitted in 25 languages to dozens of countries. Thousands of listeners followed its transmissions in those years.

Chapter V

On Pan-African unity and joint action

As we have seen, from its very establishment, the WFTU has set as its priority the achievement of unity and joint fraternal action of all African peoples and their trade unions in their struggle against colonialism and for the interests of the African workers in their own homeland.

From 1947, when WFTU organized its first large Pan-African Conference, it took the initiative to support the forces that were attempting to create a Pan-African organization which would be able to play its role in organizing the struggle. Such forces were TUC in Ghana, UGTA in Algeria and others, which organized the first AATUF (All-Africa Trade Union Federation) Congress from 25-29 May 1961 in Casablanca, Morocco.

Moses Mabhida and Wilton M'kwayi took part in this meeting on behalf of SACTU. WFTU was represented by its General Secretary, Ibrahim Zakaria, and Rocchi, Marcel Bras and Roger Clain.

ICFTU and the trade unions affiliated to ICFTU also took part in this meeting. However, due to the class-oriented line of AATUF, which was defined by the majority of the class-oriented African forces, the ICFTU and the trade unions under its influence split the Federation and tried to found another African confederation, the African Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) which they would be able to control. The founding congress of this new confederation was held in Dakar, 9-14 January, 1962 (see next chapter).

Among the dozens of joint initiatives organized by WFTU together with the class-oriented African trade unions, and later with the newly-established AATUF, was the establishment of a joint committee which would become the bulwark of solidarity for the workers and the people of South Africa. Its mission would be to organize militant days of action and weeks of solidarity in dozens of countries worldwide. This way it would carry along the International Organisations (ILO, UN etc.) to take initiatives under the international appeal

of the struggle.

When the news of the Sharpeville massacre broke, the 11th Session of the General Council of WFTU, June 1960 in Peking, decided to take the initiative and establish an **International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and the People of South Africa**.

At this meeting, the General Council emphasized that the struggle of the workers and the people of South Africa against the worst form of suppression and exploitation based on apartheid and racial segregation had reached a point when individual support was no longer sufficient. The General Council proposed to create an **International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and the People of South Africa** to give maximum support to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. For this purpose, it invited all the trade union organizations to participate in the Committee.

Together with SACTU and the TUC of Ghana, WFTU decided to co-organise the first meeting of this Committee to take place on 24-26 July 1961 in Accra, Ghana. Representatives of dozens of trade union organizations took part in this meeting.

The newly-formed solidarity committee sent an appeal to all trade unionists worldwide to cooperate in order to reveal to the world the abominable oppression under which the workers of South Africa lived, and to mobilize public opinion to contribute to their struggle.

In final Declaration, the committee concludes with an appeal to all trade union organizations:

"We call upon you,

- to develop the widest possible unity of action by trade unions, at national and international levels, for the abolition of apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa;

- to expose to public opinion all over the world the total absence of the most elementary trade union rights for the African workers, the absence of the elementary human rights enjoyed by civilised society, the repression, murder, torture, arrests, banning, deputations and expulsions to which thousands of South African workers, trade unionists and patriots are being subjected;

- to organise campaigns for moral and material help for the South African workers and people in their struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination, and to provide assistance to the victims of this shameful policy of the Government of South Africa;

- to encourage all efforts made by workers and trade unions in all parts of the world, irrespective of affiliation, to use all the means at their disposal to isolate totally the present Government of South Africa and to bring about the maximum pressure by other nations so as to end the shameful regime of racial oppression and apartheid." (...)

"We believe that no barriers of affiliation or opinion should prevent us from co-ordinating our effort in this noble task. Our brothers and sisters in South Africa need today our support more than ever before. Membership of the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Africa is open to all. Let us all come together and unite all our efforts so as to bring the most effective help to the fight of the South African people."

The result of this joint effort soon became evident, when the first International Day of Action was realized on 7 February 1962. In all countries of the world, workers took part in meetings, demonstrations and every kind of protest against the criminal policy of apartheid. Dozens of messages of solidarity reached the South African workers. In many cases food and clothes were collected for them. Solidarity actions took place in Czechoslovakia, Poland, the USSR, Vietnam, Romania, Argentina, Burma, Indonesia, Lebanon, Cuba, Mali, Guinea, China, Ghana, France and elsewhere.

In its ascending march, the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and the People of South Africa concluded unanimously in its Second Conference on 9-11 March, 1964, in which 46 national trade union centres took part, that it would enlarge the Secretariat from 3 members to 10, and would comprise WFTU, TUC (Ghana), SACTU (South Africa), UGTA (Algeria), UTUC (Northern Rhodesia), CNTG (Guinea), SOHYO (Japan), CNTI (Brazil), Australia and FNBG (German Democratic Republic).

It also unanimously adopted the documents: Appeal to the workers of the whole world, Message of greetings and solidarity to the workers and people of South Africa, Memorandum to the Organization of African Unity, Memorandum to the General Secretary of the United Nations Organization, Memorandum to the International Labour Organisation, Telegram to Mr. Verwoerd, Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa.

One after the other, the representatives described in their speeches the notable activities that were being organized in each country in solidarity with the workers of South Africa. They talked about the mass meetings and protests, brave actions by dock workers who refused to unload ships carrying South African goods, activities such as those of the workers of Suez and Port Said who refused to load fuel and supplies the South African ship "President Pretorius", protests to governments and the United Nations, collections of sums for material help, and many others.

In his speech, **Mark Shope**, General Secretary of SACTU, made a most interesting and detailed report on the political and economic situation in South Africa. He said:

"It must never be forgotten that apartheid and racial segregation in South Africa, like everywhere else, has an aim far more important than discrimination itself: the aim of economic exploitation. The root and fruit of apartheid and racial discrimination is profit."

He went on to show the extent of all imperialist investment in South Africa, especially that of the US and of British capital. He showed that the African people were fighting imperialist exploitation and stressed the role of the militant working class organised in SACTU."

The Appeal to the Workers of the Whole World spoke of the beastly policy of the government of Verwoerd, stressing that it had turned South Africa into one "vast prison and army camp". However, it could not have achieved so much if it had not had the support of those who profit from apartheid. This Appeal pointed out at one point: "How then has the government of South Africa been able to resist all these pressures till now? It is because the struggle in South Africa is not just the struggle between three million representatives of white supremacy and the eleven million citizens of South Africa. It is a struggle



Moses Mabhida, Vice-President of S.A.C.T.U., indicts the policy of apartheid and the crimes of the South African Nationalist Government, at the first meeting of the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Africa (Acra, July 1961). Beside him are Brothers S. Dawson, Assistant General Secretary of the Ghana T.U.C. and Ibrahim Zakaria, Secretary of the W.F.T.U.

against the collective strength of world imperialism and its institutions – the Banks, Insurance Companies, Armaments Industries and Stock Exchange which all have huge investments in South Africa”, and he continued: “The ruling circles of the imperialist powers, especially those of Great Britain, the United States of America, France and Western Germany fear to lose the enormous profits they get from their huge investments should apartheid, which as one of the aspects of imperialism means cheap labour, be ended. They fear that once South Africa is free and democratic, their whole position in South and Central Africa will be shaken”.

Appealing to the workers of Britain, the USA, France and West Germany to do whatever possible to stop their governments from having any dealings with the government of South Africa, the Conference ended by stressing the need: *“to declare to step up the working-class struggle against the apartheid regime of South Africa, to condemn the policy of apartheid of the Government of South Africa, to work for the complete isolation of the Government in South Africa from the rest of the world, to support politically and materially the struggle of*

the South African workers. The 7th of February which is the international day of solidarity with the workers and people of South Africa should be commemorated as a special day of struggle. We must do everything in our power according to the conditions under which we live to lessen the days of suffering of the oppressed people of South Africa. Every day and every hour, we must refuse to handle ships and aircraft which have dealings with South Africa”.

In memoranda addressed to the United Nations and the ILO, the Conference demanded the expulsion of the government of South Africa from membership of the International Body, and also asked the International Bureau of Labour to investigate all infringements against trade union rights and to implement every form of pressure against them, and to denounce the moral and material support which other governments were giving to the South African government. It also appealed for the implementation of the UN resolution on stopping all supplies of weapons, equipment and materials for the factories of South Africa. In another memorandum, the Conference congratulated the meeting of the Heads of Independent African States.

Later, with the establishment of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia in 1973, with a contribution from WFTU and its member organisations, SACTU and NUNW, WFTU developed close fraternal relations with the new Pan-African Organisation and carried out a joint action against apartheid. The days and weeks of action continued to exert pressure for *“obligatory economic, political, cultural, sporting, commercial and diplomatic sanctions against the South African Government, and a halt to public and private investments by withdrawing credit guarantees and licenses”*¹⁶.

In addition, it is worth mentioning the International Trade Union Conference of Solidarity with the Workers and Peoples of Southern Africa that was co-organised by WFTU, OATUU and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in Harare, Zimbabwe in May, 1984.

With the participation of representatives from a dozen countries from various parts of the world, the meeting decided to adopt the Harare Declaration, which among other things, called on the United Nations and member governments to: reinforce the arms embargo by making it mandatory, to extend the embargo beyond arms to the raw materials and technology used in the production of nuclear energy, and to oil and petroleum products. It asked the international community to: sever political, cultural, sports, commercial and diplomatic relations with South Africa; to pass legislation ending all investment in South Africa; withdraw pension funds and other forms of public investments from banks and companies collaborating with South Africa; halt the transfer of patent rights and new technology to South Africa; and halt all scientific and technological co-operation with South Africa. The Declaration also called on workers and trade unions everywhere to reinforce their solidarity with the workers and people of southern Africa, and to further develop the co-ordination of trade union action against apartheid.

In addition, WFTU developed other forms of joint initiatives that dealt with more general issues such as joint seminars with OATUU on “Protectionism in International Trade and its Consequences for the Economies of the African Nations”. A great part of the discussion was dedicated to the negative impact of the apartheid regime on economic development, and the establishment of

economic and social justice. A very significant initiative of WFTU, co-organised with OATUU, on 8-10 December, 1987 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was the International Meeting on the debt of the African nations. The meeting was attended by representatives of African trade unions from 40 countries and also by participants invited from international regional bodies. WFTU made its position clear at the Meeting, stressing that the debt did not belong to the African peoples and that it should be erased. WFTU is still undertaking similar initiatives today.

Chapter VI

ITUC and reformist trade unions: A love story

The renaming of ICFTU into ITUC on 2006 is not freeing it from the burden of its dirty history. This history is carved with the role it played in the division of the South African labour movement, the support it offered to the white racial trade unions such as TUCSA, the plots it organized to weaken SACTU and the militant unions and the role its ruling forces played in South Africa and the African Continent. This ruling forces are still and will always remain in the leadership and the control of ICFTU. Those are the American AFL-CIO, the British TUC and the Israeli Histadrut

It is common knowledge, that the English and American monopolies had huge transactions with the apartheid state. An important amount of their profit was coming from the exploitation of the south African workers. At the same time, the competition for the bigger share of the profits defined the policy their governments and their trade union leadership which had obvious or secret relations with the state.

It is characteristic that according to facts of 1978, the number of british monopolies investing in South Africa was 699, American 539, West German 135, French 116, Australian 100, from Netherlands 92, Swedish 64, Swiss 18, 10 from Denmark, 2 from New Zealand and Japan.

Another factor that defined the policy of USA and Britain in the international relations of their trade union federations was the stated policy of their countries at the period of the "Cold War" against the socialist countries with the self-proclaimed war against the "expansion of communism".

At a brochure of the U.S.A Department of Labour, published on February 1960 entitled «*The role of U.S Department of Labour in Foreign Affairs*» the following is stated: «*Within the framework, the Labour Department has placed emphasis on the labor aspects of the Foreign Service's responsibilities. In 1960 there were some 50 labor attaches stationed throughout the world and in Washington. More than 100 additional Foreign Service Officers supplemented the work of the labor attaches by servicing as part-time labour officers at posts where labour attaches are not assigned*»

The American AFL (American Federation of Labor) founds as a rampart for its international relations, the "Free Trade Union Committee" under the direction of Matthew Woll and Jay Lovestone, while Irving Brown, former ICFTU Director at its UN Office from 1962 to 1964, is put in charge of the "African-American Labour Center" which is founded especially for AFL's intervention in Africa.

According to New York Times (February 21, 1967) "*reports of close relations between Lovestone, Mr. (Irving) Brown and CIA go back to 1952*". The same is confirmed by dozen other sources. The same is reflected in articles of the Washington Post (February 23, 1958) while the New York Post (February 24, 1958) mentions that Jay Lovestone received orders from Cold Meyer of CIA and that Irving Brown of the African American Labour Center spends CIA money in Africa. The sum that CIA is estimated to spend per year in trade union organizations in Africa reaches the 100 million dollars.

The objective of the AFL -as George Meany, the AFL Secretary-Treasurer and a protagonist in the efforts to dissolve WFTU in 1945, says- is to "aid free trade unionists" around the world the only requirement that they "fight against communism"¹⁷. What this phrase actually meant was proved by historical facts later on with their collaboration with Cuban traitors' and supporters of Batista, with the dirty role of AFL and CIA in the movement of Chile, generally in Latin America and elsewhere.

The competition of the British TUC with the American AFL on who will prevail in Africa for the sake of the interests of their countries is revealed in the Annex of a British Cabinet Paper which was released in public by the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria in 1960 and republished by the newspaper of the soviet trade unions "Trud" (January 14, 1961).

"The Congress (it refers to the 6th Congress of ICFTU in Brussels on 1959)

was marked with a serious conflict between our trade union delegation and the American representatives over the future of the trade union movement in Africa.”

(...)

“The gradual abdication of direct British or other European rule in Africa in favor of measures to establish direct independence, makes it all the more necessary to maintain our African connections by the development of non-political means. In these conditions the role of the trade unionism and, therefore, the role of ICFTU, have acquired a new and vital importance for us.

This has been partially foreseen as regards Africa when the ICFTU was founded. Recent developments there have greatly increased the importance of the unions as alternative instruments of Western influence and especially as a brake of unchecked political and national movements.

Since it is difficult to accuse unions of serving colonial ends; with their aid it should be possible to establish harmonious relations with the new social and political institutions of Africa now being created and with the administration of industrial and agricultural interests which we hope to maintain after any political changes. Trade union help will be needed to check irresponsible nationalization and to maintain control of the key sectors of the economy in the newly created African states.

During the negotiations which preceded the Congress of State Department and the American trade unions made no real secret of the fact that participation of the American trade unions in the ICFTU would be used to further the development political and economic interests of the USA in Africa.

Reports and information on the recent secret conference of American ambassadors and senior officials in Lorenzo Marques (Mozambique) showed that general American policy toward Africa is based on decisions with a secret policy report written by Mr. Richard Nixon after a visit to Africa in 1957. The more recent document prepared by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee also confirms this. The aim seems to be to take advantage of the difficult situation in which the United Kingdom and other European power find themselves and replace their interests and influence by direct U.S. penetration in Africa using the machinery of the ICFTU and American contacts that have been built up with African leaders for this purpose.”

And the document continues: “The Americans are not interested in the creation in Africa of genuine trade unions as we know them. America has no labor party. Her trade union movement has been built up from above by highly paid trade union bosses and not from below as in Great Britain and in Europe. Her trade union leaders are isolated from the rank and file and have little or no experience of trade union work as we know it. Indeed so far as they do have an understanding of our form of trade union work they condemn it as ‘socialistic’. As a result the American trade union leaders such as Meany, Reuther and Dubinsky can afford directly and openly to execute governmental and particularly CIA policy. The American trade union leaders have therefore always sought to build up the trade union movement in Africa on the basis of privileged leaders. Their chief weapon, following American practice is the bribery of anti-communist and anti-colonial elements in the trade union and nationalist movement. In agreement with the State Department and the CIA

the Americans have provided secret undercover support for such leaders as Tom Mboya, the general secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labor and the chairman of the ICFTU Area Committee for East, Central and Southern Africa."

One of his many activities in Africa was to take action for the split of the All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) and to form the African Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) which was supported by ICFTU.

With or without the intervention of their governments and their secret services, the ICFTU, the AFL and the British TUC (each one for its own interests) played a dirty role in many African countries and in North Africa in particular.

They supported TUCSA, an organization which believe in racial discrimination and in the division of the working class; Which was an organ of the governments of apartheid; which never rallied against the arrests, the attacks, the murders of trade unionists and strikes; which never struggled against any antilabor or racial legislation; which demanded the dismissal of those who participated in an "illegal" strike; which argued against the recognition of the non registered trade unions; which campaigned against the boycott and the sanctions of the South Africa State; which cultivated the class collaboration and acceptance of the black workers' fate to be the most exploited and hard working part of South Africa by supporting the capitalist exploitation everyway possible.

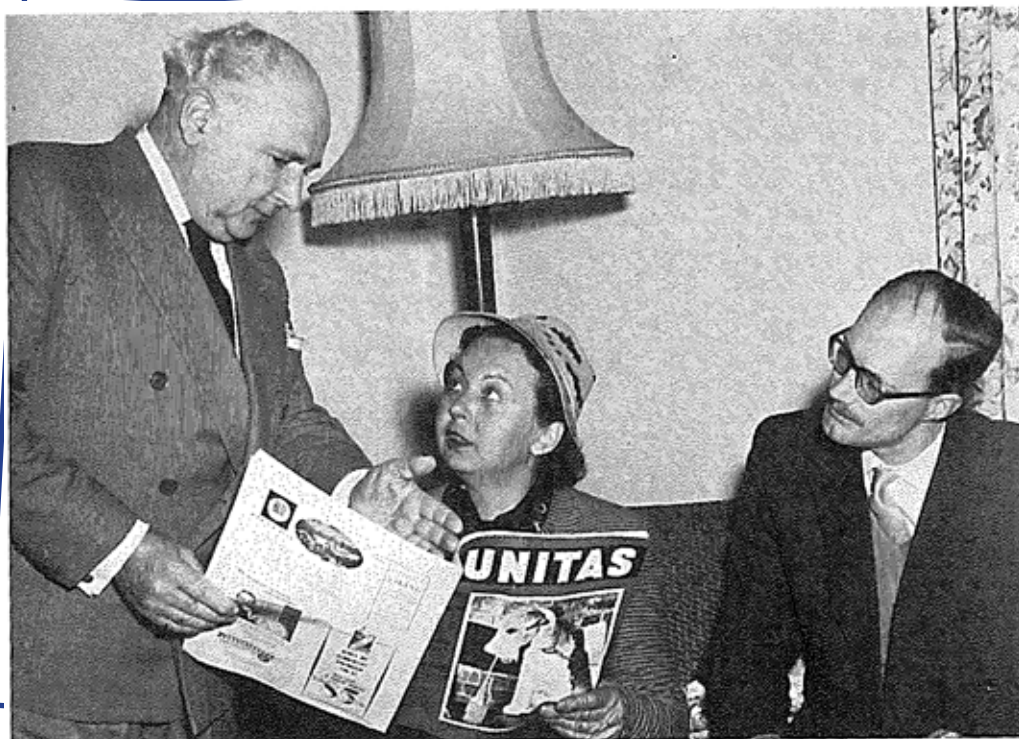
ICFTU fully supported TUCSA

Even if TUCSA never seemed to be an official member of ICFTU, since the latter's image would be damaged by that, however, the affiliated trade unions of TUCSA were affiliated to the International Trade Secretariats (ITS), the sectoral organizations of ICFTU.

The ICFTU participated in TUCSA's Conferences, usually represented by W.G Lawrence (of the British TUC), who was based in Rhodesia and transferred the warm support of ICFTU to TUCSA as we read in the following extract of the ICFTU's Asian publications¹⁸: *"The ICFTU was represented at the Conference by W. Lawrence who read a message of fraternal greetings and conveyed ICFTU's full support to TUCSA's struggles"*. This is also confirmed by its Report of the 9th Congress held in Brussels in 1969: *"During the period under review the ICFTU has been regularly invited to TUCSA's annual conferences and our representative in Rhodesia, WG Lawrence, has attended as an observer."*

Following the increasing influence of SACTU, the need arose for the black unions to come under the control of ICFTU as well, since their foundation could not be prevented. To solve this problem but still under the racial discrimination, ICFTU in collaboration with TUCSA founded FOFATUSA, a federation which consisted of black trade unions only and became immediately official member of ICFTU.

Moses Mabhidha, comments on this development in the book published by



ICFTU delegation to South Africa, Tom O'Brian and Mr. Pieter de Jonge, inspecting a copy of TUCSA's Journal *Unitas* together with Dulcie Hartwell, General Secretary of TUCSA, 1957

WFTU in 1962 and he says: "Recently, the South African, Trade Union Council (TUCSA) which hitherto has had white members only, has decided to accept African workers as members, with important limitations, but this appears to be purely a manoeuvre on the part of this affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to try and weaken the strength and influence of SACTU which has always been a multi-racial trade union centre.

The Federation of Free African Trade Unions, for African workers only, was also created by the South African Trade Union Council in cooperation with the ICFTU. This division amongst the African workers has dealt a heavy blow to the trade union movement and weakened the unity of the workers in the face of the onslaught of the employers and the government."

The FOFATUSA, however, does not manage to convince the black workers and serve its task, so in 1966 it dissolves and its affiliated trade unions step under the control of the white leadership of TUCSA, which under the pressure of the international reaction to its racial policy faced mainly in the ILO, it accepts, temporarily, to accept black unions as its members. A while later it dismissed them again in order to reaccept them down the road once more.

The British TUC supported TUCSA

All the missions of ICFTU in South Africa were hosted by TUCSA and the same was the case for the missions of the British TUC. Those missions were supposed to be an expression of solidarity to the struggle against apartheid as these organizations officially claimed but their story is expressed in the following extract of an issue of the African Communist which was printed close to the events:

"The delegation of the British TUC which visited South Africa in October 1973 was a mixed one. Jack Jones, leader of Britain's largest union (T&GWU) has the reputation of being a left-winger. Danny McGarvey of the Boilermakers' Union is a maverick, left in posture, not in practice. His union has long maintained links with its reactionary whites-only counterpart in South Africa. Cyric Plant, a little-known but influential figure in TUC circles, is what the bourgeois press loves to call a moderate, in contrast to the 'irresponsible' militants. Vic Feather, recently rewarded for his service to British capitalism with a peerage is unmistakably a right-winger. Secretary to the delegation, boss of the TUC's international department and author of the report of the delegation, was a Cold War warrior, ex-Foreign Office man Harhgreaves.

A delegation so composed was bound, if not to split (which it nearly did) at least to produce a report essentially reactionary in its main elements. In South Africa, the five men spent most of their time in the company of three groups which have combined repeatedly (what-ever their differences on other scores) to obstruct and prevent the growth of free, independent non-racial or black trade unions: government, employers and the white trade unions. They side-stepped the burning issue of African workers' wages (their original pretext of their visit), wine and dined with their TUCSA hosts, praised the mine compound system and other features of the African workers' wretched life which British workers would not tolerate for a day, and conspicuously avoided meeting any of the jailed SACTU trade unionists or the still-fighting SACTU trade unions."

In fact the TUC delegation did not hesitate to praise the apartheid government for its progress in the organization of black workers: *"Worst of all they went through the motions of reaching an agreement with the Vorster about the progress towards the organisation of African workers which, in the face of the Nationalist Government's well-known hostility to African trade unions, could only have a public relations exercise intended to confuse the outside world."*¹⁹

The abovementioned mission actually took place soon after the first International Trade Union Conference against apartheid which was organised in Geneva, on June 15-16 1973 with the participation of all international organisations whose resolution called for boycott and sanctions against South Africa. This is how little the participation of ICFTU and TUC in those international meetings actually meant.



The British Trade Union Congress delegation to South Africa on their arrival at the "Jan Smuts" airport, October 1973. From the left: Lief van Tonder, Vice-President of TUCSA, Cyric Plant, British Workers' Delegate to the ILO, Steve Shecpers, President of TUCSA, Arthurr Grobbelaar, General Secretary of TUCSA, Vic Feather, General Secretary of the TUC, Tom Murray, Vice-President of TUCSA, Jack Jones, President of the British Transport and General Workers Union and Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the TUC and Alan Hargreaves, Head of the TUC's International Affairs Department.

The dirty history of AFL-CIO

Similar were the relations of AFL-CIO with TUCSA which was invited in the Congresses of the American Federation usually represented by Lucy Mvubelo of the Garment Workers Union of African Women—later the National Union of Clothing Workers (NUCW), a black in colour trade unionist which played the role of the imperialists. For example, in the first International Trade Union Conference against apartheid that is mentioned in the previous paragraph her speech towards the representatives of the world trade union movement reflects her identification with the apartheid regime: *"Don't isolate us, don't break off contact and don't advocate disengagement and withdrawal of foreign investments" (...)* *"I appeal to our trade union colleagues not to make the task of the people of South Africa more difficult by asking for withdrawal of these companies from South Africa, or for boycotting South African goods"*.

The AFL-CIO founds the African-American Labour Center in 1964. George Meany serves as President of the AALC and Chairman of its Board of Directors and Irving Brown as its Executive Director. The proclaimed objectives of the AALC were: *"To strengthen African trade unions. To provide direct assistance*

to African trade unions in union development and leadership training, workers' education, vocational training, co-operatives and credit unions, labour economics, communication, and other areas related to the welfare of the workers and to promote solidarity between African Unions and American workers"²⁰.

All these "noble" objectives would be funded by the government of USA and the CIA. In 1967, the resources of the AALC came from AFL-CIO and individual unions (425,000 dollars), from the U.S Agency for International Development Aid, a well-known cover-agency of CIA (1,769,539 dollars) and by private contributors (57,000 dollars)²¹. A sum of 2,251,539 dollars was what the AALC could use to influence and to buy-off the African trade union movement and to educate the African workers with the feasibility that the skilled worker is more useful to the American monopolies than the unskilled one: *"With such backing, the AALC's role is predictable" says in the African Communist at that times: "Though CIA/AFL-CIO collaboration may not always reach such extremes as in Chile, its trade union philosophy is invariably reactionary. Blatantly or subtly, they teach that workers should not work towards changing the structure left by colonialism. They should welcome American investors and should not mind when U.S multi-nationals stake out their territories economically, as the older colonial power did in the 'scramble for Africa'. For example, they make sure that workers should be trained because investment from abroad will be made 'if skilled African workers are available'" ²².*

Beyond the support offered by AFL towards TUCSA, the AALC funded other "independent" trade unions. They actually invested on the division of the South African labour movement. Main concern of the AFL as it states after the great strikes of 1973 was that there need to found trade unions that will direct the frustration of the workers in less dangerous -for the policy of apartheid and the monopolies- roads: *"Unless responsible black leadership is encouraged the next series of strikes could be disastrous. If the government does not permit blacks to form and run responsible trade unions, industrial chaos and the resulting explosion may in the end destroy the very fabric of South African Society"*²³.

Extracts from a Report of the AALC of March 1, 1987 for the evaluation of its activity in the year 1986 can be found below. In total, the AALC founded that year 32 trade unions, 21 of which received steady support. Some of them were independent and a few of them were members of the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) which was then affiliated to ICFTU and had refused to participate in the foundation of COSATU. Instead it founded in 1986 together with the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) the current National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) which also became affiliated to ICFTU and now to ITUC.

We read from the AALC's report:

- *"AMAWU (African Miners and Allied Workers Union) was formed in 1984, not to challenge the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) but rather to attract workers in geographical and industrial areas neglected by NUM. AALC assistance went to helping the union's organizing efforts." (...) "NUM must recognize that it is not the only game in town".*

- *"The AALC representative was requested to attend a meeting in*

Durban in late 1985 held by the Natal branch of BSATS (Black South African Transport Services Workers Union). Members felt that they were not getting the representation they should by their union nor were they involved as they felt they should be in the-mainstream of the black labor movement. The Natal branch, being the largest, felt it could take over the union with support from some of the other branches if the constitution was followed and enforced. Assistance was requested with a training program to adequately inform members of their constitutional rights, legal rights, and labor legislation of the country."

- "ARHAWU (African Railway, Harbour and Allied Workers Union) was formed in May 1985 to respond to the needs of black workers employed by the South African Transport Services (SATS), in particular the 63,000 black workers in the railway industry. ARHWU's base is in Johannesburg, and the AALC's assistance was directed at administrative support and organizing. The local AALC representative worked with the union's organizing department in training, developing an organizing strategy, and designing an overall plan of execution." (...) "AALC assistance helped this union to

grow and maintain itself." (...) "Unexpected competition came from the relatively dormant South African Railway, Harbour and Allied Workers Union, an affiliate of the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU)".

- "Initial assistance in 1984 focused on organizing, transportation and administrative support. In 1985-1986, it focused on creating a stronger education department within FBWUSA (Food Beverage Workers Union of South Africa (CUSA/AZACTU)) and an educational facility to enhance the training of union



George Meany, President of AFL-CIO greeting TUCSA's General Secretary Arthur Grobbelaar, at the AFL-CIO Annual Convention in Miami Beach, October 1973

members and local union leaders. Although it has effectively increased its membership and staff, educational programs, recognition agreements, and contracts, FBWUSA still faces very strong competition from the newly formed Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU)."

- "UMMAWSA (United Mining Metal and Allied Workers of South Africa) was formed in 1984 as a spin-off union of the then FOSATU affiliate, Metal and Allied Workers Union. The MAWU members who started UMMAWSA took 13,000 members with them and brought their membership figures up to 17,000 within one year. It was in 1985 that UMMAWSA approached the AALC for assistance, which provided for administrative services and organizing activities." (...) "The AALC assistance has successfully helped to hold this union together and allow it to expand in the face of adversity."

Is ITUC any different?

By changing its name from ICFTU to ITUC in 2006 is ITUC today a different organization? Yes, it is different. It is more capable to present itself as a representative of the workers, to adopt worker-friendly phrases, to project a modern, shiny image of an international trade union organization.. however, when things get serious and they have to deal with real problems of the workers and real class struggles, the rottenness emerges again.

The ITUC held its Second Congress in Vancouver, Canada, on June 21-25, 2010 where the official opening of the Congress was made by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Strauss-Kahn, murderer of labor rights in Argentina, Ireland, Hungary, Romania, Greece and elsewhere, together with the ex-Greek prime minister the socialist George Papandreou, born, raised and educated in the U.S., who has destroyed the rights of Greek workers and enslaved their country for the next 50 years.

At this Congress, COSATU moved a motion in solidarity with the Palestinian people (which WFTU had already formed into action calling in June 2010 in 3-days boycott of Israeli vessels). The motion of COSATU was calling for boycotts and sanctions against the imperialist regime of Israel, which applies a new apartheid against the militant people of Palestine.

The proposition of COSATU was not accepted while at the same Congress the Chairman of the Israeli Histadrut, Ofer Eini, was reelected in the leadership of ITUC as its Vice-President and returned to his country to praise with an announcement published in Histadrut's website: « *The Chairman of the Histadrut returned from the second ITUC Congress in Vancouver after successfully torpedoing a proposed motion of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) calling for a boycott of Israel. Eini was also re-elected vice-president of the Confederation and to the Steering and Executive Committee. A resolution adopting a boycott would severely damage the Israeli economy* ».

ITUC cannot claim to represent the workers and have as its affiliate and in fact in its leadership Histadrut, which beyond the role it plays nowadays supporting the state of Israel against Palestine, it also had played a major role itself as an organization during the apartheid regime in South Africa by holding

relations with the state, supplying it even we weapons through its companies²⁴.
(Bank Hapoalim, Iskoor, Koor, Afitra etc).

Chapter VII

Recent years

The WFTU hailed the founding of COSATU and hailed the support the affiliate of WFTU, SACTU, provided to COSATU which represented its most class-oriented part. Discussions for common action of WFTU and COSATU have been recorded since 1987, whereas WFTU supported SACTU's/COSATU's delegations financially facilitating them to travel to a series of European and American countries for bilateral contacts in 1989.

When COSATU together with the ANC and other forces called in 1992 for a week of Action for Peace, Democracy and Economic Reconstruction, the WFTU enhanced this call by appealing to its forces to express their internationalist solidarity in the struggle against the apartheid which was about to end after decades of bloody struggle in 1994.

The international class-oriented movement, however, received a great blow after the overthrows of the socialist countries and the disappointment that was cultivated in the labor masses when this beacon of labour achievements was extinguished and the history of labour conquests was buried under a pile of mistakes, the right-wing variation and mostly tones of lies and smearing.

The reformism and opportunism stepped on the disappointment and the smearing to prevail and destroy historical militant organizations.

Many hurried to state that the overthrows in the Soviet Union and the other countries would be in favor of peace, international friendship and that after the Cold War there would be an improvement of the living standards of the people. All these were soon proven to be major lies. The aggressiveness of imperialism intensified. Over the last 20 years it created more than 30 regional wars. It killed, raped and tortured the people and their countries and it continues to do so. The labor conquests have been left far behind. The salaries, the living standards returned back in the levels of the last century. The 8-hours of work and the social security were attacked.

Other opportunists, started to slander socialism, to try to hide its great achievements, to use the weaknesses and the mistakes that occurred in order to convince the working people that capitalism is superior to socialism. This was the period when opportunistic forces in the trade union movement raised the issue that the WFTU should be dissolved and that all the trade union should join the ICFTU.

Two were the main arguments of the opportunists. Firstly that we are at the "end of ideologies" and secondly, that "ICFTU will become class-oriented and will change strategic". Within such a framework of confusion and liquidity, there were many who changed their believes in one night, communist parties that changed their names, trade unions that erased from their constitutions any reference to class-orientation and socialism. The period from 1991 to 2000 was very difficult.

The Central Offices of WFTU in Prague, in 1993, were intruded by the police. In the capitalist Czechoslovakia, anti-communism bloomed. With anti-democratic court orders they chased away WFTU from its offices, took away its archives, froze its bank accounts and chased its cadres. It was a hostile environment of hatred and prosecutions created by the government of the neo-capitalists.

In such kind of difficult and complex conditions, the 13th World Trade Union Congress took place in Damascus, Syria. It was crucial Congress with many controversies. The trade union forces of the euro-communism, mainly from the CGT France, the CGIL Italy and Spanish trade unionists argued that the WFTU should be dissolved and they used pressure, threats and blackmails to that direction.

This is when trade union organizations and trade unionists stood on their feet, consistent and raised the red, from the blood of the international working class, flag of the class struggle. The confrontation at the 13th Congress of Damascus was at ideological, organizational and trade unionist level.

The class-oriented trade unionists defended the achievements of the socialist countries in all fields. They were the first to go into space, the first who gave women the right to vote, the first to implement the 8-hours of work, the first to provide free education, health system and housing, social security. They supported financially, morally and politically the national liberational movements and all the people, they liberated countries.

The class-oriented trade unionists stated that the ideologies have not come to an end. That the society is class divided, that there are two basic opponent classes, the bourgeois class and the working class and the class struggle continues. They claimed that the future of the humanity is not capitalism but

socialism which might have failed in its first attempt but without the weaknesses and the mistakes of that first effort it still is the hope of the humanity.

Trade unions and trade unionists from India, Cuba, Syria, Vietnam, Libya, Sudan, Cyprus, Brazil, Mauritania, Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Chile, Greece, Bangladesh and many more confronted and repelled the dissolving theories and this is how WFTU remained alive, although wounded; alive and with a stable and militant line.

The 14th Congress in New Delhi of India, solved issues that were important for the WFTU and strengthened its internationalist, anti-imperialist and democratic character. It continued consistently to support the Palestinian struggle, the socialist Cuba, the heroic people of Vietnam and Venezuela and to built strong militant sectoral organizations in all basic sectors of the economy and simultaneously to strengthen the Regional Offices.

Since the 15th World Trade Union Congress hosted in Havana, Cuba in November 1-4, 2005 a new upward course of WFTU has started. The Central Offices have been relocated to Athens, Greece; 90 new trade union organizations have affiliated to WFTU; And the 16th World Trade Congress which took place in Athens, Greece on April 6-10, 2011 with 828 delegates from 101 countries, sealed this 5-year old upward course of WFTU, which now represents more than 80 million workers in 120 countries. At its 16th open, democratic, militant and class-oriented Congress, the WFTU cemented its solid foundation with a document which reflects the strategy of the international class-





oriented trade union movement in the current conditions of the international capitalist crisis and appealed to the trade unions all over the world to join forces in the struggle against imperialism and the capitalist barbarity for the contemporary needs of the working people.

Step by step, the WFTU and the class-oriented trade unions of South Africa find in each other again, the fraternal, equal relations with common class characteristics which they had built with years of heroic struggles.

The NEHAWU belongs to the militant family of the WFTU since 1992 and comrade Lulamile Sotaka is elected President of the Trade Union International of Public Services, the sectoral organization of WFTU, which organized its 10th Congress in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In September, 25-29, 2009, the General Secretary of WFTU invited by COSATU addresses its 10th National Congress with the following words:

"Dear friends, We believe that we have a serious role and the responsibility to inspire and to direct workers to come together and strengthen the labour movement. We must insist that meeting the interests and needs of workers is directly linked to decisive action against the forces of capital and their political and trade union supporters.

The W.F.T.U. has already prepared a plan so that workers and people are not loaded with the consequences of the crisis. We believe that our proposals are based on realism and they can be implemented. Among others, we believe it is necessary:

- To stop the weapon programs and to drastically reduce military

costs. To stop the occupation and wars of imperialist forces.

- To cancel the debts of third world countries.
- To make public investments and create jobs with full labor rights.
- Direct strengthening to workers, to give real increases in wages and pensions in order to strengthen their purchasing power. Also to increase social spending for workers, to strengthen social security, public health and education and to reduce working time without reduction of labor rights. Instead of reduced, labour rights should be enlarged.

- To prohibit dismissals and to give real aid to all unemployed workers without exception.

- To stop the privatization of strategic sectors.

- Full respect for labor rights for immigrants, young workers and working women."

Bilateral relations for common action were held with NUMSA and CEPPWAWU in the Central Offices of WFTU in Athens, Greece in January 2010 and in June 2010 respectively. NUMSA becomes affiliated to WFTU in 2010 while CEPPWAWU and POPCRU are under the process of affiliation.

The WFTU participates in the 9th Congress of NEHAWU on September 27-29, 2010, as it did in the 8th on 2007. During the Congress an international meeting was organized for the foreign delegations was organized. At the Congress the General Secretary of WFTU, George Mavrikos said in his speech:

"This is capitalism. Unemployment and poverty. Barbarity and exploitation. But can this social system give solutions in favor of people? No. Can capitalism acquire a more human face? No. Can this exploitation system become the future for us and for our children? No. It can't be. It is impossible. The future of humanity, the future of the working class is socialism. Only socialism. The big struggles of class oriented trade unions, the big strikes in Europe, in Greece, in France, in Portugal, in Turkey, in Asia, in India, in Pakistan, in Bangladesh, prove that the working class has its own proposals. It has its aims."

The WFTU participated in the 4th National Congress of CEPPWAWU on 31st August - 4th September in South Africa represented by cde. Swadesh Dev Roye, member of the WFTU Secretariat and President of TUI Energy. On behalf of the WFTU, cde Devroy extended a warm fraternal greeting to the CEPPWAWU Congress. Within the framework of the Congress, the WFTU held a seminar on Health and Safety.

At the same time, the WFTU stands on the side of the south African working class which is organized in its progressive trade unions. On July 4th, 2011 the WFTU addresses a message to the leadership of NUMSA saying: *"Dear comrades, The World Federation of Trade Unions-WFTU follows your struggle for living wages and improved conditions of employment for metalworkers and wishes success to your fights for the benefit of the workers and the people of South Africa. In the rolling industrial action and meetings held on Monday 4th July, 2011 we wish you great success. On behalf of our 80 million members all over the world we express our internationalist solidarity and we join our voice with your militant voices. Long live NUMSA! Long live class oriented trade union movement!"*

More recently following a mission to Swaziland and the discussion that



The General Secretary of the WFTU addressing the 10th National Congress of COSATU, 2009

took place with the trade union there, the WFTU organised an International Conference on September 2011, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France with the participation of many trade union organisations from Africa, Europe and Middle East. The subject and the purpose of this Conference was to reveal the inhuman monarchy of Swaziland and to express the solidarity to the struggle of the Swazi people, the workers and the trade unions which are under constant harassment. On the same Conference solidarity to the struggle of the Palestinian people and their just struggle against the imperialist policy of Israel and the support it is offered by USA, was expressed as well. At this International Conference with the participation of NUMSA and NEHAWU, comrade Cedric Gina, President of NUMSA held the introductory speech for the discussion on the issue of Swaziland.

In December 4th, 2012, NUMSA organized an international seminar on the occasion of the 17th Climate Change Conference, where the General Secretary of WFTU was invited. At this seminar comrade Cedric Gina, President of NUMSA stated: *"the WFTU has a long history with South Africa's own liberation movement. When SACTU, the forerunner of COSATU was banned with all people's organisations in 1960, the WFTU became a home away from home for the leadership of SACTU."*

Two years ago, NUMSA took a conscious decision to affiliate to WFTU. Our decision was questioned by many organisations, at home and in foreign lands. Our explanation which has not changed is that we believe that the call for

workers of the world to unite is a progressive call. We said that if our affiliation to WFTU will start a process of the total unity of all workers, we would have contributed in something very important for the working class as NUMSA."



George Mavrikos, WFTU Vice-President in the period of 2003 with Yasser Arafat, Palestinian leader, September 23rd, 2003

Chapter VIII

Ten basic conclusions

1. The working class struggle and the people's struggle always bring results. Either sooner or later they will always bring progress. It took decades of struggle for the liberational movement to achieve the demolition of this racist, brutal and exploitative regime of apartheid. It wasn't only a one day revolt but a slow, consistent and continuous battle with many sacrifices.

2. The role of WFTU was positive because WFTU was consistent and clear in being ideologically, organizationally, financially and morally on the side of the South African people and supported its aims in the struggle. The position of WFTU was a matter of principles. It makes it obvious that in difficult times one needs to have stability and optimism. WFTU always had a line of unity and it always tried to unite the workers, the poor farmers, the progressive intelligentsia, the aborigines according to their uniting class interests. It respected and will always respect the independence of the national member-organisations and its friends.

3. Nowadays it is even more obvious that the capitalist society is divided in classes. It is a class society and there are exploiters and exploited ones.

There are two basic lines in conflict at all levels. On the one side there is the side of the capital, the imperialists and on the other side is the line of the class struggle, the line of the working class and its allies.

4. The course of capitalist, with its cyclical crisis and its barbarity has proven that this social system cannot give solution in favor of the workers; it cannot bring a better future for the humanity. This can only be succeeded by a society without exploitation of man-by-man, a society without injustice, without imperialist wars. A socialist society.

5. The historic experience has shown that the role of the International Organisations and mainly the United Nations Organization is formed by the existing correlation of forces. Before 1991, the Soviet Union and the socialist countries put pressure in the UN and the ILO and the international organizations used to conclude to more positive resolutions. Today, the situation is different. The U.S.A and the NATO form the strategic of the UN. This is what happened in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Libya, in Somalia, in Yugoslavia, everywhere. While in the same time for the Palestinian issue, the 28 positive resolutions of the UN that do exist remain on papers, are just words.

6. The basic tasks of the trade union movement is to cultivate, to obtain and to strengthen its principles, its values, the moral and militant culture of the working class; To educate the young militants against opportunism, corruption, bureaucracy, careerism, elitism and with stability, patience, integrity, honesty. The great militants of the class movement in South Africa taught us with their example how the popular militants should stand against the class opponent and against the capitalists.

7. It is a duty of us all to reveal the dirty role of the sold-out trade unions and trade unionists who seed the corruption in the trade union movement of Africa, the Asia, the Latin America and Europe. To reveal the "trade unionists"-organs of the governments for example in Sweden, in Denmark, in Netherlands, in Finland etc. who although there has been no serious strike over the last fifty years, they travel in Africa and all over the world buying off trade unions and trade unionists in order to reduce their militancy and the resistance of the movements in the Third World countries and to trap them in the lines of the ITUC.

8. From the outcome, we see that ICFTU/ITUC did not change. Today it still follows a capitalist-friendly strategic, it is an ally of the IMF (International Monetary Fund), of the World Bank and the monopolies. It is a stable supporter of Israel and the external policy of the USA and the NATO in Iraq, in Libya, in Lebanon. It intervenes in the internal issues of the trade union organizations.

9. The reality has proven that the most trade union organizations that joined the ICFTU/ITUC gradually lost their militant characteristics and were trapped, digested and compelled into compromises and lost their dynamic. They become inside the ITUC observers, not protagonists, second and third class spectators, in decorative positions.

10. The stand that trade unions take towards WFTU and the ITUC is a criterion. The class-oriented trade unions ought to be with the WFTU. It is not correct for them to watch as observers, to pretend to be independent, to stand in-between the two lines as neutral, as referees. This tactic gradually creates problems for the "independent" organizations themselves.

Annex

First-hand history

The WFTU Press Room team travelled to South Africa in January 2011 and interviewed militants and their families. This is how they experienced the history.



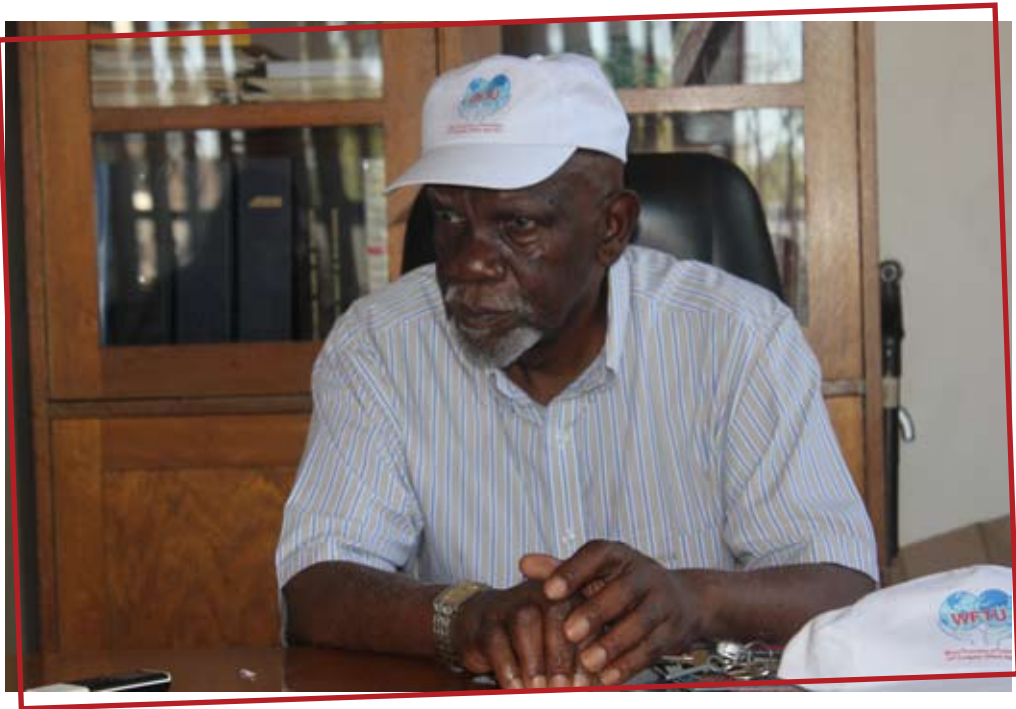
Tutukile Mabhida, Daughter of Moses Mabhida

Moses Mabhida was in exile most of his life. How did you experience life in the South Africa?

I am the secondborn of Mr Moses Mabhida who was in exile for many years up until his death. So I grew up in a poor family where my mother was sort of a widow since my father was away to exile. My mother worked as a domestic worker in Maritzburg, in the suburbs. She managed to take us to school. Our mother managed to get us some professions. Both of us are teachers, my sister and me, while my brother passed away in 1997. The years were difficult. We were harassed by the police all the time.

What were the values that the story of your father taught to you?

I can't say much about my father since he had left when I was very young. I learned that my father was a hero. He dedicated his life for the life of others and fought for the freedom of South Africa. Now South Africa is free because he was one of the people who contributed much in the struggle. But from what I have heard he was a very dedicated and loving father. I only met him in 1982 in Swaziland. I was very excited. I saw him coming in the company of others. I couldn't recognize him. Someone told me that he it was him. I burst into tears. We hugged. And we discussed all night long. I had to answer many questions about the years he missed. It was a very nice moment. On the next year all the family went in Swaziland again



to meet him.

How do you feel about the recognition that your father has today?

Today still I feel very great that so many people recognize his struggle. The stadium named after my father makes me very proud. I very happy that WFTU remembers and honors him after his death.

Eric Mtshali (Stalin), Militant

How did you got involved in the trade unions?

I started as a trade unionist, as a dockworker. At the time the dockworkers were the most militants, really militant workers. The regime feared the dockworkers.

What was the relation between SACTU and WFTU?

SACTU was affiliated to WFTU since its foundation until it was dissolved. And there were unions that affiliated to sectoral Trade Union Internationals' (TUI) of WFTU. Mabhida was the first representative of SACTU in WFTU

followed by Mark Shope.

Why was the creation of an international trade union organization back in 1945?

It was important for South African trade unions to support any progressive movement because we needed this support to overthrow the apartheid regime. Anyone willing to fight apartheid was our potential ally. So we needed the progressive trade union movement to support the struggle. And WFTU was going to be the one and indeed it became a strong supporter of the struggle in South Africa. Not only by making slogans, shouting slogans in conferences. But

“I recognize the role of the WFTU in the struggle in South Africa, because they did not make slogans only, but materially they supported us.”

also indeed WFTU supported South Africa. There were other international trade union movements which did not give support to the struggle of the South African workers. Like the ICFTU and the WCL.

How did WFTU support your struggle?

WFTU played a very important role in the liberation of South Africa. I recognize the role of the WFTU in the struggle in South Africa, because they did not make slogans only, but materially they supported us.

Sometimes when we go out in other countries campaigning against the apartheid regime they would go with us. Zakaria, (the Sudanese General Secretary of WFTU) was very active in the struggle. Not only Zakaria and others like the K.L Mahendra, (Indian President of WFTU) the General Secretary of the Transport Workers. When we were calling for boycott of South Africa, only WFTU supported that call. The ICFTU and other unions they didn't want to, but we understood why, because we were challenging their bosses in the Western countries. So it wasn't going to be easy for them to support a struggle that was calling for the removal of a regime that the western countries were benefiting from. Because -they can say anything they want to say-, the western countries needed the state of South Africa more than South Africa needed them. All

mineral resources that the West was using were found in this country and also there was cheap labor that was provided by our working class mainly. Not only mineral resources but also the market for the West was and still remains in South Africa. So was of the products produced in the West was sold in the South Africa and still this is the case today.

What were the main reasons for the foundation of a non-racial organization like SACTU?

The trade union movement in South

Africa was divided. The whites had their own federation and the workers were divided along color lines. So SACTU was going to be the non racial trade union federation to unite all these workers. But it was not easy to build that non racial trade union movement because the apartheid was legislated. It was not just a resolution in a conference. It was the legislation that there shall be now united, non-racial trade union organization.

WFTU supported us in the foundation of non racial trade unions. The South African trade unionists had to travel abroad to many countries calling for support and WFTU supported us in this. It was very difficult that time for trade unions because they were very poor in this country. So WFTU supported us financially. It wasn't a rich federation but they did their best. They help us. They were they only one who did that. No other international organization did that. Also there were national federations as the Soviet trade unions, the trade unions of GDR and the Cubans, even progressive unions in other countries that supported us.

Did WFTU's positions reflect the true interests of the South African workers?

The WFTU positions always championed the class positions. It was very serious about the class position and it was very important for us because we regarded our struggle as a national struggle in character but class in form. So it was important for us that anybody who would support us to understand this. Because those

who didn't accept that started making serious allegations that the struggle in South Africa was dominated by the Communist Party, which was not like that because those members of the Communist Party were and are South Africans and they were oppressed, as all of us, as a class.

What was the impact of the international solidarity in your struggle?

The struggle of the international movement was very stimulating. Because the workers in South Africa realized that they were not alone. That there were workers in other countries fighting with them. A characteristic example was that it was WFTU who championed the removal of South Africa from the ILO. It made us more militant because we never expected that South Africa would be expelled from the ILO.

You worked in the WFTU Central Offices in Prague yourself. What were your responsibilities?

During my stay there I was given missions to Ethiopia and Namibia, I think. I organized the first trade unions ever in Ethiopia, sent by WFTU. It wasn't long after Haile Selassie and the West did not allow any trade unions.

Was WFTU supportive of the unity of the trade unions in the African region?

Were there was struggle for liberation WFTU was there. It stood on the side of the oppressed. It is stood on the

side of the colonized all the time. It played a role in the formation of the AATUF and later in the OATUU. But one very good thing about WFTU is that it never took decisions for other. It never intervened. It supported with all its means. But it never intervened.

ICFTU claimed on one its announcement welcoming COSATU as an affiliate that it had supported the struggle against apartheid. Is this true?

ICFTU supported the white unions, because TUCSA was supported

“Independent unions to ICFTU were those unions who were anti-communist. They were very active in the formation of such unions. They have been very divisive.”

by the apartheid regime. ICFTU supported TUCSA financially. If they say that they never did, you must invite them, invite me also and let me have a meeting with them. I would love to be in a meeting with them and remind them of the things they did. They never supported the struggle against apartheid. There was this person, Kailembo (*Andrew Kailembo, was ICFTU-AFRO General Secretary of Tanzanian origin*) he used to say that they were not going to waste time and their resources supporting a “communist” union in the struggle to overthrow the regime.

They were also active in trying to split the unions and trying to create

what they called “independent” unions. Independent unions to them were those unions who were anti-communist. They were very active in the formation of such unions. They have been very divisive.

What was the role of the American Unions (AFL-CIO) in South Africa?

AFL-CIO was not so active in South Africa because I think it was not their good hunting ground. The unions of South Africa refused to accept anticommunist propaganda. I think the Communist Party and SACTU were too strong for them, so anybody who came to South Africa with an anticommunist card did not succeed.

They also managed to build “independent” unions. They were not very successful in forming those unions, because SACTU with the assistance of WFTU was very active. And the formation of independent unions did not appeal to workers in South Africa.

After all these struggles what is it that you want to leave as a heritage to the next generations?

Capitalist system still remains the enemy of the working class especially now that it is undergoing the international capitalist crisis. The struggle is still there.

A strong and united trade union

movement is what we need.

How do you see the decision of WFTU to recognize you and all the militant fighters of the trade union movement in South Africa?

It's important for WFTU to do that. To give the chance to young South African workers who don't know what is WFTU and what has been the role of WFTU in the struggle for liberation. It is really important. The youth doesn't know what is going on and the struggles that went through. They see everything as black and white and it is not so simple.

It is important for WFTU to educate the young workers which was the struggle raised by WFTU and which was the struggle raised by the working class movement against apartheid and against the capitalist system.

What they have heard is that the struggle started in 1976 on the year of the Soweto Uprising. They don't know that there was a youth before that which was involved in the struggles. That back in 1960 when the ANC and the SACP formed the military wing we were all young people that took the arms. So to speak only about 1976 as if the struggle started then, this is a distortion.

WFTU's initiative is important it will be eye-opening to the workers. Because the capitalist system is not getting weaker. It is getting more dangerous. So young

workers need to be well educated. Not just in university. They must be educated in the working class struggles. In South Africa and internationally.

**John Nkadimeng,
last General Secretary of
SACTU**

Why was the international solidarity necessary in your struggle?

We needed the support from the international movement to our struggle. When we were fighting against a law, for example, we couldn't do it without the support from the international movement. The trade unions were ignored. And even when we started the armed struggle, the trade unions with their friends from abroad supported as materially. For someone who was banned and couldn't work anymore and for others who weren't banned yet, the international solidarity was vital for them to continue the struggle.

What was the role of SACTU in the liberation movement?

SACTU was part of the liberation movement that was joined by all the

"The SACTU was the punching arm of the liberation movement because it organized the strikes. It paralyzed the capitalists."



progressive forces. ANC had accepted SACTU as an important factor of the struggle because it had contact with the workers, the people who worked in the holes of the mines. The SACTU was the punching arm of the liberation movement because it organized the strikes. It paralyzed the capitalists.

What were the main objectives of SACTU?

We campaigned against the colour bar. The workers were divided. We

“WFTU supported the foundation of SACTU full-force.”

did the same work, but we were divided because our skin-colour was different. The wages were different.

But you can't actually divide the workers. Everything that is produced comes from their hands. They do the same work they all go underground to bring cold and diamonds. They go home at the same time. When there is an accident in the mine, the rocks will drop on everyone, everybody will die. No matter which is his skin-colour.

What was the solidarity raised by the WFTU?

WFTU supported the foundation of SACTU full-force. There were a lot of meetings with WFTU. WFTU leadership would come here. WFTU was sending a number of things to us, important for our struggle. We were getting even food provided by WFTU. The Soviets and the

Indians supported us very much also. This solidarity was accepted very warmly. And in 1956 when 156 people who were fighting against the colour bar were arrested and went through the Treason Trial the solidarity was very important so that we could be released.

What was the role of the ICFTU and the American Unions in South Africa?

ICFTU was weak nobody followed them. They supported some small unions that had differences

with us. So did the American Unions. They supported any rubbish they could find. They couldn't succeed with the AALC (African-American Labour Center), this was an organ of CIA with which they tried to change our line. But they could only influence people in the corner. In the public, they couldn't speak.

Is history important to the struggle today?

Unless we agree about those things we cannot go anywhere. The capitalist exploiters they need the ignorance.

Gertrude Shope,
leader of the ANC Women's
League and wife of Mark
Shope

You and your husband were both militants. How was your life like during all these struggles?

Our life was very difficult. Most of the time we were apart. Except of the time we were in Prague, while Mark was working in the WFTU office. Most of the time we were in different countries working for the unions and at the same time our children were going to school in Cuba after Zambia. Myself, I was travelling for months or weeks to other countries.



But this is how life is when you are a militant. Once you are at the liberation struggle, your sole family doesn't matter that much as the bigger family. Many other children were not with their parents.

How did Mark Shope started working at the WFTU Offices in Prague?

WFTU was a mother body of the world trade unions, including SACTU which was its affiliate. My husband was the General Secretary of SACTU. When Mabhida had to leave WFTU, Mark Shope had to represent SACTU and the African unions of the English-Speaking countries in the WFTU.

WFTU and SACTU had a warm relationship and they were working very well together. His experience with the WFTU was very positive. He was given latitude and facilities to go to all the difference places to tell the people about the struggle in South Africa and the other African countries.

Which of his trips do you remember most?

One time we went to Varna, Bulgaria on some vacation facilities as guests of the trade unions. There you would meet other trade unionists and exchange experience and get some rest. Another time we went to Hungary for vacation were we exchanged experience for trade union matters, we saw their projects, the way they did things.

Comrade Shope as other militants was under constant persecution. What do you remember from those times?

Shope was arrested in 1956 at the Treason Trial. The rulers here could not accept that they had adopted the Freedom Charter. 1960 there was the state of emergency many people were arrested again and kept in Pretoria and all the liberation organizations were banned. WFTU was telling the unions to try and support our struggle. Shope was arrested and sent to Pretoria as well. At that time we had our second



“Because the people of the apartheid would want to do one thing and they did not because they would fear the WFTU, that the world body would react somewhere.”

Mark Shope

daughter.

Was the international solidarity reaching to the people of South Africa?

When Shope returned back from the Fifth WFTU Congress in Moscow in 1962, SACTU organized for him to go from one province to another and talk to people about the Congress, the solidarity, about the socialist countries and about the unity of the workers.

So while he was on this tour, our boy was born and we sent him a message to let him know that he has a baby boy back home.

He immediately sent a message that we have to give name the boy "Lenin"! That excited he was from his trip.

Was the solidarity raised by WFTU helpful for your struggle?

We have to appreciate what WFTU did for us. They were very far away from us and they managed not to take care of the European, the Latin American, the Asian people. They made sure we helped us in Africa too. And it was just at the right time because we needed that help, which coming from a world organization of workers it had a lot of dignity. It turned things. Because the people of the apartheid would want to do one thing and they did not because they would fear the WFTU, that the world body would react somewhere. The WFTU had members' trade union organizations from the whole world and when the world trade union movement decided to do one thing, it would cause havoc.

WFTU also organized conferences,

meetings for the exchange of experience, it printed books and had people at its headquarters who worked for the world trade union movement; all these helped to create unity and solidarity amongst the workers of the world.

How do you feel about the decision of WFTU to honor the memory of Mark Shope?

It is a very great honor. The WFTU shows that it has not forgotten its people. It adds to the WFTU history.

Lulamile Sotaka, NEHAWU, Head of the Africa Regional Office of WFTU

How did you join the trade union movement?

I joined the trade union movement in 1982. The racist minority regime had adopted the recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission which it had appointed as a result of the strikes of workers in the 1970s. Among other things, the Commission recommended that Black workers should be recognised as "employees" which extended the right to form trade unions. A militant general trade union,



the South African Allied Workers Union was established and I joined it.

How difficult was it for a worker to get organized?

It was not difficult to organize workers as they were all yearning for their emancipation from the apartheid oppression. What was actually difficult was for organized workers to operate under the brutal repressive conditions of the regime. For example, I was employed in the public service where there was exclusion of workers from coverage by law. There were no trade unions in the sector except for staff association which were white and had no problems with the apartheid policies. In fact, they were supporting those policies. When we joined SAAWU we started organizing underground and would continue until

we had majority of workers as members and we would then challenge and fight with the employer for recognition and other rights. Immediately after the establishment of Cosatu all unions affiliated to Cosatu started merger talks that were aimed at implementing the congress resolution of Cosatu of "one industry one union". Three militant unions SAAWU, GAWU and HAWU merged in June 1987 to form NEHAWU. It was never easy to do all this organizational work. The leaders of the trade unions were persecuted, detained for extremely long periods without trial and tortured. Some got murdered. The regime was very brutal.

How did you get in contact with WFTU?

Firstly, it was through being an activist

in the trade union movement starting from the time of joining the SAAWU. Discussions at the local shop steward meetings would touch on the WFTU and how it was supporting SACTU and our liberation struggle. Secondly, Nehawu had extensive international relations and after its second national congress it decided to affiliate to the TUI of Public and Allied Unions, a trade union international of the WFTU. We attended meetings of the TUI(PAE) and got to understand closely the WFTU. Thirdly in 1998 NEHAWU sent a delegation to the IX World Congress of the TUI (PAE) in Kolkata and I was one of the delegates. I was elected as one of the vice presidents of the TUI at that congress. I got to attend the Directive Committee meetings and got more familiar with the WFTU. When the then president had to relinquish that position in 2002 I was appointed by the Directive Committee to act and later was elected at the X World Congress as president, then re-elected again in 2009.

What was your experience from working with the TUI of Public Services?

In the first place I came into contact with very experienced comrades. There were huge chances of learning more about the class oriented trade union movement organized under the banner of the WFTU. The consistency in the fight against globalization and privatization is the main distinguishing features of the Tui of public service. Attending activities of the affiliates of the TUI and coming into contact with the most distinguished class-oriented

revolutionary personalities such as the late comrades Debkumar Ganguli and Tarakeswar Chakraborti and many others. It was an opportunity to learn a lot and get more information on the WFTU.

What was the position of COSATU regarding the international affiliation?

In one of its meetings the discussions resolved to affiliate to ICFTU and to maintain relations with the WFTU with a view to work towards uniting the two federations. The debate is back on the table and we hope that the outcomes will favour the position of affiliation.

What was the argument for COSATU to affiliate to ICFTU?

Most affiliates are affiliated to the ITSs (global unions) of the ICFTU and are holding positions there. Some see it as a strategic position that will ultimately knock sanity in the minds of the leaders of the ICFTU while some as ourselves see that there is no possibility of that happening. The argument of persuading the imperialist entrenched minds is self defeating as the experience is that those people who lead that federation have no illusions about what they stand for. I have a personal experience with them when our union sponsored a resolution to have the PSI and the TUI of PS merge. The PSI general secretary was rude and in a way in no uncertain terms stating that that proposal was useless and that there will never be a merger between the ICFTU and the WFTU unions.

What are the relations of the trade union organizations of South Africa with WFTU today?

Since we as Nehawu we started having relations with the TUI we have been working hard to influence unions in our sector to establish relations with the TUI. The response has been positive. For example, the former General Secretary of the TUI has visited South Africa on many occasions and addressed not only Nehawu congresses but also Samwu. He has been invited to conferences and addressed them. The General Secretary of the WFTU, comrade George Mavrikos has also visited South Africa on several occasion and addressed congresses and conferences. The impression that they have left to the workers is positive, if one is to go by the comments of individual comrades after they had listened to the WFTU speak. At the 15th World Trade Union Congress of the WFTU Cosatu sent a delegation led by its Then First Deputy President and even at the last historical 16th World Trade Union Congress Cosatu sent a representative. The relations are not bad but I think that it is a matter of taking the logical conclusion by the South African unions, in a formal structure of the federation, to affiliate to the WFTU. Affiliates of Cosatu such as Numsa, Nehawu, Ceppwawu and Popcru are already affiliated to the WFTU. On the 9 -10 February 2012 the four unions will be hosting the Presidential Council of the WFTU in Johannesburg. This sitting will be preceded by a gala dinner where all the unions are invited and there will be

an opportunity to interact with the class oriented federation that has always stood on the side of the struggling masses. The unions that are already affiliated have held activities such as international conferences and workshops. For example, Nehawu held an international conference at the occasion of its National Congress in 2010, Ceppwawu held the same activity at its National Congress, in 2011 and Numsa held four workshops last year and a Conference in December, 2011. The relations are indeed inspiring!



World Federation of Trade Unions
16th World Trade Union Congress



Athens, Greece 6-10 April 2011
Photo from the Opening Ceremony

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