

The Third ICFTU World Congress, July 1953

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MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS of the Third World Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), held in Stockholm on July 4-11, 1953, were decisions to give affiliates from the underdeveloped areas a greater voice in operating the ICFTU and to put its organizational and educational programs on a permanent basis. These actions were somewhat overshadowed by the congress' rapid moves to assist the workers who had risen against the Communist authorities in East Berlin and Eastern Germany only a few weeks before the meeting. Nevertheless, they had important implications for the organization's future development, whereas the policy discussions were largely routine.

The congress did not take up any large new policy questions, for the most part merely reiterating or strengthening existing policies. Some delegates expressed the opinion, however, that the election to the ICFTU presidency of Omer Becu, general secretary of the powerful International Transportworkers' Federation (ITF) and widely reputed to be a "hard-hitting and practical trade unionist," might eventually result in a more dynamic policy. The presidential election reflected a "fight for position" in the ICFTU and pointed up once more existing differences of opinion between major affiliates. These differences led to frictions at the 1953 congress, as they had at earlier meetings, and occasioned charges by some groups that the outspoken United States delegation was dominating the conference. As numerous commentators have pointed out, however, such frictions are to be expected in a democratic

body, and the differences in viewpoint did not prevent the reaching of agreement on both policy and program.

ICFTU Membership

The congress' decisions reflected graphically the organization's growing maturity and increasingly broad base. In the 3½ years since its founding, the ICFTU has succeeded in establishing itself firmly as a permanent and influential body: its affiliations had risen from 67 organizations representing less than 48 million members in 53 countries in December 1949 to 102 organizations from 77 countries or territories claiming roughly 54 million members in mid-1953. Most of the affiliations since the July 1951 congress in Milan¹ have been small organizations from the underdeveloped areas, a fact which also testifies to the effectiveness of the international's expanding regional operations.

Membership from those areas continued to account for a relatively small proportion of total ICFTU membership, however, as shown in the table (p. 1061). Largest individual affiliates were the AFL, the CIO, and the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), followed by the German Trade Union Federation (DGB). The United States membership, with the United Mine Workers also included, represented over 25 percent of all ICFTU members, while the TUC accounted for 15 percent. Apart from the DGB, with over 10 percent of total claimed membership, no other affiliate had as much as 5 percent.

Congress Proceedings

Over 200 delegates and advisers attended the Stockholm conference, representing 69 affiliated organizations in 55 countries or territories with an aggregate membership of about 50 million. In addition, 18 of the 20 International Trade Secretariats (ITS) sent representatives, and observers were present from several nonaffiliated trade-union organizations, the International Center of Free Trade Unionists in Exile, and various international bodies.

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¹For a description of the Milan congress, see *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1951 (p. 265). A summary of the report of the general secretary of the ICFTU on its growth and operations during the 2 years following that congress will appear in the November 1953 *Monthly Labor Review*.

The United States delegation included both President George Meany of the American Federation of Labor and President Walter Reuther of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, as well as other prominent AFL and CIO representatives and two officials of the United Mine Workers. Several weeks before the congress convened, these three organizations announced a common position on world problems—which they would uphold at the Stockholm meeting. In line with this announcement, the United States delegates coordinated closely at the conference and maintained a unified position on all major issues.

The main conference work was done by committee, three special committees being set up in addition to the two standing committees.² The various agenda topics and reports were presented in the plenary sessions, and general views exchanged, but they were then referred to committee for full discussion and the drafting of resolutions. Most of the committee reports were delayed, with the result that virtually all of the resolutions were submitted to the full congress on its last day and the delegates largely accepted the committee recommendations as formulated. Only on one part of a resolution on economic development was unanimous agreement found impossible.

The limited time available for general debate on the resolutions was the subject of some criticism, however, largely from European delegates. Earlier international federations, predominantly European, relied more heavily on full-dress debate in plenary session to arrive at conference decisions than on the committee type of action so widely practiced in the United States. The fact that this was a "working" congress and took numerous actions to develop and effect an operational program also contrasted sharply with the policies of such previously established organizations, including the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The ICFTU leaders made little effort to capitalize on the congress for purely publicity purposes, whereas WFTU meetings frequently seem to be little more than propaganda mechanisms.

Policies and Programs

The congress is of course a policy-setting rather than an operational body, although in this instance

it did take some direct action on the East German situation. The delegates also elaborated the steps which the executive board was to take to expand the organization's educational program. Apart from this, however, the resolutions chiefly set forth the Confederation's position on a wide variety of issues and called on international agencies, individual governments, affiliated organizations, or the ICFTU executive board to implement these policies. The congress also approved specific actions taken by the ICFTU executive bodies and staff during the 2 years between congresses and adopted the financial and general secretary's reports.

Totalitarianism and National Independence. Early in the proceedings, two East German workers gave eye-witness accounts of the June uprisings in the Soviet-controlled sections of Germany. The United States delegates took the lead in calling for immediate action, both by the ICFTU and by the U. S. Government. A joint AFL-CIO cable to President Eisenhower urged that the United States take the initiative in aiding the East German workers, press for immediate negotiations for free elections in a united Germany, and submit to the United Nations a formal complaint of Soviet violations of human rights and freedom of association. (The President's cabled response, warmly applauded by ICFTU delegates, assured careful study of the proposals and commended the contributions of free trade unionism to the cause of freedom and justice.) This was followed by recommendations, made by both AFL and CIO representatives and promptly approved by the congress, that (1) the ICFTU send a special commission to Berlin to ascertain the facts concerning the worker demonstrations and to urge the United States, British, and French high commands there to press for release of the imprisoned workers and relaxation of oppressive practices, and (2) a special fund be raised to help these workers and their families (to which both the AFL and the CIO were prepared to make a sizable contribution). The commission—made up of one representative from each of the three Western nations involved—visited Berlin and returned in time to report to the delegates on the last day of the meeting; so

² These were on organization, finance, and constitution; economic, social, and political; regional activities, publicity, and education; credentials; and standing orders.

also did Mr. Reuther, who had previously been scheduled to visit the city at that time. On the basis of these and the eye-witness reports, the conference paid tribute to the East German workers and castigated the "captive" unions which supported the regime; it called for German unity on the basis of free elections throughout the country. All affiliates were urged to raise "moral and financial support" to back up the ICFTU's pledge of solidarity with the East German victims of Soviet tyranny, as well as to press their governments to demand the release of arrested German workers.

The congress also recommended that the executive board consider setting up funds and committees of inquiry for other regions where "the workers are struggling against their oppressors." A number of other strongly worded resolutions also dealt with these problems of human and trade-union rights. The "full respect of human rights" was stressed as basic to establishing the social justice necessary for peace. In this connection, the delegates insisted on "the right of democratic nations to strengthen their military defense in the face of aggression or threatened aggression," but hoped that aggression would be abandoned and supported certain specific steps toward peace, such as conclusion of an armistice in Korea and discontinuation of the supply of arms to Communist armies in Indochina.

While the main target of the various resolutions on human and trade-union rights was the Communist form of totalitarianism, non-Communist regimes infringing on democratic rights were also attacked, "whether such dictatorial regimes be of the Communist, Falangist, Peronist, or any other type." Further, while human rights are non-existent in countries under dictatorship, they are not respected in several other countries, the congress stated. Specific murders and imprisonments in Spain, Argentina, Venezuela, and Peru (as well as Eastern Germany) were protested, and affiliates were called on to take such action as warning the workers that the repressive "Peronista" measures in Argentina constitute a threat to peace in the Western Hemisphere and are "very similar to international Communism." Most of these Governments, as well as several Communist regimes, were among those charged with violating trade-union rights in formal complaints previously lodged by ICFTU officials with the UN Economic

and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the International Labor Organization (ILO); the congress approved these complaints and urged the ILO to "redouble its efforts to prevent violations of trade-union rights." In a general policy statement on South Africa, the congress observed that the Government had intensified its efforts to "enslave" nonwhites and "to wipe out all means of protest" since the original ICFTU resolution on the subject, and that it was attempting "to force its policy of apartheid on the labor movement"; it commended the South African labor movement's resistance to divisive legislation and pledged its support in the struggle to combat racialism. Finally, the congress expressed its disappointment at the decision of the ECOSOC to postpone consideration of the report of the UN-ILO special committee on forced labor³ and demanded that this matter be dealt with immediately.

Included among the countries where human and trade-union rights are "not respected" were certain non-self-governing territories. In addition, the delegates stated that, just as social justice is a prerequisite for peace, so also is national independence. They reiterated that the ICFTU would combat "colonial oppression" wherever it exists, aid the free unions of non-self-governing territories, and help organize free trade unions where they do not exist. The executive board was instructed to continue its pressure on the UN and metropolitan States in behalf of non-self-governing territories, and also to urge that such territories be represented in the UN and the ILO. In addition, several African territories were singled out for special comment. One of these was Tunisia, on which the Confederation has long been vocal. A representative from the Tunisian affiliate charged the French authorities in Tunisia with preventing a normal trade-union movement there. It was noted that the affiliate had in the immediate past been prevented from sending representatives to ICFTU meetings because delegates were not granted exit visas from their country, and an announcement to the congress that the French Foreign Office had promised to work for a free trade-union movement in Tunisia was enthusiastically received. Nevertheless, the delegates strongly demanded a variety of actions in support of the Tunisian unionists and for the establishment of democratic self-government and national freedom.

³ See Monthly Labor Review, September 1953 (p. 944).

The strength of the Confederation's attack on the internal practices of totalitarian nations demonstrates the success of member groups in maintaining unity in spite of varying opinions. The main difference in viewpoint is that on the problem of Communist imperialism—not on the basic policy toward Communism, to which the Confederation remains strongly and unalterably opposed, but on the question of how best to deal with it. This difference is chiefly one of emphasis: some unions, led by the British TUC, hold that action should center on eliminating the economic conditions which enable Communism to spread; others, led by the AFL, take the position that the main fight should be against Communism itself. This division of opinion threatened ICFTU unity at Milan but was successfully bridged, and the issue was raised only indirectly at the Stockholm meeting. In his presidential address, Sir Vincent Tewson of the TUC advocated international reconciliation by the trade-union method of face-to-face negotiation, and this prompted Mr. Meany to include a strong condemnation of appeasement in his opening remarks and to stress the tactical nature of the current Communist "peace offensive." Irving Brown, AFL representative in Europe and a member of the United States delegation, further emphasized that the danger from the Communist practices was so much greater than that from the "imperfections" in some Western democracies that the ICFTU should draw a distinction and not attack them on an equal basis; the issue, he said, "is not one of absolute dictatorship and absolute freedom, but rather an issue of absolute dictatorship and relative freedom." The different points of view, and the leaning of a good many delegates toward "neutrality," were also apparent in other speeches. But there was no lengthy debate or "wrangling" over resolutions on the subject.

Differences of opinion were also voiced at the congress concerning ICFTU policy toward the Yugoslav labor movement. The ICFTU has consistently rejected for affiliation any organization regarded as controlled by its government. On the basis of a report compiled by the staff, the executive board had decided that the Yugoslav unions could not be regarded as free agencies, although there was no objection to affiliated organizations' sending delegations to Yugoslavia.

At the convention, a Swedish delegate challenged the material in the staff report and urged taking the status of the Yugoslav unions under advisement rather than making an immediate negative decision. In reply, the general secretary reiterated that the Yugoslav unions do not function as free and independent organizations and said that considerable change in their status would be necessary before the ICFTU could accept them as members.⁴

Economic and Social Conditions. The report to the convention on "economic and social tasks of today" was introduced jointly by Mr. Meany and Mr. Reuther, and both presented proposals for a positive program. Mr. Meany enumerated many specific suggestions for national and international action to obtain (1) "freedom from want and insecurity," (2) development of economically underdeveloped countries, (3) "rational economic organization during the rearmament period," and (4) improvements in international migration practices. Mr. Reuther, in a brief statement, outlined various proposals for a "positive fight against Communism on the economic and social fronts."

The numerous resolutions approved by the congress in this field varied from a proclamation that the right to employment is a basic social right and that full employment policies "should take priority over all national and international objectives" to the statement that the ICFTU was prepared to assist affiliates in the establishment of basic minimum wages and machinery for settling industrial disputes. The executive board was instructed to issue a comprehensive policy statement which would also outline practical measures to attain full employment; to give special attention to the establishment of equal pay for equal work in various countries and of social-security systems in dependent territories; and to explore, in cooperation with affiliates and the ITS, the possibilities for conclusion of agreements between trade unions in different countries for the transfer of migrants' membership. The last instruction was part of a lengthy resolution stressing the importance of international migration and recommending various

⁴ The admission, recently, of the Yugoslav miners' organization to the Miners' International Federation caused serious friction in that body, with the UMW representative pressing for their exclusion and some European unions taking the position that they should be kept in.

national and international actions on the matter. Other resolutions affirmed the need for high wage policies throughout the world and for social (as well as economic and political) integration of Europe. On the latter issue, it was decided that the ICFTU, in agreement with its European Regional Organization, should establish an inter-European committee to investigate the possibilities of and conditions for such a social integration.

In a resolution on economic development, the congress welcomed the UN's establishment of a special fund to supply grants-in-aid and low-interest long-term loans for financing development programs, as well as the efforts of the UN and its Specialized Agencies to provide technical assistance. Affiliated organizations from countries in a position to do so were called on to urge their governments to make "generous grants" for these purposes. The executive board was instructed to continue to press both individual governments and international institutions to adopt the ICFTU-endorsed development policies, emphasizing especially that such programs be sure to take into account the need for social and trade-union progress. The subject was considered by two of the congress committees and they could not agree on whether to include in the resolution a paragraph criticizing non-UN programs of economic aid and recommending that economic assistance be channeled through the UN wherever possible. This was the point cited on which the congress failed to reach unanimous agreement. The resolution as adopted did not contain the disputed paragraph, with the understanding that that question would be considered by the incoming executive board.

Regional and Educational Activities. The ICFTU's continuing concern with questions affecting the underdeveloped areas was evident in its emphasis on obtaining national independence for the non-metropolitan territories and on the need for economic development. This concern, as well as the increasing stress laid on the day-to-day "working" type of action, was also reflected in the congress' decision to put the ICFTU's special regional fund on a permanent basis and its effort to obtain more able and experienced personnel to carry out the fund's program.

The special \$700,000 fund, made up of donations

from affiliated organizations, was originally set up by the 1951 Milan congress to be used over a 3-year period, because the scope of the regional program required financial resources beyond those provided by ordinary dues. In spite of some criticism of the type and extent of regional activities to date, the 1953 congress "viewed with satisfaction" the progress of the program in providing facilities for educating trade-union leaders and otherwise assisting in the organization and strengthening of trade-union movements, and decided that they must be carried out on a long-term basis. It therefore (1) instructed the regional fund committee and the executive board to assess the financial requirements of such a program after the completion of the initial 3-year period in July 1954 and (2) called on all affiliates and ITS financially able to do so to pledge additional commitments for a further 3-year program. The general secretary had reported that one of the serious problems encountered in the program was the difficulty of finding suitable personnel; the congress therefore urged affiliates and the ITS to cooperate fully in making available trained trade-union personnel to carry out "this all-important aspect of the ICFTU's work." Another problem was that of the fund's publications program, which had not been satisfactory, according to the general secretary; the regional activities committee accordingly suggested that the production of ICFTU publications be decentralized as much as possible, that more suitable material be supplied affiliates planning to publicize the ICFTU, and that "the practical and industrial aspects of trade unionism" be emphasized.

Another resolution dealt with the policy of the ICFTU's regional bodies, primarily that of the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT). This resolution was submitted by a representative of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). The CTC had lost considerable prestige when the ORIT decided, at its December 1952 meeting, to move its headquarters from Havana to Mexico City, and the Cuban delegates were reportedly intent on securing from the ICFTU some explicit form of recognition. They dominated the Latin American group at the congress and apparently were responsible for keeping the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), one of the strongest Latin American organizations,

off the ICFTU executive board.⁵ The resolution in question included a lengthy statement of the important role of the CTC in the Latin American labor movement, the ICFTU, and the ORIT. In addition, the resolution set forth the general aims of trade-union internationals, which could only be achieved by full collaboration among all affiliates; declared that the ICFTU and the ORIT would intensify efforts to counteract the Communist and Peronist regional bodies; and stated that studies should be made of the specific problems of the underdeveloped countries so as to "put into effect rapidly a large-scale fighting campaign" to solve these problems. The Cubans also suggested that the ICFTU be made a "fighting organ" by giving it the right to call international strikes in support of affiliates; this proposal was, however, rejected by the committee and received no floor support when raised in the plenary session.

The emphasis on educational activities in the underdeveloped regions also resulted in specific congress instructions to the executive board to expand both the short- and long-term educational programs of the ICFTU. On the immediate program, the board was to institute additional regional centers for the training of "trade-union educators, organizers, and propagandists," particularly in the underdeveloped areas; to support short-term ICFTU-directed training courses in particular countries; to make material available for the use of affiliates in their own training and organizational programs; to encourage exchange visits of trade unionists; and to "strengthen collaboration with other pro-labor institutions." The board was also to prepare for establishing an ICFTU international trade-union college which would train officials for trade-union work on the international, regional, or national level. Finally, the delegates called on the board to develop a "comprehensive, world-wide plan to be carried out over the next 10 years which would provide continuity to the work begun or contemplated in the regions and which would be closely coordinated with organizational efforts."

Relations With Other International Bodies

The Congress gave considerable attention to the present role and functioning of the ILO, now a Specialized Agency of the UN. The ILO and the ECOSOC are the chief intergovernmental bodies

with which the ICFTU works, as indicated in the resolutions. On the basis of a report on the ILO's work, the ICFTU emergency committee in March 1953 expressed concern and put the subject on the congress agenda; the chairman of the Workers' Group of the ILO Governing Body (a British delegate to the congress) also appealed, at the conference, for greater interest by ICFTU affiliates in ILO operations. The conclusions of the congress were twofold. On the one hand, it denounced the "direct or indirect attacks" on the ILO by governments and "elements acting on behalf of employers" which refuse to give the ILO necessary financial means, and stressed that ILO operations—particularly its African activities and the work of its industry committees—should be increased, not curtailed. On the other hand, the ILO must "adapt its means of action to the demands of the peoples and of the times" and "be more energetic in its action and firmer in its relations with the governments," especially in its efforts to prevent violations of trade-union rights; the ILO "may already have attempted" to do this but "the results of this preliminary action have been rather limited." The executive board was instructed to continue working to increase ILO efficiency, in close collaboration with affiliated organizations, the ITS, and the ILO Workers' Group (a joint ICFTU-ILO Workers' Group Committee having recently been set up); it was also to obtain and coordinate support from affiliates for the ILO and specific ILO programs.

This and other instances in which the executive board was instructed to work with the ITS, as well as their representation at the meeting, point up the cooperative relationship between the ICFTU and the ITS.⁶ Joint financing of certain field operations and other types of coordination increased during 1952 and early 1953, but, as pointed out in the ICFTU general secretary's report, the collaboration still left much to be desired. At a general ITS conference held in Stockholm immediately prior to the ICFTU congress and attended by ICFTU officials, the discussion centered on the need for closer cooperation between the two groups, particularly in the

⁵ Although the CTC had refused at the December meeting to nominate a representative for the ORIT executive committee, it was invited and sent a delegation to the ORIT secretariat's August 1953 meeting in Mexico City. Cordial relations between the CTM and CTC were re-established and plans were made for the CTC to resume active participation in the ORIT.

⁶ See Monthly Labor Review, April 1953 (p. 372).

field of regional activities. The ITS-ICFTU liaison committee forwarded to the congress a statement to this effect, which was noted by the regional activities committee in its report. The ITS statement stressed that they "strongly feel" they should themselves work more actively in this field, over and above contributing to the ICFTU's regional fund. To this end, the "machinery of coordination" should be reviewed and adapted with a view to enabling the ITS to increase their regional work "in the closest possible relation with the ICFTU." A special committee was appointed by the ITS conference to go into the whole question more fully and report to the next general ITS conference.

The question of relations with the Christian and the Communist internationals did not arise directly at the 1953 congress, although the delegates were informed of these organizations' efforts to establish cooperative arrangements with the ICFTU. The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (CISC)—which has recently moved its headquarters to Brussels, the seat of the ICFTU—had sent a 10-point program to the ICFTU in December 1952, outlining procedures for cooperation by the two internationals on regional or functional issues. The CISC proposals were rejected, however, with the explanation that the ICFTU was not prepared to enter a permanent cooperative agreement until all difficulties between the various national affiliates of the two organizations were solved. The outgoing ICFTU executive board reported to the delegates that, at its meeting just before the congress convened, it had reaffirmed this decision, although cooperation for specific objects could continue. WFTU bids for unity of action continued to be ignored by the ICFTU. A written appeal from the Communist-sponsored "Nordic Peace Conference of Labor" for negotiations among the three trade-union internationals was delivered to the meeting, but ICFTU President Tewson refused to accept and submit it to the congress.

Administrative Changes

At its Stockholm meeting, the congress amended the ICFTU constitution so as (1) to enlarge the key executive board, (2) to abolish the general council, and (3) to permit the election to the presidency of Mr. Becu, who was not a member

of the executive board as required by the constitution. These moves enhanced the influence of the smaller member organizations and reduced the possibility of a single strong affiliate's dominating the Confederation.

Structural Changes. The executive board is set up on a regional basis, and several affiliates had submitted to the congress proposals to enlarge the executive board by one member—to be allotted to the particular affiliate's region. The congress finally added 6 new seats to the board, raising its membership from 19 to 25, a step criticized by some members as nullifying some of the savings made by the elimination of the general council. The relatively weaker movements of Asia, Africa, and Latin America profited most from the increase—4 of the 6 new posts being assigned to these areas. In fact, the board representation of the first two areas thereby became quite disproportionate to their numerical strength in the ICFTU, as shown in the table below. The other two new seats were assigned respectively to Europe and to North America, giving the UMW representation on the board.

Regional distribution of ICFTU executive board seats and total membership, mid-1953

| Area | Seats on 1953 executive board ¹ | | Number of countries or territories | Number of organizations | Claimed membership, January 1953 ² | |
|----------------------------|--|---------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---------|
| | Number | Percent | | | Number | Percent |
| Total..... | 25 | 100 | 77 | 102 | 54,235,143 | * 100 |
| Africa..... | 2 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 288,000 | (*) |
| Asia-Middle East..... | 5 | 20 | 16 | 17 | 6,269,534 | 12 |
| Australia-New Zealand..... | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1,036,332 | 2 |
| Great Britain..... | 2 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 8,020,079 | 15 |
| Europe..... | 6 | 24 | 18 | 20 | 15,461,706 | 29 |
| Latin America..... | 3 | 12 | 19 | 34 | 7,083,675 | 13 |
| North America..... | 5 | 20 | 2 | 5 | 16,051,614 | 30 |
| West Indies..... | 1 | 4 | 10 | * 13 | * 44,203 | (*) |

¹ Two substitutes are appointed for each executive board seat, from the same area but not necessarily the same country or organization.

² Figures for 18 affiliates which failed to supply January 1953 totals are for January 1951; figures for 5 organizations admitted to affiliation in July 1953 are those listed at the time the affiliation was announced.

³ Figures total more than 100 percent because of rounding.

⁴ Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent.

⁵ Number of affiliates includes 1 small organization for which no membership figures were available.

Source: General Secretary's Report to the Third World Congress of the ICFTU, May 1953 (pp. 105-107), and ICFTU Information Bulletin, July 1-15, 1953 (pp. 2-3).

The change in the composition of the executive board assumes even greater importance when the elimination of the general council is taken into consideration. The council, representing all affiliated organizations, had originally been set up to

meet in the years between congresses. It met for the first time in 1952. A number of member organizations regarded the expense and effort involved in this meeting, which actually amounted to a congress somewhat reduced in size, as unjustified and therefore recommended the council's abolition by the congress.

Election of Officers. The 25 members of the executive board and the two substitutes assigned for each were elected unanimously. In the absence of other nominees, J. H. Oldenbroek of the Netherlands (also a former ITF official) was unanimously re-elected as general secretary, as were the Confederation's two auditors.

The new executive board met immediately after the congress ended in order to elect the other ICFTU officers. Mr. Becu was elected president without opposition. Among the 7 vice-presidents were Mr. Meany and Mr. Reuther, who were also re-elected to the 7-member emergency committee.

The presidential election engendered considerable outside speculation as well as some friction among members both before and during the meeting. This was because of the known opposition of the United States affiliates—particularly the AFL—to the possible re-election of Mr. Tewson, whose election in 1951 they had strongly opposed; it was held that his election had violated the "gentlemen's agreement" reached at the ICFTU's founding that the top posts should not be held by representatives from the larger nations. Mr. Tewson did not run for re-election, however, and the "jockeying for position" therefore centered on selection of his successor. The United States delegation strongly supported Mr. Becu, who is Belgian, and the constitutional amendment necessary for his election. The amendment was narrowly defeated in committee, but the full congress subsequently voted to consider it and finally approved it by more than the required two-thirds majority of total membership, with the British delegation voting for it in spite of Mr. Tewson's opposition.

Mr. Meany was the only delegate who spoke in favor of the amendment, and the vigor of the

United States delegates' support for Mr. Becu caused sharp criticism from some of the delegates. It also caused Mr. Becu's election to be regarded in some circles as a "U. S. victory"—additionally so because the United States delegates have consistently favored the vigorous and aggressive type of action for which Mr. Becu is known and at times have criticized the ICFTU leadership for failing to take such action. Others stressed that the new president was not likely to become a "tool" of any group; in their opinion, his election merely represented a return to the original agreement on leadership, rather than a step toward substituting the United States members' influence for that of the British.

This return to the original understanding on leadership points up the ICFTU's chief underlying problem, i. e., the problem of the power relation in an organization which includes two exceptionally powerful groups as well as many small, weak affiliates. While the United States members account directly for a much larger proportion of total membership, the TUC commands support from other Commonwealth affiliates and from the Socialist European unions which traditionally look to it for leadership. The different viewpoints of the two groups on methods for combatting Communism have already been cited. Differences in domestic policies also exist, such as that between the United States unions' advocacy of free enterprise and the Socialist philosophy of the British unions; the founding convention agreed to omit any ideological concept from the constitution, but even at the 1953 congress there was occasional reference to these political differences. The agreement that none of the major affiliates would seek top posts was a conscious effort to avoid the clashes to be expected from both strong groups' natural tendency to lead. But the smaller affiliates actually have not had the strength to exercise the necessary leadership and hence have had to go along with one or the other of the larger groups, with accompanying resentments of their own. The original agreement, and the current return to it, held in abeyance rather than resolved this fundamental problem.