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**TRADE UNION
STRATEGIES
FOR THE 1990s**

**DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE
IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS
AND HUMANKIND THROUGH
TRADE UNION
DIALOGUE AND
ACTION**

Rs. 5/-

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PREAMBLE

As the new decade of the 1990s dawns, the trade union movement the world over is facing great changes and new challenges. These changes and challenges are going to leave a significant imprint on the next period and, indeed, far beyond the 1990s. They can already be seen in the social struggles today. The role of trade unions, at the heart of social movements for the defence of workers' interests and for the development of international cooperation which should be centred on the satisfaction of people's needs, is going to increase.

Everything in the world is on the move. We are witnessing positive changes in international relations. The INF Treaty is a first step on the road to disarmament. The technological revolution, which is still in its formative stages, is radically changing the conditions of material production and the sphere of all activities. The threat of an ecological disaster is ever present. The problem of the foreign debt of the developing countries is a potential source of widespread social conflict. This is a world in which microchips, satellite TV and highly developed communication networks should allow humanity to become aware of the immense possibilities offered by these times. Humanity is, however, faced with the challenges of widespread unemployment, deteriorating living standards, health care and social welfare, social inequality, malnutrition, illiteracy, a lack of housing, destitution, isolation, and other acute social problems.

The countries where capitalism dominates are discovering a new phase in their serious structural crisis, which is driving them to seek a solution by new regional integrations, restructuring and expanding their zones of influence, as well as a vast restructuring of social organisation and the public sector.

A profound and bitter crisis has also appeared in certain socialist countries. The origins of that crisis are traced to the bureaucratic and authoritarian forms of social organisation. These countries have been increasingly incapable of meeting the demands of development and of satisfying the social needs of their peoples.

Most of the developing countries, subjected to domination by transnational corporations and capitalist countries, victims of decreasing markets and increasing debts, are being pushed further into difficulties, with dramatic social consequences.

The issue of development is now a central question. For the trade unions, the concept of "development" does not have a purely economic significance. This concept is both social and economic. The human being should be at the centre of all action aimed at development. The interests of people constitute the ultimate meaning of development and the principal factor in its implementation.

The full realisation of their capabilities and initiatives is an objective condition for economic efficiency. It is increasingly important that progress be made on the standard of living, the creation of millions of jobs, the improvement of health, education and working conditions and in the situation of pensioners. New areas for protest campaigns and for united struggles are therefore opening up for the trade union organisations of all countries: all the peoples of the world must be able to satisfy their needs and at the same time, the significant inequality and domination which exists must be eliminated. This idea is at the heart of this document.

One common aim is appearing everywhere: democracy, in the largest sense of the word, along with the struggle for national sovereignty. The trade union movement played an active role during the struggles for democratic changes in the 1980s; they reaffirm the right of every nation to self-determination, national independence, the free choice of its own path of development and the full exercise of all human, civil and trade union rights throughout the world.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that one of the most important transformations of the 1980s was perestroika in the Soviet Union, the main objective of which was the elimination of the interventionist administrative system and the effective and complete implementation of universally recognised human rights. As it is being implemented, perestroika is coming up against resistance and obstacles caused by economic and social difficulties, which are not being overcome. Perestroika goes hand in hand with a desire to alter international relations through disarmament and increased economic cooperation. This does not mean an end to the trade unions' own action in the struggle for peace and cooperation.

The other countries of Eastern Europe have undergone essential socio-political changes, putting an end to the restrictions on democracy that reigned in these countries. Under various forms, these changes include the transfer of property to the private sector, deregulation and an appeal for foreign capital. They are faced with the strategies of Big Capital which wants to extend its influence in this region of the world.

The introduction of market relations to the economy of these countries is being accompanied by price increases, unemployment and largescale migration.

The satisfaction of social needs and economic development raises the issue of the social control of market mechanisms.

This is all radically influencing the situation and role of trade unions in these societies, their very existence, their goals and their strategies and tactics. In all these cases, this concerns the entire international trade union movement.

The economic and social policies pursued in the 1960s achieved high rates of industrialisation and economic expansion and increased employment in the developed countries. They are not having the same effect in the 1990s

The fall in rates of economic growth can be seen in all social and economic systems. Unemployment is at a high level and is of a lasting nature in a great many countries: it is accompanied by rising inflation in many of them. The introduction in several countries of market mechanisms which govern the economy, can also be accompanied by these problems, necessitating a broadening of the scope of trade union struggles.

A great debate is taking place in the world concerning the choices for economic and social policies and management methods for enterprises. The role of human resources and social needs which condition efficient economic development is now an important aspect of action.

This is true as much at national as international level, where the consequences of the logic of capitalist development on the lives of workers and people are being rejected. This demand concerns, in different conditions, the serious and indeed chronic malfunctioning resulting from the crisis of the administrative-command method of socialism. Established concepts are now being challenged as never before.

The stakes everywhere are those of development and its criteria of creativity and initiative. This requires a genuine expression of democracy through worker participation in everything that constitutes economic life.

The creation of new economic efficiency cannot be achieved without people, nor, even more so, against them.

Such objectives are raised in terms of struggle, regardless of different situations and relations of forces; struggles in every country and convergences between peoples of different countries.

The radical transformations taking place in the world clearly underline the universal nature of the fundamental values of the trade union movement, including:

- the defence of the vital interests of workers as the principal task of the trade unions;
- Freedom of Association as an inalienable right of all workers;
- the right of all trade union organisations to choose freely their orientations in all areas, including where economic and social interests are concerned;
- the autonomy and independence of trade unions in regard to political parties, religious institutions, governments and employers;
- the right of trade union organisations to influence decision-making on economic, social, political and cultural issues.

The Universal Declaration of Trade Union Rights adopted at the 9th World Trade Union Congress in Prague is as topical today as it was 12 years ago.

Trade unions place the improvement of workers' lives at the centre of their activity and their objectives. As an essential force responding to what is now at stake in a changing world, trade union action is the decisive element in the defence and improvement of workers' rights and living and working conditions. In this action, trade unions must do everything within their power in order that

the development of cooperation and new international economic relations is carried out on the basis of reciprocal interests and justice. These conditions are essential for the implementation of a New International Economic Order which is a genuine factor of progress and not an element of domination. In fact, the transnationals set up economic relations between the developed countries and others only as a means of accumulating profit.

The world trade union movement can and should contribute to the debate concerning the paths and the nature of development. It has an important role to play in this battle, especially in mobilising public opinion and the workers. In many countries, the trade union movement faces considerable problems. Is this a crisis, or a critical phase in which emerging contradictions will be solved by new options? Are the trade unions today capable of taking up the challenge? They can succeed if they combine their efforts to involve workers in this thought process and action, and if they can overcome differences of assessment and manage to achieve unity of action on all aspects they have in common.

All this depends on the general responsibility of the whole world trade union movement and calls for constructive answers to essential problems, such as:

— Do trade union programmes fully reflect the vital interests of all categories of workers? Are they not sometimes narrow-minded in their aims and tasks? Are the demands they contain always clear and specific? Do they always fully take the grass-roots organisations' opinions into account? What place does trade union democracy hold in the running of trade union activities?

— Are trade union structures fully adapted to face the employers' practices in the organisation of production and social integration?

— Why are we seeing a reduction in the traditional social base of trade unions and their membership in so many countries? What is the solution?

— Can we be content with the effectiveness of trade union solidarity at national and international level?

These questions are directly related to the activities of trade union organisations at national and international level: how do we conceive their present basic tasks, functions and options? These are the basic questions to be answered.

Assuredly, this process generates new obligations and opens up new fields of activity and solidarity. It calls for innovation, rapprochement and cooperation between trade unions. There are thus new opportunities for reflection, trade union participation and convergent action.

In this context of change, the involvement of workers and their trade unions is decisive in responding to universal problems, to issues of employment and development and in ensuring the satisfaction of the needs of workers and peoples in the new conditions:

Nothing will be granted to workers without the development of struggles

and without the existence of strong trade union organisations in each of their respective countries.

The stakes and the transformations of the contemporary world argue the case for the existence and the strengthening of more active and more creative international trade unionism.

In order to build this trade unionism, the WFTU has a duty to make a contribution at the highest level, which implies a modernised, more active and influential WFTU, going beyond differences and divergences, and playing a dynamic and determining role towards unity of action in the world of labour on an international scale.

1 — THE SITUATION OF THE WORKERS

The general features of the overall social situation witnessed during the 1980s, as assessed by the trade union movement as well as by the ILO, include the following:

— At the end of the 1980s, the world is in a more precarious social situation than at the start of the decade.

— In many industrialised countries, unemployment rates in the 1980s were higher than at any time since the last world war. The insecurity of employment has also increased everywhere. Social welfare systems are being seriously challenged. Access to public services has become more selective and unequal. Young people and women are being particularly affected by these processes of social regression.

— A majority of developing countries have experienced rising unemployment and underemployment, as well as increased poverty, especially because of the heavy burdens of servicing the foreign debt as well as the "adjustment policies" of the IMF.

— The number of people living in absolute poverty has risen from about 820 million in 1980 to an estimated 950 million at the end of the decade. A new category of poverty has been added to that already existing, which subsequent developments have not been able to eliminate.

— There is increasing loss of livelihood for small farmers in the rural regions of developing countries due to evictions from land organised by big landlords and agri-business transnational corporations. Stagnation and lack of development in rural areas worsen problems of food security. About 100 million people — one quarter of the African population — are unable to meet their food needs.

— The share of income from labour in total income is today smaller than at the beginning of the decade. The decrease in real wages and the fewer well-rewarded jobs created during the recent period have meant in many countries that income from work has declined faster than per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Wages in most developing countries fell by 20 to 30 per cent.

— The deregulation policies and the free rein given to monopoly capital have only fuelled the financial sphere and speculation, to the detriment of production and jobs in the developed market economy countries. In the USA alone, a sum of over a quarter of a trillion dollars is spent annually on shady take-over deals, leveraged buy-outs (LBOs) and other financial manipulations — all of which do not produce a single new product or a single new job.

— The economic difficulties in the centrally-planned economies and the failure to adapt and restructure to meet the changing needs and tasks of economic development have had serious consequences, including a decline in real purchasing power and living standards of workers in these countries in several sectors. In some of these countries, problems of mass unemployment have also arisen, along with runaway inflation, etc.

The distribution of world GDP among countries continues to be highly unequal. In the early 1980s, countries with more than 50 per cent of the world's population accounted for only 4.5 per cent of the world GDP. The developing countries and China, which accounted for 75.1 per cent of the population, shared only 20.9 per cent of world GDP in 1987. On the other hand, the developed market economies, which had only 16.6 per cent of the world population, had 69.1 per cent of the world GDP.

The distribution of income within countries shows similar inequalities. In the USA, 10 per cent of the population in the highest-income brackets held two-thirds of the national wealth. During the last ten years, the decline in real wages of workers in the US was over 10 per cent.

The actions by the trade unions in defence of workers' interests and to win new improvements involve broad questions of economic and social policy. Moreover, the rigorous implementation of policies of deregulation and privatisation which were imposed on many countries, especially developing countries, by the TNCs and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have adversely affected the jobs, wages, living standards and social welfare of the working people during the last four years and challenged trade union rights.

The negative and often serious consequences of the so-called development policies and strategies so far pursued are self-evident. They have been the subject of innumerable conferences and campaigns organised by the trade union movement at all levels against this situation of underdevelopment. They are the basis for priority demands which are being increasingly made, such as:

- The creation of jobs and the raising of the level of skills,
- The fixing of wages to cover basic needs and social welfare measures for all.

— Measures to guarantee efficient economic growth that responds to the needs of populations.

— International economic cooperation:

These demands increasingly call for a democratic alternative and for worker participation in management.

Serious human, commercial, financial and production imbalances, domination and conflicting interests which characterise the economic situation and relations between capital and nations at international level are the expression of contradictions that are affecting all regions of the world at the present time.

Development of the economic situation

It is in this context that the major issues of equality and social justice and responding to social needs are being raised. For example, there is an inter-relation between the decline in real wages and the rising profits of Big Business and financial institutions. This explains the contrast between the increasing poverty in the developing countries and the soaring assets of the transnational corporations and banks. During the 1980s, the developing countries paid back, as debt service, the colossal sum of 1,456 billion dollars. Such huge income transfers and debt-equity swaps, the burden of which usually falls on the working people, are unprecedented, as are rising poverty and human deprivation.

The debt question concerns workers and trade unions, since it weighs down heavily on living and working conditions. The foreign debt of developing countries constitutes a new way of plundering and exploiting people's natural resources. It accentuates their dependence on TNCs and international financial institutions. The debts of the United States and of other industrialised countries are also increasing. The accumulated financial imbalances are the result of a crisis in the efficiency of capitalist production. The crisis in the interventionist administrative system in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe continues to exacerbate the problem of their foreign debt. These imbalances are today holding back economic cooperation and development that corresponds to the needs of workers.

The most developed countries are trying to overcome this crisis by attempting to establish new structures, particularly in the financial sphere. Their aim is to organise the redistribution of surplus capital. This process has created new contradictions between the United States, the FRG and Japan, and the various transnational financial companies. Regional economic integrations, as they are now being attempted, are far from resolving these contradictions.

The countries of the EC are continuing the construction of a large internal market and of European monetary union. As a result, economic confrontations are appearing in the form of imbalances and increased domination. The gaps

between the countries of the south of Europe and the north are widening. This leads to increasing competition between the workers.

The social aspect is missing from this construction, as all trade unions recognise. New convergences are therefore emerging which rely on struggles in these EC countries. Today this raises the issues of new types of united action, a search for convergences in action, protest action and new solidarity.

The dimension and content of international economic relations are now becoming more important. The explosion of new technologies and the development of a new telecommunication and global information network have made the modern economic world a more complex and interdependent unit than ever before.

However, the full benefit of these positive developments does not flow to the world economy as a whole because of the high level of centralisation and strict control over these processes exercised by transnational businesses and financial institutions. The operations of these institutions show that the high level of integration they have built up is limited to a closed circle, to which the bulk of the performers in the world economy can have no access. The magnitude of their economic power can be seen from the fact that while world trade (including services) involves US\$ 3,000 billion annually, the turnover in the Eurodollar market exceeds US\$ 75,000 billion annually.

The problem of regulation and control over the activities of transnational corporations and banks has been before the United Nations and the international community for nearly two decades now. It is known that the turnover of the big TNCs far exceeds the GNP of many countries. The whole question of the defence of national sovereignty against the transgressions of the transnational economic and financial groupings has now become all the more urgent in the wake of their growing domination over global economic relations.

Employment and technology

One of the essential aspects characteristic of social and economic development in the contemporary world certainly resides in the deepening gap between, on the one hand, people's growing capacity to master nature, the dimensions of technological change and the potential it represents for the solution of the problems of humanity and, on the other, the social and economic difficulties faced by the populations and workers in many parts of the world and increasing inequality among individuals and nations.

The increase in scientific and technological potential means that it could be possible to mass-produce the things that people need. But this is accompanied by more extensive poverty and greater social and economic inequality.

Hence the implementation of new technology should be accompanied by adequate safeguards which would lead to an improvement in living standards and working conditions, as well as the development of the workers' capacity for initiative and participation in management.

It is important to stress the seriousness of the situation and prospects in the field of employment in the world. Chronically high levels of lasting unemployment, demographic pressure and austerity policies combine, in both the developed and the developing world, to place obstacles in the way of world-scale full employment in the near future.

This situation leads the great majority of the world's inhabitants to a new awareness that they could live better and have a better quality of life.

This leads to discontent and social struggles throughout the world, which assume growing dimensions. Convergence of opinion is shown by the demands and aspirations expressed by the workers and peoples, especially for the defence and development of employment, for quality and the expansion of labour and for training and qualifications.

In the 1990s, the problems of employment and the full utilisation of human resources to advance real economic and social development have assumed a high priority.

In the near future, some 400 million jobs will have to be created — 360 million in the developing countries alone — only to absorb the new entrants to the labour force, that is, young people.

Over 30 million people are jobless in the OECD countries. Over 500 million are estimated to be suffering from unemployment and severe underemployment in the developing countries. A similar phenomenon, the extent of which cannot yet be evaluated, is now appearing in the USSR and Eastern Europe. The high level of unemployment among young people and women, even in industrialised countries, is now becoming chronic.

It is now widely recognised that rising unemployment, the slow-down in the rate of job creation, the deterioration in the type of jobs created and the fact that a vast section of working people are forced to find their means of survival in the clandestine or Informal Sector, constitute the principal characteristics of the world social situation.

The great majority of developing countries, whatever economic option they have chosen, have been facing major economic and social problems since the early eighties. The negative aspects of the policies of structural adjustment implemented on the initiative of the IMF and the World Bank, in particular, have given rise to considerable social damage: per capita income is now far inferior to what it was in 1980. The social conditions of the population and workers have largely deteriorated, with spreading poverty and unemployment.

For many years the capitalist countries have experienced chaotic growth, characterised by a differentiation between them in the rate of growth. The present phase of significant growth deceleration, which began in the United States

during the second half of 1989, is witness to the serious difficulties experienced by their economy. It attests to the fact that these countries have not overcome the structural crisis that they experienced during the early 1970s.

Industrial and financial restructuring has led to austerity policies becoming wide-spread. They are resulting in significant social regression.

The new types of employment that are rapidly appearing in the dominant capitalist countries are further challenging the living and working conditions of the workers.

Closed in their excessively centralised and rigid structures, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the USSR, have fallen behind to a very large extent in the implementation of the latest stage of the scientific and technological revolution. In seeking other alternatives, such as a market economy, or planned markets in economic organisation, these countries are coming up against the extremely serious problems of inflation, a slowing down of growth rates and unemployment. This situation has led to a loss of some social guarantees and a drop in living standards for the workers.

The formulation and implementation of technological development continues to be dominated by the subordination of labour to private interests and the logic of competition. Modernisation strategies are still focussed on reducing human labour, to the detriment of concepts of full employment and development of the quality of human labour. Any improvement in efficiency and productivity is devalued if it leads to the exclusion of more and more people from productive activities, depriving the workers of any possibility of development, whatever their age or sex.

The main features of this process are the following: — reduction in the proportion of workers in sectors of material production;

— changes in the structure and importance of the manufacturing industry;

— large increases in the proportion of wage-earners in the service sectors.

Another important trend in the changing composition of the labour force has to do with the general upgrading in qualifications of the work force. This is seen in:

— the increasing average number of years of vocational training and education;

— the increased proportion of skilled jobs, engineers, managerial staff and technicians.

According to reports by most international bodies, these modernisation strategies solely oriented to profits and with no consideration for human needs, mean that, in the 1990s, there will be even more unemployment and underemployment.

Moreover, the rapid introduction of new technology based on the search for profit brings with it insecurity and instability of working conditions and wages for an increasing number of employed workers.

The structural changes in the labour force resulting from the introduction of new technology, including the big shift from manufacturing to services, have seriously affected the composition and structure of the trade union movement in many countries.

A contradictory situation is developing. On the one hand, the ranks of the labour force are increasing, creating new potential for the expansion of the trade union movement, however, on the other hand, the reduction of the labour force in the well-organised sectors of the manufacturing industry and the structural changes in these sectors have resulted in serious reductions in trade union membership. The large number of new employees in the service sectors are often unorganised.

The new forms of industrial organisation and management and the relative decline of large-scale enterprises which are now significantly influenced by new technology, also bring new problems for trade union organisations, calling for new approaches and strategies.

The environment

What is at stake in the environment is becoming increasingly clear every day. For the workers, their unions and the populations of the various parts of the world, it is no longer a new awareness of the "ecological problems", but far more: an awareness of the need to provide a better life for the women and men of the world.

The interlinking of the economic, social and ecological crises is very strong and forms the basis of our trade union approach to the environment. Major problems jeopardise the chances of ensuring a type of development that respects the needs of the environment (the burden of arms expenditure, Third World debt, profiteering by private firms) etc...

The trade union approach, which coincides with the analyses given in the report by the World Commission for Environment and Development, is to unite economic, social and political development which responds to the needs of the workers, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our common future lies in sustainable development: lasting and viable development.

Climatic changes are a major concern. The fear of seeing the seas rise, the deserts grow and the increasing threats to life on earth calls for unprecedented international effort.

Developments in the water cycle show that water is endangered. In addition to the problems of quantity, there is also the deterioration in the quality of water and the need for long-term preservation of water resources. The inter-

dependence of climatic developments and the water cycle is equally worrying. The growing desertification, which is transforming 6 million hectares of land into total desert and reducing to zero the productivity of 20 million hectares of fertile soil every year, is having terrible consequences.

The extraordinary wealth of biological diversity is also endangered. One quarter of all the world's biological species are threatened with extinction in the next 20 to 30 years.

The lopsided growth and increasing world scale of economic activities during this century show the effects policies are having on the environment. Public and private industrial groups are primarily responsible for serious attacks on the environment. They are taking part, on a large scale, in the destruction of the tropical rain forests in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Further attacks on the environment follow from:

- intensive agriculture based on single-crop farming and massive use of chemicals;

- energy production which has grown 80-fold;

- industry which has increased by 100-fold its consumption of metals.

The trade union movement has condemned the transfer of pollution-causing enterprises to countries where legislation to protect the environment is less restrictive or does not exist at all. The total prohibition of the export of products whose use is prohibited in the country of origin has also been demanded.

2 – TRADE UNIONS IN THE FACE OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY

Before our eyes, the economy is undergoing fundamental changes which, on the one hand, can open up fresh and unprecedented prospects for social renewal and progress but, at the same time, can create a basis for growing concern on the part of the workers and society as a whole.

Throughout the world, revolutionary changes are taking place in the whole system of productive forces. The depth and scale of these changes can only be compared to the industrial revolution.

Technological transformation has resulted in impressive progress in many fields: microelectronics, industrial robots, biotechnology, information technology, etc. Science has given humankind new technology, materials and products that can substantially improve the conditions of everyday life and work, and open up wide prospects for human activity.

The technological revolution has made possible a powerful leap forward in increasing the world production of material goods and services. In the last few decades, the gross world product has grown many times over, making it possible to improve the working and living conditions of millions of workers in different parts of the world and from different wage groups.

These transformations in the world economy have been accompanied by a serious worsening of unemployment, displacement of jobs, unstable working and living conditions, and forced removals. The rapid introduction of new technology, based on purely profit considerations, has resulted in precarious and unstable working conditions and salaries for an ever-increasing number of active people, instead of favouring the social justice fought for by workers and their trade unions. Social inequalities between the "rich" and the "poor", both at international level and in many countries, has grown considerably during the last few decades. In the industrialised countries, categories of "new poor" people have emerged, thus increasing the total number of destitute.

As the trade unions have pointed out, the internationalisation of productive forces and production relations, in its present form, can often endanger

the sovereignty and economic independence of countries. Moreover, the policy coordination which these transnational groups organise among themselves and through the governments of their home States is obvious. Such coordination is also seen in the common economic policies pursued by governments seeking drastic redistribution of income in favour of Big Business and at the expense of the working people.

Action has been taken by the WFTU and other international or regional organisations concerning international summit meetings such as those of the Big Seven or other UN and non-UN organisations. The trade unions of the world should coordinate their efforts, without exception, in order to increase the impact of their action at international level and in the different regions or economic, commercial or financial systems such as the CMEA, the European Community, the Lome Convention, GATT, etc. The trade unions demand non-discriminatory participation in all discussions related to workers' interests.

That is why the trade unions demand the democratisation of global economic relations, that is to adopt measures to free these relations from the domination and control of transnational monopolies and to base them on strong foundations of international economic cooperation. The basis of international economic relations must be fair and mutually advantageous to the peoples, with real equality in rights to allow them to build and develop their countries on the basis of comparative advantage.

The trade unions challenge the claim of the Big Business groups and their political allies who say that the "market economy" ipso facto works in a democratic manner. Their aim is not only to correct the negative social consequences of choices guided by profitability, it is also to have economic development based on the satisfaction of needs. That is why they demand the creation of genuine democratic structures allowing worker participation in decision-making.

The worsening of financial and monetary relations is an essential factor of the crisis in international relations, the price of which has to be paid by the workers, peoples and nations. Not only can the trade unions not accept the position that this financial domain should be inaccessible to workers and trade unions, but they demand that the control and participation of the working world be practiced in the financial sector. To this end, they must act together for new regional economic and financial structures, for new types of cooperation and for national sovereignty.

The trade union organisations are concerned about and express their opposition to the social consequences of structural changes which have a negative effect on the situation of workers and peoples. They are not only fighting them, they intend, with their proposals and their activities to take ac-

tion, at national, regional and international level, so that the workers and the peoples can impose new economic and social reforms, based on skill-intensive full employment, development, international cooperation and democracy in the enterprise and in society.

What is needed is a new economic internationalism with a human face and a progressive social content.

There is a broad consensus in the world trade union movement on what kind of "economic internationalism" and solidarity we propose and what social content it should have. In the main, this should include international campaigns and action for:

- an extensive write-off of the debt of the developing countries;
- effective regulation of capital movements and a selective international tax on capital flows to discourage speculative operations;
- the reorganisation of the financial sector on a new basis, with public ownership and control of all major financial institutions; the reform of the international monetary system; the democratisation of the structures of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to make them universal;
- the promotion of trade and economic cooperation between countries, joint ventures for production, trade, research and services, on a basis of equality and mutual benefit and upholding the principles of the New International Economic Order:
- the establishment of an International Fund for the Development of Peoples under the auspices of the United Nations, along with a "Disarmament for Development Fund":
- adherence by all countries to international labour standards and the adoption of strict measures against unfair competition based on sub-standard wages;
- the adoption of a mandatory UN Code for the regulation of the activities of transnational corporations and banks and its enforcement and monitoring with the participation of trade union organisations.
- The unity of trade union action in each multinational group remains the main condition for the application of such a code, as is shown by the example of the ILO's international labour standards. These problems also concern joint ventures.
- The right of workers and trade unions to block and prevent financial operations (takeover bids, leveraged buy-outs, leveraged management buy-outs, etc.)
- the recognition, through national legislation and international labour standards, of the trade union rights of workers in all enterprises under the TNCs, including the right to information and consultation on all questions of

wages, investment, restructuring, production and capital deployment by TNCs and in all cases of joint ventures and in Free Trade Zones.

— the establishment by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) of ecological standards and their implementation through national legislation as well as their observance, in particular, by the TNCs.

— In the framework of the formulation by the United Nations General Assembly of the International Development Strategy for the 4th UN Development Decade (1991-2000), priority should be given to the creation of new jobs and to ensuring suitable wages and working conditions, as well as to economic and social security, security of employment for all workers, respect for human rights, democratic freedoms and trade union rights, and to measures for people's participation in development. Specific measures should be adopted to attain the objective of "Health and Housing for All" by the year 2000.

Wages, jobs, technology and social welfare

Wages have been the priority demand in all workers' struggles throughout the world. Wages constitute the main motivation in work. The trade union movement should act to achieve wages responding to the needs of the workers and their families, guaranteeing purchasing power and its growth, and ensuring equitable remuneration for the competence acquired and applied by the workers. Effective measures need to be taken to offset the sharp decline in real wages and the erosion of relative wage differentials, as well as to guarantee a just share of the gains in productivity for workers through wage increases. Adequate steps should also be taken to deal with the negative consequences of deregulation, flexibility and structural adjustment measures.

The trade unions are in favour of new technology. New technology is a necessity and it needs to be accompanied by good social conditions. The mission of the trade union movement is to take up the challenge of jobs, expose the real causes behind the present situation and propose ways towards a lasting solution to the problems. It is life which presents us with the urgent need to draw up a trade union strategy which involves all workers in action to promote national and international solutions to these essential problems.

The use of advanced technology in these conditions brings out new contradictions, of which we would point out a few aspects.

Firstly, technological development as it is implemented, is neither homogeneous nor uniform. Automated production sectors coexist with the more

traditional forms of production. The trade union movement should therefore take into consideration the complicated results of these situations and express the demands of all, whilst uniting their action.

Secondly, the implementation of new technology today requires training and higher qualifications. The employers' strategies take this into account, channelling it through principles of selectivity and elitism, aimed at individualising the workers' situation. These practices also tend to divide the workers. The trade union movement ought to demand initial, in-service training, as well as permanent training for all and collective guarantees which take these demands into account.

Thirdly, access to and control of new technology in the different countries and regions is particularly unequal. The developing countries are the main victims of the inequality in its various forms: refusal of transfer or the transfer of outdated technology, or the introduction of new technology not adapted to the economic, social or ecological conditions of the host country. This situation is exacerbated by foreign debt and requires sustained activity by the trade union movement in both the developed countries and the developing countries, in order to promote technological cooperation which responds to the interests of all the partners involved. This should be taken into account by all the workers and reflected by international organisations, in order to ensure that the workers and trade unions are consulted at all stages of the introduction of new technology.

The effective use of the new potential in material productive forces requires extensive development of education and training systems, which is the only way of allowing the workers fully to control and implement technological development in the service of the peoples. This action should lead to increases in skills and qualifications and the recognition of these in terms of wages and purchasing power.

It should also improve the quality of work, that is, bring about socially useful reductions in working hours and significant improvements in working conditions. There are real possibilities today for progress in this direction.

Social welfare provision and health care are of fundamental concern for all trade union organisations. Improvements to social welfare have always been an essential factor in development. This is why the trade union movement cannot accept cuts in social welfare budgets and must take action towards improving social welfare and extending it to cover all sections of the population.

Social welfare provision and health care are not isolated problems which depend on the characteristics of each country. All the workers and trade unions of the world are concerned. It is a matter of human rights, defending

humankind, the right to life and a means of eradicating serious epidemics and diseases, such as AIDS. The universal nature of social welfare and health care also requires national, regional and international trade union cooperation to ensure that they are developed and extended.

There are real possibilities for active participation in the definition and selection of the aims of research and in the drawing up and implementation of scientific policies, promoting access for the workers to all aspects of knowledge and all dimensions of training.

At this time, when the interdependence of economic and social systems has become a structural reality in the world, there is a demand for international cooperation. This demand for balanced, open and democratic international cooperation is a priority. It should be seen as an alternative to the struggle for domination going on today between states and Big Business.

The international trade union movement has the task of promoting positive and convergent action by the workers, over and above the limits of national borders, in order to attain commercial, productive, technological and financial cooperation aimed at meeting the economic and social needs of all peoples, that is, assuring the conditions needed for real development, bringing with it full employment.

The need to develop human resources and respond to human needs in different areas and, in particular, with respect to the environment, training, culture, health and social welfare, makes it indispensable to channel the necessary resources into these activities. This means that a larger part of state budgets should be reserved for these purposes and spending on weapons and unproductive activities should be cut. Spending on these purposes is a factor for development. This, in turn, promotes their expansion by increasing the means available. The efficiency of services which respond to these needs, and which are often public services, should be improved. This is increasingly dependent on the skills of the employees involved, the development of their capacity for initiative and the democratic participation of the consumer in the management of these services. More generally, these requirements apply to all public services, whether aimed at the population in general, enterprises, or both individuals and enterprises.

Education

Education and training constitute a fundamental human right. It continues to be flouted. According to UNESCO, around one billion human beings,

that is, one in every five of the world's inhabitants, adults and children, are illiterate.

How can these men and women take their full place in the great challenge of economic, social and democratic development?

The question of education and the initial and continual training which our era requires cannot be left exclusively to the specialists; it is of concern to us all.

All the predictions indicate that the situation will continue to worsen if urgent measures are not taken. The financial pressure to cut state social spending needs to be resisted.

This fundamental problem for both the immediate and long-term future of humankind must be actively taken into account by workers and trade unions.

International Literacy Year (1990) and the years that follow should lead to different forms of action aimed at providing literacy training for populations which need it. It should also be particularly marked by an increase in trade union struggles and campaigns to remedy the root causes of illiteracy, which should lead to radical changes in government policy, in the interests of the people.

Young people should be accorded rights which will lead to the eradication of the causes of complete, as well as functional, illiteracy. These include:

- Unrestricted and free access to education at every level, dependent only on ability and interest, independent of financial means, ethnic origin or religious, political or philosophical conviction.

- Educational establishments at every level provided with adequate equipment to work on the basis of progressive teaching methods.

- Financial assistance to all those in need.

- Equal rights for girls and boys.

- Accommodation, food, leisure time activities, health and medical care, as far as possible for a nominal fee or free of charge.

- Possibilities for low-cost study trips.

- Above all, the right to qualified teaching staff, whose working and living conditions enable them to conduct effective lessons.

- The abolition of all discrimination on the basis of age in the granting of social allowances.

- The right to live in peace, in a world of greater solidarity.

- The right to social leisure-time activities, including the opportunity to travel, in order to promote solidarity and international understanding.

Environment

In the face of the current challenges, action by the workers and their trade union organisations and international cooperation is taken unreservedly as part of the vast movement for sustainable development, which respects the environment.

Trade union activity to protect nature and the working environment is closely linked to the struggle for better working conditions and health and safety for the workers. It is first and foremost in the enterprise—a potential source of pollution and hazards—that action must be taken to protect the environment.

The trade unions and other bodies which represent the workers in the enterprise must, obligatorily, be consulted on all health, safety, accident prevention and environmental protection measures in the enterprise, whether they come from the employer or the relevant public authorities.

The workers and their trade union organisations must have freedom of expression concerning everything which affects health and the environment.

This right of free expression should concern information for the workers and the local population. Industrial secrecy should, in no case, be allowed to hinder the exercise of this right.

The trade unions and other workers' representative bodies must be able to monitor installations, provisions concerning the safety of working conditions, standards and the state of the environment around the enterprise. They must have the right to be assisted by the experts of their choice and take samples or make analyses at the cost of the employer.

The functions and rights of the trade unions and other representative bodies must be applied to the benefit of all the workers on a site, whoever their employer.

If a dangerous situation occurs, the right of withdrawal must be recognised and guaranteed. Any breach of safety regulations or case of accidental pollution should be the subject of a detailed report to the workers' representative bodies.

The fight to protect the environment and ensure social control of hazards means that higher skills are urgently needed. The exploitation of unskilled labourers, mistrust, and the lack or violation of trade union rights are equally deliberate hazards to safety and the environment.

The smooth running of manufacturing requires adequate numbers of skilled workers to ensure the normal functioning of equipment and to cope in case of accidents.

It is high time that in-service training included basic knowledge of ecology and matters concerning the industrial environment. In-service training will be even more productive if it is used to complement basic training.

Communication

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 1988-1997 a "World Decade for Cultural Development", in order to highlight the cultural and human dimensions of the development process and the stimulation of creative skills and cultural life in general. The objectives of the decade fully coincide with workers' aspirations; trade unions are therefore called upon to contribute effectively to achieving these aims. These aims must be pursued, respecting the workers' rights in terms of culture and the demands of their organisations.

In this field, trade union action must be directed specifically towards promoting international cultural cooperation, creating new ties of solidarity and dialogue between cultures and facilitating greater cultural exchanges. The trade unions have to devote greater effort to improving workers' knowledge of other cultures, in order to eliminate prejudices and intolerance generated by reactionary forces

In this regard, social tourism promoted by the trade unions can play a positive role.

Trade unions support the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order, as proposed by UNESCO. Communication has emerged as a growth sector of the economy, a complex and pervasive socio-cultural influence and a meeting point for many fields of human activity. The development of new technology, such as the use of satellites transcending national frontiers, cable systems, video recorders, inter-active computer systems and networks, is opening up new possibilities. It is necessary to adopt appropriate strategies to avoid misuse of the information media by the monopolies that are already entrenched in this sector in many countries and to ensure a free flow of information.

The trade unions demand new possibilities for their activities. There are now vast opportunities to promote trade union cooperation at national, regional and international level in the field of communications and to promote trade union solidarity in the information age.

Information is power. There have been some commendable initiatives by various trade union organisation to set up information systems and satellite bases, with opportunities for computerised link-ups. However, compared to the total domination and control over the information infrastructure exercised by international monopolies, trade union efforts so far have been grossly inadequate.

Trade unions need the means to promote cultural cooperation and information exchange. In this regard, a major problem to be overcome is how to handle information flow in various languages. This is a difficult problem but there are ways of overcoming it.

Trade unions should jointly organise research on the "disinformation" activities of the transnational monopolies and on how to make their presence felt in the national and international information media. This has to be done while helping to organise the working people employed in the mass media and by promoting coalitions with all democratic forces seeking to eliminate monopolies - both private and bureaucratic

Problems of women,youth,immigrant labour and other categories

In the last decade, the social and economic changes in the world have resulted in an increase in the number of working women of about 150 million. It is estimated that women account for about 36% of the economically active population. About one billion women are expected to be in the labour force by the year 2000.

In the industrialised countries, more than one-third of trade union members are women. Nevertheless, in these countries, as well as in the developing countries, there are vast sectors of women workers who are yet to be organised in trade unions and this has to be a major task for the decade of the 1990s.

Despite the efforts made by working women and trade unions, the basic problems of inequality and discrimination continue to exist in many sectors and regions. The social infrastructure required to combine work and family responsibilities is not commensurate with the actual extent of women's employment and their needs.

The situation of young workers also remains precarious. Along with working women, young workers are subjected to various forms of discrimination in respect of employment, wages and working conditions. Young people form a large proportion of the unemployed, even in the industrially-advanced countries.

Exploitation of child labour continues in several labour-intensive occupations, especially in developing countries. Cases of clandestine employment of children are also reported even in developed countries. Trade unions call for national and international action against such practices and for adequate legislation upholding the rights of children and youths.

The international and regional trade union conferences on problems of working women and young workers, held in recent years, have called upon the trade unions to intensify their action on the demands of working women and young workers and also to take steps to ensure their great participation in trade union activities as well as in leadership positions. This has also been recommended in the framework of the renewal and organisational strengthening of the trade union movement in the new situation. Such action is particularly necessary at the industrial and professional level, paying particular attention to the specific problems faced by these categories of working people in the different sectors.

In the developing countries, the trade union movement has begun to intensify its activities on the problems of agricultural and rural workers, to achieve food self-sufficiency, implement democratic land reforms, eliminate unemployment and under-employment and accelerate rural development. There is a need for stronger solidarity action in support of the struggle of working people in rural areas by the workers and trade unions in the urban areas and by the international and regional trade union organisations. In the 1980s, the situation of rural workers, like that of the majority of working people in the developing countries, deteriorated further, because of "austerity" programmes and IMF policies. Effective action is needed to end such a situation.

Trade union action to defend the interests of migrant workers should be stepped up. The number of workers employed outside their own country, which is estimated at

20 million, is continuing to grow with the increasing internationalisation of the economy. Trade unions demand that governments take specific measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against migrant workers and to ensure the same economic and social rights and responsibilities for them in accordance with international standards and the New International Economic Order. International trade union coordination to defend migrant workers should be much more effective.

The right to retire is a considerable gain of the workers. It is inseparable from legislative and contractual collective guarantees, and this calls for consistent action from the whole of the trade union movement, so that this right is safeguarded and improved. This issue concerns, in particular, retirement age and the level of pensions. The interdependence of the situation of retired people and that of employed workers demands the continuation and promotion of efforts to organise retired workers in close cooperation with the trade union movement.

The structural changes in industry and the economy have further enhanced the role of engineers, managerial staff and technicians (EMTs); organised efforts by these workers to improve their conditions, in cooperation with the trade unions, are developing in many countries. The joint action of the organisations of EMTs and the trade unions is particularly vital in the struggle to eliminate the negative consequences of technological change and to ensure that such changes result in maximising labour productivity and not in the wanton elimination of jobs and skills. The effective coordination of the activities of the trade unions and the organisations of the EMTs is of decisive importance to the success of collective bargaining and protest actions.

Peace and disarmament

We have now entered the last decade of the 20th century. Looking back over the last period, we can see that significant changes took place in the 1980s, particularly the latter half. They primarily concern the change in the international situation, with an evolution from the existence of two great ideological and military blocs, promoting animosity and confrontation, to a situation in which positive factors must be decisive.

However, the danger of another world war is still one of the great threats which compromises the survival of humanity, the right to life and the protection of civilisation. Despite the significant progress made in disarmament negotiations, the danger of these weapons being used has not been averted. A modern war, with the use of weapons of mass destruction, would have irreversible consequences for the world. That is clear to everyone. Even a conventional war, particularly one involving countries with a large number of nuclear and chemical factories, would lead to incalculable danger for humankind.

At the same time, trade unions cannot forget the damage inflicted on the world economy due to senseless military expenditure and the negative distorting effect this has on workers' standards of living, employment and social welfare. This spending is also an essential cause of the public debt of many industrialised and Third World countries.

It is impossible to resolve the cardinal issues of development and ensure the survival of civilisation, without creating conditions for lasting peace based on justice, and without a transfer to development of the resources now spent on weapons.

One of the most important questions is that of cutting military spending and the conversion of the arms industry. Several years ago, the trade union movement put forward a proposal to cut the level of military budgets and, first and foremost, the budgets of the major powers, and transfer the resources thus released to the needs of social development, particularly in the countries of the Third World. Effective measures need to be taken to prevent the misuse of new technology for military purposes and especially for the development of sophisticated modern weapons by the transnational military-industrial complexes.

The commencement of practical disarmament sheds new light on questions of conversion, that is, of the transfer of weapons production to civilian purposes. The trade union movement has been studying this complex question for more than 10 years. It is important for the workers of all countries, in all continents, irrespective of their social system. The complex processes of conversion require adequate planning and preparations, the formulation of practical programmes of conversion and measures to maintain workers' jobs and living standards, organise retraining where necessary and ensure economic efficiency.

What is needed is the political will, on which basis it will be possible immediately to begin to implement models of practical conversion, the social re-orientation of military expenditure and the creation and subsequent implementation of the whole concept of a "disarmament economy" instead of an "armament economy" in each country and each instance of international trade and cooperation.

The military and political prerequisites for conversion demand the principle of "reasonable defence sufficiency" as opposed to the weapons build-up which is still prevalent in a number of countries.

Given these arguments, we propose a trade union alternative to the present situation as regards disarmament; it should:

- be guided by the aim of entering the next millenium without wars and violence;

- help to develop a new spirit in international relations, based on a recognition of the global nature of the threat, replacing confrontation by cooperation and settling any conflicts by peaceful, political means;

- work for the effective influence of workers and world public opinion on the disarmament process, to achieve substantial progress along the path to a radical reduction in, and subsequent elimination of all nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, a considerable reduction in conventional weapons and armed forces, and a ban on the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction;

—struggle for the creation of an economy of international cooperation instead of the "arms economy";

— support an equitable political solution to regional conflicts through negotiations, oppose all forms of military intervention, and call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from all territories and for the dissolution of all military bases; respect for the right of peoples to self-determination and an end to all forms of aggression and foreign intervention, from any quarter.

— consistently support the simultaneous dissolution of the opposing military and political blocs, and prevent the formation of any new military alliances which would lead to increased international tension;

— work towards the adoption by all countries of national legislation, and also international documents on conversion, including the conversion of manpower resources and military budgets; consolidation of the role of trade unions and other social organisations in the adoption of decisions on these issues and control over measures carried out in that field;

— deploy efforts for the speediest practical implementation of the principle of "disarmament for development", based on the transfer to development purposes of a large part of the resources released as a result of disarmament, with the participation of trade unions in managing the fund which could be created at the United Nations for this purpose; rendering economic assistance to the Third World, not on a bloc basis but on the basis of equal relations between North and South;

— establish and ensure regular contacts between trade union organisations, including those of different orientations, on the issues of the survival of civilisation and the consolidation of peace and disarmament for development. Taking into account the convergence of their positions on these issues, ties between the trade union movement, the UN system and non-governmental organisations pursuing similar goals, should be established and strengthened.

— promote a worldwide mobilisation of trade union organisations committed to disarmament and conversion for development.

III.-THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

On the eve of the 1990s, all the trade unions in the world and each of them individually are confronted with a challenge that is new both in terms of its quality and its strength. The trade unions as the representatives and defenders of workers' rights and interests have to meet these challenges and seek to exercise their new and qualitatively higher responsibilities.

The 12th World Trade Union Congress provided an exceptional opportunity to establish a broad dialogue and constructive exchange of opinions, on which basis more coordinated and effective action could be promoted.

The trade unions of the world take into account the appearance of new concepts in the field of international relations and the increasingly confirmed idea that it is necessary to democratise these relationships, to ensure economic security for all and to carry out disarmament.

The role of the trade unions of the world in participating in international relations is an essential condition if they are to confront the serious challenges posed by the developments affecting the peoples of the various parts of the world, whatever their social system or present level of development.

Faced with these demands, the fundamental issue for all trade unions at the present time is to promote worker participation in order that their social and economic needs be taken into account and fulfilled.

In order for this trade union participation to increase in volume, unity and efficiency, combining demands and proposals in campaigns, it must be carried out democratically with the workers. It can therefore oppose the attempts to put men, women and peoples into competition, with each other, increase their effective solidarity and make progress in international relations for the interests of the workers of the countries concerned, for peace and essential international economic development.

This considerable challenge to the whole of humankind requires new participation by the unions, and demands the renewal of activity by the trade union movement. This challenge calls for the implementation by the whole trade union movement of a new solidarity, adapted to the needs of our time

In 1990, the world's trade unions observed the centenary of May Day. Also this year, there is the 45th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and of the attainment of unity between the trade unions of the world with

the founding of the WFTU on a clear basis of "No More War" and "For Social Welfare".

These events provide us all with an opportunity to think at length on the successes of the past, the reasons for and consequences of the trade union split, the present problems and the future of the trade union movement.

In the last century and especially in the last 45 years, the world's trade unions have made great progress. The trade union movement has spread far and wide and the estimated trade union membership is now as much as half a billion. There are three major international trade union organisations — the WFTU, the ICFTU and the WCL, as well as regional and branch-based bodies.

Great success has been achieved. However, in the context of the new problems faced by working people in the wake of vast technological change and restructuring, questions are being raised as to whether the existing trade union structures are adequate to deal with the new challenges and tasks. Trade union activity has become more complex and new forms and methods of work have become necessary. This is particularly true in regard to the international activities of the trade unions and the structures which are needed to deal with the problems arising from growing international economic links, joint ventures, the activities of transnational corporations and banks, the around-the-clock operations of international finance, the emerging internationalisation of the labour market, etc.

International trade, economic and financial relations are directly affecting jobs, wages and living standards in all countries on an increasing scale. The operations of transnational enterprises call for appropriate and effective coordination of activities of the workers and trade unions in these enterprises. However, with a very few exceptions, the international trade union organisations and their professional organisations, mainly because of the obstacles set by the TNCs, have not been able to help in establishing such channels for the necessary information, exchange and coordination.

In the developed countries, the structural changes in industry and the economy are having repercussions on the trade union movement and demand corresponding changes in the structure of professional organisations. The changing composition of the labour force has a significant impact on trade union structures at national level and poses new problems concerning the renewal and growth of the trade union movement. The decline in employment in the unionised manufacturing industries as a consequence of the restructuring has led to a corresponding decline in trade union membership. Moreover, the attacks by Big Business seeking a "union-free environment" also have a serious impact. Trade union membership is falling in many countries. Traditional bastions of trade unionism in North America and Europe are

showing considerable losses.

Trade union centres are launching sustained campaigns to "organise the unorganised" and to present a better image of the unions themselves as genuine defenders of workers' interests as well as improving the capacity of unions to provide better services for their members. Particular difficulties in this regard are faced in the developing countries where the number of workers in the informal sector of industry far outnumber those in traditional sectors and serious efforts are therefore necessary to organise them and expand trade union influence.

It is important to note that the trade unions in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, due to a lack of independence, were not in a situation where they could express the state of mind of the workers and criticise adequately the bureaucratic leadership for the serious mistakes made in governing, mistakes which caused stagnation and economic recession. From this stemmed a gap between trade unions and working people, mistrust of unions and the need to rethink their role and their activities as a whole. The trade unions in the process of renewal in these countries are rejecting the bureaucratic system and interventionist economic management as a whole.

The trade unions of Eastern and Central Europe, where there is a high level of union membership, are undertaking fundamental changes in their activities and are coming up against new and complex problems. In some of these countries, unfortunately, several organisations have been set up. In breaking their close links with parties and state administrative structures, the unions are experimenting and creating new structures based on the following principles: complete autonomy and independence from governments and political parties, internal democracy allowing the expression of all opinions, debureaucratisation and the strengthening of the role of trade federations and professional branches on the basis of the defence of workers' interests.

The trade unions welcome detente and the efforts being made by countries to promote mutual understanding and to eradicate the old prejudices of the time of the Cold War.

These changes also have an impact on the relations between trade unions of different international affiliation or orientation. This is promoted by the efforts of all concerned to improve the efficiency of the functioning of the Workers' Group at the ILO. On some global issues, there has been a common approach in the presentations made by the international and regional trade union organisations at various UN fora dealing with peace and disarmament, development, the environment, etc. At industrial level, in some sectors there has been an effort to improve relations between the international professional organisations.

However, the state of international trade union relations remains far behind the positive trends in the world situation. There is still an insufficient realisation of the serious negative consequences of the lack of international trade union coordination on workers' struggles and the defence of workers' interests.

The task of the trade unions is to unite all workers, on the basis of their common interests, going beyond the different opinions and ideologies that they hold.

In this spirit, the trade union movement has to ensure that it does not become an arena for political parties and different ideologies to confront each other.

These questions had constituted one of the main causes of the split in the past; it still constitutes a serious brake on trade union cooperation today. This does not, however, mean a denial of the necessity of a wide and pluralistic debate allowing everybody to express their opinions.

The growing diversity of economic and social situations and consequently the diversity in the solutions advanced, underlines the diversity within the world trade union movement as well. Nevertheless, the interdependence of world phenomena also stresses the need for dialogue, cooperation and solidarity. It is, therefore, necessary to identify and develop all common features of the trade union movement of the world, with tolerance and respect for all opinions.

There is still insufficient research on the possibilities of joint international action on common issues and an under-estimation of the difficulties in promoting such action. Although the relationship between national and international trade union action is recognised in principle, it is not reflected in day-to-day activity in practical terms.

For this reason, international trade union activity must not only form the necessary extension of work carried out at national level, but the national organisations must feel involved in joint work at international and regional level and its implementation in their own countries.

At their Congresses, the international trade union organisations have all stressed the need to develop activities on a decentralised (regional) basis as well as on a trade and professional basis giving greater scope for the activities of international branch trade union organisations. To realise this objective, however, it is essential to remedy all the inadequacies, obstacles and bans that are obscuring it. Great progress has already been made towards this aim and this shows the great opportunities that exist for implementing this orientation which is so necessary in the new situation.

In the new situation, the methods of promoting joint action in defence of

workers' interests at regional and industrial level — which all agree is a priority — should command greater attention, and an effort should be made by all sides to find the best way of achieving positive results.

High priority should also be given to promoting joint action on North-South issues, towards many of which there is a broadly similar approach by all international and regional trade union organisations. Branch trade union organisations in the world have been providing active solidarity in various ways to advance the work of the trade unions in the developing countries. It should be possible to further strengthen this cooperation by undertaking joint campaigns and action on questions of development and international economic cooperation.

Defending workers' interests, ensuring social progress and justice, providing an effective contribution to the achievement of real international economic cooperation, the building of a world of peace and guaranteeing trade union freedoms and human rights, are still the basic tasks for which workers are organised: trade unionism. More than ever, perhaps, the need for unity and joint action is a requirement of the times.

In order to defend workers' interests, to overcome opposition, to be stronger and to achieve further success, common thought and action is a necessity. The trade unions cannot leave it to the transnational corporations and international financial bodies to impose their own views. World dialogue and united, coordinated action by the trade unions of the world is an objective need.

We consider that this noble aim which has always been at the centre of workers' concerns is a necessity and that it is possible to fulfil it.

This has to be achieved by responding to trade union concerns in a more constructive manner, and taking into account the prevailing situation. It is equally necessary to ensure that all organisations have their place on an equal footing, and a democratic basis, to ensure their representation and efficient participation in the drawing up of guidelines.

It is an indispensable rule that each of them should have the freedom to join in or not join in the activities decided on by the majority, and express its disagreement when it sees fit.

This rule would allow each organisation to retain its own convictions and positions and its originality, whilst looking for common positions where they exist. It should be a way of building international trade union relations considerably. It would also give a considerable boost to their international authority, so that they may effectively influence decisions at this level where they affect the workers. This is the case particularly with the UN agencies and the ILO, and the international financial bodies such as the IMF and the World

Bank which, in general, take very little account of the opinion of the trade unions.

This orientation is equally necessary in respect of governments and employers' organisations in the various continents, where trade union activities should be built up taking the existence of these bodies and the specific nature of the situations into account, in order to contribute to the activities of trade unions in the different parts of the world.

A great effort must be made to adapt branch-based activities to the needs of the time, since transnational corporations are becoming more and more active throughout the world, increasing numbers of joint ventures are appearing and the need for relations, dialogue and an exchange of experience is becoming quite clear, both within enterprises and in the branch organisations concerned.

Guided by the effort to deal more effectively with the concerns of trade unions the world over, and to coordinate their activities, all the component parts of the trade union movement must try and overcome difficulties and restrictions: this will promote constructive dialogue in the interests of all workers of the world, of the WFTU, the ICFTU and the WCL.

The 12th World Trade Union Congress has a special significance for the whole trade union movement, carrying forward the experience and viewpoints of international, regional and national trade union organisations to respond to present-day demands and workers' needs by adapting the forms and methods of their activity, structures and priorities.

Aware of the risks involved in the international situation for the peoples and the workers and the considerable strength which international unity between the trade union organisations would represent, the 12th World Trade Union Congress calls on all trade unions of the world to work for its achievement.

IV. — FOR A RADICAL RENEWAL OF THE WFTU'S APPROACH, ACTIVITIES AND STRUCTURES

Since their creation in various countries, the labour movement and trade union organisations have sought to coordinate their activity at international level. This long association resulted 100 years ago in the labour movement and the trade unions of the world collectively celebrating May Day as a genuine expression of a united action - the call for an 8-hour day.

Since then, despite difficulties accompanying progress, and draw backs linked to trade union development and their different ideas, this basic hope for united, concerted action has remained constant and is still a permanent preoccupation.

During the Second World War the anti-fascist coalition enabled the trade unions to overcome many political and ideological differences of the time. The creation of the WFTU in 1945 is proof of this. Rallying the great majority of trade unions of the world, it was an historic trade union event which marked the development of international trade union relations, opening up great prospects to the trade unions of the world for the defence of the basic interests of the workers of our world.

The cold war period which influenced relations between countries, had a negative influence on the international trade union movement.

This international trade union situation was conditioned in a multiform period of capitalism based on a general crisis of development and the collapse of the colonial system. The existence of many types of confrontation and harrowing armed conflicts, and the system of international cooperation which maintained and developed new forms of domination dragged a significant number of countries into underdevelopment which had disastrous consequences for the workers and the peoples of the countries concerned.

The WFTU and its member and friendly organisations, in looking for the broadest possible unity, developed permanent support for the struggles of the workers in their actions for social progress, the respect for trade union freedoms and the coordination of trade unions in their struggles against the harmful activities of transnational corporations.

Campaigns were organised each time they were deemed necessary to increase international solidarity, to confront racism and attacks against the independence of nations. Effective support was provided for the development of trade unions, trade union training and for the respect of trade union and human rights.

United initiatives were taken in various continents to oppose foreign debt and its catastrophic effects on nations.

The WFTU developed consistent action to assure world peace against the arms race and for the reduction of military expenditure and it being allocated for meeting the social needs of humanity.

However, if we take into account the general development of the trade union movement and the real difficulties which influenced its development, such as the anti-trade union and anti-worker policies of the capitalists and the governments of numerous countries, these positive results would have been even greater if the normal work and development of the Federation had not been hindered by certain major obstacles.

In vital areas, the position of certain of its members, despite open and often lively debates, sometimes led to erroneous or unilateral positions.

Trade union organisations, as they worked in certain socialist countries throughout this period, behaved as representatives of their countries more than as representatives of genuinely independent trade union organisations. It is in this way that the reality in these countries was not really taken into account.

This situation had repercussions for the position of the WFTU on the choice of priority activities and the excessive weight of some of them greatly hindered trade union initiatives which could have been carried out in order to guarantee the defence of the workers' interests in the best possible way.

These are two major faults which have harmed WFTU activity and prestige throughout the world and which have had negative repercussions on the trade union movement.

The basis for a renewal of the WFTU is in the elimination of these two negative phenomena.

The WFTU, comprising trade unions from capitalist, developing and socialist countries, is therefore a precious instrument of the international trade union movement. Experience has shown that broad understanding, cooperation and action by the trade unions of the world is possible on the basis of defending the workers' interests in all areas.

From the 9th World Trade Union Congress onwards, the WFTU adopted the open door policy.

Bilateral relations between organisations belonging to the WFTU, the

ICFTU and the WCL have increased substantially.

The WFTU has become more representative; UN special agencies have begun to ask more often for the point of view of the WFTU on a number of issues and, in many cases, have accepted our proposals.

Cooperation between the WFTU, the ICFTU and the WCL in the ILO, in particular in regional conferences, has improved.

The first constitution of the WFTU, adopted in 1945, has been modified several times in order to best respond to trade union organisations.

Trade unionism must now confront new responsibilities of an historically unprecedented dimension. They have to operate in a number of areas with courageous innovation. They must assure the defence of the workers interests in complete independence and in all situations. This fundamental aspect is more necessary for trade unions now in the 1990s than ever before. Having decided to take its full responsibility in the realisation of this objective, the WFTU intends to radically renew its activities, running, methods of work and conditions of rallying the workers on the basis of their common interests and not that of ideological, political, religious or philosophical references. The WFTU, which groups together workers from capitalist, socialist and developing countries, intends to represent trade unionism from the entire working world — that of all workers in their diversity.

The WFTU, which respects the definitions of each centre bases itself on combative and democratic trade unionism, trade unionism that is genuinely independent from employers, governments, political parties and religious institutions and fully linked to the needs of workers and peoples, to social and economic progress, and to cooperation and peace. That poses with the greatest urgency the need for unity, solidarity, rapprochement and dialogue between the trade unions of the world for greater strength and efficiency in mobilisation and action.

There is therefore a great deal at stake. What we intend to establish is a radically renewed WFTU, that is fully independent and unitary and can draw workers together.

The preceding chapters of this text present the international economic situation. They demonstrate the co-ordinated character and similar consequences of the anti-social measures which are affecting the workers in various parts of the world.

Beyond the ideological concepts that are expressed in the world, the existence of different economic systems is a reality. Faced with such a situation, there is now an imperative need to find common approaches that facilitate convergent action by all trade unions.

Throughout the world the basic issue of development, to satisfy and

guarantee social needs is being raised seriously. It has led to the demand for the respect of human rights, trade union rights and for the broadest possible democracy.

The scale of these objectives is immense. They are confronted by the ideological offensive launched by Big Business and the TNCs which tend to eliminate the trade unions as soon as they oppose the exploitation of workers, counter any mechanisms of political and ideological pressure or resist the attempts to create collaborationist trade unionism that undermines its independence.

This wish to create a world without trade unions has already had effects which require a response from the members of the WFTU and all other trade unions, regardless of their affiliation.

This response is vital:

-To assure all workers employment, and a dignified life which guarantees decent wages, working and living conditions for everyone, which scientific and technological process makes possible.

-To resolve in a concerted manner the questions concerning peace, disarmament and the environment and in a wider sense, those concerning the future of humanity in order to assure to all peoples a life of freedom and solidarity, based on their national independence.

The present situation, with the possible development of relations between states and the changes already carried out to trade unions in certain socialist countries which affirm their wish to be independent and to defend the worker's interest, should promote reconciliation between the various trade union forces.

The aim of the WFTU is to enable all trade union organisations from all continents to meet and to consult each other whatever their orientations and national, regional or international affiliations.

The WFTU is therefore vital for everyone to work together and overcome all exclusions and rejections of unity. Its aim is to search for a way to unite all workers regardless of their political, philosophic or religious opinion.

The WFTU is in favour of international trade union unity without any exceptions or restrictions. It is prepared to engage in all dialogue without delay with all the component parts of the national and international trade union movement and to use all opportunities to take joint action for the defence of the interests of the workers. The maintenance of restrictions in international trade union contacts and relations which is not in any way justified-outside of ideological and political positions, creates many obstacles. We regret this because the existence of such negative positions does not correspond to the objective needs to the workers.

The WFTU should implement the spirit and the letter of its Constitution. In its future activities it should therefore ensure that its leading organs permanently work to respect these principles. No one may behave like the representative of any party or government. Each of its member organisations should have as its aim combative activity to defend workers' interests. The transformations that have occurred in the countries of Eastern Europe have had consequences for the trade union movement in those countries, but also in other countries of the world. This constitutes a positive new trend which contributes a great deal to lifting previous obstacles and favours activities that allow them to renew their structures and their forms of organisation in accordance with the needs of our time.

The organisations of the WFTU want to change the existing situation and to put an end to the exploitation of humankind which is a significant obstacle to the development of the workers, and to solving the global problems facing all of humanity.

We base ourselves on the reality of social relations and their contradictions. In this context, we are in favour of a WFTU where each member organisation has equal rights and duties. Each organisation counts as one. Each can choose their own level of participation — branch, regional or global.

The WFTU only exists through the wishes of the trade unions of which it is comprised and to respond to their needs and concerns. Grouping together trade unions from many countries with various social systems, from all continents, the WFTU co-ordinates and conducts their struggles and defends their demands at international level on the basis of the consistent and converging principles which they express.

The WFTU has set its objective as regrouping internationally all trade union organisations who act in order to assure the defence of workers, regardless of their beliefs.

It represents a centre where similar problems can be discussed together in order to assure joint search for solutions.

There can be no real solution without continual dialogue, joint reflection, bold initiatives, proposals and action.

At the moment, perhaps more so than ever before, the coordination of activities is a necessity. The basic problems of defending the workers' interests are posed in similar, and often identical, terms and, in many cases, their solution requires concerted action.

Taking into account the convergence which exists at every level, in the various professions, the different branches and different regions of the world — the main aim of activities should be effectiveness. This requires an unprecedented examination of the situations as they exist, without any formalism

and bureaucratisation.

Far from being intended to impose pre-established opinion, this practice is based on the desire for understanding and cooperation. This requires frank discussion and a search for ways expressing ideas and orientations which promote cooperation between all the trade union organisations concerned.

This international trade union approach must respect the dignity, originality and independence of each of the organisations which take part.

In implementing the guidelines defined by the analyses in the background document for the 12th Congress, the WFTU also intends to modify and improve its work and structures.

There are two main orientations behind this: the development of industrial activities and that of regional activities in order to bring day-to-day activities closer to the realities and daily concerns of the trade unions and of all workers.

Building up the potential of sectorial activities at international level is a decisive aspect if the needs of the trade unions are to be met.

The industrial federations in most of the developed and developing world are carrying out activities specific to their professions with increased autonomy.

Trade unions in enterprises are having to cope with the internationalisation of capital, markets and production, and the activities of the increasingly powerful and hegemonistic transnational monopolies. Their concerns are also linked to the development of the various professional branches and the implementation of new technology, which affects them directly, and the changes to the composition of the working class, which are creating problems for the trade union movement to overcome.

Wage demands, employment, working conditions and the future of everyone are the main concerns of the workers, and are expressed clearly in their struggles. The solution to these concerns is increasingly linked to the international situation, because of transnational corporations and the internationalisation of activities.

Redeployment, mobility, insecurity and misinformation are the daily lot of workers and trade unions, particularly in the transnational corporations, and thus confirm the increased importance of international trade union organisations able to help and respond in practical terms to the needs of trade unions in this respect.

Industrial unions have to overcome the competition between workers which is instigated by the employers.

This reality in the development of the trade union movement gives each TUI major responsibility in the international sphere, responsibility that can be

fulfilled with a reinforcement of the independence of their decisionmaking, more effective general independence and different practices as regards their functioning.

The WFTU must, on the basis of the means it has, create conditions in which the TUIs, and their leaderships should be able to take all decisions they consider useful, in all fields, including that of finance, so as better to carry out their role and promote the effective defence of the workers' interest.

This continual search to give the TUIs full autonomy and independence in their activities, whilst making them an indispensable element of our world trade union movement, demands real cooperation and coordination of the activities of the TUIs and the WFTU.

Regional activity responds to the real concerns affirmed by trade union organisations in the various continents and regions of the world. The day-to-day defence of the workers' interests has specific features, which may often form a subject of united action and the basis for greater effectiveness. This should bring about activities which are as close to the trade unions as possible, to coordinate their specific demands and also express these at world level. The setting up of the WFTU regional offices will allow better expression of solidarity, the more effective organisation of trade union training and the coordination of struggles at regional and world level. This will bring about better coordination of activities and action with regional organisations of varying orientation which already exist in many of the continents and regions. This regional structure should also cooperate closely with the TUIs who so wish to look at the possibilities of sustained joint action in the continent or region whilst respecting their independence on the basis of the orientations and priorities of each TUI.

A question of even greater importance today than in the past is how we can unite and strengthen our forces of action so as better to help the trade union organisations concerned, whether they be members, friendly organisations, independent or even members of other international centres.

What kind of adaptation should be made? In other words, what kind of a WFTU does our movement need at the present time?

It needs a WFTU which is a place for consultation, dialogue initiatives, proposals and information for all the trade unions of the world.

An effective WFTU that defends the interests of the workers represented by member and non-member organisations.

– A WFTU that puts forward trade union alternatives to the present unjust international economic order.

– A WFTU able to give impetus to international trade union action decided on by its leading bodies.

— A WFTU that helps national and industrial trade unions to deal with some aspects of their trade union work.

— A WFTU that encourages, organises and coordinates solidarity actions for the struggles of peoples and workers.

— A WFTU able to take effective action to defend and ensure respect for trade union freedoms, trade union rights, and human rights.

— A WFTU that supports the struggles for political and economic independence, against forms of discrimination, racism and domination (imperialism, colonialism or any other type) in favour of national sovereignty and peace.

— A WFTU that works in an active and constructive manner in cooperating with the national or international centres in defending the workers' interests at the UN, the ILO, UNESCO and the FAO, as at all other international bodies and organisations.

— A WFTU that is capable of conducting meaningful exchanges of experience and information among different trade union organisations, at world, regional and industrial level.

— A WFTU that can render educational help in trade union work.

— A WFTU that uses all means and possibilities to promote cooperation and unity of action by the international trade union movement.

— A WFTU able to show clearly, by region, profession and at world level, the common points in the demands and struggles of workers, that can form a basis for joint action.

The WFTU should concentrate its activities on the main problems regarding defence of the workers' interests and assistance to trade unions to ensure effective activities.

The new structure of the WFTU and the various mechanisms to be set up should be free as far as possible from any rigidity so that they can continually adapt to the needs of trade union organisations and developments in the international situation. These flexible and adaptable structures, whilst assuring the organisation of the activities and actions that may be demanded by the situation, will be of a more efficient coordinating nature. They will be responsible for drawing up guidelines, encouraging action and thus ensuring the convergence and dissemination of this action. This means acting as a stimulus and supporting the decisions of national organisations and branch federations to bring about the broadest possible and most united international activities and maximum efficiency in ensuring the defence and improvement of the workers' living conditions.

In order to meet these objectives, international trade union activity must be free of any formalism, meetings which are not indispensable should be

cancelled, with the aim of ensuring maximum usefulness and effectiveness and putting the human, material and financial resources into activities to be carried out, whilst ensuring the conditions for democratic discussion and decision-making.

With this in mind, the future set up of the WFTU could be as follows:

- The Congress, which could meet every five instead of every four years;

- The General Council which could meet at least three times between 2 Congresses;

- A Presidential Council, composed of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the President of the Audit Commission, the General Secretaries of the TUIs, the Regional Secretaries and the Secretariat of the WFTU. This Council could meet twice a year to define what is to be done to ensure the implementation of the guidelines set by the General Council, and to consider financial matters and various aspects of activities;

- A restricted permanent Secretariat.

Since the objectives and structures of the WFTU headquarters will be considerably modified, with the creation of regional offices under the responsibility of the vice-president, with a full-time secretary, who will deal with: relations with the WFTU Secretariat and the national centres, the coordination of activities in the region, and the organisation of trade union training and solidarity action, this decentralisation of activities, will allow a significant reduction in the permanent political and technical staff. At the WFTU headquarters, the Secretariat will be in charge of daily work, coordinating activities and representing the WFTU in the various international bodies and demonstrations, and will also be in charge of information and research work.

The rational use of modern methods of work and communication, taking into account financial capabilities, should enable a significant improvement in the quality and speed of circulating information.

An international economic and social research centre should be set up. It should be able to count on the cooperation of skilled trade union and scientific experts, who could ensure a high quality of studies and research. This centre should maintain working relations with other organisations of the same nature.

Constant work for the various categories of wage-earners and the various commissions will be carried out on the basis of a new concept which takes into account the specific aspects relating to their activities, closely linked to research and the practical achievements of the representatives of Centres and trade unions concerned.

The WFTU's publications should be adapted to the new guidelines.

These thoughts regarding the needs of the trade union movement today

and the role of the WFTU mean that developments must be taken into account and the WFTU adapted to this reality.

The implementation of all these objectives requires an in-depth examination of the skilled human resources needed and the financial means to be adapted to these objectives. This matter of possibilities and resources, as essential as it is, is closely linked to the objectives and structures of the WFTU.

REPORT FROM COMMISSION NO. 1

DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

Chairman: Jean-Christophe Le Duigou (France)

Rapporteur: Razakanaivo, General Secretary of FISEMA (Madagascar)

The discussion was very productive. 22 speakers representing all continents discussed in detail the topic of "development and the responsibilities of the trade unions".

1) One conviction emerged: without struggle based on action by the trade union movement for demands, there will be no immediate replies to the essential problems of genuine development nor to the urgency of establishing a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

a) Great potential now exists-particularly with the new stage of the scientific and technological revolution. But this does not automatically benefit needs. On the contrary, increasing inequality, increased domination by multinational corporations and by some countries over others and a decline in national sovereignty are evident everywhere. There is unemployment, insecurity, and attacks are being made against social rights in the developed capitalist countries. There is the rural exodus, poverty and the pillage of wealth in the developing countries. A serious situation of shortages and the challenging of social rights is accompanying the implementation of market mechanisms in the USSR. The situation of the workers and people, and their living and working conditions are at the centre of this challenge.

b) The causes must therefore be identified, not on the basis of ideological discussion a priori, but on the basis of a specific analysis of reality. This is the prerequisite for a genuine change in the situation.

The speakers identified a certain number of mechanisms that are responsible for the difficulties:

- the existence of immense debts and, in particular, the considerable debt of the developing countries, which has nevertheless been paid through exorbitant interest payments;

- the worsening of levies concerning terms of trade, certainly on raw materials from the Third World, but also on energy sources, food products and even manufactured products between the developed countries and towards the developing countries;

- the increase in mass, lasting unemployment, under-employment and the development of insecure forms of employment are directly responsible for the fall in living conditions of the workers, increased poverty and migration;

- the continuing austerity and adjustment policies advocated by the IMF and World Bank and implemented by governments, leading to unemployment, a fall in liv

ing standards and the waste of huge potential, particularly in the public sector.

Other factors were rightly put forward, such as regional conflicts and wars, which caused increased difficulties for peoples.

c) Responsibilities must be clearly set out:

– that of the transnational corporations, whose powers have increased considerably and who rely on putting the workers of different countries into competition with each other. They divert huge resources towards financial speculation. These corporations, as explained by a trade union representative from the Arab countries "are setting, more than ever before, the rules of the international economic and financial game",

– that of governments which mostly go along with the strategic choices of the transnational corporations. The responsibility must also be pointed out of a number of Third World governments whose bad running of their countries has increased difficulties, as was pointed out by several delegates from Latin America and Africa;

– finally, that of a type of bureaucratic state authoritarian socialism that was incapable of providing a lasting solution to the needs of the populations in the countries of eastern Europe and in the USSR.

Not only has the need for struggle by the workers not disappeared, but increased difficulties, such as the waste of great potential, has strengthened it.

2) At the same time as the necessity for more campaigns is asserted, basic questions concerning a number of recent evolutions arise:

a) The first series of questions deals with the radical transformations that affected the socialist countries and the economic reforms being introduced in the USSR.

– Very few speakers defended the virtues of central planning and the administrative control of the economy.

However a number of speakers expressed their concern faced with the consequences of wide-spread "market mechanisms".

Should we fear, as one participant said, "the dictatorship of the market", or, as appears more correct, "the dictatorship in the market of profit criteria, exacerbated by the unprecedented development of capitalist concentration?"

The question is not unnecessary since in the first case, it is the market itself that represents a danger, whereas in the second case, it is some of its most negative forms which must not be reduced, but overcome. This once again raises the issue of specific social rights and worker participation in management choices and cooperation.

–The market is spreading throughout the world in every-increasingly unified forms. As was demonstrated by a representative of the Soviet trade unions, the USSR economy is going to find itself gradually immersed in the world market with the ensuing consequences for the Soviet workers, but also for the workers of other countries. New needs, not only for united action, but also for solidarity in campaigns are appearing in East-West relations which are now inseparable from North-South problems.

b) The second series of questions concerns the capitalist attempts to find a way out of the crisis, primarily, the attempts being made to construct new zones of influence and integration such as in North America, Europe, in the Pacific and Japan.

The countries of the South see this as a direct threat of the closure of a certain number of markets and the reduction in available finance.

The countries of the North concerned and involved in the process see this as a danger of increased internal domination.

However, the need for new cooperation must not be ignored. It is essential that this cooperation be mutually advantageous, that it enable greater control over national wealth and, above all, that it respond to the needs of employment.

c) The third concern is that of the increase of structural adjustment policies and the debt issue which serves as justification for the former's wide-scale use. The increasing poverty of indebted countries is leading to a catastrophe and pushing the NIEO to an every-increasingly distant horizon.

The fact that almost all the Third World countries are now subjected to these policies is leading to disastrous cumulative effects on the economies of the developing countries. The formulas implemented by the IMF and the World Bank are provoking destructive competition between countries and production (free zones, assistance for competitive activities, the resort to tax advantages, the fall of social gains).

It is resulting in a fall in human and economic potential in the countries of the South International and bilateral public aid is often wasted and sometimes diverted.

The writing-off of the debt is an urgent and just measure but not sufficient in itself. Without new financing and the participation of the workers and their representatives in the control of the allocation of this finance, there can be no possible solution.

From this point of view, the change in the economic situation, which has been taking shape for almost a year, shows that we have not overcome the crisis, but that we are entering a new stage that risks producing deep tears in the social fabric of every country: wage-earners, small-scale farmers, farm labourers and independent workers would be the greatest victims.

3) It is therefore a series of extensive changes that are increasing the responsibilities of trade union organisations and the need for international solidarity relations that are radically renewed.

—The creation of employment and the satisfaction of social needs requires worker participation in the introduction of new technologies, in the issues of training, in economic and social conditions and productivity. A series of proposals which are the direct result of often mass campaigns during recent years are put forward:

—the writing-off of the foreign debt of the developing countries, the granting of further finance and a reform of the international financial system, on the basis of real equality for countries;

—the power of trade unions and their representatives to block the most dangerous financial operations of the transnational corporations;

—the creation of an international tax on the flow of capital in order to stop speculation;

—the establishment, within the United Nations, of an International Fund for the promotion of people's resources and cooperation;

—the development of the public banking and financial sector around the aims of reform for needs.

b) This is not, however, separable from the general satisfaction of social needs as an aim, and as a means of new economic and social efficiency.

This necessitates campaigns to prevent social regression and to insist on new re

sponses to demands: jobs, buying power, the development of social welfare programmes, the defence and development of the public sector, which is not only the property of the state.

These social objectives can give a positive specific content to the universal demand for development which characterises the present period. It is this improved and more equal social content won by campaigns, which have greater solidarity, that will make contemporary interdependence that of social progress and not of the demands of international capital.

c) The indispensable character of workers' struggles for their demands is the basis of the responsibilities of the trade union organisations at both national and international level.

The workers need more stable organisations that are genuinely independent from governments and political parties. Several participants expressed the wish that the WFTU increase information to friendly or affiliated organisations on all of these economic and social issues.

The workers also need dialogue, rapprochement and unity, as was declared by the majority of the commission's members.

The comments made during the two meetings evoked the national, regional and international features of the issue of development. The increased interdependence in international relations and its social impact are confronting the trade unions with new demands.

This is at the centre of the need for a renewed WFTU, which is more active in rallying workers for development and more active and committed to the defence of demands and the promotion of campaigns at international level.

REPORT FROM COMMISSION NO. 2

TECHNOLOGY, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Paul Bennet

The Chair, Alain Obadia of the CGT (France) welcomed the members of the Commission and explained the proposed way of working, which the Commission approved.

In his introductory remarks, the Chair outlined the essential place of new technology in socio-economic development, including employment and working conditions. He pointed to the varied pace of change between industries, countries and regions of the world, and also to the cumulative effects of the impact of new technologies, indicating the challenges these trends posed for the labour movement.

He stressed that new technologies cannot be considered separately or as an element outside social relations. On the contrary, they are a social product, closely linked with the aims they are given. For that reason, the workers' and trade union centres' intervention in their design, use and implications are very important.

Individual workers faced dramatic change in the forms of work and production, and associated training needs, as well as fresh threats of unemployment, poverty, famine and social unrest associated wholly or in part with new technology.

Training was an essential element in meeting these challenges, as well as raising the general level of literacy and numeracy.

The often negative role of the IMF and World Bank required particular attention and policy responses from the international trade union movement.

In spite of these difficulties, the fact that new technology is a social product must not be forgotten, with the possibility of maximising the benefits of technology through social control. The lessons of technological application in advanced capitalist countries, where unemployment and poverty were still chronic, and profits still concentrated in the hands of capital, must be learnt. More resources must be devoted to maximise the human and social potential of the technology. Workers' organisations must be involved in the choice, management and application of technologies. It is on this basis that economic growth can be achieved for the benefit of all in the developed and developing world. The trade unions must press for social democracy, union involvement in economic management and the promotion of higher skills for all workers to improve their working lives.

In concluding his introductory remarks, the Chair announced that 150 participants were present in the Commission, representing 107 countries and 147 organisations.

The Commission's Analysis of the Problem

31 speakers contributed to the discussion. While some divergences between the experiences of the industrialised and developing countries emerged, it was clear that the development and use of new technologies was an unstoppable social force, but also that the problems generated so far were greater than the immediate benefits to working people which had been gained. It was agreed that the trade union movement must share experience and work together at workplace, national and international levels to minimise the negative aspects and to maximise the beneficial effects of new technology, including the sharing of the resulting profits.

Participants from Africa, India and Latin America indicated the problems posed by the combination of transnational capitalism and new technology, in the form of technological transfer or dumping of obsolete, unhealthy or dangerous technologies on poor countries. The Commission condemned the role of the IMF and World Bank in insisting on the import of expensive and often inappropriate technology, which added to their indebtedness as well as increasing unemployment, as conditions for loans to debtor countries.

Alternative technology, combinations of new and traditional technologies, and forms of labour-intensive technology were identified as better alternatives to meet under-developed countries' needs. These approaches can often be developed through "South-South" dialogue, and need to give particular attention to the economic and technological problems of rural areas. It was felt that the trade unions must direct their attention towards the deployment of technology in ways which narrow the gap between rich and poor countries, and which create employment and social gains for developing countries, rather than adding to already severe unemployment.

Participants from industrialised countries pointed to the pressure from business to acquire "state of the art" technology in, for example, telecommunications, which could cause problems for workers and consumers. The concentration of technology-based enterprises into global corporations in the media, poses chronic political and cultural problems for society as well as major economic challenges to trade unions on an international scale. It was pointed out that technological development, although it has massive potential benefits for workers and their families, has not realised that potential even in the most advanced capitalist countries, Japan and the USA, where millions still face poverty and unemployment, often as a direct result of the application of new technology. Particular concern was expressed at the multinational companies' failure to follow ILO and other international conventions and recommendations on the introduction of technology. The experience of Japan is particularly relevant, as a high technology society with business and social formations geared to the exploitation of both workers and management, and the severe problems including overwork and stress provide lessons for other countries to which Japanese technology and business methods are being exported. While much of the Commission's discussion was concerned with private, capitalist industry, the problems of the public services as major users of new technology in all countries, and the role of technology in the reconstruction which is being undertaken in Eastern Europe were noted.

The Commission recognised that women workers face particularly severe problems arising from new technology. In particular, women were often the first to face unemployment as a result of technological innovation, whether in India's mines and jute mills or in Western offices. Also, women's work was frequently still confined to relatively unskilled jobs which with the introduction of new technology are being replaced by fewer highly skilled jobs, which are taken by men. Participants emphasised the need to ensure that all workers, male or female, have access to the jobs created by new technology, and to the training which is needed to do them.

Training should build on high quality, free initial education for all — too often, low levels of literacy and numeracy present insurmountable obstacles to young people and adults seeking jobs in an increasingly technology-oriented labour market. Training must be appropriate to the technological and industrial needs and level of the countries concerned, including intermediate technology.

Particular concern was expressed at the health and safety implications of new technology, whether at the individual level such as exposure to visual display units, or the catastrophic impact of Chernobyl or Bhopal. The inadequacy of business and governmental responses to health and safety means that trade unions must take a leading role in demanding that appropriate standards are set, achieved and monitored.

The adverse effects of technological change on the environment were noted, both in the Third World, where transnational companies exploited countries' ecologies as well as their workforces, and in developed countries. In developing countries, replacement of imported by indigenous, intermediate technologies, can have environmental as well as economic advantages. The Commission pointed out the importance of trade union initiatives linking ecological problems with the implementation of new technologies. However, it was felt that the international trade union movement must develop its policies in respect of environmental issues as an extension of its work on health and safety to the whole of society.

Trade union responses to technology are very different, but there was a recognition that economic development in the next decade would be closely linked to the use of technology. Trade unions must therefore ensure that they are involved in all levels and stages of decision-making to ensure that the interests of their members and the wider society are represented. The unions must also work together more closely at all levels, on technological issues.

Towards a trade union strategy

1. The trade union movement must respond to the challenge of new technology, which is taking place on a global-scale and which is generating a transformation of employers' attitudes and structures, with a fundamental re-assessment and reorganisation of its own structures, including closer cooperation for action and the exchange of information, at the level of the enterprise, and nationally and internationally.
2. The trade union movement has to take the initiative in order to win new rights opening up participation for workers at all levels on the development and use of new

technology, including both collective bargaining and legislation and regulation through national and international bodies, reflecting the increasingly transnational character of technological development. The trade unions must pay particular attention to the impact both on employment and on unemployment of new technology, including indirect effects on Third World countries.

3. Trade unions must press for the establishment of tripartite bodies, involving them with employers and governments in policy-making and monitoring of the employment aspects of technology, including training, health and safety and the environment.

4. The trade union movement itself must give a high priority to environmental issues and to educating its own members in the environmental impact of new technologies, as well as pressing governments and industry to take full account of the environmental dimension of technology.

5. At the international level, trade unions must apply pressure for the full implementation and improvement of UN and ILO policies on the application of new technologies, giving particular importance to the protection of workers, the positive development of poorer countries and the generation of forms of technology appropriate to their economic needs and social conditions.

6. Trade unions must work to reverse the particularly severe impact of new technology on women in employment, including unsocial hours of working, de-skilling, re-deployment and unemployment. Union responses must include pressure to improve training and career opportunities. However, trade unions must recognise that they themselves must improve the position of women in their own organisations, through positive action programmes to ensure that union structures fully represent women's interests.

7. Trade unions must give higher priority to pressure for initial and continuing education as a right for workers to enable them to benefit fully from the opportunities presented by new technology. Within the social sphere, unions must press for higher standards of universal general schooling, including numeracy and literacy, without which technological training is impossible.

8. The concentration of the control of technology in a few giant transnational corporations in each industry, particularly in media technology, with its serious economic, political and cultural implications, must be met by global trade union strategies, coordinated by the WFTU and the ICFTU working together more closely than before.

9. The international trade union movement has a duty to ensure that new technology is not used by transnational corporations or the IMF or World Bank in ways which play off one group of workers against another, particularly by exploiting the workers of developing countries.

10. Already, nation states are proving unable to cope with the transnational character of new technology. It is essential for the international trade union movement to act together to apply pressure to national governments worldwide, to regional bodies and to world authorities to strengthen the social control of new technology, and the role of the trade unions in that process.

REPORT FROM COMMISSION NO. 3

PEACE — DISARMAMENT — CONVERSION

Chairperson: Cambell Christie

Leading Speakers

Prof. J. Matousek, CSFR

Prof. J. Ullmann, USA

Prof. E. Bugrov, USSR

Mr. A. Breusov, Aircraft Workers' Union, USSR

Rap. Ms Terry Marsland, MSF, UK

Since the first nuclear bomb was used on the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki the world has lived under constant threat of annihilation. Now for the first time in 45 years we witness the possibility of world peace.

The international trade union movement has been instrumental in rallying workers' support in various forms of action at regional, national and international level. Trade unions have paid particular attention to the United Nations and its specialised agencies.

This consistent work by the trade union movement has helped to ease the tensions and make it possible to overcome the attitudes of distrust and confrontation.

The relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union coupled with the signing of the INF Treaty and the advances made during the course of the Vienna arms talks moves us further towards the possibility of achieving a peaceful world. If we are to continue to build on the progress made so far the trade union movement must continue to give active support to peace movements throughout the world.

That requires particular attention in working for peaceful settlements to regional conflicts. The developments in securing international agreements between the super-powers have been positive but we are still faced with regional conflicts which are not so positive. Africa, Central America and the Middle East, these areas of the world, each in turn have been, and in the case of the present Gulf crisis are, serious threats to world peace.

The crisis in the Middle East has shown the need for disarmament not just for the major military powers but for all countries. The widespread unprincipled sale of weaponry, including the technical and scientific expertise to produce chemical weapons, helped to prolong the Iran-Iraq war. The Gulf crisis has also shown the central role the United Nations has to play in helping countries to avoid conflict. Throughout the crisis in the Gulf, the United Nations has acted to pull the world back from the brink of the war.

We cannot afford to ever be complacent over peace. The total stock of nuclear weapons today amounts to some 15,000 megatons, equivalent to more than one million Hiroshima bombs, apart from all the other methods which can be deployed to kill and maim.

SDI is not talked about as widely as it was during the period of the Reagan administration but it is still a major part of the defence programme of the United States. 2.89 billion dollars is the most recent allocation to the programme from Congress.

There is therefore a major task in achieving disarmament and conversion. It can only be done through a planned and orderly programme which takes account of the social and economic consequences. Such a programme must have a fundamental legislative framework backed by ILO conventions which requires governments to take practical steps to deal with the social consequences of disarmament.

The cost of destroying the arms and chemical weapons will be more than it costs to manufacture them. Verification is also an important factor. Therefore the transition between dismantling the arsenals of the world and benefits to the communities from the peace dividend will take time. Stripping one tank of all useful parts and breaking it up will take 500 hours to complete at a cost of 25,000 dollars. According to the potential CFE treaty more than 30,000 tanks will be destroyed at a cost of 750 million dollars; that is the scale of the problem.

As trade unionists, our primary concern is for the social and welfare issues of military personnel and their families and of workers in the defence industries displaced by disarmament. A planned programme to deal with the problems is essential.

Throughout Eastern Europe particularly in the Soviet Union disarmament and conversion have been difficult simply because no one planned for it. Military personnel and their families require the same consideration for housing, education and jobs as do civilian defence workers. Without careful planning the social stresses become intolerable.

If governments and industrialists plan well, conversion can be the engine that drives industrial recovery. It is a way of reorganising the use of a country's industrial resources for all the people. We have to understand and accept that workers in the defence industry will not accept conversion unless they are assured of decent job alternatives. In most cases the workers are highly skilled but they are flexible and they will want jobs which allow them to use those skills in other sectors of industry. A worker skilled in making tanks can transfer that skill to making tractors. Western governments make loans to Third World nations to buy weapons. Under a programme of conversion that money can be loaned to buy tractors instead of howitzers or tanks. That helps the economies of both countries.

A country's infrastructure needs continued renewal. Roads must be built. Traffic control systems, programmes for road, rail and air transport, sewage disposal, environmental issues, schools, hospitals...All these requires skilled workers.

The members of the commission considered a wide range of issues on the subject of peace, disarmament and conversion and concluded that to make it happen, the trade union movement must set the agenda. Conversion is primarily a trade union issue which is developed into the rest of the community. Those who work in the industry recognise their value. They also have the most to lose. The principle of conversion is to protect industrial resources used for the production of arms so that they can be used to produce for a civilian economy and the economic social growth of the nation.

We must plan a strategy which will include using specialised agencies such as the UN Commission on Disarmament and the ILO to demand that a social clause on the

planned and socially oriented conversion, subject to control by trade unions and other public organisations be included in intergovernmental or international agreements on disarmament.

Given the tripartite nature of the ILO, a joint approach by the WFTU, ICFTU and WCL to governments and employers is needed with the issue of conversion being included in the report of the ILO Director General at the next General Conference. The 1981 Resolution on the Social and Economic Aspects of Disarmament is to be updated to include conversion.

We must develop the widest possible consultation with trade unionists throughout the world, with the possibility of creating an international trade union centre for the socio-economic problems of disarmament and conversion.

REPORT FROM COMMISSION NO. 4

Rapporteur: Kenneth Miller

Presidium — USSR, France, ICTUR, Peru, Senegal, Britain, Sudan. 284 delegates attended the Commission and there were 35 speakers. Discussion was based on a paper prepared by Professor Keith Ewing, London, and Kenneth Miller, Strathclyde, on Trade Union Rights in the 1990s. It was clear from the vast majority of speakers that trade union rights are being abused throughout the world. Speakers from Latin America, Africa, the Far East, the Middle East, the USA, Australia and Europe, all explained the ways in which trade union rights are being abused in their countries. In some instances trade union leaders had been the targets of assassination, death threats and imprisonment; in others, trade unions are banned and denied the right to collective bargaining, and in still more, legal restrictions on the right to strike and trade bans have denied trade union members this basic freedom. Special concern was expressed about the persecution of trade union leaders "when defending trade union rights". Many speakers also expressed the opinion that trade union members, as workers, are often victims of state conflicts- and pay dearly for such conflicts, as poor people. It was clear that, regardless of the political system in which trade unions operate, abuse of basic trade union rights is commonplace.

The Commission then sought to identify and discuss the essential rights and freedoms of trade unions. These were:

1. The right to organise-necessary as a first and basic step;
2. The right to autonomy from the state and independence from employers-creates free and independent trade unions;
3. The right for unions to devise their own democratic arrangements and for members to participate in union decision-making;
4. The right to bargain collectively with employers (including union participation at the workplace and rights to information);
5. The right to strike.

These rights were considered to be basic human freedom which must be guaranteed by all nations. These five key themes were discussed in detail at the Commission in the context of the widespread abuse of trade union rights already described and against a background of the growth of transnationals in all countries of the world.

One central issue which was addressed was whether these basic rights could be defended at all by the enactment of legislation. A number of speakers made reference to the importance of the mechanism of ILO Conventions as a means of defending their rights and argued in support of the exercise of unions strength to achieve these objectives.

The present procedure does not sufficiently allow speed and efficiency for the urgent and serious cases. It is therefore necessary to press for greater effectiveness of the bodies involved in the creation and in the monitoring of labour standards.

Equally, there was general agreement on the importance of union struggle as a

means of fighting off attacks on trade union rights. However, it was clear that there was a broad consensus based on the idea that union struggle and legal provisions must go hand in hand. Unions must fight for just laws which guarantee them and their members the basic rights which were discussed. In this way the necessary climate for the effective exercise of trade union rights would be created.

Many speakers also agreed that trade unions should increase pressure on the ILO to ensure that it deals effectively with complaints. To this end, there was a general call for greater cooperation among trade unions to ensure:

a) More adherence to ILO Conventions:

b) Quick responses by the trade union movement when abuses are discovered.

This led many delegates to argue for unity of action, both within the ILO and outside it. There was a call for dialogue among the trade unions of the world in order to allow them to defend themselves and also as a basis for unifying the movement.

Further, a number of speakers also called for the development and strengthening of ICTUR as a defender of trade union rights. The hope was expressed that, in time, ICTUR would have a significant presence in every country in the world; that it would become a vehicle for democratic representation of trade union and human rights' bodies and lawyers' organisations all over the world; and that its strength would be such that states which violate trade union rights guaranteed by ILO Conventions would no longer be able to get away with doing so.

These were the major themes of the Commission. However, several other points have to be made. First, in the context of growing levels of unemployment throughout the world, many speakers also supported legislation guaranteeing a persons right to work and as a means of avoiding unemployment. Equally, reference was made to the decline in union membership in many countries. Clearly, unemployment is important here also as a reason for the fall in union membership. However, there was also a call for trade unions to look closely at their own arrangements and structure in order to encourage workers to join their organisations.

Finally, every person at the Commission recognised the importance of cooperation, dialogue and unity of purpose by the world trade union movement in order to prevent abuses of trade union rights.

Broadly speaking, the Commission recognised that no single political system or ideology can guarantee that it will prevent the violation of trade union rights.

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