

were therefore invited to participate in the Free World Labour Conference and in the Founding Congress of the ICFTU. (Fourteen of them in fact accepted this invitation). The Founding Congress embodied in the Constitution effective cooperation between the Confederation and the International Trade Secretariats. It provided for reciprocal representation of ICFTU and International Trade Secretariats in the governing bodies and for the conclusion of arrangements for mutual assistance in the field of trade union organising. This programme of cooperation between the Confederation and the International Trade Secretariats has been faithfully and systematically carried out, to the benefit of all free trade union organisations and particularly those in the economically developing areas.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF THE ICFTU

When the ICFTU started on its road towards uniting the free trade unions of the world under its banner, 69 trade union organisations and federations in 52 countries and « territories (as colonies and protectorates were called) with a membership of 48 million workers followed its call and affiliated with the Confederation. This was a surprisingly successful response, never before achieved by an international organisation assembled on a voluntary basis. To be sure, the large majority of membership came from the long-established trade unions of the economically advanced countries 'in Europe and North America; but while the affiliated organisations in these countries - and in the newly emerging industrial power, Japan - counted more than 38 million members, a further 10 million members came from the countries in the economically underdeveloped parts of the world. This was a very encouraging beginning; but, thanks to the organising and educational efforts among the unorganised or poorly organised masses of workers in many developing areas, dynamically and systematically assisted by the ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats, membership did not remain at that figure. When the latest ICFTU Congress (Amsterdam, July 1965) reported on membership of affiliated organisations, it had grown to 58 1/4 million, with this growth occurring mainly in the developing sector. While in the economically advanced countries membership had increased only by 2 1/2 million from the end of 1949 to the end of 1964, it advanced by 7 3/4 million in the developing countries, corresponding to a growth rate of 80 per cent in the fifteen years which had elapsed between the First and the Eighth Congress.

The success would have been even more pronounced if at the time when trade unionism took root in the developing countries and international cooperation in this field became effective, the tendency had not arisen in a number of these countries to

restrict trade union rights or to place trade unions under government control. Thus there were instances where trade unions were banned outright - as in Thailand and in Nepal -, others where trade unions were forced by governments to disaffiliate from the ICFTU - as in Algeria and under the Nkrumah dictatorship in Ghana, and further instances in which « reorganisation » including disaffiliation from the ICFTU, was forced by governments upon the trade unions, as in Tanzania.

The growth of the ICFTU membership in the developing countries has nevertheless been spectacular. Disappointing as the pace of economic development has proved to be in large parts of the developing world, the time has been ripe for trade union organisation on a large scale in those regions and with dynamic assistance on the part of the ICFTU an explosive growth of trade unionism has been achieved.

CHAPTER III

THE ICFTU'S STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The most fundamental fight which free trade unionism has to wage all over the world is the fight for democracy and all other human rights. At the time when the ICFTU was founded, democracy had achieved great victories over dictatorial systems in some European countries, - Germany, Austria, Italy; colonial rule had broken down in vast regions of the world - in the first place in Asia; but over Eastern Europe communist rule had been imposed in the wake of the advance of Soviet troops and in giant China the communists had carried the day. At the same time the fascist regime in Spain - and a similar one in Portugal - had not yet shown any signs of weakening, while in many parts of Latin America military or fascist rule prevailed.

1. The fight against dictatorship

The ICFTU gave top priority to fighting the dictatorship systems wherever they existed and supporting democratic opposition to them. In the case of the communist regimes the ICFTU in the first place rejected their claim to be workers' regimes: it further denounced the claims of their so-called trade unions to be genuine trade unions and to represent the interests of the workers, independently of their governments. Moreover, whenever and wherever democratic forces rebelled against the tyrannical rule imposed upon them - in the uprising of the workers in East Berlin and other East German towns in June 1953; in the Polish uprising starting in Poznan in June 1956 — and in the democratic Hungarian revolution of October 1956 — the ICFTU expressed the warmest sympathies of the free trade unions of the world with these popular movements, forcefully