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**The  
International Federation  
of Trade Unions**

Development and Aims

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## Preface.

During to scarce three years of its existence the International Federation of Trade Unions has been the target for attacks from right and left.

Misrepresentation, calumny and insinuation -- all with the object of inducing the workers to turn their backs on the one international power, which is not only in the position to safeguard their interests under present-day conditions, but also to lead the workers from capitalism to the socialist commonwealth - were and still are of common occurrence.

The following pages aim at showing in the most condensed form possible, what the I. F. T. U. is, what are its aims and what it is doing as opposed to all deliberate and other inaccurate statements.

## I. Introductory.

### *a) The pre-war International.*

The first attempts to establish an international organisation of the trade union movement may be said to date from the first conference of secretaries of national trade union federations at Copenhagen in 1901 on the occasion of the Scandinavian Labour Congress.

Seven countries were represented, namely: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, England, Finland, Norway and Sweden. From this date onwards international trade union conferences were regularly held. At first these were held annually; but later the conferences were made a biennial fixture. At the third, which met at Dublin in 1903, it was decided to appoint an international secretary, who was to maintain relations between the national trade union federations, make extracts from the annual reports of the secretaries of each national federation, and submit a summary to the latter in the official languages.

The headquarters of the International Secretariat were established at Berlin. At the eighth international conference held at Zurich (Switzerland) in 1913 a suggestion of the American delegation that the International Secretariat should be henceforth known as "The International Federation of Trade Unions" was adopted. An alteration in the form of organisation was not primarily intended. Since 1903 the International Secretary had been Carl Legien, the President of the General Federation of German Trade Unions. In 1913 he became the President of the International Federation of Trade Unions and retained office until the dissolution of the Federation in 1919.

Affiliation fees were first payable for the financial year 1903-1904. The amount fixed was 50 pfennigs (6d) per 1000 members per annum. Later the amount was 1 mark and subsequently 1 mark 50 pfennigs. In 1913 the amount was increased to 4 marks per 1000 members per annum.

Fourteen national trade union federations were affiliated in 1903, of which the following had joined since 1901: Holland, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Servia and Bulgaria. In 1908 the trade union federations of Finland and Croatia were admitted; and in 1909 Bosnia, Rumania and the United States of America became affiliated. In the year 1911 the Bulgarian trade unions were expelled until such time as the rival trade union federations of that country had amalgamated. The Transvaal joined the Federation in 1913. At the outbreak of the World War no less than 20 national trade union federations were organised within the International Federation of Trade Unions. The table subjoined will illustrate the growth of the pre-war International Federation.

Year	National Trade Union Federations	Membership Total
1904	14	2,378,975
1905	14	2,849,680
1906	14	3,706,425
1907	15	4,079,805
1908	17	4,313,516
1909	20	5,859,257
1910	20	6,121,711
1911	19	6,900,995
1912	19	7,394,461

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The task of the International Conferences was defined as follows:

"to investigate the possibility of closer co-operation of the trade unions of all countries, of compiling trade union statistics on uniform lines, of mutual financial support in economic disputes and all other questions immediately concerning the organisation of the working class in trade unions."

In the opinion of the majority "Militarism and general strikes were not questions which should be discussed at a conference of trade union officials". Nevertheless the Paris Conference of 1909 unanimously expressed the hope "that the workers of all countries might soon be able to prevent war by their influence and by utilising all and every means at their disposal".

Commencing with the year 1904, the International Secretariat Issued in the form of a year-book a collection of reports on the trade union movement in French, German and English; and to these year-books all the affiliated organisations contributed. Since the year 1913 a fortnightly International News Letter was also published.

Very important work was performed by the International Secretariat to promote international financial assistance during national strike movements. For the most part, however, it was a centre for transmitting information on the trade union movement in various countries, such as had never existed before,

#### *b) The International during the War.*

The war stopped the development of the international organisation. Even the information service could not be continued.

For the purpose of maintaining connections between the national trade union centres of the belligerent countries, a temporary bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions was established at Amsterdam. Repeated attempts to convene an international conference of trade union representatives of belligerent nations all failed. Such a conference had become necessary in order to decide the important question as to whether the headquarters of the International Federation of Trade Unions should be removed to a neutral country. As this conference could not be held the question remained in abeyance. At the conference of the trade union federations of the Allied Powers, held on the 5th July 1916 at Leeds it was decided to establish an International correspondence office at Paris for the duration of the war.

At the same conference a trade union Peace Programme Was formulated. The demands contained in this programme were revised by the Secretariat of the International Federation of Trade Unions. On the occasion of the International conference convened at Berne on the 1st October 1917, by the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions in which, however, only trade union representatives of neutral states and of the Central Powers took part the French and Italian representatives were prepared to come, but passports were refused them by their respective governments - these demands were unanimously adopted after a few alterations had been inserted. With the exception of the American trade unions, which were neither represented at Leeds nor at Berne, the trade unions of the belligerent countries were equally involved in the formulation of this programme. The trade unions were able to use this important preparatory work as their starting point once the war had come to an end.

## II. The Re- Establishment of the Trade Union International.

### *a) The Berne Conference 1919.*

The first successful step towards the reestablishment of a trade union

International was the special trade union congress at Berne, which was attended by the trade union representatives taking part at the International Socialist Conference held at that city from the 5th to the 9th of February 1919. The chief questions engaging the attention of this conference were, firstly, an International programme for the protection of Labour in which the demands of the trade unions were to be formulated for the Peace Conference, and, secondly, the convocation of an ordinary international trade union congress with the object of creating an institution which would restore the unity of the movement and which would conform to the exigencies of the times.

Delegates from 16 states took part at the Berne Conference but the delegates of Belgium and the United States were not in attendance.

Even at the Berne Conference it was manifest that as a consequence of the war and revolutions the trade unions had become a more recognised power in capitalist society than before the year 1914. Their attitude towards the capitalist system was expressed in terms of open hostility; and their final aim was defined as the abolition of the capitalist system of production. Reforms did not mean a surrender of trade union aims but a preparatory step to their accomplishment. Reforms were possible in two ways, namely, "by the resistance of Labour Organisations and by seizure of the powers of government".

The Governments of the various states were called upon to introduce a new Labour Code; furthermore the League of Nations was to be vested with legislative powers. The League was called upon to establish an International Labour Office supported by an International Labour Parliament. "This International Labour Parliament should not merely adopt international conventions without binding force, but should pass international laws. At the moment these laws are passed, they should have the same legal force as national laws."

The immediate object was a system of international legislation for the protection of labour, which would adjust the existing differences between the legislation of the different countries. The Berne Programme of 1917 was revised. Compulsory Education, the Eight-Hours Day, the English Working Week and other demands were formulated in accordance with the altered state of affairs. For the realisation of these demands the appointment of a permanent body was demanded which would consist of an equal number of representatives of the Member States of the League of Nations and of the International Federation of Trade Unions.

The conference expressed itself in favour of an autonomous League of Nations; but for this very reason they declared "that if the working classes desired to prevent the League of Nations from becoming a centre of reaction and oppression they would have to organise internationally and in this way acquire sufficient power to effectively control the League of Nations".

### *b) The Amsterdam Congress.*

The task of the international trade union congress held at Amsterdam from the 28th of July to the 2nd of August 1919 was to bring the international organisation described in the preceding paragraph into existence. Seventeen delegations representing fourteen states took part. Italy, Hungary, Greece

and Canada which were represented at the Berne Conference failed to send delegates to Amsterdam. This, however, was not due to any objection to the congress as such: On the other hand the United States and Belgium were represented at Amsterdam.

Behind the national trade union representatives at Amsterdam were no less than eighteen million workers!

A preliminary conference of 12 delegations from national trade union centres, which had been affiliated with the pre-war International Federation of Trade Unions liquidated the affairs of this body and drew up the agenda for the General Congress.

The antagonisms due to the war, which were still fresh in the minds of those present at Amsterdam and which were rendered more complex by the fact that completely unanimous conceptions did not prevail with regard to the role of the trade unions during the post-war period, gave rise to difficulties at the -general congress. This was apparent whilst the draft rules were under consideration and also when the attitude of the congress to the League of Nations, the Labour Charter and the International Labour Organisation was being defined.

After a severe criticism of the Labour Charter the Congress endorsed the Berne Programme, "as the working class should remain quite independent in formulating their own demands". It was demanded that the Berne Programme should replace the Labour Charter.

As, nevertheless, the Labour Charter might become the basis of a League, "which will not merely be a League of Governments but a League of Peoples" the congress declared its readiness "to lend its co-operation to the Washington Conference subject to, the following reservations:

1. The representatives of the trade union movement of all countries to be invited and admitted without any exception.
2. The delegates appointed by the National Trade Union Centres affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions to be recognised as the representatives of the Labour Movement".

The delegates taking part at the Washington Conference were also pledged to make every effort to ensure:

"That in the delegations of every country to the conferences of the international Labour Organisation, there shall only be one Government representative, just as there is only one representative for the workers and one for the employers, and that in place of a two thirds majority, an absolute majority shall suffice for the adoption of decisions."

The Amsterdam Congress also declared itself in favour of an autonomous League of Nations with legislative and judicial powers; it, however, emphasised the necessity - like the Berne Conference Previously -- of an independent international organisation of the working class "to control the League of Nations":

Furthermore the congress declared that, "as the trade unions are themselves the primary condition of and the basis for socialisation, the efforts and activities of the workers should be directed to that end".

The international trade union congress at Amsterdam not only formulated certain fundamental principles, but also immediately defined its attitude to an important question of world policy. In a special resolution it condemned the blockade of Russia and Hungary and thus made it clear at the outset

that the deliberate exclusion, particularly of Russia, from world commerce was a severe impediment to the restoration of Europe.

In spite of existing differences this congress of trade union organisations agreed to a comprehensive programme and also avoided the danger of binding itself to inelastic rules. It was in this manner that the new International Federation of Trade Unions came into existence.

#### *e) The Organisation of the new International Federation of Trade Unions.*

The International Federation of Trade Unions consists of National General Trade Union Federations organised on a definite trade unions basis. Only one National Federation of Trade Unions from each country can be admitted to the International Federation. The autonomy of the trade union movement of each country is guaranteed. The management of the International Federation is vested in the Bureau, the Management Committee, and the Congress. The chief governing body of the International Federation is the Biennial Congress. The Congress consists of the Management Committee and the representatives of affiliated national federations. Each national federation represented at an International Trade Union Congress has one vote for 250,000 members or fraction thereof; over 250,000 and under 500,000 members 2 votes; over 500,000 members and under 1,000,000 members 3 votes, and one additional vote for every further 500,000 members or fraction of 500,000 members for which it pays contribution to the International Federation of Trade Unions.

This method of voting enhances the influence of the large industrial states with vast trade union organisations, in contradistinction to the conferences of the pre-war International Federation of Trade Unions, where each national federation had only one vote irrespective of the number of members and delegates.

The Congress elects the Bureau and Management Committee of the Federation; it examines all reports of the Management Committee issued since the previous Biennial Congress; it fixes the rates of contributions for the ensuing financial period; and it has authority to decide all questions of principles or tactics of a trade union nature. All propositions are decided at the congress by a simple majority. This provision formally restricts the autonomy of the national trade union centres in international matters, and is inasmuch a step towards centralisation of the International. As the decisions of the Congress, however, cannot be binding in a legal sense (like the resolutions of Parliament so far as these may have legal validity) their enforcement is always dependent on the voluntary co-operation of each national trade union federation. The independence of each national trade union federation consequently diminishes the significance of the vote by simple majority rather than the contrary.

During the period between two congresses the Bureau and the Management Committee are entrusted with the management of the International Federation of Trade Unions in accordance with the policy laid down by the Congress.

The Management Committee consists of the Bureau and the representatives of the groups into which the various countries were divided by the Amsterdam Congress. The Bureau consists of the President, three Vice Presidents and the two Secretaries, and meets at least once a month whereas the Management Committee meets twice a year.

The Management Committee assists the Bureau in its activities; exercises financial control; arranges the agenda of ordinary congresses; decides questions of admission or non-admission of National Federations subject to confirmation by the next congress, and acts as an arbitrator in all matters in dispute.

The actual business from congress to congress is conducted by the Bureau.

*d) The Aims and Objects of the International Federation of Trade Unions.*

The Amsterdam Congress defined the two great aims, of the International Federation of Trade Unions. *Firstly, like its predecessor it shall be the centre for the exchange of trade union information and shall issue reports and statistics on the position of the trade movement of affiliated countries.*

At the time of writing the statistical investigations have not been brought to an advanced stage for technical reasons; still this subject has not been lost sight of. On the other hand, the periodical "The International Trade Union Movement" which has appeared every two months since January 1921 in German, English and French; and the "Press Reports" which are sent out every week - also in the three languages<sup>1</sup> - have already served the purpose of effecting an exchange of information on trade union activity.

The periodical publishes the Manifestos, Resolutions, and fundamentally important correspondence of the International Federation of Trade Unions; also contributions on important international trade union questions, reports on the position of the trade unions in various countries or on any great strike or lock-out, and on new developments concerning labour legislation and trade union organisation. The Press Reports impart everyday information on questions of trade union interest and the kindred subject of international social and economic policy. For the purpose of issuing these publications a translation office is attached to the International Federation of Trade Unions which also undertakes work for several of the International Trade Secretariats.

*The publications of the Federation are devoted to the task of furthering the second and greater aim of the International Federation of Trade Unions, namely, the promotion of trade union interests and efforts in those countries whose national trade union federations are already affiliated and also in those countries where the trade unions are fighting on a similar front but are not yet part of the International Federation.*

The aims of the International Federation of Trade Unions as formulated by the Amsterdam Congress were:

Unity of action on all questions of mutual trade union interest; propagating the principle that the trade unions in Capitalist Society are forced to wage the same battle in all countries; co-ordination of the entire trade union movement for those objects dictated by the present world position without infringing the independence of the national federations by doctrinaire centralisation

<sup>1</sup> It is intended to issue the Press Reports also in Spanish and Swedish

### III. The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions since the Amsterdam Congress.

The activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions have been guided firstly, by the policy laid down at Amsterdam and at the subsequent Congress held at London; secondly by the dictates of an uncertain economic and political world situation, and also by the social-political reaction which is prevalent in various countries; thirdly, by the precarious position of the working class and large sections of the community of different countries owing to the economic disruption due to the war; fourthly and not in the least by the political differences particularly amongst the workers of Europe, owing to which the unity and pugnacity of the trade unions - nationally as well as internationally -- are in danger of destruction.

*a) Relations with the American Federation of Labor.*

The American Federation of Labor, it is true, sent their representatives to the Amsterdam Congress, who, however, were not vested - as afterwards transpired - with the right to take a binding decision on the question of affiliation of the American Federation of Labor. On March 5th 1921 the Executive Committee of the Federation, to whom the Montreal Convention of June 1920 had referred the question for decision, advised the International Federation of Trade Unions that the American Federation of Labor had decided not to affiliate.

This decision was not so much due to the difference of conception between the neutral and socialistic trade union movements. Misunderstandings on the subject of socialisation, which was regarded in America as tantamount to the fulfilment of the socialist programme, were certainly not without influence. The decisive point, however, was the supposed violation of national autonomy.

Characteristically enough, not a single European country had raised this objection. The Americans do not seem to understand the tendencies and differences inside the working class movement of Europe which make it incumbent upon the new International Federation of Trade Unions to conduct a more active trade union policy than its predecessor. There is no question of the doctrinaire alternative: national autonomy or autonomy of the International; but rather the question of liberty of action for the national trade union federations as well as for the management of the International Federation of Trade Unions, based less upon the strict letter of the Rules as upon mutual confidence. All actions of the International Federation of Trade Unions without exception, are based on the voluntary co-operation of affiliated organisations.

Whereas the Americans reproach the International Federation of Trade Unions for having "revolutionary principles" the Communists for their part denounce it as the "Yellow International"!

The reason for this latter piece of calumny is the fact, that the Federation has lent its support to the work of the international Labour Office of Geneva.

*b) The International Federation of Trade Unions and the International Labour Office.*

The National Trade Union Federations which constitute the International Federation of Trade Unions demanded the establishment of an International Labour Office for international social legislation with the widest possible competency. Such an institution has not been established. However, this is no reason why the present Labour Office should not be supported. On

the contrary, the Labour Office can only perform effective work, assert its power against all attacks, and extend its influence in the future, if the workers in the Member States of the League of Nations bring their power to bear both nationally and internationally by and through their trade union and political organisations. The International Federation of Trade Unions succeeded in their attempts to have the trade union representatives of *all* countries admitted to the Conferences of the International Labour Organisation. The trade union representatives on the Governing Body have been successful in their efforts both with regard to the Enquiry into Production and on the question of Disarmament - although too high a value should not be placed on the successes attained hitherto. The fundamental objection to the co-operation of the trade unions with the International Labour Office is as unsound and as obsolete as the one-time prejudice against parliamentary action.

*c) The Third International and the "Red" Trade Union International.*

Besides the co-operation with the International Labour Office, there are three principal reasons why the Communist International has conducted its campaign against the International Federation of Trade Unions, particularly in the past two years. Firstly, the refusal of the unreasonable demand that the leadership of national and international trade unionism should be placed under the tutelage of the Communist International; secondly the repudiation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat on Russian lines; thirdly, the repudiation of the idea of World Revolution in the sense of a social revolution realised by incessant and convulsive political action. The campaign against the International Federation of Trade Unions, as the alleged champion of bourgeois democracy and of industrial peace by understanding, has been at times the cardinal point of Communist aggression. Since the second half of 1920, and especially at the London Congress of November 1920, the standpoint of the International Federation of Trade Unions on this question was repeatedly made manifest against the attacks of Sinoview and Losowsky.

In May 1921 the International Federation of Trade Unions took steps to uphold the unity of trade union action by deciding that any organisation affiliating with the Moscow International would automatically exclude itself from the International Federation of Trade Unions.

In fact, the balance of power has turned so definitely against the Moscow Trade Union International -- despite the split in the French trade unions - that Losowsky, although continuing his attacks without interruption, repeatedly made attempts to open negotiations with the International Federation of Trade Unions at the end of 1921. As in practice, however, the plan of forming communistic "cells" and the carrying of political differences into the trade union movement has not been abandoned, and as the split in the French trade union movement was not prevented, these negotiations have not yet led to any result.

The International Federation of Trade Unions never attempted to keep the Russian Trade Unions out of its ranks. Immediately after the Amsterdam Congress the Bureau approached the trade unions in Petrograd, Moscow and Odessa, with the object of re-establishing relations, but these overtures were unsuccessful. At their meeting in Brussels in February 1922 the Bureau declared their willingness to open negotiations with representatives of the Russian Trade Unions if they officially expressed the desire to confer with the International Federation of Trade Unions. This decision was definitely confirmed at the International Trade Union Conference held at Genoa in April 1922.

The second International Trade Union Congress in Rome (April 1922) especially appealed to the workers of Russia, America and the countries of the Far East, and called upon them to establish, while retaining their full autonomy, a united front by forming one organisation embracing the workers of the entire world.

It remains to be seen whether the American and Russian Trade Unions will take the path indicated by the congress.

*d) The Aims of the International Federation of Trade Unions.*

The International Federation of Trade Unions has based its policy on the concrete problems of social and economic life and not on doctrinaire demands. In formulating the aims of this policy the Special International Trade Union Congress which met from the 22nd to the 27th November 1920 at London and where 18 national federations were represented, played a very important part.

The disorganisation of economic life after the war and the lame efforts of the capitalist states to master the chaos by the terms of the Peace Treaty, by subsequent Conferences and Pacts, as well as by coercive measures, obviously inspired the demands formulated by the Federation. On the subject of the currency crisis which exclude more than 200 million people from the world's trade, the Federation demanded the *cancellation of the International War Debts* and the issuance of an international loan by the League of Nations or an organisation attached thereto - a loan to be guaranteed by the wealth and resources of all nations. It was demanded that the unsystematic distribution of raw materials, which is a deep rooted impediment to economic reconstruction should be removed by the formation of an International Office for the Distribution of Raw Materials. The high cost of living and the scarcity of the most important necessities of life was the reason why the congress adopted a resolution stating that socialisation of the land, mines and means of transportation was urgently necessary. Socialisation, however, was not to be nationalisation in the sense of State Capitalism but active control by the community through the intermediary of the trade unions and their representatives. In connection with socialisation and as a preparatory step in that direction, the Federation demanded the right of organised workers to co-manage and control production. The conception that trade unions are not only working class organisations for the improvement of wages and working conditions, but also that they are the actual machinery of production which is to supplant private enterprise - this conception which is the underlying principle of the Guilds (Building or otherwise) and the Agricultural Co-operative Societies - was enunciated in this resolution. Practical education for industrial democracy, not political catch-words is the way to abolish capitalist production! This programme of world restoration was confirmed and supplemented by the International Trade Union Conference for Economic Reconstruction held at Genoa from the 15th to the 18th April 1922, as well as by the Second International Trade Union Congress at Rome (20-26 April 1922). The Government Conference held at Genoa, which tried to solve the problem of economic reconstruction from the point of view of economic imperialism and from the international standpoint of assisting capitalism to victory once more, afforded the organised workers an opportunity of defining their attitude towards this problem.

In view of the fact that the economic crisis in Europe can only be surmounted by international co-operation, the fundamental demand was made that Russia should be readmitted without any reservation to her rightful

place among the nations of Europe. The idea was once more formulated of raising an international loan which shall be guaranteed by the resources of all the nations of Europe. This loan to be issued by the League of Nations, and applied for the purpose of furnishing the impoverished nations with the means to enable them to resume their industrial *and* commercial activity. Besides granting international credits, it will be absolutely necessary to organise international control and distribution of the principal raw materials which are indispensable for industrial and agricultural purposes, in order to prevent private speculation in these raw materials; and also to fix freight rates internationally so as to harmonise the interests of exporter and importer.

Production must be regulated by placing all countries in a position to give an equivalent in the form of labour in return for the raw materials and manufactured products which they receive. The policy of exorbitant tariff walls, which have increased the cost of living, reduced the workers' standard of life, and is partly responsible for the widespread unemployment throughout the world, has to be relinquished and economic imperialism abolished. The erroneous policy of the past three years has shown that economic nationalism has no justification for its existence.

If we want peace, we must see to it that there shall be economic equality as between nations. It should be made impossible that the economic situation of certain nations become untenable owing to an abundance of raw materials while other nations are ruined owing to a lack of raw materials.

*e) Actions of the International Federation of Trade Unions.*

Faithful to the principle of dealing with practical problems, the International Federation of Trade Unions by its actions, decisions and proposals repeatedly intervened in European politics. Owing to the relative impotence of the League of Nations, the International Federation of Trade Unions would have been unable to have mobilised the power of the trade unions as a world political force, if it had been content to remain a mere "Controlling Body" of the League. For the purpose of waging a national and international war against Capitalism, Imperialism, Reaction and Militarism, not only in principle but every time these tried to suppress the liberties and efforts of Labour organisations, the International Federation of Trade Unions has had to become the "controlling body" of bourgeois governments.

Before the war the question of Militarism and the General Strike were regarded by international trade union conferences as matters which could *only* be settled by the representative body of the whole proletariat, namely, by the regular International Socialist Congresses (Resolution adopted at Christiania in 1907). This conception has automatically changed with the times. A political International, which could justly speak on behalf of the whole mass of the workers unfortunately does not exist in consequence of the political split after the war. Nationally and internationally the trade unions became the "representative body" of the entire working class to a far greater extent than any socialist party. In certain countries like Germany *and* Austria the power of the trade unions became so considerable, that their opponents decried them as "a state within the state".

This extension of power led to the conscious application of the two most dangerous trade union weapons, firstly, in Germany against the Kapp Coup, d, secondly, on the direct initiative of the I. F. T. U., against Horthy's

regime of blood and terror in Hungary. We refer to the General Strike in Germany proclaimed by the German Federation of Trade Unions and to the international boycott of Hungary. These weapons were sanctioned by the London Congress as an effective and appropriate method in the struggle of the trade unions for progress and against reaction. A primary condition for the successful application of either weapon is the realisation that the struggle of the trade unions in all capitalist countries for the accomplishment of a new social order is similar in character; and consequently that co-ordinate action between affiliated national federations and the International Craft or Industrial Secretariats is essential. The trade unions must avoid the mistakes of bourgeois governments; they must not in their over-anxiety to uphold the national autonomy make their international organisation incapable of acting; their organisations must become the model of a real League of Nations to be realised inside their own ranks, particularly by disciplined international action.

*e I. The Boycott of Hungary (from July 20th to August 10th 1920).*

In this connection the boycott of Hungary must be regarded as the first international trade union action of real importance. The trade unions united in a struggle against a reactionary State! Not bourgeois governments but the trade unions; not the League of Nations but the International Federation of Trade Unions! This boycott was no mere intensification of belligerent operations; but a final coercive measure against a State. Finally this weapon was not used by a state or confederation of states but by the International Organisation of the Working Class!

This boycott was Labour's answer to the atrocities perpetrated by the White Terror in Hungary, especially against the workers. In March 1920, the International Federation of Trade Unions had endeavoured by way of negotiation to induce the Hungarian Government to alter their policy. The Supreme Council was also approached by the Federation. When these steps proved abortive, the boycott was proclaimed for the 20th of June 1920. The Austrian trade unions applied the boycott in a most exemplary manner, whilst the Czech trade unions partly succeeded in carrying it into effect. Rumania and Jugo-Slavic, where the trade unions were not affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions, failed to take action; the non-adjacent countries also failed to make adequate preparations. The intelligence service, as instituted, did not afford a sufficient basis for lasting and co-ordinate leadership of the boycott. For these reasons it was abandoned on the 10th August 1920.

The strictly limited success of this first attempt is not a case against the measure as such, but merely proof that the trade unions have yet to learn how to make adequate technical preparations and how to carry out actions of this kind. Meanwhile the conditions in Hungary became notorious throughout the world as a consequence of the boycott. Besides, in August 1920 the Hungarian Government somewhat modified their attitude towards the trade unions. For the Hungarian trade unions the international solidarity, evinced by the boycott meant a new lease of life.

*e II. The Refusal to transport Munitions in August 1920.*

During the second half of 1920 the attack of the Polish Government on Russia and the menace of international complications arising therefrom compelled the International Federation of Trade Unions to urge the workers to refuse all transport of goods for war purposes. The National Federations were

called upon to enforce this decision "if necessary by mass action or by a General Strike".

Even in this instance the object aimed at was, in a technical sense, not completely attained. It was quite true, however, that the action of the International Federation of Trade Unions safeguarded the Russian Revolution from the further and more insidious design of reactionary rulers. As it was, no government dared think of giving regular military assistance to the Polish Government in view of the attitude of the trade unions. This was acknowledged at the first Trade Union Congress of the Moscow International in 1921.

### *e III. Protest against the Occupation of the Ruhr District.*

In the years 1920-1921 the threatened military occupation of the Ruhr District played a fateful and disturbing part in European politics.

After receiving the report of the commission sent by the Federation to the Ruhr District, the London Congress declared that the organised workers were prepared *to use all and every means to oppose such measures and to prevent a military dictatorship over the workers in the Ruhr District.*

It is an open secret that this decision was very largely responsible for causing the constantly threatened occupation of the Ruhr at the end of 1920 to be abandoned; and furthermore in causing the exclusion of the Ruhr District from the application of the Sanctions which were so severely condemned by the International Federation of Trade Unions. The trade unions had no need to take any subsequent action in this matter.

### *e IV. The Disarmament Conference of the International Federation of Trade Unions in November 1921.*

In discussing the action of the trade unions with regard to disarmament, it is necessary to direct attention to the conference convened by the International Federation of Trade Unions on the 15th November 1921 at Amsterdam. This conference co-ordinated the resolutions adopted respectively by the international congresses of Transportworkers, Metal Workers, and Miners, and appointed a Provisional Joint Committee to be entrusted with the management of the campaign and propaganda against militarism; and until the next congress would take all measures necessary to combat militarism and counteract the imminent danger of war.

The congress at Rome altered the composition of this Joint Committee by substituting the Management Committee for the Bureau. It made the Provisional Joint Committee a permanent committee and thus created a standing international body to maintain, direct and further the propaganda against war and militarism. The powers of the committee were more definitely defined insofar as the right to proclaim an international general strike was exclusively vested in the Management Committee. The Committee shall remain the International Committee of Action. In conformity with the practical conception of the struggle against war and militarism, which

characterised the discussion on this question at the congress, the greatest importance was attached to a continuous, class conscious and international campaign against militarism. Sentimental socialism has no practical value. Socialism must become a solid conviction in order that the workers shall not fail at the decisive moment.

The new International Federation of Trade Unions has always regarded the combatting of War and Militarism as part of the comprehensive task of overthrowing the capitalist system. No less definitely is it the conviction of

the International Federation Trade Union that Disarmament is a necessary condition for the economic reconstruction of Europe, not only on account of the inproductive financial burdens armaments entail but chiefly on account of the constant danger to peace caused by the presence of huge standing armies. The congress at Rome took this into consideration and properly classified the campaign against war among the great political issues by declaring "that it is above all the duty of the International Trade Union Movement to combat all forms of political and economic nationalism as well as the concluding or maintaining of all alliances or agreements which might lead to concerted military actions".

The war against war must be carried on unabatedly both by the Political Labour Movement and the Trade Unions. The fact that an international central body has been formed by the trade unions to permanently devote itself to this task, is therefore of much significance.

This Provisional Joint Committee comprise the Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions, and one representative from each of the three great international federations of transport workers, metal workers, and miners.

The significant progress made by this conference in comparison with the results achieved hitherto was the determination not to let matters rest with mere resolutions but to create machinery with the express object of enquiring into the technical side of combatting war, which, in the event of a general international stoppage of labour being ordered, should be thoroughly conversant with the impediments to the accomplishment of such action. This Joint Committee may be of vital importance to the technique of the trade union struggle against war, provided, however, it enjoys sufficient support of the national trade union and the great international federations. The Joint Committee can do very much to realise the "greatest possible unity" of the trade unions - as demanded at London - for a concrete task.

### *f) Enquiries instituted by, the International Federation of Trade Union into the European Situation.*

On repeated occasions, more particularly, however, in connection with the London Diplomatic Conference in March 1921, and on the occasion of the Economic Conference at Genoa in April 1922, the International Federation expressed the standpoint of the international working class with regard to the negotiations of the former belligerent nations on the problem of Reparation and restoration of the devastated areas.

The Federation held that reparation by Germany for damage caused by the war was necessary and just, but that it had to be based on the co-operation of the nations, which would alone guarantee that the Pacts were carried into effect. For this reason the International Reparation Conference convened by the International Federation of Trade Unions on the 31st March and 1st April 1921 embodied in a resolution the proposal that an International Reconstruction Office be instituted for the technical organisation, and for the general and financial administration of the work of reconstruction. "This Office was to be empowered to raise world loans guaranteed by the League of Nations for the purpose of restoration, the interest and principal being paid by Germany."

The International Trade Union Conference for the economic restoration of Europe (held at Genoa in April 1922) and the Second Ordinary International

## IV. Expansion of the International Federation of Trade Unions since Formation and Plans for the further Development of its Organisation

### a) Membership since 1919.

At the inaugural congress of the new International Federation of Trade Unions, 17 national trade union federations from 14 countries were represented namely: the United States, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Great-Britain, Holland, Luxemburg, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Czecho-Slovakia.

Italy and Hungary were prevented from sending delegates.

On the 1st December 1920, the national federations of no less than 22 countries were affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions. The new member countries were (besides Italy and Hungary) Greece, Jugo-Slavla, Poland, Canada, Argentina, Peru and the Union of South Africa. The United States failed to ratify their application.

On the 1st July 1921, the member countries of the International Federation of Trade Unions had increased to 24. The new entrants were Bulgaria and Latvia. The following table gives particulars concerning the membership of the Federation.

Year	Observations	Number of affiliated countries	Membership
1919	<b>Membership represented at the Amsterdam Congress not including the Syndicalist Federations of Germany and Holland</b>	14	<b>17,633,000 <sup>1)</sup></b>
1920	1st. December	22	<b>23,662,000 <sup>2)</sup></b>
1921	1st. July	24	<b>23,907,059 <sup>2)</sup></b>

<sup>1)</sup> Including the American Federation of Labor (3 600 000 members).

<sup>2)</sup> Excluding the American Federation of Labor.

### b) *The International Federation of Trade Unions and the International Industrial Secretariats.*

Besides being affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions, the various trade unions are also affiliated to an International Industrial Secretariat according to the industry or craft covered by the organisation. These twenty-nine international organisations have no constitutional connection with the International Federation of Trade Unions. In practice, however, it has served a good purpose - as the International Secretariats all endorse the Amsterdam Programme - in allowing representatives of these international secretariats to take part at the Congresses of the International Federation of Trade Unions, although without the right to vote thereat.

The congress at Rome and the Joint Conference of the International Federation of Trade Unions and the International Trade Secretariats held immediately thereafter dealt with the question as to whether closer organisational ties and the incorporation of the International Trade Secretariats within the International Federation of Trade Unions were desirable.

A committee was appointed to investigate this matter and to report to the next Congress. Until that time the present method of co-operation will be continued.

Trade Union Congress at Rome endorsed the draft programme for the revision of the stipulations concerning Reparations: "the settlement of the Reparations question should be international". Special emphasis was laid on the crux of the Reparations problem, namely, "the mutual cancellation of the debts contracted by the European countries during the war" as the first condition for

the restoration of world economy; and in this connection it also demanded the renouncement by the Allied Powers of reparations in respect of war pensions, the discontinuance of military occupations and the abolition of the sanctions.

In March 1921, the International Federation of Trade Unions instituted an official enquiry with regard to the devastated areas of France and were explicit to advocating the co-operation of German Labour in the work of restoration

The Federation also instituted enquiries into the situation in German-Austria and the Saar.

The enquiry, however, instituted in Upper-Silesia became the most widely known. In contrast to the subsequent decision of the League of Nations tal partition this territory, the commission appointed by the International Federation of Trade Unions were of opinion that the territorial status of Upper Silesia as an economic and geographical unit should not be violated. Consequently the commission proposed to confer on Upper Silesia economic autonomy and autonomous administration under the control of the League of Nations. It was an attempt to bring two nations together, not nationally but economically, for solving a problem of equal economic importance to Germany and Poland.

### g) *Relief Movements undertaken by the International Federation of Trade Unions.*

The first relief movement organised by the International Federation of Trade Unions was in aid of the destitute Austrian working class. The total sum collected for this purpose -- more than one million Dutch guilders - was expended on food and coal; and also for the maintenance of Austrian workers' children who were in need of convalescent treatment in foreign countries

The campaign conducted by the Communist International and by the Moscow Trade Union International, has never prevented the International Federation of Trade Unions from taking up the cause of the Russian workers and the Russian people. In the summer of 1921, when the ravages of the famine which has since become a veritable human calamity, first wrought havoc in -Vast' areas of Russia, the Federation immediately decided to institute a great working class relief movement. Repeated appeals for effective assistance on behalf of the famine stricken population were issued, and by the 15th December 1921 the federation had succeeded in collecting about 800,000 guilders. In the agreements concluded between the representatives of the Russian Government and the Chief Commissioner sent by the International Federation of Trade Unions to Russia, it was stipulated that the food supplies purchased by the Federation should be primarily employed for the maintenance of 40,000 children in the Chuvash Territory. The work of relief will be extended to a still larger number of children if this course is made in any way possible.

*c) The International Federation of Working Women*

Hitherto women workers have only been affiliated with the international Federation of Trade Unions as members of the various trade union organisations which form the constituent parts of those National Federations belonging to the International Federation of Trade Unions. The International congress of Working Women held from the 17th to the 25th October 1921 at Geneva was responsible for the formation of a permanent organisation, namely, the International Federation of Working Women. This Women's Federation comprises the women members of those national trade union federations which are affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions. Trade Unions can also be admitted to the Women's Federation provided they accept the aims of and agree to work in the spirit of the International Federation of Trade Unions no more than one organisation of each country can be affiliated.

Trade Unionism for women is in its infancy in most countries.

However, as the unorganised women workers constitute a danger to the working conditions of the whole working class, the Congress at Rome instructed the Management Committee to encourage the organisation of working women in the various countries.

The congress emphatically declared that it regarded the organisation of men and women in one trade union as the most efficient form of trade unionism but called upon the Management Committee to continue the existing friendly relations with the International Federation of Working Women.