

A Paper published by the Union of Unemployed in Iraq - UUI , Network of the UUI & FWCUI Representative Abroad

The open conference of workers in Basra concluded successfully

on 26.11.2004

Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq-FWCUI

Today in the city of Basra under the slogan (the power of the working class is in its unity and organization) the open congress of workers in Basra commenced with participation of more than 200 representatives and labour activists of many labour unions, industrial workers and preparatory committees of labour unions. The congress discussed the main topics including the role of labour movement to end the occupation and in determination of the political future of the Iraqi society.

Falah Alwan, president of FWCUI presented a lecture about the freedom of trade unions, Adul karim Al Sada presented a research about the unity of the working class and

Ali Abas presented an assessment about the realities and current situation of the labour movement in Basra.

Qasim Hadi, general secretary of UUI made a speech about the unemployment in Iraq after wars and under the occupation, Yanar Mohamad, gave a speech about

the role of the working women in the trade union movement and the position of the women in the labour movement in Iraq. Nadia Mahmoud, member of the political Bureau of the Worker Communist Party of Iraq gave a speech about the activities of FWCUI and UUI Abroad and their influence on the political stands of the labour unions world wide on the situation of the worker's movement in Iraq. She also stressed upon the importance of international solidarity with labour movement in Iraq.

There was a detail discussion about the agenda of the conference for more than 4 hours and then followed by the election of the executive board of the FWCUI. The congress, issued many resolutions, conclusion and recommendation which after discussion, they have been approved by the congress and considered as resolutions of the congress.

The congress made a conclusion regarding the situation of Iraqi people under the occupation and the interim government

established by the US led coalition in Iraq and the struggle of the civil resistance front against the occupation. The congress appeals to labour movement world wide to support Iraqi workers and Iraqi people to end the occupation of Iraq.

The labour activists and representative of labour unions viewed this congress, as an important congress in this capacity been held in Basra which was very triumphant in proposing a prospective to the labour movement in Iraq.

The agreements around the resolutions of this congress were very obvious and constructive and its agenda was very apparent and broadly dealt with the current situation in Iraq, in which majority of the decisions and resolutions have been accepted by absolute votes of participants.

During the elections, a group of participant formed a calculation team of the votes and the results were very truthful and accurate.

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In another part of the congress, many solidarity letters which have been sent to the conference from trade unions, political parties and labour activists worldwide have been mentioned and short paragraphs of these letters have been translated to the workers.

The congress was concluded with great feeling of success of all participants on the success of the congress and they regarded these conferences as great steps and important in principles to establish real independent labour unions not belonging to the government.

In the congress the female representatives and activists took an active role. In this regard a female labour activist named Kifah Hassan won the election with absolute majority of votes of the participants.

The congress discussed many serious issues for the independent labour movement in Iraq its tasks and responsibilities to end the occupation of Iraq and to set its role in the political future of Iraq, freedom of trade unions and the unity of the working class.

Resolutions & Recommendation of the conference of Workers of Basra-FWCUI

On November 26, 2004 the first broad conference of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq-Basra branch was held. The conference tackled many topics on the role of workers in deciding the political destiny of the society, freedom of unionist struggle and the unity of the Working class. The discussions

reflected the view of the FWCUI for the workers' movement in Iraq in its entirety as part of the working class worldwide. Therefore the Federation believes that the concepts, conclusions, and theoretical framework of the conference must be turned into resolutions and demands as the summary of theses and the discussions of the conference.

The list of the resolutions and recommendations of the conference:

First: guaranteeing intervention of workers and their unions in deciding the state's structure and participation in taking decisions.

1. Direct participation in legislating laws and endorsing the constitution.

2. Workers unions must be independent of the state and the workers' right to form unions without the authorization of the government.

3. All resolutions, laws and regulations passed by previous regimes and the current authority, which negate the rights and freedoms of workers, must be abolished.

4. Formation of workers' bodies to watch the authority in regard to workers' rights and freedoms.

Second: Recognition in law that workers' organizations are the affair of workers themselves and authority must not interfere toward restricting workers' rights and unionist freedoms.

1. Prohibition of passing any resolution which legalize a workers' organization or federation and not others and regard it the legitimate and legal representative of the

unionist movement in the country.

2. Financial support must not be limited to the union authorized by government and unions, which do not belong to the state, must not be deprived from such support.

3. Prohibition of restricting unionist freedoms whether through direct legal ways or through exerting negative and detrimental morale influence.

4. Abolishing all resolutions, which contradict with unionist freedom including resolution number 16, which violates unionist freedoms.

Third The concept of working class's unity is the alignment of workers around their fundamental and most important objectives and interests.

1. Workers' organizations must be a tool at workers' hands to achieve their objectives and interests

2. Prohibition of making workers organization tools at the hands of authority or forces, which oppose workers.

3. A wide segment of working class-women are not represented in the unionist movement, which is a major weakness point in unionist movement and its credibility in defending the entire working class. Women must be allowed to participate actively in unionist work.

Long live the willpower of the working class.

Withdrawal of all occupying forces from Iraq, is an urgent demand of the independent labour movement in Iraq

Arrestment of workers of Yousufiya-Baghdad under the pretext of insurgency

The American forces on the night of 16.11.2004 in Yousufiya town, Alsaidat Village arrested a number of workers in their homes under the pretext and allegation of armed insurgency against American forces, despite they are continuing in their working in the Company for oil productions in Baghdad. The workers are Kais Mutalak Najm ,Issam Ali Hussein , Hussein Ali Hussein and Ahmad Algarizi and they have been transported to an unknown place .

We strongly condemn these aggressive actions of US forces against the workers and civilian s and we demands immediate release of the arrested workers .

We appeal to all labour unions , human rights and international organisations and political parties to stand behind the workers in Iraq and their labour activists and progressive people in Iraq and to condemn the aggressive operations of US forces in Iraq in order to strengthen US - control over Iraq .Thousands of civilian people became victims of this aggressions by both US forces and political Islamic groups. We refuse to convert the resident places and work places of people to battle fields of military confrontations.

17.11.2004

Establishment of the worker council of Forest and Farm workers in Alzafaraniya- Baghdad

The workers in the general corporation for forest and farm have established in the Alzafariniya Farm their worker council .The council was established in a free and democratic election and majority of the workers have participated in the general meeting and as a result 7 workers have been elected as leading board of this council .The election was occurred by the supervision of the two representative of the FWCUI who were Samih Ashur and Rasheed Ismail and Mr.Salam Muhamad , the director of the agriculture in this corporation .

It's well known that FWCUI establishes labour unions and workers councils without governmental permission depending on the international labour standards and conventions which declare that establishment of labour unions is the right of workers themselves and government has no right to interfere.

27. November 2004

Shahraban Governor in Baghdad threatened to arrest the labour activists who joined FWCUI

The governor of Sharaban issued an official order to all companies and factories in this neighbourhood to prevent and try any labour activist who joins FWCUI. He stressed that the only official and legal federation is IFTU and threatened to arrest those who joined FWCUI.

It seems that this Governor neglects the international labour conventions specially conventions Nr. 98 and 87 which clarifies the right of workers to establish their unions and prevent the government to interfere in this matter. Pressurising workers only to join one union is an old tradition of Baath Regime which seems that this Governor is also one partner of these fascist policies of Baath regime.

FWCUI will raise an official claim against this fascist policies of Governor of Shahrban and we will stress that he must be tried and not freedom loving labour activists.

November 2004

From P.4 Houzan Mahmoud's speech at No Sweat

Looking at all this chaos and in the absence of minimum security the activism of women in the workers movement has been made even harder. But we have shown them way that the real resistance is the resistance of workers and women for freedom, humanity, egalitarianism, and secularism not Islamism and killings and bombings of innocent civilians. We are telling people that we want an end to occupation and we are fighting for a secular and egalitarian state and not a reactionary religious state. Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq has been organizing women to fight for equality and women's rights and is known in the world for its non compromising stands in defense of women and exposing Islamists for their brutalities against women in Iraq.

We have been spearheading the struggles to empower women to get involved in the unions and the recent example of the Basra conference in which a female worker, Kefah, was elected with an absolute majority votes among 200 delegates to head the workers councils in Basra.

It is the task of workers and women in Iraq to end occupation of Iraq and establish a state whereby people are treated equally and not on the bases of gender, ethnic, religious or tribal backgrounds. The achievements of our unions have been great but it is still fragile as the threats of the Interim government and USA is still hanging over our heads. Our progress and even existence will be in jeopardy in the absence of a strong International solidarity. As you appreciated a great deal more needs to be done and we are looking forward to your continuous support.

Once again I would like to thank you for your support and solidarity with us and thank you all for listening.

Houzan Mahmoud-4.12

Voice of Iraqi Workers

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Houzan Mahmoud's speech at No Sweat Campaign's annual meeting London 4/12/2004.



Greetings comrades:

I would like to congratulate you for your annual meeting and thank you for inviting me.

Comrades. I would like to start my talk with a greeting message sent to you by my comrade Falah Alwan, the leader of the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq.

Dear comrades of No Sweat campaign

On behalf of Federation of workers Councils and Unions in Iraq I would like to send our warmest greetings from Iraq to your annual conference in London.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank you for your support and solidarity with us in the past year, in particular for your support to our conference in Basra.

The successful conclusion of our conference in Basra, under the current circumstances, has proved to be a great success for the working class struggle in Iraq. It is worth mentioning that it would have been a great more difficult without the international support and solidarity from organizations like yours.

Once again thank you and wish you all the best and success in your campaigns to defend the workers across the world.

In solidarity

Falah Alwan
President of the Federation of
Workers Councils and Unions in
Iraq-30.11.2004

To speak about the miseries and hardships that the workers in Iraq had suffered in the past is a long story. There is no doubt about the brutality of the Ba'ath regime during the last three decades in dividing the workers and suppressing their struggles.

Independent unions were not allowed to exist and official ones were a means in the hands of the regime to implement the Ba'ath regime's anti-workers policies. But what is happening now under the new rule of both America and its installed puppet regime, the so called interim government, is not any better than what happened under the previous regime.

Certainly neither the USA nor its puppets want to see independent workers unions and organizations. But the workers in Iraq from the first days of the collapse of the Saddam's regime and the occupation of Iraq have started organizing themselves in unions and workers councils. We have been trying to organize the working class up and down the country, clear of the Ba'athist members and so called leaders, with a new vision for equality and freedom in Iraq. Amongst the new wave of workers organizations are the Union of Unemployed, Federation of Workers Councils and a number of recent unions in Iraq that were established in and around May 2003 to defend the rights of unemployed workers and unionize the workers to defend their rights. These workers' organization are certainly formed by the workers themselves and act as a tool in the hands of workers to achieve their goals and not merely a tool in the hands of the capitalist regimes to impose their laws on workers.

Our unions have had tremendous progress since their foundation. They have courageously stood against occupation and holding the occupying forces to account for the starvation, poverty and the widespread unemployment in Iraq.

It was in August 2003 when the Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UUI) decided to stage a 45 day sit-in in front of the coalition forces provisional authority's office in Iraq to demand jobs or unemployment benefit. The US forces response was to arrest the leaders of this movement in an attempt to contain this huge force of the working class in Iraq.

So far around 14 major demonstrations have been organized by our unions in Baghdad and other cities of Iraq.

As you know the situation in Iraq is turbulent. There is the ongoing occupation of Iraq. Civilians are getting killed and terrorized by US forces as well as the armed Islamic gangs and the dramatic rise of the armed forces belonging to the political Islamic forces in Iraq who have now turned our society into a battle field.

This turmoil has lead to a situation where female workers can not go out to work without fully observing Islamic veil. Those daring to disobey them will get kidnapped by different local gangsters due to lack of security. The issue of security and lack of protection of citizens in Iraq have lead to chaos which had made the job of labour activist and organizers very difficult indeed.

The Islamists are using the occupation as an excuse to terrorize Iraqi people. They blow up cinemas, video and DVD shops, shops selling alcoholic drinks. Women using hairdressing salon will have their hair cut in public in an effort to exert fear and shame on them.

They kill women who go to work without veil and threaten to kill girls who go to university without veil. So far over 1000 female students have withdrawn from university as they do not want to be killed for not wearing veil. All these are done in the name of "resistance". If they want to fight the occupiers why do they kill and behead Iraqi people, or foreign workers who are the victim of occupation.

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