

Position of the Autonomous Federation of Workers of Argentina (CTA A) concerning the eminent threat to the right to strike

The international right to strike is under a systematic attack by the employers world wide. This threat is part of a long-term strategy which started with the dissolution of the UdSSR and which can be observed at international and national level, where steps are being undertaken to limit or even inhibit the exercise of the fundamental and inalienable right to strike which allows the workers to fight more efficiently against the economic powers that exploit them, expressing their discontent and crying out to defend their rights in order to obtain new achievements. Strike has historically been the most successful mean to confront capitalist exploitation.

At international level and in the framework of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the employers have a two-fold mission: first, they want to weaken the mechanisms of control put into place by the ILO, to then go even further, and eliminate all relic of the control of the right to strike within the ILO, allowing that the right is being restricted or even prohibited without any intervention, by every nation State.

It is true that the employers are not only thinking in the conference of this year, or even next year. They are planning much farther, aiming to redefine the mandate of the ILO as a sphere of custody of workers' rights. In the case of the right to strike, the employers will, as a first step, search to wipe out all trace of this right in the debates of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). At the same time, they will try to achieve that the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) intervene less in situations where the right to strike, its extent and limits are being questioned. The arguments they use to justify their position will be remitted to the debates of the CAN, in which already, and since the agreement of february 2015, are constantly found less references to the right to strike.

The missing of a decided and persistent answer from the Group of Workers facing this attack by the employers, not only leads to a weakening of the right to strike in the international realm, but could also, in a medium or long term, provoke an acceleration of the emptying of contents and influence of the controlling mechanisms put into place by the ILO, and consequently facilitate the slow dissociation of ILO agreements from the national norms which regulate work relations.

Nevertheless, some of the workers' organizations are reluctant to take position, convinced that it is best to delay the debate about the right to strike, for it directly faces and confronts with the economic powers which claim to intervene in favour of the cooperating workers'

organizations in decisions taken in the ILO. To limit us to mere defensive answers, accepting the small but constant achievements of the employers is an erroneous strategy, which only serves to strengthen the material and symbolic gains of the employers at a long run. It is on us to change the direction of debate and adopt a forward-going strategy which necessarily has to include the defense of the right to strike as one of the principal pillars.

Summing up, we do not agree with the exchange of favours in the face of being blackmailed. We do not agree to resign fundamental rights, and especially the most important of all, the right to strike, in exchange for an apparent functioning of the CAN and the International Conference of Work, since the exercise of the right to strike ensures the validity of all the other rights manifested in the international agreements.

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