



Weltbewegung Christlicher Arbeitnehmer
World Movement of Christian Workers
Mouvement Mondial des Travailleurs Chrétiens
Movimiento Mundial de Trabajadores Cristianos

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See – Judge – Act in solidarity



A happy new year to all our members and readers, Peace, health and strength be with you all. It is with a lot of enthusiasm that we are moving forward towards the aims we have set for ourselves accompanied by solidarity in our daily work.

This solidarity, that has shown itself during the campaign of action of the WMCW in aid of the reconstruction of the ACO of Haiti. The terrible earthquake in January 2010 has destroyed Port au Prince and its region. This has left a country destroyed and a movement destroyed. Some members of the Haitian ACO are still reported missing, some have lost their houses, the children their schools and the headquarters of the ACO has collapsed into rubble and for those who have returned it is virtually impossible for the leaders to maintain the life of the movement!

In this number you will find a brief report of the solidarity campaign, in which many movements have taken part, from the North and from the South, and who have made it possible for the ACO of Haiti to survive. They have taken the first steps in the reconstruction of the movement, taking into account above all the structures of the ACO and its grass roots groups. It for that reason they have given a lot of importance to the review of life.

The review of life is the treasure of our movement, and it is that which distinguishes us from other movements, and it is very important that this practice does not fall by the way side. It is for that reason that the central article in this edition we communicate to you the experience of the ACO France

We also publish two short articles of the current situation of the MCW of Niger and the German KAB. It is necessary and important that the movements have a mutual understanding of one another. In this way they can co-ordinate their actions and draw lessons from the experiences of others. INFOR and the Intranet are two instruments for achieving this aim. Let's make us of this possibility! All the articles about the life of our movements are both welcome and can be published.

This is the first edition of INFOR of the "new team", which was elected in Nantes. Jean Michel Lanoizelez (treasurer) and me take this opportunity of sending our greetings to all our members and readers and thank you for the confidence that you have placed in us. We would like to give you a complete picture of the activities of the "new team". For that you will find here a summary of the activities of the secretariat.

Happy reading!

Betina Beate
General Secretary



Activities Report of the General Secretariat of the WMCW

The General Assembly in Nantes (France) in October 2009 adopted new statutes involving an important change in the functioning of the secretariat of the WMCW. A single general secretary was elected (in place of two): Betina Beate (KAB Germany). In addition as the council had indicated, the assembly of Nantes equally elected the Treasurer: Jean Michel Lanoizelez (ACO France) this election was in order to give a more important political responsibility to the Treasurer.

The daily work of the WMCW therefore rests essentially in the hands of the general secretary (salaried) and the treasurer (volunteer). A distribution of tasks have been prepared: the treasurer has taken charge of, with the help of other volunteers, the questions of administration, the management of the house of the WMCW, keeping of the accounts etc. The tasks of representation: communication with the movements, visits, working in a network with other organisations have been reserved for the General Secretary. The two leaders work in concert in a climate of constant exchanging of information.

The daily work is very important and some priorities have been established. In effect, two people (one of whom is a volunteer) cannot deliver the same quantity of work as the previous secretariat composed of three people full time (two general secretaries and a chaplain) aided by a full time financial administrator and several translators.

However, thanks notably to the very important help of volunteers, a large number of activities have been achieved, and the action plan voted on by the general assembly in 2009 has started and put in place.

In 2010, the priority has been putting in place an improvement in the communication with the movements. To this end, several documents have been addressed to the movements and some visits have been made. The mail and communication have been done essentially via an Internet network.

Documents sent to the national movements and regional co-ordinations:

- **Report of the International Seminar and the General Assembly of Nantes 2009**
- **New Statutes** implementing the changes ratified by the General Assembly
- **Report of the International Counsel of March 2010** with the decisions taken.
- **Letter n° 1 Solidarity Campaign.** Objectives of this letter: re-launch the solidarity campaign of the movements of the WMCW to help them to participate in a common action and to feel part of a larger chain of solidarity. For 2010, the secretariat proposed to assist with the reconstruction of the ACO in Haiti, which was hit hard by the earthquake.
- **Letter n° 2/2010 Subscriptions.** The letter explained the importance of regular payment of the subscriptions. It also requested that all movements complete a commitment form for their subscriptions for 2010-2013 so that the WMCW can make better plans for its annual budgets. In fact, the subscriptions of the movements enable the self-financing of the secretariat.
- **Questionnaire:** in order to have a better knowledge of their reality, their work and their needs. It will enable us to also update our database (names of leaders, contact persons etc.)
- **Flyer on the Review of Life:** to help the movements to use this method, which is a treasure of the WMCW and which must be practised well in order to know it well.

Visits made by the General Secretariat:

- In 2010, the Treasurer and the General Secretary participated in two meetings of the European Co-ordination and at its regional seminar which took as its theme: **“Compatibility between Work and Family”**. During this meeting a new co-ordinator was elected, Marc Michiels. The seminar took place at Szombathely, in Hungary in order to assist the integration of the movements of Eastern Europe.



- The ACO of France has celebrated its 60th anniversary during its XX National Meeting held at Poitiers in May 2010. The treasurer and the general secretary were presents. Allot of work took place during this meeting, but at the same time everything was music, sincere smiles and comradeship. The participants left with the slogan of the meeting in their hearts: **“Resist, hope, together lets choose life”**. Resist all the difficulties, frustrations and injustices hoping for a change towards a better world, in choosing a more dignified and just life for all.



- The LOC of Portugal organised an international seminar about **“More and Better Employment”** following the 15th National Congress, where the National Team was re-elected in the presence of the general secretary. This meeting took place in a spirit of solidarity and welcome, where the activists of the LOC showed all the tenderness with which they participate in the movement.
- The KAB of Essen invited the General Secretary to participate in its XIV diocesan day where it agreed the orientations for the coming years: **“Work, culture, justice, here in Europe and in the world as a whole”**.
- In July the General Secretary made a visit to the HOAC of Spain. Arriving in Madrid she was able to get to know the permanent team, she continued her visit going to Salamanca to participate in a summer school on the theme of immigration. It was an unforgettable very rich experience, discovering the authentic manner in which the HOAC approaches the training of its activists.



All these visits enabled the members of the secretariat to get to know personally many activists, and to share their experiences and to visit allot of base groups in order to discover their work, their strengths, but also their difficulties.

Meetings taken place since the General Assembly:

- **Bureau:** It has met twice. The next meeting is planned for February 2011. The Presidents are in constant communication with the General Secretariat and the respective co-ordinations.
- **International Council (IC):** The IC met for the first time in Belgium in March 2010. Although this was a new working group, the work was very effective and productive in a climate of friendship. The next meeting of the IC will take place in February 2011.



- **Support Group:** It has met six times. This group is composed of members of the ACO France, the KAB Germany, MCW England, the Chaplain, The General Secretary and the Treasurer; it is a space for dialogue, debate and propositions on everything that concerns the organisation of the WMCW.



- **The General Secretary and the Treasurer** meet on a regular basis and are in close contact via the internet about all the daily decisions in particular about finance where all the transactions require two signatures.

Network Working:

Communication being one of the priorities for this four year mandate, the secretariat has put the accent not only on internal communication with the members of the WMCW but also with other organisations with whom the WMCW shares common objectives.

- **International Labour Office (ILO):** The General Secretary participated in the 99th Conference of the ILO in June in Geneva, where she was able to establish contact with representatives of the ILO and employment ministers from different countries around the world.
- **Justice and Peace:** Contact is maintained with Justice and Peace by the participation at its seminars and meetings on the theme of Decent Work with particular attention to migrant workers.



- **IYCW and CIJOC:** The WMCW is maintaining its contact and dialogue with these two organisations of Young Christian Workers. The WMCW is always interested that youth and adult movements co-operate together in the different countries around the globe.

- **CCFD, MISEREOR, Adveniat, Solidarité mondiale, Weltnotwerk:** The secretariat is in contact with these aid agencies via a regular exchange of information on the activities and plans of co-ordination of common actions.

At the level of administration a priority for the secretariat:

- To assist in terms of the content, the financing and organisation of the regional seminars. For the year 2011 the regions of Europe, South Asia, West Africa, the Indian Ocean Islands and the Caribbean and North Africa have planned their seminars under a theme of migrant workers.
- To up date the database of the information about the movements leaders, contacts. A questionnaire that has been sent out to all the national movements and the co-ordinations.

For these four years the WMCW has set itself some challenges. During the course of this first year the biggest difficulty that has confronted the secretariat has been the lack of participation of the member movements. It is worth remembering that it is the member movements that give life to the WMCW and their participation is indispensable! .

This edition of INFOR is an opportunity for the secretariat to give a heart felt thank you to all those volunteers who help support the life of the WMCW, in all areas of its activities: administration, organisation, bookkeeping, translation, production of texts, reflection etc. Their support with everything is very important in assisting the general secretary and the treasurer; it is a work of motivation and pleasure.

The secretariat warmly thanks them for all they have done to live the spirit of solidarity and fraternity, which is the mark of our dear WMCW.



Solidarity Campaign

The 2010 solidarity campaign is concentrated on the reconstruction of the ACO of Haiti. This movement has experienced a great deal of difficulty over recent years brought about by the difficult political and economic situation of the country. The ACO would have disappeared without the will and determination of some of its members to revive the movement. In January the earthquake ravaged Port au Prince and this catastrophe swept away these efforts. The secretariat of the ACO has been completely destroyed, and all the documents have disappeared, archives and projects. Communication between the members is difficult even impossible and several of them are reported now as missing. Some of them died in the catastrophe, others have returned to their families in the provinces.

In spite of these enormous difficulties, the current leaders of the ACO have told us of their strong desire to revive the movement, an indispensable movement in the current situation in the country. In effect, the ACO enables the formation of militants for civil society in order for them to take an active part in the reconstruction of their own country and to make known the voices of the poorest.



The campaign is being co-ordinated by the secretariat of the WMCW and its activities are organised with the unconditional support of the MTC of the Dominican Republic. As a first step for the reconstruction two representatives of the MTC from the Dominican Republic went on a fact finding visit to Haiti to

discover the reality and the needs of the movement.



The second step was the organisation of a training seminar that took place at the end of October in Santiago in the Dominican Republic and with the support of the secretariat of the WMCW, the ACO Haiti the MTC Dominican Republic. The objectives of this meeting have been fully achieved: to examine the current situation of the ACO, its strengths and weaknesses and to establish a plan of action with some priorities around communication and the re-dynamism of the base groups in order that they can become places of reflection and formation so that their members can become engaged in civil society. This meeting was also an important time for sharing, exchanges and reflection in a climate of much friendship.

The secretariat of the WMCW takes this opportunity to **thank all the movements who have been at the heart of this campaign: ACO Haiti, MCT Dominican Republic, ACO France, HOAC Spain, LOC Portugal, KAB Germany, KAB Austria, ACO Catalonia, MCW England, MTC Niger, KA NO JANG South Korea, ACO Japan, MTC Québec.** Their solidarity is enabling the reconstruction of the ACO take shape day by day.

A heart felt thank you!



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1. Presentation of the Christian Workers Movement NIGER (MTCN)

The Movement of Christian Workers of Niger (MTCN) was established on the 18 August 1998 by Father Mathias Doamba, then curate of St. Gabriel's Parish Garbado, by bringing together all Christian workers in order that they could develop in Christ a world of peace and justice in the world of work. The MTC currently has eight groups based in two dioceses in Niger (Niamey and Maradi), with 1693 members. The majority are domestic workers, or work in bars and restaurants in Niamey (most of whom are migrants). The headquarters of MTC is based in Niamey at the Cathedral and is a service of the diocesan Church. The working method of TCM is the review of life; this method has identified several challenges:



- Helping young school leavers, to escape the conventional system of education and where parents have no visible means to support their academic needs, thus a People's University was created to train accountancy technicians, and bachelor of accounting, computer classes and literacy are also given in this centre.
- The CASEMA: A centre of the unemployed has set up a kind of apprenticeship training and learning centre established in 2000, which aims to provide work for unemployed, and students at the end of their

training, and offers learning workshop etc; to young people.

- The Women's Cooperative is a body that serves women or micro credit is distributed to enable women to realize Income Generating Activities, in 2010, twenty (20) women each received a credit of 305 Euros for small businesses with support from the Belgian NGO World Solidarity.
- In order to fight against injustice and enable the development of decent work, groups of the most vulnerable workers were organized in an association or a trades union, this Domestic Workers (Faith Action of Domestic Workers) girls working in pubs (Waitresses Association for Integrated Development). And so now by the actions (Televised debate, advocacy, meeting with the bosses, marches...) of the MTC, living conditions of many workers have been improved.

2. Overview of policy on the MTC Niger:

The MTCN is convinced that improving the living conditions of workers through a commitment without limits, so we set some goals which consists of: To engage in the construction a more just and fraternal society, based more on solidarity and democracy. To participate in the work of evangelization and human liberation in the spirit of the Gospel and with reference to the social teachings of the Church. To bring men and women together to reflect on the meaning of life and ways to strengthen the protection of human values threatened by consumerism and inequality in sharing work and wealth. To encourage and to invite all members to be active and engage in their workplace and in society, and to defend the dignity of all women and all men. To prioritize action with the excluded, the most exploited and all those who lack the means to defend their rights: the unemployed, working children, women, migrants, etc.



The structure of the operation of the MTCN

MTCN is organized according to democratic principles, this implies that

- The minority accepts the majority decision.
- Leaders at all levels are elected democratically by the members, to whom they are accountable for their activities,
- The leadership gathers on issues it considers sensitive to the opinion of the basic structures
- The lower level implement the decisions and directives of higher-level structures.

Bodies and organs of the MTCN

- General Assembly
- The national executive
- The Council
- Finance Committee
- The Committee for women
- The core teams
- The National Committee to fight against meningitis

Crespin Lawson, MTC Niger





The Review of Life, an inexhaustible treasure for sharing

For 60 years the 'Action Catholique Ouvrière' (Catholic Worker Action) of France, has based its practice on the Review of Life. It is a collective approach made with a group of the ACO, a privileged place of meeting in a group and with God. The base groups meet around a three-step method, SEE, JUDGE, ACT.



SEE: is a sharing of the facts on life of each member or collective concerns.

JUDGE: it is to understand, to analyse the causes, the consequences the risks or what's at stake: it is also to review our lives in the light of the gospel in order for us to transform them.

ACT: starting from the SEE and the JUDGE, it is to define a personal or collective action for the transformation of human relations and the coming of God.

In the following article, we are going to present you with the originality of the Review of Life method and what it can produce.

The Review of Life Group is first of all a place of mutual support and solidarity:

The people who come together in a Review of Life Group are chosen or invited but they have accepted to take the same path of mutual development. It is **first of all a place to listen and to speak**. It is a place to listen to what others have to say about their lives, and thus implies the use of the first person singular "I" (in other words talking about one's own life and experience not generalisations). A place of self discovery with others and all are required to be open minded, it is not always easy, this requires time to deve-

lop...the establishment of confidence in the relationship, a place where one can speak without fear of being judged. It is a place where there is a sense of companionship.

It is not simply about it being a nice place together, nor is it a place of confrontation of political or trades union ideas, even if we strongly defend our convictions. It is not only a place to speak but also a place where we learn to recount the story of life from which it will be possible to emerge with a response to profound human expectations, and to explore different facets of our faith.

The Review of Life Group is a Church Community:

The review of Life is also and above all a **meeting of the church between baptised people**, at least between believers, **who give a place to the word of God, to an expression of faith: a meeting which sends us out in to life to an engagement in society in proximity with others**. The members of the Review of Life Group do not therefore just talk about themselves, but are open to others, to God, to the Spirit, to the Church. The **presence of the scriptures** here then makes sense.

It is a moment where we can share our lives, our doubts, our hopes, our fears, where we can confront all this with the word of God, by reading from a word of our faith or a Bible text. To question what is said, to react and to accept that sometimes we may not understand. It is also a time to share a prayer.

Is it Jesus Christ who summons us? It is therefore thanks to him that we are there, thanks to our inheritance of faith brought by the church (since the apostles until our movement of catholic action)

The Review of Life Group is also a place of personal transformation:

The Review of Life is of limited interest if it is only at the service of a social engagement. It has a much greater interest **at the service of a personal and social development**. In this sense, the Review of Life is a place for speaking par excellence: a space to talk which responds to the needs which are



strongly to the fore today: expression of one's individuality, to be brought out of one's isolation, to be recognised, to find and to create a sense of the meaning of life. In the Review of Life there is a kind of interaction between "I" (personal situation, place of friends colleagues) and "Us" (collective reflection in the meeting) the movement from "I" to "Us" occurs because of the story told. The Review of Life starts from what is lived, the personal experience of the person who tells his or her story, so it is the subject that becomes the motor of action on the facts that have been reported. At the same time the individual is not alone, sh/e falls in to a long historical experience of believers.



Review of Life is an essential modern quest.

Life currently is divided into sections between, activities, roles and thoughts. Alone, the subject of life can unify these sections and seek to make for a more authentic life for all those involved. By the recounting of the facts in the Review of Life, and with the others around the table or those present in the facts, by all those who have gone before us who make up part of a collective history, and of course by God who is the basis of our faith, we can give a meaning to our lives. This transformation takes place over a long period because it takes time to measure these transformations.

Review of Life is a place of spirituality "engagement":

The Review of Life gives us a glimpse on our spirituality and that of others: **spirituality is in each of us and present in the world.** The spirituality of the ACO, is precisely to strive together in our struggles for human dignity and our way of living, believing and ce-

lebrating the God of life who is in each of us. Members of the ACO, in the diversity of the Church, we have an inheritance that we are happy to share with those who we meet.

The Review of Life enables us to live an **"incarnate" spirituality**. It is centred on the word of God that lives amongst his people and us; this word sheds light on our lives and comes to inhabit them.

The Review of Life makes life a **spirituality of "relationships"**. God makes an alliance with his people. Through the experience of the Review of Life we recall this alliance. We too, make an alliance with our work colleagues, our neighbours, and our friends in the trades unions, political parties and community associations. We live in solidarity, sometimes with tears and tensions. But we belong to the same people, which are loved by God.

In the Review of Life we live a spirituality centred on the "resurrection". The experience of Jesus Christ died and resurrected illuminates our existence and is the basis of our hope. We are often witnesses to the transformation of people around us, a transformation that exceeds our expectations. We too, by the re-examination of our lives we can measure also the transformations that we have lived.

Thus, in the history of our path in the Review of Life, we join with that of our human history and that of our history as believers. It is this treasure that thanks to the ACO, we have one day discovered that we are called to make known to others. It is a joy to share.

*Gilles Roustan,
Anne-Sophie Scherpereel*

The secretariat of the WMCW has recently produced a leaflet on the Review of Life in Groups. It gives some ideas and advice to be adapted according to the reality and practice of each movement.

This leaflet is available on requested from the secretariat of the WMCW.

KAB fights against the total economical appropriation of the human being

Increasing intensification of work, flexible working hours, frequent changes of working time, unemployment, and ever more demands encroaching on private life, are constantly increasing stress on workers today. A respite from this daily stress is the work free Sunday – at least so far.

Sunday is the day of the family, the day of rest and contemplation, the day of culture and celebrations and the day of the Lord. To prevent this from changing and in order to fight against the total economic appropriation and exploitation of human beings and their



private lives, the Catholic Workers Movement Germany (KAB) has joined the “Alliance for the free Sunday”.

In Austria, Switzerland and Poland, and in many countries all over Europe “Sundays` alliances” have been recently established. Alliances of ecclesiastical and trades union groups are fighting together for a work free Sunday with debates, discussions and creative events. The various local, regional and European wide Sunday Alliances announced the 3rd of March, as their day of action, as it was Emperor Constantine who legally safeguarded Sundays as being free on this day in 321 AD. On the 3rd of March the “International Day of the work free Sunday” will be celebrated for the first time all over Europe.

With the participation of 72 trades union- ec-

clesiastic- and civil society organizations coming from 22 European countries, the first European conference to safeguard the work free Sunday met in spring 2010. This conference was held under the leadership of European Parliament member Thomas Mann from Germany who had invited the participants to the EP in Brussels. The German alliance for the work free Sunday welcomed the cooperation with political organizations. Nevertheless, it underlined the importance of keeping the movements' independence, and the importance to include supporters coming from all kind of political parties.

The Brussels conference published an appeal in favour of the work free Sunday, directed towards heads of states, the European Commission and members of the EU parliament. It additionally asked the people of Europe to sign a planned petition for a referendum demanding the work free Sunday. László Andor, EU commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, who was present in the conference, agreed he wanted



to put the topic on the agenda of the forthcoming hearing on working time directives.

The KAB national chairman Birgit Zenker interprets the safeguarding of the work free Sunday as a basic cornerstone for our society: “Sundays show us that human beings are more than a mere producer or consumer in our capitalistic economic system. If we do not manage to legally safeguard Sundays as work free days, peace and contemplation will lose their value and solely serve to enable us to keep on functioning in the labour market's rat race. As Christians we reject this”.

<http://allianz-fuer-den-freien-sonntag.de/>

Horst Erlenkötter, KAB Deutschlands

