

IN A NEW PERIOD NEW TASKS

by

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Tasks of the trade unions for economic and social development and in the struggle for national independence and democratic liberties in the capitalist and colonial countries.

The report of Brother SAILLANT, General Secretary of the WFTU, and the broad and keen discussion which followed it have brought out, among other things, the ceaseless decline in the living conditions of the workers in all capitalist and colonial countries.

In this Second Report we propose to raise a fundamental problem of the world situation which to varying degrees affects these countries according to the stage of their economic development and the degree of their dependence—direct or indirect—on the strongest imperialist groups and governments. We intend to examine in greater detail the most immediate of the permanent causes of the general economic depression, the lowering of the living standards of the workers and the process of steady impoverishment of the middle sections of the people so that the working class and the world trade union movement can discharge the new tasks which the situation requires from them and in every country place themselves at the head of the whole working people to combat effectively the fundamental causes of growing poverty and to raise in a constructive way these vital problems and these specific demands of interest to all.

The problem which we raise stems from the fact that thanks to the enormous progress of science and technique the world today possesses tremendous means of production and the prospect of still greater means. If all these means were used they could produce at a growing rate sufficient goods to satisfy at least the basic needs of the whole of mankind, and thus create favourable conditions for its subsequent progress which could be practically boundless. Why then does the majority of the world population live in appalling poverty and endure serious hardships while the available means of production are not fully used and while there exist in all the countries dominated by imperialism, and particularly in the colonial and underdeveloped countries, immense possibilities for production hitherto unused?

The latest data provided by the UNO shows that two-thirds of the world population live in unimaginable conditions. In fact the annual income per head of this part of mankind is lower than 41 dollars while only a fifth of the population receive an income of 461 dollars.

For two-thirds of the world population daily consumption per head does not reach 2,150 calories and is consequently well below minimum physical requirements while only a fifth of mankind consume more than 3,040 calories.

There is practically no medical assistance for these hundreds of millions of people who live in a state of degrading poverty, while sickness and epidemics are widespread. Two-thirds of mankind have one doctor for each 6,000 and their average life is not more than 30 years.

Not only does this state of poverty tend to go on for millions of people but it also continues to become worse. United Nations statistics make it possible to state that whereas before the war people consuming less than 2,200 calories per day (the physical minimum need is estimated by medical science at 3,000 calories on the average) represented 38.6% of the world population, in 1952, they represented 59.6%, that is the great majority.

This appalling fact which must move every decent human being could be conceivable if one thought that mankind did not possess all these means of production, but it is intolerable under the present conditions in which the world suffers not from a lack of goods but on the contrary from the inability of the great majority of the population to buy and consume the goods available, being prevented, by its poverty from satisfying its most elementary needs. Crises, total and partial unemployment, poverty and the struggle to capture new markets waged by the big imperialist monopolies, that is, all the great economic and social evils from which the great majority of mankind suffers and the catastrophic wars which continually threaten it, spring from the fundamental contradictions between the abundance of the means of production and the goods available, and the poverty of the people, forced to do without them although they badly need them.

We know that we are not exposing a new phenomenon. We know that this phenomenon has been thoroughly studied even in its subsequent developments by the main theoreticians of the working class movement who are known and loved by the workers of the whole world. We therefore know that the fundamental contradiction which we have emphasised is inherent in the capitalist system of production above all in the

present phase of its inexorable decadence, that is in the monopoly phase.

Our aim is rather to draw the attention of the workers and the world trade union movement to the degree of present development of the domination of the monopolies over national and world economy, to the harmful consequences of this domination, to the peoples' living conditions, in contrast with the urgent need for development and progress of the whole of society, and most of all to what the working class and the trade union movement must do under the present conditions to fight effectively against the policy of the monopolists and its dire consequences not only for the workers but also for all people who work for their living.

It is a fact that monopoly domination has grown to unprecedented proportions in the economy of the capitalist and colonial countries, especially since the end of the second world war, that is, since the big American monopolies have played the dominant role in world imperialism.

It is well-known that when monopoly groups gain control of every sector of national economic life, they tend to subordinate the development of production, and hence the needs of the bulk of the majority of consumers, to the realisation of the maximum profits, by growing exploitation of the working people both in their home countries and in the colonies, by plundering raw material sources and if necessary by artificially slowing down the rate of production and by inflation.

A high profit per article produced, gained by exploitation of the workers and by high prices, is in fact a less risky proposition for the big monopolies than mass production at falling prices.

The present extension of the imperialist domination of the big monopolies to all the capitalist and colonial countries constitutes a permanent obstacle to the development of production, tends to strengthen age-old privileges and thus sharpen every contradiction.

Today the phenomenon of under-employment in industry is growing worse, especially in the under-developed countries and those with weak economies, while industrialisation and any serious development in agriculture is coming to a standstill. In addition, instead of directing production towards the satisfaction of the needs of the population, there is a greater and greater tendency to direct it towards war purposes.

On the one hand the policy of the monopolists cuts down the purchasing power of the national market more and more, and greatly impoverishes the mass of the workers and the

people, thus removing an effective stimulus to higher production. On the other hand, the restricted use of the means of production limits the possibility of work, so that unemployment, which was already chronic in many countries, is tending to become a structural defect in the developed capitalist countries dominated by monopolies.

Although the statistics available are very approximate and do not come up to reality, they show that substantial unemployment does in fact exist in the under-developed countries for instance, the 50 million in India, the 15 million in Indonesia, the millions of unemployed in Latin America; and also that in the economically developed countries of the capitalist world there is stagnation in the employment of labour which in fact shows a disturbing regression.

According to the report of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on world economy in 1952, the level of employment was stationary from 1951 to 1952 in six advanced capitalist countries: Canada, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United States. In the same period the level of employment actually dropped in four countries: Belgium, Denmark, Holland and Britain. In Britain a decrease in the level of employment was registered even as compared with 1950. To realise the gravity of such a situation we have only to take into account the constant growth of the population and of the millions of young people all over the world reaching working age in need of work, and asking for work to build their future. But these young people, the fresh yearly contingents of labour, find all the jobs already filled and all the doors closed. These young people are not only denied freedom to choose a trade or occupation corresponding to their abilities or the knowledge acquired at school, but also, to a great extent, the opportunity of being employed on any work at all.

So these young people at the threshold of their working life are rejected and left with no possibility of a decent life, often with no trade and no prospects.

Unemployment among youth, because of its grave physical and moral consequences on the coming generation is one of the most dangerous social ulcers caused by monopoly domination over the national economy.

Our trade unions must lead young workers and support them actively in their struggle for their right to work and to live.

We must also consider what the level of employment in the most developed capitalist countries would be like today

if, in accordance with the interest of mankind, war production was ended. In Denmark the number of unemployed registered at the Labour Exchanges represented 8.7% of the available labour force. In 1950 registered unemployed at the labour exchanges shows an alarming increase although, as we know, these official figures only express part of the extent of unemployment.

In Italy the labour force in 1950. Today it represents 12.5%. In Italy during the same period the percentage grew from 14 to 16%, and in Belgium from 6.8 to 6.9%.

Of course, the capitalists take advantage of permanent unemployment to keep the workers under the constant threat of dismissal, in order to make them accept reductions in wages and social benefits and to introduce into industry a despotic discipline of fascist type to compel them to work at an exhausting speed with the risk of seriously affecting their health.

In spite of this situation, the American Government's propaganda service has launched a campaign in every capitalist country of Europe for so-called increased productivity.

In principle, the working class, which is by definition the most progressive class of our time, is in favour of increased productivity, as being a certain source of economic and social progress. But increased productivity must be the outcome of increased investments, constant modernisation of equipment, and a better organisation of work. Under these circumstances the workers have a right to share in the profits coming from greater productivity and should consequently claim the right to check on the factory's output so as to obtain their share and so as to help bring about a better use of the profits both in developing production and in making the utmost possible price reduction in the interests of the consumers.

But when, on the other hand, increased productivity is being sought by American methods, that is, with no new investment, no modernisation of equipment, but by imposing a greater physical and mental effort on the workers, this means inhuman super-exploitation of the worker. To a person like Mr. Joyce, the Vice-President of the European Co-operation Administration (E.C.A.), productivity, to use his own words, "means an increase in production with the same industrial equipment and the same labour force" (re-translation). For this reason all our trade unions must resolutely oppose this so-called productivity campaign run by American imperialism and its agents.

proposed plan of work, a proposal which was received with the greatest interest and with real enthusiasm, by every section of the Italian people, and met with a wide response in the national press of all viewpoints. On the basis of this economic policy for national and human progress, the CGIL has led great mass struggles in every region of Italy during the last four years and gained considerable successes. These successes have added to its strength and prestige in the country and made possible great progress towards the unity of the working class and its alliance with broad sections of the middle class, progress on a wider scale than we have ever experienced before this great initiative by the CGIL.

This great battle for the economic and social development of Italy has had its heroes and its casualties. Many workers and peasants, and many trade union leaders, have paid with their lives, with imprisonment and bitter insults for their fight to renew their country's life. The dead of Modena, and the gallant peasants who fell fighting for the land at Melissa and in the Fucino district, will never be forgotten. The fight has been hard but effective. Of course it has not all been easy during the development of the fight. There have been mistakes as well, misunderstandings and failures. But the account we are able to present today is one that does honour to the Italian working class and to all Italian workers.

We wish to hand on this valuable experience which the CGIL has gained to our brothers in other countries, so that they can consider whether it can be used by their own trade union movement, and to what extent.

Therefore, if you will allow me, I will give a few examples to show how we in Italy have raised this fundamental problem, and what results we have achieved.

But before I proceed to these illustrations I should like to go into the ideas I started out from — that is, to analyse the unprecedented extent of the domination of imperialist monopolies on economic life in the various capitalist and colonial countries, and the extreme gravity of its consequences for the working people, for the nations and for world peace.

THE CONSEQUENCIES OF THE POLICY OF THE MONOPOLIES

We have underlined the repercussions which are determined by the growing domination of the monopolies on the economies of various capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial

countries. It is necessary to emphasise that this situation is made even worse by the fact that American imperialism has succeeded in the course of recent years in assuring for itself a controlling and dominating position over the various economies and even over the monopolies of different countries, even if all that, far from strengthening the imperialist system, brings about new and more serious contradictions. In order to carry out its plan of world domination, American imperialism uses all the methods to strengthen the power of the monopolies which are subjected to it in the different capitalist countries, in such a manner that these monopolies have within their hands all the reins of state. In this manner American imperialism assures itself of a more direct control over the different governments.

In effect recent experiences have confirmed that the large monopolies are at present increasing the degree of enslavement of the states and national governments to their policy and their immediate interests.

In this connection, it is necessary to remark that without any doubt the bourgeois state has always been the expression of the dominant capitalist groups. But during a long period its leadership was safeguarded by a liberal ruling class which had an important political function of mediation between the immediate and particular interests of each employer and the more general interests of the capitalist class.

Today this mediation seems no longer possible. The businessman, in order to carry out to the full his policy of subjugating national economies and the economies of other capitalist countries, has thrown overboard not only the great liberal traditions of the bourgeoisie but also that intellectual class which assured for him the continuity of the state. Today the businessman has become a member of the government, a general, an admiral, an economist, and he tries in this manner to take directly into his own hands the reins of state in order to make of it an instrument for his interests however immediate, however particular.

Examples of this have multiplied in the course of the last years. In the United States the men of the big trusts occupy the key positions in the government, in the army, and in the navy. In many countries of Western Europe, the big industrial organisations have a decisive influence on government decisions and often make of it, openly, a useful instrument for the satisfaction of their most selfish interests.

With this aim of strengthening monopoly groups in the interior of capitalist and colonial countries — in order to turn them into agents of its policy of war and world domination —

American imperialism has started the bluff of "reconstruction plans".

American imperialism has in this manner tried to present itself not under its robber's cloak, but under the mask of "a benefactor" and "philanthropist" who pretends to sacrifice himself for the well-being of the peoples. The Marshall Plan, the Colombo Plan, Truman's Point 4 Doctrine, the Schumann Plan, etc. have been created for this reason.

Brother Saillant has already documented the negative repercussions of the consequences of the application of the Marshall Plan on the national economies and on the working peoples of Europe.

Permit me to mention here some other aspects of these consequences concerning in particular the under-developed countries.

Let us start therefore with the Marshall Plan.

In the first phase of the application of this plan, by the exportation to Europe of different goods at reduced prices and even under the name of free goods, American imperialism tried to give a real content to its cloak of philanthropy. But this so-called "American Aid" did in the end bring about the weakening of the countries which received this so-called aid, increased unemployment, and worsened the living conditions of the workers.

In effect, the importation of machinery, for example, under apparently favourable terms, had the catastrophic effect on Europe of gigantic dumping. In Italy, the imports of American machinery corresponded to 60% of the national engineering production and brought about the closing of numerous factories and caused the sacking of almost 40,000 workers.

Such a weakening of the fundamental industries of the countries of marshalled Europe has greatly facilitated the gradual subordination of these economies to the needs of American imperialism.

In the second phase of the application of the Marshall Plan, American imperialism, having already succeeded in obtaining this objective, wished to take a step forward in imposing on the governments of the capitalist countries of Europe the setting aside of an ever larger part of their own

resources for war expenditure, thus turning them into the instruments of its aggressive policy.

The history of the Colombo Plan, which should have been a British Plan, but which in reality has become a new facet of American imperialism, is the same as that described for the Marshall Plan.

The Colombo Plan is essentially based on the national programmes elaborated by the governments of the semi-colonial and colonial countries, of Southern and South-East Asia, under the direction of the American government.

These "national" programmes speak clearly.

It is a case in effect of reconstructing, through the medium of these plans, one thing alone: the feudal and semi-feudal privileges in agriculture, that is to say to stop the forward march of the great movement of the Asiatic peoples for agrarian reform, for independence and the revival of national economy, and thus to perpetuate the most barbarous forms of exploitation of the agricultural workers. It is a question, in the end, of favouring the penetration of American imperialism in these countries.

These programmes, in effect, foresee investments almost exclusively in agriculture and transport, and in consequence they are definitely directed towards an intensification of the exploitation of the resources of raw materials destined for the markets controlled by the great foreign monopolies. These programmes are equally orientated towards the development of a transport system, originated in order to favour the export of these raw materials to the metropolitan economies. These programmes thus ignore the need to create a truly national transport system, that is to say, a need which tends to favour the economic development of the underdeveloped countries of Asia, while completely forgetting in this way the fundamental problem of the colonial and semi-colonial countries—industrialisation.

The Five Year Plan for India foresees that only 10% of the total investments included in the programme would be destined for industry. For the Ceylon Plan, this percentage falls to 6%. For the Plan for the British territories of Borneo, Sarawak, the Federation of Malaya, and of Singapore, the percentage of investments earmarked for industrialisation falls abruptly to 0.2% of the total of the investments planned.

The governor of the National Bank of Pakistan, in one of his speeches at the recent assembly at the headquarters of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, expressed himself in these terms on the Colombo Plan:

"... In general, these programmes are rather modest and in concrete terms represent no more than a continuation of the development plans, along the traditional lines of different countries elaborated on many occasions. The greatest importance is given to the utilisation of the agricultural resources..."

"... It is thus possible to obtain from this programme a concrete improvement of the living conditions of the population..."

The permanent poverty of the colonial and semi-colonial populations of Asia has shown the profundity of this analysis.

The plans of reconstruction and development imposed, under one form or another by the government of the United States in the countries of Latin America and Africa, have had the same fundamental consequences.

In the following period, the so-called "reconstruction plans" have given way to a policy of more intense penetration by imperialist monopoly. In the course of these last few years, the attempt has been made, in effect, to impose on the countries of marshalled Europe plans of economic integration: the so-called European Coal and Steel Community, the military alliances, etc., which are the instruments which tend to strengthen still more the American domination on the other economies, causing the transformation of these economies into reserves of the most powerful monopolies.

These advanced stages of the imperialist policy have considerably favoured, as was to be expected, the strengthening of the position of the American monopolies in all the economies of the capitalist world. The direct private investments alone of the monopolies of the USA made abroad have doubled from 1929 to the present day, in passing from seven thousand seven hundred million dollars to more than fourteen thousand and a half million in 1952. From the end of the second world war up to the present day, these investments have risen by about 70%. On the other hand, the exportation rate of new capital from the USA to all the markets of the capitalist world has accelerated more and more: from a hundred and eighty-three million dollars in 1946 to six hundred and three million dollars in 1951.

And here are the results of these imperialist investments. According to a report of the United Nations, the foreign investments, in large measure from the United States, effected in Latin America, from 1945 to 1952, rose to about one thousand three hundred and thirteen million dollars. During the same period the countries of Latin America had to pay to foreign shareholders, in interests and dividends, a sum five

times greater, that is to say five thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine million dollars.

In this scandalous robbery of the poorest of the peoples, the investments made by the Americans in India, Africa and other countries find their explanation.

All the populations of the capitalist world have been struck by this policy of domination and exploitation of which the consequences are now becoming apparent in a very serious manner.

The crises of industrial and agricultural production taking place, the increasing under-utilisation of productive capacities, are a few examples of the overwhelming economic instability caused by the above-mentioned factors.

On the other hand, agricultural production in certain countries is in an alarming state of stagnation, while it tends to decline unmistakably in the under-developed countries. This produces a marked lag in the collection of national revenues, not only in the colonial and semi-colonial countries—where the fall in exports and in the production of raw materials has brought about a considerable reduction in monetary reserves, in investments and in consumption—but also in the highly developed capitalist countries.

It is equally clear that, in this situation, investments in general tend to decrease or to remain at a standstill. According to the official statistics given by the different countries, it appears that for the whole of the nations of marshalled Europe, the proportion of the gross national budget coming from private investments has fallen from 1950 to 1952, from 16.9% to 15.9%, while government expenses, more and more directed towards the financing of rearmament, have risen in the same period from 14.6% to 20%.

In the general aggravation of the economic situation, all the contradictions characteristic of the capitalist system become more pronounced. Among these, the contradiction between agricultural development and industrial development is particularly serious.

The high prices imposed by the monopolies only restrict agricultural revenues, while, on the other hand, the agricultural producers cannot develop their production because, owing to the policy of super-exploitation followed by the monopolies, popular consumption is reduced and consequently the core of the national market is enfeebled.

One repercussion of these phenomena is the accentuation of the difference between agricultural prices and industrial

prices, a difference which is always one of the main signs of growing poverty in the countryside.

In Italy, for example, from 1938-1951 the price of means of production bought by the agriculturalists has increased by about 62 times, while those of agricultural products have increased by only 57 times. In France, from 1930-1951, the price of the means of production have increased 22 times while those of agricultural products have increased only 15 times.

In the light of these facts we can interpret the impressive contradictions which are growing, along with the development of the population, with an increase in the needs of the great masses of consumers and with the decrease of agricultural production.

In Western Europe, from 1938 to today, while the population has increased 13%, the amount of agricultural products available for food has remained practically stationary. Indeed individual consumption of bread, sugar, meat and eggs, has decreased.

In the under-developed countries, agricultural production is falling. In India, from 1950 to 1952, the production of wheat fell by 8%; of rice by 9%, of cotton by 6.5%.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations stressed in its last report the fact that the availability of cereals per head had fallen by 10% in the countries of Asia under imperialist domination. The matter is even more serious when one calls to mind that these countries had to import, last year, more than 6 million tons of cereals, whereas around 1930 these countries were themselves exporters of these products. Such facts are a terrible indictment against the policy of imperialism and against the big landowners who, today, are, in fact, nothing but the bases on which the domination of the great monopolies are built in the under-developed countries.

Another grave result of the policy of penetration and of the exploitation followed by the strongest monopoly groups in all the countries of the world, has been the ever-growing instability and, hence, the slowing down of international trade.

According to the same statistics of the UNO, the exports of the marshalled European economies diminished considerably from 1951 to 1952, and this decrease became even more pronounced in the course of the first months of 1953. Indeed from the first quarter of 1952 to the first quarter of 1953 exports from these countries decreased by 6%.

An even more serious position is noticeable in the under-developed economies of Asia, Africa and South America. In these countries a great slowing down of exports has taken

place and a fall in the prices of raw materials, while at the same time the prices of imported products have increased. This has resulted in a deterioration of their trade balances. Indeed, on the whole, during 1950, they had assets amounting to round about 2.3 thousand million dollars while today they must register liabilities which already amount to 1.5 thousand million dollars. Precisely for this reason these countries have had to reduce their reserves, consumption and investments.

One factor which has strongly contributed to bring about this general instability of international trade has been the embargo imposed by the big monopolies on trade with the countries of socialism.

This grave aspect of the cold war led by the forces of imperialism against the Soviet Union, People's China and the other countries progressing along the path to Socialism, has still further weakened the economic independence of the countries of the capitalist world. It is well to recall that the embargo has permitted groups of American monopolists to impose on the countries of Asia, Africa and South America producing raw materials, a heavy reduction of their goods destined for export. It is also well to recall that discrimination against the Socialist markets prevented the European textile industry avoiding a crisis which is now taking on alarming proportions:

This policy is, then, a basic method of guaranteeing American domination over these economies, even if, alongside this, it results in ever graver contradictions between the European governments and that of the USA.

It is clear that in this general situation of unbalanced instability and crisis, the mass of the workers are the first to suffer from the consequences.

We have already mentioned some phenomena which have particular significance in this regard, such as increased total and partial unemployment, under-employment, the decline in industrial employment and so on. It is sufficient to recall that these phenomena have become considerably worse as a consequence of the growing crisis in some basic sectors, such as in textiles.

At present there are 149,000 unemployed textile workers in the USA, there are 160,000 in Italy, 150,000 in Great Britain, 130,000 in Japan, 60,000 in Belgium, 160,000 in India; in Brazil and Argentina respectively 30 and 32% of the textile workers are unemployed.

The increase in unemployment has been followed by an increase in the exploitation of the workers in all capitalist countries of the world, both developed and under-developed.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, working hours are becoming daily more exhausting; inhuman exploitation of children and women has not disappeared but, on the contrary, is growing. Although they impose on the women and children, by means of exhausting working hours, work often equal to that carried out by adult men, the monopolist groups and their national representatives pay them miserable wages, in certain cases less than 70% of those of the agricultural workers. But the exploitation of the workers is growing also in the most advanced capitalist countries through a general speed-up in the factories.

They are spreading the practice of piece-work by which, very often, the big monopolies impose an increasing amount of unrewarded supplementary work on the mass of the workers.

The relationship of piece-work wages with the volume of wages paid has varied from 1930 to 1950: from 45 to 70% in France, from 34 to 38% in Great Britain, from 30 to 60-70% in the USA, from 48 to 58% in Sweden, from 39 to 57% in Norway, from 35 to 58% in Finland.

Hundreds of examples can be quoted which prove the accentuation of super-exploitation of the workers in all the sectors of industry. A particularly significant example in this regard is that shown by the mining industry where production has increased considerably, even though irregularly, while in general the number of workers in this industry has decreased.

Precisely for this reason output in the mines increased enormously between 1949 and the present time: by 85% in France, 75% in Italy, 16% in Japan, 34% in Belgium, 38% in the Saar. In Western Germany and Great Britain the output of a miner working underground has increased by 20 and 10% respectively.

This situation, determined by the increase of domination of the monopoly groups over all the economies of the capitalist countries, not only brings about a considerable worsening of the living standards of the workers, but more and more impoverishes the population as a whole, bringing into the general picture of ruin: the peasants, shopkeepers, artisans, workers in the liberal professions, etc.

The fate of millions of peasants, ruined and cast into the fringe of productive activity, is truly moving.

This tragedy appears still more serious when we consider that the present fate of small agricultural landowners is not only a human problem, as it might have appeared during a period when the expropriation of the peasants was accomplished as a consequence of the rise of capitalism in the

countryside and a substantial development in agricultural productivity.

At the present time it has also become a distressing economic problem, because such a development no longer goes hand in hand with expropriations, but on the contrary, a severe crisis and a regression in agriculture itself are the result.

There are impressive figures of this. Peasants' debts have reached a very high level. According to an extract from the agricultural survey of the USA for 1952, published by "Federal Reserve", it is stated that peasants' debts increased by 80% in relation to January 1946. In this extract it is affirmed that: "...the increase of 13% registered in 1951 was the largest among all other increases shown in the preceding years..."

Up to the neck in debt as a consequence of loans, which in the under-developed countries are given on the basis of interest rates of as high as 100% and 160%, crushed by an unjust taxation, ruined by the policy of the big monopolists, the peasants are driven off their own lands by thousands each year. In Tanganyika (Africa) during 1952, a forced expropriation of 3,000 peasant families took place.

In Kenya the expropriation of small agricultural landowners takes on an aspect of unheard of brutality, African farmers are dispossessed by force of arms and their villages burned. This phenomenon of expropriation is not limited to the under-developed countries. The French census of 1946 showed that there were 879,000 small agricultural landowners fewer than in 1929.

Moreover, serious consequences show their effects on the conditions of various consumption markets and thus on the living standards of all sections of the population, because of the application of the financial policy imposed by the different governments subservient to the strongest monopolist groups. It has been proved that imperialism extends its domination over the whole capitalist sector of the world and that this plundering domination affects all sections of the peoples.

All these sections of the people must, then, unite around the workers' trade unions in the different countries and on an international scale, in order to free themselves from imperialist plundering and to achieve conditions allowing a decisive development of world economy and, consequently, a higher economic and cultural standard of living of all the peoples.

The WFTU will be at the forefront of this great task.

From this account two important facts stand out which we think can usefully be brought to the attention of the workers and the world trade union movement; these facts particularly stand out:

1. The control of the economy of every country by monopolies, and the existence of a master imperialism which powerfully equipped is vigorously working to ensure its economic—and consequently political—control over each of these countries, have brought about a new situation in which even the most advanced imperialist countries are reduced to dependence upon the most powerful imperialism, that of America.

2. In order to impose on the workers and the great mass of the people the harsh sacrifices involved in the disastrous economic and war policy of the home and foreign monopolies, the governments, the tools of this policy, resort with growing frequency to force and to mounting waves of brutal reaction. A process of reactionary regression is going on in all the capitalist countries, including those which boast of their ancient “democratic” or “liberal” tradition.

This process is above all characterised by the most violent attacks on the workers’ trade union and democratic rights.

A thorough analysis of this backward movement of capitalist society—one of the signs of its decadence—shows that its development keeps pace with, and follows the same curve as the domination of the big home and foreign monopolies over the life of each country. It is well known that often the most reactionary measures against the workers and the trade union and democratic movement are imposed on the different governments by the master imperialism, the American government.

We must bear these facts in mind in order to guide the trade union movement in the right direction and find the most suitable methods to conduct a successful struggle for the defence of the workers’ interests and rights.

As regards the struggle for national independence of the peoples—which is one of the basic aims of the international working class—the problem has grown more extensive than in the past. This problem which in the past only arose for colonial and semi-colonial countries and under-developed countries, arises today, though in a different form, for advanced capitalist countries such as Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, and, to some extent, Britain.

The working class in the capitalist countries has reached such a degree of maturity that it clearly realises that under imperialism an economically dependent country has no politi-

cal independence and does not enjoy effective national independence. In this situation the tasks of the working class and the trade unions in the capitalist countries widen and new opportunities for alliance with broad sections of the population open before them.

Just as the economic and social policy of the monopolies harms the vital interests of the middle sections of the population, so their unpatriotic policy of the economic and political subjection of their own country to the stronger foreign imperialism, not only strikes at the deepest interests of the nation, the petty bourgeoisie and even some sections of the capitalists, those who have no direct connection with the foreign monopolies and consequently do not get the slightest share of their super-profits but it also offends the national feelings of very wide sections of the people.

The working class, which has the historic mission of leading the advance of all society towards progress in every field, has the duty of fighting with all its might for national independence and opposing every form of subjection to foreign imperialism. It therefore has the duty of allying itself with every other section of the people whose interests are harmed and whose feelings are offended by the direct or indirect domination of foreign imperialism, and the duty of struggling at their head for complete and effective national independence.

At the same time, the greater and greater obstacles which the monopolies and the government put in the way of the satisfaction of the workers' most urgent and most elementary economic demands, require that even trade union struggles for these demands must be mass struggles, struggles of the people in the sense that large sections of the people understand and support them. In Italy, where all the immediate demands of the workers are always linked with the progressive economic policy, adopted by the CGIL, we have had many cases of strikes, and the occupation of factories which have lasted for a considerable time, during which peasants, tradesmen, artisans, and professional workers have actively supported the workers in their struggle, including considerable gifts of money and food.

This popular character of a trade union struggle is always an important factor in its success.

.....To make trade union struggles popular, merely to desire the monopolies. They must struggle alongside them to achieve these demands; they must put themselves at the head of the struggle for national independence and the economic

money and food.

This popular character of a trade union struggle is always

development of the country, against the restrictions and limits which home and foreign monopolies impose on this development.

The international working class and the people of the colonial countries realise more and more clearly that the problem of national independence is not an abstract problem; it is not just a question of emotion, dignity and national honour. On the contrary, it is a vital problem on whose solution depends the possibility of the economic development of the peoples concerned, and their living standard.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, where a feudal type of economic structure and social relations still survive, national independence is the prerequisite condition for breaking of this structure, the creation of new social relations and the promotion of a thorough economic revival in the country.

Generally speaking, no economic and social revival is possible in the colonial and semi-colonial countries without a thorough-going agrarian reform, abolishing the system of landlordism and all feudal privileges and giving the land to the peasants. Only such an agrarian reform can open the way for these countries to develop agriculture, industry, and commercial relations, in short, to economic and social progress. But the carrying out of such radical reforms, so vital to the colonial peoples, is conditional upon their national liberation and the ending of all imperialist and colonial domination.

Consequently, for the colonial peoples, the winning of national independence means the winning of bread, work, wellbeing, a decent and more human life. So the struggle for national independence has a deep and concrete economic and social content. For this reason the trade unions in the colonial countries must always—using the most suitable forms and methods for their particular situation—link the struggle for their economic and social demands with the struggle for their national independence.

For the same reasons, the national movements in these countries support the struggle of our trade unions for the workers' economic demands and so enlarge the front of labour, national independence and peace, and thus create favourable conditions for its forward advance.

In the economically advanced capitalist countries, controlled by the master imperialism, the question of national independence takes on a different character, though it still has certain aspects similar to those in the colonial countries. In the capitalist countries which are in the conditions I have described, the economic control exercised by foreign imperia-

lism tends to subject the economy of these countries in every way to the particular requirements of the controlling power. Limitations are therefore set to the development of particular branches of industry, as we see in practice with the Schumann plan and of agriculture, as happens with the serious restrictions we have already considered, imposed on international trade between the dominated countries.

I have already said that American imperialism has managed to impose on the countries it controls—which they supposedly “help”—the obligation to import certain products from the United States without limit, even if they are unnecessary or even if they are harmful to the national economy, and without any *quid pro quo*. Of course these facts have negative effects on the national economy of the dominated country and the living standard of its people.

It follows from this that even in the advanced capitalist countries controlled by American imperialism, the question of genuine national independence has great importance from the economic and social point of view, besides its great moral and emotional value in connection with the sense of national pride and dignity which is deeply rooted among these people.

In other words, where American imperialism subjects any country to its economic control it has the sole aim of realising the maximum profits at the expense of the vital interests of the controlled country, and consequently of the various sections of its people. Under these conditions every economic demand of the workers, peasants, craftsmen, tradesmen, and so on, in the dominated country has a direct connection with the struggle for genuine national independence. It follows that, not only in the colonial and under-developed countries, but also in the most advanced capitalist countries, subjected to the economic and political control of American imperialism, the struggle for national independence constitutes an objective basis for a broad alliance of different sections of the population around the working class.

The possibilities of such an alliance are even wider when we remember that the fight for national independence is one essential aspect of the struggle for peace. The colonial peoples, like those of the capitalist countries, have no desire to be slaughtered to gratify the appetite for conquest of American imperialism. The winning of national independence is the most effective safeguard against this deadly danger.

Bread, work, freedom, national independence and world peace are the pillars of the alliance of workers and people which we advocate.

In our opinion it is precisely the trade unions which must

initiate this broad popular alliance and fight at its head, for the just demands of the workers and of every section of the population.

At the present moment even the most advanced capitalist countries who are themselves imperialists and oppressors of many colonial countries are falling under the economic and political control of a stronger imperialism.

If we consider this fact in a merely superficial way, we might come to the false conclusion that the cause of national independence of all peoples is falling back instead of stepping forward.

But a serious examination of the position shows clearly that the cause of liberty, and national independence for every people is making very swift progress in every continent. The subjection of the advanced capitalist countries to American imperialism shows, on the contrary, the advanced stage of decay of the imperialist system, for in order to safeguard their privileges, the big capitalists and landlords have come to the point of openly renouncing their national independence. One sign of this among many is the fact that the intellectual theoreticians of imperialism openly deny the whole principle of national independence and are trying to raise unprincipled "cosmopolitanism" to the rank of theory, given currency by American imperialism to prepare the way for its rapacious world domination.

But the cause of national independence which the imperialist monopolies repudiate and flout, is taken up and carried forward by the working class, by all working people, and by the peoples of every country.

One of the most significant of the contradictions now shaking the imperialist system is that certain imperialist governments, who are making great efforts and exhausting their own people in the vain hope of preserving their domination over the colonial peoples, are subjecting their own countries more and more to American imperialism. In order to keep other peoples under their control, these imperialist countries themselves become dependents on a stronger imperialism. This contradiction has come to a head in France, where the Government is begging and getting "assistance" from the American government—thus increasing the dependence of France on the master imperialism—in order to continue its unjust and hateful war against the gallant people of Viet-Nam, and maintain its domination over the peoples of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, who are struggling heroically to win their national independence and so open the way to their economic, social and cultural development.

It is consequently plain that in fighting bravely against the "dirty" war which the French Government is carrying on in Viet-Nam, the French workers are fighting to preserve the independence of their own country, France.

The world working class sends its fraternal greetings and reaffirms its complete solidarity with the heroic people of Viet-Nam, the gallant fighters of North Africa, and all the colonial and semi-colonial peoples who, having no other means of achieving their just aspirations, are taking up arms to win independence for their country.

Imperialism resists everywhere, slaughtering and spreading ruin among the colonial peoples in the attempt to maintain its position and perpetuate the plunder and oppression of the colonial peoples. But the whole colonialist system, which history has already condemned by the process of social and political evolution now going on in every continent, by the existence and continual progress of the first socialist societies, and by the irresistible growth of the international working class movement, has received a fatal blow by the great victory, historic and final, of the people of China. This victory has awakened and given irresistible strength to the hope of national liberation among all the oppressed and subjected peoples. For this reason movements of national liberation are rising, establishing themselves and developing in practically all the oppressed countries of Asia and Africa. The popular forces of the colonial countries are on the march to win their liberty and free themselves from every form of bondage.

This is an historical movement of our time, it is one of the basic elements in the development of human civilisation; it is an indispensable condition for economic, social and cultural progress for the whole of humanity.

No force, therefore, can stop this movement, or hold back its victorious advance.

In order not to make this report too long I have refrained from analysing the present stage of development of the national liberation movement going on in the various colonial and semi-colonial countries. I apologise to the representatives of the countries concerned. I thought it would be as well to confine myself to stressing the essential aspects of the problem; and leave it to the representatives of the colonial and semi-colonial countries to show up the other aspects, so that our final resolution on this important problem may fully answer the expectations of the oppressed peoples and the requirements of the struggle of the world trade union move-

ment, to give active support to every people struggling for national independence, wellbeing and peace.

On this note I will end, emphasising that the national question in all dependent countries either directly or indirectly offers an objective basis for the formation of a broad fighting front against domination, and the unpatriotic and war policy of the monopolies. Our trade unions have the task of developing their opportunity to the utmost in order to lead the advance of their own movement and the movements of all the democratic, national and progressive forces of their country.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE DEFENCE OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES

Brother Saillant devoted part of his report to this problem whose gravity is well known to the workers of the world. It will be enough for me, therefore, to underline certain essential aspects of it in order to draw the conclusions which arise for the world trade union movement.

I have already pointed out that alongside the growth of monopoly control over the national economies, and their subjection to American imperialism, there is developing in all the capitalist countries a continuous worsening of the most brutal methods of reaction and repression of the mass of workers and people. This reaction pursues the same aims as fascism. It borrows its attempts at theoretical justification from fascist ideology, the same bogies and the same lies.

Of course, the present reaction in the so-called "democratic" capitalist countries differs from fascism in various aspects, but not in its aims. It aims, in fact, at the same results which the fascist governments of Italy and Germany unfortunately arrived at—the complete destruction of trade union rights and democratic liberties, so as to subject the workers and the peoples to the fiercest exploitation by groups of ruling imperialists and throw them against their own wills into the aggressive war which American imperialism aims at in every way.

In the sense I have just described we may define the wave of reaction now sweeping all the imperialist-dominated countries and the process of growing fascism in the so-called democratic capitalist countries.

It must be recognised, brothers, that this process has reached a very high degree of development on the international scale. That is why it is necessary to draw strongly the attention of workers, democrats and all who care for liberty to this point.

In every country the capitalist governments are trampling on their own constitution and their democratic social laws. The most elementary principles of democracy and liberty are flouted or abolished without scruple.

Of course, this process of fascism does not proceed at the same pace or in the same forms in every country. I must stress the fact the government repression, while aimed at the destruction of every democratic liberty won by the peoples, directs its first attacks against trade union rights, freedom of association, the right to strike, any collective action by the working people, designed for the legitimate defence of their bread, their wages, their work. In this too the reactionaries follow the same road as Italian and German fascism followed before them.

I am not going to speak of the position in the fascist countries such as Spain, Greece and several others, where the blood-thirsty terror exercised by governments who are under the orders of American imperialism is notorious all over the world.

On the situation in the other capitalist countries of America, Europe, Asia and other regions of the world, involving the systematic and brutal violation of the workers' rights, our WFTU has compiled a very weighty and impressive dossier.

Should I read this dossier to the Congress? It would take too long, and besides, it would not serve any useful purpose, since the facts in question are well known to world public opinion. It will be sufficient if I briefly trace the line of development of this progress towards fascism and a few of its repressive methods.

The present grand master of the repression of the workers and of democracy is well known to be American imperialism. The instructors in this repressive action are the agents of the American State Department, scattered throughout the capitalist and colonial countries, with lavish means and in the countless different guises of "missions" of every kind, including "trade union advisers". It follows that all the methods of repression which are now fashionable in the United States are taught and very often imposed on the governments of other countries.

And these methods, we know, range from illegal im-

prisonment of militant workers and democrats to the lynching and murder by hired thugs, some of them from the restriction or abolition of the right to strike to the closing down of trade unions which are not obedient to the government; from the imposition of barbarous principles of political and racial discrimination in the composition of trade union leaderships to the most disgusting inquisitorial methods against "suspect" militant workers, sometimes extending even to the other members of the family.

These are repressive measures which respect nothing—neither moral principles, human feelings nor law. These methods are used without mercy whenever it is not possible to disrupt trade unions and democratic and national movements, or to bring them under the orders of the government or American agents, by means of bribery or threats. Of course this is done in the American style, that is in the name of "democracy".

These methods are to be seen all over the world, but particularly in the countries more directly under American imperialist domination, as in most of the Latin American countries. Each capitalist government demands that the trade union movement shall be at its orders. These governments lay down that the trade union leaders are not to be elected by the trade unionists but appointed by the governments themselves. In a series of countries, particularly in Latin America, the governments have driven out or imprisoned the elected leaders and replaced them by government bureaucrats. In other parts the government has set up paper trade unions and arbitrarily assigned to them the rights and functions of the real unions.

The real unions are deprived of all rights and are subject to control, ribald outrages and inconceivable persecutions.

The violent suppression of strikes, the illegal imprisonment of honest militant workers, and the breaking up of unions are the current international fashion. And while it is true that this progress of the capitalist states towards fascism is further advanced in the under-developed countries, and that repressive measures are even more savage in the colonial countries, it is still true that this process is very far advanced even in the most developed countries of America and Europe.

We know that even in France and Italy the governments have brought bills before their parliaments aimed at "regulating", as they put it, the right to strike. Actually these laws, modelled as you would expect on the notorious Taft-Hartley

anti-strike law, would have the effect of practically abolishing the right to strike by prohibiting it altogether to public employees and imposing compulsory arbitration. We know all about compulsory arbitration. It means that in disputes between workers and employers the government decides the issue—that is, the employers themselves.

It is plain that the real aim of these laws is to deprive the workers of every possibility of defending their bread and their rights effectively and legally.

We have to note that all over the capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries social legislation is being retarded in recent years.

Laws suppressing the right to strike and restricting trade union liberties are being passed in several countries. In others, the government do not even take the trouble to pass laws to suppress trade union rights. They simply suppress them, using police methods and breaking the existing laws of their country.

If the development of this process could be determined purely by the will of the imperialists, the monopolies and the big landlords in the various countries, you can guess that it would soon be all over with trade union and democratic liberties in the capitalist world. In fact, some official spokesmen of American imperialism have openly stated that one essential goal of the cold war was the liquidation of the French and Italian CGT's, which represent the most strongly organised free and independent trade union forces in capitalist Europe. They have not attained this goal and never will.

We can state with pride that, to the extent that the right to strike and trade union liberties still survive in the world, it is the result of the splendid, often historic resistance of the workers of every land fighting under the glorious flag of our great WFTU. Together we can win and extend trade union rights over the whole world of labour.

THE DEFENCE OF THE WORKERS' DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AT THEIR PLACE OF WORK

With your permission, brothers, I will say a few words about this fundamental aspect of the workers' trade union and democratic rights.

Some years ago the capitalists of practically every coun-

try inspired as usual by the instructions of the special agents from the various American departments, set up an absolute, despotic discipline at places of work. It very often involves the suppression of all free expression and organisation by the workers, besides petty persecution to the point of insulting their human dignity.

In many firms the employers and their agents claim the right to search the workers at the factory gate to see that they have not got any newspaper or pamphlet in their pockets which the employer or the government would not approve of. During the usual breaks in the work, the workers are forbidden to hold any discussions of a trade union or political nature or to take collections. The workers are spied upon to find out which of them belong to a union not approved by the employers, and these workers are persecuted and eventually dismissed. In this way a fascist-type of discrimination has been established.

In countries where the national Constitution grants all citizens freedom of organisation, free speech, the right to strike, etc., the employers assume the right to abolish these rights for the workers inside the factory.

The special departments of American imperialism have invented a complete theory on this score, for which they have the name of "human relations".

They are always so human, these American gangsters!

According to this "theory", all managerial staffs, down to the foreman, must be experts on social laws and collective agreements, as these documents are interpreted by the employers. This is so that they can persuade the workers that the employers' interpretation of their rights is completely sound and that it would be useless to call in trade union leaders in their disputes with the employers.

In short, the management is to fill the place of trade union representatives.

Of course, those workers who do not accept the "sound" interpretation by the employer and his agents are marked down, listed as undesirables and dismissed at the first opportunity.

This is another form of discrimination which they are trying to introduce.

This all proves that American imperialism and the employers are anxious at all costs to prevent the workers from being organised, from having opinions of their own, from having a will of their own, or from having a character of their own. They want the worker to be, not a person like other persons, but a mere thing, a tool, an animal obeying a master.

Can the dread of dismissal, unemployment, and hunger for himself and his children, bring a worker to such a stage of degradation? No; it cannot.

We declared from this platform that the energy and passion with which we fight to defend the workers' bread and employment will grow infinitely greater in the defence of a possession even dearer to our hearts and wills; the defence to the death of the dignity, freedom and human personality of the workers.

You see, brothers, how many miseries are already being inflicted on the workers and the peoples by monopoly control over the national economies, and their policy of unlimited exploitation and war under the control of the most aggressive imperialism. They want to enslave the workers, so that today they can force them to bear the crushing burden of the cost of reckless rearmament; and so that tomorrow they can force them to go and be slaughtered on behalf of the world domination of American millionaires. That is why they destroy trade union rights, why they try to reduce the workers to the level of animals in their factories, why they are anxious to abolish all trace of democratic liberties, why they shamelessly sell the national independence of their country.

We must explain to all the workers that the defence of trade union rights is closely linked with their bread, their right to work, with the defence of their country's national independence, and with the defence of that all-important requirement for the peoples, world peace.

We must explain to all democrats that democratic liberties are an indivisible whole, that trade union rights and the democratic rights of workers inside their factories are the main pillar of the peoples' liberty as a whole, and that if this pillar is destroyed all liberty will fall with it.

If there is no democracy in the factories there is none in the state.

On this basis, too, we must work for a growing enlargement of the united front in the fight for the rights of labour, liberty, national independence and peace.

But we must also devote more energy to the specific struggle in defence of trade union rights, giving it greater scope in each country and on a world scale.

At each place of work we must forcibly oppose all discrimination, victimisation, arbitrary dismissals, and every abuse by the employers, even if only one worker is affected, and no matter what his opinions or organisation. We must apply in this way the basic principle of proletarian solidarity: *all for one and one for all.*

I should like to return to an idea which Brother Saillant dealt with in his report, and turn it into a detailed proposal.

We all remember that in the last century and the first years of the present century, the international workers' movement, which was then just feeling its feet, picked out the most important demands of the workers of the world at that time, the *eight hour day*, and on this basis it embarked on its first international battle. It had a very great effect all over the world and resulted in a number of working class victories. We know that the 1st May Celebrations date from that battle.

Now I think that in the present situation, the question of trade union rights, connected with living standards, national independence and peace, is the most important demand of the workers.

I therefore propose:

1. *that on May Day 1954, the chief slogan should be the defence of these elementary and indispensable rights of the workers.*
2. *that the WFTU should draw up a Charter of Trade Union Rights and Democratic Rights of the workers of the world in their place of work.*

This Charter should be widely distributed in the factories, the offices and in the countryside throughout the world, and should also be presented for approval to all Parliaments and democratic Assemblies in all countries by the elected representatives of the friendly M.P.'s.

Finally, this Charter should be presented also to the United Nations and to the ILO.

We should also launch a great international agitation, in order to achieve decisive victories.

We demand full freedom of trade union organisation for all workers without any discrimination, in every country of the world.

We demand that all the trade union organisations should be free and independent, and that no government should make illegal claims to interfere in the functioning of a trade union or in its policy.

We claim the full right to strike for all the workers without any exception.

We want every worker, throughout the world, to be free to join the trade union organisation of his choice, and to be active in that union.

We demand that all trade union leaders, at all levels, should be elected democratically by the members.

We ask that all trade unions take part in the negotiation

of collective agreements, with a number of representatives proportionate to the number of their members.

We demand full respect for the dignity and humanity of workers at their place of work, and also for their freedom of organisation and speech.

Trade union rights are the shield with which the workers defend their bread and their dignity.

It is necessary to defend or to win trade union rights in order to defend the bread and the living conditions of the workers and their families.

We are a great force, brothers, both in our numbers and in the justice and the rightness of the cause which we are defending. We must make the most cynical exploiters in the world; the defenders of reaction and war, feel the irresistible weight of this force. We can and we must force them to retreat to ensure the advance of the sacred rights of the workers of the world, with whom advances the cause of human progress.

ITALIAN EXPERIENCES OF THE METHOD OF WORK OF THE C.G.I.L.

I have come to the last part of my report.

In all spheres we have seen how serious are the consequences of the very high level of control over the national economies, achieved by private monopolies and American imperialism.

We have also seen that these consequences do not only affect the wage-earning workers, but that they also attack the vital interests of the middle strata of the town and country population, that is to say, the great majority of the people in every country.

This means that we have come to a stage in the evolution of capitalist society when the domination of the monopolists and their policy of stagnation and economic regression, of reaction, of poverty and war, is in obvious and increasing conflict with the elementary needs of life and of progress of the great majority of the people.

The question which I put is as follows.

In these conditions, should the working class and its trade unions limit themselves to *protesting* against the policy of the monopolies, to *opposing* what the monopolies do, to *resisting*

the disastrous consequences of their policy? Or should they also *propose* and *support* other resolutions to the economic and social problems of the country, which correspond better to the immediate and permanent interests of the workers and the great majority of the people, and should they struggle to demand their application?

Our CGIL in Italy says yes to the second alternative.

From this has arisen the great initiative of the Plan of Work of the CGIL.

Faced with the economic stagnation of the country, with the decay of its industrial potential, with the backward state of a large part of the national agriculture, with the extreme inadequacy of its sources of power, with the total unemployment of more than two million workers (whilst immense possibilities of productive work remain unused), the CGIL with the collaboration of the best Italian technicians, worked out its Plan of Work, and presented it to the people. This Plan envisages an organised development of industry, of sources of power, of transport, of agriculture, of building of houses, schools and hospitals and thus the gradual absorption of unemployment, with a view to full employment.

At the same time—and this is one of its essential points—the Plan of Work implies a considerable improvement in the standard of life of the workers and the mass of the people, by means of increasing the consuming capacity of the home market and by providing an increasing outlet for the increase in industrial and agricultural production.

In other words, instead of the contradiction provoked by the policy of the monopolies, between the so-called “excess” of productive capacity, and the insufficient consuming power of the market, a contradiction which they try to solve by restricting production—instead of all this, the CGIL propose a policy of a balanced economy on the basis of parallel expansion of production and consumption, in the interest of all the people and of the general progress of the country. This Plan includes also an increasing development of economic exchanges with other countries: this enables us to publicise more forcefully and more correctly our claim for the abolition of all ideological discrimination in this sphere and the extension of trade relations with the USSR, China and the other People’s Democracies.

In addition, the working out of the Plan of Work has enabled us to make more obvious the need for certain structural reforms in Italian society, in particular it shows the need for *agrarian reform* (such as the abolishing of the huge estates in Southern Italy, by distributing the land to the agricultural

workers), and *industrial reform* by limiting the economic power of the monopolies, in particular by the nationalisation of the electricity monopolies and the Montecatini Company, a chemical monopoly which weighs particularly heavily on the national economy. By means of the Plan of Work, these important reforms appear not merely as a demand for social justice, but even more as a demand for the economic progress of the country.

The achievement of the Plan of Work, which would profoundly change the economic and social condition of the country, demands great productive investment, both public and private. It demands at the same time an increase in the possibilities of productive investment by the State, and the *direction* of private investment towards the work and production in the general interest which is foreseen in the Plan, not only that which guarantees the highest profits to the monopolies.

This fundamental demand of the Plan on the one hand opposes the needs of work and the well-being of the people to the egotism of the monopolies (and poses the problem of how the resources of the country should be utilised), and on the other hand brings out the growing necessity for productive investments. This makes unproductive investment such as rearmament particularly objectionable, and gives more power and breadth to our struggle for peace and *against* the unproductive expenses for war. The Plan demands a policy of peace, of friendship and of economic exchanges between all peoples.

I should like to draw attention to the great difference that there is between the plans of the numerous "planners" of imperialism (notably the notorious plan of M. de Mann) and ours.

The others wish to "organise" the monopolies, and to achieve a type of plan suitable to the economic monopolies, with a view to reducing some of the most disastrous consequences of their policy. Naturally, all these plans have come to nothing.

It is not possible either to organise capitalism or to plan its economy.

Our plan of work, on the contrary, envisages preventing the monopolies from completely applying the greatest possible profit. It opposes the needs of life and work of the people to their policy of regression; of proposing constructive solutions for economic and social progress instead of their solution of restriction and stagnation.

By the Plan of Work the Italian working class has demonstrated to the rest of the people that it does not take up a negative attitude to the fundamental problems of national life;

that it does not confine itself to protesting against and denouncing the misdeeds of the policy of the monopolies; that it does not postpone all possible constructive solutions to "after" a radical change in social relations, that it is capable of proposing immediate positive solutions to the vital problems of the people, solutions which will immediately improve their lot, their living conditions.

In addition, because the plan does not deal exclusively with the interests of the wage-earning workers, but also with the vital interests of the middle strata, the working class denounces the misdeeds of the policy of the monopolies, and proves that it does not fight only for its own interests, but that it is also defender of the living standards and the progress of the vast majority of the population.

The working class thus, in practice, exercises a leading role for all the strata of the working people, and proves that it is the only class which, along with all working people, is capable of directing society towards progress, as it is the great social class whose immediate and permanent interests coincide with those of the whole people.

I would like to emphasise again that our Plan of Work is not only a Plan for the economic construction of the country. No, *it is the basis and the expression of a political and economic line*, applicable in all the branches of economic activity which cannot be and are not foreseen in the Plan, as is proved by some examples of the results of our struggle which I have quoted.

When this Plan was first initiated by the CGIL some Italian brothers wondered if by concentrating the workers' attention on the achievement of the Plan the question of wages and other immediate claims would take second place. These doubts were soon dissipated. It could not be otherwise, because one of the main items of the Plan is precisely the improvement of the standard of living of the masses.

In fact, the recent great united strikes in Italy, which are going to continue in the future, had the improvement of wages as their object.

Our experience proves that our policy of the Plan of Work gives greater justification to our wage claims, broadens our struggles, and opens wider perspectives to the workers.

The raising of wages is also necessary to combat economic depression, to increase consumption and stimulate an increase in productivity and employment. This has proved to be a convincing argument and it draws large sections of peasants, tradesmen, and craftsmen, etc. into support for our struggles. Here is a characteristic example.

The Italian Confederation of Tradesmen (employers) de-

clared itself in its official organ to be in agreement with our policy of higher wages as a struggle against economic depression, and an effective method of relieving the anxiety of the tradesmen.

Our journal replied by congratulating the Confederation of Tradesmen and by asking them to help our struggle. They replied "Yes, but what have you in store for us, after the working class revolution?"

I replied that we are concerned today to improve the living conditions of all those whose livelihood depends on their work. After that we shall see.

However, I added that if we marched side by side today, there is no reason why we should not march side by side tomorrow also, since our aim will always be the same, that is guaranteeing the wellbeing of the people.

This demonstrates the atmosphere of broad sympathy which our policy for the economic restoration of the country has created round the CGIL, and even around its struggle for higher wages.

I must stress, friends, that the CGIL has attained excellent results, not only because it has adopted a correct and progressive line of policy, but also and chiefly because, on the basis of this correct line, the CGIL has unleashed throughout the country a powerful and vigorous mass struggle.

We know that once a correct line has been established, it is the mass struggle that is decisive.

Our Plan of Work sketched the general line, the principal objectives to be reached. Then it branched out all over the country. On the basis of the plan each municipality discovered productive work—or work necessary to the social life of the people—which could be carried out in its territory. Each industrial Federation has studied, in its regional and national conferences, the practical means of developing peace production in its own branch and obtaining employment of a certain number of unemployed, and how to force the trust to reduce retail prices, to bring about an expansion of consumption.

We can say that there was an outburst of interest in work and production among the workers; in all the regions and localities local plans are coming into being, on the basis of the CGIL Plan. These local plans have been drawn up at special conferences where, together with the trade unionists, associations of technicians, craftsmen, tradesmen, doctors, teachers, etc. participated.

These regional and local plans contain a series of concrete specific demands which are of general interest. On the basis of these demands, the struggle has been launched.

The first fruitful example of this struggle was provided by the great masses of poor peasants and agricultural workers of the South.

The Plan of Work provides a more striking and popular justification for land reform. In their hundreds of thousands, in Calabria, in Sicily, in Sardinia, Apulia, in the Abruzzi, the agricultural workers began to move, seized the lands of barons and began to cultivate them.

The government reacted, trying to drive the peasants from the estates by force. The workers put up a valiant resistance. Some were killed, some wounded, some imprisoned, but they won.

We have forced a partial agrarian reform. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land have been handed over to the peasants. This is a beginning. The struggle continues.

Another outstanding success was gained by the whole of the workers in the South of Italy. Since one of the aims of the Plan is to raise the economic level of the under-developed areas of the country, it was endorsed with particular enthusiasm by the masses in the South. They launched at once a series of "reverse strikes", that is to say, they began to carry out the works forecast in the Plan (roads, canals, aqueducts, sewers, etc.) and then they demanded payment of wages by the public authorities.

The CGIL acquired enormous popularity in the poorest districts of the country.

The middle-classes were deeply impressed. They realised that it was necessary to do "something".

After vain attempts to check the movement, the government presented to parliament a special law for the South of Italy, in which the expenditure of 1,200,000 million lira in ten years was allotted for essential works and to promote the economic development of these regions.

These works are now proceeding.

This is very little, friends, in proportion to the needs, but in a period when the monopolies would like to devote more resources to armaments, it is a considerable success to have obtained the allocation of 1,200,000 million lira for economic construction.

Here is another example.

In the valley of the Vomano (Abruzzi), the construction of five hydro-electric stations had been projected before the war. The work which had been scarcely started was stopped by the war and was never restarted.

The moment our Plan of Work was launched, our trade unions in the Vomano region initiated the struggle for the con-

struction of hydro-electric stations. The electricity trust concerned declared that it had not the necessary resources to construct the power stations. The government declared that it could do nothing about it. Then the workers of about 30 municipalities in the area launched a series of reverse strikes. They began the construction work of the dams, etc. The police kept driving them away, but the workers returned to work almost every day for months on end. Meanwhile the whole population took up its position alongside the trade unions. Town committees were created everywhere, with the support of all the sections of the population.

The breakaway unions who at first did not wish to take part in the struggle, were afterwards involved. The movement became a movement of unity, with the backing of the people, to such a point that even the catholic priests and the christian democratic town councils took part in the town committees formed on the initiative of our unions.

The electricity trust which was concerned put up resistance. It and the other electricity monopolies resorted to blackmail.

To construct new power stations—they said—the price of electricity must be increased, so as to make enough profit to pay for the construction of new power stations. They said “no price increases, then no new power stations”. These, therefore, were to be paid for by the people and belong to the monopolies. The government found the demand of the monopolies “reasonable”. The CGIL replied *no*, and launched a campaign throughout the country for the nationalisation of the electric monopolies, a campaign backed by the people.

The workers of the Valley are continuing their reverse strikes.

The mass struggle backed by the people, was so powerful that the monopolies had to yield.

They did not obtain price increases for electricity and they were forced to build the power stations; work is in progress now. About 3,000 workers are employed. They have already spent several thousand million lira. The total planned expenditure is 13 thousand million.

It is a splendid victory for the people grouped around the CGIL against the monopolies.

The following example is even more significant:

The “Montecatini” (a monopoly for the production of chemical manures) was making extremely large profits and was using only 70% of its productive capacity and was selling its fertilisers at excessively high prices. The peasants were very dissatisfied. In accordance with the line of the Plan of Work,

the question was examined by our Federation of Chemical Workers, in collaboration with our Confederation of Agricultural Workers.

A conference of representatives of workers and technicians from monopoly enterprises proved that with a reduction in profits and the complete utilisation of productive capacity, one could increase production, employ hundreds of workless and reduce by at least 15% the cost of the fertilisers to the benefit of the peasants and the development of national agriculture.

MONOPOLY.

The directors of the monopoly were amazed at the "novelty" of these demands but the news raised a storm of enthusiasm in the countryside all over Italy.

The monopoly refused at first to examine these demands and reduce by at least 15% the cost of the fertilisers to the benefit of the peasants and the development of national agriculture.

The workers carried out a series of strikes and stoppages. *Conclusion:* We obtained a 12% reduction in the price of fertilisers; the employment of more than 300 workers, an increase in production and consumption of fertilisers, to the advantage of the peasants and national agriculture. The alliance of workers and peasants was strengthened by it.

I stress that our policy of the economic restoration of the country imparts irresistible strength to our struggle against dismissals and against the closing down of factories.

Confronted with the crisis in the metal industry, confronted with the employers and the government, who wished to close the factories or to reduce the man-power considerably, our Federation of the different industries studied the question with the CGIL.

It emerged from these studies that about 80,000 tractors were needed in agriculture to bring mechanisation to a reasonable level, and that on the railways thousands of passenger waggons and hundreds of modern engines were needed; in the merchant navy many ships were needed for passengers and goods, etc.

We asked the government to take suitable measures to provide the country with this necessary equipment, instead of closing the factories. The population, interested in the progress of their country, supports us. On this basis we are waging our fight.

When they want to close the factories, the workers always resist. They systematically take possession of the factory and continue to work justifying themselves by the proven fact that there is plenty of work to be done, which the country badly needs.

At Reggio Emilia, the 4,000 workers of the "Reggiane" factories occupied their factory day in, day out for a whole year.

On their own initiative they built three large tractors of a new type, which Italian agriculture needs, to give substantial proof of the good work the factory could turn out in the interest of the country.

The whole population grouped itself around the factory workers, making government interference by force impossible.

During the whole year that the occupation lasted, the workers, the peasants, the tradesmen, the craftsmen, the whole population of the town and of the region guaranteed adequate food supplies for the four thousand workers at the factory and for their families with the help of the cooperatives.

Think, friends, what it means to feed such a mass of people for a whole year and then measure the power of the feeling of solidarity of these magnificent workers, as well as the breadth of the popular alliance which was formed around the workers in their fight.

This great struggle ended in a compromise amounting to a partial success.

At Genoa, they wanted to dismiss thousands of workers from the naval shipyards "Ansaldo".

The workers occupied the shipyards. In order to prove that there was good work to be done, they began to build a big passenger ship, the plans for which had already been drawn up.

After months of occupation of the shipyards, and many demonstrations in the town, thanks to the support of different sections of the population, the dismissals were withdrawn, and the shipyards have built the beautiful ship whose construction the workers demanded, and which today is the pride of the Italian merchant navy.

The warmongers in our country utilise the crisis in the metal industry to spread the idea that this crisis can be fought by the development of war production.

To this attitude of economic regression and subsequent impoverishment of the country, we oppose a solution of economic progress and peace.

We demand the compulsory investment in agriculture of 15% of the rent receipts of the big landed proprietors, and the utilisation of part of these investments for the mechanisation of agriculture.

We ask also that the State should grant long-term loans to agriculture at a very low rate of interest for the purchase of agricultural machinery.

By this means, which is of particular interest to the peasants, we can fight the crisis in the engineering industry by the development of peaceful production and the stimulation of agricultural progress. The Italian sharecroppers have struggled successfully on this line.

Our Federation of Sharecroppers struggles for the mechanisation of their holdings in order to lighten the heavy work of the sharecroppers and to improve their living conditions through an increase in production. They have achieved a number of successes. In the province of Livourne alone, our sharecroppers have already forced the proprietors to buy 800 agricultural machines, to install 89 mechanical irrigation systems, and to build 85 kilometres of roads linking the holdings to the towns.

At the same time we are pressing for peaceful production in the factories and progress in the countryside.

CONCLUSION

Brothers,

I have perhaps given too many examples. I hope at least that they are clear.

We wanted to accomplish a task: that of transmitting to our Brothers in all countries the great experiences that we have had and which have given us very good results. This does not mean that everything is going well in Italy. No! We have made some mistakes, we have had misunderstandings, we have not had enough continuity in the struggle for the Plan of Work. We intend to eliminate these mistakes.

But this policy and the great struggles that we have waged on this basis, have permitted us to gain important achievements.

The examples given clearly show that, to a certain degree, we have prevented the monopolies from doing all they wanted and we have even forced them to devote several thousand million lira to investments beneficial to peace and economic progress, which they would have preferred to devote to rearmament.

We have forced the government to increase state investments in peaceful work and public work in spite of its policy of war and subservience to American imperialism.

We have made clearer than ever the parasitic and anti-

social function of the monopolies and the deep contrast which exists between their policy of economic regression, war, reaction and poverty, and the needs for work, well-being, progress and peace of the people.

Principally, the CGIL has proved to the people that positive and progressive solutions exist to the vital problems of the country, and that the people, grouped around the working class and the CGIL, can impose them. We have given to the workers and the people still more confidence in their power and in their possibilities for success.

We have widely opened to the workers and the people the way to save our country and towards its economic and social reconstruction.

Not only the workers, but also an increasingly large mass of the people place their great hopes of future well-being and progress in the CGIL.

The Italian working class has never before had so many links with the broad sections of the people as today.

A great popular and working class alliance is developing around the CGIL and its programme of action, the Plan of Work.

In Italy, everybody (friends and enemies) recognises that the CGIL with its increasing prestige, has made an important contribution to the recent electoral victory of the working class and democratic parties; a victory which has changed the situation in Italy and inflicted a hard blow on imperialism.

I believe, brothers, that I have given you sufficient idea of the experience that we have had in Italy.

It is difficult for me to say to what extent this experience can be utilised in other countries. However, I am convinced that it is of general value, because it is determined by the present state of evolution of the system of monopolistic imperialism.

In fact, we know that a similar policy has been adopted in recent times by trade union organisations in many countries. I hope then, that our brothers who contribute to the discussion will let us know their experiences in this question in order that our Congress can draw useful conclusions from them.

The enemies of the workers put increasing obstacles in the way of our trade unions, in order to prevent them from accomplishing their tasks, above all their most important task, that of effectively defending the day-to-day interests of the workers.

Our enemies more and more resort to methods of force. It is thus more necessary to discover the weak link in

their system in order to draw the consequences which arise from it.

The weakest point of imperialism is, no doubt, the fact that it harms the vital interests of increasingly broad sections of the people.

It is necessary to find the appropriate means of linking our trade unions to these sections of the people and of placing the unions at their head, in order to oppose the violence and lies of the enemy, by mass movements which grow increasingly broad and powerful.

Brothers,

All these facts, with many others of contemporary life and history, prove that we can change the situation in the different countries and in the world.

No, the monopolies cannot do all that they wish to do. Imperialism, the creator of war, reaction and poverty, cannot make the world situation develop as it wants.

We are the people who determine the world situation and its development. We can and therefore we must, act so that the world situation develops towards life, against the bearers of death.

The forces of work, of progress and of peace in the world are immense, and our cause is just.

No force can prevent us from going forward.

Close our ranks, comrades, let us raise and carry forward the banner of unity and of international solidarity of the working class, of unity of all the workers of the world!

We can and will achieve the triumph of the cause of social justice, national independence, liberty and peace, the essence of human progress!