

Alliance for a responsible, plural and united world

World citizens assembly

Lille December 2-10, 2001

Socioprofessional Group

TRADE UNIONS

Seventeen trade unionists and militants of groups working against unemployment or for the rights of workers, coming from Latin-America (7), North America (4), Africa (1) and the former Soviet Union (5) gathered for the first world meeting of the union College since its launching at the end of 2000. All of them appreciated the very rich exchanges of experiences as well as the confrontation of the analyses on the challenges called forth by globalisation, the changes in social structures and the gap which sometimes seems to separate the trade unionist world from a whole part of other actors of civil society.

First, the College drew a lesson from the struggle for the rights of man at work and for the respect and improvement of social, economic and cultural rights in Brazil and Russia, stressing the importance of pluralism, radicalism and the creation of Brazilian trade unions, as well as the grave lessons Russian workers continue to be subjected to after the transformation from a totalitarian and Stalinian regime to authoritarian and excessive capitalism.

Then, little by little, the group was given to know the worries of the other socio-professional circles gathered in Lille, by talking especially about the possible convergence with women, young people and on some issues even with shareholders !

The delegates learned about the Alliance's charter suggestion, but did not have any particular comment on it, except the wish to integrate in it the moral obligation to struggle against injustice under all its forms. Several participants said they would rather not comment on the declarations or the documents of the Alliance; an organization they hardly know yet. But there was a general interest in carrying on participating in the Alliance, and in progressively gaining more importance in its different structures and workgroups (see point 4.)

With a view to the future of our 'virtual College', the participants agreed on an agenda based on the following activities :

1.
To carry on and improve the exchange of information on the alternative suggestions of the trade union circles in order to reinforce the reforming and renewing process of the trade unions throughout the world.
2.
To develop training activities for trainers to allow a wider number of union militants to take advantage of the richness of the discussions and the knowledge concentrated within the Alliance.
3.
To reinforce the Asian and African Colleges.
4.
To strengthen the links and open new connections with other components of the Alliance, especially in the socio-economics group.

Although the concrete planning of the activities depends on the resources we manage to mobilize, especially in North America and Europe, the members of the College have committed themselves to setting up little workshops during the big international union circle meetings, which should reach a climax at the next world social Forum in Pôrto Alegre in January – February 2002 and the next world congress of the World Federation of Workers Education Associations in Prague in February 2002.

The participants suggested that Adam Novak from Alternatives (Montreal, Canada) carried on working as the facilitator and that an electric mailing list be set up as soon as possible to improve communications within the College.