

**Christian Trade Unions and European Integration  
Organizations and Problems**  
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[See table of contents](#)

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**Article abstract**

Christian trade unions of the countries of « Little Europe » have established organizations to coordinate their European activities and to represent their interests before the agencies concerned with European economic integration. They have been forced to seek allies in order to increase their influence. In this search they have two major alternatives: they can work closely with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, or they can try to increase their influence within the Christian Democratic political milieu. This article describes the supranational structure of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions and analyses the problems of orientation with which its supranational activities has confronted it.

The present article was suggested by a broader study of Christian trade unionism in the world. A grant from the Social Science Research Council enabled the author to visit several European countries during the summer of 1959, and this assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Additional research was accomplished in Europe in the summer of 1961.

# Christian Trade Unions and European Integration :

## ORGANIZATIONS AND PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

Samuel H. Barnes

*Christian trade unions of the countries of « Little Europe » have established organizations to coordinate their European activities and to represent their interests before the agencies concerned with European economic integration. They have been forced to seek allies in order to increase their influence. In this search they have two major alternatives: they can work closely with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, or they can try to increase their influence within the Christian Democratic political milieu. This article describes the supranational structure of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions and analyses the problems of orientation with which its supranational activities has confronted it.*

Christian unionism has traditionally been torn between its religious cultural milieu and its working class economic interests. The cross and the glory of Christian unionism has been to face simultaneously in both directions, to reconcile within itself the conflicting claims of religion and class. This study of the reaction of Christian trade unions to the establishment of the organs of European economic cooperation suggests that this traditional bifocal point of view is being extended to the European level.

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tions to coordinate their European activities and to represent their interests before the agencies concerned with European economic integration. Representing minority trends within both European labor and European Christian Democracy, Christian unions have been forced to seek allies in order to increase their influence. In this search the unions have two major — not mutually exclusive — alternatives: they can work closely with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU, or Free International), or they can try to increase their influence within the Christian Democratic political milieu.

This article describes the supranational structure of Christian trade unionism and analyses the problems of orientation with which its supranational activities has confronted it.<sup>2</sup> These problems arise primarily from the religious and class orientation of Christian unionism, and the tensions and conflicts which result therefrom. The article is based largely on interviews with the leaders of the Christian and Free Internationals who are most concerned with European supranational activities, interviews with leaders of the national Christian confederations, and documentary materials available at headquarters of the Christian International and of the national confederations.

### Background of Christian Unionism

The contemporary problems of European Christian trade unionism can be better understood against the background of its antisocialist origins and long struggle for survival. It has been a minor but persistent faction within European labor. The roots of Christian unionism lie in the reaction of the Roman Catholic church, and to a lesser extent the Protestant churches, to the problems of industrialization and the dechristianization of the working class. While in their early years Christian unions were often clerically led and middle-class in outlook, they have become progressively more independent and working-class. Although still antisocialist in ideology, the national confederations of Christian unions have generally achieved some working relationship with the socialist<sup>3</sup> or religiously « neutral » — to use Roman Catholic

(2) In this article, the term « international » applies to the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU, or Christian International) and its activities, and the term « supranational » refers to the organizations and activities dealing specifically with European integration.

(3) The term « socialist » refers, for the sake of convenience, to one of the three major contemporary trends in European labor — socialist, Christian, and communist. It does not mean that the leaders and rank and file are necessarily socialists or nonchristians. « Christian » unions and unionists are those affiliated with the IFCTU.

terminology — trade unions of various European countries. The nature of these relationships, however, varies greatly from country to country due to demographic, ideological, and political factors.

The largest and strongest Christian unions were in Germany and Italy before fascists destroyed the independent labor movements of those countries.<sup>4</sup> These Christian unions were not reactivated at the

RELATIVE TRADE UNION STRENGTH IN THE «SIX»

	ICFTU	IFCTU	WFTU	Without int'l affiliation
Belgium	772,295	690,920		
France	300,000	300,000	1,000,000	565,500
Germany	6,331,735	277,000 *		1,143,635
Italy	2,868,076		3,936,000	900,000
Luxembourg	22,585	8,549	3,500	12,255
Netherlands	476,581	620,361	10,000	252,415

end of World War II. A recent attempt to organize confessional unions in Germany has not been very successful. In Italy, the Christian Democrats who broke with the communist-dominated unified movement joined with some Republicans and Social Democrats to form a nonconfessional union affiliated with the ICFTU. While this union is closely tied politically with the Christian Democratic party, it is nonconfessional and affiliated internationally with the Free International, and hence not a «Christian» union in the specialized sense used in this article. The German and Italian situations are discussed at greater length below.

French Christian unionism has long been strong among white collar workers and since World War II has expanded impressively into the industrial working class. At present, it equals its ICFTU counterpart in numbers and probably exceeds it in aggressiveness and dynamism.<sup>5</sup> Christian unions are also especially strong in Belgium and the Netherlands where the coincidence of demographic and ideological factors gives them a stable niche in the political culture. The Belgian Christian

(4) European trade unions statistics are extremely unreliable. This is especially true in France and Italy. The following estimates, based on reports of U.S. Labor Attaches, are worth noting, provided they are viewed with caution.

(\*) This figure for the German Christian unions is much too high. Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor, *Directory of Labor Organizations-Europe*, Washington: GPO, 1959, Vol. I, p. x.

(5) See the author's «The Politics of French Christian Labor», *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 21 (Feb. 1959), pp. 105-122.

confederation is only slightly smaller than the ICFTU affiliate, and the Protestant and Catholic confederations of the Netherlands together surpass their ICFTU rival. In addition, there are small Catholic and Protestant confederations in Switzerland, a Christian confederation in Luxembourg, and a recognized Christian political faction within the unified confederation of Austria.

These European confederations, especially those of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, are the major affiliates of the IFCTU. The Christian International claims to be world-wide in character, and has, indeed, expanded remarkably in non-European areas in recent years. Its only truly viable non-European affiliate, however, is in the Canadian province of Quebec, and this one may soon cease to be independent of the North American labor movement. Unions of « believing workers »<sup>6</sup> in Africa, and Christian unions in South America, have yet to prove their vitality. Thus Christian trade unionism is primarily a continental European phenomenon, and for this reason the IFCTU finds it easier than its rival, the Free International, to concentrate its attention on European matters.

The European confederations attempt to agree among themselves on European issues so that they can present as united a front as possible on the European scene. But although a common religious orientation would seem to minimize ideological and other differences, such is not always the case. Within the Christian movement there are, for example, great differences between the French and Dutch outlooks. Not surprisingly, these are the two confederations which represent the extreme contrasts: the French Christian confederation is decentralized, nonconfessional (free of direct religious ties), and flirts with socialism; while the Dutch Catholic confederation is centralized, intimately connected with the Church, and closely tied politically with the Dutch Catholic political party. The alienation of the French working class is evident within the Christian movement as elsewhere; the spirit of cooperation and moderation which characterizes Dutch trade unionism in general is also apparent. Christian trade unionism shows considerable variation from country to country and even within countries, as between the Dutch Catholic and Protestant confederations, and a recognition of these divergencies is a prerequisite to understanding the attitudes of the unions relating to economic integration.

(6) The term « believing workers » (*travailleurs croyants*) is part of the title of some of the affiliates of the IFCTU in Africa and Asia which lack a Christian base.

## Organizational Structure

The IFCTU secretariat represents Christian trade unionism on the international level. Except for a period of inactivity during World War II, it has functioned continually since its founding in 1920. It was located in Utrecht, in the quarters of the Dutch Catholic confederation, until 1952, when it was moved to Brussels in order to be nearer the center of European activities. The IFCTU has sixty-two affiliates, including national confederations of Christian or «believing workers» plus eleven international trade secretariats. Each of these secretariats — which are largely quiescent — unites on the international level the national federations of Christian miners, or metal workers, or white-collar workers, etc., which are the constituent units of the national federations. In 1961, the non-European organizations were more numerous than the European, although the bulk of the membership is still European. Although much inferior in numbers and resources to the Free International, the IFCTU supports a substantial staff in Brussels; offices for international organizations in Paris, Geneva, and New York;<sup>7</sup> and regional offices in Leopoldville, Dakar, Brazzaville, Lagos, Santiago de Chile, and Saigon.

These significant, if limited, non-European activities make it inconvenient for the IFCTU secretariat itself to handle directly matters concerning European integration. Consequently, the IFCTU and the national confederations established two specialized supranational organizations to represent Christian trade unionism before the Communities: the Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Organization of the IFCTU. The European Organization is one of several regional organizations envisaged for the IFCTU, two additional ones already existing for Africa and Latin America.

The Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the ECSC, established in 1955, represents Christian trade unionism before that Community.<sup>8</sup> It was composed of representatives of the national Christian confederations within the «Six» and the national federations concerned with coal and steel — those of miners, metal workers, and white-collar workers. The evolution of the European Organization, however, has

(7) The IFCTU has consultative status with the ILO and the UN.

(8) R. COLIN BEEVER, *European Unity and the Trade Union Movements*, Leyden: A.W. Sythoff, 1960, esp. pp. 79-122, discusses the organization of trade unions before the ECSC.

reduced the function of the Federation largely to that of representing the miners and metal workers in Luxembourg. The Federation has a small staff in Luxembourg headed by a Secretary and financed by the European Organization.

When the European Economic Community (EEC) was formed, the Committee on European Questions of the IFCTU initially assumed the task of representing the interests of Christian unions before it. Soon it was apparent that a separate organization was desirable here also, and the Committee on European Questions sponsored the establishment in 1958 of a second supranational organization, the European Organization of the IFCTU. It represents all the European Christian confederations, although the Austrian and Swiss delegates do not deliberate on Common Market matters. Christian unions in overseas territories of France and Belgium were admitted as associate members when the organization was established.

The policy-making organ of the Organization is the Council; although only national confederations are admitted as members, half of the delegates selected by the confederations must represent the national federations of miners, metal workers, etc., and must be chosen in consultation with them. In 1961, ways of associating the trade secretariats more closely with the Organization were being discussed. The Council has established work groups dealing with the following subjects: the Economic and Social Committee (of the EEC), food and agriculture, transportation, nuclear energy and Euratom, and energy. Members of the work groups are national representatives who specialize in those matters, and they do most of the staff work in those areas for the European Organization. The work group on the Economic and Social Committee, for example, is composed of the national Christian unions' representatives to that body. The Council elects a president, three vice presidents, and the Secretary of the Organization; the treasurer of the IFCTU serves *ex officio* in that capacity for the Organization also.

The Directing Committee, composed of one representative from each member confederation, meets more often than the larger Council, and it supervises the work of the secretariat. There is also a larger consultative European Conference which is supposed to meet yearly, although it met for the first time late in 1960; it has no decision-making powers.

All substantive decisions, except elections and financial questions, require unanimity; each confederation has votes in all the organs equal

to its seats on the Council. The IFCTU itself settles disputes within the Organization, receives reports from it, supervises it, and insures that it takes no decisions contrary to the policies of the IFCTU. The Organization has its own budget and secretariat, headed by a very able, full-time Secretary. The Paris office of the IFCTU, which represented the Christian International in the Mixed Trade Union Consultative Commission, which in turn represented labor before the OEEC and the European Productivity Agency, has been placed under the control of the European Organization.

Considerable caution should be used in assessing the significance of the structures outlined above. Because of the European orientation of the IFCTU, financial and numerical weaknesses, and the strong commitment of Christian trade unionism to the ideal of European integration, the entire secretariat of the IFCTU is concerned with European supranational matters. The Secretary General of the IFCTU — who dominates the Christian International to a remarkable degree — is deeply involved in the affairs of both the European Organization and the Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the ECSC. He has great freedom in speaking in the name of the IFCTU, considerable influence within the national confederations, and relative freedom from direct control by the IFCTU executive board.<sup>9</sup> The Secretaries of the Organization and the Federation are largely his assistants for handling the affairs of Christian trade unionism before their respective communities. Moreover, despite the three separate structures, the same persons are likely to represent their national confederations and federations in meetings of the various bodies of the IFCTU, the Federation of the ECSC, and the European Organization. The leadership of all three bodies, therefore, is largely vested in the same persons. The Federation and the Organization are thus to some extent paper organizations, devices for focusing attention on European supranational problems rather than completely separate, autonomous organizations.

### Leadership and European Integration

This supranational structure is partially a reaction to the supranational organizations of the Free International — a desire of the smaller International to match the larger — but to consider it only in those

(9) For example, the IFCTU constitution states: Article 32, «... The Secretary General can only be dismissed by the Congress...» (which meets only every third year); and Article 33, «The Secretary General shall represent the IFCTU with full powers under all circumstances».



terms would be misleading. The present structure of separate organizations to deal with the two Communities reflects a deeply held conviction on the part of Christian trade union leaders. The structure reflects not only a desire to represent adequately the interests of Christian labor before the Communities; it stems also from the strong commitment to the ideal of European integration held by these leaders. They conceive of the supranational structure of Christian trade unionism as not only a method of treating with the organs of integration but also a method of furthering, by example, the ideal of integration. Some within the Christian movement would like to go even further toward integrating completely the European activities of Christian trade unionism; others oppose any additional restrictions on national freedom of action.<sup>10</sup> The present structure permits any degree of cooperation while allowing the freedom of action which is tenaciously retained by the national confederations.

The Christian unions are fortunate in the high level of interest maintained in European affairs by the dominant figures of the national confederations; they are usually the leading proponents of supranationalism within their movements. But below the top level of leadership there is a very steep decline in interest in European affairs. This seems to be as true of second echelon leaders as of the rank and file. Although the reasons for this cannot be stated with certainty, an impressionistic analysis would take into account the fears of the rank and file concerning the unknown ramifications of economic integration. It would also note the contrast which often seems to exist within Christian unionism between the top leadership — usually of excellent ability — and lower echelons. Christian leaders attribute this in part to personality characteristics of Christian union members and to the milieu from which they come — the tendency in several countries for them to be from predominantly rural or recently industrialized areas, to be concentrated in small industry, to be relatively poorly educated, to be conservative, etc. One leader stated privately that the very religious principles on which Christian unionism is based inhibit aggressiveness, experimentation, and the development of broader horizons of outlook. These characteristics of Christian union members are closely related to the reluctance of their leaders to integrate the Christian and « neutral » unions, which is discussed below.

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(10) August Cool, President of the Belgian Christian Confederation and President of the European Organization, is strongly favorable toward a more complete integration of Christian labor's European affairs; the Dutch confederations are probably the most strongly opposed.

Fortunately for Christian unions, these characteristics do not apply to most of their top leaders; indeed, they tend to apply less and less to Christian unionism as a whole, and in some countries, France for example, would hardly apply at all. Nevertheless, the necessity of selling supranationalism has led to an inversion of the roles of the national representatives to the supranational organizations. Ordinarily, their roles would be to defend the interests of their national confederations within the supranational organizations, and that is, indeed, a principal task. But as the confederal representatives are likely to be among the few persons within their national organizations who have a real appreciation of the importance and potential of the supranational organizations, selling supranationalism within the national confederations is often their most important task. They are often placed in the position of helping formulate supranational policies and then of lobbying for these policies among their membership; they become agents of supranationalism within their national organizations. It is generally agreed among these representatives that through education and publicity the national movements must be made aware of the importance of supranational activities if these activities are to receive increasing support.

There is constant communication among the national Christian union leaders and the compactness of Europe and the closeness of Brussels to the major Christian affiliates facilitates coordination. Indeed, it is this closeness which enables the supranational structures to operate with small full-time staffs: national representatives can meet quickly and often to discuss supranational problems, and the national confederations can perform many staff functions — such as research — for the supranational secretariats. This physical proximity and personal intimacy is a great aid to the functioning of the European Organization.

### Relations With Christian Democracy

Despite the considerable achievement of European Christian trade unions in establishing a supranational structure, and without discounting their great strength in several countries, they are too weak at the supranational level to exert great influence alone. Christian unions must either expand their own organizational strength or seek close ties with other groups. One such path lies among cultural allies within Christian Democracy.

Much of the national importance of European Christian trade unions stems from their alignment with the broader movement generally known as Christian Democracy. The Christian International maintains close contacts with most other branches of that movement. On the European level, for example, it has cordial relations with such agencies dealing with European integration as *Les Nouvelles Equipes Internationales* (NEI), *L'Union Internationale des Jeunes Démocrates Chrétiens*, and *Le Mouvement des Travailleurs Chrétiens pour L'Europe Unie*. This latter is a front organization which groups trade unionists and others concerned with the position of labor in a united Europe. Since it is not itself a trade union, it can take political positions with greater facility than the IFCTU, and can also reach German and Italian milieux more easily than the Christian International. The leaders of *Le Mouvement*, however, are also leaders of the Christian unions.

Relations with the NEI are informative concerning the various attitudes held toward the IFCTU in different countries. A 1957 incident illustrates the two basic attitudes. IFCTU leaders met with the French Secretary General of the NEI and concluded an agreement to establish a committee for formulating common socio-economic policies. But at the next NEI Congress the Italian, German, and Luxembourgish delegates protested against the establishment of a committee of liaison between the two, on the grounds that ties with Christian unionism would be embarrassing to Christian Democracy in those countries which had no strong Christian trade union movements.

Another exemplary contact was with the Conference of Catholic International Organizations in 1954, which the IFCTU Secretary General attended as an observer. This Conference drew up a resolution on « Technique and Productivity » which the IFCTU claims is the first document on the supranational level edited in cooperation between employers and workers. This would be a most significant step if Catholic employers' organizations were powerful in the countries of the « Six », but they are not; and even agreements completely satisfactory to Christian employers and workers are not likely to have much direct influence on European supranational policies. It is chiefly the political parties which have real political power within the Christian Democratic movement.

It is, therefore, the relations between the IFCTU and the Christian Democratic parties themselves which are of greatest interest. These

parties are the natural ideological allies of the Christian trade union movement and it has been a source of disappointment that they have not been of greater assistance. The reasons are perhaps inherent in the conflicting interests of the unions and parties. Christian Democratic parties are heterogeneous in their clientele and socially « integrative » in their policies. While the Christian unions also adhere to an « integrative » philosophy, in practice they must act as the spokesman for the limited interests of labor. Hence the aims of the unions and parties often conflict; and, indeed, the connection between the two is sometimes embarrassing. Moreover, most European Christian Democratic parties suffer from severe internal divisions on social and welfare questions. As a result, although individual Christian Democratic politicians have been friendly toward the IFCTU, overall relations have been far from satisfactory.

From the perspective of European labor, several Christian Democratic parties are socially conservative, and this is particularly true of the two powerful German and Italian parties. Germany and Italy are also the countries where the IFCTU has no viable affiliates, and Christian International leaders argue that the absence of strong Christian trade union movements is partially to blame of the conservative orientations of the German and Italian Christian Democratic parties. German Christian Democratic leaders wish to encourage the DGB<sup>11</sup> in its official policy of nonpartisanship. Hence they are not friendly toward the Christian International either within Germany or at the many European gatherings where easy access to politicians can be so rewarding to trade unionists. Contacts with Christian Democrats from Italy are friendlier, but still reserved; for the CISL<sup>12</sup> is affiliated with the ICFTU, not the Christian International.

While relations between the *Mouvement Republicain Populaire* (MRP), which is the Christian Democratic party of France, and the French Christian confederation are friendly, the union has been careful in the past decade not to identify itself too closely with the MRP.<sup>13</sup> It is through the Christian parties of Belgium and the Netherlands, the two countries where Christian unions are internally the strongest, that Christian labor's viewpoint is most likely to reach the level of the Coun-

(11) The *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* — the large, unified German trade union central.

(12) *Confederazione italiana sindacati lavoratori* — The Christian Democratic-oriented central in Italy.

(13) BARNES, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-121.

cils of Ministers of the Communities, if at all. Both governments often include Christian trade union officials in governmental delegations; and in both countries Christian labor forms an important wing of the Christian parties. In Belgium this contact is indirect, due to the incompatibility of trade union and political party mandates; but in the Netherlands, leading Christian union officials are at the same time party officials and members of parliament.

By no means, however, are the contacts of Christian labor limited to Christian Democratic politicians. Christian union leaders who would seldom deal with socialist politicians — note, politicians, not unionists — in their own countries count socialist politicians from other countries among their best contacts on the supranational level. A disadvantage of contacts with socialist politicians is that they are usually out of power in most of the six countries, a fact which might explain some of their reasonableness as well as the prudence of Christian Democrats in espousing the aims of Christian labor. In summary, the ideological identification of Christian trade unionism with Christian Democracy and their common commitment to the integration of Europe has not resulted in a working alliance on the European supranational level which is satisfactory to Christian trade unionism.

### Competition With The Free International

Christian union leaders feel that the absence of strong affiliates in Germany and Italy is partially to blame for their unsatisfactory relations with Christian Democratic political parties. If the IFCTU had strong affiliates in those countries, they argue, these unions could apply pressure on the parties. The « quasi-corporative »<sup>14</sup> nature of the consultative bodies attached to the two Communities places a particular importance on sheer size and geographical completeness: the very real strength of Christian unions in France and the Benelux countries is vitiated by their near-complete absence in Germany and Italy, two of the three giants of the Communities.

Labor's formal participation in the Coal and Steel Community, for example, is limited to membership in the Consultative Committee attached to the High Authority. In this Committee, labor is only one element in a quasi-corporative chamber of fifty-one representing equally

(14) The term is that of Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958, p. 43.

producers, workers, and consumers and dealers.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, members serve in their personal capacities, not as representatives of particular labor organizations. However, the national confederations nominate lists of candidates from which the members are chosen; and, as a matter of practice, there is an informal partitioning of seats among the non-communist labor organizations. Labor's sole formal representation in the EEC is in the Economic and Social Committee, which is similar in composition to the Consultative Committee of the ECSC: members are appointed in their personal capacities by the Council from lists, submitted by the member states, containing twice the number of names to be appointed.<sup>16</sup> Labor is not guaranteed any certain percentage of the seats; but in 1959, of the 101 members, 37 represented labor; of this number, ten represented Christian labor: three of five from Holland, two of five from Belgium, one of three from Luxembourg, and four of eight from France.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the Christian share of the delegates from these countries is considerable. Yet, the absence of Christian unions in Germany and Italy greatly limits the overall strength of Christian unionism.

It is, then, the perceived need for an organization in each of the six countries which has led to the attempted expansion of Christian trade unionism in Italy and Germany.

The situation in Italy is not as bad from the Christian union viewpoint as that in Germany. The economic weakness of Italy, the divisions and poor financial resources of Italian trade unions, and the *de facto* Christian orientation of the largest noncommunist confederation, the CISL, make Italy seem a bit less crucial to Christian unionism than Germany. The CISL hoped to unite Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, and Republicans in a single noncommunist confederation. For this reason as well as practical ones — such as the greater financial resources of the Free International — the CISL did not affiliate with the Christian International. Nor, despite its close ties with the Chris-

(15) Article 18 of the Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community.

(16) Articles 194-195 of the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community.

(17) The seventeen workers' seats of the ECSC are generally assigned: 11-12, Free International; 4-5, IFCTU; and one seat to an independent French union. BEEVER, *op. cit.*, p. 117. The French delegation in 1956, for example, represented the socialist miners, Christian miners and metal workers, the independent confederation of supervisory personnel, and the Saar ironworkers. DANIEL VIGNES, *La communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier*, Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1956, p. 83.

tian Democratic party, did it become a confessional union. Even so, its politics made it unacceptable to many Social Democrats and Republicans, who formed a rival noncommunist center also affiliated with the Free International. The ICFTU thus has two affiliates in Italy, and, despite years of prodding, has not succeeded in uniting them.<sup>18</sup> The Christian Democratic orientation of the CISL is offset, from the viewpoint of the IFCTU, by its adherence to the ICFTU; Christian unionism gains nothing organizationally on the supranational level from the Christian orientation of the CISL. However, IFCTU relations at European labor meetings are said to be much better with the CISL than with any other ICFTU affiliate. Even so, a CISL splinter union at the FIAT works of Turin has made overtures for admittance to the Christian International. Italian unions were in 1961 still represented in the IFCTU only through the affiliation of some Italian metal workers to the Christian Metalworkers Trade Secretariat; there is still no affiliated Italian confederation. An application for membership by the neofascist CISNAL was rejected by the Christian International.

The re-establishment of Christian unions in Germany has already been attempted. In that country former Christian and socialist union leaders supported a unified movement, the DGB, after the war. This arrangement seemed acceptable to most of the former Christian union leaders now in the DGB. While there are often protests at the pro-socialist activities and preferences of DGB leaders — these socialist leanings are undoubtedly shared by a majority of the membership — considerable freedom of action is left to Christian Democrats, and the union itself maintains a formal nonpartisanship thus far tolerable to most Christian Democrats within it, to the leaders of the Christian Democratic party of Germany, and to most of the Catholic hierarchy. It is probably even convenient to the Christian Democratic party to have a potential major arm of its socialist opposition restrained, if only partially, by formal nonpartisanship.

Nevertheless, some unionists felt that the role accorded Christian Democrats in the DGB was unsatisfactory. Indeed, former Christian union leaders occupy few leading positions within the organization. Many pre-Hitler Christian union leaders opted for political careers after the war and left the members of the former Christian unions poorly led. The dissatisfaction of some of these leaders, the energetic support of

(18) JOSEPH LAPALOMBARA, *The Italian Labor Movement: Problems and Prospects*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957, pp. 172-177, discusses the problem of unity between the two ICFTU affiliates in Italy.

one member of the Catholic hierarchy, and, perhaps most important, the moral and financial support of the Christian International led to the establishment of a separate Christian trade union in Germany in 1955. This union has not received much support from former Christian unionists now in the DGB. The Christian union's membership is drawn largely from blue-collar workers who did not in the past belong to any union, from a formerly independent white-collar union, and from the Christian unions of the Saar which were established under French auspices. After six years of activity and financial support by the IFCTU the German Christian unions have a claimed membership of less than 200,000 — and a probable actual membership much smaller — compared with more than 6,000,000 in the DGB. Hence the future of German Christian unionism is not very bright.

Nevertheless, the existence of the Christian unions has poisoned relations between the two Internationals in Germany. The IFCTU gained a weak and ineffectual ally and lost all hope of good relations with the DGB, for the latter views the German Christian confederation as a dual union and the Christian International as its founder and protector. The Christian International feels that geographical completeness is essential if it is to play an effective role in the consultative bodies of the Communities, and in European labor politics in general. In the process of trying to achieve this completeness it has embittered its relations with the DGB, the most powerful single trade union confederation on the continent, and has gravely complicated the achievement of effective cooperation of labor on the European level.

It should be noted that it is not only on the European level that the two Internationals compete with one another. The activities of the Christian International in Africa, South America, and Asia also greatly antagonize Free International leaders. They feel that competition between the two noncommunist Internationals weakens the democratic labor movement at a crucial time and in crucial areas of the world, that Christian trade unions have no place in those areas, if anywhere, and that there is no need to grant any concessions to the Christian International. Certainly the IFCTU has attempted to expand into areas where it has an extremely insecure cultural base.

Perhaps it would be willing to forgo expansion in return for concessions on unity. It would like a form of unity which would fuse the top leadership but leave the base organizations separate, as they fear, for reasons outlined above, that Christian unionists could not long



maintain their separate identity in an organic merger. This solution would, of course, mean the maintenance of dual unionism, to which the ICFTU is in general opposed. However, it has two affiliates in Italy and had two in the United States before the merger of the AFL and CIO. Nevertheless, the Free International has not seemed willing to make concessions to facilitate merger, and this is not surprising, considering its commanding position in the noncommunist labor world. Many of its leaders also resent the implication that members of the « Christian » unions are better « Christians » than they are. While many European ICFTU leaders are perhaps anticlerical socialists, this is by no means true of all of them; and it certainly would not apply to many of the leaders of their affiliates in the Anglo-American countries. Furthermore, the Christian unions are small in the context of international labor, even if they are significant in Europe; and concessions would seem to give them an unwarranted prestige. Hence it is the Christian International which seems to be more interested in cooperation.

### The Case For Cooperation

The deep division of European labor gravely vitiates its effectiveness on the supranational level. Although there were two periods — at the end of World War II and at the time of the formation of the Free International in 1949 — when organic unity on the international level could have been achieved between Christian and other noncommunist tendencies, the opportunities were missed for a number of reasons. While there is still continuing « talk » of uniting the two internationals, the chances of success seem at the present remote. The two Internationals continue to oppose each other in numerous countries while trying to cooperate on the European supranational level.

If unity is impossible, then maximum cooperation seems necessary. Despite the complications which have arisen from the German situation, much has been accomplished in coordinating the European activities of the two Internationals. The Christian and « neutral » unions have generally worked out satisfactory methods of cooperation within France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, and differences which exist do not seem to interfere greatly with supranational common action. Although there is considerable animosity between the Christian and Free Internationals, relations between the European Organization of the Christian International and its Free counterpart have been excellent. And due to the absence of communist unions from the activities of the Communities,

agreement between these two is often sufficient to insure the coordination of the supranational activities of labor.

The success of the two Internationals in coordinating their activities before the Economic and Social Committee shows that cooperation is possible. Thanks largely to the good working relationship between the Secretaries of the two organizations responsible for the Committee, labor caucuses are held to work out common stands, decisions are made which are binding on both groups, speakers are designated to represent labor's viewpoint, and joint study groups operate effectively. Even the DGB representatives do not object.

The case of appointments to positions within the Communities indicates the importance of coordination. Two major achievements are viewed by the organizations as successful joint efforts: the appointments of Paul Finet of the Belgian « neutral » unions to the High Authority of the ECSC and of P.J.S. Serrarens, then Secretary-General of the IFCTU, to the Court. This mutual support sometimes extends even to candidates who are not personally agreeable to one of the two, as in the joint support given the unsuccessful candidacy of a vocally anticlerical Belgian socialist to a high position. On the other hand, agreement is not always forthcoming, and several unsuccessful candidacies are said to be traceable to attempts to « go it alone ».

There seem to be no outstanding policy differences which would make cooperation between the two Internationals impossible. They both approve of the beginnings of economic integration represented by the two Communities. They both are dissatisfied with the role accorded labor within the Communities, and both are devoted to increasing the influence of labor on the determination of the policies of European economic integration. There are, of course, some differences in their policy preferences, but it is doubtful if the differences between the two internationals are greater than the differences within each of them: labor differences do not always follow ideological lines, and there are numerous national differences within both Internationals which are of far deeper significance. From the pragmatic viewpoint, therefore, increased cooperation between the Christian and Free Internationals would seem to be both desirable and possible of achievement if the German situation is alleviated.

Looking to the future, the logic of economic integration seems to demand greater cooperation within European labor if it is not to be

threatened with the loss on the supranational level of advances made on the national level. Only by presenting a united front can labor hope to exercise a maximum of influence on the policies of integration.

The decline of the importance of ideology in Europe is helpful to the achievement of cooperation, if not unity. Christian unions arose as a reaction not only against the evils of industrialism but also against the aggressive antireligious outlook of socialist-dominated unions. European socialists have changed greatly in outlook in the past generation. Common experiences before and during World War II did much to bridge the gap between the two outlooks. Two major European countries which in the past had Christian unions failed to revive them in that form after World War II. And in other cases, if Christian unionism did not already exist, it is doubtful that it would be necessary to invent it. The religious issue is therefore of decreasing importance. Moreover, the increasingly technical nature of the problems of European integration serve to lessen ideological debate even further. Christian unions often find themselves disagreeing on labor matters with their ideological allies in the Christian Democratic parties and agreeing with socialist politicians. Today, history and personalities — rather than substantive issues — seem to be the major reasons for the continued existence of separate Christian unions in Europe.

Yet, history and personalities are reasons enough for the continued existence of Christian unions. The particular historical experiences of Belgium and the Netherlands, for example, virtually insure the survival of Christian unions in those countries for some time to come. And these same factors encourage their ICFTU affiliated opponents to oppose concessions which would unite the Internationals and still leave separate the national confederations. That increased cooperation and even unity seem the best ways to maximize the influence of European labor, is no guarantee that the Internationals will follow this course.

On the other hand, there seems to be no reason why the present level of cooperation cannot be maintained, or even increased, without any formal change in the relationships of the two Internationals, if sufficient good will and skill are employed by responsible officials in both organizations. This is, perhaps, an untidy arrangement, no « permanent solution » at all. But it is probably the only realizable alternative.

### Summary

European Christian trade unions have established the Federation of the IFCTU to coordinate the European activities of Christian unions.

Due to numerical weakness, Christian unions must look elsewhere for support. The natural ideological allies of the IFCTU, the Christian Democratic parties, have generally adopted economic and social policies, especially on the European level, which are unsatisfactory to Christian trade unionism. The attempted expansion into Germany seems to have been a failure, at least as measured in terms of numbers and increased influence for Christian labor; expansion in Italy is also unpromising at present. But ties with Christian Democracy and the attempted expansion have hampered the development and maintenance of good relations with the ICFTU and make unlikely any formal agreement between the two Internationals. On the other hand, the two Internationals are in general accord on most matters concerning European integration and work well together on the staff level. Consequently, it appears likely that informal cooperation will increase despite the absence of organic ties.

## RESUME

Le syndicalisme chrétien, en Europe, a traditionnellement été écartelé entre son milieu culturel religieux et les intérêts économiques de la classe laborieuse. La croix et la gloire du syndicalisme chrétien ont été de pouvoir marcher dans deux directions et de réconcilier en lui-même les réclamations conflictuelles de la religion et des travailleurs.

Cette étude portant sur la réaction des syndicats chrétiens vis-à-vis l'établissement des organismes européens de coopération économique montre que ce dualisme traditionnel s'appliquerait aussi à leur action sur le plan européen.

C'est pour coordonner leurs activités européennes, surtout et d'abord, que les syndicats chrétiens d'Europe ont fondé cette fédération qui a pour nom la *Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Chrétiens* et qui est connue sous le sigle CISC.

En raison de bien des faiblesses, les syndicats chrétiens sont obligés d'aller chercher du support étranger dans leur action. A cause de liens idéologiques, les alliés naturels de la CISC sont les partis démocrates chrétiens. Mais ceux-ci ont généralement adopté des politiques économiques et sociales, spécialement sur le plan européen, qui étaient insatisfaisantes pour le mouvement syndical chrétien.

Les tentatives d'expansion des syndicats chrétiens en Allemagne semblent être loin d'une réussite, si l'on prend comme critère les effectifs recrutés et leur influence auprès des travailleurs. En Italie, une action analogue n'apparaît pas plus prometteuse.

Mais ces liens avec la Démocratie chrétienne et ces échecs dans l'expansion ont gêné le développement et le maintien de bonnes relations avec la *Confédération Internationale des Syndicats Libres (CISL)* et rendent peu probable tout accord formel entre les deux Internationales.

D'un autre côté, les deux Internationales sont généralement d'accord sur la plupart des questions qui se rapportent à l'intégration économique de l'Europe et s'entendent assez bien au niveau des dirigeants supérieurs.

C'est pourquoi il semble bien qu'une coopération informelle va aller s'accroissant, malgré l'absence de liens organiques entre les deux Confédérations internationales.