

# Statement of Principles of the Confederation of National Trade Unions\*

---

Volume 16, Number 1, January 1961

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1021894ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1021894ar>

[See table of contents](#)

---

**Publisher(s)**

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

**ISSN**

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

---

**Cite this document**

(1961). Statement of Principles of the Confederation of National Trade Unions\*. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 16(1), 118–123.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1021894ar>

élever leurs enfants et à leur assurer une éducation et une instruction adéquates; le droit à une habitation salubre et suffisamment spacieuse dont ils seront, autant que possible, propriétaires.

#### INSTRUCTION ET CULTURE

La CSN croit que l'instruction à tous les degrés et la culture doivent être accessibles à tous les citoyens. La CSN croit qu'il faut démocratiser notre système d'enseignement de façon à y assurer partout une représentation équitable des parents, premiers responsables de l'éducation.

### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF THE CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS \*

#### CHARACTER AND AIMS OF THE CNTU

The Confederation of National Trade Unions is a free and democratic national organization of trade unions. In its thinking, it adheres to Christian principles, on which it bases its action.

Its objective is to promote the occupational, economic, social, and moral interests of Canadian workers. In its own particular sphere and in co-operation with other institutions it seeks to bring about for the workers economic and social conditions that will enable them to live as human beings and Christians. The Confederation wishes to contribute to the establishment of orderly relations between employer and employees according to the principles of truth, justice and charity.

It believes in the primacy of spiritual forces in the establishment of the social order. This belief is founded on its concept of the human being.

#### HUMAN BEINGS

The CNTU believes in the fundamental dignity and equality of all men.

The dignity of the human being rests on the fact that man, being created in the image of God, is endowed with intelligence and free will and has an eternal and supernatural destiny. Man is therefore a personal being responsible for his acts and for his life; the lower creatures are ordained for his happiness.

The fundamental equality of all men springs from their common origin, nature, and purpose.

The CNTU recognizes that the proper organization of society calls for diverse functions organized hierarchically. Access to those offices must be based on objective criteria which reject class privileges and favouritism in all its forms.

---

\* *Industrial Relations* published the Statement of Principles of the CCCL (Vol. 10, No. 1, December 1954, pp. 56-60) and that of the QFL (Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1958, pp. 99-102).

The CNTU does not tolerate interference with a person's rights on the grounds of his language, nationality, race, sex or religion.

#### RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

To enable him to fulfil his destiny and to discharge his obligations, man is vested with inalienable natural rights that can never be denied, abolished or ignored.

To exercise those rights, man must enjoy corresponding freedoms. He must, however, take into account the limits imposed by the nature and finality of human beings and by the co-existence of various people living together as a society.

The CNTU believes it necessary to recall some of the fundamental rights of workers which it intends to defend and to promote:

- 1.—the right to work;
- 2.—the right of association;
- 3.—the right to a fair distribution of wealth;
- 4.—the right to respect of the individual in his physical and moral life;
- 5.—the right to truth, to education, and to culture;
- 6.—the right to legal security;
- 7.—the right of free expression;
- 8.—the right to participate in the economic, social, and political life of the nation.

#### SOCIETY

As his nature requires him to do, man must live in society to develop his faculties and fulfil his destiny. He must be regarded as the active subject of social life and not as a mere object.

It is a duty for each citizen to contribute to the public good according to the requirements of social justice.

That is why the workers, like other men, are entitled to participate in the organization of social life.

#### THE STATE

The State should promote the common good. The CNTU believes that it should, by its laws and their proper application, safeguard the civil rights and liberties of everyone and foster the development of autonomous intermediate groups whose active contribution is necessary for the maintenance of social peace.

The State should concern itself above all with directing and orienting the economy and the distribution of wealth and with establishing conditions that ensure full employment and social security.

## DEMOCRACY

The CNTU has faith in political democracy, because it is the system that best guarantees the freedom of citizens and their participation in civil responsibilities. Democracy implies universal suffrage and the division of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The CNTU believes that our political system should not be at the mercy of a few privileged people who use power for the protection of their privileges and their selfish interests.

The CNTU believes that a true political democracy is inconceivable without democratization of the economy. It is opposed to any form of totalitarianism.

## WORK

Work, which is the chief factor in the production of wealth, engages man with all his being: his physical strength, his mind, his will, his responsibilities, his motives, and his aspirations.

The CNTU therefore holds that the material and quantitative aspect of work should not be the only consideration, and it vigorously calls for working and employment conditions that respect the dignity of the workers and enable them to discharge their obligations in a normal way.

The CNTU also demands for the worker a share in the formulation of working conditions and in the life of the business.

Since each man has the duty of selfpreservation imposed on him by nature, he has the natural right to work, and society owes him the chance to obtain steady and remunerative employment in keeping with his aspirations and abilities.

## INCOME OF THE WORKER

The workers of all countries are entitled to a fair wage and a comparable income that will permit them and their families to live under acceptable human conditions.

The workers should receive from enterprise their fair share of the wealth which they helped to create. They are also entitled to share in the general prosperity of the nation.

The CNTU believes also that there should be equal pay for male and female labour for work of equal value.

## TRADE UNIONISM

Trade unionism is an essential means by which the workers can protect and promote the interests of their trade. If the union really represents the workers concerned, it is the normal body for negotiation, representation, co-operation, and participation at all levels: that of the individual business, industry, and the national

economy. Accordingly, the right of association of all workers, without discrimination, should be recognized and the free exercise of that right should be guaranteed.

Among its immediate objectives in this sphere, the CNTU wishes to ensure the full exercise of the right of association, and it advocates collective agreements, social security measures, and sound labour legislation. It attaches great importance to the economic vocational, social, intellectual and moral training of the workers.

#### PROPERTY

The CNTU is mindful of the universal destination of all resources of the earth and the social finality of material goods.

The CNTU recognizes the legitimacy of the right of private ownership and affirms its twofold nature — individual and social. However, it takes great care not to identify private ownership and capitalism. It repudiates liberal capitalism and rejects Marxism in all its forms.

Therefore it demands for the workers, and for the other members of society, the means of owning property privately.

The exercise of the right of ownership should be regulated according to the nature of the object depending on whether the goods are for individual use or are capital goods. Private or public ownership of capital goods is subject to larger social charges that arise from the nature of such goods, from their subordination to the common welfare of society, and from the fact that the lives of the workers are engaged in the enterprise.

The State should control all economic activity to ensure the priority of the general interest over the private interest. Some business concerns, because of their great importance for the welfare of the citizens or because of their tendencies to abuses, need to be watched more closely and kept within just limits by suitable control measures.

If there is a danger for the common good in leaving certain services or means of production under the control of private interests, the community should assume responsibility for them. The management of such enterprises will be entrusted as far as possible to autonomous bodies that are representative of all interests.

#### CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The CNTU sees in the co-operative movement an excellent means of economic and social improvement and a necessary complement to trade union action designed to reduce the cost of living and to humanize and democratize the economy.

#### ECONOMIC LIFE

The CNTU considers that the economic life should be at the service of man and that society should allow everyone to play a responsible part in it and to share in its organization.

The CNTU believes that economic life should not be guided solely by the mechanism of technology, but that it should be subordinated to moral and spiritual values and directed according to the standards of social justice and charity.

With a view to ensuring harmony in labour relations and providing for the needs of the community, the CNTU believes in the necessity of establishing for the economy a legal status founded on the community of responsibilities between all who play a part in the economic life.

The CNTU notes that there are several forms of enterprise. It recognizes as valid those which, while pursuing their own aims, respect the human personality and best serve the common good.

The CNTU advocates participation by the workers in the management of enterprises by the introduction of elements of the partnership contract into the labour contract. This development will encourage the integration of the workers in the enterprise and will lead to better co-operation between the employer, the employees and their trade union organization. Thus, as is proper, the management of the enterprises will cease to represent exclusively the interests of capital.

Economic life should be organized in such a way as to ensure close co-operation between the public authorities and the employers' and workers' organizations at the industry and national levels.

At the industry level the workers and their employers, through their union organization, should join hands in forming bodies for co-operation which will have the function of studying the general problems of their industry and finding adequate solutions.

At the provincial and national levels, according to the jurisdictions established, the CNTU believes in the necessity for appropriate organizations to which the representatives of the workers and of their employers should be appointed by their respective bodies. The role of such organizations would be to co-ordinate and guide the economic life under the supervision of the State.

Finally, the CNTU believes that Canada, in conjunction with other states, should aim at the international organization of the economy in order to ensure a better distribution of the wealth and to guarantee, not only economic security and stability in the world, but also peace and harmony among nations.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

The CNTU affirms that the workers are entitled to the security resulting from an adequate income, from stability of employment and from effective protection against the risks of work and certain risks inherent in life.

The CNTU believes that the production of material goods should first be geared to the satisfaction of legitimate human needs and that a policy of full employment should be established. But it is also necessary to adopt social security

measures which provide for replacement and complementary income. In the planning and application of such measures, the rights of individuals should be respected and an appeal should be made for the co-operation of the parties concerned and of their representative bodies.

#### THE FAMILY

The family is of such importance that everything possible should be done to preserve its integrity, to guarantee its rights, and to ensure its fullest development. The family preceded civil society, of which it is the first cell, and it cannot sacrifice its role, its functions, and its essential prerogatives to society.

The CNTU claims for the families of workers the chance to exercise all their rights: the right of married couples to a normal conjugal life, the right of fathers to provide a living for their dependents; the right of mothers to devote themselves in the home to their tasks of guardians, housekeepers and educators; the right of parents to bring up their children and to provide them with an adequate upbringing and education; the right to a healthful and sufficiently roomy home of which they will, as far as possible, be the owners.

#### EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The CNTU believes that education at all levels, as well as culture, should be accessible to all citizens. It believes that our educational system should be democratized in order to ensure an equitable representation of parents, who have the primary responsibility for education.

## RECENSIONS - BOOK REVIEWS

*Confidences d'un patron sur la réforme de l'entreprise*, par Alexandre Dubois, Economie et Humanisme — Les Editions ouvrières, 12, avenue Soeur-Rosalie, Paris (13), 1960, 140 pp.

L'entreprise est la cellule de base de la production. Elle est le lieu de rencontre entre les divers agents qui travaillent ensemble à mettre sur le marché un produit ou un service. C'est à son niveau que s'opère la première répartition du revenu soit par la rémunération du travail ou par la distribution des dividendes. Dans le système capitaliste, on n'a pas encore réussi à saisir parfaitement cette réalité complexe, à l'ordonner, à lui donner une structure juridique qui tienne compte à la fois de l'aspect économique, de l'aspect humain et de l'aspect social. Et tous ceux qui ne veulent pas rester à la surface des choses tentent d'apporter leur solution. Le mou-

vement pour la réforme de l'entreprise n'est pas localisé en un pays particulier. En France, en Grande-Bretagne, aux Etats-Unis et même au Canada, on se penche sur ce problème et propose des remèdes.

L'auteur de cet ouvrage n'est pas un inconnu. Directeur-gérant d'une entreprise prospère, depuis une vingtaine d'années, il est à la pointe de divers mouvements pour une réforme de l'entreprise; il ne se contente pas de mener le combat sur le plan des idées, de bâtir des théories. Dans son usine, en collaboration avec les travailleurs et le syndicat ouvrier, il expérimente avec audace et prudence ses conceptions. Il a aussi le courage d'éliminer les hypothèses qu'il ne peut vérifier. Déjà, en 1945, il publiait un ouvrage qui, à l'époque, avait attiré l'attention, *Structures nouvelles dans l'entreprise*. Il nous revient, cette