



Newsletter

of the Trades Union International of Workers
in the Building, Wood, Building Materials
and Allied Industries

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Workers, rebel against austerity measures!

by **Antonio Lopés**
UITBB President

Currently we are experiencing a new phase of the global crisis, which began at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008. The relief measures adopted by major countries to bail out the big banks did not solve the crisis. On the contrary, they have increased the voracious appetite of the international banks. Billions of dollars have been dumped in an attempt to ensure the solvency of financial capital without alleviating the difficulties experienced by enterprises, the productive sector and entire nations, and perversely imposing ever greater sacrifices on the workers. Continuous financial speculation determines the dynamics of capital, while states are unable to establish a new regulatory framework for their economies.

In 2011, the European Union has plunged into an acute crisis of financial and economic instability, starting from Greece, and spreading to Ireland, Spain, Portugal, via France, Finland and Italy, and reaching Germany, the flagship of the Euro zone, which is threatened by recession. The United States, the world's largest economy, is at a loss over the threat of non-payment of the public debt to creditors.

So-called fiscal adjustment aims to impose on workers huge wage cuts and reductions of social benefits, destroying the historic achievements of the working class. This is totally unacceptable.

ALTERNATIVES AND OTHER ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS

continued on p. 4



Italy

2012.01.27



Tunisia

2012.01.25



UITBB SECRETARIAT MEETING Lisbon, 19-21 11 2011



Nigeria

2012.01.09



Belgium

2012.01.30



Zimbabwe

2012.01.19

UITBB SECRETARIAT MEETING CONCLUSIONS

After the presentation of the Report of the General Secretary of UITBB, Comrade Debanjan Chakrabarti, a fruitful and factual discussion was developed between the members of the Secretariat that confirmed the following issues:

- The capitalistic crisis, which at first manifested in the USA and the EU, is spreading and embracing other countries.
- The competition between the capitalists is escalating, and is becoming a war for the conquest of new markets, supply routes for oil, gas, etc.
- People are the victims of the competition of capitalistic development. The governments acting as capital's instruments abolish workers' gains such as stable working hours, social security, collective labor agreements, and they increase taxes and degrade social benefits, and the number of the workers with access to the basic commodities necessary for life is diminishing day by day.
- At the same time, the trade unions develop workers' struggles in numerous countries against capital, the governments. They demand an end to the attacks against the workers, and claim the satisfaction of their demands based on workers' current needs.

The Secretariat, taking into consideration the note presented by the General Secretary and the discussion that followed, reached the following decisions:

1. To convene a joint (UITBB-Syrian

continued on p. 5

Capitalistic crisis - Workers' struggles - The way out for the working class

by **Yiannis Pasoulas**, President of the Federation of Construction Workers and allied Trades of Greece, Member of the UITBB Secretariat

The consequences of the global capitalistic crisis and especially the labor-popular struggles in Greece have “shaken” for good the consciousness of workers in many countries, particularly within the EU. Of course, the political representatives of capital have tried to “muddy the waters”. However, they cannot hide the fact that the developments in Greece give the possibility to the workers to think about what the causes of the capitalistic crisis are, and to reveal the role of the EU and of the other imperialistic organizations, and furthermore enrich the experience of the class-oriented forces for the strengthening of the struggle against bourgeois and opportunist currents at the political and trade union level.

The developments have also proved wrong those bourgeois politicians who – in our country as well as in other countries of the EU - noted that the integration of Greece into the European Union and subsequently into the Eurozone is the “sheltered port” against the “storms” of crises and instability.

The reality in Europe proves that capitalism, which is at the imperialistic, highest stage of its development, tortures millions of workers, irrespective to the development level of each country.

It generates poverty and unemployment, suffers from incurable contradictions, oppositions that are demonstrated with cyclical crises, but also with wars for expansion of the monopolies’ business activity, for greater market shares, and for the control of the resources of wealth.

The conclusion that emerges is that capitalism is dangerous not only during the phase of the crisis but also during the phase of economic growth, during the phase when capital accumulation and overac-



cumulation is achieved, the position of the working class worsens, the contradiction between capital and labor sharpens, the anarchy of capitalistic production, with the disturbance of proportions, balances, which were fixed in the previous era, is manifested more intensely and the economy is led into crisis.

The crisis manifested in Greece, as well as in other capitalistic countries of the EU synchronously is a crisis of the over accumulation of capital. It is a crisis that is based on the sharpening of the contradiction between the social character of production and the capitalistic appropriation of its results, because the means of production are under the ownership of capitalists. The criterion of the system’s motion is the profit that leads to the anarchic and uneven development of the branches and sectors of the economy and of geographical areas.


The recent Agreement of the Eurogroup (EU of 17) for a stricter control framework of fiscal discipline does not constitute a strengthening either of the Euro or of the Eurogroup, or even more so of the EU. A fragile compromise was achieved with the will and interests of Germany prevailing, which is not going to blunt the contradictions, nor will the unevenness be surpassed and nor will the economic crisis be dealt with.

The unification of the European market in the framework of EU from

1991 to 2000 belongs to the past.

Within the swirl of the capitalist crisis, it is becoming even more apparent that the EU is the guardian of the power and profits of the monopolies, now as centrifugal forces are strengthening, which are weakening the imperialist predatory alliance, it is of particular importance that the opportunist line is defeated, which calls for an utopian search for a new “pro-people architecture” for the EU. This line leads to the disarming of the people’s movement. The EU and capitalism cannot be humanized.

Faced with the crisis, the majority of the trade union forces in Europe have either lined up with various lines of crisis management saving monopolies’ profits, or they have content themselves with talking about a the crisis of neoliberalism, while keeping intact the capitalistic way of production and hiding the real causes of the crisis.

Others consciously and unconsciously have dragged the working people into adopting demands in support of “healthy productive capital” and for the protection of the power of the EU. They have urged the workers to accept the abolition of fundamental rights in the name of safeguarding jobs, and have pushed the working class into a position of social consent resorting to the alibi of overcoming the crisis. 

Havana, May 2011, FLEMACON Conference elects new leadership

Lucia Maia from Brazil, the Secretary for International Relations of the Construction Workers Federation of the State of Bahia - FETRACOM-BA, has been elected the new president of FLEMACON (Latin American Federation of Construction and Wood Workers' Unions). In her inaugural speech she reaffirmed the objective of promoting unity among workers in Latin America and the Caribbean, underlining the role of FLEMACON as a reference in the struggle for a more just and humane society. The new leadership was given major tasks, including the drafting of a new constitution for FLEMACON.

Immediately after this meeting, the new leadership convened a planning seminar in Bahia, which registered the attendance by 29 unions including from countries such as Colombia, Peru, El Salvador and Brazil. The meeting set as a goal the registration of FLEMACON as a regional class based trade union organization. FLEMACON leaders attended the Congress of the Construction Workers of Uruguay and of Peru, where they had the opportunity to express satisfaction and pride to be present at the time of the election of a new

government. FLEMACON participated in the 4th Meeting "Nuestra America" emphasizing the relevance of such activity in the life of workers in the region. FLEMACON views with great concern the problems of abandoned children on the Latin American continent, children who are the basis of a healthy society. FLEMACON notes with equal concern the forced exile of workers who have to leave home in search of jobs often without any training. FLEMACON organized lectures, activities commemorating the 66th anniversary of the foundation of the World Federation of Trade Unions, and

attended conferences dealing with the major problems of the working class.

The new leadership published three newsletters, solidarity statements with the peoples of the world and their struggle against capitalism, denouncing the continued imprisonment of the Cuban Five, and expressing firm support for the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

FLEMACON welcomes the creation of the Economic Community of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC) aiming to become an instrument of integration and the search for the autonomy and sovereignty.



FREE THE CUBAN FIVE

Day after day, more people in every corner of the world are demanding the immediate release of the Cuban Five. After a trial labeled unfair by many, including prominent North American voices, the *Last Soldiers of the Cold War* as the Brazilian writer Fernando Morais describes them, have already spent more than 13 years in highly restrictive prison compounds. These calls are now joined by various institutions and international bodies, which are aware of the fact that no evidence was produced at the court that the prisoners had acted against the internal security of the United States, but rather that they were fighting against terrorism defending their Cuban compatriots by denouncing the preparation of acts of sabotage

against Cuba, thus preventing an irreparable loss of human lives.

Nobel Prize laureates - Jose Ramos-Horta, Rigoberta Menchu, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Günter Grass, Jose Saramago, Dario Fo, Nadine Gordimer, Wole Soyinka and Zhores Alferov, and numerous personalities have appealed to President Obama, demanding the immediate release of Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero y Fernando González, the Cuban Five. Recently René González has been released from prison, but he is not allowed to return to Cuba for three more years and is not allowed to meet with his relatives.

It is suggested that you send the following demand to President Obama:

If the US government wants to

continue claiming it is engaged in a «war on terror,» it can help back up that claim with some very simple actions. Allow René González to return to Cuba immediately, free the remaining members of the Cuban Five and allow them to return to Cuba as well, extradite Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela, and arrest the other known terrorists in Miami. Until those acts have been performed, any claims by the U.S. government of «fighting terrorism» will continue to ring hollow.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/submit-questions-and-comments>



from p. 1

A way out: Latin America and its struggle against the crisis

The changes initiated by the election of progressive governments, such as those of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil, and followed by other governments with similar political characteristics, gave the continent a new perspective with the adoption of socialist oriented policies, strengthening democracy, implementing investment policies in the productive sector and salary increases. The state has become a driving force of the economy, taking measures to increase social benefits and the creation of jobs.

Unlike continental Europe and the

The Portuguese government declares social war against Portuguese working people

by **Pedro Manuel Milheiro**

Member of UITBB Secretariat; member of the national leadership of FEVICOM; worker at the factory SAINT-GOBAIN SEKURIT PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL: Similar to Greece and Ireland, Portugal is under attack from the IMF, UE and ECB, which found with the new recently elected right-wing government a natural ally to exploit the wealth produced by the workers and the people in Portugal. In this context, the central trade union organization of Portugal CGTP-IN has decided to extend the fight against this declaration of war by the government and the major economic and financial interests.

The great general strike held on 24 November 2011 constituted a landmark in the struggle of workers and served as a warning to European and national decision-makers, by demanding a reversal in the policies applied, to present alternatives and to defend Portugal as a developed and sovereign country. The struggle of the Portuguese workers will continue! 🇵🇹

United States, Latin America reduces social differences and maintains growth, and workers expand their social achievements with real gains in wages. The so-called BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China), stand out with their developing economies, providing reasonable conditions to their people and nations, including help to the European continent. The question remains as to what to do with the African continent with its natural disasters and other catastrophes caused by capitalist exploita-

tion, which ransacks the region, without offering anything in return.

In this context the UITBB has a leading role to play in combating all kinds of injustice that increases the exploitation of workers anywhere in the world.

Workers must continue to fight capitalism and its latest avatar, neo-liberalism, – a system that continues to make humanity unequal and increasingly impoverished. 🇵🇹



ALBANIA: Immigrants and the Obligations of the Labour Movement
by **Ylli Ymeri**

Chairman of the Albanian Syndical Federation of Building Workers and member of the UITBB Executive Committee

Albania is perhaps the only country with nearly a third of its population living abroad. More than a million Albanians have emigrated over the past 20 years. Mostly they live, with or without work contracts, in Greece and Italy. And as usual, most of them who are living in Greece and Italy are working in construction or agriculture.

The Greek Construction Workers Union has always been and continues to be interested in the rights of migrants, has convinced migrant workers to join the union, and in fact many of them have become organized. During my numerous visits to Greece I have met with many compatriots who are

members of the Greek trade union and who even hold various positions. So we are very grateful to the Greek Federation of Construction Workers. On the opposite side, the Greek government has a different behaviour. Although Albanians have resided in the country for more than 10 years, few have obtained citizenship and in order to do so you have to pay large sums of money.

In Italy the situation of immigrants is very different, although some may manage to live like Italian citizens. The major national unions do not seem to show much interest in the fate of immigrants, who are virtually stranded. The majority of Albanians working in Greece, for instance in the construction sector, have the same salary as their Greek colleagues, but that is not the case in Italy.

However, we believe that migration is not a solution to the problems

Conclusions of UITBB Secretariat meeting in Lisbon, continuation

from p. 1

Federation) meeting of trade unions with participation of Secretariat members on the topic: Developments in the Middle East Region and the Mediterranean and the impact in the construction sector and the working class in general.

2. To convene early next year the Executive Committee and the Women's Committee in Cyprus.

3. To take part in the WFTU Presidential Council in 2012 in South Africa.

4. To hold the 4th European UITBB regional meeting in Greece and to make an effort to obtain the participation from as many countries as possible. Suggested topic: collective bargaining, collective agreements, social security, stable and lasting employment, measures for health and safety.

5. To convene the 8th UITBB regional meeting for Asia-Pacific countries in Bangladesh.

6. To seek as soon as possible a reply from ACTRAV/ILO regarding the grants for national training seminars in various African countries and for the African women's meeting on the basis of the action plan adopted at the Douala meeting.



7. To call for a UITBB Action Day in 2012 around the following demands: the right to health care, education, housing, drinking water, and a ban on child labour.

8. To publish the newsletter of the UITBB. Deadline mid January.

9. To amend and finalize on the basis of the discussion the Note prepared by the General secretary and to distribute it to all affiliated unions.

10. To prepare a short leaflet on Occupational Health and Safety. (resp. Brazil)

11. To print a UITBB poster for the liberation of the Cuban Five. (resp. Greece)

12. The Secretariat took note of the affiliation of SATPC of Central African Republic and the STC of DR of Congo. The Secretariat did not accept the affiliation request of Pakistan Labour Federation. The Secretariat decided that the General Secretary would write

a letter to Synbarroutes/Niger regarding their affiliation with the UITBB.

13. The secretariat adopted a Solidarity message to Greek Metal Workers at the "Hellenic Steel Industry" on strike, the Condolences resolution, and the message of protest against the arrest of 2 trade union organizers from Cameroon.

14. The Secretariat decided to take measures to expand the UITBB, mainly in Europe, i.e. the Balkan countries, Russia, etc.

NEW AFFILIATIONS after the 15th Congress in Bahia

Central Africa : SATPC-Syndicat Autonome des Travailleurs

Progressistes de Centrafrique

DR of Congo : STC Syndicat des Travailleurs du Congo

DR of Congo: Confédération Ouvrière Démocratique

DR of Congo: Front Syndical de Luttés de Classes

GUANTÁNAMO: 10 years ago, in January 2002, the United States brought the first prisoners of war captured in the context of their imperialist aggression in Afghanistan to Guantanamo. Amnesty International says that Guantanamo symbolizes a decade of systematic violation of human rights by the United States. Today there are still 171 prisoners in the jails of Guantanamo. President Barack Obama has buried all the pledges

he made during his campaign to close the sinister prison complex and to try the accused before federal civilian courts. Guantánamo is also a symbol of imperialist occupation, in flagrant violation of international law, of a territory belonging to a sovereign state - Cuba.

The UITBB and its affiliates demand the end of the US blockade against Cuba and its people, and the return of the territory of the naval US base to Cuba.

EUROPEAN UNION: A young generation sacrificed on the altar of profit of capitalists and bankers

The consequences of the systemic crisis are disastrous for the young generation. Eurostat figures are horrifying although they do not even tell the whole truth. End of 2011: Average unemployment rate among young people for the whole of the EU: 22%; Spain: 49.6% of people under 25 years old are unemployed ; Greece: 46.6% of people under 25 years old are unemployed (in September 2011) Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Slovakia and Bulgaria: 30% unemployment among the young; Finland: 20%; Germany, Netherlands, Austria: > 10%

from p. 4

and difficulties. These issues must be addressed and resolved mainly in the country of origin. Things can be changed through struggle and hard work, which is how you develop your country. Migration has to be temporary.

General strikes in January 2012

09-13	Nigeria
16	Nigeria
17	Greece (17 th GS)
19	Zimbabwe (public servants)
25	Tunisia
27	Italy
30	Belgium (1st since 1993)

Trade unions and the climate change

by George Mavrikos, General Secretary of the WFTU
at the NUMSA Seminar in Durban, South Africa, 4 December 2011

Excerpts from the speech delivered by comrade Mavrikos

THE LABOUR ENVIRONMENT

The labour environment continues to be a cause of disease and death for a large number of working people every year. According to ILO data, more than 1 million working people each year lose their lives because of unacceptable working conditions. According to the same source, every year more than 160 million working people suffer from occupational diseases. Paying lip service to “decent work” does not prevent deadly accidents. Decent work in general and as loosely as it is used means nothing. For the WFTU, decent work means stable and full-time work, a good salary, good pension, social insurance, health and safety measures in the workplaces, and the strict punishment of employers who neglect any of these aspects.

THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

Scientists are sounding the alarm because of the rise of temperature that will cause the polar ice to melt, resulting in the sinking of coastal cities and in natural disasters. Carbon emissions-trading severely increases the threats to the Third World.

FOREST DESTRUCTION

According to official data, every year about 200 million acres of tropical rain forest is destroyed. It is estimated that at this rate by 2025 large tropical forests in Central and South America and in Asia will be completely destroyed.

LACK OF WATER

It is common knowledge that millions of people all over the world, among them 400 million children, are struggling for their lives without access to clean drinking water. The commercialization of water generates misery and death.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED PRODUCTS

US and European monopolies and multinationals accelerate and broaden the growing and the trading

of genetically modified products, despite the pronouncements of scientists that this involves dangers to the lives and environments of animals and plants.

BIODIVERSITY

According to announcements made at the International Conference of the International Union of Environment, more than 7,000 species of fauna and 8,000 species of flora have become extinct.

MILITARY IMPERIALIST INVASIONS

During the invasion of Iraq in 1991, and the Gulf War, the USA used 300 tons of depleted uranium missiles and in the 2nd imperialist invasion of Iraq in 2003 it used 1000 tons of depleted uranium. Depleted uranium is the most severe environmental problem that NATO bombing generated in Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia in 1999. Measurements made by international bodies, like the UN and other organizations found that the inhabitants had been exposed to dangerous doses of radiation, causing cancer and leukemia. UN scientists named this phenomenon “the Balkan Syndrome”.

The invasion in Afghanistan in 2001 has left the country deserted and the ecosystem destroyed, the environment polluted and by 2007 the production of opium had skyrocketed reaching levels of yearly production up to 8,300 tons, while the production before the invasion Afghanistan produced was 180 tons.

In Libya, NATO has used hundreds of tomahawk missile with disastrous consequences not only in terms of loss of human life but also for the ecosystem of the country and the Mediterranean Sea. Also in the rest of Africa the list of provoked civil wars is endless: Congo, Rwanda, Sudan and Chad, with the corresponding impact on people’s lives.

The murderous Israeli air raids


against Palestine and Lebanon with the pollution of water resources and the destruction of the fauna and flora, or the 51-year long economic blockade of Cuba by the USA as well as by the EU, lead us to the following question: What does the environment mean for capital and its political representatives? It is nothing more than a source of profit leading to the plundering of the planet’s natural resources.

WHO IS TO BLAME? WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

Human beings in general are not to blame for the immense disaster of the natural environment, the continuous downgrading of the urban environment, the accelerating expansion of slums, and the intensifying impact of the weather phenomena, (...) neither for the lack of clean water and of healthy food nor for the destruction of cultural monuments or the diseases that kill tens of millions of people every year.

It is the nature of the capitalist system that is to blame, since it generates, reproduces and worsens those problems with its continuous pursuit for bigger profits and the striving to ensure its dominant geostrategic position. This is the framework of the arguments between the imperialist centers during relevant international conferences, such as the one in Copenhagen. Their arguments reflect the intensification of their contradictions for the control of markets. (...)

The capitalist system, which is in decay, is also the background for the military imperialist invasions that destroy not only the environment but the international cultural heritage and thousands of lives as well. (...)

This is why the protection of the environment cannot be confronted separately from the class-based orientation of the development path followed by each society. 



June and October 2011 - UITBB and WFTU International Action Days



During the international actions days called by the UITBB and the WFTU hundreds of thousands of construction, wood and building materials' workers took the streets demanding, among other things, public social security for all, a halt to the privatization of health and education, OHS for all building workers, including a ban on asbestos, equal rights for migrant workers, a stoppage of price increases on essential commodities, respect for trade union rights, in particular the right to organize, to collective bargaining and to strike, a reduction of working hours aiming at a 35-hour week and intensified internationalist solidarity.

India: Numerous rallies, marches, meetings organized by the CWFI/CITU in 13 states to protest against price hikes on essential commodities and to demand social security and respect for trade union rights for all construction workers.

Portugal: Feviccom engaged in an awareness-raising campaign on the UITBB and its struggle at international level against the social and economic consequences of the capitalist crisis on the living and working conditions of building and wood workers. Feviccom demanded a 35-hour week, the defense of the public system of social security and the right to collective bargaining.

Greece: The Greek Federation of Construction Workers as part of PAME (Workers' Militant Front) has taken part in 16 general strikes and militant actions to repel the brutal attack by the PASOK government, IMF and EU on the economic and social gains of the entire working class in Greece.

Cyprus: Joint trade union march of Greek and Turkish Cypriot trade unionists to support the WFTU demands.

Japan: Kick-off by Kenkourou president Shigeyasu Fujiyoshi of the National Caravan for the eradication of dust-lung disease with broad participation of union activists from every corner of the country. Rally and march to demand from the authorities accelerated reconstruction policies in the interests of the earthquake and tsunami victims.

Pakistan: Joint APFUTU/PBKLU rally led by General Secretary Pirazada Imtiaz Syed to protest against low wages, employers' policies and the non-implementation of labour laws.

Lebanon: Meeting of FENASOL trade union activists with the participation of numerous construction workers.

Gabon: Mass meeting addressed by CGT-FL General secretary Etienne Moussavou to demand: Recognition of the right to work, shortening of weekly working hours, extension of paid leave, decrease of the retirement age, non-discrimination in employment, protection against unfair dismissals, increase in unemployment benefits, freedom of association and trade union rights, collective bargaining, restriction of the monopolies' profits, cuts of military spending, implementation of anti-inflationary measures, and an end to privatization and corruption.

Gabon: Protest march organized by UTBTBSP of the CSG (Congrès syndical du Gabon) against the consequences of the crisis; handing over of a petition to the Water and Forest Ministry of Gabon.

RD Congo: Information meeting and mobilization of forestry workers organized by the STC at Kinkole, industrial harbour, demanding collective bargaining for forestry and wood workers. STC also organized other events commemorating the 66th anniversary of the WFTU with the participation of construction workers.

Brazil: During June – numerous meetings and the launching of a country-wide campaign to promote occupational health and safety and to protest against the extremely high frequency rate of deadly accidents in the Brazilian construction sector. On 3 October, in observance of the international action day for workers rights and as tribute to the 66th anniversary of the WFTU, Flemacon, Fetracon-Ba, Sintracon-Ba and CTB organized a mass meeting on a major building site in Salvador de Bahia with the adoption of an open letter encouraging workers to give a vigorous response to the capitalist crisis. In addition, president of Flemacon Lucia Maia underlined the solidarity with the Palestinian people and their inalienable right to build a free and sovereign state, highlighted the solidarity with the 5 Cuban heroes who have been unjustly imprisoned since 1998 by the US imperialist state.

Venezuela: The Federation of Bolivarian Construction Workers led by president Marco Tulio marched in support of the Bolivarian revolution and its achievements for the working class and the poor peasants of Venezuela.

Uruguay: Activists of SUNCA Construction Workers' Union took part in a mass meeting with the presence of the WFTU regional coordinator, comrade Ramón Cardona, underscoring solidarity with the Cuban and Palestinian people.

Could you briefly present your Union and particularly its Building, Wood and Forestry Division?

The Union of Workers of Congo "STC" is a national central organization registered by the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Welfare, under No. 02/2003, under the Ministerial Decree No. 12 / CAB .MIN/TPS/066/03 of April 5, 2003.

It is a militant and class struggle trade union whose main objective is to defend the rights and interests of workers, civil servants and peasants of Congo in general, a free trade union centre that is independent vis-à-vis political, governmental and religious institutions.

The Building, Wood, Forestry and Building Materials Division STC-FTBB is primarily composed of forestry workers, altogether 375 members who contribute € 0.2 a month.

There is a lot of talk about forest certification, how does your union perceive this problem? What are the issues at stake for the forestry and wood workers whom you represent?

Forest certification stems from the policy imposed on the countries of the South by the major polluters of the planet through the Kyoto Protocol for the conservation of forests, which is essential for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and allows them to continue to produce CO2 emissions. The Democratic Republic Congo is a country that represents 60 percent of forest area in the COMIFAC (the Forestry Commission of Central Africa) and is the second largest global forest reservoir absorbing CO2, but it does not draw dividends from this conservation of biodiversity for the benefit of indigenous people. At the Conference of the Parties, COP 17, in Durban a promise was made to pay a compensatory amount of 100 billion US dollars by 2020.

Such policies lead to the loss of logging permits for small forest owners, as the deposit that they must pay has increased considerably. Thus it only allows multinational companies to exploit large forest areas. Unemployment has increased following the closure of many small logging sites. This



tor, industrial ports where timber is handled and in the few remaining wood processing plants.

Could you describe the conditions under which these workers have to work? What are the repercussions of the global crisis on the workers in your industry?

The deplorable conditions of these workers and laborers working in the wood sector are due to the small amount of jobs in the sector following the closure of sites and processing plants, and especially the recurrent violations of workers and laborers' rights under the complacent eye of the Labour Administration in the DRC. Wild capitalism represented in the DRC by the multinationals that exploit the forest, has brought only misery, and unemployment for workers and forestry workers: these multinationals do not pay back the proceeds of timber sales to the Central Bank of Congo that would make the trade balance of the DR Congo move into surplus.

What are the main obstacles faced by your union in carrying out union work, and what are your main demands? What are your goals in the longer term?

STC main obstacles are:

- The loss of employment of our members following the closure of the timber works and wood processing plants as a consequence of the global economic crisis.

- The low level of fees paid by our members due to their low salaries.

- The fear that is distilled into the minds of workers and laborers by terrorizing employers in the service of imperialism and capitalism, slowing down progress towards the emancipation of the workers in the Congo.

STC-FTBB main demands are:

- To strengthen the safety of workers on the logging sites and in the

processing plants; the increased protection of workers against the hazards of work, such as infringement of rights and economic interests; the lack of protective gear, helmets, boots, masks.

STC long-term goals are:

- To raise the awareness of workers in Congo by appropriate union training to free them from ignorance and fear.

- The increased visibility in the DRC of the UITBB in particular and of the WFTU in general through the future consolidation of militant and class based unions.

- The continued and increased organizing of self-entrepreneurs, of women's associations – all intermediaries in the sale of logs and sawn timber – in order to increase the number of members of the STC-FTBB and, in turn, of UITBB and WFTU affiliates.

How do you see your participation in the UITBB?

A. The STC sees its participation in the UITBB/WFTU as a good omen within the context of strengthening international solidarity with other militant and class-based unions around the world, for a fruitful exchange of experiences. The WFTU is a large trade union family that carries the traditional values of the left and develops methods of struggle against the exploitation of man by man, against imperialism and decadent capitalism. The STC as a militant and class-based union struggling in the DRC contributes to building a world of social justice and democracy, ensuring to every person in the world the well being that everyone aspires to.

What are the expectations of the STC vis-à-vis the UITBB?

The STC expects more cooperation in the field of training due to the importance of its federation of Forestry Division. The STC deserves closer attention from the UITBB and wishes to **benefit from training**, especially at the Institute of the ILO in Turin, to strengthen its capacity in the field, in this country with its extensive capitalist interests.