



Internazionale

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## 108th ILC - PLENARY SESSION: Speech of George Mavrikos, WFTU General Secretary



Nazionale, 20/06/2019

### **The hope lies in our struggles**

Dear friends, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

100 years since the founding of the ILO have been completed this year, and this is an opportunity to make an objective evaluation from the perspective of the World Working Class. To draw the true conclusions from the side of the militant trade union movement. To assess the results.

We believe that the ILO history is divided into two main periods. From its foundation until 1990 and from 1990 until today. In the first period, it played a positive role in general and often worked as a mechanism of protection of workers' rights. The international correlations benefited and supported the role of the ILO, with the decisive role of the Soviet Union, of the People's Republic of China, of many other socialist countries and of the non-aligned countries' movement. Those favorable correlations had an important ally by their side. The militant trade union movement, with the leading role at that time of the World Federation of Trade Unions. They had by their side the great class struggles of all workers.

The successes in establishing remarkable achievements such as: Collective

Bargaining Agreements, social security, social expenditure, improved salaries and working conditions of the working women, working time, wage increase, progress of democratic and trade union freedoms, was the result of these circumstances. Trade unions were established in every corner of the planet.

No matter how much ink is being spilled by modern slanderers, the truth will always shine.

Following the 1989-1991 overthrows and the changes that took place, the situation and role of the ILO, as well as of all International Organizations, also changed.

These days here, in the annual Conference, Ministers, Prime Ministers, arrived, they used big words, empty promises, and tried to present a picture of virtual reality.

Before 1990, employers did not want to hear about the ILO. Now they consider it their ally and friend. Why? Everyone should think and give the answer on his own.

But whatever words some people say, the truth is at the workplaces, where workers suffer from state violence and authoritarianism, from unemployment and lay-offs, from black labor, from privatizations, from poverty and capitalist barbarity. The truth lies in the Mediterranean Sea, where mothers and children are being drowned in their effort to escape imperialist aggression.

This picture is also a result of the role played by the ILO and of the current situation within the leaderships of the trade union movement.

Since 1960 the blockade against Cuba continues. What did the International Organizations do?

In Soma, Turkey, on 13 May 2014, 301 workers were killed. What did the International Organizations do?

In the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh on 24 April, 2013, 1.132 girls and women were murdered. What did the ILO do?

In Colombia, over the last three years, 600 trade union militants have been murdered. Who was punished for these crimes?

In Chile the government undermines with anti-democratic methods the independent functioning of the CAT. What did the responsible Office of the ILO do?

What have the International Organizations done to protect the workers of Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen from the imperialists? Only words. This is the picture.

Today, Heads of States come here and tell us that black is white. Mr Macron, who attacks and beats the protesters, who fires 1.000 workers from Centrale à charbon de Gardanne, whose Member of Parliament, from his party, Mr. Mohamed Laqhila, threatens to close the functioning of the Trade Union Centre of UD CGT 13, came here a few days ago and presented us a false reality. Both Mr Macron and Mrs Merkel see the ILO today as an ideological mechanism in favor of their policies. This is the truth. This is the real picture. At the same time, they strengthen the phenomena of neo-fascism and xenophobia with their anti-workers policies.

This picture only by today's workers can and must be changed, with their united, class-oriented struggles. By strengthening the unions at the base. By enhancing trade union democracy. The hope lies in our struggles.

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