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REPORT ON FIRST WORLD TRADE UNION CONFERENCE
OF YOUNG WORKERS

PRAGUE

14-20 JULY 1958

November 1958

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INTRODUCTION

Preparatory planning for the First World Trade Union Conference of Young Workers began in 1956. The holding of such a conference was approved by the IVth World Trade Union Congress held in October 1957. At that time an appeal was issued to young workers of all countries to send delegates to the Conference. The organizational work of preparing for the Conference was divided into two parts. The first step was the creation of Preparatory Committees, where possible, with the assistance of WFTU adherents. The second step was to convene congresses on a regional or national level to discuss the demands of young workers and to elect delegates to the First Congress.

The propaganda campaign varied from country to country but in general included the distribution of copies of the Conference appeal issued by the WFTU together with the distribution of additional material dealing with the Conference which was published on a national level. In Finland, for example, leaflets bearing slogans and posters dealing with the conference were distributed during the May Day demonstration. It was reported that in France and in Hungary young workers were encouraged to correspond with young workers in capitalist and colonial countries in regard to the Conference. Bulgaria was reported to have issued a "Prague Conference" postage stamp while a special radio program entitled "The WFTU Speaks to the Young Workers" was broadcast from East Germany. In Sudan the organ of the Sudan Federation of Trade Unions, Al Talia, placed before its readers questions concerning problems to be discussed at the Conference and later published what were alleged to be the replies of three young workers.

Ian Roscoi, Secretary of the Factory Youth Section, reported in the trade union journal Munca that the preparations at the "Trimpuri Noi" factory in Bucharest included: (1) youth meetings in all departments of the factory, where problems of youth work and future tasks in connection with the Conference were laid down, (2) establishment of a "Red Corner" in the factory where photographs, articles and news reports which appeared in the trade union

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or youth press were displayed, (3) issuance by the factory library of a reading list of books which would give the young workers an idea of the conditions of life of young workers in other countries, (4) discussion of these books relayed over the factory radio.

ORGANIZATION

Following these preparations the First World Trade Union Conference of Young Workers was held 14-20 July 1958 at Prague. At its opening session the Conference elected a Secretariat and a Presidium from among the less than 500 delegates reported to be in attendance. The working committees of the Conference included (1) Resolutions, (2) Labor Problems, (3) Peace Problems, (4) Trade Union Matters. The official languages of the Conference were reported to be: French, English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Czech, German and Arabic.

AGENDA

The 17th Session of the Executive Committee of WFTU established the agenda for the Conference of Young Workers as follows:

1. Wages, vocational training, trade union and social rights of young workers, struggles of young workers and their trade unions for demands and against discrimination.
2. Prospects for young workers throughout the world and their united action for peace and against the danger of an atomic and thermonuclear war.
3. The role of the trade unions in organizing and uniting young workers and the part young people can play in the activities and strengthening of the trade unions.

The report on the first item of the agenda was given by Charles Salducci, member of the preparatory committee for the Conference of Young Workers and C.G.T. Secretary for the Department Bouches du Rhone.

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Salducci alleged discrimination against young workers in wages, salaries, and working hours. He quoted statistics to prove that (1) girls in Japan, Denmark, Australia, and other countries received substantially lower wages for the same work than their male colleagues and that (2) young agricultural workers in capitalist and colonial countries were working under incredibly miserable conditions. Salducci further stated that while no increase of workers' and employees' pay was granted, the profits of such American companies as the United Steel Corporation, Royal Dutch Shell, and French Peugeot were constantly rising. He then cited as an example of good treatment of young workers, Czechoslovakia, whose constitution stipulates that men and women, young and old workers must obtain equal pay for equal work.

The report on the first point of the agenda contained the following demands: Right to work, right to equal pay for equal work, right to specialized training, reduction of working hours without reduction of wages, acceptance of young workers trade union rights, right to leisure and culture, the possibility of setting up families.

The report on the second item of the agenda was given on 15 July by Hiroshi Yamakawa, a delegate from Japan. He recalled that the bombs which had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were small and primitive compared with contemporary atomic bombs. He charged that, in spite of the statements by scientists all over the world that radioactive effects are dangerous for present and future generations, the United States and British Governments are continuing their nuclear weapon tests. The petition against hydrogen bomb tests started by Japanese women in 1955 had been so successful, Yamakawa reported, that 30 million signatures were collected in one year alone. Similarly, the peace movement had developed in West Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, and even in the United States. Yamakawa stated significantly that "In the socialist countries the struggle for the preservation of peace is linked with the building of socialism... the endeavors of these countries give great support and encouragement to young workers in the capitalist and colonial countries."

The report on the third item of the agenda was given on 15 July by Lazaro Pena, Secretary of the WFTU. In the introductory part of his speech Pena pointed out the very considerable percent-

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age that young workers represent out of the total labor force. He then cited numerous examples of the devotion and militant spirit in which young workers in the capitalist countries take part in the struggles of the workers for an improvement of their living and working conditions, for economic and social progress, for national independence and peace.

Pena compared the position of young workers in the trade unions in the socialist countries, where, he said, all the conditions have been created for the development and happy life of young workers, with the position of young workers in capitalist countries under conditions of alleged exploitation.

In conclusion the report dealt with the importance of the association of young workers in the unions for the unity of the trade union movement. "If we enlist thousands of young people in all countries as members of the trade unions," Pena noted, "then this can markedly contribute to the cause of trade union unity, for the movement will thus acquire new and fresh forces, the new and live forces of youth which are capable of removing old prejudices standing in the way of unity. The young people, imbued with a desire for peace, will defend unity, which represents progress and will fight against attempts to split the movements which hamper its growth.

"We are assembling your resolutions and demands," Pena said, "and we assure you that the WFTU will fight for their satisfaction and declare that in this action our international organization is ready to join forces with all trade union organizations, with all national centers and all international organizations which are also ready to fight for these objectives."

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

A. Demands

1. The right to work and adequate wages for work done.
2. The right to education and vocational training.
3. Respect for the ILO convention on the eight-hour day and trade union and social rights.

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4. These demands can be realized only on the basis of consistent struggle for the reduction of war budgets, against the closing down of factories and dismissals and for the development of trade relations among all countries.

B. Organization

The resolution on the role of the trade unions in organizing and uniting young workers declared that the trade unions ought to increase their effort to educate young workers in the spirit of trade union democracy, class struggle and proletarian internationalism, to educate them to defend peace, to give active support to the cause of national independence of all peoples, to oppose racial discrimination and to support solidarity with the peasants and other strata of the working people.

In another resolution, the conference presented several recommendations to the WFTU. The recommendations cover study tours of young trade union officials in various countries, consideration of questions concerning young workers at the next session of the WFTU General Council, and expansion of relations among young workers all over the world.

C. Peace

On the question of peace the Conference declared: "War preparations entail a considerable deterioration in the present conditions of young workers and are a menace to their future. Our fight for better wages, against unemployment, and for broad educational facilities, and the fight for our demands in general is closely bound up with the fight to prevent another war. The participants in the conference call on the capitalist great powers to follow up the peace move by the Soviet Union in halting nuclear weapon tests. They express their ardent support for the struggle of the young and the people of the German Federal Republic and Japan directed against the militarization of these countries, and to the struggle of the French people in defense of democratic freedoms and against the threat of fascism."

The statement sharply condemned colonialism and emphasized that the struggle of the nations against foreign interventions and for independence is at the same time a struggle for peace in the world.

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"We are convinced that if all the forces of peace unite firmly and act with determination, the danger of war will be eliminated. Human values will be preserved, and lasting peace will fully open the road to a better life, peace, and happiness."

The Conference addressed an appeal to the young workers of the United States of America. "Together with young people throughout the world, demand that your government withdraw its troops from Lebanon and respect the independence of all nations. You can do much--in company with all the young people of the world--to put a stop to this adventure and the war it heralds."

In another resolution the Conference protested to the U.S. Government against U.S. intervention in Lebanon, called upon the United Nations to secure the withdrawal of the American forces from Lebanon in the interests of peace, and expressed full support for the newly-established Republic of Iraq.

D. Miscellaneous

The Conference also adopted resolutions which called for: (1) solidarity with the people of Cyprus; (2) opposition to atomic tests in the Sahara; (3) support of striking Spanish workers; (4) support of the independence of Cameroon (French); (5) the peaceful unification of Korea and (6) the granting of an amnesty to political prisoners on Madagascar.

During the concluding session, a joint declaration by the British and French delegations protesting the landing of British troops in Jordan and the presence of French military units in the neighborhood of Lebanon was also read.

SPECIFIC ACTION IN REGARD TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The delegates to the First World Conference of Young Workers unanimously approved the appeal of WFTU in regard to the Middle East which reads as follows:

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"The landing of American armed forces in Lebanon is a crime against peace. It is a vile violation of the rights of nations to self-determination. It is an open threat to the new Iraq Republic. The American monopolists are prepared to unleash a war on Arab soil to preserve their profits and privileges. Working people throughout the world are prepared for opposition to this new imperialist offensive."

The WFTU calls on trade unionists to take part in anti-imperialist campaigns and actively to demonstrate solidarity with the Arab nations. "Working men and women throughout the world," says the appeal in conclusion, "the hour of vigilance and action in defense of peace has struck. The hour for efficient unity of all the forces of peace in the world has struck."

SPEAKERS

The following delegates were reported to have addressed the conference:

KIM Un-chol, leader of the Korean delegation and chairman of the central committee of the Korean Trade and Public Utility Workers Union, spoke on the life and work of youth in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The assistant secretary of the union of metallurgy workers of Peru, Armio Garcia, dwelt on the struggle of his union for the fulfillment of the demands of the workers of this branch.

The secretary of the regional trade union council at Petrichi in Bulgaria spoke of the perspectives that had opened before Bulgarian youth.

Khristofoules Stavros, member of the central committee of the Clothing and Shoe Workers Union of Cyprus, reported that the working youth of Cyprus were playing an important part in the struggle of the Cypriot people against British economic and national oppression.

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Chairman of the Syrian drivers union Khalid al-Hakim, who served as delegate of the United Arab Republic, described the establishment of the UAR as the fruit of the struggle of the people and primarily the youth of the Arab countries and the beginning of full unity of the Arab world. He mentioned the help which WFTU has given to the people of Asia and Africa, particularly the support which they have received from the Soviet Union, Peoples China and other democratic countries.

French delegate Andre Merlot, CGT Secretary, pointed out the very difficult economic situation in France, the consequences of which were unfavorable for the working people, especially for young people.

Zhutgai Gombo, member of the central council of Mongolian trade unions, dealt with the development of vocational and technical training, the improvement of health facilities, and the work of the Mongolian trade unions among the youth.

Laszlo Gal, member of the Free Hungarian Trade Unions, spoke about the bright prospects of working youth in the Hungarian Peoples Republic.

DELEGATES

Albania	Nakuri, Vasil
Argentina	Diaz, Elpidio Didiano, Josefina Dresney, Jose Machuca, Antonio Seifert, Mauricio Zalazar, Julio Cesar
Australia	Crisp, Desmond
Austria	Zwitelhofer, G.
Belgium	Pirard, Leonard
Brazil	Piotto, Orlando

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Ceylon	Pala, Jinedra
Chile	Figueroa, Luis
China	Han Hsi ya
Colombia	Ferrer, Luis
Cyprus	Khristofoulos Stavros
Czechoslovakia	Kucera, Vaclaw Prasilova, Vera Zupka, Frantisek
Denmark	Hansen, Knut
Egypt	Ali Hassan, Abd Ar Rahman
El Salvador	Itidallo /Hidalgo/ CA
Finland	Antti, Jantti Pohjola, Maija
France	Charvanet, Henri Giloux, Rene Merlot, Andre Salducci, Charles
French Equitorial Africa	Ayati, Francois Doualla, Jacques Mandeng, Pierre Tchicaya, Raymond
French West Africa	Alapini, Pascal Aminata, Fall (Sal) Diabate, Fousseynou Dieng, Germain Doumbia, Lassana Guibril, Sar Djim Queye Massaer Ly, Mohamed Mamery, Cherif Sekou, Cisse Sidibe, Koloko

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Germany (East)	Gunther, Roland Weidemann, Heinz
Great Britain	Edwards, John (James) Ley, John Moore, William
Guatemala	Morales-Gastillo, (fnu)
Haiti	Georges, Andre
Hungary	Gal, Laszlo
India	Babarao Yeshwant, Bhapse Krishna Gangaram, Desai
Indonesia	Baklitlar, Khalim Haloho
Iraq	Nasir Jamil Ad Din
Italy	Banfi, Leonardo
Jamaica	Dawes, J.
Japan	Bo Risaku Hayashi Tsuyako Kawasaki Yasushi Komori Masao Nakamura Eiji Ogawa Yohichi Oshima Kiyoshi Sambe Akemitsu Tanaka Sumi Yamagawa Hiroshi
Korea (North)	Kim Un-chol
Madagascar	Ranivosa, Justina
Mexico	Arriaga, Rigoberto Orozaca, Panfila

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Mongolia	Gombo, Zhutgai
Morocco	Ben Mohamed, Abdul Fouavi, Ahmed
Netherlands	Blauw, Hans De Mooy, Johanna G. De Vroome, Pieter Eysten, Nico Ferwerda, Lydia Slagt, Cornelia S. Van Hattem, C.P. Zincken, M.
Nigeria	Badou, Traore
Norway	Egil, Lovlien
Paraguay	Ramirez, Jose
Peru	De la Motta, Eleuterio Fuentes-Castillo, Zenon Garcia, Mario
Poland	Kos, Wieslaw Syty, Jerzy
Portugal	Pereira, Augusto
Rumania	Circei, Ion Pascu, Nicolai
Sudan	Abu Gabal, Hassan
Sweden	Hallgren-Spokum, Karl Jatko, Stig Jonsson, Yngve Karlsson, Nils
Syria	Al Hakim, Khalid Toughlabi, Talaat

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Thailand

Mahasin, S.

Uruguay

Gonzales-Irogoyen, Calixto

USSR

Korbova, Polina
Yakovlev, Yuri

Venezuela

Cojedes, Rafael
Hurtado-Martinez, Antonio
Irayevendi, Dr. Adolfo
Torres-Vargas, Pedro

Vietnam (North)

Nguyen Huu Ki

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INFORMATION DEVELOPED SINCE THE COMPLETION OF
THE REPORT ON FIRST WORLD TRADE UNION CONFERENCE
OF YOUNG WORKERS

The many meetings which were held apart from the Conference itself constitute an important by-product whose propaganda and organizational value to the WFTU should not be overlooked. These meetings were held by the delegates representing similar trades or representing countries having similar problems. One such delegate, Germain Dieng, representing the Dakar Oil Industry Workers Union, reported that he had attended numerous meetings including one held by delegates from chemical and petroleum products industries.

Louis Saillant in his closing speech at the Conference listed a number of common declarations emanating from these unofficial meetings. They were

1. Common declaration of all African trade union organizations represented at the Conference which set down all the possibilities for joint action by West African and Equatorial African trade union organizations. Saillant indicated that representatives of these African trade unions had worked out at the Conference methods of action to be used to accomplish their objectives.
2. Common declaration by the delegates of the Federal German Republic and the German Democratic Republic stating that the young workers of both countries had the common aim of preservation of peace and struggle against the atomic armament of Western Germany.
3. Common declaration made by the delegations from Great Britain and Cyprus.
4. Common declaration made by the delegations of Great Britain and France protesting the landing of British troops in Jordan and the presence of French military units in the neighborhood of Lebanon.
5. Common declaration made by the delegates from the German Democratic Republic, the French CGT and the Federal German Republic.
6. Common declaration by the Japanese and Korean delegates which denounced the US for trying to form a Northeast Asian Treaty

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Organization and for conspiring to establish guided missile bases in South Korea and Japan. The delegations said that they would strive to bring about the immediate withdrawal of the US army from South Korea, the peaceful unification of Korea, the removal of US military bases from Japan and the return of Okinawa to Japan. They would also strive for the unconditional release of the Korean citizens detained in Japanese camps and for their right to live where they desire, as well as for the establishment of normal relations between Korea and Japan.

7. Common declaration by the delegations from the German Democratic Republic, the Federal German Republic, Czechoslovakia and Poland confirming the cooperation of the trade union organizations of these four countries to achieve the atom-free zone in Europe.

Recommendations of the First World Trade Union Conference of Working Youth included the following items not listed in the previous report.

1. The Conference invited the trade union leaders to follow the example set by those trade unions which had created special commissions or other bodies to assist in their work among working youth.

2. The Conference considered it desirable for young workers to be promoted to leading positions at all levels of trade union organization to a greater degree than at the present.

3. The Conference recommended to the WFTU that it study the possibility of holding a trade union course on the youth question during 1959. A course of this type would allow the young trade union officials to join the Secretariat of the WFTU in examining specific problems which occupy the attention of young workers and trade unions.

4. The Conference recommended that the next session of the General Council of the WFTU should not only invite the attendance of union officials responsible for youth questions but in addition should examine the results of this First Conference and the ways in which its activities might be continued.

5. The Conference also recommended that the special columns dealing with youth problems should be continued in the international trade union publications.

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