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The ICFTU Information Bulletin is a digest of news of interest to the free trade union movement. While care is taken to give reliable information, the ICFTU accepts responsibility only for reports concerning its own

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NEWS OF THE ICFTU

African Regional Conference opens

The first all-African trade union conference to be held under the auspices of the ICFTU opened yesterday in Accra, Gold Coast, and will continue until 18 January. Representatives from almost every ICFTU-affiliated organisation in North, West and East Africa, are attending. The ICFTU is represented by Charles Millard, Director of Organisation, and Jay B. Krane, Assistant Director of Organisation.

A full report on the results of the Conference will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Active support for oppressed Algerian trade unionists

In view of increasingly alarming reports of repressive measures against the trade unions in Algeria, the ICFTU General Secretary has sent telegrams to Monsieur Mollet, the French Premier, and to Monsieur Lacoste, the resident Minister in Algiers. He not only protests vigorously against these actions, but also warns the French Premier that he will be "compelled to submit a complaint to the International Labour Organisation unless the repressive measures are rescinded forthwith."

Other steps in defence of trade union freedom in Algeria which the ICFTU is taking without delay were also announced by the ICFTU General Secretary as follows:

1) A message on the situation in Algeria, calling for the opening of negotiations between the French Government and genuine representatives of the Algerian people, is being addressed to national delegations attending the present session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

2) It is intended to send an ICFTU mission to Algeria before the end of this month for the purpose of contacting the free trade union movement and carrying out an investigation of the situation on the spot.

Reports received from the ICFTU-affiliated organisation in Algeria, the UGTA, indicate that the situation there has been deteriorating rapidly since

the end of last year. On 29 December, riots were started in Algiers by extremist elements among the French population, as a result of which many Algerians were killed or wounded. In protest at this massacre, and the complete failure of the police and armed forces to prevent it, the UGTA called for strike action culminating in a 24-hour general protest strike in Algiers on 3 January.

These legitimate protests have been met by the French authorities with even more stringent repressive measures directed at the trade unions. The offices of the UGTA have been raided by the police and fifteen trade union leaders arrested and sent to a concentration camp at Berroughia. The weekly publication of the UGTA has, for some time, been systematically confiscated, while the UGTA delegate to the ICFTU African Regional Conference, Allal Abdalkader, has been refused a passport to enable him to proceed to Accra.

In reply to the ICFTU protest, a telegram has been received from Monsieur Lacoste, claiming that full trade union freedom exists in Algeria and that the measures taken against trade union leaders were justified on the grounds of public security.

Aid for Hungarians continues

Free trade union organisations all over the world are continuing to express their solidarity with the Hungarian working class in its heroic fight for freedom and independence. In addition to the many reported in previous issues of this Bulletin, the following are some further organisations which have declared their support and solidarity: the International Federation of Industrial Organisations and General Workers' Unions, the International Federation of Petroleum Workers, the youth section of the Cuban Confederation of Workers, the metal workers' union of Columbia, a number of trade unions in the Caribbean area (Barbados, British Guiana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad), the Luxemburg trade union federation, the Aden TUC, the San Francisco Labor Council, and the Ceylon Workers' Council.

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The Spanish trade unions in exile called 15-minute token strikes and held protest meetings in several French towns; inside Spain, thousands of leaflets were distributed condemning the Soviet action in Hungary. The Estonian seamen's union in exile organised a public meeting in Stockholm.

The Austrian trade union federation (OGB) is continuing its efforts in conjunction with the ICFTU, both in sending food parcels into Hungary and in caring for Hungarian refugees who have escaped into Austria. Up to the end of December, 11,500 gift parcels had been distributed inside Hungary under the supervision of Austrian trade union officials. In Austria, about 1,000 Hungarian refugees are being housed in trade union homes and the ICFTU is contributing 900,000 Austrian schillings per month towards their upkeep. At Christmas time, 40,000 parcels to a value of 650,000 schillings were distributed among the refugees as well as clothing to the value of 500,000 schillings. Up to the end of the year about \$500,000 had been contributed by trade union organisations in many countries to the ICFTU International Solidarity Fund for the purposes of Hungarian relief. (A further list of donations will be published in the next issue of this Bulletin.)

The ICFTU General Secretary has written to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees informing him of the relief action for Hungarian refugees undertaken under ICFTU auspices. He also calls attention to the steps taken by ICFTU-affiliated national centres in many countries to urge their governments to extend and speed-up measures for the transfer and re-settlement of refugees. In paying tribute to the work accomplished by the UN Commissariat, not only for Hungarian, but also for other refugees, the ICFTU General Secretary expressed the willingness of the free trade unions to co-operate with it in the task of integrating the refugees in their countries of adoption.

Protest to ILO

The ICFTU General Secretary has written to the Director-General of the ILO to express "the deep disappointment in the ranks of the free trade unions caused by the decision of the Governing Body to eliminate the question of the reduction of hours of work from the items to be placed on the agenda of the 42nd International Labour Conference." Pointing out that one of the principal functions of the ILO has from the outset been to place itself in the centre of social progress, he warns that this decision of the Governing Body "has put a brake on the most fundamental activities of the ILO." He adds that "the self-elimination of the ILO from a vital field of the workers' aspirations would considerably affect the interest of the trade union movement in its work", and concludes with an appeal for the Governing Body to reconsider its decision.

Up to the time of going to press, it is learned that this ICFTU protest has been supported by similar protests addressed to the ILO by several international trade secretariats (Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, International Federation of Industrial Organisations and General Workers' Unions, International Federation of Unions of