

TO THE TUI/WFTU CONFERENCE  
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Brotherly greetings to all comrades attending the conference.

I am a 74 year old pensioner from Malta. I have been a shipyard worker since I was 16 years old till I retired at age 61 years. During this period I was very active in Malta's biggest trade union, the General Workers Union. I have also been very active politically as a socialist and I was close to Dom Mintoff, the former socialist leader of the Maltese working class, who died in 2012.

All over Europe the pensioners are being disadvantaged by the continuous escalation of the cost of living, which is caused by the speculation of the global corporations and also by the transfer of public funds into the armaments industry instead into the needs of society. The deregulation of rental capitalism is another blow on the standard of living of European pensioners, based on the self-evident lie that deregulation will result in trickle-down benefits for the workers and pensioners. The illegal sanctions imposed by the United States on various countries, including Russia, Cuba and China are detrimental for trading, thus affecting the standard of living not only of the people of the countries under sanctions, but also of the people of Europe, including the pensioners.

On top of these, the biggest injustice is the raising of the retirement age all over Europe. This exposes one of the fundamental contradictions of the neo-liberal dogma. Europe today is a lot more economically developed than it has ever been and the scientific progress during the last decades has resulted in the multiplication of productivity. Yet, instead of lowering the retirement age, the ruling class is increasing it. They try to justify this treason by lying and saying that the funds are not available. It is true that the funds are not available, but the reason is that the money is going into the profits of the private corporations and into the budgets for European fascist militarism in Africa and Asia.

This contradiction has been very heroically exposed by the French working class in its opposition to Macron's dictatorship on the French retirement age. But the pensioners of all Europe should keep in mind that Macron is not simply Macron! He is the tool of the European ruling elites in the service of the big private corporations that feast on the profits that they make on the labour of the working class. They are all behind the dictatorship of Macron. So there must be a united and collective opposition at European level to stop this exploitation and to revert to the previous decent retirement age.

It is most important that these injustices against the pensioners in Europe not be considered as a separate matter from the rest of the struggles of the working class. The simple reason here is that all the injustices bestowed on the working class have a common "first cause", which is European deregulated capitalism multiplied by its flipside, European militarism. It is therefore necessary for trade

unions to mobilise not only at the industrial level but also at the political level to oppose the present European political model.

At the political level trade unions must also take a strong position against the escalation by the United States of the war in Ukraine and to demand a diplomatic solution to the conflict, as for example China, Turkey and the Vatican are trying to do. The escalation is totally against the interests of Ukraine and of Europe, as Ukraine is being conquered by the debt to the United States, while Europe is becoming a military vassal of the United States more than it has ever been. Trade union leaders have to keep in mind that the exploitation of pensioners and that of the working class in general are essentially integral parts of the same class war that the capitalist class wages continuously on the workers.

I hope my brief contribution will inspire and encourage all participants to fight on.

The struggle goes on,  
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Un saludo fraternal

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