

A Paper published by the Network of the FWCUI & UII Representation Abroad

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**Urgent appeal for financial support for the workers conference in
Baghdad! P.7**

Leather Industry workers organize a large sit-in and dissolve Alhaq association

Workers of the General Company of Leather Industry in al-Karada a suburb in Baghdad started a sit-in inside the company on 17 January 2004 in protest against the way the Ministry and administration handle the workers salaries and allowances. They accused the administration of corruption. The sit-in demands included; replace the administration and the accounting and planning managers in particular. Identify those behind the company's losses as the administration claims and identify those responsible for the company's debts from the former regime's era and stop punishing workers on these debts by stopping their allowances or through putting mental pressure on them by holding the responsible for these debts. Pay workers' allowances on due dates. Replace those who represent workers

before the administration and hold



new elections under the supervision of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq. Recognize the right of workers to

obtain pieces of product to be distributed on them after each production cycle. The delegation of the FWCUI headed by Samih Ashor, the deputy secretary of the federation in attendance of Qasim

Hadi, head of the Union of Unemployed in Iraq met a group of workers. The delegation emphasized that workers' organizations is the affair of workers themselves and that the administration must understand that the workers are the actual producers while its task is organize the production. **To P. 2**

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The Iraqi elections is neither legitimate nor fair

In Jan 30 the elections were held after a huge preparation and propaganda by the Iraqi authorities and occupation troops who wanted to legitimize the U.S and its allies installed government, urging the people to participate in the US project.

Amid an insecurity atmosphere and domination of the armed militias belong to many parties and movements in the cities, no agenda put forward for the participants by the parties, the elections campaign was in hands of a very few parties who are very well and heavily supported financially either from the Iraqi belonged money or by the neighboring countries, and the most dangerous part among all, is that some political groups began to use religious and spiritual effects as a tool to attract people to cast the ballot, the major one was the Fatwa issued by Al-Sistany urging the mandate of this elections. Later on Al-Sistany representatives started issuing religious orders and threats towards the people stating

that god will be punishing whoever didn't vote for the list blessed by Al-Sistany, which means terrorizing people spiritually. In addition the authorities used the same old fascist ways that were used by the former regime that was cutting off the rations on whoever didn't vote or spreading out rumors stating that the failure of the elections will lead the Wahabbies to win and sloter the Shiite and Ayad Allawi is the hero who will save us all.

On the whole they have created a dramatically complicated political scene based on frightening and terrorism. Besides all of that some high profile figures who were monitoring the polling station in many regions took advantage of the illiterate women and elderly to vote on their behalf for their own parties.

Thus the outcome of the election is known already and the winning lists were known even before the commencement of the elections.

The political powers with the US masterminding have completed and passed on a political show.

They succeeded to maintain the ethnicity and religious division among the Iraqi people and legitimized a government they installed a year ago.

What they called it elections for those reasons are neither legitimate nor fair. Furthermore it will draw the society down to more division and conflicts, and it is eventually strengthening and deepening the US plan in the region. We call on the, trade Unions, libertarian and secular powers to lead the massive protest against this reactionary and antihuman plan of occupying forces and Islamic and ethnic forces in Iraq and to strengthen the liberation front to put forward the people will to end the occupation of Iraq. Rejection of the division based on the ethnic or religious background which will lead to the failure of the US plan in Iraq and in the region.

Long live freedom

Long live people's will

Long live human choice

FWCUI

Feb. 02, 2005

From P.1 Leather Industry workers organize a large sit-in and dissolve Alhaq association

It is worth mentioning that the company's production exceeded 120% of the maximum production planned previously. The delegation of the FWCUI met the administration and informed it about the workers demands. The administration promised to answer the workers' demands next Wednesday and claimed it agrees with these demand. The Alhaq association established by al-Sadr group was dissolved on demand from the workers and was replaced with a branch for the FWCUI.

Recently various Iraqi cities witnessed a large wave of strikes and workers' protests and the FWCUI play a key role in organizing and leading these protests as was the case with the protest of workers of energy in Baghdad and Nasiryiah, electricity in Basra, construction workers in Nasiryiah and petrochemical manufactures in Baghdad.

FWCUI ,17. Jan 2005

Our differences with the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions-IFTU

By Aso Jabbar , January 2005

The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq categorically condemn the terrorist attack against the members of the IFTU and the Murder of Hadi Salih, the international officer of the IFTU. These are terrorist attack against civilians, which must be condemned. Despite our condemnation, we have serious difference with the IFTU, which may not be obvious to many abroad.

Some of these differences are:

1. IFTU is backed by the Iraqi Communist party, which was a member of the Governing Council and now of the Interim Iraqi Government and fully collaborates with the US led coalition in Iraq. They have always supported all policies adopted by the local authority and USA in Iraq including, the occupation of Iraq, UN resolutions in regard to war and occupation, all resolutions passed by the Iraqi Governing Council and Interim Government, the game due to be performed under the name of election, federalism for Iraq, Islamic and fascist groups coming to the power... etc. The IFTU was recognized by the Interim Government as the official and legal representative of workers in Iraq and they are receiving huge amount of financial support from the authority for their unreserved support for the IGC and the IIG. There were no real attempts by IFTU to be recognised

by the Iraqi Interim Government but this government did so because they need this union as an instrument to subdue workers and to outlaw any independent union. Its sponsor the Iraqi Communist Party did not condemn the second gulf war in 1991 with an illusion that America will liberate people of Iraq from Saddam Hussein. They did not condemned economic embargo from the beginning and only announced a modest opposition to this genocide toward the end, when no progressive and semi-progressive forces remained silent.

2. IFTU represents the government and employers in any dispute with workers. Its main task is to implement the policies of the Iraqi communist party, Interim Government and the occupation authorities. It endorses the policies of the Iraqi Interim Government in regard to workers. IFTU has never supported the FWCUI or UUI; neither has it supported independent unions in Iraq like Southern Oil Company, which is not affiliated with the IFTU or FWCUI. In numerous protest actions they have stood with administrations and the government. For example they did not condemn the bloody attack by the Iraqi police on the Textile workers in Kut. They refused to send message of support to Basra workers' conference. They refused to sign our complaint to ILO against the



authority's decision to ban all unions except IFTU. They refused to support our proposed labour law. We pleaded with them not to stand against workers in their struggles for their fair demands, but they are still supporting the interests of employers, administrations and government.

Look at their web page, you will not find any news of strikes or protest actions by workers, which are everywhere these days. In all protest action by workers, IFTU has been a marginal organisation and in many incidents workers even did not distinguish between representatives of IFTU and administration and employers. In the incident of the strike of workers in Petrochemical and Plastic Industry in Baghdad they vigorously stood against the workers, tried to break their strike and prevent them from electing their own organization. This incident demonstrated clearly the organic relation between the leaders of IFTU and employers and why workers do not recognise them as union activists. They are not serious in their opposition to Islamists. They are just part of the propaganda launched by the Interim Government and the occupation forces against the Islamic groups and Baathists. **To P.4**

Voice of Iraqi Workers

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From P. 3

Our differences with the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions

This is the reality of IFTU. The Interim Government consciously recognised them as the only legal union because they need it to subjugate the protesting working class and limit the effect of their strikes and protests. IFTU is to draw the labour movement behind their collaborating policies with occupation. The USA and the reactionary forces grouped in the Iraqi Interim Government are struggling to control the labour movement in Iraq and divert its attention from struggling for its progressive agenda. One way to do that is to deepen ethnic and religious division between workers. IFTU is in line with all these reactionary policies.

Working class is struggling against these policies and to improve its living conditions. We are in the hearts of this struggle; organizing, leading and guiding workers and they are defending employers, managers and administrations. We know very well that working class could be very powerful and strong and will have a say in deciding its won future if we succeed in our agenda, while if their agenda succeeds the working class will be further marginalized and its exploitation further intensified.

3. *From our point of view the occupation is the source of all problems in Iraq and without ending it there will be no improvement in the disastrous situation in Iraq. Therefore it is very crucial for Iraqi people to end the occupation in Iraq through their independent and progressive struggle. We welcome any forces in Iraq and abroad which support and participate in achieving this task. It is very crucial also for us to criticize strongly those who are collaborating with USA and who are standing against these attempts to force the occupation forces to leave*

Iraq. On the other hand we all know about the position of the Iraqi Communist Party and the IFTU on occupation. We all remember the dirty role that the IFTU representative played in British Labour Party conference to convince union delegates not to support an early withdrawal of UK forces from Iraq. This incident by itself is enough to know who this group is and how it misleads the labour movement for their own party's agenda.

Now let's examine comments made by Abdulla Muhsin, the international officer of IFTU in August 25, 2004, The Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU): Outline History and Future Tasks, A paper by Abdullah Muhsin, United Kingdom based Representative of the IFTU:

He says (The Union of Unemployed in Iraq - which now calls itself as the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq. Like many other movements formed in Baghdad in the wake of Saddam's demise it gained some international notoriety for organising protests outside Bremer's offices. But the UUI is really a front organisation of the small Workers Communist Party of Iraq. It commands very little support among Iraqi working people. In fact the union had disappeared from the political and industrial scene of Iraqi Kurdistan because of its sectarianism. It is possible this experience will be repeated in the rest of Iraq. Though the UUI has capitalized on the strong anti-occupation feeling and on the despair of the high numbers of unemployed, it possesses few industrial credentials and is viewed with disdain by the Iraqi labour movement.)

These claims made by IFTU are disgusting and completely in line with claims of the Kurdish nation-

alist parties; PUK, KDP, the Iraqi Communist Party and Islamic groups in the Interim Government. Abdulla Muhsin has no courage to talk about the policies and the practices of UUI and the FWCUI, but will try to mud everything. These comments are to belittle UUI and the fair demands of unemployed people that it uphold. There are millions of unemployed people in Iraq; living with their families in a disastrous situation including hunger, deprivation, and lack of health services and so on. Any serious social movement should have an answer to this problem. We were the first labour group who organised unemployed people in Iraq to achieve their demand; jobs or unemployed benefit. The UUI is an attempt to answer a problem in such enormous scale and has achieved a lot of success in this regard. We organised series of protest actions before the CPA, including a 45-days sit-in. We were attacked by Islamists- Muqtada al-Sadr group in Nasiriyah and by the US forces in Baghdad. On three occasions our leaders and members were arrested and tortured by US forces. During many protests the US and Iraqi forces shot on peaceful demonstrations of UUI and unemployed people killing and injuring defenceless people.

In all these incidents IFTU maintained silence and indifference and instead to belittle the heroic struggle of UUI. While hundreds of unions and progressive people worldwide protested against these brutalities and supported UUI demands, the IFTU supported the policies of US forces and Iraqi Interim government against the UUI. By opposing UUI existence and struggle, the IFTU practically has incited reactionary groups against the UUI.

*In Iraqi Kurdistan we organised unemployed people in UUI -Iraqi Kurdistan since 1992 and we had serious of confrontation with Kurdish ruling parties. **To P.5***

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Our differences with the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions

Prominent leaders of UUI have been killed Like Baker Ali by PUK and Nazir Omer by KDP. In tens of incidents hundreds of UUI members in Kurdistan were arrested and tortured by PUK and KDP. After civil war in 1994 between PUK and KDP in North, Kurdistan UUI was weakened, but we have not disappeared from north. We have been attacked, arrested, tortured and killed by Kurdish militias. The Iraqi Communist party of Iraq was as usual a junior member of PUK and KDP local authorities. They are well known for their nationalistic and reactionary policies and with collaborating with strong forces no matter how reactionary they are.

IFTU accuses us of sectarianism but they are neglecting our relentless struggle against the ruling Kurdish parties. According to them it is us who are sectarian but the Kurdish nationalist parties who killed demonstrators and defenceless unemployed people and killed thousands in their internal ward and more than 9000 women (honour killing) are democratic and good guys. For a decade the Communist party of Iraq supported the policies of PUK and KDP against UUI -Kurdistan.

Amid the appalling conditions in Iraq it has not been easy for us to organise more than 350,000 members in UUI in 7 major cities across the country and one cannot be less unfair to dismiss UUI as a sectarian organization. For a neutral person the question is; there is UUI struggling for the demands of unemployed people in Iraq, it is independent of any of the forces participating in the Interim Government and US polices. It struggles against the occupation and the Islamo-ethnocentric resistance. It struggles for a secular government and constitution, for freedom of organisation and

speech. It works hard to raise the awareness among workers and encourage unemployed people to improve their living conditions. How do we deal with this organization? IFTU leaders think that the UUI was just a propaganda campaign and an attempt to exploit the resentment against the US occupation of Iraq but this proves their ignorance about and blindness to the disastrous conditions of unemployed people and labour movement in Iraq.

The IFTU leaders claim that FWCUI is another name for UUI. For them any organization, which is "illegal" and not authorized by the stooge government, does not exist. If it was not the "notoriety" of UUI as Abdulla Muhsim describes it, they would have denied that UUI exists as well. They willingly ignore or oppose other tendencies inside labour movement. However the history of these two years has proved that labour movement in Iraq is genuine movement with enormous energy and struggle ability and that many tendencies exist within the Iraqi labour movement and UUI and FWCUI are its most militant organizations.

The IFTU leaders also claim that UUI or even FWCUI are the front organization of the "small" Worker-communist Party of Iraq. This is a very superficial and dishonest evaluation of labour movement in Iraq and their independent unions. This has been always the vicious propaganda of these reactionaries against both WPIraq and UUI. The aim of this propaganda is clear, it is to incite Islamists against the activists of the UUI and FWCUI and ultimately preventing them from organizing among workers and justify oppressing them by their puppet government. Like elsewhere in Iraq there are political parties and

there are unions, people have the right to join parties and at same time to be members and leaders in unions. Only the WPIraq supports UUI and FWCUI and therefore there is nothing surprising if people join both the WPIraq on the one hand and the UUI and FWCUI on the other hand. Other parties are so reactionary and have so anti-human policies that they are in alliance with US occupation and political Islam or with the misogynist anti-workers Islamo-ethnocentric resistance.

They want to belittle our struggle by saying the WPIraq is a small organization. However what the workers could do with a "huge" party like the Iraqi Communist Party which is collaborating with US occupation and political Islam and the only connection it has to communism is its name. Did workers in Iraq forget the coalition between ICP and Baath Party between 1970-1978 which end up in massacring thousands of labour leaders, unionists and workers in Iraq? Our problem is that ICP and its general secretary are member of the Interim Government and friends to people like Paul Bremer, Alawi and even Blair and Bush. Leave alone UUI and FWCUI, has the ICP support the demands of workers, unemployed people, women and youth in Iraq? Lets ask the leaders of the IFTU and ICP some questions: What good has the occupation done to people in Iraq? What good will an ethnic and religious government, ethnic Federalism, death penalty, UN resolutions, political Islam and sharia, former Baathists do to people in Iraq? What good has resolution number 16, which legitimated IFTU and outlaws all other independent unions done? Why IFTU supports all these policies?

The WPIraq supports UUI, FWCUI and other independent unions politically and materially because

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Our differences with the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions

they believe that the ranks of workers in Iraq should be independent from the bourgeoisie including the employer and Government.

The question here is not whether WPIraq is small or big. The question is what are the policies of WPIraq toward labour movement in Iraq and what prospects put before the working class. Why Abdulla Muhsin is not talking about this? Why he does not have the courage to talk about our policies? This will make it obvious how far the IFTU and ICP are from the working class. Therefore it's better to rubbish everyone progressives force by terms that they learnt from their masters like small, ultra-left, and extremist and so on. The IFTU is proud because one day the ICP was big party but they do not want to talk about the catastrophes that the policies of the ICP have brought to the Iraqi working class. Now, we only need to remember that the ICP is the member of the puppet government with other CIA-sponsored scums.

Today the ICP and the IFTU again

are acting as tools to subject the interests of working class to the interests of the USA, puppet government, political Islam, nationalists and employers in general. How many protest actions have been leaded by IFTU? Let Abdulla Muhsin mention one. I cannot give one single example. We are proud we are in the heart of the worker-movement's protests and hardly a day goes by without our activists organizing and leading a protest action for workers' demands. In fact all our unions have been established during protest actions and not in bureaucratic ways of the IFTU. Recently we established the council of workers of Petrochemical and Plastic Industry in Baghdad during a protest action.

What will Abdulla Muhsin and his colleagues say about the conference of Basra workers? Arranging a conference where 350 labour activists from different industries in south of Iraq, participate in a city dominated by their friends-political Islamic groups backed by Iran and British forces while the IFTU and ICP members are shout-

ing Allahu Akabar with the Islamic groups, which terrorise everyone can not be done by a small sectarian organization. Such achievements are done while we receive no fund from governments and we even do not have an office in the capital. Despite the financial problems we are publishing now a newspaper, which is the first independent newspaper for workers and by workers in Iraq. We exist and we are active in whole Iraq. Look at the waves of workers protests across the country to see where is the IFTU stands and where the FWCUI stands?

This does not mean that we are not ready to work with the IFTU and ICP if they accepted our principles. These principles have nothing to do with the WPIraq and briefly can be summarized:

Freedom for Iraq and struggle against occupation and political Islam, Build unions independent from government and employers, freedom of speech and organization, support workers' protests and demands, a progressive labor code, struggle for secularism and a secular government , boycott the upcoming election in Iraq and so on.

From P.8 Repression of workers by Iraqi authorities

Rather than fight the administration, the Federation intends to form strong and independent unions on a nationwide scale to protect the rights of Iraq's workers which are being trampled on by the repressive pro-US regime, as they were under the Ba'ath government.

The Federation intends to form a united working class front but to do so, it is fighting against considerable opposition by the authorities and suffers from a critical lack of funding and international support.

"We desperately need your help and solidarity. Concretely, we are asking for donations - large or small - to help make sure this vital working class gathering can go ahead" (FWCUI). The Federation needs support to accommodate workers participating in the conference who come from outside Baghdad, to pay for the rent of the venue, transportation, security and food.

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For a progressive Labour Law in Iraq

Urgent appeal for financial support for the Broad Workers Conference in Baghdad!

To all unions, labour organizations, political parties and individuals - support the forthcoming conference of workers in Baghdad!

Dear comrades and supporters of the struggle of workers in Iraq:

The federation of workers councils and unions in Iraq (FWCUI) is preparing its second workers' conference in Iraq. This event will take place in Baghdad in February 2005. As you are aware, we have already held a successful conference in Basra that attracted more than 350 representatives of workers from various unions and factories and from different cities in south Iraq. These participants created a united leadership to move towards a more coordinated struggle of workers across the south. This has provided a model for workers in other parts of Iraq and now – responding to the demands of workers in Baghdad and other cities in central Iraq - FWCUI is preparing this second conference.

Our second conference is going to be another major step towards uniting workers around a clear progressive platform. It will facilitate the struggle of the workers of Iraq to impose their just demands on the pro-US administration. Crucially, it will also be a boost to the formation of strong independent unions across Iraq, fighting workers' organizations that are independent and opposed to the US's repressive machinations against our class. The reason workers are gathering around our

federation is because of its intransigent commitment to independent working class principles and its defense of workers' rights. All of this was evidenced in recent successful wave of strikes lead by FWCUI.

The workers of Iraq are determined to hold their conference in Baghdad, the capital of their country. This conference will be an essential organizing tool to strengthen the many local initiatives that are taking place in the field of trade union struggles as well as to forge a united working class front with the struggles that are taking place the length and breadth of Iraq.

But we desperately need your help and solidarity. Concretely, we are asking for donations – large or small – to help make sure this vital working class gathering can go ahead.

The FWCUI's budget for this conference is \$10,000

We need this money In order to accommodate workers coming from different parts of the country as well transport, security, food, publicity, renting hall, etc...

Please rush your donations to FWCUI – help make sure that this historic step forward for working people in Iraq actually takes place.

In solidarity

Aso Jabbar and Houzan Mahmoud- FWCUI

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You can send your donations in different ways:

--You can send your donations through this partner account address in Switzerland with remarks FWCUI:

**International Campaign to Defend Iraqi Women Rights Solidarity with Iraqi Women Rights -SIWR
Post Finance Bank
Swift Code: POFIBECH
Account Nr. 30-340462-4
Post Box 326
3000 Bern 11
Switzerland**

-You can send cheques to Aso Jabbar - abroad representative of FWCUI through the following address:

**Aso Jabbar, abroad representative of Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq
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3001 Bern
Switzerland**

**No To America, No To Political Islam ,
For a Secular Secular State in Iraq**



Activities of The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq -FWCUI in UK



-On 24/01/2004 Houzan Mahmoud and Dashti Jamal met with Mark Osborn and Sasha Ismail from No Sweat campaign and Alliance for Workers liberty to discuss in this meeting issues around the so called elections in Iraq were discussed, as well as the outcome of the workers conference in Basra, and its important achievement for the workers in Iraq were highlighted then Houzan and Dashti spoke about the second workers conference in Baghdad. Issues around gathering support and solidarity for this conference was discussed and the No sweat campaign have decided to donate 250 pound to this conference as a first step to strengthen the struggle of workers in Iraq.

-On 31/01/2005 Dashti Jamal met with Mr. Owen Tudor from TUC in UK to discuss the participation of Falah Alwan in the TUC conference in relation to workers solidarity in Iraq.

-On 05/02/2005 Houzan Mahmoud and Dashti Jamal participated in Labour against the war annual conference in London. There were various speakers in this meeting such as Michael Mecher Labour, Sami ramadani, Ewa Jascuwich, and others.

Houzan spoke about the work and efforts of FWCUI to organize the struggle of workers against occupation and achievement of their rights in Iraq.

Dashti spoke about the falseness of the so called elections and that how irrelevant it is to the will power of Iraqi people. This discussion continued for while and at the end both Dashti and Houzan called for solidarity with workers in Iraq, in which the attendant's response was very positive.

-On 08/02/2005 Houzan Mahmoud was invited by UCL social forum in London to give a speech about the struggle of workers in Iraq. On the platform there was a union leader from Venezuela Mr. Ricardo, also there was RMT representative from UK, as well as a representative from Colombia solidarity campaign. There have been very interesting discussions and ideas about strengthening international solidarity with the working class struggle world wide.

Repression of workers by Iraqi authorities

By Timothy Bancroft-Hinchey in Pravda.Ru, http://english.pravda.ru/mailbox/22/101/399/14867_.html

The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq is trying desperately to form Workers' Councils to defend workers' rights in Iraq. All they want is the right to organize and the right to strike. One such initiative was met with gunfire by the US-backed authorities. The FWCUI appeals to the international community for support. Organized, dedicated, their ideals set on protecting workers' rights in Iraq and forming workers' councils to discuss questions of common interest, the Iraqi workers are as repressed in certain areas of the country as they were

under the former regime. The movement needs the support of the international community urgently and launches an appeal to all workers' movements, trade unions and political parties which respect and fight for workers' rights to contact the FWCUI to see how they can support the workers of Iraq in their quest to fight for their rights.

More than 350 delegates participated in the last conference in Basra, which as a great success, bringing together members of trade unions and workers' councils

from all over Iraq. A united leadership was created to coordinate the rights of workers in southern Iraq. The FWCUI is now trying to organize the second workers' conference in Baghdad in February, so as to set up a similar united body to coordinate the centre of the country.

"Our second conference is going to be another major step towards uniting workers around a clear progressive platform", declares the Federation, explaining that "It will facilitate the struggle of the workers of Iraq to impose their just demands on the pro-US administration". **To P. 6**