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# WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

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## COMMENTS

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### 150.000 workers will be dead by end 2030 because of Asbestos

In a special three-day seminar organised in Europe, horrifying information was presented about the overwhelming consequences of asbestos to the health of workers.

International research showed that the diseases caused by asbestos kill more people than any other work-related reason!

These diseases (asbestosis - mesothelioma - lung cancer) do not present symptoms at once and this makes it difficult to calculate the precise number of victims of asbestos.

Nevertheless, it is estimated that asbestos is to blame for illnesses that cause 3,500 deaths per year! Other estimates indicate that by 2030, 150,000 workers will have died from asbestos-related causes!

At the same time and while the use of asbestos has been "prohibited" in the countries of the EU, thousands of workers have already been exposed and continue being exposed as asbestos is a preferred material because it is cheap and durable.

Campaigns have started all over the world demanding: the prohibition of the use of asbestos, that workers be informed about precautionary measures where the use of asbestos is unavoidable, and that the minimum limit of safe exposure to asbestos is

adhered to.

Nevertheless, despite the prohibitions, employers continue using asbestos because their aim is to increase their profits. They do not care about people. Their only priority is their profits.

### SLAVES! In South Korea.

South Korea. The majority of workers (self-employed/seasonal workers/part-time workers, etc) is deprived of labour rights. The situation that these workers face when they try to claim their rights is reminiscent of the... Middle Ages.

The government pursues trade unions, attacks and imprisons trade unionists and invades union offices using tear gas.

Condemnation by the international community of the government of S. Korea and support for the trade unions and workers is increasing day by day. 15 November was the International Day of Action for the trade unions of S. Korea, with trade unionists all over the world actively showing their international solidarity. The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) visited the South Korean Embassy in Athens and handed over a resolution of protest. It also sent a message of solidarity to the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

## PROFITS

### PFIZER: PROFITS!

The big multinational drug industries are experiencing a golden era around the world. Their profits derive from the exploitation of the working class. They profit from the exploitation of the deprived and the humble.

The profits of "PFIZER" reached US \$3.36 billion in the first quarter of 2006! The proceeds of the company, which is the world's largest drug manufacturer, were US \$12.3 billion.

### LUKOIL: PROFITS!

The petroleum sector is the engine room of the Russian economy, as well. The profits of the Russian firm "LUKOIL" marked a 65% rise within the second quarter of 2006. 18% of this company is owned by the American firm "Conoco Phillips" and the rest is Russian. The company announced that in the current quarter, its net profits increased to US \$2.32 billion, up from the US \$1.41 billion that they were during the same period in 2005.

### EXXON MOBIL 10,5 billion dollars profits within 3 months!

EXXON MOBIL has announced that its net profits reached US \$10.5 billion in the first quarter of 2006, while in the first quarter of 2005 its net profits were US \$9.92 billion!!

This news confirms that the huge interests of the monopolies and the multinationals lie behind the war on Iraq.

## Around the World

### OAXACA

The residents of Mexico are living through days of dignity and resistance! Thousands of Mexicans support the rebels of Oaxaca. With their main demand being the removal of the governor, Ulises Ruiz, and receiving violence and repression as the only answer, the rebels have declared themselves to be strong, united and determined!

### FREE THE 5 CUBANS.

A new International Solidarity Campaign for the release of the 5 Cuban patriots who are being held illegally in USA prisons has started. WFTU unites its voice with that of progressive movements all around the world and demands the immediate release of the five.

We call upon all trade unions to develop intense action in order to defend the rights of the Cuban people and their revolution.

### AFRICA!

Colonialism is not finished.

Today, using new methods and ways, imperialist powers and monopoly corporations continue to exploit all the peoples in Africa. Modern colonialism with satellite-states and protectorates is still alive. Recent data from the UN as well as the World Bank, show that in 1930 the economic gap between Europe and Africa was 30 - 1. In 2005 this gap has grown, and has reached 50 - 1!! That is why the W.F.T.U. clearly speaks about modern colonialism.

## COMMENTS

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### CHINA CANCELS DEBTS OF US \$1.3 BILLION

Trade transactions between China and Africa have quadrupled over the last decade and in 2005 reached a volume of \$40 billion. At the end of October this year, the third Sino-African co—operation forum was held in Beijing, with the participation of 49 countries from Africa. This was an event of great financial and political significance.

Within the framework of this forum the People's Republic of China announced that it had cancelled debts of US \$1.3 billions owed by developing countries and that it had also abolished import duties and taxes on 190 products from African countries.

## COMMENTS

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### NATO and DRUGS!

The production of opium in Afghanistan constitutes 92% of the world's total production. The occupation of the country by NATO was followed by a big boom in the production of opium. Each year, opium production increases more and more.

According to the latest UN report, the production of opium in Afghanistan increased by 59% during the first 10 months of 2006!!

You can all draw your own conclusions.

### Unemployment sets a new record in England.

In Great Britain, according to official government reports, 93,000 more people were added to the list of unemployed during June and July 2006. This brought the total number of unemployed in the UK to 1.8 million. Of course these official data are deceptive. However, they show the terrible financial situation of the working class in developed capitalist countries.