

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

May 1st, the Day of Workers Solidarity Statement of FWCUI P.2

Statement regarding the FWCUI -second conference in Baghdad April 8, 2005

Despite the security concerns and marshal law that have been exercised in the eve of the second anniversary of the occupation, the FWCUI have successfully held its second conference attended by more than 200 labor activists and representatives from all across Iraq. Many subjects were put forward to the conference for discussion, and they are as it follows:

-The role of the workers in deciding the fate of the Iraqi political future

-The trade unions freedoms and association

-The role of the workers in introducing progressive and contemporary labor law

-The role of women in building trade unions Heated discussions and debates were noticed around these areas, and then the vote regarding the conference resolutions, and a modification regarding the union slogan were held. Later on a new executive board was elected. Finally the conference has come to an end after its resolutions have been adopted unanimously as ground work for the upcoming activities.

Long live Willpower of Working class



IRAQI UNION CALLS FOR A "IRAQ FREEDOM CONGRESS"

Interview with Felah Alwan, President of FWCUI by David Bacon , April 18, 2005 P.3,4&5

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May 1st, the Day of Workers Solidarity

Workers of the world celebrate on this day along with the rest of the human being in the world who hope for freedom and equality. And when the workers celebrate this occasion they are not only to commemorate the US workers more than a century ago, however 1st of May have gained a characteristic that makes it a symbol of protest movement against exploitation, and a representation of the freedom and equality.

On such day every year, billions of people around the world celebrate without paying attention to the race, color, language, or religion. It is only one banner that unifies the human being and denounces any differences and discrimination.

The Iraqi workers along with the freedom lovers in the society raise the 1st of May flag to symbolize the unification and solidarity while they live in an miserable atmosphere represented by the dark scenario, that is already prepared to divide the society and push

towards an ethnic and religious war which we witness every day.

Amid these conditions the workers flag rises high up through which the voice of workers roars to restore the civility to a society threatened to be abolished throughout conflicts and devastations.

While the political groups contend each other to get their share in the government, we the Iraqi workers get together despite the harsh conditions to hold our conferences and bring about our alternatives to salvage the society. We meet to demonstrate and protest in demanding a better living conditions and the expansion of civil liberty for the entire society.

The conditions resulted from the occupation have reached up to a point threatening to demolish the whole structure of the society, whereas the political powers stand paralyzed to provide any solution to pull the society out of this bottomless hole. At the same time the occupation forces keep deepening these miseries by continuing the occupation and installing a gov-

ernment based on the ethnic and religion to pertain their plan.

Revolving around the libertarian alternative and forming their organization is the major step for the workers to block the way before the powers who are in desire of tearing up this society, spreading conflicts, and creating hates and enemies among the people.

Let's make the 1st of May a day of unification and organization

Let the unification of the workers be significant in ending the occupation

Let the libertarian powers support the workers in their efforts to end the miserable conditions

Let the Iraqi workers organize themselves in a capable and efficient

Long Live May 1st

Long Live labor Movement

Federation of Worker Councils and Unions in Iraq

April 28, 2005

U.S. LABOR AGAINST THE WAR

February 3, 2005 ,

Falah Alwan ,President of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq-FWCUI

Dear Brother Falah: I am writing to send greetings of solidarity to the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq and to all the Iraqi workers gathering at your conference in Baghdad. We in USLAW consider the work being done by your Federation to be of the utmost importance in laying the groundwork for a secular progressive Iraq where workers rights and women's rights will be respected.

Our 110 affiliated labor organizations are sending you a modest contribution of \$500 to help make this conference possible. We in the US are well aware that it is extremely difficult to organize for the rights of working people in the midst of an occupation and a war, without adequate funds and without assurances of even the basic necessities of life such as clean drinking water and electricity. We will continue to oppose the occupation imposed on Iraqis by our government and will continue to support workers and unions in Iraq in every way possible. We look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with you and your organization. In Warm Solidarity,

Gene Bruskin , Co-Convenor , US Labor Against the War

Hundreds of Unemployed People Marched the Streets to Denounce the Local Authorities' Inhuman Campaign- 7.4.2005

More than 700 unemployed people in Nasirya led by Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UUI) have organized a demonstration against the cruel campaign launched by the local authorities to move the sidewalk vendors from their workplaces to an unwanted remote place where there are no customers. The demo lasted for 4 hours and many media officials were notified however no one of them showed up.

A delegation of 5 members was formed chaired by the UUI Secretary in Nasirya (Ahmed Salim) to meet with the Mayor and discuss this issue.

The police tried to end that demo at any cost but the demonstrators refused to move and waited to see the end of the meeting, the police however reacted viciously and fired at the sky in an attempt to scare the demonstrators but they insisted of staying till the end.

Finally the meeting came to end by the agreement of both sides upon: Registering all the protestors for any future job opportunity in the ministries of: Defense ,Interior, Labor and social services .

The Mayor promised to find and discuss an appropriate alternative area for being a shopping place Authorized to members of the delegation including the Secretary of UUI to speak on behalf of the unemployed people.

Ahmed Salim

Secretary of the Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UUI)

Nasirya Branch

IRAQI UNION CALLS FOR A "FREEDOM CONGRESS" AND UN INTERVENTION

Interview with Felah Alwan, by David Bacon , April 18, 2005

http://www.truthout.org/issues_05/041905LA.shtml

On March 18, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions of Iraq, one of Iraq's three trade union federations, announced the formation of the Iraqi Freedom Congress. The union called it "a broad organization committed to establishing a free, secular and non-ethnic government in Iraq," composed of "political parties, trade unions, people's councils, associations and institutions." The FCWUI sees the present situation as a "civil abyss," in which "the fabric of the civil society in Iraq has been torn apart under the US occupation and the domi-

nation of the Islamic, tribal and political gangsters."

In the following interview, the president of the Federation of Workers' Councils, Felah Alwan, explains the way the union proposes to end Iraq's occupation, and the occupation's impact on workers.

Q: What political process can end the occupation?

F: Iraq is now in a state of anarchy. There are no civil institutions. There's nothing except the occupation forces and the govern-



ment. The structure of the government imposed by the occupation forces has been divided along lines of ethnicity and religion.

To P.4

Voice of Iraqi Workers

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From P.3 Interview with Felah Alwan, by David Bacon , April 18, 2005

That makes some people believe that there is popular support for it. Our society may be headed for civil war between religious groups. We call for the organization of a Congress of Liberation, including all the political powers in Iraq, to end the occupation and rebuild civil society. This Congress would include all groups, and would have the power to end the rule of the occupation. One way to end the occupation itself would be for the forces of the United Nations to keep the peace.

Q: So you think UN troops should replace the US military forces?

F: If the current troops withdraw, there may be a need for another military force, especially from countries that haven't participated in the occupation. They would supervise new elections, to help the Iraqi people elect their government, instead of the election that just happened. The main thing is to end the occupation, and all this would take place afterwards. But the occupation will never end until we can hold a congress of all the powers in Iraq that make up civil society.

Q: What was the attitude of the members of the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions of Iraq toward the January elections in Iraq?

F: Our federation issued a statement criticizing the way the elec-

tions were conducted. We said that for people to choose between more than one alternative, they would have to know the programs of the different political parties and groups. This hasn't happened in Iraq. So this was a violation of the right of the people. Most women in Iraq outside the capital in the rural areas can't read or write. So the supervisors of the election centers there themselves filled out the ballots for the parties they wanted.

As an example, one important Shiite cleric told people to participate, and said that those who boycotted the voting would go to hell. This was an intervention by religious orders, threatening people if they refused to participate. Sistani also threatened people with hell if they refused to vote for the electoral list of the group of Shiite parties. On the other hand, the party of the Prime Minister [Issad Allawi] waged a propaganda campaign telling people that if the election failed, everyone who boycotted or refused to participate would be punished. In the cities, in areas under the hegemony of the Islamist militia, people were threatened if they refused to participate or if they didn't vote for the list of the Shiite candidates of Sistani's party.

So the election took place without a real desire on the part of the voters. People were also afraid that the election centers would be attacked, and even that people

would be beheaded. In this case, it is unfair to call this an election. It was a ridiculous thing.

We tried to enter one of the centers to take pictures, and the armed men there prevented us from doing that. They stopped people from going in to see what was happening. The supervisors and the supporters of the armed militia called on people to support their alternative, and no other, especially the list of Sistani. In Kurdistan, people were already announcing the result of the election before it happened.

So we called on workers to boycott these elections, because people were divided according to their ethnicity, language and religion. Its purpose was to impose the American project on Iraq, and give legitimacy to the government imposed by the Americans and the occupying coalition. The same parties we saw in the old Governing Council will remain in power, and the political balance will remain the same. They called on people to participate to give this legitimacy.

We do know that many workers in the State Leather Industry Factory, and in others, boycotted the election. But we don't know the exact number, because in Iraq we're prevented from knowing such things. I can prove that a large number of workers boycotted the elections. **To P.5**

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

From P.4 Interview with Felah Alwan, by David Bacon , April 18, 2005

But the religious workers, especially those who follow Sistani, were given religious orders to vote. That is the main why a large number of religious people took

part.

D: What is the economic situation of workers in Iraq today?

F: The large number unemployed forces people to work under very bad conditions, and for very low wages. For example, agricultural workers are paid less than 100,000 Iraqi dinars a month. That's about \$70. The cost of fuel has increased very rapidly, and makes transportation very difficult. The conditions are very dangerous. Outside of Baghdad, workers in the other governates can only get jobs through political parties, especially those in the government. And they require workers to join their party. Before the election, some parties told people that if they voted for them, they'd give people jobs.

The large number of unemployed makes workers afraid to lose their jobs. Our workers struck a chemical plant in Baghdad. The administration, with another so-called union, threatened their jobs, and even threatened to arrest them. So the people abandoned their demands for higher wages and better conditions. In the State Leather Industry Factory, workers only make \$100-150 a month. They do dangerous work, and some lose their fingers on sharp instruments, and are denied

any compensation. It is a state-owned company, so the administration threatened to arrest workers, saying they had no right to organize a union. But the workers organized two strikes in January in spite of that.

In the villages, people work for \$1 a day. On construction sites in Nasariya, 100 miles south of Baghdad, they get 6000 dinars, or \$4-4.50 a day, in very bad conditions. They work seven days a week. When we called for one day of rest, the administration refused. "We need to finish the building," they said. And we found out that this building is for soldiers, so people were in danger of being killed at any moment by the armed groups. Four explosions took place while they were working. The workers were attacked because they were working on a building for the US Army. The gangs placed bombs on the site, and the Italians discovered three of them. But one exploded. Even there, the companies try to stop people from joining unions by threatening to fire them.

D: Has the economic situation gotten better over the past year?

F: The prices have gone up very rapidly. Kerosene rose so much that a worker can't buy it. Transport also increased a lot, because the price of fuel went up. Vegetables and food went up because transport went up, and because it's dangerous and

expensive to transport it goods. All of this puts a lot of pressure on the wages of the workers.

Q: How was your union formed?

F: Our union came out of the Union of Unemployed of Iraq. We had an 18-day demonstration at the start of the occupation, for unemployment insurance or jobs. Workers started to organize themselves on their own. They were very courageous.

Our organization was founded in the electricity, textile railway, and services industries. The main problem has been how to struggle against the old administration in the factories, and to raise the wages. Our focus from the beginning has been on the daily life issues. We've held a lot of seminars, and prepared our own proposal for the labor code. We tried to get the Minister of Labor to accept it, but the government already had its own agenda.

People are beginning to see the trade union movement as one made up of workers themselves, not related to the authorities. We have a weak trade union tradition among workers now, because workers see unions as part of the government. The authorities compound this problem by intervening in the trade union movement, with legislation that gives support to one organization and not others. Trade unions are being used by political parties to play a role in Iraq.

Donation to FWCUI -2nd Conference in Baghdad and to FWCUI and UII :

5000 USD from MDS & Solidarity Committee with Civil Resistance in Iraq in Japan , 500 USD from USLAW-USA , Robert C.Oelhaf-USA 100 USD ,Mr. Laurence Shoup Oakland -USA 25 USD , 300 USD Union Aid Abroad APHEDA Level 3, 377 Sussex Street Sydney NSW 2000Australia, 70 Euro from Getrud Moll Stuttgart -Germany ,130£ from Oxford -UK, 250 £ from London solidarity night-UK, 100 £ from CPGB -UK

Violation of workers' rights continues in Iraq

April 25, 2005

After the Iraqi government issued resolution 16 in 2004 which installed one federation as the official and legal representative of labour movement in Iraq, our Federation lodged a complain to the International Labour Organization which accepted the complain and regard resolution 16 a violation of international standards and agreements. This committee addressed the Iraqi authority but never received any reply.

The above mentioned complain was attached with a report on the conditions of workers under the occupation and the fact that the current government continue to enforce the oppressive laws of Baath regime which consider workers public servants and deprive them of the right of formation unions.

Despite banning us from activity for being unofficial and unrecognized by state and despite many discriminative resolutions issued by prime minister Ayad Allawi which endorse resolution 16 and authorize the governmental federation to put hand on all property and assets of previous federation

collected from workers over decades, which therefore belongs to the workers themselves and no government has the right to confiscate it or give it to its representatives and followers.

Despite all these obstacles our federation continued to organize workers and lead their daily struggle.

As the result of the prominent and sensible activity of our federation and after large numbers of workers join it in many sectors deserting the official union and establishing branches for the FWCUI in a democratic process to get rid of the traditions of past which severely restrict workers' freedoms. The administrations in cooperation with official federation have threatened our unionist activists and carders. These threats included threatening workers who have joint the Federation of Workers' Council and Unions in Iraq with sacking like what happened in the National Company for Petrochemical and Plastic Manufactures. Many unionist activists from General Company for Cotton Industry were also pun-

ished. The al-Najibia electricity office threatened Raad mahmood, and Haydar Abdulla that they will transferred to a remote place if they continue their unionist activity.

The federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq is a labour organization which represents workers of Iraq in all provinces and has members from all religions and nationalities in Iraq and in this sense is a glimpse of hope and a step on the path of liberation and building a civil society.

We consider any threat and resolution against our federation a blatant violation of workers' freedom and bringing to the force the practices of former regime.

We call on international Labour organizations and human right organizations to intervene and exert pressure on the Iraqi authorities and support our federation as a progressive labour organization.

Falah Alwan
President of FWCUI-Baghdad

The Independent Union of Public Servants & Services Joins the FWCUI

Baghdad, Thursday March2, 2005: The Independent Union of Public Servants and Service in Baghdad today announced that it is now a member of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq. The announcement followed a meeting between the leader of the Independent Union of Public Servants & Services (IUPSS) Mr. Abdul Zahra Abdul Hassan, his deputy Mr. Ali Hussein Jawad and the leadership of the federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq represented by Samih Ashur deputy president. Mathi Aofi, a member of the FWCUI's executive bureau and Falih Maqtof, FWCUI's legal representative also attended.

The Independent Union of Public Servants & Services decided to join us after announcing its split from the Democratic Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions. The split was discussed and approved by a meeting of IUPSS members held on February 28.

Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq

Solidarity messages to FWCUI - second Conference in Baghdad on 8th. April 05

Kansas City Labor Against the War Affiliated with US Labor Against the War
kclaw@kclabor.org

To/ the Federation of Worker Councils and Unions in Iraq

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Kansas City Labor against the War extend warmest fraternal greetings to your second conference, meeting in Baghdad April 8. Your work in building an effective labor movement under the most difficult conditions is an inspiration to trade unionists everywhere.

We were proud to have sponsored a visit by your able representative, Brother Amjad Al-Jawhary, to our city last year where he spoke to several hundred about your objectives. We continue to build solidarity with your efforts among our unions and in our community. Above all, we raise the demand: withdraw U.S. and all occupying troops from Iraq!

Best wishes on your deliberations.

In solidarity,

Bill Onasch

For Kansas City Labor against the War

27.03.05

Solidarity messages from broadcasting council of sendika.org from Turkey to FWCUI second Conference in Baghdad

Dear Aso Jabbar,

Excuse us that we are late about the second conference of FWCUI. We would like to send the solidarity messages of sendika.org authors to the Iraqi Working Class and also the second conference of FWCUI.

We believe that both the Turkish and Iraqi working classes have to fight together against occupation and neo-colonialism.

After we had published your news and the interview, a lot of unionists and leftist organ-

isations requested us for more information and some of them had published the interview in their publications. One of them is "People's Houses' News Paper." [www.halkevleri.org.tr]. We will send a copy of the publication.

People's Houses is a poor neighborhood organization, which organizes the unorganized poor working class of Turkey. In the south cities of Turkey we had organised a campaign with People's Houses against the bloody commercial relations of Turkey and US. You know more than a hundred Turkish truck drivers had died in Iraq, because they had been forced to work and service for US troops. We called the government to stop all these commercial relations with occupation forces and called the Turkish workers not to work for the US contractor Turkish firms. If you want, we will send detailed information about this campaign.

Activists from People's Houses (Umar Karatepe is one of the sendika.org editors and a People's Houses director) wanted us to send their solidarity messages, too. And you know sendika.org is a unionist website not a trade union's web site but there are lots of unionists from several unions among our authors. One of them, Ertu?rul Bilir the General Secretary of The Publication Workers Union salute's FWCUI, too.

We believe that the Iraqi Workers will create an Iraq of equality, Freedom and peace.

In solidarity,
sendika.org

Solidarity Meassage from MDS (the Movement for Democratic Socialism, Japan) to FWCUI-Conference

We would like to express our deepest solidarity to the second conference of FWCUI in Baghdad on April 2005. The recent news of the wave of strikes led by FWCUI has encouraged the peace loving people and the workers all over the world. We believe the Civil Resistance in Iraq, especial-

ly including the working class is the only perspective to end the occupation of Iraq and to realize a free, secular and non-ethnic government in Iraq.

We are now determined to advance the international solidarity activities with FWCUI and the Civil Resistance as a co-founder of IFC (Iraq Freedom Conference).

Let's end the occupation of Iraq !

Let's withdraw immediately all the occupying forces including US, UK, and Japan from Iraq !

Let's advance the activities of IFC (Iraq Freedom Conference) as an international solidarity movement !

Let's establish a free, secular and non-ethnic government in Iraq !

Long Live the International Solidarity !
Best Wishes and Solidarity

SATO, Kazuyoshi

President of MDS (the Movement for Democratic Socialism, Japan)

Solidarity with the FWCUI & UII from the Industrial Workers of the World, Scottish Assembly

The situation of the Iraqi working class under the occupation is a difficult and dangerous one and for those attempting to organise unions and encourage the building of a new labour movement it is particularly perilous.

Between the guns of the occupying army, the militias of the new government and the political Islamists of the so-called resistance, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions of Iraq (FWCUI) and the Union of the Unemployed of Iraq (UII) and the Southern Oil Company Union have been trying to develop an independent workers movement.

In this they deserve our support and solidarity.

The members of the Industrial Workers of the World, gathered for their 2005 Scottish Assembly salute the courageous struggle of these fellow workers and send revolutionary industrial unionist **To P.8**

From P.7 Solidarity messages to FWCUI - second Conference in Baghdad on 8th April 05

greetings to the FWCUI, UUI and SOCU. We congratulate the FWCUI on the successful workers' open conference held in Baghdad on April 8th and in the decision of the Independent Union of Public Services and Servants to join the Federation.

The workers' struggle is an international one and global organisation is required if the working class are to carry out our "historic mission to do away with capitalism" (from the Preamble of IWW).

In solidarity for the One Big Union of the working class and the abolition of the wage system!

The Scottish Assembly of the Industrial Workers of the World, meeting in Stirling on April 17th 2005.

Solidarity with FWCUI from Youth of the Communist Party of Turkey

We are with you .We struggle against imperialism with all of the workers in the world.

Youth of the Communist Party of Turkey-24.03.05

Solidarity message from the Japanese Solidarity Committee with the Civil Resistance of Iraq and ZENKO

We would like to express our warmest solidarity to the second conference of FWCUI in Baghdad on April 2005.

We know that FWCUI has been involved in a lot of struggles to secure the rights of workers in Iraq. It has been facing Global Capitalism which are intending to monopolize the oil resources and to destroy the rights of the working class in Iraq as well as in the Middle East. We believe the Civil

Resistance of Iraq against the occu-

pation is the only perspective and hope to open the way to the bright future of the people in Iraq as well as all over the world.

We are now advancing the international solidarity activities by increasing the membership of the solidarity committee and also extending the video show campaign of the video 'Civil Resistance'. We would like to let you know that we are determined to continue our struggle to end the Occupation of Iraq and advance the activities of IFC (Iraq Freedom Conference).

Best Regards in Solidarity.

YAMAKAWA, Yoshiyasu
Chairperson of ZENKO (National Assembly for Peace and Democracy, Japan)

MORI, Fumihiko
Co-Chairperson of the Japanese Solidarity Committee with the Civil Resistance of Iraq

01. April.2005

Soldarity essage from Solidarity Iraq, France to FWCUI-Conference

To all delegates in Baghdad's conference of FWCUI:

The working-class in Iraq is the only force able to challenge the current situation of occupation, ethnic and religious pressures, and attacks on women, poverty, inequality and lack of social rights.

The government knows this and try to keep workers silent, supporting an official state-union like baas party did. The Islamists and the nationalists know this, fighting harshly any kind of working-class organisation. The occupation forces knows this also, fearing unemployed demonstrations and workers strikes more than all. So, the existence even of free unions, workers councils, and base organisation in working class is a threat for all of them. Let's this

threat become a more and more powerful force!

We, member of Iraq Solidarity association in France, strongly support the working-class organisation, the Federation of workers councils and unions in Iraq, and all secular, equalitarian and libertarian forces in Iraq.

We address our friendly salute to all delegates and wish this conference to be great success, a new step in working-class organisation to end occupation, enforce men and women equality, and impose workers rule.

Nicolas Dessaux, spokesman of Solidarity Iraq, France
April 07.2005

Solidarity Message from Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation (ZACF) of southern Africa to FWCUI conference in Baghdad - 23. March 2005 Comrades!

Revolutionary syndicalist greetings to the FWUCI from the Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation (ZACF) of southern Africa. ["Zabalaza" means "Struggle" in Zulu & Xhosa].....

We wish you all strength and success in your struggles. Not simply because you are comrades to us in the global fight against capitalist exploitation and its handmaidens of imperialist war and religious/ethnic prejudice. But also because you have chosen the most powerful working-class tools for resistance: reliance on your own class unity & integrity across all false capitalist-induced divisions, and directly-democratic processes that strike fatal blows at the roots of elite rule. We look forward to a fruitful interaction between our organisations and our regions.

Red & black regards
- **Michael Schmidt (ZACF Inter. Secretary)**

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For a progressive Labour Law in Iraq

For immediate Withdrawal of all Occupying froces from Iraq