

CHAPTER IV

STAGES OF ICFTU ACTIVITIES

We have so far pictured the general struggle of the ICFTU for the promotion of basic free trade union ideals in many lands. In a rapidly changing world, however, new situations and new problems arise from time to time which require new solutions; new tasks impose themselves and require new approaches. A dynamic movement will, without losing or weakening any of its ideals, be moved to adapt its activities and even its machinery to new situations, problems and tasks. Such a process of shifting of emphasis is thus a sign of a dynamic organisation: it can be easily observed in the history of the ICFTU.

One can distinguish three broad stages in the history of the ICFTU: a first stage of consolidation and preparation for the great task of expanding into the developing countries; a second stage of expansion into this new world and of promoting its rise and progress; and a third stage of finding a dynamic equilibrium between the old and the new countries.

1. **The first stage: Emphasis on problems facing industrial countries**

In the first stage of the history of the ICFTU the world was faced by the pressing problems which the most devastating war of modern history had created. Europe having been the chief battlefield and industrial societies being particularly susceptible to war devastation, the economic recovery problems in the nature of things centred on Europe.

a) **European recovery**

It was mentioned in the Introduction that the fate of the WFTU experiment was sealed when the communist elements

within the World Federation of Trade Unions refused to co-operate with the recovery programme for Europe, the Marshall Plan. The disagreement between the communist and democratic forces within the World Federation of Trade Unions affected the most vital interests of the free trade unions in their entirety. Without the recovery of Europe from the gigantic devastation of war there would have been no way out of the misery into which the peoples of Europe had been plunged - no hope for economic development and social progress in the industrial countries - and no possibility of assisting the economically underdeveloped countries in their development. The break-up of the WFTU was unavoidable and the foundation of a free trade union international was a historical necessity; it was also natural that the young ICFTU was preoccupied with European recovery problems.

b) Economic cooperation and integration

The European recovery programme was based on the Marshall Plan, named after the United States Secretary of State George Marshall who proposed this plan in 1947. On the basis of this plan the United States granted within four years 13,000 million dollars of financial assistance to the cooperating European countries and the rapid recovery of European industry was to a large extent due to the Marshall Plan. The Plan provided that European recovery should be a cooperative enterprise, and it was for this purpose that the OEEC (Organisation for European Economic Cooperation) -later OECD, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - was formed in 1948. As has been mentioned above, the free trade unions of 18 European countries decided to cooperate with it, in defiance of the obstacles raised by the communist forces within the WFTU.

In the same spirit the free trade unions fully joined in further efforts for European cooperation and integration. Both the ICFTU Constitution and the Declaration of Economic and Social Demands adopted by the Founding Congress had laid the basis for these efforts on the part of the free trade unions. The Constitution declares as one of its aims « to advocate... increased and properly planned economic cooperation among the nations in such a way as will encourage the development of wider economic units and freer exchange of commodities », and the Declaration of Economic and Social Demands called for « ever-broadening areas of international economic cooperation ». The free trade unions helped to achieve the formation in 1951 of the European Coal and Steel Community embracing the coal,

iron and steel industries of France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg. For the first time in history, a common market for certain basic industries in a group of important producer countries was created. The community appointed a leading trade unionist - Paul Finet, the first President of the ICFTU - as a member of the Directorate of the Community (the High Authority). Six years later the European Economic Community was established, in which the free trade unions again won representation at the highest level. They established the European Trade Union Secretariat to follow EEC work and influence it. For the European Free Trade Association (Efta), which was founded in 1960 and which groups eight European nations outside the European Economic Community in a free trade area, the unions of the participating countries have also established a secretariat.

The ICFTU, while encouraging these regional integration efforts and - through its affiliated organisations within these regions - cooperating with them as an effective means of furthering productivity and prosperity as well as freer trade among nations, has always emphasized that communities of this kind should take into consideration the trading interests of the countries outside of these communities. Thus one year after the formation of the European Economic Community the ICFTU Executive Board in a resolution which it adopted at its meeting of November 1958 emphasized « that all policies undertaken by the European Economic Community and the European Free Trade Area should take fully into account the economic and social interests of other countries ». The Sixth World Congress of the ICFTU (Brussels, December 1959), moreover, in a Resolution on Regional Economic Integration admonished, the two European regional groupings to do all that is possible to promote the economic development of underdeveloped countries, and by working towards the reduction of their external tariffs, to further the liberalisation and extension of world trade ». It should also be noted, that the ICFTU has always, directly and through its regional organisations, expressed its support for all efforts to create areas of economic cooperation and integration in other regions too, particularly in Latin America and in South East Asia.

c) Action for full employment

As long as in many industrial countries the loss of production facilities through wartime devastation had not been made good and capital was not available in sufficient quantity for this pur-

pose, large-scale unemployment was rampant; even later on, after the shortage of capital had been overcome as a result of the Marshall Plan, the danger of mass unemployment loomed large. In many economically underdeveloped countries, due mainly to lack of capital resources but also to grave economic and social deficiencies, such as feudal or semi-feudal conditions of land tenure and illiteracy, the rapidly growing labour force could not be absorbed. Mass underemployment in the countryside, moreover, led to mass migration to the cities which were unable to give productive employment to the newcomers and the new generation.

Trade unions have always viewed unemployment as one of the worst scourges of present-day society. They have always considered the right to work, which implies the opportunity to find appropriate work places, as an inalienable right of the worker. In all three formulations which the Founding Congress of the ICFTU gave to its economic, social and political views - the Constitution, the Manifesto and the Declaration on Economic and Social Demands - the principle of full employment was expressly stated.

In the years following the ICFTU remained preoccupied by the problem of achieving and maintaining full employment. A resolution adopted by the Third World Congress (Stockholm, July 1953) re-emphasized that the right to work is a basic social right, and declared in an important statement on the implementation of this right that « full employment policy should take priority over all national and international objectives », - a principle which unfortunately is frequently disregarded by governments in shaping their economic policies.

In March 1954, the Emergency Committee of the Executive Board adopted a detailed statement - prepared, on instructions from Congress, by a committee of experts - which not only formulated the principles of full employment policy in a most comprehensive way, but also contained guide-lines for the implementation and application of the principles at national and international level. While effective full employment policy was considered a short-range economic and social objective for economically advanced countries, for developing countries it was defined as one of the principal development goals for which the ICFTU pledged itself to work. The Statement therefore treated the employment problems of developing countries in the context of economic development and traced an outline of the views of the free trade union movement on development policies and requirements.

The issue of full employment policy was again systematically treated by the Seventh World Congress (Berlin, July 1962). A statement on the achievement and maintenance of full employment was adopted which adjusted the views expressed in the 1954 statement to newer experiences and added to them a thorough review of the employment problems in developing countries, with guide-lines for their solution.

Following the lead which the ICFTU gave in proclaiming the principle of full employment and in outlining ways and means to its implementation, the United Nations family fully espoused this principle; both the UN Economic and Social Council and the International Labour Organisation have expressly and repeatedly endorsed it.

d) **Productivity of labour**

After the disaster of the Second World War and after the reconstruction of the devastated production machinery, the industrial countries of the world witnessed a spectacular rise in the productivity of labour, brought about by rapid technological progress. The ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats have given much attention to the problems involved in this phenomenon. As early as July 1952 the General Council of the ICFTU adopted a Statement of Prices, Wages, and Productivity, emphasizing that rising productivity is one of the prerequisites for improvements in living standards but that safeguards must be assured both for avoiding technological unemployment and for full participation of the workers in the benefits brought about by rising productivity.

The issue of productivity was again taken up, on a broader basis, but in the same spirit, by the Seventh World Congress in a statement on automation and technological progress.

The extent to which increases in the productivity of labour will be translated into higher real wages depends in the first place on the bargaining power of the trade unions - provided of course, that trade union rights are fully ensured. In this field there is, apart from the establishment of general principles, little that can be done by the international trade union movement. There is, however, one aspect of the potential social effects of rising productivity where international trade union action can be promising: that of reduction in the hours of work on a national and even international scale, as the duration of the working day is more susceptible to general norms. The

first concrete international action which had as its objective working conditions was, eighty years ago, an action in favour of the eight-hour day. In the meantime the International Labour Office has repeatedly incorporated into its international labour code conventions and recommendations concerning hours of work. It was therefore logical that when the pace of technological progress kept accelerating and national incomes kept rising rapidly in the economically advanced countries, the ICFTU, in cooperation with the international Trade Secretariats, should launch a concerted campaign in favour of a reduction of hours of work. The ICFTU Executive Board at its meeting of December 1955 proposed that affiliated organisations in industrial countries, wherever the working week was in excess of forty hours, should make all efforts to achieve the forty-hour week, either immediately or by fixed stages. This initiative, which had the full support of the international Trade Secretariats, individually and jointly, met with unprecedented success. In many countries trade unions included reduction of the hours of work in their demands. From the time of the ICFTU action a general trend of reducing hours of work to forty hours or towards that goal has made itself felt in the industrial countries.

2. The second stage: concentration on union-building in developing countries

A world of rapid change will be beset with problems in every quarter and will require determined action everywhere. It has been explained above, however, why particular attention had to be given to the problems of industrial countries in the initial stage of ICFTU activities: but it became obvious that the conditions under which the great majority of the world's population lived were so appalling that the international free trade union movement would have to concentrate all its resources and energies on the task of contributing to economic development, political freedom and trade union growth in this disfavoured part of the world.

This by no means implies that in the first stage of its history the ICFTU neglected this task. The Founding Congress itself established the basic principles which guided the ICFTU in its liberation work for the developing countries. This applied first of all to political liberation. The Constitution adopted by the Founding Congress proclaimed « the right of all peoples to full national freedom and self-government ». In its aims the Constitution stated as one of the tasks of the Confederation « to provide assistance in the establishment, maintenance and deve-

lopment of trade union organisations, particularly in economically and socially underdeveloped countries »; and as another task « to encourage the development of the resources of all countries... and particularly of underdeveloped countries ».

Moreover, in the very first years of its existence, the ICFTU laid the foundations for its organising activities in developing countries. Regional organisations were established in the inter-American region in January 1951 and in Asia in May 1951. Delegations were sent out to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and the first Trade Union College of the ICFTU was opened as early as November 1952 in Calcutta.

The fundamental views of the ICFTU on economic development in underdeveloped countries were rapidly set out. In 1950 the ICFTU proposed a programme of financial assistance to economically underdeveloped countries containing a principle which was considered revolutionary at that time: in its first statement to the UN Economic and Social Council in July 1950, the ICFTU urged that the industrially advanced countries should pledge themselves for many years to come to assist underdeveloped countries with substantially greater funds than heretofore. And in a statement which the Emergency Committee of the ICFTU Executive Board adopted in September of the same year the United Nations was urged to encourage the conclusion of an agreement between economically advanced and underdeveloped countries on a long-range programme of financing economic and social development through fixed amounts on a scale comparable to that of the Marshall Plan. What may have appeared utopian at that time has in the meantime become a well-established policy; it should not be forgotten that the ICFTU was the first international organisation which recognised the need for it. The influence of the international free trade union movement may well have been a decisive factor in preparing world public opinion for the acceptance and implementation of this policy.

(a) Organisation and education

Step by step, work for the developing countries moved into the centre of ICFTU activities. First of all, it was necessary to build up the technical machinery for carrying out the organisational activities of the ICFTU. What was needed concretely was to create organs which would be equipped to ascertain in all regions of the world what the actual trade union situation was, what prospects there were for the development of free trade unions where they did not yet exist or were too weak and what could and should be done to assist in the establishment or development of free trade unions.

The ICFTU secretariat was reshaped to take account of the new tasks. The regional activities service grew into the organisation department with specialised staff for each region covered. An education department was formed to supervise the trade union colleges of the ICFTU, to prepare trade union training programmes in general and to cater for women's and youth problems at the international level.

Trade union leaders from the areas concerned were drawn into the planning of organisational activities. In the Americas and in Asia the regional organisations, set up in the early days of the ICFTU, were to hand for this purpose. In Africa consultations took place through the regional machinery which was established in the late fifties and through special meetings. Regional organisations also assisted in the implementation of the activities, through the provision of field representatives from the continent concerned, participation in educational activities and the stimulation of work on regional and local economic questions.

Regional activities work was furthered by a series of missions. Soon after the ICFTU's formation missions composed of high-level representatives of affiliated national centres went out to the different continents to make contact with the younger trade union movements and study their problems on the spot. Later official missions were sent to help evaluate the needs of different countries for assistance. The need for such missions - except to investigate particular situations - grew less as working relationships were established with the trade union centres concerned and more informal visits were paid by officials of the central ICFTU, the regional organisations and the international trade secretariats.

The teeth of the organising drive were the field representatives of the ICFTU, all of them trade unionists of long standing. Their task was to place their experience at the disposal of the trade union movements of the country in which they were stationed, with the local leaders adapting this experience to their own circumstances. They were advisers and educators, and where the ICFTU granted temporary financial subsidies to young organisations, they supervised the utilisation of these.

The first representatives went to work in the early 1950's — to the Gold Coast (West African Information and Advisory Centre), to Kenya (East Africa Office) and to Malaya, for assisting in the organisation of plantation workers.

From the late fifties onwards ICFTU field representatives were stationed in many countries. For some years about a dozen

ICFTU field representatives were present at any one time in Africa. Seven representatives or office directors were stationed in Asia. In Latin America, where great opportunities followed the fall of several dictatorships, a network of representatives and correspondents was created.

Parallel with the organising drive ICFTU educational activities in the developing countries were intensified. Trade union training has long been an essential feature of the work of the well-established trade union centres, and the ICFTU took up educational activities at international level from the very beginning. In countries with well established strong trade unions the function of the ICFTU has been limited to establishing general principles of trade union education and training and to organising conferences, seminars and courses where trade unionists of various countries can be assembled for the discussion of problems which go beyond the confines of their own countries. This task the ICFTU has successfully undertaken. Following a European Trade Union Education Conference in November 1950, an international education conference was held in Berlin in July 1952 and it adopted a statement on principles of general and trade union education (approved by the ICFTU General Council). International and European trade union seminars and courses have been organised by the ICFTU.

It was, however, quickly obvious that the ICFTU's major educational role would be in the vast expanse of the developing areas, and that this job formed an integral part of international assistance for the building of free trade unions. The backbone of these activities were to be the ICFTU trade union colleges in the three principal developing regions, Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the vast areas of these three continents central points were needed where trade unionists of the various countries within these continents could be assembled in order to receive a more systematic and more thorough training than would be possible in their own countries. From these central points the College teachers could also go out to organise on the spot training courses in the various countries of their continent. The residential courses have given general trade union training, but in addition courses for specialists such as research officers and educators have been held.

The financial, educational and organisational tasks involved in carrying out the college plan were very complex. Thanks to a special collection of funds the ICFTU Asian Trade Union College was opened in November 1952 in Calcutta. (In the meantime it moved to New Delhi.) Reports of its success soon spread to other continents, and the ICFTU received repeated

requests to set up colleges elsewhere. The ICFTU established a trade union college in Kampala, Uganda. The first courses of the ICFTU African Labour College, from November 1958 on, were held in hotel rooms and from June 1961 on in its own building. The College catered for English-speaking students; from headquarters a large number of short courses were organised in the different French-speaking countries of Africa. After the compulsory sale of the College to the Uganda Government in 1968, courses were carried on in different countries under a revised African educational programme. Latin America had its Institute for Labour Studies from 1962 onwards, and an ICFTU ORIT College, built in Cuernavaca, Mexico, was opened in 1966.

While the three trade union colleges in their extension work organised a large number of trade union courses in various parts of the regions which they served, the ICFTU - and in their professional fields the International Trade Secretariats - was also intensely active in organising seminars and courses in developing countries. Many thousands of free trade unionists in virtually all parts of the developing world benefited from the opportunity offered to them by the ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats to attend trade union seminars and courses, either at the ICFTU trade union colleges or in various countries.

Connected with the educational programmes, courses were held on economic questions. The regional organisations in the Americas and in Asia made staffing arrangements to cover economic and social issues, while in Africa the African research service covered regional questions and gave assistance to African trade unions on economic matters affecting them.

At a very early stage the need was felt to facilitate the work of the trade union colleges, seminars and courses by producing and placing at their disposal educational literature. A great number of educational publications were issued in the official languages of the ICFTU, some of them in particular series (« Educational News », « You and your Union », « Know your Facts »). At the time of the Eighth World Congress (Amsterdam, July 1965), 600,000 copies had already been printed of these three educational series; in addition, 400,000 copies had been printed by the ICFTU colleges and regional organisations.

It should be mentioned in this context that over the years the ICFTU has altogether been very active in the field of publishing. Both its regular publications - its monthly magazine *Free Labour World* and its news bulletins, press services etc. - and its occasional pamphlets and monographs have been invaluable not only in keeping contacts with, and assuring a steady flow of

information to, its membership in all parts of the world, but also in spreading the ideas of free trade unionism and in influencing public opinion.

The ICFTU spurred on the International Trade Secretariats to undertake regional activities. The International Transport Workers' Federation had long had affiliations from all over the world, but other ITS had been mainly European-based. Through imparting its own experience in particular countries, through financial assistance for ITS regional programmes and through placing the ICFTU educational facilities at ITS disposal, the ICFTU encouraged the ITS to expand in the developing countries. The ICFTU field representatives, who dealt primarily with the national centres, sent back word that for a thorough organising job to be done, representatives were needed to give specialised assistance. The International Trade Secretariats quickly responded to this appeal. The ICFTU made a special contribution by facilitating the establishment of two international trade secretariats concerned particularly with the developing countries: the International Federation of Petroleum Workers and the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers. Later the ICFTU sponsored the formation of the International Secretariat of Entertainment Trade Unions.

The ICFTU's finances had to grow rapidly to cope with all the tasks involved in regional activities. It became quickly obvious that this work could not be financed by the regular affiliation fees. As, on the other hand, the ICFTU has been firmly determined not to solicit or accept any funds from sources outside of the free trade unions themselves, there was no other way open for financing the organising and educational activities of the Confederation in the developing regions than an appeal to those member organisations which were in a position to make financial contributions above their affiliation fees. Occasional sporadic contributions would not suffice and a regular source of income was needed. A first step in this direction was already taken as early as 1951. The Second World Congress (Milan, July 1951) approved in principle the organisation of special campaigns for the financing of regional activities of the ICFTU. The contributions raised in this way were channelled into a Regional Activities Fund. This Fund, which was in operation for four years, was fed by voluntary contributions of affiliated organisations - and certain international trade secretariats - of about \$800,000. The Fourth World Congress (Vienna, May 1955) changed the financing system, by authorising the Executive Board to raise a levy of one cent per member annually from affiliated organisations for regional activities. In the three years in which this system was in operation, much higher contributions

than in the first period were raised (about 51,100,000 altogether), but the tasks of financing regional activities had in the meantime increased in such a gigantic way that a new system had again to be sought.

The financial system which was then established, the International Solidarity Fund, however, owed its origin to events which were extraneous to the development tasks, namely, to the Poznan uprising and the Hungarian revolution of 1956. It was in connection with the solidarity action which was undertaken in favour of the fighting or refugee Polish and Hungarian workers that the Executive Board decided to establish an International Solidarity Fund, in the first place with the purpose of providing assistance to workers who fall victim to repression from dictatorships and colonial regimes, from hostile governments and employers; but in effect the Fund which was formally established by the Fifth World Congress (Tunis, July 1957) soon found its chief function to be that of financing all those activities in developing areas which have been described above, that is, the trade union colleges and the other educational activities in the developing countries, the regional organisations, the direct assistance for the development of free trade unions as well as the expenses of the ICFTU representatives in these areas. It was also decided that parallel regional activities of International Trade Secretariats should likewise be partly financed by the International Solidarity Fund. It was understood that in order to tackle these enormous tasks the rate of contributions would have to be raised far higher than in the preceding years. Thus in the period which embraced the calendar years 1957 to 1964 a total of about \$12.6 million was contributed.

The immense drive which took place from about 1957 onwards has ensured that in practically all developing countries the concept of free trade unionism is clearly understood at all levels of the leadership. The roots of free trade unions have been firmly implanted. In many countries the organisations have flourished; setbacks in others can only be of a temporary nature. The first big effort has been followed up by activities put on a long-term basis, geared to the idea that trade unions will grow as the countries develop economically and accordingly taking into account the rate of financing which the well-established trade union centres can sustain over a prolonged period.

(b) The liberation struggle

Development, as the ICFTU understood it, meant, however, not only development of free trade unions, but development of

the countries and peoples in which free trade unions arose. Development in this sense was to be a political, economic and social concept. When the ICFTU was founded, the vast African continent was for the most part under European domination; so were Malaya and Singapore in Asia, Malta and Cyprus in Europe, and Guyana and the Caribbean islands in the Western Hemisphere. Thus the free trade unions which developed in these countries were still subject to governments outside of their own countries and to legislations which had been imposed on them by metropolitan governments. Emancipation from colonial subjugation, achievement of complete independence were the supreme goals to which the trade unions of these countries aspired. And this was, certainly not by coincidence, also one of the fundamental goals of the ICFTU from its inception.

The ICFTU accordingly did everything in its power to support the free trade unions of the colonies and of other dependent countries in their national liberation struggle. In the critical period in which the fight for national independence became acute in most of these countries, that is roughly in the decade from 1952 to 1962, there was not one ICFTU Congress which did not emphatically support the right of the colonies to self-determination and the duty of the metropolitan countries to undertake rapidly all measures for the implementation of this right. At the same time, in those dependent countries in which free trade unions existed and participated in the liberation struggle, the ICFTU vigorously supported them in their fight. The most memorable examples are the massive support which the ICFTU gave to the Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan trade unions in their heroic freedom fight, to the trade unions of former British East Africa and to those in Cyprus and in Aden. It was a matter of deep satisfaction to the international free trade union movement that in all these cases the fight ended with full victory, although in some cases only at the price of precious lives, imprisonments and tortures. The international free trade union movement will never forget the foul murder of Farhat Hached, General Secretary of the UGTT (Tunisia) and substitute member in the ICFTU Executive Board, on 5 December 1952 and the death in prison under suspicious circumstances of Aissat Idir, General Secretary of the UGTA (Algeria) on 26 July 1959.

The fight for national independence and freedom is not yet over. It is still being waged in the vast Portuguese colonies and, in another form, as a fight against racial oppression and servitude, in the Republic of South Africa and in Rhodesia. As long as there are countries in the world in which peoples are

subject to foreign rule, the international free trade union movement will support their liberation struggles.

(c) **Assisting economic growth of developing countries**

If in the first phase of the ICFTU's history recovery from the war was the main preoccupation, the second phase was dominated by the overriding problem of finding effective ways and means for freeing the economically underdeveloped countries from misery and starvation and for starting to close the gap between the production and income levels of this group of countries and those in the economically advanced regions.

The position which the international free trade union movement was bound to take towards the solution of this problem was clear from the outset. As the development problems of the economically underdeveloped countries cannot be solved on national levels alone, but call for the most intensive cooperation of the international economic community as a whole, the role of the ICFTU has been to help create a general understanding of the absolute necessity for this cooperation; to indicate the most effective ways and means of making it a reality; to have the entire free trade union community accept its position; and to propagate its views in all international forums.

Concretely speaking, the ICFTU realised that the goal of rapid economic development cannot be achieved by a magic formula, but requires simultaneous international cooperation in all economic fields. The ICFTU was from its earliest stages aware of the pressing need for financial development aid on the largest possible scale to economically underdeveloped areas of the world. The meeting of March 1953 of the Emergency Committee of the Executive Board appealed to the United Nations family and to the peoples and governments of all the countries of the world « to make the most strenuous and determined efforts to accelerate the pace of development of the economically underdeveloped countries ». The appeal was the leitmotiv for all further ICFTU action in this field.

A new stage was reached when the world economy as a whole was hit by a sharp recession in the years 1957 and 1958, characterised by a decline in industrial production and world trade. While this depression made itself felt in the economically advanced countries in a disturbing rise in unemployment, the situation became disastrous for the developing countries, as the demand for their primary products declined in the industrial countries. As a result, prices of primary commodities, which had already been lagging behind prices of industrial goods,

dropped sharply. This ominous chain of events meant not only privation for the producers of primary commodities, affecting mainly the workers involved, but also a halt in economic development, which depended on foreign exchange earnings.

In this serious situation the Executive Board meeting of July 1958 proposed a world economic conference of all free governments to tackle, by united and cooperative action, the pressing problems of the day. As, however, there was a lack of response to this proposal, the following meeting of the Executive Board in November 1958, decided to convene a World Economic Conference of Free Trade Unions.

The World Economic Conference of Free Trade Unions, which met in Geneva in March 1959 and which was attended by representatives of affiliated organisations both in economically advanced and developing countries, of International Trade Secretariats, of United Nations bodies, of GATT and of interested governments, constituted a milestone both in ICFTU action in the economic field and in its repercussions on the world as a whole. In a twenty-point Statement on World Economic Problems, the Conference outlined a programme of action on national and international levels. One proposal immediately caught the imagination of the whole world and subsequently was elevated to the rank of an established principle in the relations between economically advanced and developing countries. The Conference urged the wealthier countries « to increase substantially their financial assistance to the development of economically underdeveloped countries and to regard one per cent of their national income as an indispensable minimum contribution for this purpose ».

The establishment of a link between development aid and national incomes in economically advanced countries (which was later modified by taking the gross national product as a basis) struck world opinion as a reasonable and logical principle. It meant in the first place implicitly that the free trade unions of the « wealthier countries », agreed that they would consider an expenditure of at least one per cent of the national incomes of their own countries as a reasonable contribution to the economic and social development of the developing countries. What was further implied in this proposal was that as the workers of the economically advanced countries, who after all constitute the bulk of the tax payers in these countries, were ready to accept this contribution, there should be no obstacle to adopting the one percent principle as a target for all industrial countries.

This reasoning actually carried the day, to the extent at least that it was accepted by the United Nations family. As early as July 1961 the United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld - a few weeks before his tragic death - in an address to the UN Economic and Social Council stated « that an annual contribution of one per cent of the national product of industrial nations for financial assistance to developing countries had now been generally recognised as desirable and necessary ». While in most economically advanced countries the actual amounts of development aid have fallen short of the one per cent target, public opinion in these countries has at least become conscious of the shortcomings and the development aid target is there to be reached.

The developing countries are producers of agricultural and other primary commodities (such as minerals), and while economic development under favourable conditions means a measure of industrialisation, their chief economic interest still lies in propitious conditions for the prices and markets of primary commodities. Unfortunately, however, the markets of primary products have, as long as they are left to themselves, always been characterised by extreme fluctuations in prices which adversely affect the whole economy of these countries. Experience has shown that these price fluctuations can be substantially reduced if the chief producer and consumer countries for particular primary commodities conclude international agreements on the stabilisation of the markets for these products. Agreements of this kind may contain provisions for minimum and maximum prices, for quantities to be marketed, and in some cases even for joint buffer stocks. Unfortunately international commodity agreements have so far been concluded only for an extremely limited number of primary products - such as wheat, sugar, and coffee -, in spite of continuous efforts by United Nations bodies and particularly by the FAO and UNCTAD in their favour.

The ICFTU gave from the outset much attention to the need for introducing this stabilising factor into the economy of developing countries. The position of the international free trade union movement - in this case the ICFTU and the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers, with which there has always been the closest consultation and cooperation - was first clearly stated by the Third World Congress. Subsequently the demand for the conclusion of international commodity agreements figured in a number of resolutions and statements adopted by the governing bodies of the ICFTU. The views of the ICFTU on this subject were greatly

expanded in the Guide Lines for the free trade union position in the United Nations trade and development machinery.

Export difficulties, however, are only one of the problems besetting agriculture in developing countries. Another is the generally very low productivity of labour, largely due to lack of financial resources and technological knowledge, but certainly aggravated by the existence of feudal or semi-feudal systems of land ownership and management in a number of economically underdeveloped countries. These systems not only block agricultural development, but are socially oppressive, frequently holding the workers on the land in a status of near-servitude.

While the problem of financial resources and of technological education is part and parcel of the general problem of financing economic and social development, that of the system of land ownership and management is to a large extent a political and social problem. What is needed for structural changes on the land is a bold and comprehensive land reform, which cannot be carried out by economic means only, but requires political decisions at the highest level, usually in the form of systematic legislation accompanied by effective means of enforcement and of financial assistance to the new land owners.

The Second World Congress, in its Resolution on the Development of Economically Underdeveloped Countries, called for thorough land reform as a prerequisite for the development of these areas. Later ICFTU Congresses repeated this appeal, and no opportunities were missed in presentations to United Nations bodies and the FAO to demonstrate the interest of the free trade unions in this eminently important problem. Serious efforts have subsequently been made in a number of developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa to carry out systems of agrarian reform. In this situation it was felt important to obtain information on the progress of these projects, but also on the position the free trade unions of the countries concerned were taking. The ICFTU Executive Board at its meeting of March 1964 decided to undertake, jointly with the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers, a survey on this subject. The two internationals, through questionnaires sent to their affiliated organisations concerned, secured valuable information which showed that the need for land reform was generally recognised, that in effect land reform projects were already in the process of being prepared or adopted, but that there were still tremendous obstacles to a speedy and effective implementation of these projects, partly of a political, partly of a financial and technical nature.

Experience in many countries shows that if land reform is to be effective and to lead to increased agricultural production and productivity it requires public funds which cannot be built up without international aid. Another point stressed in many answers is the need to help agricultural workers to acquire land of their own, and on the other hand to protect the social interests of those who remain wage earners. The views of the two internationals and of their interested affiliates were subsequently brought to the attention of the International Labour Organisation which had placed agrarian reform on the agenda of the International Labour Conference of 1965.

Hunger and malnutrition, which are still the lot of a large part of the world's population, cannot be overcome simply by turning over to starving people surplus food available in other parts of the world. The eradication of hunger and undernourishment is a problem which ultimately can be solved only by economic development and by systems of social justice which would secure a minimum income to everybody. The fight against hunger is one of the aspects - certainly the most outstanding one - of the effort which must be made for rapid economic development.

The ICFTU has frequently appealed for international action to ease food shortages and for the establishment of food reserves. Moreover, as soon as the FAO organised systematic action for tackling the problem of food supplies, the ICFTU actively supported these efforts, particularly the organisation of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign and the establishment of a World Food Programme.

It has long been recognised, however, that financial and technical assistance from the economically advanced countries is in itself not sufficient to ensure a satisfactory pace of growth in the third world. At certain periods the total amount of financial aid received by developing countries has been more than swallowed up by trade losses they suffered at the same time because the prices they were paid for their exports in primary products dropped while they had to pay as much as before, or even more, for the industrial products they imported.

A satisfactory pace of economic development can be reached only if, in addition to financial assistance, trade relations between the two groups of countries are established in such a way that exports from developing to advanced countries are substantially facilitated and encouraged.

The ICFTU has been giving increasing attention to the grave export problems of developing countries. As the bulk of these

exports consists of primary products, the principal concern of the ICFTU in the field of trade relations between developing and industrial countries has been that of stabilising the markets and prices of this group of commodities. To the extent, however, that economic progress consists in the development of manufacturing industries, trade problems arise also in the sector of trade in industrial products. This holds true in the first place for such manufacturing industries in developing countries as could become competitive on the world markets if import duties on such products were lowered in industrial countries, as well as for industries which process primary commodities; this second category of industries is hampered in its development in all those cases in which the importing countries' import duties on processed products are higher than on the primary commodities from which they are processed.

The more certain countries in the developing world have reached the stage of incipient industrialisation, the more they have found their development in the industrial sector impeded by trade barriers which exist in industrial countries against imports of these two categories of manufactured goods. The ICFTU dealt with this problem at the World Economic Conference of Free Trade Unions in June 1959. The Conference was aware that the industrial export interests of developing countries require particular measures which go beyond the general need for the liberalisation of world trade. The Conference, therefore, urged governments, in cooperating and reducing tariffs and other barriers to international trade, to give due consideration to the development needs of economically underdeveloped countries. In the years following, the ICFTU investigated this problem thoroughly from the viewpoints both of the exporting developing countries and of the importing industrial countries. In doing so, the ICFTU was aware that increasing imports of manufactured goods from developing into industrial countries may create serious problems for the workers in industrial countries who are employed in industries which may suffer from such imports.

As a result of these investigations the Executive Board, at its meeting of October 1961, adopted a Statement on International Trade Problems, in which it appealed to the trade unions in industrial countries to view the competition on the world markets of industries of developing countries « in its perspective as an inevitable consequence of the industrialisation in the developing countries and to seek to meet this long-range problem, by pressing their governments to adopt appropriate internal policies (including maintaining high levels

of demand generally and taking special measures to assist depressed areas, to compensate displaced workers, and to retrain workers for new jobs) rather than resorting to protectionist measures ». The statement fully recognised the need for « the progressive expansion of the exports - both of manufactured goods and of primary commodities - of the developing countries, but at the same time the need for avoiding sudden disruptions of the established markets of importing countries with their consequent adverse effects on employment and labour conditions ». The Seventh World Congress reaffirmed the position which the Executive Board had taken and emphasized « that the industrial countries should take steps to provide increased access for imports of manufactured and semi-processed goods from developing countries ».

Again the position on international trade which the ICFTU had taken in the resolutions adopted by its governing bodies became a milestone for the treatment of this problem in the world community of nations. This became obvious when the United Nations General Assembly at the end of 1962 decided to convene a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. It was clear from the outset that this conference would mainly deal with precisely those aspects of the development problems which had moved into the centre of the ICFTU's preoccupations: the problems of trade between the developing and advanced countries. The ICFTU Executive Board, therefore, welcomed the decision of the United Nations to call such a conference. The ICFTU had all the more reason for satisfaction as it had urged this step since 1958.

The ICFTU intensified its own work in this field with a view to presenting to the United Nations bodies a thorough and systematic free trade union programme on these vital problems. Even before the United Nations had agreed to convene a conference on trade and development, the ICFTU Executive Board, at its meeting of October 1961, decided to establish a Committee on International Trade Questions, which was charged with studying the problems of international trade, particularly with the need in mind for progressively expanding exports - both of manufactured goods and of primary commodities - of developing countries and for propagating measures for adjustment in industrial countries to this expanding trade.

The ICFTU was thus well prepared for cooperating with the incipient United Nations trade and development machinery. A very comprehensive and systematic memorandum analysing the chief problems in this field, presenting the views of the free trade unions on these problems and containing concrete propo-

sals for their solution was submitted to the United Nations Conference on Trade Development, which was held in Geneva, from March to June 1963. In addition, a strong ICFTU/ITS delegation submitted to the Conference a number of oral statements. Impressed, no doubt, by this intensive cooperation of the international free trade union movement the Conference agreed that non-governmental organisations concerned with matters of trade and development should be permitted to participate in the deliberations of the United Nations Trade and Development Board, which was to continue the work of the Conference, and of its subsidiary bodies.

As a next step the ICFTU Committee on International Trade Questions, at a meeting in October 1963, prepared « Guide Lines for the free trade union position in the United Nations trade and development machinery ». The Guide Lines systematically analysed the trade relations between industrial and developing countries as well as those among developing countries and showed the way for a thorough reform of these relations. An essential part of such a reform would be not only the expansion of international commodity agreements and the conclusion of agreements covering groups of interrelated products, as well as the lowering of trade barriers for processed goods, but also the granting of preferential treatment for imports of manufactured goods from developing into industrial countries.

At successive meetings of the Committee the Guide Lines for the free trade union position in the United Nations trade and development machinery were thoroughly revised and greatly expanded with a view to dealing systematically with new situations and problems which moved into the foreground of international attention and activities. It was on the basis of these documents that the ICFTU participated in all sessions of the United Nations Trade and Development Board and of most of its subsidiary bodies and, through a strong delegation, submitted and discussed a very comprehensive memorandum to the Second United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (New Delhi, February to May 1968).

3. The third stage: Facing new problems in developing and industrial countries

The division of the world, economically and socially, into advanced and underdeveloped countries has the most striking consequences and has deeply penetrated the consciousness - and conscience - of world public opinion. This situation constitutes a tremendous challenge and calls for determined

action with a view to fostering economic development and social progress and narrowing down the economic and social gap between the two groups of countries. That the international free trade union movement has always been in the vanguard of the forces which have taken up this challenge has been shown in the preceding parts of this survey.

In this context, new and important problems have come to the fore. One of the most burning is the role of the trade unions in newly independent developing countries and the contribution they can make to the economic and social development of their societies. There is no denying that in this connection a deplorable tendency has made itself felt in certain - by no means all - newly independent developing countries towards the curtailment and even suppression of trade union rights. Only in this way, we are told, can the entire national effort be concentrated on the paramount objective of rapid economic development.

Time and time again, the ICFTU has stated that it understood the preoccupation of these governments with development problems and applauded their determination to overcome them. But we emphatically assert that they are disastrously mistaken if they suppose that a free trade union movement is inconsistent with this aim. The exact opposite is true. Whenever they have been given the chance, the unions have shown themselves able and willing to make a constructive contribution to development. The cooperation of organised labour, freely given, can provide the main impetus of a purposeful development effort, whereas a puppet trade union movement which does not enjoy the workers' confidence can act only as a dead weight.

Some of these governments have also curtailed trade union rights by exerting pressure on the unions to disaffiliate from the international movement. The reason generally invoked is the need to observe a policy of non-alignment, the implication being that affiliation with the ICFTU is tantamount to alignment with one of the great power blocs. To this we would reply three things. First, we have constantly proved by our actions that the ICFTU is genuinely independent of all power blocs. Second, to deny trade unions the right to affiliate with international organisations is a flagrant violation of ILO Convention N° 87. Third, we strongly suspect that the real motive of the governments concerned is to isolate and weaken the trade unions by depriving them of international support and solidarity.

Happily these attitudes are not prevalent in all developing countries. There are not a few of such countries where trade

union rights are respected and whose governments appear to recognise that only if the unions enjoy full autonomy and freedom will they be able to command the allegiance of their members and rally them voluntarily behind the national effort. The respect of trade union rights has not in their experience hampered economic or social development any more than the affiliation to the ICFTU has embroiled them in the cold war. The ICFTU sincerely hopes that their example will not be lost on other, more authoritarian governments which, faced with identical problems, have taken the easy, and more timid way out.

a) The role of trade unions in developing countries

In all countries trade unions have been organised in order to protect and promote the immediate material interests of their members as dependent workers. Everywhere they have realised also that these interests are closely connected with the well-being and progress of the community as a whole. It came as a matter of course that the unions have expanded their activities into participation of one kind or another in the economic, social and political life of their countries.

However, while in the older industrial countries there has been a gradual evolution of these functions, in the developing countries the need for this development has been immediate: trade unions in developing countries quickly had to fulfil this double function of fighting for the raising of the living standards of the workers whom they represent, and of participating actively in the economic development efforts of these countries.

There can be no doubt that between these two functions conflicts can and will from time to time arise. They are in effect part of those conflicts which are unavoidable in human society. If, however, governments in order to prevent such conflicts or under the pretext of preventing them, resort to taking control of the unions or transforming them into their own instruments of government, they destroy a social force which is vital for the economic, social and political development of modern society.

This is best illustrated by the direct contribution trade unions can make to economic and social development. The potential of trade unions is not confined to their participation in the deliberations of economic planning boards and other economic and social institutions on the national, regional and local levels. In many developing countries trade unions have

spontaneously felt the need for direct and concrete action on their part in nation-building in the economic and social sphere. They have given form to this action by founding or promoting cooperatives, housing projects, vocational training, etc., giving tangible proof of their efforts to combine the immediate interests of their members with the needs of the community as a whole.

The international free trade union movement, aware of the importance of these functions of the trade unions in developing countries, has assisted them in performing these signal services for the benefit of the economic and social development efforts of their country. Thus the Executive Board at its meeting of July 1965 set up a Working Group on Cooperatives, Vocational Training and other forms of Social Action as a counterpart to work being done for, and in cooperation with, free trade unions in developing countries by affiliated organisations, International Trade Secretariats and other organisations cooperating with the free trade unions in various countries. It was increasingly felt that factual information, coordination and cooperation was needed and that the ICFTU should take the initiative in bringing about coordination of this kind.

It was agreed that the efforts should be concentrated on specific concrete projects, and, as the first major project, a programme was agreed upon, designed to assist the Indonesian trade unions in the gigantic work of development. The ICFTU, in cooperation with certain affiliates, ITS, the International Cooperative Alliance and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and with the collaboration of all affiliated, and also non-affiliated Indonesian trade unions, has set up a long-term coordinated programme. Trade union training plays a great part in this programme. With the agreement of all participating organisations the ICFTU has appointed a programme coordinator charged with the coordinating work in Indonesia.

The double function of the trade unions in the developing countries has found a logical reflection in the activities of the international free trade union movement which, in addition to its perennial role, is undertaking actions designed to meet the urgent needs of the peoples of the developing countries engaged in the tremendous tasks of nation-building.

b) International cooperation for economic and social development

While the imperative need for economic and social development of the developing countries is universally recognised, what

is perhaps less deeply rooted in the general mind is the fact that the prospects for progress in the developing countries are closely connected with the existence of a sound, solid and dynamic equilibrium in the economies of the developed countries. It is a sad and paradoxical fact that economic disturbances in the economically advanced countries are more strongly felt in the developing than in the industrial countries themselves.

In the last few years the industrial world has unfortunately experienced several situations in which its dynamic equilibrium has been severely disturbed in one way or another. Economic recessions together with unusually high rates of unemployment, problems of adjustment of industrial structures, disturbances in the balance of payment of leading industrial countries, devaluations of currencies, grave monetary crises have made themselves felt with very adverse economic repercussions in many parts of the world. It was therefore logical that the ICFTU, without in any way diminishing its activities in the developing countries, should devote increasing attention to problems which are also of concern to the industrial countries. In addition, the rapid expansion of multi-national companies with the consequent concentration of decision-making affecting workers beyond national frontiers must be met by corresponding actions on the part of the international free trade union movement.

The most striking source of economic disturbances in the last few years has been a series of world monetary crises. While these monetary disturbances have obviously been made worse by unscrupulous speculators, they have been primarily due to the fact that the international monetary system is not flexible enough and is too short in monetary reserves to adjust itself smoothly to the fast growing world economy and to its monetary requirements.

In this highly unsatisfactory situation the international free trade union movement raised its voice again. The Executive Board of the ICFTU, through its Sub-Committee on Trade and Development, at its meeting of March 1966 adopted a resolution on international monetary reform which, for the first time in the deliberations of international bodies analysed the reasons for the failings of the existing international monetary system, stated the need for reforming it and formulated the objectives of such a reform. The resolution showed that the existing system fails to assist in overcoming difficulties which countries experience with their balance of payments from time to time, and to that extent is in part responsible for deflationary policies to which governments often resort in such situations and which in turn impede economic growth and bring about unemployment. The

resolution further stated that the existing monetary reserves are not sufficient for the needs of a growing world economy; they are, moreover, too unevenly distributed throughout the world, and in particular the monetary reserves of the developing countries are too small, thus making these countries unduly vulnerable. The aim of the monetary reform should be to create sufficient international liquidity with a view to facilitating economic growth in all countries, helping prevent balance of payment crises, assisting in preventing deflationary policies, and distributing monetary reserves more evenly throughout the world. Another important point which the resolution made was that the developing countries - which had been completely cut off from the official deliberations of the major economic powers about monetary reform - should be given an opportunity to participate in the elaboration of the reform and in the management of any reformed system which might be agreed upon.

It was not until 1967 that the international Monetary Fund was in a position to agree on a reform which consisted in the creation of special drawing rights which in case of need would increase the international monetary reserves and thus enlarge international liquidity. The decision of the International Monetary Fund was a move in the direction which the ICFTU had indicated. The ICFTU Executive Board expressed satisfaction at the decision of the International Monetary Fund, but termed it « a first modest step towards a thorough international monetary reform ».

Even this modest improvement of international monetary arrangements has unfortunately not yet been implemented, and the monetary crises which shook the world in the autumn of 1968 had again to be overcome with ad hoc measures based on existing instrumentalities. The newly appointed Economic and Social Committee of the ICFTU therefore established a working group on international monetary questions, which, at its first meeting in January 1969, reemphasised the need for enlarged international liquidity, expanding international trade, and opposition to deflationary and protectionist policies. The working group, which decided to keep the question of international monetary arrangements under constant review, pointed out, in particular, that strengthened and improved international monetary cooperation must be an integrated part of a global strategy for economic and social development.

Another major concern of the ICFTU in the field of world economy was the need for liberalisation of international trade. From its beginnings, the ICFTU had advocated such a develop-

ment. « We reject the narrow nationalism which leads to the protection of national markets by high tariff walls and other trade restrictions », declared the ICFTU Founding Congress in its Declaration of Economic and Social Demands.

When the United States Congress, in October 1962, authorised the President to reduce or eliminate tariffs on a wide range of imported products, the ICFTU immediately welcomed this initiative and also the fact that the law contained a provision for adjustment measures in case of hardships brought about by increased competition from imported goods. Thus the international negotiations about tariff reductions - through GATT - were opened, which became known as the Kennedy Round.

From the viewpoint of trade liberalisation between industrial countries, the results of the Kennedy Round negotiations, which lasted years before an overall agreement was reached in June 1967, were generally satisfactory. For a great number of products, import duties were indeed substantially lowered although only gradually, within a five-year period of grace. The Executive Board at its meeting of October 1967 welcomed what it termed the positive aspects of the Kennedy Round agreement, « the results of which should facilitate international trade and should favour a rational distribution of production and economic expansion ». There were, however, also negative aspects of the agreement: they concerned the participation of the developing countries in its benefits. It turned out that most of the tariff concessions which were made in the Kennedy Round agreement concerned products in the exports of which industrial countries were mainly interested, while but little progress had been made in the liberalisation of trade in products exported by the developing countries. Moreover, the five-year period of grace meant that in a period which was of particular importance for economic growth in developing countries, the benefits resulting from the Kennedy Round agreement would be very small. The Executive Board regretted these negative aspects of the Kennedy Round agreement and appealed to the Contracting Parties of GATT to resume and speed up negotiations about problems concerning trade between industrial and developing countries. Unfortunately very little, if any, progress has so far been made in the implementation of the promise of the Contracting Parties to proceed with such negotiations.

In the field of trade and development the ICFTU played a major role in shaping the UNCTAD - the UN specialised body to deal with this problem. The ICFTU also elaborated comprehensive guide-lines for free trade union policies on the question of trade and development.

During the post-war years a structural and institutional phenomenon has developed in the world economy, whose magnitude and consequences in the economic and social order are just beginning to be measured. This phenomenon is the development of integrated production of goods and services at international level. The instrument of this integration is the highly-diversified worldwide corporation.

The danger represented by these firms rests not so much on their turnover and the size of their share capital, as on the fact that, being domiciled in several countries, they are in a position to switch their production fairly easily from one country to another. This gives them a very strong bargaining position vis-a-vis both governments and trade unions and a power which, if unchecked, enables them to resist, and indeed to break, any national trade union action. More than once, workers' international solidarity, mobilised at short notice, has, in fact, successfully prevented multinational firms from abusing their powers; in the long run, however, it is clearly more in the workers' interest to create machinery for ensuring permanent cooperation between all national unions concerned.

If the workers are to be able to deal with such firms on anything like an equal footing, unions working in quite different fields and thus affiliated to different international trade secretariats, must coordinate their action: the problem thus concerns no longer merely the international trade secretariats but the international trade union movement as a whole. To start with, a thorough and systematic study of the whole range of phenomena comprising industrial concentration, multinational corporations and international conglomerates is needed, in order to clarify the trade union movement's conceptions of, and attitude to, one of the most challenging developments of our time.

The international free trade union movement has started to meet this challenge. Some International Trade Secretariats have already established world-wide trade union councils to examine labour and general policies of multi-national companies. The role of the ICFTU in this connection will be a coordinating one - the actual activities being carried out by the respective International Trade Secretariats. In addition, the ICFTU has to make sure that the hitherto uncontrolled power of these multinational companies is not used to restrict basic trade union rights, such as the right to collective bargaining or the right to strike.

c) Housing problems

Aside from adequate nutrition, decent housing is the most basic human material need. But while the food problem is of vital importance for the developing countries, the housing problem has plagued both the economically advanced and the developing countries. The first postwar years were characterised by an acute housing shortage in Europe, due to war destruction and the interruption of building construction during the war years. It was in this critical situation that the European Regional Organisation of the ICFTU, jointly with the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers, established a Committee on Housing, whose task it was to find the most appropriate ways and means of accelerating housing construction and in improving housing standards. The Committee actively cooperated with affiliated organisations in this field, in pressing for a solution of the housing problem in the framework of international organisations, in investigating housing needs, and in publicising the results of its studies.

However, while the acute postwar housing shortage was indeed eased - partly as a result of direct housing activities of trade unions and of cooperatives with which they were connected -, it became obvious that the housing problem as such was not a postwar problem only, but an urbanisation problem of a long-range character. This holds true for the world as a whole. The alarming growth of shanty towns is one of the features of this crisis.

The ICFTU, therefore, studied housing problems at the international level. It pressed for action on the United Nations level. The World Economic Conference of Free Trade Unions requested the United Nations to establish a special agency for housing. This proposal was seriously considered by United Nations bodies and, by way of compromise, the UN Economic and Social Council decided in 1962 to set up a Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, in the deliberations of which the ICFTU has fully participated.

In the meantime, the ICFTU undertook a survey of world housing conditions and requirements which was submitted to the Executive Board at its meeting of March 1964. This report confirmed the grave housing problems both in economically advanced and developing countries and the urgent need for action on the part of intergovernmental organisations, governments, cooperatives and trade unions. The Executive Board therefore decided to convene, jointly with the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers, a World Conference

on « Housing for the Millions ». This Conference met in Brussels in October 1964 and adopted a Statement on International Activities for Housing and Planning. The Statement made concrete proposals for coping with the housing shortages, particularly through the securing of adequate funds from international and regional sources for intensified social housing activities, for measures for the acquisition of land reserves for housing, and for subsidising residential construction. The Conference also proposed that the ICFTU and the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers established an International Housing Committee.

The executive bodies of the two internationals immediately approved this proposal and set up a joint ICFTU, IFBWW International Housing Committee. This Committee met for the first time in April 1965, set to work at once and in the short time of its existence so far has been dealing in a very systematic and thorough way with many aspects of the housing problem. With the cooperation of affiliated organisations of the two sponsoring internationals it made investigations, submitted reports, and adopted statements on problems of acquisition of land for housing, of rent policy, and of the financing of housing. These statements, which were approved by the executive bodies of the two sponsoring organisations, and the reports accompanying them, constitute the guide lines for the activities of trade union bodies in this field. The reports on the acquisition of land for housing, on problems of rent control and on the financing of housing were published by the two internationals.

d) Rights of working women

In most countries women have succeeded in achieving political franchise only to discover that equality in this field does not suffice to break through the wall of inequalities and discrimination which age old traditions of human society have built in the economic, social and educational spheres of life. More often than not wages and salaries are lower for women than for men, access to higher-paid jobs is blocked, educational opportunities are restricted. For trade unions, which all along the line fight for the elimination of discrimination, in which men and women, as comrades in arms, jointly struggle for the improvement of their lot, the inferior status of women is intolerable. The ICFTU has from its inception claimed equality for the two sexes.

Systematic work on the problems of women workers was undertaken in an early stage of ICFTU activities. Upon the recommendation of an international summer school for women

trade unionists which the ICFTU organised in La Brevière (France) in 1953, the Executive Board at its meeting of May 1955 decided to set up, in cooperation with the International Trade Secretariats, a joint ICFTU/ITS Preparatory Committee on Women Workers' Questions.

On the basis of the thorough preparatory work of this Committee the ICFTU/ITS Committee on Women Workers' Questions was established in 1957. The Committee, assisted by the Women's Section of the ICFTU Secretariat, has engaged in intensive work on the problems of women workers, by way of analyses of their conditions, the preparation of reports and proposals to United Nations and ILO bodies as well as to governing bodies of the ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats, the submission of draft resolutions and the preparation of the Charter on the Rights of Working Women. In addition, the Women's Section of the ICFTU Secretariat organised and directed a great number of training courses and seminars for women workers in various regions. Moreover, fundamental problems of women workers were discussed by the Eighth World Congress of the ICFTU, as a special item on its agenda, as well as by three World Conferences on Women Workers' Problems which were held between 1963 and 1968. The work which was done both by the ICFTU/ITS Committee on Women Workers' Questions and by the World Conferences on Women Workers' Problems was crystallised in a number of resolutions on problems of vital concern to the working and in the Charter of Rights of Working Women which was adopted by the Eighth World Congress.

This document, which deserves to be classified as one of the fundamental proclamations of human rights, lays down the basic rights of the working woman: her right to join trade unions of her choice, her right to work, her right to full access to economic life, the right to unimpeded access to education and to vocational guidance and training, to full access to higher posts, to equal remuneration for work of equal value, to adequate maternity protection and to social and health protection, as well as the right to be protected through social services and facilities in her capacity as a worker with family responsibilities.

It should be further noted that on various occasions, particularly at the Eighth World Congress and in the Third Conference on Women Workers' Problems, the place and role of women in the unions was thoroughly discussed. The Eighth World Congress, in addition to the Charter of the Rights of Working Women, adopted a Statement on the Free Trade Unions and

Women Workers insisting that the organisation of women workers should be one of the permanent objectives of the trade union movement and that women trade unionists should assume full responsibility within the trade unions and be given adequate representation in trade union bodies. The Third World Conference on Women Workers' Problems (Düsseldorf, September-October 1968) emphasised the need for full and effective integration of women in the life of the trade unions and their participation, as a matter of right, in political, economic and trade union decisions.

If the ICFTU's activities were characterised by a steady expansion into new economically and socially developing worlds, they developed at the same time also in depth and intensity. The concerns of women workers are one of those fields in which the international free trade union movement felt that intensification of its activities was called for, for the reason that the women workers, who constitute so essential a part of the working population, are faced with vital problems of their own, in addition to those which they share with their male fellow workers.

e) Rights of the working youth

The young workers constitute another sector of the working population with vital problems of their own, and what the ICFTU has been doing on their behalf also belongs to the chapter of intensification of ICFTU activities. That does not mean that the ICFTU in its beginnings ignored or neglected these problems. On the contrary, as early as 1952 the ICFTU laid the basis for all its further youth work, by proclaiming in a Statement on the Problems of Youth, adopted by the ICFTU General Council meeting of July 1952, in a succinct but comprehensive form the fundamental principles of protection to which the young workers are entitled. The statement dealt in the first place with education at elementary and secondary levels, vocational training and guidance, employment conditions and wages - insisting on the principle of equal wages for equal work - and holidays with pay. It called not only on the United Nations family, particularly UNESCO and ILO, and on governments to implement these principles, but also invited the affiliated organisations to give careful consideration to the protection of young workers in the spirit of the principles which it proclaimed.

Due, however, to the fact that the institution of youth sections within trade unions was confined to several European countries,

direct ICFTU activities in this field were at first also limited to its European Regional Organisation. The European Regional Organisation organised a number of seminars for young workers and convened Youth Conferences in 1954 and 1961, which laid the ground work for trade union activities of and for young workers. In both conferences, youth programmes dealing with these activities were adopted.

In the meantime, a youth section was established within the ICFTU Secretariat and youth work was organised on an international scale. This was done first by holding three international seminars for young trade unionists in the years 1962 to 1964. Moreover, the ICFTU organised a World Youth Rally in Vienna in July 1963 which was attended by 4,500 young workers from 67 organisations in all regions of the world who camped in 1,380 tents and, with unprecedented enthusiasm, participated in all events which were organised, from round-table discussions to artistic and sport competitions and torch parades.

In connection with these intensified activities the ICFTU Executive Board at its meeting of March 1963 agreed to establish - in cooperation with the International Trade Secretariats - an ICFTU/ITS Advisory Committee on Youth Questions. It was this Committee which, through intense work, prepared the ICFTU Youth Charter adopted by the Eighth World Congress. In the same way as the Statement on the Problems of Youth, which had been adopted by the ICFTU General Council, the Charter laid particular emphasis on education and on vocational guidance and training. Thus it declared that « it must be possible for young people to attend schools of all kinds and to study at technical schools, schools for higher education and universities, irrespective of their social origins ». It is also significant for the progressive spirit in which the Charter was conceived that, in addition to establishing the principles of protection of young workers along the lines outlined by the General Council, it dealt with such problems as that of conscientious objectors and humane treatment of juvenile delinquents and the need to encourage their adaptation to society.

f) Education in the labour movement

Education - be it general, workers or vocational education - has always been high up on the list of priorities of the free trade union movement. In the preceding chapter an account has been given of the ICFTU activities in this domain, particu-

larly in the field of trade union training in developing countries. However, after the many years of expanding activity the need was felt for reassessing ICFTU educational programmes and policies. In effect, education is not static but in a state of constant development and requires from those engaged in it and from our movement as a whole the will to adapt to the changing needs and techniques of our time.

In response to this need, the ICFTU organised in Montreal (August 1967) the first World Conference on Education in the Labour Movement which constituted the free trade union movement's first attempt on a world scale to draw up a coordinated policy on education. The Conference was attended by 178 delegates and guests from virtually all regions of the world who divided in five working groups to formulate trade union views on the following subjects: general and vocational training; practical problems of trade union training; the educational activities of the UN specialised agencies and intergovernmental organisations; social and economic demands related to education (manpower planning, educational leave, social and economic incentives to promote continuing education, etc.).

Reasserting traditional labour insistence on the right to education, the Conference expounded the implications of this right and called upon trade unions to fight for the abolition of all restrictions on it, not only during childhood and youth but also throughout active adult life. The Conference also examined the role which education plays as a prerequisite of economic growth and technological, scientific and cultural progress. Special attention was given to educational planning and the Conference insisted that bodies responsible for manpower planning should coordinate their work with those in charge of educational planning, with trade unions fully participating in their work.

Other aspects of general educational policy on which the Conference expressed views were: the modernisation of the educational system; curricula and textbooks; illiteracy; continuing education with special stress on the need for paid educational leave not only for vocational but also for civic and social training; the status of teachers and their integration in the free trade union movement.

In a review of trade union training problems, the Conference drew particular attention to the need for involving certain sectors of the labour force - women, migrant workers, and other occupational groups - more actively in trade union action and for associating them with educational activities both as students and tutors.

On all these and other matters the Conference adopted a set of « Conclusions » which constitute a comprehensive declaration by the free trade unions of all countries on the role and rank of education in modern society.