



## CELEBRATION OF THE WPC'S 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

CASA DO ALENTEJO – LISBON

31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2010

### INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM” AGAINST WAR- 60 YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR PEACE”

IRAKLIS TSAVDARIDIS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE WPC

Dear comrades and friends

It is with great pleasure to address the participants of the International symposium hosted by the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation (CPPC), the regional coordinator of the WPC in Europe. We congratulate and salute the Portuguese peace fighters, which are known for their firm commitment to the struggle for peace, democracy and social justice in Portugal and for their Internationalist solidarity all over the world.

The WPC is for more than 60 years the international structure uniting in its ranks the most consequent and militant peace loving forces world wide. It is the only International Peace Organisation struggling side by side with the peoples and their movements against imperialist wars, occupation, threats and foreign intervention, for the right of the peoples to determine their own future free from imperialist domination. The foundation of the WPC is the concrete outcome of the wish and desire of the peoples after the Second World War to end war and fascism and thus it was created in 1949-1950 only few years after the Anti-fascist victory of the peoples and few months after the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

The period before the official creation of the WPC an initiative was taken by Intellectuals from Poland and France, supported immediately by their colleagues in the Soviet Union and other countries to call for a world **Congress of Intellectuals for Peace** which took place successfully in Wroclaw (Poland) in 1948 with the participation of more than 400 personalities from 46 countries. Amongst them were outstanding persons like Irene Joliot-Curie, Pablo Picasso, Ilya Ehrenburg, Martin Andersen Nexø, Sir John Boyd-Orr, Andrei Fadeev, Julien Benda and important women like Eugenie Cotton and Anna Seghers.

In Wroclaw the idea was born to hold a World Peace Congress and very soon a preparatory meeting was held in February 1949 in Paris. In the course of preparations and consultations the international appeal was translated in many languages and the famous dove of Pablo Picasso was created, which decorates also today the emblem of the WPC.

More than 18 International Associations signed the Appeal, more than 1.000 National organisations of all nature endorsed it. 3.000 famous world personalities supported the initiative. In total this was corresponding to 600 million women and men in the world.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1949 the First World Congress of Partisans for Peace opened its doors in Paris, with more than 2.198 delegates from 72 countries. The same day 281 delegates gathered in the Prague session of the Congress, because they were denied entry to France. The slogan of the Congress was: “from now on Peace is a matter of the peoples”.

The World Peace Council stated clearly from its founding days for what Peace we stand for. It is neither the PAX AMERICANA nor the "peace" of the submitted and the subordinated. Peace and social justice, peace and freedom, peace and sovereignty, peace and friendship go hand in hand and are linked with each other. Thus the WPC fought firmly for the decolonization and independence of the African, Asian and other nations, against the bloody colonial and imperialist occupation throughout our history. The WPC fought vigorously against all foreign military bases as an instrument of interference and war drive mechanism, we opposed and fought against the creation of NATO, which was from its beginning the imperialist military platform responsible for dozens of dictatorships and wars, which had always an offensive and reactionary character supporting oppressive and military regimes in the world.

This year we commemorate and celebrate one more anniversary, the sixty years of the "Stockholm Appeal" which was launched in 1950 by the WPC and signed by more than 450 million people, with the demand for the absolute ban of Nuclear Weapons. It was the period when the big western forces were starting and increasing their nuclear arsenals, adding new and even bigger threats to peace and security in the world. The WPC campaign was the biggest ever held worldwide, it received the support and endorsement of the peace loving people, demanding basically three things: The total ban of all nuclear weapons, the establishment of control mechanism for the application of the prohibition and the demand from all governments to refrain from the first strike, which was set up to be equal to crimes against humanity.

In dozens of countries the campaign embraced thousands of Organisations. The imperialists and their lackeys in different countries were hunting furiously the peace fighters. In Greece for example a young peace fighter Nikos Nikiforidis was arrested while collecting with school students signatures under the appeal and tried in a military court which sentenced him to death. He was executed in the age of 22 years on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1951.

The WPC has written on its banners clearly the struggle for the complete abolition of all nuclear weapons, the Stockholm Appeal and overwhelming support of this WPC initiative are proof for that. Thus our commitment and involvement in the movement for the same cause today is more than sure. Towards the NPT review conference this year in May in New York, the WPC will be present with its positions and principles with many of our members and friends.

This and many other initiatives and campaigns made the WPC as prestigious as no other International Organisation in the world. When the WPC passed its temporary crisis in the early 1990s, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the overthrow of the correlation of forces internationally many enemies but also some friends thought that this would mean maybe the end of the WPC.

The WPC is proud of its 60 years history and does not regret any of its commitments and cooperation, neither did we compromise our principles and ideals under any pressure or circumstances. The WPC reconstructed its forces and reaffirmed its anti-imperialist character proving amongst other things that the driving force and reason for its continuous presence in the first line of the struggle of the peoples was and is the struggle for a peaceful world order without wars, hunger and misery where the producers of the wealth will be the masters of their own. As long as imperialism and its mechanisms are prevailing in the world, the WPC will be on the side of poor and the oppressed. This is why we are getting stronger and stronger again and this is being noted by many sides. Our last Assembly held in April 2008 in Caracas with the participation of more than 125 organisations from 82 countries underlined the broad and deep links the WPC has amongst the peace loving people in the world.

Dear comrades and friends

The assessments that we set out in the final declaration of our last Assembly regarding the intensity of imperialist aggressiveness and the exacerbation of rivalries has acquired particular importance with the capitalist crisis. The consequences of the crisis make the rivalries yet more acute and create dangerous situations. The concerted effort made by the imperialists to overcome it is creating explosive problems, such as dismissals, unemployment and a drop in the peoples' living standard. According to UN data, one billion people are scourged by hunger, while two billion live under the lowest poverty threshold. At the same time, according to SIPRI data, in 2008 military spending marked a new record, reaching the astronomical sum of 1, 46 trillion dollars.

The statements made by the new US President concerning nuclear arms reduction and the agreement with Russia which were given so much attention should not create illusions. They are extremely vague, fail to provide for the destruction of nuclear weapons but rather provide for their storage and do not include the nuclear weaponry carried on ships, etc, nor do they set a clear timetable. What is clear, however, is that the production of small "smart" nuclear weaponry is advancing. What is a fact is that the recent nuclear agreement between the USA and India is going ahead. It is clear that there was a retreat as regards the National Missile Defense program thanks to the peoples' mobilizations, but the new modification of the program made by the USA is in the same direction and very dangerous.

The new National Missile Defense is being shifted to the south, deployed on moving ships. The new US President has announced demilitarization, but at the same time, while receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, he is increasing the occupation troops in Afghanistan and planning to install new Military Bases in Colombia together with the re-launching of the 4<sup>th</sup> US Naval Fleet. The war and occupation of Iraq is going on, likewise the illegal separation of the Serbian province Kosovo with the creation of a NATO-EU protectorate. Western Sahara is for 35 years under Moroccan occupation with the complicity of US and European imperialist forces and Palestine is suffering a slowly genocide by the Israeli occupation, with the criminal silence of the western world. The USA are building up their African Command (AFRICOM) while the EU is militarizing itself more and more increasing drastically its military missions and expenditure abroad.

The new US Leadership and the EU have made many statements concerning the building of new global relations of understanding, as they did at the NATO Summit in Strasbourg last April, where the "Declaration of Allied Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" was adopted. This document clearly sets out NATO's quest for a wider range of action and for a more intense and rapid offensive and interventional action to the detriment of the peoples. They are using fresh pretexts, such as the impact of climate change, the need for energy security, the problem of piracy, electronic threats and others. Within this framework the new NATO doctrine, which is the most aggressive ever known to mankind, is to be approved in November 2010 in Portugal.

And the WPC will be present also this year all over the world in the anti-NATO actions while approaching this next NATO summit in Portugal. Governmental Summits and Ministerial meetings of NATO, the EU, the G8 or WTO are for us in the WPC neither the starting nor the only focus points. We organize through and with our member and friendly organisations all over the year activities against the imperialist organisms, mobilizing hundreds of thousands and millions of people. The particular interest from our side towards NATO, as we stated it last year in Strasbourg derives from new strategic concept of this imperialist war machinery, which claims openly since its Washington summit in 1999, which has been confirmed in details in later summits till Strasbourg 2009, a role of a "World Police Sheriff" on all fronts and in all continents, violating flagrantly every sense of International law, peoples' rights and freedoms. NATO was never a defense mechanism, the WPC never tolerated or believed the lies and allegations for its supposed humanitarian role. Somebody can not pick up just some excerpts from the NATO crimes and silence others. NATO's strategy was and is unified through its 60 years course, it was steered and endorsed by all its member States and governments.

We don't agree with positions of forces that consciously attempt to cover up or to distort different sides of the issue, harboring amongst others delusions about the new US administration or the EU as counter-pole to the USA. The World Peace Council will honor its glorious history and principles with an even stronger anti-imperialist peace movement and with initiatives in which all well believing peace loving people are welcome to participate