

Le Roy, Albert
Catholics....

ABK 9881 c.2.

330107

LABOR &

laboring classes

Catholics and the International Labor Organization

BY ALBERT LE ROY, S. J.

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR OFFICE

Catholics and the International Labor Organization

By

Albert Le Roy, S.J.

The International Labor Office



Printed for the
SOCIAL ACTION DEPARTMENT
NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

THE PAULIST PRESS
401 West 59th Street
New York

Nihil Obstat:

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur:

✠ FRANCIS J. SPELLMAN,
Archbishop of New York.

New York, August 16, 1939.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. A.
BY THE PAULIST PRESS, NEW YORK, N. Y.



THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION
BUILDING, GENEVA

FOREWORD

THE word "catholic" means "universal." The universal and international Church is interested in and sympathetic with the just aspirations of labor in all countries. The International Labor Organization represents a systematic and comprehensive endeavor to improve the working conditions of the toiling masses in every part of the world.

To the great majority of American Catholics the part taken by their European brethren in the foundation of the I. L. O. is entirely unknown. As far back as 1884, the *Fribourg Union*, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Mermillo and containing representatives from several countries, was exemplifying international Catholic Action for the study of the social question and the improvement of the condition of labor; as early as 1887, another great Swiss, Caspar Decurtins, was endeavoring to induce the legislature of his country to "take the initiative in convening an international conference to prepare a basis for uniform labor legislation throughout the world"; in 1890, such a conference was held in Berlin, at which Bishop Kopp, of Breslau, represented the Holy See; in 1893, Pope Leo XIII approved a proposal to bring about an international agreement for labor legislation, pointing out that uniformity in this field was essential to protect high standards in one country against injury through competition by countries having lower standards. The Holy See was officially represented from the beginning at the sessions of the *International Association for Labor Legislation*, established in 1900. After the Great War, the Christian trade unions gave enthusiastic support to the project of setting up an *International Labor Organization* at Geneva.

Father Leroy's pamphlet gives us an interesting and sufficiently comprehensive account of the origins, principles, structure, spirit and achievements of the I. L. O. As he points out, there are two facts underlying the scope and work of the Organization: conditions of labor involving injustice; and the necessity of international agreement to provide a remedy. The guiding principles of the institution, he shows, are in close conformity with Catholic prin-

ciples, even in the matter of their phrasing. The most striking illustration of this resemblance he finds in the *Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction*, issued by the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic War Council in February, 1919, and recently reprinted in a Twentieth Anniversary Edition. A much older instance is found in the regulations adopted by the Jesuits for the protection of the Indians in the Paraguay Missions. These regulations included "all the features of modern social legislation." The summary of them given in this pamphlet will probably come as a pleasant surprise to the great majority of the readers.

Perhaps the most striking testimony to the affinity between Catholic social principles and those of the I. L. O. was that offered by M. Albert Thomas, the first head of the Organization, a few years ago, when he declared that "the principles and even the forms of words" in the Labor Charter are practically identical with some of the propositions in *Rerum Novarum*.

The latter half of Father Leroy's pamphlet describes the structure, authority, functions and results of the I. L. O. The description is adequate for all practical purposes. The last chapter is entitled: "The Collaboration of Catholics." In it the author summarizes the co-operation of Catholics in various countries with the I. L. O. and its work. Here he gives generous, though brief, recognition to the activities of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems.

Father Leroy has done a good job in producing this pamphlet. Nowhere should it be more welcome or more useful than in the United States. American Catholics have not yet become adequately conscious of their international obligations and opportunities. But they are making progress in this respect. Father Leroy's pamphlet is well calculated to accelerate that progress in the great field of labor conditions and labor legislation.

JOHN A. RYAN,

*Director, Department of Social Action,
National Catholic Welfare Conference.*

Washington, D. C.

July 25, 1939.

PREFACE

A VISITOR who crosses the entrance hall of the International Labor Office and climbs the first few steps of the main staircase, invariably stops to admire a mural painting presented by the Christian Trade Unions. This work of the French artist Maurice Denis would not be out of place in a church in one of our industrial cities. The central figure is that of Christ in all the grace and beauty of His eighteen years. The time is the evening of a working day in Nazareth. Near Him is Joseph, leaning on his carpenter's bench, and, a little farther away, the Virgin, holding her distaff. Seated at the feet of Christ are His Galilean compatriots, wearing the costume of the period—workers who, under the same skies and tilling the same soil, earned, like Him, their daily bread by the sweat of their brows and lived on the same fruits of the earth. Beyond them are workers from modern factories: a metal worker, naked to the waist, other workers in caps, an engineer, an artist and an apprentice. Behind them, coming from the fields, are peasants returning from their daily toil. One of them, with his scythe over his shoulder, has come close to the Master. Seated in a corner, in an attitude of contemplation, are Serrarens, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, and Gaston Tessier, Secretary-General of the French Confederation of Christian Workers. All are listening attentively to the words spoken on the evening of a hard day's work by the young Carpenter of Nazareth, who did His share in the toil of men.

The artist's purpose is clear. These words, so simple and so sublime that they must penetrate every heart, for "never did man speak like this man," were not spoken merely for the listeners of one day; they are for every age and every country. They were addressed equally to the humble craftsmen of Nazareth and to the peasants, miners and metal workers of the twentieth century. They are still the source to which thousands of men, whether manual workers or brain workers, constantly return in their search for a remedy for the evils of this age and for a solution of its social problems.

This fresco explains more clearly than any lengthy speech could do the close and cordial relationship which has grown up on the basis of mutual respect between Catholics and the International Labor Organization. Catholics recognize in the Geneva institution a powerful force which can bring a little more justice into this world. The International Labor Office, which is sincerely anxious to be universal in its activities and to exclude no one who is prepared to collaborate in its work of social progress, has always shown itself willing to give Catholics their full share in its activities.

A brief survey of the origins, principles, structure and achievements of the International Labor Organization will show more fully the part Catholics play in its work and the great opportunities of collaboration which are open to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD, by Rt. Rev. John A. Ryan, D.D.	iii
PREFACE	v
CHAPTER I	
ORIGINS	9
CHAPTER II	
PRINCIPLES	13
CHAPTER III	
STRUCTURE	23
CHAPTER IV	
RESULTS	30
CHAPTER V	
THE COLLABORATION OF CATHOLICS	42
APPENDIX A	48
APPENDIX B	51

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, GENEVA— (Frontispiece)	
JOHN G. WINANT, DIRECTOR OF THE I. L. O.	29
THE DIGNITY OF WORK.....	(Center)

Catholics and the International Labor Organization

By ALBERT LE ROY, S.J.,
The International Labor Office

CHAPTER I

ORIGINS

A. Before the War

THE International Labor Organization came into being just after the World War; but the idea was an old one, which had been stirring in men's minds for many years earlier. From the outset, Catholics took up the idea with sympathy. The unbridled competition that existed in the nineteenth century inevitably led men to the conclusion that it was only by breaking down the barriers of national frontiers and seeking an international solution for the social problem that remedies could be found for the undeserved sufferings of the working classes.

It was to meet this need that the Fribourg Union was founded in 1884 under the chairmanship of Monsignor Mermillod. It was an association of leading persons from various countries in Europe, who met once a year to study the questions of the moment together and thus provide a certain unity for the Christian movement.

In 1887, a Swiss, Decurtins, who belonged to the Catholic social movement, requested the Federal Council of his country to take the initiative in convening an international conference to prepare a basis for uniform labor legislation throughout the world. This idea bore fruit in 1890, when the Berlin Conference was held, at which Monsignor Kopp, Prince Bishop of Breslau, was present as representative of the Holy See. There was no more enthusiastic supporter of the work than Cardinal Manning who considered that it

was a point of honor for his country to give effect to the conclusions of that conference concerning weekly rest, the employment of women and children, and safety in mines.

The year 1891 saw the appearance of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. This Encyclical, addressed to the Church Universal, and providing it with a uniform social doctrine, brought out still more strongly the trend of opinion in favor of international solutions.

In 1893, Decurtins, at the Workers' Assembly in Bienne, again was the protagonist of the idea of an international conference. He persuaded the Assembly to convene a congress of workers' delegates without distinction of nationality, religious belief, or political opinions, to seek an agreement on protective labor legislation. Leo XIII unreservedly approved this proposal.

"It is clear," he wrote, "that the protection given to workers in their employment would be quite inadequate if it took the form of different laws drawn up by each nation independently. The various commodities from different countries compete with each other on the same market, and therefore the differences between the regulations under which workers are employed in different lands would enable the products of the industry of one nation to flourish at the expense of another."

It is not therefore surprising that when the International Association for Labor Legislation was established in 1900, the Holy See decided to be officially represented, to pay a regular contribution, and to send a delegate to its meetings. This association was really the International Labor Organization in embryo. It had a permanent office in Basle which collected information and centralized the work of research. The procedure was a dual one: a technical conference first met to prepare drafts and make proposals; this was followed by a second, diplomatic conference, at which the representatives had full powers from their Governments, and this conference took decisions. In this way Conventions were adopted concerning the employment of women at night and the prohibition of the use of white phosphorous in the manufacture of matches. These were proposed by the technical conference at Berne in 1905 and ratified by the conference of plenipotentiaries

in the same city in 1906. In 1913 another technical conference prepared draft Conventions restricting the hours of work of women and young persons and prohibiting the employment of children at night. The outbreak of war in 1914, however, prevented their ratification.

B. Since the War

Shocked by the horrors of war, and inspired by the hope that out of so much suffering and ruin a world of greater justice would be born, the workers of all the allied and neutral countries had several times demanded that the terms of peace should "safeguard the working class of all countries from the attacks of international capitalist competition and assure it a minimum guarantee of moral and material order as regards labor legislation, trade union rights, migration, social insurance, hours of work, and industrial hygiene and safety."

The Christian Trade Unions,¹ far from disapproving or ignoring these proposals, gave them their fullest support, for they were in close harmony with their own desires and their own doctrine. In June, 1918, at Le Havre, the Christian Trade Unions urged:

"That the Treaty of Peace, following the example of various international conventions, and taking account more particularly of the results obtained by the Berne Conferences, should contain clauses embodying the fundamental points of a system of protective labor legislation or at least the principle of such legislation;

"That the representatives of the various trade union associations should be invited to take part in drafting this agreement;

"That the Convention adopted should follow the dictates of humanity and of Christian morality, more especially as recapitulated in the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the conditions of life of the workers."

When hostilities ceased, their demands became more pressing, and they prepared an outline of an organization

¹ Christian trade unions, comprising Catholics and Protestants, were formed on Christian principles in many countries of Europe the latter part of the last century in order to offset Socialist teachings and to give a Christian philosophy to the labor movement. They are internationally united in the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, with headquarters in Utrecht, Holland.

which was not unlike that actually established. The Congress of Christian Trade Unions in Paris in March, 1919, demanded:

"(1) The establishment of an international labor institute, to be responsible for drafting and promoting labor legislation with which the various national laws should be brought into harmony, and to supervise the application of that legislation through an international inspectorate;

"(2) That each nation should be represented in that institute by two Government delegates, two delegates of the workers' organizations and two delegates of employers' organizations, so as to insure the due representation of the various industrial, commercial and agricultural organizations, irrespective of the trend of opinion to which they belong."

After long years of preparation, therefore, the time had come for the creation of an international labor organization. Catholics were all the more ready to welcome this step because they felt that their repeated efforts in favor of a cherished idea were at last being rewarded. No more striking tribute to this fact has been paid than that from Albert Thomas himself, the first Director of the International Labor Office, who publicly recognized the part played by Catholics in an official message which was read at Rome on the occasion of the festivities commemorating the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* and welcoming the promulgation of *Quadragesimo Anno*:

"The International Labor Organization, in which the peoples put their trust immediately after the world disaster, entrusting to it the establishment of really humane labor conditions as part of the effort to secure peace and world harmony, has set about this immense task with great confidence and enthusiasm. It realizes that it is not a spontaneous creation, the result of a sudden burst of enthusiasm, but rather the consummation of prolonged effort and of close and active collaboration between all men of good will and all who are striving after ideals. The seed fell on good ground, which had been carefully prepared over many years by workers who were anxious to secure the reign of social justice, and among them by those who based their convictions on the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*."

CHAPTER II

PRINCIPLES

A. The Starting Point

THE International Labor Organization was established just after the war by a special commission presided over by Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor. Its constitution was included in the treaties of peace which put an end to the War—as Part XIII of the Treaties of Versailles, St. Germain and Trianon and Part XII of the Treaty of Neuilly.

In reality it is entirely independent of the Treaties and forms a separate entity. Its relations with the League of Nations do not in any way affect its complete autonomy. Countries that belong to the League of Nations are required to be Members of the International Labor Organization, but the reverse is not the case. Germany and Austria, which had to wait several years after the War before being admitted to the League, were Members of the International Labor Organization from the outset.² Japan³ and Brazil when they withdrew from the former, remained very active Members of the latter. The United States, which never ratified the Treaty of Versailles or belonged to the League of Nations, became a Member of the International Labor Organization in 1934 when President Roosevelt, acting under authority of a Joint Resolution of Congress, accepted the invitation to membership. At present the Organization has fifty-five States Members, including all the important industrial Powers, with the exception of Germany, Japan and Italy.⁴

In fact the International Labor Organization stands upon its own field of activity in which all can find a common meeting ground. The problems with which it deals are

² Germany resigned from the two organizations in 1933.

³ Japan, following the Munich pact, notified the Organization that she would cease to collaborate with the technical services of the League of Nations and with the International Labor Organization by the end of 1938.

⁴ In December, 1937, Italy withdrew from the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization. This decision will become effective after a period of two years, in December, 1939.

not ephemeral; they are eternally important. They are problems not of local but of universal interest. They are the most important questions in the everyday life of the people of the nations. They have nothing to do with differences of opinion between two countries, or with changes in boundaries; they concern the fate of humanity as a whole. The question at issue is whether, throughout the whole world, from Japan to England and from America to France, men are to be able to earn in peace their daily bread or their bowl of rice; to provide for the subsistence of their wives and families; to be saved from poverty, both them and their families, when overtaken by sickness; and, after a lifetime of labor, to enjoy a few years of rest and peace before their days on earth are ended.

The Organization stands above political discussions. It also stands above doctrinaire discussions and differences of ideology. It was set up, not to elaborate theories, but to remedy crying abuses and to insure a little more happiness for everyone. In the world today human beings are suffering and struggling, because their legal conditions of labor are not sufficiently humane. The task of the Organization is to bring them help.

That is the starting point from which the extent and limits of the work can be defined. There are only two facts which must be recognized and all the rest follows: the first is that conditions of labor exist which involve injustice; and the second is that these conditions can be remedied only by international agreement. The Preamble justifying the creation of the International Labor Organization reads as follows:

“ . . . Whereas conditions of labor exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperiled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required: as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labor supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children,

young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organization of vocational and technical education and other measures;

“Whereas also the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labor is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries;

“The HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES, moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world, agree to the following:

“A permanent organization is hereby established for the promotion of the objects set forth in the Preamble.”

B. The International Labor Charter

The aspirations expressed in this Preamble, although they do not cover the whole field of Catholic social endeavor, at least form an integral part of it and have always been shared by the supporters of that movement.

When the guiding principles of the Organization, now everywhere known as the International Labor Charter, are examined, the resemblances will be seen to be equally striking. Catholics can unreservedly accept all these principles since the very phrases are familiar to them. This will be clear from a mere reading of the text:

“The High Contracting Parties, recognizing that the well-being, physical, moral and intellectual, of industrial wage-earners is of supreme international importance, have framed, in order to further this great end, the permanent machinery provided for in Section I. . . .

“They recognize that differences of climate, habits and customs, of economic opportunity and industrial tradition, make strict uniformity in the conditions of labor difficult of immediate attainment. But, holding as they do that labor should not be regarded merely as an article of commerce, they think that there are methods and principles for regulating labor conditions which all industrial communities should endeavor to apply, so far as their special circumstances will permit.

“Among these methods and principles, the following seem to the High Contracting Parties to be of special and urgent importance:

“*First*: The guiding principle (above enunciated) that labor should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce.

“*Second*: The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.

“*Third*: The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country.

“*Fourth*: The adoption of an eight hours’ day or a forty-eight hours’ week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained.⁵

“*Fifth*: The adoption of a weekly rest of at least twenty-four hours, which should include Sunday wherever practicable.

“*Sixth*: The abolition of child labor and the imposition of such limitations on the labor of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development.

“*Seventh*: The principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.⁶

“*Eighth*: The standard set by law in each country with respect to the conditions of labor should have due regard to the equitable economic treatment of all workers lawfully resident therein.

“*Ninth*: Each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed.

⁵ New economic and social circumstances, the most important of which was the depression and the widespread unemployment which accompanied it, have now brought us beyond the stage of the 8-hour day; the question of the moment is the 40-hour week.

⁶ It should be noted that this principle is intended merely to remedy the obvious injustice of paying a woman a lower wage than a man for the same work merely because she is a woman. Such a practice means exploiting female labor and also tends to bring down rates of wages for men. Justice demands that when a woman performs the same work as a man she should be paid the same amount. The paragraph was not intended to refer to questions of family wages or compensation for family responsibilities—a matter that is dealt with in practice by means of family allowances.

“Without claiming that these methods and principles are either complete or final, the High Contracting Parties are of opinion that they are well fitted to guide the policy of the League of Nations; and that, if adopted by the industrial communities who are Members of the League, and safeguarded in practice by an adequate system of such inspection, they will confer lasting benefits upon the wage-earners of the world.”

Anyone who has even a slight acquaintance with Christian social doctrine will immediately realize that Catholics not only can but ought to subscribe to all these principles. It is their own program, a program based on the need for justice which they have maintained for many years. It was laid down in the Papal Encyclicals and has constantly been put forward by the leaders of the Church in every country, such as Cardinal Gibbons when defending the Knights of Labor, by Monsignor Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, in his famous speech of 1869 on the trends of the working-class movement, and by Cardinal Manning, the great Christian leader, who was so popular in London that his funeral brought together representatives of Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales walking side by side with representatives of the trade unions and of the dockers. Read once again the following pages from the message which Cardinal Manning sent in 1890 to the President of the Liège Congress; it might be mistaken for a preliminary draft of the International Labor Charter:

“Political economy is not a matter of values and exchanges; or of free contracts only, but of human life in all its social needs and welfare. It is impossible to discuss how many hours a day a man or a woman shall work, until we have first laid down how many hours in the day are needed that a man may live a human life, or how much time in the day is needed that a woman may fulfill the duties of domestic life.

“In mines and other severe labors a day of eight hours is reasonable and just; in lighter labors a day of ten hours may safely be admitted.⁷

⁷ It should not be forgotten that these lines were written in 1890 and the demands they contain represented considerable progress in the light of the practice of that period. One may safely presume that Cardinal Manning would have been prepared today to accept the idea of a 40-hour week.

“For women who are mothers and heads of families it is hard to see how they can be absent from their children. For other women eight or ten hours is as much as can be given without hindering the due fulfillment of the duties of human life, and the power of sharing in the domestic life of homes.

“For children no work ought to be permitted until the child has been duly educated. This must vary in the various conditions of national life; but in almost all countries the age for remaining at school ought to be raised. For young persons all noxious trades hurtful to health ought to be forbidden by law. In mines the work of women and children ought to be absolutely illegal; in like manner all night work.

“The rest of the Lord’s day ought to be protected by law for all who live by labor.

“Finally the right of uniting for mutual protection and support is a natural and legitimate right inherent in capital and labor—in employers and employed. Such unions are most fruitful and peaceful when masters and men unite in one common confraternity or guild. When they are separate and independent, they ought freely to confer, face to face, in any contention arising between them.

“My last word will sound perhaps over-sanguine and over-bold. I do not believe that the powerful relations of employers and employed will ever be safely and solidly secured until the just and due proportion between profits and wages shall have been fixed, recognized, laid down, and publicly known to govern all free contracts between capital and labor.”

More recently, in February, 1919, the Program of Social Reconstruction issued by the Bishops of the United States a few months before the International Labor Charter was drawn up contained all the essential points of that Charter and was even more daring in some of the reforms advocated. The principal points may be reproduced here as summarized in an excellent pamphlet prepared by the National Catholic Welfare Conference.⁸

⁸ Rev. R. A. McGowan, *Catholic Work in the U. S. for Social Justice*, p. 5.

"1. The continuance of the National War Labor Board to put the power of government back of the family living wage, fair hours and the right of collective bargaining.

"2. The necessity of a high level of general purchasing power to secure steady prosperity.

"3. Social insurance against unemployment, old age, sickness and invalidity; and a co-ordinated system of employment bureaus.

"4. Minimum wage laws and equal pay for equal work for women.

"5. The development of consumers' co-operation and of government competition with monopolies not otherwise restrainable.

"6. High taxes on large incomes, excess profits and inheritances.

"7. The rise of labor to share in management.

"8. The rise of the working people to share in the ownership of the things with which and on which they work (through co-partnership and producers' co-operation) if we are to have an efficient economic regime or one safe from revolution.

"9. The supremacy of the right to a living wage over even interest on investment.

"10. Application to both public service monopolies and other businesses of the principle of no more than a fair return on actual investment."

The similarity is surprising, but still more surprising is the fact that these aspirations are by no means of recent date. They are to be found in some form or another, according to the circumstances of time and place, but always identical in substance, long before modern industry began to develop. Social problems have now become much more extensive, but in essence they remain the same, as do also the principles for their solution.

If we go back to the South America of two centuries ago we shall find that the weaker class for whose protection social legislation was then necessary was not the modern proletariat but the Indian who had been brought under domination by the white settler and whose fate seemed

likely to become little better than that of the ancient slave. The Jesuits, who established those extraordinary republics among the Guarani Indians, commonly known as the Paraguay Missions, accepted as an elementary truth the idea that labor was not a commodity or article of commerce and that the worker was entitled to the benefits of a system of rules guaranteeing him the full rights of human existence. In spite of their name these Missions extended over territory belonging to six different republics: Argentine, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil and Bolivia. It was a unique system and wonderfully suited to the character of a childlike people used to nomadic conditions of life who were to be trained to a sedentary existence; full account was taken of their qualities and their defects, and particularly of their improvident nature which made them entirely careless of the morrow.

All the features of modern social legislation, such as the protection of women and children, insurance against old age, sickness and accident, the limitation of the working day, the weekly rest and even vocational guidance can be found in an original form in those Missions.

The land was divided into two parts: one was divided up individually among the different families, who were free to cultivate it as they wished; the other part, known as God's land, was cultivated jointly and the produce was used for the maintenance of the aged, the infirm and the young, for the building of churches and houses, and for paying the modest taxes which the Missions owed to the King of Spain. There was no hereditary succession and no sale of property; children were educated entirely at the expense of the community, and on reaching his majority each child received the piece of land to which he was entitled. Each child also learned a trade, selected not haphazardly but according to personal ability and tastes. The working day was fixed at eight hours and the Indians worked for three days a week on God's land and three days on their own property. Widows and their daughters were engaged in making clothes, which were distributed to every member of the Mission, one garment a year being given to adults and two to children.

Money was nonexistent and would in any case have

been useless. The "foreign trade" of the Missions was very slight and was a monopoly of the community. As white settlers were not permitted to enter the territory, a caravan set out once a year for the nearest towns to sell the produce of the Mission and in particular the well-known Paraguayan maté which provides a favorite drink. The profits were used to buy products which the Missions could not manufacture themselves. The problems of the distribution of profits between capital and labor did not arise, for the whole yield was used for the benefit of the members of the native community. The Jesuits themselves lived on a modest allowance paid by the King of Spain.

Life was simple, with no luxuries but also with no poverty or misery. There could be no destitute persons in those Missions. Many of the social advantages which the International Labor Organization is trying to obtain for modern workers were guaranteed to the inhabitants of these settlements.

This idyllic system, based on principles so bold that we of the present-day should find them alarming, lasted for one hundred and fifty years and came to an end only as a result of violence when the Guarani Indians were deprived of their natural defenders, the Jesuits, and were unable to resist the armed attacks of their adversaries.

* * * *

Then as now, in America as in Europe, the guiding idea of Catholics was the same. In its practical expression it has to be adapted to varying circumstances of time and place, but in essence it remains unchanged and underlying it can always be perceived those ideals which are at the basis of the International Labor Organization.

It is not therefore surprising to find the same agreement revealed in the fundamental document in which Catholic social doctrine is now enunciated—the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. On many occasions since 1919 corresponding passages from the Encyclical and the International Labor Charter have been placed side by side in various kinds of synoptic tables. The concordance between the two is in any case freely recognized and appreciated on

both sides. On the one hand we have the statement of Pius XI in the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*:

“When after the great War the rulers of the leading nations wished to restore peace by an entire reform of social conditions, and among other measures drew up principles to regulate the just rights of labor, many of their conclusions agreed so perfectly with the principles and warnings of Leo XIII as to seem expressly deduced from them.”

These words are echoed by Albert Thomas, who had no hesitation, when paying tribute to the work done by Catholics under the inspiration of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in making the following assertion:

“When our Charter solemnly declares that Labor should not be regarded merely as a commodity, that young workers should be permitted to continue their physical and mental development, that the workers should receive wages guaranteeing them a reasonable standard of life, and that they should have freedom to combine in trade unions, is it surprising that Catholics should take pleasure in recognizing and emphasizing in the pontifical document of 1891 principles and even forms of words that are inspired by the same generous aspirations to secure the dignity of man, the inalienable rights of children, of women, and of every worker to a fair share in all the commodities they produce for society, the lawfulness of occupational associations and the necessity for State intervention?”

CHAPTER III

STRUCTURE

THE International Labor Organization consists of:

A General Conference of representatives of the States Members; and

The International Labor Office, which is controlled by a Governing Body.

1. The General Conference

The General Conference which must meet not less than once a year, is composed of delegates of the States Members of the Organization. Each Member is entitled to send four delegates with the right to vote: two representing the Government, one the employers and one the workers; and in addition, a certain number of experts (two for each item on the agenda).

This tripartite system of representation is a very happy innovation in the history of international relations. Not only do the governments have their say in the matter (as is only natural since they are responsible for the general interests of their countries) but also those who are more directly affected by the regulation of labor conditions, namely, the employers and the workers. As these interests are in some respects divergent, it is only fair that each of the groups concerned should have a representative. A strict balance is maintained between the two groups. If there is no delegate for one group from any country, either because the government failed to appoint one or because the Conference declined to accept his credentials, the other non-government delegate is merely entitled to take part in the discussions without having the right to vote.

The nomination of the employers' and workers' representatives is not left entirely to the discretion of the governments, for, if it were, these representatives would no longer be independent and would not truly represent the interests of their respective groups. Under Article 3 of the Constitution of the Organization, they must be appointed "in agreement with the industrial organizations,

if such organizations exist, which are most representative of employers or workpeople, as the case may be, in their respective countries.”

The interpretation of this provision has led to various differences of opinion, one of the most noteworthy of which is of special interest to the Catholic social movement and was destined to be settled in its favor. It arose in connection with the appointment of Mr. Serrarens, General Secretary of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, as workers' delegate of the Netherlands.

There were in the Netherlands five leading organizations of workers: the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions with 219,000 members, the Catholic Workers' Federation with 156,000, the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions (Protestant) with 76,000, the Netherlands General Trade Union Federation (neutral) with 51,000 and the Netherlands Labor Secretariat (extreme Left) with 36,000.

In 1919 and 1920 the workers' delegate to the Conference had been chosen from the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions, which, being numerically the largest, could be considered as the most representative. In 1921, after the Netherlands Government had tried in vain to bring about an agreement between all these organizations, it appointed as workers' delegate Mr. Serrarens, who was nominated by the Catholic, Protestant and neutral trade unions, which together had a slightly larger membership than the two other federations. The Minister of Labor indicated his intention of dividing the workers' organizations into two groups "according to whether they accepted or rejected the theory of the class struggle." The workers' delegate was to be selected alternately from these groups and at least one adviser would be chosen from the other group.

The Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions, supported at the Conference by the International Federation of Trade Unions as a whole, lodged a protest and claimed that it alone as the largest organization should have the right to nominate the workers' delegate. The Conference accepted the credentials of the delegate *de facto* and referred the legal question to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague.

The point at issue was the interpretation to be placed on the expression "the industrial organizations which are most representative of employers or work-people." What was the exact significance of the plural? Did it mean that the Government should apply to two organizations, one on each side—the most representative organization of employers and the most representative organization of workers—or was the Government intended to apply to the most representative organizations within each of the two groups? On the surface it was an elementary problem of grammar, but the grammarians left to themselves would have been unable to solve it. The Permanent Court decided in favor of the view taken by the Netherlands Government; it considered it to be in conformity with the provisions of Article 3 of the Constitution which nowhere lays down the principle of representation of only one organization. If only one organization had to be consulted this might result in the appointment of a delegate against the wishes of a majority of the workers in a country which had, for example, four organizations, the first with 110,000 members and each of the other three with 100,000. The aim of every government must certainly be to secure an agreement between all the most representative organizations of employers and between all the most representative organizations of workers, but that unfortunately is an ideal which it is difficult to realize in practice. What governments can be asked to do is to make every effort to bring about an agreement which can in the circumstances be considered as guaranteeing the most adequate representation of the workers of the country.

* * * *

The legal instruments at the disposal of the Conference for achieving its aims are *Conventions* and *Recommendations*.

1. Conventions, which are very carefully drawn up, usually at two different sessions, are exact and strictly defined texts. They must be adopted by a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast, each delegate, irrespective of the group to which he belongs (government, employers' or workers') voting separately and having one vote. This

again marks a definite advance on the usual practice of international conferences which used to require unanimity before a decision could be adopted.

A convention passed by the Conference does not thereby become binding on the States Members of the Organization; it must, irrespective of how the government delegates may have voted, be submitted for approval to the competent authority in each country, which is free to ratify or not.

Thus, although the States remain free to take the final decision, an important step forward has been made in the development of international legislation since the days of the International Association for Labor Legislation. For after the diplomatic conferences of the former Association, the governments were not obliged to submit the draft conventions that were adopted to their parliaments for ratification.

2. Recommendations do not bind governments to accept a definite text; they lay down principles which governments are invited to take into account in their legislation and in their administrative practice. They, too, have to be submitted to the competent legislative authority and if they are approved, the State is required to give an account of the steps it has taken to give effect to the Recommendations.

Some provision had to be made for supervising the application of conventions. The Members of the Organization are therefore required to submit annual reports on the measures taken to give effect to the conventions which they have ratified. These reports are first examined by a committee of twelve experts selected from different countries on account of their personal competence. A summary of the reports is submitted to the annual Conference.

If international regulation of labor conditions is not to remain purely platonic and out of touch with reality, but is to meet the real needs of the moment, the situation must be constantly reviewed and the main economic and social tendencies must be detected in the seemingly chaotic flow of events. Thus the line that should be followed and the questions which should first be dealt with will clearly emerge. For this reason several sittings of the Conference—and they are generally far from being the least ani-



THE DIGNITY

Maurice



TY OF LABOR

ce Denis

(See Preface)

mated—are devoted to the discussion of the report in which the Director of the International Labor Office summarizes year by year the economic and social situation throughout the world.

2. The International Labor Office

It is no easy task to create a body of international legislation applicable to most varied countries at extremely different stages of evolution. It would be impossible to do so if there were no permanent institution to serve as secretariat, to conduct research and to provide assistance in the preliminary drafting of the texts of Conventions and Recommendations. This is the work of the International Labor Office, the activities of which are supervised by a Governing Body.

(a) *The Governing Body*

The Governing Body of the International Labor Office, which meets four times a year, consists at present of 32 members selected on the same tripartite basis as the Conference: 16 government representatives, 8 employers' representatives and 8 workers' representatives. The employers' and workers' members of the Governing Body are elected for three years by the employers' group and the workers' group at the Conference respectively. Of the sixteen government representatives, eight are elected for the same period by the government group at the Conference and the other eight belong to the countries of chief industrial importance: the British Empire, Canada, France, India, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.⁹

The Governing Body appoints the Director of the International Labor Office, passes the budget and draws up the agenda for the Conference.

(b) *The Office*

The International Labor Office is the permanent secretariat of the Organization and forms a sort of international

⁹ Previous to their withdrawal from the I. L. O., Italy and Japan were the other two countries of chief industrial importance.

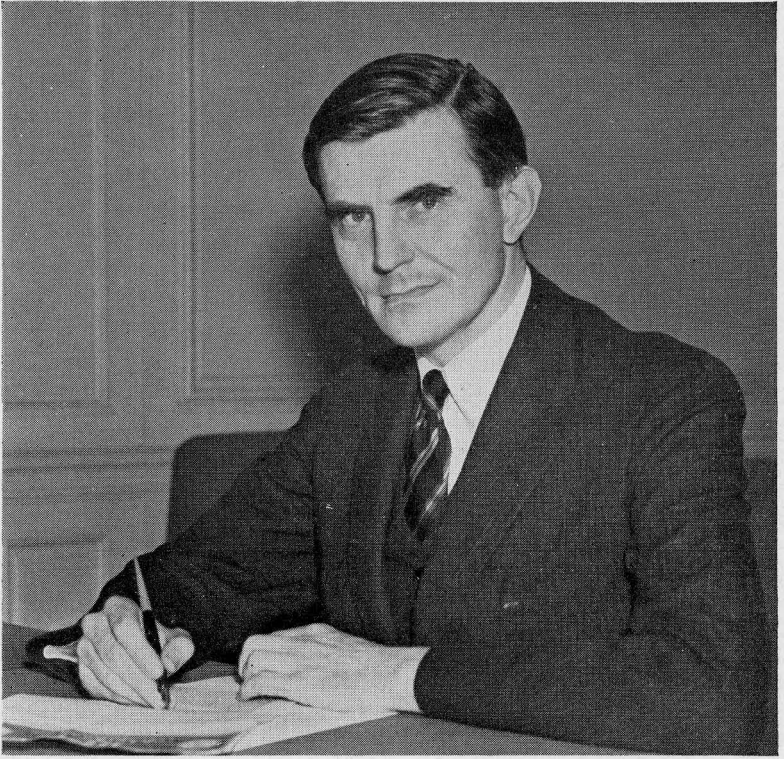
department of labor. It is not composed on the same tripartite basis as the Conference and the Governing Body. The members of the staff, who belong to some 40 different countries, are all appointed by the Director. They are international civil servants who give a solemn undertaking "to discharge their functions with the interests of the International Labor Organization alone in view."

At the head of the staff is a director appointed by the Governing Body. This post was first held by Albert Thomas, the celebrated French statesman. When he died suddenly in Paris on May 7, 1932, he was succeeded by Harold Butler, formerly a high official in the British Ministry of Labor, who had been a member of the Committee which drew up the Constitution of the International Labor Organization in 1919. The present Director of the Office is John G. Winant, former Governor of New Hampshire and the first Chairman of the Social Security Board of the United States.

The duties of the Office include the technical preparation of the items on the agenda of the Conference, for which it supplies the secretariat. It undertakes any investigations which the Conference instructs it to carry out and collects information concerning the international adjustment of conditions of industrial life and labor. This is an immense task which requires the Office to keep in constant touch, throughout the world, not only with governments but also with employers' and workers' associations and even with all the private organizations dealing with social questions. In its endeavor to make its work universal and to give a faithful reflection of actual conditions in the world, it neglects nothing that affects labor or the worker and has always been careful not to exclude from its relations any group which it recognizes as being of real social value.

In order to obtain full information it has appointed various advisory committees of specialists. These keep in touch with the Office and supply it with information either by correspondence or directly in Geneva when the Office finds it necessary to convene meetings of the committees.

The office takes such a wide view and covers such an immense field of activity that it has been called "the best



JOHN G. WINANT
Director of the International Labor Organization

(See page 28)

social observatory in the world," a description that is often echoed by those who have been in touch with it. It has no desire to keep for itself the mass of information it has collected, but places it at the disposal of any who wish to come and study it.

It is part of the duty of the Office not only to be a laboratory for social studies but also to be a center for distributing throughout the whole world the information it has collected and compiled. Every month the *International Labor Review* which now appears in English, Spanish, German and French, publishes exhaustive studies on the most varied social subjects. Every week *Industrial and Labor Information* keeps thousands of readers abreast of economic and social developments, the growth of labor legislation in every country, the evolution of social insurance, unemployment, migration and similar methods. These periodicals are supplemented by lengthy documentary studies on various subjects, of which 200 have already appeared.

The International Labor Office is also at the disposal of individual applicants for information. It is an unvarying tradition that no request for information—and, on the average, a thousand are received annually—should remain unanswered.

Researchers and students have facilities for consulting in a comfortable reading room the 400,000 volumes which constitute the most complete library of social questions in the world, the 4,361 newspapers or magazines (861 a day on the average) at present received in the periodicals service, and the press cuttings selected daily from the most important of these publications.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

AFTER nineteen years of existence, the International Labor Organization has to its credit the adoption of 63 Conventions and 55 Recommendations.

Instead of following step by step the various sessions of the Conference in chronological order, it will be preferable, and simpler for the reader, to indicate in outline the main features of the work.¹⁰

Hours of Work

By 1914 the labor abuses of the nineteenth century, when hours of work were often 16 or 17 a day, had largely been overcome. But in most industrial countries the daily hours were still from 10 to 12. That meant that family life was practically impossible for the worker who returned home exhausted after a day's work in a factory which was often at a considerable distance from his home.

Immediately after the War, the campaign for the three 8's—8 hours' work, 8 hours' leisure and 8 hours' sleep—was in full swing. As was mentioned above, the International Labor Charter referred to the 8-hour day or the 48-hour week as the goal to be reached wherever it had not already been achieved. That was the first item on the agenda of the Labor Conference held at Washington in 1919, when a convention for a 48-hour week was adopted for workers in industry and land transport. It provided certain exceptions, more particularly for a few of the Asiatic countries: China, Iran and Siam, where local conditions made the reform premature and impracticable, and also for Japan and India, where a lesser reduction was agreed upon.

In 1930 that convention was supplemented by another for the benefit of employees in commerce and offices. In this case also certain categories of workers were excluded

¹⁰ A complete table of the Conventions as of March, 1939, is given in Appendix A. The number of ratifications was 835 on November 1, 1938, and this movement far from slackening, is gaining strength. Even the depression did not hold it up, for the average number of ratifications during the years of prosperity from 1925 to 1929 was 50 a year, whereas during the years of depression from 1931 to 1935 it was 51. In November, 1938, the United States registered its first five ratifications. Appendix B summarizes the action taken at the 1939 Conference.

from the scope: employees in hotels and restaurants, places of amusement, and hospital establishments.

In 1931 a further convention regulating hours of work in coal mines fixed the time spent in the mine from the time when the first miner descends to the time when the last returns to the surface at 7 hours and 45 minutes.

Finally in 1936, at a special session dealing with maritime questions, a convention on the 8-hour day for seamen was also passed.

One extensive group of workers, those in agriculture, has not been dealt with so far in a similar convention. The question is at present being considered by technical committees. It bristles with difficulties which are too obvious to require enumeration here. It is enough to mention the great difference in the hours worked at various seasons of the year and the existence of large numbers of peasants and small holders who would not be willing to accept a restriction of hours.

* * * *

The economic depression which started in 1929 caused unprecedented unemployment. In 1932, the statistics of 16 countries showed a total of 30 million unemployed persons, which means that, if their families are taken into account, there were not less than 100 million persons in these 16 countries who were dependent for a livelihood on various forms of relief and allowances. Among the many causes of the depression, everyone agrees that an important one is the extreme development of mechanization and rationalization. Far more can now be produced with fewer workers than formerly. The natural and almost inevitable reaction of the employer at the outset is to reduce his staff, and this naturally increases unemployment.

The trouble was so serious that a remedy had to be sought urgently. The idea of producing the maximum amount in the minimum of time with the minimum of labor without troubling about the consequent unemployment must give place to the idea of producing the maximum amount in the minimum of time but with a reduction of the hours of work of each worker instead of the number of workers employed.

That is the origin of the idea of the 40-hour week. It must be noted, however, that it is proposed to effect the 40-hour week without any decrease in the standard of living of the workers. Otherwise the remedy would be a very imperfect one. Since much is being produced, much must also be consumed. Otherwise the production would be not merely useless but even harmful. One of the effects of the 40-hour week as thus proposed would be to increase the total purchasing power of the masses and therefore bring about an increase in consumption.

The first arguments advanced in favor of the 40-hour week were thus essentially economic. They can, however, be backed up by a strong social argument: extreme rationalization and speed-up work have made even an 8-hour day much more strenuous than formerly. The worker is subjected to nervous tension which is harmful to health. For humanitarian reasons alone, therefore, it is reasonable to urge that the period of exposure to fatigue should be shortened.¹¹

At its sessions in 1933 and 1934, the annual Conference discussed the adoption of a convention on the 40-hour week, but a stubborn opposition prevented it from achieving this aim.

The idea was not abandoned, but was taken up in a different form. The 1935 Conference passed a convention of principle: any State which ratifies declares itself in favor of the 40-hour week and of the adoption of the necessary measures to introduce it. A series of special conventions for each group of industry was then to be prepared and submitted to the Conference for adoption. Up to 1937 special conventions had been passed for three groups only: the glass-bottle industry, public works and the textile in-

¹¹ This idea is coming to be more and more widely held. In an address on April 13, 1937, to representatives of the Federation of British Industries, Mr. Baldwin, then British Prime Minister, after pointing out that cases of nervous strain no longer occur only among non-manual workers but very frequently also among manual workers, expressed his opinion as to the necessity for reducing hours of work in the following terms: "It is no longer a question of leisure or of wages; it is a question of ensuring that at any rate those people who are in a position where they may suffer from the strain of nerves incidental to certain industries today may not be allowed to become what they may well be if nothing is done in years to come—nervous wrecks that are no good to themselves or to the country. It is, in short, what adjustment may be necessary to ensure a sane and healthy life, healthy not only in body but, what is still more important to us, in mind."

dustry. As this procedure seemed to be too lengthy, it was decided, at the request of the workers' representatives, that a few general conventions, covering all those workers who were not so far covered by conventions adopted in the past, would be put before the Conference for decision. After a first reading in 1938, the Generalization of the Reduction of Hours of Work was placed on the agenda of the Conference of 1939. Four groups of conventions will be considered: industry, commerce, offices; coal mines; railway, water and air transport; and road transport, where the general problem of the hours of work is complicated by questions of safety.

* * * *

In connection with the conventions on hours of work, mention may be made also of the convention providing a weekly rest for workers in industry and transport. This rest must be granted as far as possible to the whole staff on the same day, and should coincide with the traditions and customs of each country. It is clear from the text that the convention is inspired both by social and religious motives. A recommendation urges the extension of the same measure to employees in commerce until such time as more definite regulations can be adopted for their benefit.

* * * *

A convention providing for a week's holiday with pay annually was adopted in 1936 by the very large majority of 99 votes to 15.

Social Insurance

"A system of labor regulation if true to the principle of social justice must secure the effective protection of the workers against risks endangering their livelihood or that of their families. This protection can best be attained by means of the establishment of a system of social insurance granting clearly-defined rights to the beneficiaries."

This view was expressed by the Conference in 1925 in a general resolution on social insurance. The work accomplished in this field, although still incomplete, is considerable.

In 1925 conventions were adopted on accident insurance and workmen's compensation for accidents for all workers, salaried employees and apprentices in any industrial or commercial undertaking, including foreign workers. This measure extends indirectly to agriculture, since a convention of 1921 prescribes that the general legislation on workmen's compensation should extend to agricultural workers.

A convention was also adopted in 1925 on workmen's compensation for occupational diseases. In 1927 a Convention was passed on compulsory sickness insurance, and in 1929 several conventions made provision for old-age, invalidity, and widows' and orphans' insurance for all persons employed in industry, commerce and agriculture.

* * * *

Everyone who has any knowledge of the workers understands that one of their chief anxieties is for the future of themselves and their families. "In the event of sickness or accident or in old age," they ask, "what will become of my wife and children? What will become of myself?" By hastening the adoption of Conventions concerning social insurance, the International Labor Organization will have done much to grant the workers some degree of security and to remove one of their most acute sources of anxiety.

The Protection of Women

The desire to protect women in the course of their employment was one of the primary interests of the Organization, as it generally has been in national legislation. The Labor Charter, as was already seen, demanded equal wages for equal work so as to put an end to the widespread exploiting of women. It also stated that women should be included in all factory inspection services.

As early as 1919 a convention was adopted concerning the employment of women before and after childbirth. They are entitled to give up their work six weeks before the presumed date of the confinement and to remain absent six weeks thereafter. During that period they must receive an adequate allowance for themselves and for the child, and they are also entitled to free attendance by a

doctor or midwife. If as a result of complications they are unable to return to work at the end of the six weeks, they are still immune from dismissal by their employer.

A woman who nurses her child is entitled to two breaks of half an hour each during her working hours for this purpose.

The desire for maternity protection is reflected also in a recommendation urging that women should not be employed in handling dangerous substances, even when such substances may be handled by male workers.

Another convention prohibits the employment of women during eleven consecutive hours of the night, and yet another prohibits their employment underground in coal mines.

Protection of Young Persons

There are several conventions concerning the employment of young persons, which are intended to prevent interference with their full physical development and to facilitate their mental development.

These conventions originally fixed the age of admission to employment at 14 years for industry, maritime work, non-industrial occupations and agriculture, but in agriculture an exception is made for work outside school hours.

Employers must keep a special register for all children under the age of 16 years. The minimum wage has been fixed at 18 years for employment as trimmers and stokers on board ship, and it is further provided that young persons employed at sea must undergo periodical medical examinations.

The question of the age of admission to employment was reconsidered before very long; and new conventions have recently been passed raising the age to 15 years for employment at sea (October, 1936) and for industrial and non-industrial employment (June, 1937).

It is a matter for congratulation that these new conventions revising the earlier ones were adopted by large majorities. It is a reform which the workers had strongly urged. It will be remembered that the Young Christian Workers (J. O. C.) include in their program the fixing of the minimum age at 16 years.

This measure is valuable in the first place as an effective means of combating unemployment. But that is a special point of view and by no means the most important. The reform is desirable on higher grounds. It is calculated to raise the whole spiritual, moral and intellectual standard of the working class in general. Its purpose is not merely to bring some relief to the labor market. To raise the age for admission to employment means at the same time extending the period of school attendance. A young person cannot be left idle. If the doors of the workshop are closed until a later age, those of the school must be open for a longer period, and the child therefore profits by additional years of education. Mr. Pauwels, President of the Belgian Christian Trade Unions, who was a workers' adviser at the Conference in 1937, drew attention to this aspect of the matter in a speech in support of the Convention. It will certainly be of interest to recall this exposition of the workers' psychology.

"Humanity is always striving towards a better fate. That has always been one of its aims, and that is why, apart from inevitable pauses and occasional setbacks, the work of social progress continues unceasingly and unremittingly. It is a profoundly human aspiration, and, if I may say so, it is on that account profoundly Christian. But just because it is human this aspiration is particularly strong among those whose conditions of spiritual, moral and intellectual existence as well as of social life are the least favored: among those who feel that their personality and their human dignity are slighted; among those who are endeavoring to remove still more of the inequalities that separate the workers from other classes and to destroy the inferiority complex from which the working class suffers.

"This collective striving towards an ever higher standard of humanity is not due to any base feeling of envy or to any materialistic desire; it is inspired by a profound desire for the recognition of a higher dignity—that of human personality.

"The workers, I repeat, have lofty aims; they wish to rise to higher spiritual, moral, intellectual and social planes, and they feel that only in so far as they do rise can they possess a fuller human life and secure for labor and hu-

man personality that due respect in economic and social affairs which is at the basis of Christian doctrine and of all true civilization. It is also one of the fundamental principles of our International Labor Organization."

Industrial Hygiene and Safety

The International Labor Office, in collaboration with scientists and with organizations of employers and workers, is very active in its study of industrial hygiene and safety. In this matter there is no difficulty from the moral or humanitarian point of view, for everyone is agreed. The problems to be solved are essentially technical and therefore need not be discussed in detail here.

The Berne Convention in 1906 prohibited the use of white phosphorous in the manufacture of matches, and as early as 1919 the Conference adopted a recommendation urging the governments which had not already done so to ratify that convention as soon as possible.

Mention may also be made of a convention adopted in 1921 regulating the use of white lead in painting.

Two conventions have been passed for the protection of dockers against accidents. Carping critics might suggest that dockers represent but a relatively small category of workers, and that it was scarcely worthwhile setting in motion the mechanism of a huge international institution simply to avoid a few accidents. But even in such a case, if it were merely a question of protecting a few homes from disaster or saving a few human lives there would be no cause to regret the efforts made. A moment's reflection on the value of human personality will show how true this is. No worker must remain excluded from the activities of the International Labor Organization. As Albert Thomas once said: "Some people criticize what they call our red-tapism; if it has served to save even a few hundred human lives it will not have been in vain."

Native Labor

The indigenous workers in colonies, who are more exposed to exploitation and less able to defend themselves, have more need of protection than any other workers.

Again one may quote Albert Thomas, who fully realized this fact and considered that the work of the International Labor Organization would be incomplete if it did not place this question in the forefront:

“With the distant countries more than with any others we must be careful to maintain unity in the struggle of men against nature and against the sufferings and privations which may result from faulty social organizations. Only when we have achieved that unity and established constant touch with the distant countries shall we have solidly established the League of Nations and our Organization for social justice.”

The work done in this field is of special interest to missionaries who live in close touch with the indigenous populations and have devoted their lives to them. The most important results are:

1. The Forced Labor Convention of 1930, by which every ratifying State undertakes to abolish forced or compulsory labor in every form at the earliest possible moment, and, until it can be entirely suppressed, to permit it only for public purposes. This convention has been ratified by 19 States, whose colonial empires contain 90 per cent of the total population of colonies. It will be practically universal when ratified by Belgium and Portugal as well.

2. The Recruiting of Indigenous Workers' Conventions of 1936, in which the moral aspect has not been overlooked. Among the various rules laid down for the protection of these workers, a prominent position is given to the prohibition of the recruiting of non-adult workers and to the obligation devolving on the competent authorities to take account of the dangers to the family and to morality which recruiting may involve.

These two Conventions are only a first step, which is to be followed by others. The next seems likely to be a convention regulating contracts of employment of indigenous workers. It was discussed in first reading in the Conference of 1938 and will be resumed for a final decision in that of 1939. It is indeed essential that strict fundamental rules should be laid down for such contracts. Especially when they are for long periods and involve penal sanctions, they weigh heavily on the indigenous worker, who

is often unable through lack of education to realize all their implications. Missionaries more than anyone are in a position to appreciate the value for native populations of the adoption of humane contracts of employment freely entered into by the workers.

Unemployment

Since the end of the War, no problem has been more acute than that of unemployment and consequently none has been more attentively studied by all who take an interest in the workers' welfare.

In order to alleviate the innumerable sufferings caused by unemployment, unemployment insurance, which was practically unknown before the War, has progressed so rapidly that it now exists in twenty countries. A convention on the subject was adopted in 1934.

To provide some slight assistance to those who are thrown out of employment is merely a first step; what is more important is to deal with the problem at its roots. Prevention is better than cure; but in this case there can be no question of a single remedy but rather of a number of measures which taken together, can unite to achieve this aim. Some of the measures already mentioned above have helped to reabsorb the unemployed: the reduction of hours of work, the 40-hour week, holidays with pay and the raising of the minimum age for employment.

In 1929 Albert Thomas advocated the adoption of large-scale advance planning of public works. The great merit of this suggestion was that it was not to be restricted to the national field but aimed at co-operation between all States and the pooling of all their resources in order to combat effectively this scourge of the modern world. The idea seemed to gain no ground for several years but in reality it was still alive, and a recommendation in favor of the establishment of a plan for international co-operation in the planning and timing of public works on a large scale was adopted by the Conference in 1937.

Unemployment of Youth

Unemployment of youth is even more serious than unemployment in general from the point of view of its conse-

quences and, more especially, its moral consequences. It is impossible not to be moved by the sufferings of those who are just setting out on the path of life and find every avenue blocked to them, so that they remain on the unemployment register without ever having the opportunity of doing a day's work. These young persons have frequently expressed their natural feeling of despair, but never in more striking fashion than when they had the opportunity of appearing on the platform of the International Labor Conference in 1935. Under the auspices of the trade unions, delegations of young unemployed persons were permitted to address the Conference and express their views. Among them was a delegation of about 100 members of the Young Christian Workers (J. O. C.) bearing a petition signed by 85,000 young unemployed persons under 25 years of age. Their attitude was expressed by one of their numbers in the following terms:

"We are bound to say that when we think of the future we are afraid; the fear of life overwhelms us; it destroys the zest, the joy, the confidence—all the buoyant enthusiasms which make the strength and the beauty of youth.

"No one will ever know the full measure of the pain which gnaws the hearts of the young victims of persistent unemployment. They are gone, those days when we could take home our pay. We wonder how much longer we can dare to sit at the family table. At times we dare not eat. We are ashamed, and long to go away so that we need no more take the bread of those who have earned it by their labor. We ought to be helping our parents, but we are to them only a cause of distress. We ought to be bearing our share of the burdens of our homes, but we are only a charge upon them. Many of us do help our families so far as it is in our power, by foregoing some things that are necessary to us in order to leave enough for our younger brothers and sisters. The cost is hunger and malnutrition at the very age when the growth of the body demands wholesome and strengthening nourishment. We are in danger of many diseases, which sometimes compel us to spend long periods in hospitals or sanatoria.

"That is why we, the young unemployed of the whole world, in unity with the workers in general, appeal to you

delegates of the International Labor Conference. We feel that the Conference, as a result of its exhaustive studies, its previous work and the bonds of close international collaboration which it has established, can promote measures calculated to reduce unemployment of youth. . . . We have confidence in you and we are convinced that you will do everything in your power to find immediate remedies for our position.

"We await the restoration at the earliest possible moment of the right which we cherish above all others, the right to work and the right to live.

"We are not idle ne'er-do-wells. We urge with all our strength that satisfaction be given to our legitimate claims."

Even after this touching appeal there could, of course, be no question of improvising a convention on such an extensive basis and covering so many fields as the re-absorption of unemployment. The Conference, however, adopted a recommendation which can be said to constitute a real program of social policy. It advocates fixing the school-leaving age and the age of admission to employment at 15 years, the creation of special centers, at which attendance would be entirely free, for young unemployed persons, the organization of public works for these persons, the development of vocational training and of vocational guidance services.

CHAPTER V

THE COLLABORATION OF CATHOLICS

THE idea of convening a Congress of workers' delegates, without distinction of nationality, religious belief or political opinion, which Decurtins had advanced in 1893 and which received the full approval of Leo XIII, has thus been put into practice on a much larger scale than he could have hoped for at that time. Instead of a mere Congress, there is a huge permanent organization which has been working successfully since 1919 and which has already impressive results to its credit. Every year new conventions are adopted by the Conference and every year additional ratifications introduce into the legislation of the States Members new measures for promoting social justice. No international organization ever worked on such a scale and with such unbroken continuity. Little by little a system of international labor legislation is being built up which will give the working class of the whole world an increasing measure of justice and well-being.

There is nothing in these achievements or in the principles of the International Labor Organization which can stand in the way of sincere collaboration by Catholics; on the contrary, everything invites them to support the promoters of this beneficent legislation. It is, therefore, not surprising that since the very beginning they have taken an active interest in the Geneva organization and they may in all justice claim their share in the common work.

Collaboration at the Conference is not the same as collaboration with the International Labor Office.

At the Conference delegates are appointed by governments, and, in the case of the employers and workers at least, they must be selected from the most representative organizations. It has been seen above what this expression means and how exactly it should be interpreted.

In countries in which there are employers' and workers' organizations directly inspired by Christian principles, it is through these organizations that Catholics can obtain a place in this new labor parliament as employers' or workers' delegates or advisers. But we must look facts in the face. There are flourishing employers' organizations

of Catholic inspiration in certain countries, such as France, Belgium and Holland, but they are exceptions and in any case most of their members are small-scale or medium-size employers. They have made little progress among the employers of large-scale industry and the latter group, wrongly or rightly, always considers itself as most fully representing the interests of the employers.

It would be very desirable if a place could be found in the Conference for employers' representatives who openly supported the doctrine of the Encyclicals, for this would prevent a considerable amount of friction between the employers' group and the workers' group. This does not mean that there have not been employers' representatives who are well-known Catholics, active members of religious organizations and speakers at "social weeks." But it was not generally as members of these organizations that they were selected to take part in the work of the Conference. The ideal would be for some at least of those employers to be put forward as representatives of a Catholic organization, with class collaboration as the fundamental principle that they advocate.

The Christian trade unions have, as a result of their number and membership, and various local circumstances, been able to obtain official representation. This was the case in the Netherlands, in circumstances which were explained above. Since the Permanent Court at The Hague gave its decision, other governments have followed the example of the Netherlands and have appointed representatives of the Christian trade unions as workers' delegates or advisers. Czechoslovakia and Poland, for example, have sent them as delegates; and Belgium and Switzerland, as advisers.

It might be thought desirable for the Christian Trade Unions to be still more fully represented. That is a question, however, which does not depend on the International Labor Organization; it is a national question, since each government has to select its delegates according to the rules laid down above. If it is thought desirable to secure fuller representation for the Christian Trade Unions at the Conference, these trade unions and the employers' associations must first endeavor to increase their membership in each

country. So far, however, their presence and their collaboration have certainly borne fruit and their participation in the common work has been eminently satisfactory.

In countries such as England and the United States, where there is no independent Christian trade union movement, Catholics have not this special problem to face. If they wish to be logical with themselves, their obvious duty is not to remain outside the occupational movement in their country but to become active members of the existing employers' and workers' organizations. In so doing they will contribute not only to the development of social legislation in the national field, but also to the preparation of international labor legislation. Thus they will further the establishment of justice, both in their own countries and in the world as a whole.

There is another way in which the Catholic social movement can be represented at the Conference, namely, in the government delegations. Here it is not a question of membership but merely of personality, since each government is free to appoint the representatives whom it considers best suited to promote its interests. In order to realize the part that Catholics have played in the International Labor Conferences by this means, it will suffice to mention, by way of example, that two outstanding representatives of the social movement have presided over the discussions of the Conference: Monsignor Nolens, Minister of State of the Netherlands, in 1926, and the Rev. Dr. Brauns, former Minister of Labor of Germany, in 1929.

The International Labor Office offers possibilities of collaboration of quite a different kind. The Office is in daily touch with various Catholic groups on innumerable questions and the relations between the two have always been most cordial. It may be said that there is no Catholic group interested in social questions of any kind, which has not been in communication with the Office and which has not had reason to congratulate itself on the fact. The same can be said from the point of view of the Office. Albert Thomas, in that spirit of loyalty which characterized all his activities, did not fail to acknowledge this fact publicly:

"I can definitely state that whenever we have worked side by side in the past eight years, we have done so in a

spirit, not of mutual tolerance, but of ardent and passionate faith on both sides in the realization of our common ideal, although our inspiration may have come from different sources."

Any enumeration of the organizations with which the Office has collaborated must necessarily be incomplete, but a few may be selected at random.

The *French Social Weeks*, at which the Office has made a point of being represented every year, have expressly recommended in their conclusions an interest in and co-operation with the International Labor Organization.

The *Young Christian Workers' Organization* (J. O. C.) delegates of which had an opportunity of addressing the Conference in 1935, has carried out inquiries into the wages of young persons, apprenticeship and vocational training, which are increasingly appreciated by the Office.

The international students' organization *Pax Romana*, which has co-operated with the Office in studying the question of unemployment in the professions.

The *Apostolatus Maris*, which deals with the question of seamen's welfare in every port of the world.

The *International Catholic Union for Social Service*, which has at present 47 social service schools and auxiliary associations.

The *Catholic Workers' College* in Oxford, which trains a number of militant workers every year.

The *Catholic Social Guild* in England, which organizes more than 350 study circles, members of which are drawn from all ranks of life.

As was natural, the Office first developed these relations in Europe, but it rapidly got in touch with more distant countries and its relations may now be said to extend over the whole world.

In South America the attention of the Office was naturally drawn to the Catholic social movement which is rapidly developing there. In this case also only a few examples can be given: the *Economic and Social Secretariat* in Buenos Aires, which has branches throughout the whole of Argentina, the *Matté de Cruchaga Social Service School in Santiago de Chile*, the similar school in Montevideo, the *Catholic Young Workers' Organization* in Co-

lombia, the workers' clubs in Brazil, the *Social Action Group* in Rio de Janeiro, etc.

In Canada the Office has established close and frequent contact with *Social Weeks*, the *People's Social School* in Montreal and the *Christian Trade Unions* in Quebec.

Nowhere perhaps is the Catholic Social Movement so youthful as in the United States. Fundamentally it is the same as in every other country, but its physiognomy is entirely its own. It reflects the innate qualities of the people of that country, being full of life and having no fear of audacious projects, for social problems arise there more rapidly and more acutely than in other countries. That is why the American Catholics, although not ignoring the lofty realm of principles, show a definite desire not to spend too long in that rarefied atmosphere but prefer to descend boldly into the arena as soon as possible.

This explains the rapid development of social schools, workers' schools, social courses for the clergy and summer schools for students, all of which are well attended. It also explains the innumerable leaflets and pamphlets and the weekly radio talks which deal with current problems affecting the workers considered in the light of Christian principles. Special mention should be made of the very active *Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems*. This organization is a unique type of traveling university, which holds about six regional meetings annually, at which employers, employees, students of Catholic social teaching and the public can exchange ideas on the social problems of the day.

It would be difficult to study the details of this enthusiastic movement without the help of the powerful *National Catholic Welfare Conference*. This body, which was set up in 1919 under the supervision of the Bishops, aims at unifying, co-ordinating and organizing the Catholic people of the United States in works of education, social action, immigrant aid and other activities. It has maintained cordial relations and collaborated more and more closely with the International Labor Office for many years, particularly so since the United States became a Member of the Organization.

Missionaries anxious to help the peoples to whom they

have devoted their lives have made frequent appeals to the International Labor Office and have had reason to thank it for its effective help.

Two further details will help to show the interest taken by the International Labor Office in these relations and the spirit of benevolent impartiality in which it follows the development of the Catholic social movement. Every year the *I. L. O. Year-Book*, which is an official publication summarizing the work achieved during the preceding year, devotes one chapter to the Catholic Church. Since 1926, at the request of the Director and with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, the Office has had on its staff a priest who takes part in its work and maintains contact with Catholic organizations.

In a study published after its first ten years of existence, the Office was able to say: "From its inception the Organization has tried to create contacts to become known, understood and appreciated, to find support, encouragement, stimulus and a guide in its relations with all the elements of international life."¹²

Catholics for their part can amply confirm the truth of this statement. The International Labor Organization has appealed for their assistance as for that of others. It has loyally opened its doors to them without requiring them to conceal in any way the ideals that inspire them. It was Albert Thomas himself who recommended that the Christian trade unions should "freely and openly affirm the ideal which attracted large bodies of believers to them." "It is our interest," he said, "that every faith should be strengthened and should take definite action; it is not by endeavoring prudently or even shamefacedly to minimize or restrict our individual activities; it is not by concealing the principles we cherish in our heart of hearts, but on the contrary by seeking to raise our ideals still higher and revealing them in their purity and in their integrity, that we can succeed in concentrating our aims on the ideals and activities which we possess in common."

In such an atmosphere of sincerity, free from all misunderstanding, it is easy to work hand in hand at a task which claims the support of every man of good will.

¹² The International Labor Organization: *The First Decade*, pp. 365, 366.

APPENDIX A

Conventions and Recommendations

March, 1939

1st Session (Washington, 1919)

1. Hours of Work (Industry).
2. Unemployment.
3. Childbirth.
4. Night Work (Women).
5. Minimum Age (Industry).
6. Night Work (Young Persons).

— White Phosphorous.¹

2nd Session (Genoa, 1920)

7. Minimum Age (Sea).
8. Unemployment Indemnity (Shipwreck).
9. Placing of Seamen.

3rd Session (Geneva, 1921)

10. Minimum Age (Agriculture).
11. Right of Association (Agriculture).
12. Workmen's Compensation (Agriculture).
13. White Lead (Painting).
14. Weekly Rest (Industry).
15. Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers).
16. Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea).

7th Session (Geneva, 1925)

17. Workmen's Compensation (Accidents).
18. Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases).
19. Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation).
20. Night Work (Bakeries).

8th Session (Geneva, 1926)

21. Inspection of Emigrants.

9th Session (Geneva, 1926)

22. Seamen's Articles of Agreement.
23. Repatriation of Seamen.

10th Session (Geneva, 1927)

24. Sickness Insurance (Industry, etc.).
25. Sickness Insurance (Agriculture).

11th Session (Geneva, 1928)

26. Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery.

12th Session (Geneva, 1929)

27. Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels).
28. Protection against Accidents (Dockers) (1929).

14th Session (Geneva, 1930)²

29. Forced Labor.
30. Hours of Work (Commerce and Offices).

15th Session (Geneva, 1931)

31. Hours of Work (Coal Mines).

16th Session (Geneva, 1932)

32. Protection against Accidents (Dockers) (Revised, 1932).
33. Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment).

¹ This Berne Convention formed the subject of one of the Washington Recommendations.

² The 13th Session produced no conventions.

17th Session (Geneva, 1933)

34. Fee-Charging Employment Agencies.
35. Old-Age Insurance (Industry, etc.).
36. Old-Age Insurance (Agriculture).
37. Invalidity Insurance (Industry, etc.).
38. Invalidity Insurance (Agriculture).
39. Survivors' Insurance (Industry, etc.).
40. Survivors' Insurance (Agriculture).

18th Session (Geneva, 1934)

41. Night Work (Women) (Revised).
42. Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) (Revised).
43. Sheet-Glass Works.
44. Unemployment Provision.

19th Session (Geneva, 1935)

45. Underground Work (Women).
46. Hours of Work (Coal Mines) (Revised).
47. Forty-Hour Week.
48. Maintenance of Migrants, Pension Rights.
49. Reduction of Hours of Work (Glass-Bottle Works).

20th Session (Geneva, 1936)

50. Recruiting of Indigenous Workers.
51. Reduction of Hours of Work (Public Works).
52. Holidays with Pay.

21st Session (Geneva, 1936)

53. Officers' Competency Certificates.
54. Holidays with Pay (Sea).
55. Shipowners' Liability (Sick and Injured Seamen).
56. Sickness Insurance (Sea).
57. Hours of Work and Manning (Sea).

22nd Session (Geneva, 1936)

58. Minimum Age (Sea) (Revised).

23rd Session (Geneva, 1937)

59. Minimum Age (Industry) (Revised).
60. Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) (Revised).
61. Reduction of Hours of Work (Textiles).
62. Safety Provisions (Building).

24th Session (Geneva, 1938)

63. Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work.

Recommendations

In addition to the Recommendation concerning white phosphorous mentioned elsewhere, 55 Recommendations concerning conditions of labor were adopted at the twenty-three Sessions of the Conference, 1919-1937 inclusive. Particulars of action taken on these Recommendations, a list of which is given below, are published from time to time.

1919 (1st Session): Unemployment.

- Reciprocity of Treatment.
- Anthrax Prevention.
- Lead Poisoning (Women and Children).
- Labor Inspection (Health Services).

1920 (2nd): Hours of Work (Fishing).

- Hours of Work (Inland Navigation).
- National Seamen's Codes.
- Unemployment Insurance (Seamen).

1921 (3rd): Unemployment (Agriculture).

- Childbirth (Agriculture).
- Night Work of Women (Agriculture).

- Night Work of Children and Young Persons (Agriculture).
 Vocational Education (Agriculture).
 Living-in Conditions (Agriculture).
 Social Insurance (Agriculture).
 Weekly Rest (Commerce).
- 1922 (4th): Migration Statistics.
- 1923 (5th): Labor Inspection.
- 1924 (6th): Utilization of Spare Time.
- 1925 (7th): Workmen's Compensation (Minimum Scale).
 Workmen's Compensation (Jurisdiction).
 Workmen's Compensation (Diseases).
 Equality of Treatment (Accidents).
- 1926 (8th): Migration (Protection of Females at Sea).
- 1926 (9th): Repatriation (Ship Masters and Apprentices).
 Labor Inspection (Seamen).
- 1927 (10th): Sickness Insurance.
- 1928 (11th): Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery.
- 1929 (12th): Prevention of Industrial Accidents.
 Power-Driven Machinery.
 Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Reciprocity (1929).
 Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Consultation of Organizations.
- 1930 (14th): Forced Labor (Indirect Compulsion).
 Forced Labor (Regulation).
 Hours of Work (Hotels, etc.).
 Hours of Work (Theaters, etc.).
 Hours of Work (Hospitals, etc.).
- 1932 (16th): Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Reciprocity (1932).
 Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment).
- 1933 (17th): Employment Agencies.
 Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance.
- 1934 (18th): Unemployment Provision.
- 1935 (19th): Unemployment (Young Persons).
- 1936 (20th): Elimination of Recruiting.
 Holidays with Pay.
- 1936 (21st): Seamen's Welfare in Ports.
 Hours of Work and Manning (Sea).
- 1937 (23rd): Public Works (International Co-operation).
 Public Works (National Planning).
 Minimum Age (Family Undertakings).
 Safety Provisions (Building).
 Inspection (Building).
 Co-operation in Accident Prevention (Building).
 Vocational Education (Building).

APPENDIX B

1939 Conference

The International Labor Conference, at its 1939 meeting, adopted a convention and four recommendations dealing with the regulation of hours of work in road transport.

The convention limits hours of work in the industry to forty-eight per week, but authorizes the competent authorities to sanction higher weekly limits for subsidiary work and for work frequently interrupted by periods of mere attendance. It also authorizes the competent authorities to exempt workers engaged in certain categories of work, as for instance in transporting sick and injured persons, and in forestry or agricultural undertakings.

Daniel J. Tobin, President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, in a plea for adoption of the convention told the Conference that with the exception of three or four industries such as the steel industry, road transport employed more men, directly and indirectly in the United States than any other line of work. He placed the number of trucks in operation there as five million, and said that at least two and a half billion dollars had been invested in their manufacture and operation.

Mr. Tobin based his plea for the convention largely on humanitarian grounds. He stressed the number of road accidents resulting each year from tired drivers falling asleep at the wheel, and said that from the point of view of road safety the Conference should give the convention its full support.

The four recommendations adopted by the Conference were designed to supplement the convention. One urges governments to require the use of control books for workers engaged in road transport. Another deals with night work in road transport, and the determination of the classes of workers to be authorized to perform such work. The third deals with methods of regulating hours of work in the industry, and the fourth concerns rest periods for professional drivers of private vehicles.

The Conference also adopted a Resolution sponsored by the United States Government requesting the governing body of the International Labor Office to undertake a study of methods which would enable federal States to accept the obligations imposed upon them by the Conference.

ARTICLE 11

1900

