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THE FRENCH CONFEDERATION GENERALE DU TRAVAIL AND THE
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTRES (1900-
1914): FRENCH SYNDICALIST ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTERNATIONALISM AND
THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

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Doctor of Philosophy

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April 1987

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THESIS SUMMARY

This thesis examines relations between the French Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) and the labour movements of other countries in the years leading up to the First World War. The aim of the study is to examine the CGT's policy of internationalism in practice, both in relations with other labour movements and in its membership of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres (between 1900 and 1914). In particular, the relationship between the French and German labour movements is explored in the light of the events of August 1914. This study shows that that relationship was a reflection of the respective positions of the French and German labour movements in the international movement. It also subjects to close scrutiny the assumption, widely made before 1914, that workers had more in common with each other than with the ruling classes of their own country, by analysing the extent of, and the reasons for internationalism and international cooperation in the labour movement. As a study of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, an organisation about which very little has previously been written, this thesis complements existing work on the international labour movement prior to 1914. It also provides new insights into the French CGT by concentrating on the fundamental areas of internationalism and opposition to war, and offers fresh contributions to the continuing debate on the international labour movement and its response to the outbreak of war.

KEY WORDS:

- Confédération Générale du Travail (France)
- International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres
- Internationalism
- International labour movement

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AFL	American Federation of Labor
AIA	Association Internationale Antimilitariste
ASE	Amalgamated Society of Engineers
CGT	Confédération Générale du Travail
CNT	Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores
FNS	Fédération Nationale des Syndicats ouvriers de France
FTSF	Fédération des Travailleurs Socialistes de France
GFTU	General Federation of Trade Unions
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ILP	Independent Labour Party
ISB	International Socialist Bureau
ISEL	Industrial Syndicalist Education League
ISNTUC	International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres
IWMA	International Working Men's Association (First International)
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
NAS	Nationaal Arbeidssekretariaat van Nederland
POB	Parti Ouvrier Belge
POF	Parti Ouvrier Français
POSR	Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Révolutionnaire
SDF	Social Democratic Federation
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
TUC	Trades Union Congress

By 1914, internationalism was associated with the labour and socialist movements of the industrialised world. This internationalism was reflected on an institutional level, in the First International (1864-1876) and in the Second International (1889-1914).

Many of the theoretical bases of workers' internationalism were laid down by Karl Marx, whose thoughts guided and inspired not only those organisations involved in the First International, but indeed, much of the subsequent history of socialism. Marx's and Engels' contribution to human knowledge rested upon the central idea of the historic role of social classes. Historical change, according to Marx and Engels, was the product of the struggle between classes. The central importance of class in society logically meant that class mattered more than nationality as a criterion of social allegiance. Marxist thought therefore posited that the struggle of the working class was international and that emancipation could only be achieved through a combination of forces on an international level.

This assumption that workers of all countries had more in common with each other than with the ruling classes of their own country was central to Marxist thought after Marx and to the ideological motivation for the Second International. In line with this theory, the socialists in the Second International saw the international organisation as an instrument for peace, fraternity and solidarity between the workers of all nations. Accordingly, the Socialist International took upon itself the task of opposing war, and resolutions condemning war became routine - almost ritual - for International Socialist Congresses. It became widely

assumed that the internationally organised proletariat could prevent a war by marshalling forces against such an eventuality. Even if war did break out, the socialists would stop the war effort by organising workers' resistance; or so it was thought.

Because of its noble aspirations and grandiose claims to represent the "real parliament" of the world, and because of the very real fear which this international organisation inspired in governments, the Second International became a model of internationalism which reflected less its real preoccupations and activities than the image it projected. The myth of the Second International was thus created and sustained.

Largely because of this image, the outbreak of war in August 1914 devastated the international labour and socialist movements. Instead of organising resistance to make war impossible, the Second International showed itself to be powerless as socialists of the belligerent nations voted war credits and joined in the war effort. In some countries, a minority of socialist and labour leaders insisted that the beliefs and assumptions which had guided the work of the International had been abandoned in 1914. At the end of the war, they bitterly accused their leadership of having betrayed socialist principles in August 1914.

Subsequent accounts of the Second International and the years prior to 1914 continued to be based on the same assumptions. The conclusions seemed to fall into two camps: some concluded that the socialist leaders had betrayed the workers they claimed to represent, while these same leaders and their supporters angrily justified their conduct. The debate was

obscured by the fact that many of the pre-war socialist leaders had died before or during the war. The most obvious example is that of Jaurès, whose assassination on 31 July 1914 was seen by many as the trigger to French labour and socialist acceptance of the war. Many possible scenarios were put forward to suggest what might have happened had Jaurès lived to lead the anti-war movement.

The betrayal theory was seen as particularly valid in the light of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent rallying of many socialists to Russian leadership of international communism. If Lenin and his party had successfully transformed a war between nations into a struggle between classes, it was argued, the socialists of other countries could have done the same.

The question of the "collapse" of 1914 has been at the heart of the history of the labour and socialist movements. As has been indicated, many studies could not provide a coherent answer because they became entangled in the "betrayal" dispute which was ultimately a debate between the Marxist or revolutionary position, based on a literal interpretation of Marx's call for workers of all lands to unite, and a revisionist position which called into question Marx's theories. In other words, the "betrayal" debate rested on a perception of what should have been done in August 1914, instead of an analysis of what was done and what was possible.

The Second International and its role in the events of 1914 has been the subject of an abundant literature, and it is not proposed here to examine all those works which deal with the

subject. Several studies are, however, noteworthy for the light which they shed upon events. In his study of the major¹ protagonists of the Second International, Milorad Drachkovitch claimed that the weakness of the International, shown by its failure to stop war, could be explained by examining the weaknesses of French and German socialism. He concluded that these two socialist movements were essentially entrenched in, and partly a result of, specifically French and German² characteristics. James Joll, too, points to fundamental differences within the International, notably between the French and German socialists, which give the lie to the myth of a monolithic international socialist movement before 1914.

After examining the work of the Second International,³ Georges Haupt has pointed out that studies of the International and its pronouncements on war leave aside the question of the state of mind of the workers whom the socialists claimed to represent. In this context, the question of whether or not individual socialist leaders betrayed the principles of the International is irrelevant, because this tells us nothing regarding the possibilities for action to prevent war. Nor does it address the question of the extent of internationalism among workers (as opposed to socialists).

Going beyond a monolithic approach to the Second International, historians have also looked to labour and socialist movements of individual countries. Notable among these⁴ are historians of German socialism, such as Dieter Groh, whose theory of "negative integration" points to the dichotomy between

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integration into the German state. Carl Schorske has similiarly
observed that the groundwork for later splits within the German
socialist party was prepared well before 1914.

6 7
More recently, Dick Geary, Gary Steenson, Barrington
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Moore Jr., and others have attempted to go beyond the usual
definitions of working-class behaviour (congresses of socialist
parties, support for political parties in elections, etc.) and to
analyse labour movements on the basis of day-to-day, rank and
file experience. The result of these studies has been to throw
into question an analysis of history which is based solely on
institutions and to place emphasis instead on the way in which
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messages were received at the base. Bernard Moss' book on the
French labour movement corresponds to this general trend.

These interpretations of history of labour and socialist
movements do not directly relate to the Second International, but
they open up the debate in such a way as to shed light on
theories concerning the "collapse" of 1914, and suggest
possibilities for further analysis. In the same way, a recently
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published study on the French Revolution of 1789, by Lynn Hunt,
has sparked off fresh debate. Rejecting both "revolutionary" and
"revisionist" approaches to history, Lynn Hunt instead places
emphasis on what she sees as new and distinctive in the French
Revolution.

The aim of this study is not to reject or refute Marx's
theories on the centrality of the class struggle and on
internationalism. Rather, it is evident that a serious analysis
of labour internationalism must explore the reasons for
international cooperation and internationalism, and evaluate

their practical application. It has become increasingly clear that, as an explanation of the behaviour of the international labour movement in 1914, a study of the pronouncements of the Second International is insufficient. What needs to be examined is rather the extent to which the declarations of the Second International were echoed in the daily activities of the labour movements of the countries concerned. After all, the socialist leaders may have made fine speeches about the need to oppose war by all means, including the general strike, but they did not themselves have the industrial muscle necessary to organise mass action. This was the domain of the labour unions.

An examination of the labour movements in the different countries will reveal that the situation before 1914 was far more complex than that assumed by the proponents of the "betrayal" theory. In this respect, studies of the labour movements of individual countries have made very valuable contributions. In the case of Germany, John Moses¹¹ has studied at some length the German labour movement prior to 1914; in particular, his work on Carl Legien,¹² head of the German Generalkommission, has helped to counterbalance the prominence traditionally given to socialist leaders such as Liebknecht, Kautsky, Bebel and Luxemburg. While the latter had an undoubted and lasting influence on German socialism, Legien's leadership of the German labour movement was crucial not only for the decision of German socialists and trade-unionists in 1914, but for the whole of the international labour movement.

The case of France is even more complex and interesting.

The case of France is even more complex and interesting.¹³ Here, the work of Annie Kriegel and Jean-Jacques Becker has been fundamental. Kriegel and Becker conclude that, although both the French socialist party and the French labour confederation, the CGT, were committed to opposition to war, only the CGT was in a position to act positively to prevent war, by means of the general strike. The central question is not, therefore, the reason for the collapse of the Second International, since this International simply did not have the mass support which labour organisations commanded. The question is rather centred on the labour movements of the countries concerned. Did they share the concerns of the Second International? Did they regard internationalism and opposition to war as working-class issues? Did they actively strive to combat nationalism and militarism? Did they participate in international activity?

In fact, labour internationalism, as opposed to socialist internationalism, is a relatively neglected area. After the war, labour internationalism, like socialist internationalism, was divided along ideological lines. The work of the International Federation of Trade Unions became well known, as did that of the Red International of Labour Unions, yet the forerunner of the IFTU, the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, remains virtually unknown. One reason for this may be the prevalent monolithic view of the international labour and socialist movement before 1914; it was assumed that all labour movements were affiliated to the Second International. This was not the case. The French labour movement, despite its commitments to internationalism and antimilitarism, stayed away from the

congresses.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to examine the international labour movement (as opposed to the international socialist movement) prior to 1914. In particular, the study concentrates on the French CGT in order to evaluate its attitudes towards internationalism, towards the international labour movement and towards the labour movements of other countries, especially that of Germany.

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Jacques Julliard's article has offered some valuable insights into the attitude of the CGT towards antimilitarism and the struggle against war. Similarly, Robert Brécy has provided a useful introduction to the question of the CGT's international links in his bibliographical study of the French labour

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movement. On the whole, however, there is a lack of exhaustive studies of the CGT's attitudes towards internationalism and antimilitarism, and many erroneous assumptions remain unchallenged. This is illustrated by Jean Touchard's remarks, in his history of the French Left since 1900, ¹⁶ expressing surprise on learning, from Kriegel and Becker, that the CGT and the French socialist party pursued separate antimilitarist campaigns. This example is indicative of a wider ignorance of differences which existed between the "official" picture of the international labour movement, as presented by the resolutions of the Second International, and the reality.

Likewise, the lack of serious analyses of the organised international labour movement before 1914 constitutes a gap in our knowledge of this period. Reports of the International

our knowledge of this period. Reports of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres fall into three main categories. The first consists of studies undertaken by the IFTU, whose main interest lies in the ISNTUC's history as forerunner of the IFTU.¹⁷ Whilst giving informative background material, these studies tend to stick to details which are strictly relevant to the IFTU, avoiding any analysis of conflict. The second category, consisting of works by (usually communist) opponents of the IFTU, concentrates on conflict. Foremost among these is the influential work by Losovsky,¹⁸ which, by dismissing the ISNTUC as a mere "letter-box", has helped to discourage students of history from closer examination. Finally, the third category, exemplified by the work of Lewis Lorwin,¹⁹ studies the international movement in some detail, but it suffers as a result of its failure to distinguish between the labour and socialist movements.

This thesis, however, attempts to go beyond the partisan approaches of the first and second categories, whilst also making a clear distinction between labour movements and socialist parties, in order to analyse more closely the concept of labour internationalism.

In an attempt to answer some of the questions outlined above, this thesis has set out to examine the French labour movement, internationalism and the international labour movement. This has been done principally through primary source material. Walther Schevenels has traced the fate of the archives of the ISNTUC, and concluded that they had been lost in the Second World War.²⁰ The documents of the ISNTUC - chiefly conference reports and reports on the international movement compiled by the

International Secretary - have been obtained through labour movement archives. Conference reports and the International Secretary's reports were first compiled in German, and then translated into French and English. Wherever possible, copies have been obtained in two or more languages. The translations are literal, and this avoids conflicts of interpretation (unlike the reports of the Second International, which often caused controversy by differences in wording after translation), but it also means that the English versions are rather awkward and stilted. In some cases, only English versions have been found; the accuracy of these reports can be assumed, but stylistically the quality of the translations is not always good.

Much extra invaluable information has been supplied by the national centres involved, in their own reports and in their press. Since the main focus of this study is France, much of the source material comes from the French syndicalist press of the period under examination, and from socialist and other press sources, as well as CGT congress reports and official reports and bulletins. French syndicalism is crucial to the study of labour internationalism because, as this thesis will show, the French CGT boasted a more highly developed revolutionary consciousness than the labour movements of other countries and constantly debated questions, such as antimilitarism and international obligations, which the leaders of other national labour movements were reluctant to take on board. In this way, much of the lost ISNTUC correspondence, particularly that between France and Germany, has been pieced together, because the CGT was so eager

to publish it all and debate its significance. This is reflected in the wealth of primary material, in the French syndicalist press and elsewhere, on issues on which the German labour press, for instance, maintained a discreet silence. Wherever possible, however, this thesis has attempted to show the German response and to make comparisons between the CGT and the labour movement of other countries. For this reason, it has been necessary to conduct a detailed examination of the German labour movement and its responses to the CGT and to internationalism.

The examination of the real working relations between the CGT and the German trade unions shows what an enormous gap there was between two fundamentally different conceptions of labour activity, and reveals the problems which hindered the construction of a labour International. The frustrations, tensions and even hostilities generated and expressed in these contacts counterbalance the "heroic" accounts of the Second International.

Another important dimension of this thesis is the exploration of the relationship between internationalism and national interest. Far from being instinctive or automatic, labour internationalism was seen as desirable because it brought benefits to national organisations. Internationalism had a practical, rational side which was reflected in international labour organisation, as well as abstract ideological motivation. Labour leaders saw the need to justify internationalism by citing national advantages. Perhaps even more significantly, policies adopted on an international level were, as this thesis shows, often the product of domestic considerations.

By comparing the French CGT with other national labour movements, by analysing relationships within the ISNTUC, and by examining the motives for and the extent of labour internationalism, this thesis seeks to contribute to the wider debate on working-class internationalism, of which the Second International and the events of 1914 are just one aspect. Indeed, only by widening the debate from the restricted arena of the Second International can the events of 1914 be understood and interpreted.

Chapter I. THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND INTERNATIONALISM: THE BEGINNINGS

1

As Lorwin points out, internationalism may be an ideal, a policy or a method. The characteristic feature of internationalism, in all three cases, is a perception of common interests. In order for interests to be shared, they must first be perceived individually. As far as internationalism is concerned, self-interest and altruism are thus blended in a desire for cooperation rather than conflict.

Of five types of internationalism which Lorwin pinpoints (humanitarian, pacifist, commercial, social-reformist and social-revolutionary),² the latter two concern this study directly because they are associated primarily with the labour and socialist movements, unlike the other three, which gave rise to campaigns involving a variety of social classes and intellectual currents. This association is made on two levels: firstly, on an ideological and intellectual level, the spread of internationalist ideals in the nineteenth century found an echo in the groups associated with the socialist and labour movements; secondly, on a practical level, internationalism was to some extent a product of the growth of organised labour itself.

Early internationalism was based very much in the realm of ideas. The French Revolution of 1789 brought with it a set of universal ideals and a new cosmopolitanism, proclaimed most notably in the Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, described by Maxime Leroy as "une charte internationale de la liberté, un document universel qui doit servir au salut de tous les peuples".³

In the nineteenth century, this political and social

internationalism was brought into the economic arena, with the development of the capitalist industrial system. The free trade economy brought with it new sets of conflicts and interests, particularly new class solidarities and antagonisms. Thus it was that internationalism became linked with labour movements. Labour, as a distinct economic and social group, saw the necessity to join its own forces, for protection, and because it saw that it could not entrust the solution of its problems to those in power. At the same time, labour, as a distinct group with its own traditions which took in, for example, many elements of the French Revolution, represented a kind of standard bearer of human progress and civilisation which could only benefit the human race as a whole.

Internationalism, inspired by sympathy with the uprisings of 1830-1831 in France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Poland, was based on a perception of a common cause, which was democracy and justice. This was echoed in the socialism of the type represented by Owen in England, Fourier and Saint-Simon in France. Criticising the excesses of the free trade economy, which caused misery and suffering to many, these socialists looked to "humanity" as a whole, and helped to spread internationalist ideals. Many of these ideals were taken up by the nascent labour movement. In England, the National Union of the Working Classes, formed out of a blend of radicalism, socialism and the new labour groups, appealed in 1831 for the working class to unite for the benefit of the whole of society.

In 1834, the first modern movement of labour unrest reached its peak. In France, this resulted in a growth of revolutionary

secret societies and a regeneration of Babeuf's communist ideas, the aim being to emancipate the proletarian classes. In England, on the other hand, the response was economic rather than political, with the formation in 1834 of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. The Grand National aimed to unite workers in one organisation. As such, it represented a significant development in the international movement and served as a model for other countries. At a very early date, links were made between these various groups in England, France and elsewhere in Europe. In the late 1830's, William Lovett, of the Grand National, received such a great response to his "Address to the Working Classes of Belgium" (in which he, in the name of English workers, protested against the imprisonment of a Belgian worker arrested because of attempts to organise fellow workers) that he suggested the formation of an international labour organisation. Contacts between Chartists, Owenites, Saint-Simonians and Blanquists were so strong that a project for international association was considered in 1839, but due to arrests (after strikes in England and the Blanquist uprising in France) it never came to fruition.

Following the collapse of Owenite, non-political idealism, the demands for independent working-class activity grew. In England, the emphasis was on conquering the political institutions: universal manhood suffrage and protective legislation for workers. Chartism as a political force grew. Elsewhere, a revolutionary wave swept across central and southern Europe in 1848.

In contrast with these heady years of idealism and intellectual development, the 1850's saw a period of slow, practical building-up of the labour movement. Labour organisation grew from the need felt, from day-to-day experience, by workers to join together to improve their condition. Only after years of slow and painful building, in the face of repression, did any sort of organisation come about. As far as labour organisation was concerned, England was far in advance of any other country. Elsewhere, in France and Germany, workers were hindered by repressive laws restricting association, but still mutual aid societies, educational groups and friendly societies developed.

With the development of labour organisation, internationalism assumed the added dimension of practical necessity. Migration was a crucial factor in the growing need for international links experienced in the working-class movement. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Paris and London were minor "Internationals" in their own right, with migrant workers and political refugees from many different countries, and it was from these two cities that the first demands for, and the first attempts at, international cooperation were made. As well as having the experience of dealing with people from different nationalities and cultures, the workers of London and Paris and other large cities were facing the problems associated with the migration of labour, most notably competition between immigrants and indigenous labour. The importation of strike-breakers from abroad was one aspect of this particular problem which showed how much employers were gaining from the lack of international solidarity among the working class. It became common in the

1850's and 1860's for employers in England to respond to organised working-class action by bringing in workers from Belgium and Scandinavia in particular.

At the same time, it was becoming increasingly evident that the interests of capitalism itself were not confined to any one country but were actually international. The spread of colonialism showed that the whole world was open to capitalism as a market, and that national differences actually helped the ruling classes to keep the workers in check. Just as radical democratic internationalism grew in response to the "Holy Alliance" of Metternich, so too the argument that, as capital was international, so the working class should organise internationally, was central to all attempts to set up an international workers' organisation.

Because of the links between Chartists, Positivists, Blanquists and others, in France and England, ideas of international cooperation had already been circulated by 1848, when Marx's and Engels' Communist Manifesto was read for the first time. The Communist Manifesto laid down what was to be the essence of socialist internationalism. It posited the theory that workers of all lands had more in common with each other than with their respective rulers, and called upon workers of all lands to unite against their oppressors. However, although the Manifesto argued that nations were merely the product of early territorial squabbles among rulers, which had nothing to do with the mass of the people, Marx and Engels maintained that workers had to organise themselves in order to influence and ultimately conquer

power in their own land, and therefore placed their internationalism firmly upon the basis of strong national components.

Trade unions, as yet in their infancy when Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto, were acknowledged by Marx as a necessary stage in the "organisation of the proletarians into a class."⁴ By the time the first international working-men's organisation came about, it was the English trade unions which played a major role in its formation. Only after the association was formed was Marx invited to join.

It is significant that contacts between France and England led to the formation of an international association. It was from France that most of the theoretical background, dating from the French Revolution onwards, emerged. Marx's theories, on the other hand, represented newer currents of thought, associated naturally with Germany and the developing German labour movement. Their originality lay in the revolutionary and historic role of the working class. These theories did not directly influence the foundation of the First International, but developed alongside and together with the International.

In fact, the decisive pushes for international ties came from England, and emerged out of practical results in the growth of trade unions, rather than from ideas. The catalyst was a series of conflicts in the London building trade between 1858 and 1861. The London builders first went on strike in 1858 to support their demand for a nine-hour day. Almost immediately, the employers reacted with a lock-out, coupled with attempts to bring strike-breakers from the Continent. For the builders' leaders,

the strike served to show the need for unity of action and greater organisation. The immediate result was the creation of the London trades council in 1860. In 1861, the Beehive was set up in an attempt to relay information about workers' demands and strike movements.

The building strikes had far-reaching repercussions on the whole of the labour movement. When, in 1861, after a renewed strike by the London builders, the government sent in troops to work at the Chelsea barracks, the London labour leaders saw in the incident a powerful argument for workers' franchise, and the English labour movement became linked with various suffrage reform associations. More importantly, it was from the labour leaders involved in the building strikes and the London trades council that the initiative for the first international workers' organisation came. Their contacts with French workers led directly to the setting-up of the First International.

The most important single motive impelling English workers to make contact with their counterparts abroad was the desire to prevent strike-breaking through the use of foreign labour. Moreover, workers abroad could actively help strike movements by sending, not only moral support, but financial aid. In the absence of organised strike funds, this practical form of solidarity had an immediate and obvious value to workers on strike. The symbolic importance of this form of action was also extremely potent.

Through contacts established by English Positivists (who had a special affinity with France because of the intellectual

influence of Comte and other French thinkers), the London builders on strike received five pounds and eighteen shillings from France. Although it was a fairly modest sum, it had an enormous effect on the morale of the English workers. Years later, Odger, secretary of the London trades council, referred to this strike aid, when the bronze workers of Limoges appealed to the trades council for assistance during a strike. These bronze workers became the backbone of the International in France.

In order for workers to be able to assist each other in this way, the exchange of information about the situation of the working class in each country, especially about strike movements, was perceived to be necessary. At first, this information could be obtained piecemeal, but the labour leaders were dependent on contacts outside the labour movement for this. It soon became clear that more regular and organised links were desirable.

In 1862, Napoléon III sponsored an elected delegation of French workers to visit the International Exhibition in London. Among these workers were Fribourg, Tolain and Talandier, later to be prominent in the First International. During their visit, at a tea-party organised by an English group interested in the progress of cooperative societies, the French workers met several English workers later to be involved in the International, and the idea of a corresponding committee was proposed.⁶

Indeed, correspondence between the French and English workers was maintained, so that when the issue of Poland cropped up in 1863 as a rallying-point for international action, the French and English workers were ready to organise joint activities. The Polish cause became identified with working-class

internationalism; indeed, as Lorwin has pointed out, the democratic ideal and the desire to promote the independence of small nations formed one of the most important factors.⁷ In particular, an "Address of the English to the French workers", drafted by Odger and reproduced in England and Europe in December 1863, brought to the attention of the world the ideals of English labour leaders. The address called for:

"a gathering together of representatives from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, England and all countries, where there exists a will to co-operate for the good of mankind".⁸

The motivation for such an appeal lay in the growth of English trade-unionism. At least among skilled workers, labour was becoming more organised, and the results were seen in more effective action for higher wages and improved working conditions. On the Continent, however, workers were still struggling for the right to organise. This posed a double problem for English workers: firstly, the threat of competition from industries abroad, which had lower labour costs; secondly, the possibility of competition from immigration and the threat to replace English strikers with foreign labour. In the short term, international links could be used by English workers as a means of creating solidarity and thus dissuading foreign workers from taking jobs in England during strike movements. In the longer term, Odger and the other English labour leaders saw the chance to spread the principles and methods of English trade unionism abroad, which would have the result of raising the standard of living in other countries, thus reducing the threat of competition.⁹ As Collins and Abramsky have pointed out, however,

these motives were not entirely selfish. They were based on a conviction that their interests were necessarily identical to those of workers abroad, and inspired by a genuine sympathy for movements for democracy in other countries. This was shown during the Polish revolts and the American civil war, when English workers sided with the North, once the issue of slavery had been brought out.

On the French side, too, the developing labour movement saw the benefits of international cooperation. In February 1864, sixty signatories, including the Proudhonists Tolain and Murat, who had campaigned together with English trade-unionists on the issue of Poland, proclaimed in the "Manifeste des soixante" that there was a conflict of interests between capital and labour and demanded the right for labour to organise. Logically, this meant that workers of different countries should stand together in a network of mutual assistance. Practically, this was shown when a group of workers on strike in Limoges appealed to the London trades council for aid in 1864. The English, remembering the builders' strike fund in 1860, published several appeals on behalf of French workers in the Beehive.

All these factors were decisive in shaping the ideas and contacts which led up to the foundation of the International Working Men's Association (First International). This, although not purely a labour or trade-union body, was largely based on labour groups in various countries, and provided a framework of reference for all subsequent attempts at international labour organisation.

I.1 The International Working Men's Association

At the meeting, in St. Martin's Hall in London on 28 September 1864, which founded the First International, Odger once again spelt out the reasons for labour internationalism:

"We find that whenever we attempt to better our social condition by reducing the hours of toil, or by raising the price of labour, our employers threaten us with bringing over Frenchmen, Germans, Belgians, and others to do our work at a reduced rate of wages, and we are sorry to say this has been done, not from any desire on the part of our Continental brethren to injure us, but through a want of regular and systematic communication between the industrial classes of all countries."¹¹

If the English trade-unionists had definite and concrete goals in allying themselves to the International, the composition of other national sections was less clear-cut. Collins and Abramsky,¹² in their analysis of the First International, distinguish between four main tendencies in the first years of the international organisation, represented by the English, Italian, German and French sections. The Italian Mazzinists were the least radical section, placing emphasis on the republican virtues of "brotherhood" and "civic duties and rights". In Germany, where the socialist movement was advancing rapidly, leading to the creation of the Social-Democratic Party in 1869, the section of the International was inspired by radical socialist ideas. Of the two French sections, one was based in London under the leadership of Le Lubez, strongly republican; the other was led by the Parisian workers Tolain, Murat and Perrachon, who had, along with the English trade-unionists, been foremost in preparing the way for the foundation of the

International. This latter group was influenced by the theories of Proudhon, based on a vision of a society composed of small cooperative units exchanging goods and credit, and rejecting State control.

It was this heterogeneous mixture which formed the core of the First International. The final spark was provided by Karl Marx, whose aim in guiding the international movement was revolutionary. In contrast with both the English labour leaders and the French Proudhonists, Marx argued that workers should organise nationally and internationally to win political power and use this to change the social system. The English labour movement had no such strategy of international working-class emancipation; rather, they considered that the immediate benefits to be gained from international organisation, particularly in material improvements for themselves and for workers abroad, were of primary importance. In addition, the democratic nature of the working class, organised internationally, could be used as a force for peace by putting pressure on individual governments' foreign policy. For the Proudhonists, working-class organisation was desirable only insofar as it promoted free exchange, not as a means of coercion.

The Inaugural Address of the First International, drafted by Marx, took into consideration all of these positions. Primarily, however, it was directed to the English working class. With its emphasis on the objectives of raising wages, reducing working hours and reforming legislation, the Address was closer to the English point of view than to any other group.

From the beginning of the International Working Men's

Association, the English labour leaders played an important role in its organisation and activities. The link between the International and the earlier struggles in the English building trade is shown by the fact that, of twenty-seven Englishmen sitting on the General Council of the International in 1864,¹³ no less than eleven came from the building trade. Odger, first and only President of the International, was secretary of the London trades council which had been set up during the builders' dispute; Lucraft, a joiner, Cremer, a carpenter, and Howell, the bricklayers' leader, were all prominent in the IWMA.

The undisputed lead which the English labour movement had in the International was a measure of its advance over every other national section, particularly on an organisational level. In 1868, the Trades Union Congress was set up, having been preceded by various local and national conferences. At the second congress in 1869, the delegates spent much time discussing social legislation, an area where the labour movement had already made some progress, and the idea of setting up a Parliamentary Committee was established. Already many trade-union leaders were local councillors and in a few years some would be members of Parliament. On the whole, the English labour movement seemed to represent a much stronger force in the political life of the country than did workers of any other country.

The key to the English labour movement was trade-union organisation. After the collapse of the Chartist movement in Britain, it was the trade unions which had revived the working-class movement. Political demands came later, on the basis of

strong working-class organisation. This was the reverse of the situation in many countries, where trade unions were small and weak, dependent on political movements to breathe life into them.

Despite the appeal to the British labour movement in the Inaugural Address, there was one omission, in that Marx made no direct reference to the role of trade unions. At this stage, Marx's strategy was based on the necessity of political leadership to unite the international working class - this was to be the function of the International. This idea was the general thrust of the Communist Manifesto, but it was clarified in the Inaugural Address, with specific reference to England as the model for capitalist development in all industrialised nations.

Marx's ideas on the role of trade unions were elaborated as a result of discussions within the First International. At the instigation of the English, a debate was held under the auspices of the General Council on the question of whether trade-union pressure for wage increases could effectively raise the standard of living of workers. Weston, an Owenite who for some time had been propounding the idea that pressure for increased wages would ultimately harm industry and could therefore be of no benefit to workers, read a paper to the General Council in May 1865. In June 1865, Marx responded in a paper which was published after Marx's death by his daughter Eleanor, under the title "Value, Price and Profit". In this paper, Marx insisted that higher wages would change the structure of demand, resulting in an improvement of workers' living standards. In particular, Marx pointed to the success of the Ten Hours' Bill not only in improving working conditions but also in initiating a real rise in wages, thus

disproving the theorists who had forecast the ruin of British industry. From this Marx concluded that it was necessary to change legislation, and not merely to accumulate wage demands:

"As to the limitation of the working day in England, as in all other countries, it has never been settled except by legislative interference. [...] This very necessity of general political action affords the proof that in its merely economic action capital is the stronger side."¹⁴

The lessons for the labour movement were spelled out by Marx:

"Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system."¹⁵

In general terms, this analysis corresponded to the growing trend within the English labour movement towards parliamentary activity. The General Council was clear in its position on the question of the attitude to be taken towards trade unions and strikes, which constituted the first theoretical debate of the first congress of the International in Geneva in 1866. This position was summed up in Marx's instructions on the congress, under the heading, "The past, present and future of trade unions". In this, Marx stressed the inherent inequality of the struggle between capital and labour. By organising in unions, workers could defend themselves to some extent, but they could never hope to make gains unless they organised a wider struggle for complete emancipation:

"The immediate object of trade unions was [...] confined to everyday necessities, to expedencies for

the obstruction of the incessant encroachments of capital, in one word, to questions of wages and time of labour. [...] Apart from their original purposes, they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centres of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction."16

The necessity of trade-union organisation and action was by no means unanimously accepted by all sections of the International. The French Proudhonists, for example, saw trade unions as no more than a necessary evil in the conflicts engendered by the economic system. They favoured producers' cooperation. A compromise was achieved which endorsed Marx's instruction, while adding that strikes were necessary purely because of existing conditions.

On another level, the demands of the trade-union movement were recognised by a resolution at the Geneva congress calling for an international collection of data on labour conditions, including wages, hours of work, female and child labour, night and piece work. Such an ambitious project was never implemented, as the international labour movement was not sufficiently equipped at that time to undertake it, but the importance placed on such questions at Geneva and at subsequent congresses was a sign of the priorities of the International. The collection of data on labour internationally was an idea of such central importance to the international labour movement that it was later to become a major preoccupation of the labour movement and one of the primary raisons d'être of international cooperation between trade-union bodies.

Support for the International among the labour movements of various countries fluctuated, and depended on the degree of

organisation in the country concerned as well as on the perceived benefits of the International. In England, the organised trade-union movement was in general receptive to the idea of international links. In 1867, a large trade-union conference in Sheffield (a precursor of the TUC) recommended affiliation to the International of the various societies represented, "believing that it is essential to the progress and prosperity of the entire working community"¹⁷. This appeal was repeated at the second TUC in 1869, where it was argued that the IWMA would help to restrict international competition by raising wages to a uniform standard in Europe. It was also pointed out that international organisation was a natural development of the growing workers' movement, just as local unions had given way to national organisations. As well as serving the interests of labour, international association would "conduce to lasting peace between the nations" by putting pressure on governments' foreign policy.¹⁸ Nevertheless, these appeals did not always have the desired effect of increasing affiliations to the International. One reason for a stagnation in the International's membership after the Geneva congress was the evident contrast between the English and other organisations. Whereas in England a campaign for political reforms was steadily gaining ground, in the rest of Europe unions were struggling to exist.

In many cases, affiliation resulted directly from incidents in which the International proved its worth in concrete terms. The General Council could point to several notable successes. In April 1866, the General Council gave help to London wire-workers

on strike by appealing for solidarity on the part of other wire-workers. An attempt to import strike-breakers from Belgium during a London tailors' strike in the same year was frustrated by direct intervention of the International. The tailors' strike proved to be a turning point for support in England of the International, resulting in several new affiliations. A similar incident proved the worth of the International for French workers. In 1867, Parisian bronze workers, on strike as part of a struggle for the right to form a union, were locked out by their employers. After a visit to London by a delegation of the strikers, the General Council was able to send hundreds of pounds¹⁹ collected from English unions. The success of the French workers' strike acted as a morale-booster for the whole of the international movement.

In many cases, the threat of the International's intervention alone sufficed to ensure victory for the workers' demands. In 1868, for example, Geneva building workers who had been locked out appealed to the International for help. The employers were alarmed enough to concede the strikers' demands²⁰ for a wage rise plus a reduction in working hours to ten. As employers became worried by the prospect of their plans to substitute foreign labour being thwarted, the prestige of the International among workers soared and its legend grew.

In this sense, the example of the International and its achievements helped to spread the ideas and methods of labour organisation. Evidence from Austria and Germany, for instance, indicated that trade-unionism was growing as a result of the²¹ inspiration of the IWMA. The influence of the International

could not be measured by its membership alone. Reports presented at the Basle congress (1869) attributed continuing social agitation in Switzerland, France, Belgium and Wales to the International's action, not because the IWMA deliberately fomented social unrest, but because the benefits of international links were obvious to strikers: "Ce n'est pas l'Internationale qui jeta les ouvriers dans la grève, mais la grève qui jeta les ouvriers dans l'Internationale."²²

This in turn helped to keep the issue of trade-union organisation at the forefront of international action. Furthermore, the International was helping to build up national organisation at the same time as it was developing international solidarity, and as part of the same process.

In a preliminary address to the Basle congress, the English labour leader Applegarth praised the work of the International on two main grounds. Its role in preventing the free importation of strike-breakers, thus creating new international solidarities, alone justified its existence, according to Applegarth. Over and above this, however, a second benefit was perceived: the exchange of ideas. In particular, Applegarth thought that the English labour movement had been enriched by contact with more radical ideas which demonstrated that, beyond immediate wage struggles, there was a higher goal to be attained. From their European brothers, the English workers could gain insight into more combative methods (more "spirit"); in return, the other national centres could learn from the English the value of "standing their ground". Applegarth concluded that an international union was

"necessary to attack the evil that oppressed them at the root".

Given the very different circumstances which existed in each country, regarding the attitude of the State and of employers, and legal conditions affecting the right to organise, such an exchange of ideas was indeed a remarkable achievement and one which contributed to the development of both workers' organisation and socialist debate.

Ultimately, however, it was the clash of ideas which brought about the disintegration of the International. A profound divergence of ideas between the English labour leaders and the French Proudhonists was evident at the Basle congress in 1866. It was reinforced at the Brussels congress of 1868, when both Marx (through Eccarius) and the English labour representatives opposed French projects for credit banks. The English criticised the Proudhonist ideas as "unsound", "visionary" and "illusory".²⁴ At this stage, the practical, cautious English formed a counterpoint to the French delegates, strong on ideas but weak on organisation. One indication of this difference was the role played by each group in the International. Whereas the English trade-union leaders were important figures in the organisation and administration of the IWMA, the French workers were particularly active in congress debates.

The Brussels congress, however, marked the beginning of a new phase, in that the International was now committed to more markedly socialist aims, notably land nationalisation. The collectivist ideas were of course inspired by Marx, but supported by the English labour representatives. Soon, however, new conflicts emerged. The two main sources of conflict were the

interpretation given to the Paris Commune of 1871, and the power struggle between the Marxists and the Bakuninists.

The Franco-Prussian war, the downfall of the French emperor and the Paris insurrection provided a test for the internationalism of those involved in the IWMA, over and above the reciprocal nature of purely "trade-union" internationalism. The first signs of division appeared in response to the proclamation of the French Republic. Whereas the campaign for recognition of the French Republic at first united all sections of the British labour movement, Marx was strongly opposed to the desire of some labour leaders to link the campaign with support for Jules Favre's government. There was also disagreement on whether Britain should seek to secure a settlement through arbitration, or intervene on the side of France in the name of democracy. The International's position was further confused by disarray amongst the ranks of its French section in Paris, which was divided between support for the republican government and involvement in the Paris Commune. Tolain, a founder member of the French section, had left to become a member of the French Parliament. In general, reaction among the English labour movement to the Paris Commune was sympathetic, although the workers were isolated from the rest of English society in this view. Marx's analysis of the events, written for the General Council immediately after the fall of the Commune, did not, however, receive unanimous approval. Its praise of the Communards and denunciation of Favre's government alienated those members of the General Council who had earlier expressed support for Favre. Odger and Lucraft resigned from the General Council in the full

glare of press publicity; Lucraft was to have no further dealings with the International.

The last years of the International were marked by growing division and increasingly bitter squabbles. Bakuninist ideas were spreading; the Swiss section was more or less autonomous, and like-minded sections were being formed in Spain and Italy. Marx now saw Bakuninist influence as the greatest threat to the International, and was no longer worried about control over the English sections. After the second London conference in September 1871, an English Federal Council was set up. Marx hoped to use the English unions as a bulwark against the spread of Bakuninist influence, by laying stress on the need to play down political ideas. According to Marx, "the task of the International was to organise and combine the forces of labour for the coming struggle".²⁵ Despite the support of the majority of the English section for Marx's views on this, the Federal Council too became involved in attacks on the role of the General Council. In a desperate attempt to prevent the International falling under Bakuninist control, Marx manoeuvred the transfer of the General Council to New York, thus ensuring the death of the International.

The Bakuninist wing existed for several years after the end of the IWMA. After the congress of the Hague in 1872, in England, as elsewhere, branches of the International appeared to function as normally. In November 1872, however, the Federal Council split into two groups, each claiming to be the sole representative of the International in England. The International as such, based on

the association of many diverse groups, but inspired by the powerful, well organised English labour movement, reached its end in 1872.

It was not so much the heterogeneous mixture of groups and ideas in itself which caused the decline of the International, but the central contradiction between practical trade-union organisation and the development of more radical theoretical conflicts, especially as far as the English were concerned. In this respect, George Howell's retrospective view of the International, written in 1878, is revealing:

"The seeds of discord and decay were sown at this first congress [presumably Basle, 1866] by the introduction of 'the religious idea' by a German 'doctor' named Karl Marx. From that moment dissensions began to crop up; it led to interminable debates on all kind of abstract theories and notions, religious, political, and socialistic... What 'the religious idea' meant in the minds of those who presumed to become its apostle does not appear; but whatever it was, it did not captivate the English members of the International, to whom, as a rule, it was repugnant.

"[...]

"In proportion as these imported continental ideas became more and more predominant, so the International declined, as regards its English power and influence; one by one the earlier members left, and new adherents did not appear to fill their places."26

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Despite the inaccuracies in Howell's memory of events, two ideas are of particular interest here: the English labour leaders' hostility towards divisive (i.e. political) questions, and their identification of these ideas with foreigners.

Engels, who had never shared Marx's optimistic view of the potential of the English labour movement, wrote to Sorge in 1874, explaining that the end of the International was timely. The IWMA, thought Engels, had belonged to the period of the French Second Empire, whose death coincided with that of the

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International. After the Paris Commune, which had ushered in a new era based on the central role of the proletariat, there was a need for a new form of international organisation, openly proclaiming its communist ideals.

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As Collins and Abramsky have concluded, the IWMA was a product of its time, arising directly out of the labour revival of the 1860's. Its appeal to various labour movements was based on a perceived need for combination of forces, and was reinforced by the practical benefits to be gained from such combination: mutual financial aid, solidarity, elimination of competition. It is noteworthy that in England, where trade-union organisation was strongest, most of the newer, larger unions preferred to remain outside the International, whilst recognising its merit. Affiliations came mainly from the smaller, older unions which were the most threatened by outside competition: for example, tailors, basket-makers, boot-makers. The failure of the General Council to secure the affiliation of the newer and larger (because less exclusive) unions, particularly the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) disappointed Marx. When, in 1872, Newcastle engineers went on strike for a nine-hour day, the ASE appealed to the General Council to prevent the employers from carrying out their threats of bringing in workers from Belgium and Denmark. Marx used the occasion to remark pointedly that trade unions had a habit of appealing to the General Council when they were in trouble, only to conveniently forget the International afterwards. Nevertheless, despite the General Council's work in preventing the use of strike-breakers from

Belgium, which was praised by the ASE, the union never joined the
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International Association. Those English unions which, because of their strength, were in a relatively strong position to bargain with employers eschewed contacts with the International, because they felt they had nothing to gain from international links.

The IWMA also represented a meeting-point for all the different ideals and theories which characterised the mid-1860's. In this sense, too, the IWMA was a product of its time. The development of many different currents of socialist and anarchist thought, coupled with industrial advances and the rise of an organised working class, meant that the international labour movement was constantly changing. The relationships between the different forces within the labour movement were constantly changing, too, and those which prevailed in 1872 were no longer those of 1864.

Nevertheless, largely because of this heterogeneity and constant shifting of forces, and also because of the legends which grew up around the IWMA, as employers and heads of nations alike viewed it with distrust and then alarm, the First International served as a model for many, very different groups. The First International's viewpoint took in both the economic and the political. Marx had stressed the need for political as well as economic action. But this could be taken to mean methods such as lobbying MP's for changes in existing legislation, just as it could signify a belief in the revolutionary aim of working-class organisation.

As well as practical international cooperation, the

International also represented a theoretical internationalism based on a vague belief in international fraternity of the oppressed, which inspired identification with the Polish and Irish causes as well as with the Paris Commune. This was also reflected in the IWMA's resolutions on war. The idea of a popular militia was approved at Geneva. At Brussels, the Belgian collectivist Caesar de Paepe secured approval of his resolution calling for workers to cease work in the event of an outbreak of war. This resolution was certainly ahead of its time. Marx and the English regarded it as irrelevant, since the working class overall was not organised sufficiently. Indeed, the Franco-Prussian war demonstrated the practical influence of such a resolution. Marx's second address on the war (after the proclamation of the French Republic) drew the inevitable conclusion:

"If the French workmen amidst peace failed to stop the aggressor, are the German workmen more likely to stop the victor amidst the clangour of arms?"³¹

In general, the international working-class was not sure enough of its own power or strength to make any sweeping claims as to its role in decisions affecting war and peace.

Finally, if internationalism was stressed both as a principle and as a feature of the First International's structure (national sections being identified as sections of the International rather than as groups in their own right), this was because national sections were so weak. In some countries, the section of the International assumed the role of central coordinator, in the absence of national federations. In this

context, the International was instrumental in setting up national sections, rather than consciously striving to dismantle national barriers. National and international organisation were part of the same process.

I.2 Labour and Internationalism after the First International

The end of the First International left a gap which many trade-unionists in different countries were anxious to see filled, although some labour groups did take part in the Bakuninist congresses which followed the removal of the General Council to the United States. For many trade-unionists, the conflicts within the First International over tactics and tendencies had impressed upon them the need for a purely trade-union International.

International activity during the 1870's was at first confined to the Jurassian sections of the old International. After the suppression of the Commune, many of France's leading militants fled abroad and became involved in this wing of the international movement. In 1877, the Universal Socialist Congress of Ghent established the victory of those collectivists who believed in the necessity of political action to conquer power for the working class, over the anarchist sections of the movement. Meanwhile, the labour movement in France had, in the repressive aftermath of the Commune, been developing along different lines. Eschewing political action of any kind, labour was organised chiefly in the cooperative movement. In 1878, the two paths crossed when several of the political leaders attended the second labour congress at Lyon and found support for more

radical views among leaders of the cooperative movement. The Lyon congress decided to organise an international labour conference later that year, a sign that, for the labour leaders if not for the political activists, the Jurassian federation did not represent the true International. At the same time, the Universal Socialist Congress of Ghent had mandated its French section to organise an international congress, strictly revolutionary collectivist in terms of delegates and agenda, in 1878. On the initiative of the radical socialist journalist Jules Guesde, the two congresses were merged, and the revolutionary collectivist agenda triumphed.

Under French law, membership of the International was banned. Alarmed by the agenda of the international congress, the French government declared the meeting illegal. When the congress went ahead as a private meeting, the police occupied the room, dispersed the participants and sent the foreign delegates home. Guesde and the other organisers of the congress were prosecuted.

George Shipton, then Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, headed the group of English trade-unionists who travelled to Paris. This unfortunate incident no doubt helped to reinforce the English trade-unionists' reluctance to look outside their own national boundaries, and bolstered the feeling of superiority cherished by the English labour leaders, which made international association appear to hold no benefits for them. Judging the French attempt at holding a congress by their own standards, the English could only see lack of organisation. There was another factor in the English attitude: the fear of revolutionary ideas. That the congress had been taken over by the

French and Swiss collectivists was proof to the English of the gulf which separated the English labour movement from the rest of Europe.

In England, the body which assumed the role of representing the whole of the English labour movement in its contacts with workers abroad was the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC. This had been set up by the TUC in 1871 to back up the campaigns of trade-union candidates in the forthcoming general election, and to coordinate activities relating to social legislation. In the absence of any national trade-union federation, however, the English trade-union movement had come increasingly under the control of the Parliamentary Committee, which now functioned effectively as a central council. This was to be of great significance to relations between the French and English labour movements, since the Parliamentary Committee was very conservative in outlook, shutting out any hint of the newer, more militant ideas which were beginning to enliven national congresses. Broadhurst, the long-term secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, was, along with other prominent members, a supporter of the Liberal Party, and he became an Under-Secretary in a Liberal government.

The attitude of the Parliamentary Committee was a major obstacle to international trade-union association, not least because the English labour movement continued to dominate the labour movement internationally because of its high membership and continued growth and because of its industrial muscle. Although the Parliamentary Committee's sphere of activity was

supposed to be limited to work concerning elections and legislation, its assumed role as a central committee meant that the annual congresses (the decision-making body) referred the important question of international activity back to the Parliamentary Committee. The latter, however, consistently avoided making any commitments in this area, excusing its inaction by claiming that it was not competent in such matters.

Thus, the ninth annual TUC, held in 1876, abstained from taking any action on a proposal sent by Mr. Pio of the Danish trade unions that the congress appoint a committee to work out a scheme of "non-political" union between the English and Danish trade societies. Instead, the Parliamentary Committee was requested to answer the letter and "take such other steps as seem³² to them advisable after further correspondence". The Parliamentary Committee accordingly dropped the issue as quickly as possible, thanking the Danish labour leaders for their efforts, and assuring them that the Parliamentary Committee would always be happy to pass on information and strike appeals. This fell far short of the Danish unions' detailed scheme for "an alliance between the Societies of the two countries for³³ protection and defensive purposes". Although the proposed alliance was expressly non-political, the Parliamentary Committee was evidently reluctant to become involved in any scheme which might place demands on the English trade unions. Nor were they willing to relinquish, in favour of a committee elected for that purpose, the right to speak on behalf of the whole of the English labour movement when dealing with unions abroad.

Subsequent annual Trade Union Congresses, whilst showing

evidence of a growing interest in international cooperation, nevertheless continued to relegate such questions to the Parliamentary Committee. At the Leicester congress in 1877, Thomas Smith moved:

"That in order to encourage a closer unity and understanding between British and Foreign Trade Associations, this Congress is of the opinion that it is desirable to admit in future foreign delegates representing bona fide trade unions to take part in the deliberations of the Congress."³⁴

Although there was general assent, even this question was referred back to the Parliamentary Committee. This apparently contradictory attitude was perhaps a legacy of the days of the First International, which had shown that, although English labour groups were willing to encourage international ties where the value of these was evident, they were extremely reluctant to commit themselves to work which was not directly beneficial. It was a simple matter to express vague ideas in favour of international cooperation at congresses, much more difficult to spend time and energy putting these ideas into practice. It is also interesting that the Leicester decision to admit foreign delegates to congresses, evidence of a desire to spread the aims and methods of trade-unionism across Europe, did not envisage the participation of English delegates at foreign congresses.

German trade unions made several overtures to the English TUC around this time, including invitations to trade-union congresses in Germany. These were the Hirsch-Duncker, liberal-oriented trade unions, which admired the English labour movement's "wise organisation, their sound principles, their energy in maintaining the rights of working men". They received

a non-committal reply from the English. Despite this, the need for international cooperation as a means of stopping competition between workers of different countries was a real one, and was the subject of discussion at several English labour congresses.

The first breakthrough came in 1883, when the Parliamentary Committee received a letter from M. Labusquière of Paris, which the Committee laid before the sixteenth annual TUC. The letter referred to the "use and necessity for the associated workmen of various countries to be informed on all questions, and especially on those which affect their rate of wages", which had induced the National Committee of the "French Workmen's Party" to convene an international conference in Paris in October 1883. Several aspects of this scheme appealed to the Parliamentary Committee. The proposed agenda contained no theoretical questions, but stayed within purely trade-union limits:

"1st. International legislation on labour questions (hours of work, sanitary conditions of workshops, etc.). 2nd. Labour in each country by foreign workmen. 3rd. In cases which the previous questions seem to require, the means of insisting upon the abolition of laws of any country which place obstacles in the way of permanent international good understanding between trade unions."36

The purely trade-union character of the proposed conference seemed confirmed by the mention of "delegates of real and properly constituted workmen's organisations", and if the fact that the letter emanated not from a trade-union body but from a political party worried the Parliamentary Committee, these fears were assuaged somewhat by the results of enquiries which affirmed that the "French Workmen's Party" was merely the vehicle for the parliamentary aspirations of the labour movement.

This simple statement masked the tortuous political directions followed by the French labour movement since 1878. At the third national labour congress in Marseille in 1879, Guesdist collectivist ideas triumphed over the non-political cooperative movement which had led working-class organisation. The congress decided on the creation of a labour party to seek the collectivisation of the means of production, and the Parti ouvrier was accordingly formed in 1880. Soon, however, conflicts arose between the Guesdists and the section around Paul Brousse, which advocated an electoralist strategy. At the sixth national labour congress in 1882, the Guesdists formed their own "Parti ouvrier", later to become the "Parti ouvrier français", while the "possibilists", under the leadership of Brousse, took the title "Parti ouvrier socialiste révolutionnaire français" (which became the "Fédération des travailleurs socialistes de France" in 1883). Although these were essentially political conflicts, they divided the labour movement. Both sections, each with its own trade-union following, claimed to be continuing the work of preceding labour congresses, and both were concerned to capture working-class support.

Of the two sections, it was the Broussist wing of the labour movement which invited English trade-unionists to Paris in 1883. If the English were aware of the political leadership of the French labour movement, they must also have realised that the "possibilists", with their emphasis on local political representation and overall electoralist strategy, were closer than the Guesdists to the English viewpoint. The international

initiatives undertaken by the "possibilists" in the 1880's were not only the expression of a belief in the development of working-class organisation, nor merely a continuation of Brousse's involvement in the Jurassian International, but also, after the split with Guesde, a conscious attempt to strengthen the Broussists' claim to recognition as the sole legitimate socialist party of France. The division of the French labour movement was thus extended into the international arena by the international congress of 1883; it continued until 1891, by which time new divisions had emerged.

I.3 The 1883 conference in Paris

The invitation sent to the English trade unions justified the need for an international conference by pointing out the value of information on all questions affecting workers, especially concerning wages. No doubt for the benefit of the English, it stressed the exclusively working-class nature of the planned congress. The proposed agenda reflected this concern to limit discussion to those questions which preoccupied the English labour leaders, concentrating on the exchange of information and discussion of legislation.

Bailey, Burnett and Broadhurst were appointed to attend as the delegates of the TUC Parliamentary Committee, and six major trades associations sent a total of eight delegates from England to Paris in October 1883. As promised by Labusquière, all of the French delegates represented various trades, apart from Labusquière himself, Gély and Paillot, of the National Committee of the "French Workmen's Party", and twelve delegates appointed

by the seventh national labour congress, including the political leaders Brousse, Allemane and Joffrin. As well as the TUC, the French had invited delegates from Spain and Italy, the former being represented at the conference by two trade-union delegates and a member of the Committee of the "Workmen's Party of Catalonia", and the latter by Andrea Costa, who had been entrusted with no fewer than twelve mandates from various trade unions and political groups in Italy. The composition of the meeting presumably reflected the extent of the "possibilists'" contacts abroad.

During its five sittings, the conference passed four main resolutions, as well as discussing reports from the countries represented. Firstly, the conference expressed the opinion that, whereas the ruling classes had an interest in fomenting hatred between nations, the workers of all countries had "a common interest in maintaining peace". The conference protested against "all wars" and demanded that the money devoted to war budgets should be used to improve workers' living conditions. Next, the conference stressed the necessity of reducing working hours and improving working conditions, both by means of legislation, and by organised working-class action. Dependent on this was the lifting of laws preventing national and international association. The third resolution urged all workers travelling abroad to join trade unions of the foreign country and never to work under terms which would undersell native labour. Finally, the conference expressed the desire for a permanent union of the labour movements of all different countries, together with regular congresses, since "the interests of workers of all

countries are identical and reciprocal", and since international organisation was the most effective way to defend those
38
interests.

In terms of the subjects discussed and agreed, the 1883 conference catered for all the different viewpoints represented. Essentially, apart from the resolution on war (which was based on pacifist rather than revolutionary arguments, and on the economic cost of war, and which was therefore wholly acceptable to the English), the resolutions dealt with questions of primary importance to trade-union organisation: the improvement of working conditions, reduction of hours. These preoccupations reflected both the priorities of the English movement and the "possibilist" strategy of the Broussists, which placed emphasis on the need for changes in legislation. At the same time, these were questions of universal significance. Over and above the practical and immediate question of trade-union organisation, the first and last resolution in particular mirrored the ideological preoccupations of the French labour movement, led by the Broussists. For the French, the universality of working-class interests, whatever the country, was accepted as evident, whereas for the English this assumption had to be continually justified.

The scope of the conference agenda was indeed ambitious, given the low level of working-class organisation in most countries. This pointed to the interest which the French had in all areas of working-class organisation, without necessarily the means to follow up this interest.

Because the agenda was limited to questions acceptable to

the English, any major clash between the two labour movements was avoided. The Parliamentary Committee later reported that,

"With the exception of a wish to rely upon the State for things they may do for themselves, we did not object to the general views of the French delegates on social questions."³⁹

The English did, however, find plenty to criticise in the French methods of organisation. In the course of their report to the conference, the English made it clear that they considered English trade-unionism far superior to any other organised labour movement, and directly appealed to the other delegates to work to strengthen their respective organisations. They noted that, even where unions were relatively well organised in France, contributions were rarely paid, and membership figures did not accurately reflect the reality of the situation. As for the organisation of the conference, the English remarked pointedly that French procedure was quite different from their own. Whereas at Trade Union Congresses in England a prepared resolution was discussed and then amended to suit the opinions and points raised in debate, the French drafted resolutions to suit the mood of the discussion, reflecting the emphasis placed on the airing of ideas and opinions.⁴⁰

At the next annual TUC, held in Aberdeen in 1884, the Parliamentary Committee's attitude was summed up in its report:

"Has the conference of 1883 done any good? To us perhaps it has not. The position we assumed was that we were so well organised, so far ahead of foreign workmen that little could be done until they were more on a level with ourselves."⁴¹

On the other hand, the English noted with some satisfaction a reported increase in the number of chambres syndicales. Perhaps

more significant for the French was success in local and national elections (for the Broussists), the English concluded. Finally, the TUC noted that one practical result of the international conference had been a successful action to stop Marseille sailors going to fill the places of sailors on strike in Genoa and other Italian ports. Overall, the English concluded:

"These facts show that the Conference has not been without result, and they point the moral that other conferences may lead on to further progress. They also teach us that a compact labour party, working steadily for itself, may not be out of place in this country."⁴²

The 1883 conference was thus a success, in the sense that an exchange of ideas had taken place, however limited and cautious. Nevertheless, it did not provide a test for the internationalism of its participants. This was because the other delegates were careful not to upset the English delegates, and because the English had definite ideas about what they wanted to gain from the contacts. From the Parliamentary Committee's report to the TUC, it would appear that the English labour leaders were using the French example to back up their own arguments for the formation of a labour party in England. This would explain the Parliamentary Committee's rather odd references to the "French Workmen's Party" in 1883, and indeed its decision to accept the invitation in the first place.

The 1883 conference paved the way for further exchanges. When, in 1886, an invitation for a second meeting was received, the Parliamentary Committee sent a delegation, this time not considering it necessary to obtain approval from the TUC.

I.4 The International Trade-Union Conference of 1886

In March 1884, a law was passed in France which allowed the formation of trade associations and federations. Since this indicated that the authorities would be less inclined to outlaw or hinder international meetings, the "possibilists" arranged an international conference to coincide with the Paris exhibition. The Parliamentary Committee sent J. Mawdesley and John Burnett as its delegates, while the ASE and other important English unions sent representatives. For France, there were delegates from eighty-six trade associations. The conference was given a more international flavour than its predecessor by the presence of a delegate from Austria (M. Brod), five delegates from Belgium, including Edouard Anseele and Dr. Cesar de Paepe, and representatives of Australia, Hungary and Sweden. The German Social Democratic Party sent a letter, in which the party regretted that because of the Anti-Socialist Laws operating in Germany it could not send a delegate to the meeting, but Herr Grimpe, of the Sozialdemokrat of Zurich, was empowered to speak on Germany's behalf. A telegram was also received from Laurent and Jensen, Presidents of the Swedish trade unions, which was sent on the occasion of the first joint congress of Swedish, Danish and Norwegian unions; this message sent fraternal greetings and expressed the hope for "united action and co-operation between the Workmen's Trade Societies of all countries".⁴³ A message from Switzerland echoed these sentiments. It seemed that labour organisation in all the countries of Europe was progressing to such an extent that a closer cooperation was now possible.

The initial impression received by the English delegates on their arrival in Paris was a good one. A "very cordial" exchange of greetings took place, John Burnett remarking that "The splendid meeting of today was a living testimony of improved organisation and increased strength". This impression of improved organisation in France and elsewhere led Burnett to conclude that⁴⁴ "that seed had been sown which was now germinating".

The conference was, however, to realise the worst fears of the English labour leaders, and to show the difficulties of international cooperation. To begin with, the language difficulties proved to be a great obstacle to discussion, for the English in particular, and the English delegates' prejudices and misunderstandings were reinforced by their feelings of alienation from the main speeches, which were translated after a lapse of time.

Most importantly, the political nature of the conference was implicit from the start, when the English delegation began their stay with a visit to the National Committee of the Fédération des Travailleurs Socialistes de France (the word "socialist" was still being dropped from the English translation of the title). The English were not, however, concerned by the involvement of Brousse and Allemane and their followers. Indeed, they had already indicated approval of the "possibilist" strategy and hinted at its potential use in England. What caused the English concern was the presence and particularly the attitude of the German speaker, Grimpe, who used the occasion not only to extol the virtues of socialism but also to directly attack the English

trade unions. The first three days of the conference, which were occupied with the reading of reports from the various countries, soon developed into a battle between Grimpe and the English delegates.

Mawdesley, called upon to describe conditions in England, felt obliged to defend, almost apologetically, the English concept of trade-union activity. He said that the English trade-unionists felt like strangers in the international gathering,⁴⁵ because they did not understand socialism.

Grimpe at once attacked the English trade-unionists for their failure to adopt a socialist approach:

"Mr. Mawdesley in his speech had said that he had not studied Socialism. This seemed strange, for there were plenty of Socialists in England who would be only too pleased to afford him every information. [Grimpe] sincerely regretted that these English Socialists were not represented at the Congress."⁴⁶

In comparison, Grimpe described the formation of the "International" Trade Unions in Germany, opposing them to the English trade unions, which had "enjoyed too much freedom, too much material prosperity". By way of conclusion, he bitterly attacked the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, Henry Broadhurst:

"But what shall we say of men who betray a cause, of such men as Mr. Broadhurst who voted in favour of coercion in Ireland and accepted 35,000 francs a year to be a member of a capitalist Cabinet. In 1883, this self-same Mr. Broadhurst came to Paris as delegate to the International Conference held at the Café Hollandais. [...] Such a scandal would not be tolerated in Germany."⁴⁷

Once translated into English, this last pronouncement caused immediate uproar, which Grimpe aggravated by further justification of his words. The meeting was called back to order

by Brousse, who reminded the delegates that all "factional polemics" should be kept out of the conference and instead common ground for agreement should be sought. This did not prevent similar outbursts from Grimpe occurring later, and the English replied in kind:

"Herr Grimpe complained that the English had been spoiled by too much liberty and too much prosperity. This was a paradox that came with bad grace from the delegate of a nation whose labourers are worse off than those of any other country. People living in glass houses should not throw stones."48

Even more revealingly, the English delegates' hostility towards Grimpe found expression in a condemnation of all German workers:

"Ask the tailors, and bakers, and cabinet-makers in England why they earn so little, and they will at once answer that they suffer from the competition of German emigrants."49

These antagonisms underlay the whole of the conference. They were not, however, insurmountable, given flexibility on both sides. This was not to be. If Grimpe's attack was unrelenting, the English response was equally rigid.

As well as the reports from different countries, there were four questions for the attention of the conference. The first question dealt with international labour legislation, which most delegates favoured. However, when the President came to ask for the vote, three members of the English delegation had already left for London, and one delegate was absent through ill health. Only Mr. Jones had left a message approving of most of the first motion, so that the remaining delegates were asked to decide on behalf of the English unions. They responded in a written declaration, which, although supporting the principle of

international labour cooperation, effectively abandoned all responsibility for deciding on any issue before the conference.

By doing this, the English undermined the whole of the conference. Cesar de Paepe summed up the feelings of the non-British delegates when he remarked:

"We had expected something better than that at the hands of the English trade unions. They have failed to understand that by voting with us they would have given great moral strength to our moderate practical demands."⁵⁰

The Australian delegate, John Norton, criticised the English trade-unionists who "had not had the courage of their opinions⁵¹ and thought fit to abstain". It was pointed out that the English trade unions already had many of the advantages such as reduced working hours, and it was unfair of them not to support a resolution calling for the same measures to be extended to other countries. Adolphe Smith, the English interpreter who was a strong supporter of Allemane, described the reaction of the conference to the English behaviour as "a douche of cold water; a⁵² feeling of hopelessness was depicted on many countenances".

When the time came for a vote on the second question, concerning education, the English delegates had all left the hall without giving any reason. Nevertheless, the conference continued, and voted in favour of the resolution calling for free secular education, to be placed under the surveillance of the labour movement. There was also agreement on the third question, demanding the abrogation of laws preventing the international association of workers. Finally, the conference agreed that an International Workmen's Congress would take place in 1889, the organisation of which would be entrusted to the Fédération des

Travailleurs Socialistes de France. The conference ended, at least, with a semblance of unity - but without the English.

Indeed, on all the questions - labour legislation, secular education, international organisation - the delegates of all countries represented, including England, were united in agreement. Mawdesley, President of the Parliamentary Committee, reported his approval of the conference resolutions in his
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account to the TUC. In this, the 1886 meeting represented a considerable step forward in continuing the work of the 1883 conference. More countries had become involved, and everywhere labour organisation was gaining in strength.

The extent of the antagonism between Grimpe and the English delegates, however, posed crucial questions about the nature, and the future, of international cooperation. To the English, accustomed as they were to a position of authority in the international movement, and one which commanded respect, Grimpe's remarks were deeply offensive and were to remain in the memory of
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the labour leadership for some time. That the English took the criticisms so much to heart was a reflection of their own feelings of superiority over any other labour movement. Moreover, it was unthinkable for the English delegates that such questions as the political leanings of individual labour leaders should be discussed at a trade-union conference. For the French and German and other labour representatives, however, this clash of ideas was seen as the prerequisite for thrashing out ideological programmes and strategies.

On this level, Grimpe's attack and the English response to

it served to show the cultural divide which separated the English trade-union movement from the rest of Europe. In particular, this incident highlighted a power struggle within the international movement which had hitherto been unstated because, in their attempts to win over the English, the French "possibilists" and their labour following had been flexible in their approach. Once feelings had been ruffled, however, the possibilities of compromise were slight, as the 1886 conference showed. In other words, international cooperation depended on a desire for compromise. This may seem to be self-evident, but it nevertheless clashes with the assumption, expressed in 1883, that "the interests of workers of all countries are identical and reciprocal". For the labour movements outside England, the question was the following: how far were they willing and able to submerge their own demands to allow for consensus?

If Grimpe's attack was a sign that the leadership enjoyed by the English labour movement in the international movement was being contested by newer models of organisation, notably German Social Democracy, it was also, on another level, an indication of a wider struggle in the international movement: that between trade unions and socialist parties. In 1886, this struggle, which had begun during the later years of the First International, was still not fully out in the open, but it foreshadowed later splits which were to involve the whole of the international labour movement. As both trade associations and socialist parties developed and consolidated their position (in varying proportions to each other, according to the country), the uneasy relations between the two forms of organisation within the international

labour movement became increasingly acute. For the English in 1886, the situation was clear, and the response to it was equally clear. The first reaction was to insist on the exclusion of all but genuine trade-union representatives, and on the discussion of purely practical questions affecting workers, at any international meetings.

The position of the English Parliamentary Committee was, however, further complicated by the TUC's approval of the international conference's resolutions. Included among the various clauses was one which called upon the Parliamentary Committee to organise an international conference in London in 1887. As the international conference had decided, in the absence of Mawdesley, to hold a further congress in Paris in 1889, it is unclear whether Mawdesley simply made a mistake in his report, or whether he intended to propose the holding of a conference in London as a means of controlling the next international meeting. Whatever the reason, the Parliamentary Committee had lost interest in international organisation following the 1886 conference, and tried its best to reverse the TUC's decision. In May 1887, therefore, the Parliamentary Committee sent out a circular which stated that the international conference had been put off. The Parliamentary Committee emphasised the financial cost and the amount of work necessary to organise an international conference properly, and which the Parliamentary Committee felt unable to undertake.

The Parliamentary Committee then launched an attack on the foreign delegates represented at the 1886 conference, in an

attempt to discourage support at the TUC for the holding of an international meeting. According to the circular, the "comparative perfection" achieved by the English labour movement was the result of "many years' experience, labour and sacrifice", whereas:

"so far as we have been able to observe, this characteristic self-abnegation and pecuniary privation had no permanent existence in the continental perception of Trade Unionism".⁵⁵

The circular quoted at length from reports given at the 1886 conference to demonstrate the lamentable conditions of workers abroad; this was the result of poor organisation and discipline, the circular claimed. The conclusion was obvious: English trade unions had achieved more on their own than the workers of any other country, and therefore associating with foreign workers could be of no benefit. It was up to foreign workers to organise themselves.

The underlying reason for the Parliamentary Committee's anxiety was equally clear. Whilst the 1883 conference had proceeded much in accordance with English principles, the introduction of political discord into the 1886 meeting had evidently been the cause of some alarm for the TUC leaders. The presence in Paris of Rackow, of the German Communist Club of London, had particularly rankled the English trade-union leaders.

The next annual TUC, however, saw nothing in the Parliamentary Committee's circular to alter the appreciation of international gatherings expressed in 1886, and after some discussion it was agreed that the Parliamentary Committee should organise an international congress in 1888.

The International Trade-Union Congress of London, 1888

The Parliamentary Committee had been forced into the organisation of this congress, and they were not going to make any effort to ensure its success. Although the preliminary notices were sent out to associations in various countries in April 1888, most of the organisational work was left until as late as possible. It was also claimed by Adolphe Smith, who was engaged as interpreter for the congress, that the Parliamentary Committee had deliberately planned the gathering for November instead of the summer months, when more delegates would have been⁵⁶ able to attend.

Invitations were sent out to "all the European Trade⁵⁷ Societies whose address we have been able to obtain". It was, however, bluntly emphasised in the invitation that "delegates not speaking French or English will have to make their own⁵⁸ arrangements" and warned that all credentials would have to be written in French or English, as would reports on the situation of labour in different countries. By laying down these conditions, the Parliamentary Committee presumably hoped to eliminate German and other trade-unionists who would introduce a "socialist" element into the meeting. In fact, this meant in practice that those proficient in languages (that is, the educated middle classes rather than workers) would be more likely to attend.

The Parliamentary Committee also hoped that a strict insistence on workers' credentials would prevent socialists from participating in the congress. For this reason, the Parliamentary Committee refused point-blank to accept the mandate of the French

school-teachers' association, arguing that school-teachers could
not be considered as workers.⁵⁹ At the congress, Edouard Anseele
attacked the Parliamentary Committee's attitude to the question
of credentials, with particular reference to its effect on German
workers:

"He knew of genuine working men who would have braved
the penalty of imprisonment on a more cordial
invitation - naming Bebel as one."⁶⁰

Following the incident involving Grimpe in 1886, it was, of
course, precisely the German socialists whom the English had
hoped to exclude by their strict insistence upon credentials.

The organisers also tried to exclude the Scottish socialist
Keir Hardie, along with others, from the congress. Once more,
this tactic backfired upon the Parliamentary Committee, because
this close inspection of credentials prevented only workers from
attending, especially those from countries where there was no
central organisation and therefore no means of verification,
whereas socialist delegates could usually produce a mandate. Out
of forty-six foreign delegates to the congress, only two were not
socialists (the positivist Auguste Keufer and the anarchist
⁶¹
Tortellier).

The majority of the foreign delegates were French, Belgian
and Dutch. Altogether, however, they were outnumbered by the
British delegates (between sixty and seventy). This was, of
course, the reason why the English had wanted to hold the
congress on their own soil.

The congress opened with a lengthy, rambling speech by
George Shipton, which gave a history of all laws affecting

workers since 1327. This was later accepted as the official report of the British section, although some of the delegates, notably John Burns, objected. In fact, it would appear that Shipton deliberately spent hours on his speech in order to reduce
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the time available for discussion.

The obstructionist spirit of the organisers was further evident in wrangles which occupied much of the first day. The foreign delegates protested against the English unions' insistence upon a British chairman for a whole week and a British-dominated standing orders committee. This ended with a moral defeat for the Parliamentary Committee: it was agreed that the president for the whole week should be English, but with a foreign assistant-president, while foreigners outnumbered the
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English on the standing orders committee by five to four.

It was obvious to all that the English trade-unionists were trying to sabotage the international congress, or at least prevent it from having any real effect. In fact, the foreign delegates had already been warned of this when they met a group of English socialists the day before the congress was due to open. During the course of this meeting, the subject of the attitude of the Parliamentary Committee and its influence was discussed. This is revealed by the report of the delegate of the French barrel-makers (Renier). It would appear, therefore, that the socialists had already discussed common tactics against the English trade-unionists' obstruction before the congress
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opened.

For this reason, the socialists were able to push through the most important resolution facing the congress, concerning

international legislation on working hours, despite considerable opposition from the Parliamentary Committee. This question was being debated by successive Trade Union Congresses in England, and the Parliamentary Committee was evidently anxious to avoid committing itself to the opinion of socialists abroad. In passing this resolution, the congress salvaged the work of previous conferences. Indeed, the opposition of the English delegates reflected, not so much a desire to renege on previous decisions, as a desperate attempt to keep discussion within the bounds already set out in previous conferences. It was the question of means to the agreed end (the eight-hour day) which divided the congress, the English objecting particularly to a clause which stipulated political action.

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Similarly, agreement on the question of the re-establishment of an international organisation was merely superficial. The English president of the congress refused to allow any discussion of measures which could add authority to the tentative links already established; he refused to entertain a proposal which argued for the setting-up of an international newspaper, and would not allow the delegates to move a resolution calling for the printing of reports on the congress in French and English.

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The reason for this was that the Parliamentary Committee had decided against further contacts with foreign trade-unionists. Shortly after the congress, the Parliamentary Committee issued a report which, without criticising the congress directly, implied that it had been of no benefit to English trade unions, and

suggested that the English unions were being forced into wrong decisions because they had been outnumbered by foreign delegates⁶⁷ (in fact, the reverse was true).

The experience of international contact had convinced the English labour leaders that the answer was to isolate the English movement from socialists. When they saw that international contact was actually helping to spread socialist ideas, they became afraid of any international contact at all. At the 1888 congress, foreign socialists had sided with English socialists against English trade-unionists, and this, to the Parliamentary Committee, showed an alarming trend away from the cautious trade-unionism which they hoped to propagate through international meetings. Instead of international conferences being a means of spreading the principles of trade-unionism in Europe, they threatened to spread more radical ideas, even to England.

Effectively, the Parliamentary Committee decided after the 1888 congress to ignore further invitations to international meetings. It declared that it would not participate in the 1889 congress in Paris, despite the fact that this congress had been agreed upon both in 1886 and in 1888.

The 1888 congress thus marked the end of that particular phase of international links which had begun in 1883 and which was characterised by a concentration on "trade-union" questions. The importance of the English labour movement in the international movement had largely been responsible for this orientation.

At the 1888 congress, however, a whole new series of ideas and methods of action had begun to be debated by the

international labour movement. The English model was seriously questioned. The French barrel-makers' delegate was almost apologetic in explaining, for the benefit of his comrades at home, his opposition to the English labour leaders, but the message was, nevertheless, that the time had come to put forward new, more radical ideas:

"Aucun des délégués n'était animé d'un sentiment d'opposition systématique, ainsi qu'on cherche à le faire croire en Angleterre. Nous arrivions à Londres, désireux d'établir avec les Trade-Unions des rapports plus sérieux, plus suivis, plus intimes, en un mot, que ceux qui existaient; mais nous ne pouvions pas trahir les intérêts de la classe des spoliés, que nous représentions, en applaudissant les arguments trompeurs que le capitalisme emploie dans tous les pays, afin de mieux nous opprimer."68

These changes had been noticed by Adolphe Smith, a follower of Paul Brousse. In his report of the 1888 congress, Smith drew the conclusion that it would be the last purely trade-union gathering of its kind, since discussion could no longer be limited to purely trade-union questions.

Smith did not attempt to forecast what the future form of international organisation would be. This was still far from clear. At the 1888 congress, most foreign delegates had been united in opposition to the English viewpoint. Nevertheless, there were deep divisions within the more radical European labour movements. One notable departure from the socialist line was represented by the anarchist Tortellier. Like the English, he too opposed the "political action" clause of the resolution calling for the eight-hour day, but for different reasons. Tortellier rejected political action because he believed that direct workers' action was the only way to achieve the emancipation of

the working class. The Italian delegate, Lazzari, put forward a similar point of view.

Despite these divergences, however, there was no clash of ideas between the parliamentary socialists, revolutionary socialists, and anarchists. Lazzari even managed to secure approval for his resolution calling for all working-class associations to "abandon all nationalist and patriotic ideas which tend to divide the workers of different countries",⁷⁰ although the congress did not examine this question. It was assumed that the only divide was drawn between the English trade-unionists and the others.

Nevertheless, in the new phase which opened up after the 1888 congress, it soon became clear that the shades of opinion which made up the international movement varied enormously, and many of them clashed with each other. In particular, the early contacts between the English and French and other labour movements showed the extent of the divergences which existed between different concepts of labour organisation, especially on the subject of the relationship between labour and socialism. It became clear that any international organisation would have to resolve these differences. The divide which separated the English from the rest of the European movements was symptomatic of fundamental differences within the international movement which were to dominate labour and socialist internationalism in the years which followed.

Chapter II. LABOUR AND SOCIALISM: THE INTERNATIONAL DIVIDE

The English trade-union leaders had decided, after the international congress of London in 1888, that future international links would have to be made on a purely trade-union footing. To most of the other participants of the London congress, the distinction between a labour international and a socialist international was not so clear. Adolphe Smith's conclusion, following the London congress, was that international gatherings of labour representatives would necessarily have to take on board political questions, because of the inevitably more general nature of the discussion, and because conditions in some countries were such that it was impossible to separate political from economic demands.

In many ways, Smith's judgement was remarkably far-sighted. He saw that discussions of a purely practical nature, involving concrete agreements between trade unions, would be more feasible and more appropriate at international gatherings of representatives of individual trades or trade federations.¹

Indeed, international links between national trade federations mushroomed towards the end of the nineteenth century. Where a need was felt for international cooperation on specific issues, involving members of the same or related trades, links were made more directly and more quickly than through the often laborious procedures involving national coordinating bodies. This was true in cases where strikers were threatened by the use of foreign workers, for example, as well as in the case of appeals for strike aid; solidarity between members of the same trade in different countries was more obvious and more clearly reciprocal.

These secretariats were formed for purely practical reasons. The trade-specific nature of the international secretariats was a reflection of this practical cooperation. Because discussion, action and exchange of information were limited to individual trades, questions of wider importance to workers were excluded from the start. Mutual help, and not abstract internationalism, was the spur to the formation of international trade secretariats.

II.1 International Trade Secretariats

In 1871, an attempt was made in London to set up an international tobacco workers' organisation, but this was short-lived. It was not until 1889 that such an organisation was founded on a more solid basis, when Belgian and Dutch cigar-makers, with the cooperation of German tobacco-workers, set up the International Tobacco Workers' Federation.² Similarly, international relations between typographical workers of mainly French-speaking countries dating from 1880 led to international congresses in 1889 (Paris) and 1892 (Berne).³

The 1890's saw the formation of a great number of international trade organisations, so that, by 1900, international secretariats had been established for the hatters, glovers, shoemakers, miners, glass workers, tailors, metalworkers, textile workers, lithographers, transport workers, as well as for other, smaller federations.⁴ This process continued, with the stronger federations often absorbing some of the smaller ones, so that by 1914 there were twenty-eight international trade secretariats. The most important trade

secretariats had already been well established by the turn of the century, however. These were the printing workers', the metalworkers', the building workers' and the miners' secretariats. The congresses of these organisations were followed with interest by trade unions and socialists all over Europe.

By 1900, most of the important trade secretariats had been established internationally. While the process of centralisation was still the preoccupation of most national labour movements, links were already being made between members of the same trade in different countries. Contacts had usually been established directly through the exchange of strike appeals, and these remained a major part of the secretariats' activity. The first secretariats concerned themselves principally with practical questions, such as the transfer of union membership from one country to another when workers emigrated, or preventing the replacement of strikers with workers from abroad. As organisation grew, international congresses were held to discuss such questions, and communication was also encouraged through international bulletins. In quieter periods, the secretaries could spend time drawing up statistical information regarding their trade in different countries.

In the early years, it was precisely the exclusively trade nature of the international secretariats which ensured their coherence and stability. Later, the most important trade federations also took part in congresses of the Second International and gradually adopted stances on wider political issues. The formation of international trade secretariats was

not, however, motivated by ideological concerns; rather, it reflected a practical need for internationalism in the labour movement, based on mutual aid and solidarity and the exchange of information.

This was evidently the kind of internationalism envisaged by the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC. Nevertheless, conditions in other countries meant that it was often impossible to separate economic and political demands. Equally, many socialist groups were dependent on working-class organisation and could not envisage the possibility of national trade-union groups acting on their own initiative without political guidance. It was the overlap between the two wings of the labour movement - economic and political - as well as conflicts between the two, which created problems for unity in the international labour movement.

II.2 Labour and the foundation of the Second International: the international congresses of 1889 in Paris

If the international trade secretariats pointed to real benefits which labour organisations could hope to gain from international association, they clearly, as small and exclusive bodies, had severe limitations. Indeed, it was the limited nature of their activities and demands which made cooperation possible.

Overall, however, the international labour movement was moving away from this narrow perception of trade-union activity towards a wider view of the relationship between capital and labour. This shift corresponded with economic change on a massive scale in the industrialised world. At the same time, on a political level, governments responded in different ways to the

growth of the labour movement which resulted from the consolidation of the capitalist system. In some countries, workers' organisations were suppressed, along with all political dissent; in others, workers were beginning to participate to a limited degree in the political life of the country. According to political, economic and social factors, the labour movement developed unevenly in different countries, as the battles over tactics and goals played themselves out. Lorwin sums up these developments thus:

" [...] the labor and social movement of Europe and America [...] split up between four main economic and social doctrines: Marxism, Revisionism, Syndicalism, and Trade Unionism. Under the influence of varying political and economic conditions, these divisions resulted in the formation of several types of social movements."⁵

This was inevitably to have repercussions on the international labour movement as a whole, and on perceptions of international activity.

The existence of two separate congresses in 1889 can be explained by the divisions resulting from the transition from the old-style, mainly "economic" International, based very much on trade unions, to the new, wider demands of the international movement. In 1886 and 1888, as we have already seen, the French *Fédération des Travailleurs Socialistes* had been mandated to hold a congress in Paris in 1889, at the same time as the Paris Exhibition. Quite separately, the *Fédération nationale des Syndicats*, at that time heavily under the influence of Jules Guesde, decided at its second national congress in 1887, to organise an international congress for the next year.

The Guesdists were preoccupied with the need to win over

labour unions and convert them to socialism. In order to do this, it was necessary to build up national and international organisation. At the 1887 national labour congress, Dormoy argued the case for national and international federation:

"Partout où les travailleurs se sont trouvés concentrés par les conditions mêmes du travail, des chambres syndicales ont surgi. Mais isolées, sans lien avec les syndicats de même métier existant sur les autres points de la France ou à l'étranger, ces organisations purement locales ont été impuissantes à tenir tête aux prétensions patronales."⁶

Dormoy argued that international trade federations would help to raise wages to a uniform level. Nevertheless, fédérations de métier were envisaged only as a transitory stage. According to Guesdist theory, mechanisation would break down skill differentiation in workers, leading to the formation of large, general corporations, both nationally and internationally. It was therefore important to build up national federations of all trades, as was emphasised in the report from the Syndicat de Tarare:

"Il est de leur intérêt [celui des travailleurs] à s'enrôler au plus tôt sous la bannière de la Fédération nationale, en attendant qu'elle devienne internationale."⁷

For the Guesdists, the key to labour organisation lay not in the intrinsic value of trade association but in the need to win over the mass of workers to socialist principles. Guesde himself saw trade associations as virtually useless on their own, without political guidance. This was, of course, a reaffirmation of Marx's earlier views on the relationship between trade unions and political parties.

The importance, to the Guesdists, of building up the

national and international labour movement, was all the more acute because their rivals, headed by Paul Brousse and Jean Allemane, had already taken the lead in organising international links. Both the Guesdists and the Broussists saw the need to take the initiative in the international labour movement. On this depended their struggle to be seen as the sole legitimate socialist party of France.

These splits were not, however, confined to France; they were international. To a large extent, they reflected the earlier splits between "Marxists" and "anarchists" towards the end of the First International. David Stafford, biographer of Paul Brousse, has pointed out that the labels "Marxist" and "anarchist", used to denote the opposing sides in the clash of ideas which led to the end of the First International, denoted less a positive allegiance to a particular school of thought than a negative means of identifying opponents. Stafford observes that "the memory of these traumatic conflicts played an important role in
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determining later loyalties". Brousse, because of his earlier association with the "anti-authoritarian" (i.e. anti-Marxist) Swiss section of the First International, was a natural rival for the French Marxists under the leadership of Guesde. Once it became clear that Brousse had already taken the initiative in organising international links, the shadow of the First International loomed even larger and the rivalry became even more pronounced.

Engels, too, viewing developments from England, saw the importance of the international movement in the struggle between

rival factions in France. He warned the Guesdists pointedly to organise their own international congress, in direct competition with that already organised for 1889:

"The point for you is that there should be a congress - and in Paris - where you will be acknowledged by one and all as the only internationally recognised French socialist party... To regain your position in France, you need, primarily, international recognition."⁹

The decision to organise a second, rival congress was therefore deliberately made by the Guesdists in an attempt to secure international recognition. Since, by this decision, the Guesdists ignored the mandate which had been given to the Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs Socialistes by earlier international conferences, they were clearly repudiating the work of all the previous conferences and congresses, and aiming to place international alliances on a completely different footing. The possibilities for conciliation between the two groups were therefore rather remote.

Despite this, the aims of the two congresses, in terms of proposals and discussions, were remarkably similar. Many of the foreign delegates who attended the "possibilist" meeting, held in the rue de Lancry, also attended the second meeting held in the salle Petrelle (rue Rochechouart). This was especially true of the British contingent, which was somewhat fragmented owing to the refusal of the Parliamentary Committee to organise and oversee the delegation.

The Broussists, however, stressed the line of continuity stretching from the first conference in 1883 to the 1889 congress, and prided themselves on having already achieved

important work in building up international links:

"De nombreuses délégations ouvrières sont allées en Angleterre, à l'occasion d'Expositions, de Congrès, etc.

"De leur côté, les Trade-Unions anglaises nous ont envoyé à maintes reprises des délégués de leurs puissantes associations.

"Nous ne sommes donc plus étrangers les uns aux autres. De ces visites presque annuelles sont nés des rapports de courtoisie, d'amitié et de solidarité entre les travailleurs des deux pays; Français ou Anglais, il n'y a ici que des travailleurs qui cherchent ensemble les moyens d'améliorer leur condition sociale."¹⁰

Discussion at the rue de Lancry congress centred on international labour legislation - working hours, night work and holidays, factory inspection, work for women and children - and means of obtaining such laws, the repeal of all laws restricting international association, governmental support of employers' coalitions, and ways and means of setting up permanent relations between trade unions of different countries. The discussion was anchored firmly in labour organisation rather than socialist theory.

The debate on international organisation was one which revealed divergent points of view. The most important resolution, calling for all "Chambres syndicales et groupes corporatifs" to become federated on a national and international level, met with widespread approval in principle, but there were differences over the scope and authority of an international organisation. The French had worked out a detailed proposal for association: a national committee would be set up in each country, which would correspond with other centres. Where a central labour organisation was already in existence, this would take on the role of national corresponding committee. Each year, the national

centres or committees would in turn be responsible for international correspondence, and an international bulletin would be published.

Adolphe Smith, as ever anxious to promote cooperation between England and France, thought that such a practical and solid proposal would please the English unions: "Les Anglais sont d'avis que ces votes réorganiseront l'Internationale".¹¹ It was indeed a very solid proposal, and one which the French were to put forward many times. Many of the English delegates praised the suggestion, and made powerful speeches in favour of international association, notably Hyndman of the Social-Democratic Federation. Not all those present were in favour, however; Lavy, of France, warned that a central committee could be dangerous: "On doit laisser cela à ceux qui ont besoin d'une haute direction, d'un maître."¹² A strong feeling in favour of national autonomy was evident, and this was reflected in the resolution itself, which declared that the congress was

"désireux d'établir des relations permanentes entre les organisations des différents pays, mais résolu à ne laisser porter aucune atteinte à l'autonomie de ces organisations".¹³

In any case, no vote was taken on this question, as all were in favour in principle, but it was agreed to refer it to the national organisations for approval. Once again, the "possibilists" were reluctant to push the English too far.

The rival congress, which met in the salle Petrelle, discussed similar questions, dealing with international labour legislation and the need for international organisation of labour. There were, however, crucial differences between the two

gatherings. While the salle Petrelle congress attracted fewer foreign delegates overall than its rival, the German delegates overwhelmingly favoured the former. This alliance between the German social-democrats and the French "Marxist" socialists (under the leadership of Guesde and Vaillant) was to prove decisive for the future of international socialism. Whereas the priorities of the English trade-union movement were seen to dominate the rue de Lancry congress, reflected in the practical basis of the discussions and the tentative nature of the decisions, German influence significantly tipped the balance at the salle Petrelle congress in favour of the Marxist position put forward by Guesde and Vaillant.

Despite the basic similarity of the aims and agenda of the two congresses, the ideological battle-lines were thus drawn up along the old Marxist/non-political division. This was reinforced by the determination of the salle Petrelle delegates, motivated by their perception of a trial of strength between two rival forces, to refuse any conciliation between the two groups.

As Gerhard Niemayer has pointed out in a paper on the Second International, the refusal of the salle Petrelle delegates to unite with the rue de Lancry congress, on the invitation of the latter, heightened the contrast between the two gatherings and gave the former a clearer identity, "something that a great number of parties and organisations could call 'we'".¹⁴

Unity was, however, achieved two years later. Both Paris congresses had planned to hold further, separate congresses in 1891. It was Engels who rallied the Marxist sections to the

Belgian congress planned by the "possibilists", which the TUC planned to attend. In doing so, Engels' intention was not to recognise the primacy of the "possibilists" or of the English trade unions. Rather, he was concerned that the divisions shown in 1889 would be perpetuated. Although he had a definite idea of which of the two groups he preferred ("l'un bon, l'autre mauvais" ¹⁵), he had no desire to see the international movement split in half. Rather, the aim was to unite the whole of the international movement, whilst giving it a clear Marxist direction. This aim guided the debate on political action at the next international congress in Brussels in 1891.

II.3 The Brussels congress of the Second International and the question of trade unions

It is in the context of the Marxists' aim to give the International a clear socialist identity that the Brussels resolution stipulating political action must be viewed. Clearly, the memory of the First International was far from dead in the minds of the Marxists. Since the Guesdists had received the support of the German socialists and other important groups and individuals in the socialist movement, they now felt strong enough to impose conditions on the international movement. This was intended to establish once and for all the primacy of Marxist socialism in the international movement. Accordingly, it was decided at Brussels that:

"La question des anarchistes a été résolue définitivement. Pour siéger aux Congrès de la démocratie sociale internationale, qui a son propre programme, sa politique et ses moyens d'action, il faut être socialiste, être partisan de l'organisation ouvrière, admettre l'action politique et

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l'intervention de l'Etat."

This was a remarkably rigid statement for a fledgling movement to make, particularly in view of the diversity of tendencies represented in the labour movements of different countries. The Marxists, in laying down strict conditions for members of the International, were trying to avoid from the outset the problems which had beset the First International. They were also conscious of the power struggle which had been given concrete form in 1889 by the existence of two separate congresses.

Inevitably, this caused tension in the international labour movement. By the Brussels resolution on political action, the International was stating explicitly that, while labour organisation was desirable, it was insufficient without political guidance. The tension between the two wings of the labour movement - economic and political - was thus laid bare.

Whilst the Brussels resolution was used against the anarchists, its implicit statement on the respective positions of labour and socialism within the international movement was not lost on the English trade-unionists. The stipulation of the need for political action was used to exclude three Belgian anarchist groups from the congress. The English trade-unionists had no sympathy with anarchism, and the expulsion of the Belgian anarchists was voted unanimously. Nevertheless, several trade-unionists expressed unease at the procedure, feeling that they were entering dangerous territory in their implicit recognition of political action. At least one English delegate, Giles, seems to have perceived the potential danger that the clause on

political action might be used against the non-socialist English
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trade unions. This fear was not groundless. The confusion
surrounding the question of whether non-socialists could be
admitted to International Socialist Congresses made the position
of labour organisations in the International extremely uncertain.

If the Brussels resolution on political action defined the
central role of socialist parties in the international labour
movement, it did not define the exact role of trade unions within
the International. The Brussels congress set itself the task of
establishing the International's position on trade unions in two
main resolutions, the first concerning workers' coalition and
methods of action, and the second on international links and
exchange of information. The two were discussed together. Also of
particular interest to labour organisations was the first item on
the agenda, dealing with national and international labour
legislation.

This very first item caused controversy. The original
resolution restated previous calls for national and international
legislation regulating working hours and conditions, especially
for women and children. Leo Frankel, however, successfully argued
that a section on the class struggle should be appended to the
resolution, and Victor Adler moved that only electoral candidates
belonging to socialist parties should gain votes from socialists.
The aim, and the effect, of this was significantly to shift the
emphasis of the resolution towards a more expressly socialist
standpoint. The English trade-unionists, in particular Holmes,
protested against the proposed amendments, saying that if they
were voted, "ce vote serait la rupture complète avec les trade

unions". Nevertheless, Frankel's amendment was carried.

This discussion crystallised the wider debate, concerning the nature of the International itself. The Marxists who had imposed on all members of the International the recognition of political action had no wish to exclude "bread and butter" trade-unionists from the international movement. They wished to draw these labour leaders into the international socialist movement, since they represented the mass of organised workers. Nevertheless, they saw the need to force these labour leaders into more radical positions.

This was the significance of the debate on legislation. In order to gain and retain the support of workers, the International had to be seen to offer practical results on questions which were of direct interest to workers. To neglect such questions would be to recognise the primacy of trade associations in this area. If Marx had posited that trade unions were inadequate without political guidance, his work with the First International had also shown the need to root socialist ideology firmly in working-class organisations.

By many socialists, however, questions of primary importance to labour leaders were seen as dangerous because they diluted the central message of class struggle. This was the reason why Leo Frankel insisted on situating the question of labour legislation in the context of the class struggle. By doing this, he was pushing the English trade-unionists in particular much further than they wished to go. The fact that Frankel's amendment was carried, despite English protests and threats of withdrawal,

shows just how little room for manoeuvre there was.

Significantly, the English were not the only ones to contest this attitude. On the questions of workers' coalitions and international exchange of information, the commission could not reach agreement, and two separate resolutions were drafted. Groussier, a French delegate and rapporteur of the first (majority) section of the commission, stated the position of the French syndicats. Groussier was a member of the Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Révolutionnaire, a group which, under the leadership of Jean Allemane, downgraded parliamentary socialism and emphasised instead the revolutionary action of the working class, organised in labour associations. The Allemanists therefore played an important part in the development of revolutionary syndicalism in France. Groussier's report stated the central importance of trade associations:

"C'est surtout dans ces organisations ouvrières que nous devons nous grouper pour changer la société. Elles doivent défendre avant tout les intérêts professionnels proprement dits et aussi servir de base à la société future... Il est donc utile que les associations soient unis [sic] en fédérations nationales et internationales: les nationalités n'existent pas pour nous."²⁰

In order to exchange information efficiently, a centralised committee would be useful, Groussier argued, but trade-union movements were not yet strong enough to envisage such a task. Nevertheless, some kind of international link between labour groups was necessary, in order to exchange information and statistics. Because of this, a correspondence committee was desirable: "on peut instituer dans chaque pays un comité syndical correspondant avec ceux des autres pays". It was stressed that

national autonomy had to be respected. Finally, Groussier emphasised that methods of direct action against employers were the principal means of securing workers' demands; strikes and boycotts, he said, were "actuellement les seules armes pour
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lutter contre le capital".

The majority report was based on the assumption that labour associations, in their own right, were vital to the emancipation of the working class. If an international labour organisation was impossible at that stage, it was only because the labour movement was insufficiently organised in most countries.

This perception of the necessity of labour unions was disputed by many of the other delegates, notably the Germans. Because of this, the commission also produced a minority report which reflected an altogether different view of the role of labour groups. The minority report acknowledged the importance of workers' associations, because of their potential mass recruitment. Given legal restrictions, however, international organisation of labour was impossible, according to this report. This argument was to become a familiar German refrain. Finally, the report stressed that strikes and boycotts were methods to be used only as a last resort, and only when workers were well
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organised and prepared.

Boch, the German rapporteur of the minority report, explained the Germans' reasons for opposing the creation of a central international labour organisation:

"Les ouvriers allemands ont une position politique et économique toute spéciale. La majorité de la section ne l'a pas compris. Le projet serait excellent, s'il était réalisable, mais il ne l'est pas.
"Les Allemands sont sincèrement internationaux. Ils

ne peuvent cependant admettre une organisation centrale internationale, qui serait illégale d'après les lois de leurs pays."23

The German leaders were, of course, extremely selective in their obedience to laws forbidding them to take part in international organisations and activities. Since most of the German labour leaders were present at Brussels, many mandated directly by trade unions, and since many German unions belonged to their international trade secretariat, there were evidently ways of circumventing the legal restrictions when the Germans chose to do so. In the case of the proposed international labour corresponding committee, the Germans' opposition was not so much based on a fear of prosecution by their own government, as motivated by the desire to obstruct independent action by labour groups.

Delporte, of Belgium stated the terms of the disagreement more explicitly:

"D'après la majorité, le bureau ne devait s'occuper que des syndicats, tandis que la minorité voulait l'étendre à toutes les formes de la question sociale."24

This, then, rather than the question of practicability, was the crux of the debate. Whereas many of the French delegates favoured independent action on the part of the working class, the Germans insisted on joint action of the labour groups and the social-democratic party.

On this point, the French delegates had an ally in the English trade-unionists. Although the aims of the French Allemanists and syndicalists were revolutionary (and hence largely incompatible with English trade-unionism), their emphasis

on independent workers' action found an echo in the English position on international organisation. Parnell, one of the few English delegates to speak on this point, claimed that:

"Le salut de la classe ouvrière dépend d'une organisation internationale universelle qui doit être l'oeuvre des travailleurs eux-mêmes. Les bourgeois socialistes, qui ont des principes acquis, pourraient plus utilement employer leur énergie à convertir la bourgeoisie."25

After a short debate, the discussion was closed, despite protests from the French and Belgians, and an amendment, based very closely on the German (minority) report was passed. In other words, the social-democratic point of view was emerging as the largest single force within the international movement. This meant that trade associations would be forced into acknowledging the supremacy of the political (socialist) movement. The final result of the debate on international secretariats was nevertheless ambiguous, since it did not actually exclude autonomous trade-union activity, but rather embraced it as part of a wider concept of international activity. Nevertheless, the social democrats were resolved to make their victory, and their dominance in the international movement, complete.

II.4 The Zurich congress of the Second International, 1893

The next international congress, held in 1893, resumed the debate on national and international organisation of labour unions. It was the German point of view which guided the commission's report. Adolphe von Elm, a leading figure in the developing German trade-union movement, stressed that, while agreeing with the English trade unions that a strong, centralised

organisation was both desirable and necessary, the German labour movement had to contend with a particularly harsh legal system which rendered such organisation impossible. Information, statistics and appeals for strike aid could be exchanged just as easily through loosely organised groups, argued Elm. He went on to describe what was to be the essence of the German position on the trade-union question for many years to come: the identity of interests of socialist party and trade unions. In Germany, the trade-union movement was weak and small, whereas the socialist party was strong and powerful. Each had its own task to fulfil in conjunction with the other:

"Den Kampf der Arbeiterklasse auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet einheitlich und wirkungsvoll gestalten kann nur die Arbeiterorganisation. [...] die Gewerkschaften sind berufen, die Pfeiler der künftigen Organisation der Gewerkschaft zu bilden und ist deren Ausbau deshalb neben der Erringung der politischen Macht der Arbeiterklasse eine absolute Notwendigkeit."26

Because of legal restrictions, the German resolution recommended the setting-up of national trade federations, the establishment of labour exchanges, the exchange of international agreements on mutual aid - but no international committee of any kind.

Despite the position of authority which the Germans had already assumed in the international movement, this resolution was far too limited in nature for the labour representatives of most other countries. A counter-resolution, moved by the Belgian Jean Volders and signed by most other sections except Germany and Austria, was therefore voted in preference to the German report. The Volders resolution reiterated the Brussels decision and called upon workers to organise themselves in national labour

secretariats, for the purpose of drawing up information which could then be exchanged internationally. It also recommended membership of the international trade secretariats or federations²⁷ (according to individual trades).

The defeat of the social-democratic resolution on international labour organisation can perhaps be explained by the composition of the French delegation. Because of impending elections in France, most of the leading French parliamentary socialists were absent from the Zurich congress. The French delegation was therefore dominated by the revolutionary, anti-parliamentary Allemanists and by syndicalists, together with the more conservative labour leaders such as Auguste Keufer, whose standpoint was nearer to that of the English trade-union leaders. Although the German and Austrian social-democrats exerted a considerable influence over the international movement, the absence of their allies, the French parliamentary socialists, meant that the social-democrats had (temporarily) lost an important lever in the debates at Zurich.

Of more immediate importance to the social-democrats was the question of anarchists. The organisers of the Brussels congress in 1891 had been careful not to invite anarchists to that congress, but nevertheless several anarchists had appealed for admission on the first day. They were formally excluded at the opening session. On the next day, the anarchist Merlino arrived in disguise and was later arrested by police. The Brussels congress then passed a resolution stipulating recognition of political action as a condition for attendance, in the hope that anarchists would be deterred from attending future congresses.

In Zurich in 1893, the anarchists returned to the attack. The first day of the congress was taken up with the question of admission. In order to exclude the anarchists, the congress set about refining the resolution on political action taken at Brussels. The German social-democrats in particular were adamant that the anarchists had to be expelled at all costs. Some of the anarchists in question were Germans who had recently been expelled from the SPD, notably Werner and Landauer. For the German socialist leaders, to be forced to sit in international congresses with anarchists recently expelled from their own party was too much to bear. Bebel's attack on the anarchists was so fierce that it caused uproar, and Swiss comrades had to be asked to restore order.

The question of the admission of anarchists was central to the very nature of international congresses. In order to give an identity to the heterogeneous grouping of socialists within the International and to draw the labour organisations into this camp, the aspect of political action had to be stressed as the justification for the expulsion of anarchists. However, although major figures such as Bebel were anxious not to alienate trade unions, and stressed that "political action" could be loosely interpreted in order to include, for example, support for labour reforms (something with which the English trade-unionists could agree),²⁹ many French and English labour representatives saw the question as having wider implications for their struggle. Keufer, the positivist leader of the French printers' union, argued that the stipulation for political action should be removed and that

all workers' organisations should be invited to international congresses. He was supported by many English trade-unionists, including Watts, who foresaw that these pre-conditions could exclude trade unions, and Mowbray of the London Tailors' Union,³⁰ who similarly argued for tolerance.

The French and English labour representatives argued for the widening, rather than the restriction of conditions for participation in the congresses. In opposing these views, the inflexibility shown by German and French socialists did not bode well for the future of the International. In excluding anarchists at all costs, they faced two dangers: the possibility of losing ground to reformism in an attempt to placate the trade-unionists on the issue of political action, and the risk of losing trade-union support altogether. Even before the Zurich congress, the Dutch communist anarchist Christian Cornelissen had foreseen a split between the "revolutionaries", or those seeking political action, and the remaining section, which included trade-unionists³¹ on the English model as well as syndicalists and anarchists.

Only a few socialists were far-sighted enough to see this as a possible result of the anti-anarchist manoeuvrings of the international congresses. Notable among these was Edouard Vaillant, who from a very early stage argued for separate socialist and labour congresses, in order to allow each to develop its own methods of action and to avoid the dangers of an uneasy coexistence.³² For most of the other socialists, the trade-union question could best be solved by playing it down as much as possible.

The main objections, on the part of the labour leaders, were

motivated by fears that expulsion of anarchists, on the grounds that the congress was expressly and exclusively social-democratic in nature, would also exclude all those non-social-democratic labour unions within the international movement. Bebel and the German socialist leaders were anxious not to alienate these labour representatives. At the same time, they were equally keen to make the grounds for exclusion rigid and unsurmountable. Given the tension between these conflicting aims, the resolution voted was therefore curiously ambiguous. According to personal interpretation, it either stipulated recognition of political action for all participants in international congresses, or it allowed representation of all labour bodies, irrespective of opinion on the political action question. A French version read:

"Toutes les Chambres syndicales ouvrières seront admises au congrès; aussi les Partis et les organisations socialistes qui reconnaissent la nécessité de l'organisation des travailleurs et de l'action politique. Par action politique on entend que les organisations des travailleurs cherchent, autant que possible, à employer ou à conquérir les droits politiques et le mécanisme de la législation, pour amener ainsi le triomphe des intérêts du prolétariat et la conquête du pouvoir public."³³

This version was based on an English circular sent out in 1895 by the organising committee of the next international congress. In both these versions, the "chambres syndicales" are separated from the "partis et organisations socialistes" by a semi-colon, thus making the recognition of political action grammatically linked with socialist parties only. The presence or absence of this semi-colon was to prove crucial in the debates before and during the London congress of the Second International in 1896. In fact, the importance placed on the semi-colon is

curious, since even when it is replaced by a comma it is possible to consider the clause on political action as belonging exclusively to socialist parties. The second half of the resolution, defining political action, makes it clear that political action is linked with labour organisations. The second sentence also spells out specifically what was meant by political action: electoral activity with the aim of "la conquête des pouvoirs publics". This was a very narrow definition which excluded all anti-parliamentarian groups as well as syndicalist and trade-union groups. The debate around the punctuation of the resolution did, however, serve to cloud the issue.

The question of admission or exclusion of the anarchists had dominated the Zurich congress. Even so, the issue was far from resolved.

II.5 The London Congress of the Second International, 1896

The Zurich congress had accepted the offer made by English delegates to hold the next international congress in London. A committee was appointed, headed by Eleanor Marx Aveling, to coordinate organisation and preparation with the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC. Relations between the "Zurich committee" and the Parliamentary Committee were far from easy, and the question went before two Trade Union Congresses (Dublin in 1893 and Norwich in 1894) before it was finally approved. Initially, the Parliamentary Committee wanted the title of the congress changed from "International Socialist Workers' and Trade Union Congress" to "International Trade Union and Socialist Workers' Congress", thus refusing the application of the label "socialist"

to trade unions, but they were overruled by the social-democratic
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majority on the organising committee.

The invitation sent out in 1895 recalled the text of the Zurich resolution giving conditions of participation. Here, the first sentence of the resolution, and particularly the punctuation of the sentence, took on a central importance. Whereas the English version separated trade unions from socialist parties with a semi-colon, the French invitation merely placed a comma and the word "et" between the two clauses, and the German version made an even stronger link between the two clauses by placing a comma and the word "ebenso". It was therefore possible to argue for admission of trade unions irrespective of political opinion, as well as to argue that all groups wishing to participate should recognise political action. The fact that the three versions were all slightly different served to heighten the ambiguities caused by disputes over such grammatical niceties.

For those anarchists who refused any kind of association (individualists or anarchists "of the deed"), this did not pose any problems, since their expulsion from the congress would be undisputed in any case. On the other hand, the debate concerned two principal sets of activists: those communist anarchists who
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considered themselves socialists, but who disputed the party-political definition of the Zurich resolution, and who favoured economic action; and those trade-unionists who were not revolutionaries, and who refused to acknowledge political action, preferring to work solely in the economic domain. In both cases, to apply the Zurich resolution to the letter would be to

invalidate many properly constituted mandates. Both sets of activists therefore argued for tolerance in the interpretation of the Zurich resolution.

The communist anarchists launched a concerted campaign against the Zurich resolution. In December 1895, a London Anarchist Committee was formed, in order to coordinate protests from Holland, France, Italy and elsewhere. In England, Keir Hardie and the Independent Labour Party argued for tolerance and the opening of the congress to all socialists, including anarchist socialists. In France, the POSR argued against exclusion of those opposed to the conquest of political power. The other major source of opposition to the Zurich resolution in France came from the increasingly autonomous labour movement, represented by the Bourses du Travail. In Holland, the Socialistenbond similarly opposed the imposition of conditions on workers' delegates.

By the time the London congress opened on 27 July 1896, all sides were prepared for a battle. In fact, the congress was totally dominated by this battle. The two national sections which reflected this power struggle most clearly were the French and the English.

In the French section, three main factions emerged. One, around Guesde and Gabriel Deville, insisted that the Zurich resolution should be applied, to the letter, to every single delegate, even those representing trade associations. An opposing faction, represented by Allemane's POSR and the Bourses du Travail, argued against the Zurich resolution in any form and for complete tolerance of dissenting opinions. A third section, led

by Vaillant and Marcel Sembat, opposed the participation of anarchists but felt that workers' associations should be given complete freedom to participate and to have themselves represented by whoever they chose. Passions were aroused during the first national section meeting, convened to verify mandates, when Jaurès and three other socialists announced that they had no official mandates, since, as deputies to the French Parliament, they considered their electoral mandate sufficient. These delegates were accepted by the French section only after a bitter argument, during the course of which Guesde was reportedly heard to exclaim that "le titre de député vaut mieux qu'un mandat
37
syndical".

In the afternoon, the national sections met again to discuss the Zurich resolution. In the French section, Guesde put forward a rigid interpretation of the international congresses: "[...] il ne s'agit pas d'un congrès corporatif, mais bien d'un congrès
38
socialiste". Pelloutier, of the Bourse du Travail, expressed a completely opposite point of view: "[...] le mouvement économique
39
doit l'emporter sur le mouvement électoral". Keufer argued for tolerance in the name of working-class unity: "[...] il ne faut pas imposer l'action politique, car ce serait diviser le
40
prolétariat."

It was indicative of the disarray prevalent in the French delegation that the first vote, showing a narrow victory for the Zurich resolution, was disputed. The second count resulted in a total of fifty-six for, fifty-seven against. Immediately, the "political action" minority withdrew, despite pleas for calm and

for unity by Vaillant. A scuffle ensued.

The English section was similarly divided. The Social-Democratic Federation and some socialist labour representatives were in favour of the Zurich resolution. The ILP delegates, many trade-union delegates and the Fabian socialists were in favour of a more tolerant interpretation. At the first meeting of the English section, the Zurich resolution was approved by 223 to 114, but the ILP delegates and many trade-union delegates were missing.

When the question was examined in plenary session, the discussions became stormy, if not downright farcical. The scene had been set at the beginning of the congress, when Edward Cowey (President of the Parliamentary Committee and member of the Miners' Federation), presiding the opening session, warned of the dangers of intolerance and division:

"The workers must unite nationally and internationally; they must be tolerant as to means, but determined as to the end - the emancipation of the working class. Until now, there have been too many political parties, governed by ambition and party feeling. It is a well-known fact that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and therefore I hope that this Congress may arrive at some well-defined and concerted action."⁴¹

Immediately, Singer, on behalf of the Germans, thanked the president, but took care to rectify Cowey's message:

"Les ouvriers allemands croient à la fois dans le trade-unionisme et dans l'action politique. Mais le chemin le meilleur pour la réalisation de leur idéal était l'emploi de l'action."⁴²

From the outset, then, the Germans were determined to concede nothing to the trade-unionists. In the debate on the Zurich resolution, it was clear that it was not only the

participation of anarchists that was at stake. Rather, the social-democratic sections of the International - the Germans and Austrians, the minority French section, the Spanish section and the SDF in England - were resolved to impose their own methods of action on all those in the international movement: namely, the subordination of trade-union action to political (electoral) activities of socialist parties.

Although Vandervelde, for the bureau, stressed that the Zurich resolution was aimed at anarchists and not at trade-unionists, the discussion showed otherwise. Jaurès led the debate:

"Lorsque nous recommandions l'action politique, ce n'est pas que nous songions à combattre l'action corporative et syndicale. [...] Je sais que c'est dans cette organisation que le prolétariat puise les meilleurs éléments de son éducation économique, mais je me refuse à reconnaître la supériorité de l'action syndicale au point de vue de l'émancipation du prolétariat."⁴³

The social-democrats had the advantage of dominating the organising committee. This meant that it was able to cut short discussion where necessary. More importantly, it was decided that voting should proceed on the basis of one vote per national section. This meant that sections representing few members could sway the vote. This was particularly important, since most small nations were under the influence of larger nations such as Austria. Australia, represented by one single English delegate (Aveling, a son-in-law of Marx), was able to vote on equal terms with England. Finally, the French minority section succeeded in obtaining separate representation. The considerable French and English opposition to the Zurich resolution was thus outmanoeuvred, and the Zurich resolution was upheld.

The London congress of the Second International is thus seen as a turning-point, marking the definitive commitment of the International to parliamentary socialism and the supremacy of political parties over labour organisations. The battles leading to this victory for social-democracy had completely overshadowed any positive discussion within the International on questions of interest and importance to workers and socialists. At the London congress, for instance, the question of land collectivisation, the first question on the agenda, after the Zurich resolution, to be discussed, was not broached until the fourth day of the congress. The commission's report concluded:

"Nous sommes dans la période de l'enfantement , nous devons donc nous borner aujourd'hui à indiquer le but collectiviste, réservant pour plus tard, bientôt sans doute, l'unité des moyens."⁴⁴

In other words, the international was not yet sufficiently developed to decide on means of working towards essential parts of the socialist programme. Yet the London congress judged the international movement sufficiently developed to definitively impose blanket restrictions which effectively excluded about half its members.

Michel Winock points out that the exclusion of the anarchists dominated the London congress to such an extent because of the degree to which anarchists had penetrated the labour movement, especially in France.⁴⁵ It was therefore no longer possible to exclude anarchists without excluding a considerable section of the labour movement. This was true to some extent. Socialist domination of the labour movement in France had by 1896 given way to an autonomous direction in the

labour movement which was reinforced by the presence of anarcho-syndicalists, some of whom had begun their political activities as anarchists. The distinction, which Michel Winock fails to make here, between anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists is an important one. A further qualification must also be made. The presence of anarcho-syndicalists would not have had such an impact on the international movement as a whole had it not been for the determination of the social-democrats, not only to oppose anarchism of any kind, but also to impose from the outset social-democratic methods on all members of the International.

In this sense, the anarchists claimed that the social-democrats' victory at the London congress was a Pyrrhic one:

"Les vainqueurs sont les socialistes libertaires, antiparlementaires. Nombre d'entre eux ont été expulsé certes, mais ceux qui restaient ont obligé la social-démocratie à se montrer telle qu'elle est: intolérante, à l'esprit mesquin, étroite, si autoritaire que M. Keir Hardie l'a qualifiée de bismarckienne, de 'castiron socialism' (socialisme de fer). Le caporalisme le plus éhonté s'est affiché et cela a révolté la plus grande partie des Anglais."⁴⁶

The English - and not only the more conservative trade-unionists - had indeed been dismayed and even shocked by the proceedings of the London congress. Accustomed to more sedate gatherings, they were outraged by the physical scuffles and verbal attacks displayed at London. Already in 1893, the Parliamentary Committee had expressed its criticisms of incidents⁴⁷ involving the expulsion of anarchists from the Zurich congress. The London congress was a "distasteful experience" which confirmed the Parliamentary Committee's resolve to have as little⁴⁸ as possible to do with further international gatherings. Henceforth, British trade-union delegations to international

congresses were organised through individual unions.

Instead, the TUC became closely involved with the American Federation of Labor. As well as a common language and some common cultural and historical traditions, the American and English labour movements shared certain characteristics which facilitated a rapprochement. Both the AFL and the TUC had developed out of a labour aristocracy, especially the AFL which consciously limited its membership to include skilled workers only, and in both countries rapid industrialisation had favoured the development of a stable, independent trade-union movement. Both shared a fear of socialism and a hankering after official recognition from government bodies.

From 1895 onwards, there was a regular exchange of delegates to British and American trade-union congresses. The TUC made much of the visits from American delegates, making detailed arrangements for their reception and allocating money for souvenir gifts; this does not appear to have been done in the case of other foreign visitors. ⁴⁹ Enthusiasm for the American trade-unionists increased after the (in the eyes of many English trade-unionists) disastrous London congress of the Second International. Delegates attending AFL conventions returned with glowing reports, finding that, unlike European labour movements, the AFL conducted its affairs in a sober and businesslike way.

The Trades Union Congresses of 1897, 1898 and 1899 marked the peak of internationalist enthusiasm in the TUC. It was clear, however, that this internationalism was based on links between just two nationalities - England and the United States:

"We were assured that the bond of unity which has been created for several years between the British and American organised workers was greatly appreciated by our friends in America, and we feel certain that the closer the ties of relationship become between these two great organised bodies of labour the more will its influence tend to bring about the emancipation of the workers of the world."50

The TUC thus based its internationalism on links with like-minded bodies abroad. These links had to be cultivated at the expense of European connections. This was justified by the Parliamentary Committee by the belief that the spread of trade-unionism internationally, and not the spread of socialism internationally, would ultimately benefit the workers of all nations.

While the English trade unions were retreating from the international scene, two other strands of the European labour movement were beginning to emerge as potential leaders of international action: France and Germany. Even more than the TUC, it was the position of the French labour movement in the International which was profoundly affected by the London congress of 1896.

II.6 France and Germany: separate attempts at a labour International, 1900-1901

II.6.i The Confédération Générale du Travail and the Second International, before 1901

The formation in 1895 of the Confédération Générale du Travail marked the beginning of a new phase of French syndicalisme, independent of any particular political school of thought and fiercely jealous of its own autonomy. Previous coordinating bodies such as the Fédération Nationale des

Syndicats had been the arena for struggles between various socialist factions. If Jules Guesde and his followers had won this battle in the short term, it was a Pyrrhic victory, because the reaction against political interference which found expression in revolutionary syndicalism isolated the Guesdists in the labour movement.

The growth of the Bourses du Travail as a major force in the French labour movement contributed greatly to this process of shedding of political influence within the workers' associations. In the battle over these associations, the Broussist and Allemanist sections, who were heavily involved in local politics (in the municipalités), tried to use the Bourses as a lever against the Guesdist-dominated Fédération des syndicats, by subsidising the Bourses. This favourable attitude on the part of many municipalités partly explains the growth and implantation of the Bourses. It was however due to the energy and determination of militants such as the former anarchist (and former Guesdist) Fernand Pelloutier that the Bourses not only became the centres of working-class activity but also retained their complete independence, "gardiennes de l'indépendance syndicale".⁵¹ In 1899, Pelloutier claimed that

"Il n'y a certainement pas, parmi les 300 organisations qui habitent la Bourse du Travail de Paris, plus de 10 syndicats comptant pour modifier le régime économique de leur corporation, et a fortiori le régime social tout entier, sur le concours parlementaire."⁵²

The Bourses du Travail and the newly-formed Confédération Générale du Travail, in an often uneasy alliance which was formalised only in 1902, were to be at the forefront of French

attempts to build international solidarity; this was an integral part of their ideological raison d'être.

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Having freed itself of the Guesdist influence, the founding congress of the CGT in 1895 set about finding its own orientation. Although it represented very much a mixture of sometimes conflicting ideas, its desire for autonomy was a common factor and laid down the basis of what was to develop into revolutionary syndicalism. A traditional anti-political stance in the French labour movement had been sharpened by Government scandals and the extensive use of Government-sent troops to brutally crush strikes. Many socialist parties, already discredited in the eyes of many because of their continual quarrels and splits, could not be trusted because they placed their faith in corrupt bourgeois institutions. Instead, the syndicat would be the centre of all workers' activity and serve as basis for the future organisation of society.

Whilst working towards the long-term aim of complete emancipation, the CGT also encompassed demands which had long been essential demands of French workers, such as the reduction of working hours, a minimum wage, etc. These would not be achieved, however, by lobbying of deputies or attempts to have socialist candidates elected. Pouget outlined syndicalist methods in his paper Le Père Peinard:

"Y a pas à tortiller: c'est un mauvais système que d'attendre que les alouettes nous tombent rôties du ciel gouvernemental.

"Le jour où nous voudrons fermement les huit heures, nous n'aurons qu'à opérer nous-mêmes. Il n'y aura qu'à nous entendre et à quitter les ateliers et les usines une fois huit heures de travail accomplies."54

The workers' weapon par excellence was felt to be the

general strike. Anarchist influence can be detected in many of the CGT's resolutions and actions, especially in the emphasis on the general strike; it was a policy of French anarchists in the 1880's and 1890's to enter the syndicats in large numbers. However, the importance of the general strike was not that it was an anarchist method of action, but that it was a purely economic action, directed against employers by workers themselves. It was the question of the general strike which had been at the centre of the struggle between Guesdists and other factions before the 1895 congress in Limoges which marked the victory of the non-Guesdists. Thus the first congress of the CGT reaffirmed earlier decisions taken in the face of Guesdist opposition, and thereafter the general strike was featured on the agenda at every congress. Although much of the Limoges congress was occupied with discussion on the form of the new confederation, the CGT also made a link with actions taken in the past when it decided to take over the mantle of representing French syndicats internationally. It was decided that the CGT should contact organisations in other countries, with a view to organising "un⁵⁵ Congrès ouvrier international, exclusivement corporatif".

Much of the preparatory work in this area had been done by the Bourses du Travail. The members of the Paris Bourse had been very active in the organisation and the proceedings of the 1889 congress in the rue de Lancry. They were very much part of the Anglo-French tradition of co-operation, dating back to the 1883 congress and beyond, rather than of the new Socialist International Congresses. The rue de Lancry congress of 1889 was reported extensively in the Bulletin de la Bourse du Travail de

Paris (June 1889). At the same time, the format of this bulletin was modified, one of the major new areas to be covered being "le mouvement ouvrier international". Reports on the situation of workers abroad began to appear regularly in the bulletin.

The founding congress of the Fédération des Bourses du Travail, held in St.-Etienne in February 1892, discussed the question of an international labour secretariat, proposed at the Brussels congress of 1891, and elected four delegates to the French secretariat, which would be based in Paris.⁵⁶

It was, in fact, in France that the idea of a national secretariat, launched at the Brussels International Socialist Congress of 1891, had the most success. Although secretariats were set up in most countries represented at the Brussels congress, their activities did not last long. In France, however, largely due to the interest shown in socialist circles (particularly by the Allemanists and by Vaillant) and especially by the Bourses du Travail, the national secretariat, established at an initial meeting in September 1891, remained active for several years. Its headquarters were situated in the Paris Bourse du Travail. In 1893, it published the results of an enquiry into the causes and effects of unemployment. A second investigation, undertaken the following year, into wages and working hours, was never completed.⁵⁷

The idea behind the national secretariat was the need to collect, and exchange internationally, information:

"[...] les travailleurs conscients ne s'émanciperont d'une bourgeoisie armée de toute la science de son temps qu'en faisant pénétrer par l'évidence des démonstrations, leurs principes parmi les ouvriers les plus réfractaires à la propagande socialiste."⁵⁸

Socialists saw in the collection of information a means of propagandising workers. Equally important, however, was the idea that workers themselves should collect information as a means of affirming their independence vis-à-vis the State.

One of the aims of the national secretariat was to unite not only all the rival socialist factions, but also the socialist and syndicalist wings of the labour movement. In the first few years of its existence, the national secretariat appeared to create and maintain this unity. Even during its first few meetings, however, there were clashes over the composition of the secretariat. It would appear that the political parties grew disillusioned with the slow work of the national secretariat before the Bourses du Travail. Reports of meetings of the Secrétariat national du travail in socialist papers ceased in 1892, while La Bourse du Travail, and later the Bulletin des Bourses du Travail continued to report its activities.

At the same time, the constraints of working with the socialists were beginning to make themselves felt, and the Bourses du Travail started to consider the possibility of setting up a purely working-class organisation. In 1894, the third congress of the Bourses du Travail launched the idea of holding an international congress. The next congress of the Bourses, the following year, made a more concrete resolution to call a "Congrès international des Bourses du Travail" in 1900. This step away from the national secretariat project, towards an independent international initiative, corresponded to the development of an increasingly autonomous syndicalist movement in France.

Similar calls for an autonomous international congress were voiced at the first CGT congress in 1895. Representatives of the French chambres syndicales had attended all the international labour congresses of the 1880's and 1890's, including the International Socialist Congresses. However, they, like their English counterparts, although not for the same reasons, had come up against a major obstacle at the Zurich and London congresses with the question of allegiance to political action and the exclusion of the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists.

Jules Guesde had struck the keynote of the International Socialist Congresses when he said:

"L'action corporative se cantonne sur le terrain bourgeois, elle n'est pas forcément socialiste...C'est au gouvernement, c'est-à-dire au coeur, qu'il faut frapper. L'action parlementaire est le principe socialiste par excellence. Il n'y a pas de place ici pour ses ennemis. Ce n'est pas de l'action corporative qu'il faut attendre la prise de possession des moyens de production. Il faut d'abord prendre le gouvernement qui monte la garde autour de la classe capitaliste. Ailleurs, il n'y a que mystification, il y a plus, il y a trahison."62

This was the clearest indication yet of what the Socialists' insistence on political action meant: not only the exclusion of those within the labour movement who were anarchists or anarchist sympathisers, but an attempt to discredit any whose policies disagreed with those of the majority, and, fundamentally, a direct attack against the autonomy and indeed the very existence of trade associations. Grouped against this conception of the International were not only the anarchisants, but also those "reformists" such as Auguste Keufer, who, like the English trade-unionists, saw political action in the socialist sense as

dangerous. Having struggled to maintain their independence from socialist parties in France, the syndicats were not about to surrender themselves to the domination of Socialists in the International.

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As Brécy points out, the exclusion of the "anarchist" trade-union leaders (Pouget, Delesalle, Tortellier, Pelloutier, and others) actually helped to reinforce the determination of the anarchists to make the trade-union domain their own, and the resolution of the French syndicats to retain their autonomy. It is from this period that revolutionary syndicalism really took a hold on the French labour movement.

Guesde's remark, made at the London congress of the Second International in 1896, to the effect that those willing to concentrate on the economic action of the working class should hold their own international congresses, confirmed the French syndicalists' view of the International and the conviction that, indeed, the only way to represent their viewpoint internationally was to organise separate congresses.

The early congresses of the Second International had also left an imprint on the French syndicalists (and on many French socialists) in another respect. They served to heighten the contrast between the German model of social-democratic party discipline and the French libertarian tradition. Augustin Hamon's interpretation of the London congress bears witness to the image of German socialists as seen through French eyes; he describes the Germans as "des soldats bien disciplinés", "des automates", and attributes these characteristics to the military education received in Germany.

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This image of German workers as well-

received in Germany. This image of German workers as well-disciplined, obedient soldiers is echoed in the socialist Lucien Herr's description of the differences between French and German socialism:

"The German Socialist Party is above all a disciplined hierarchy; ours is a voluntary and free association of men bound together by confidence and not by obedience. Their disciplined cohesion is their strength; I am glad of it. But we neither can nor want to appropriate it. We cannot do so; we are differently made from them; because even politically militarism is repugnant to us. What is all powerful with us is the freedom and spontaneity of the formation of our groups; strong unity is that which results from this, not that which dominates the groups... The Germans are an army and there lies their strength. It's also perhaps their weakness."⁶⁵

From the early days of the Second International, the association of German social-democracy and militarism was a constant theme dominating French images of German workers. It reflected a deep-seated distrust of German influence within the international movement. This was especially true of French syndicalists, who, having fought bitterly to gain the autonomy of the labour movement, were determined not to allow themselves to be submerged in a social-democratic International. The alliance between the Guesdists and the German social-democrats further identified the Second International, in the eyes of the French syndicalists, with political domination.

After the London congress, the CGT made no further attempt to participate in the International Socialist Congresses, but placed all their hopes in setting up an international,⁶⁶ exclusively workers' organisation. Pelloutier bore testimony to the effect which the exclusion of the anarchists had on the French labour leaders when he wrote in 1889:

"Eh bien! ces hommes qu'on exclut du congrès 'socialiste' où d'ailleurs ils ne se seraient pas présentés, le programme de ses travaux étant étranger à l'objet habituel de leurs préoccupations, ils prendront part au congrès 'ouvrier révolutionnaire' parce qu'ils trouvent dans son ordre du jour les problèmes économiques dont ils cherchent depuis quelques années la solution."67

The resolution taken by the Bourses du Travail, and the CGT's own decision to hold an international congress in 1900, were thus fused into one united initiative.

By this time, the CGT had quite clear ideas about what it expected from international solidarity. Although the term "international secretariat" was still used, and the proposed tasks of the secretariat were to consist mainly of provision of "un bureau de statistique et d'études économiques sur le développement des organisations ouvrières", the scheme envisaged by the CGT went beyond the scope of suggestions already made at the Brussels international congress of 1891.

The Bourse du Travail d'Alger was particularly interested in the question of "entente internationale", because of problems of immigrant labour, mainly Italian and Spanish, faced by workers in Algeria. At the CGT congress of 1900, Soulerie explained the idea of the Algerian Bourse du Travail. He proposed the organisation of societies for all the different nationalities in any given area; these would be coordinated by an international secretariat, so that in this way all workers of all nationalities would be affiliated to a central organisation, and there would therefore be no competition between workers of different nationalities employed in the same workplace. It was an ambitious project. Soulerie emphasised that the international secretariat

would be no "rouage administratif ajouté à l'organisation économique de prolétariat", no "comité directeur", but "un⁶⁸ organisme réel, en contact avec tous les pays".

Liénard, of Tourcoing, also argued that the question of immigrant labour could only be considered internationally:

"Le capital n'est-il pas international? [...] Le prolétariat doit s'entendre internationalement aussi, et la seule base sur laquelle cette entente puisse être stable et viable, c'est la base purement économique."⁶⁹

The congress agreed that internationalism was an essential part of working-class ideology, since "aujourd'hui, la patrie est devenue, dans sa définition, le protecteur naturel du puissant⁷⁰ contre le faible". Apart from the practical considerations, some argued, there were higher moral questions of peace and solidarity:

"Il y a une question plus haute: il faudrait, en face de la brutalité capitaliste qui arme les travailleurs les uns contre les autres, affirmer la solidarité ouvrière et proclamer que, quels que soient les motifs invoqués par les dirigeants pour déclarer la guerre, jamais les travailleurs ne considéreront comme ennemis leurs frères d'au-delà des frontières. Que les travailleurs refusent de se battre et les gouvernements hésiteront à déclarer la guerre."⁷¹

Thus the CGT expressed its opposition to wars, and its hope that international solidarity could put a stop to them.

For others, the question of international solidarity was indissolubly linked with other aims of the CGT. Granger pointed out that if a general strike were organised, it could be broken by goods or labour from abroad. It was therefore necessary to discuss the question as a whole; internationalism could not be⁷² separated from other aspects of the CGT's policy.

The congress report, which was to provide the basis for

discussion at the imminent international congress, echoed all these aspirations and called for an international secretariat to co-ordinate international action, whilst stressing that each nation would have complete autonomy to follow its own orientation. It ended with a condemnation of "ce chauvinisme, ce fanatisme et cette folie qui porte le nom de nationalisme".⁷³

II.6.ii The international labour congress of 1900

As well as the congress of the Second International, two international congresses were held in Paris in 1900. The first, an international congress of all "Trades-Unions, Syndicats, Unions de Métier, Fédérations d'Industrie, Cartells, etc., etc." (hereinafter referred to as the international labour congress), organised by the CGT, took place on 17 and 18 September, and was followed by a second international congress of transport workers (19-21 September).

Of 157 delegates to the international labour congress, only a handful had come from abroad: Switzerland was represented by Calame (Zurich) and Koch (Berne print workers), Belgium by the deputy Lambillotte, Italy by the deputy Rigola (who was mandated by the Italian building workers' union). There was an English representative, Chambers, but his mandate came from the International Federation of Transport Workers. Similarly, a German representative appeared on the last day of the congress (presumably Stiviner, of the Hamburg seamen's union) but he had no representative mandate.⁷⁴ Those foreign delegates present at the congress were evidently in Paris either for the International

Transport Workers' Congress, or for the International Socialist Congress, held later in September. From the beginning, then, the congress was less an international one than a French labour congress, with foreign delegates present. The CGT did its best to maximise the presence of the few foreign delegates; Calame was appointed president for the first day, Lambillotte for the second. On all questions, the opinion of the foreign delegates was studiously asked. It was agreed, too, that on the most important questions the vote would be taken by nationality, otherwise the foreign delegates would be hopelessly outnumbered.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, virtually all the reports at the congress were presented by French delegates, and the discussions were dominated by the French.

The most important question, and indeed the purpose of the congress, was the setting-up of an international labour secretariat. Soulery, of the Bourse du Travail of Algiers, presented a long and detailed report on the question, which took as its basis the report presented to the CGT congress a few months previously. He began with the central assumption that international labour organisation was everywhere seen as necessary:

"A l'Union internationale des capitaux, il faut opposer l'Union internationale des travailleurs; c'est là un axiome compris depuis longtemps; mais qui jusqu'ici n'est jamais sorti du domaine de la théorie et pour la réalisation duquel rien de pratique n'a été entrepris."⁷⁶

Soulery dismissed the Second International as a political body. Political action, he claimed, had caused the end of the First International:

"La grande Internationale, qui fut rendue responsable de la Commune voulut faire évoluer des éléments économiques sur le terrain politique, elle en est morte et beaucoup de ses adeptes avec elle.

"Il s'agit de ne pas reprendre cette conception sublime mais fausse et de préparer un mouvement des forces économiques du parti producteur international sur le seul terrain économique."77

The first task of the proposed international secretariat would be to elicit information concerning legal restrictions on international activity. The means of making contact with organisations of each country would be through the national labour federations (of which Soulerly gave a precise list). In this way national autonomy would be safeguarded. By finding out about the situation in each country, it would then be possible to identify areas where agreement could be reached. Eventually, the international secretariat could provide an international service network, with information, translations, speakers. Each country would provide regular data which would be disseminated in a bulletin. In short, the international secretariat would coordinate activities of national federations, while never replacing or overriding these national federations; the principle of autonomy was paramount.

Finally, Soulerly submitted a special report recommending the establishment of labour groups, on the basis of nationality, in each large city. Soulerly's report saw "la Cité cosmopolite" as an International in miniature. If harmony between the nationalities could be achieved in a large city, he argued, competition would be reduced. He proceeded to give a detailed list of possible unions which could be set up in all of the major industrialised nations. This project was based on Soulerly's own experience in

organising workers in Algiers:

"Il est inutile de dire ici que nous sommes internationalistes quoique nous soyons mieux placés que tout autre dans les pays cosmopolites pour constater que la non compréhension de cette idée d'internationalisme, en même temps que la concurrence faite aux travailleurs par les étrangers, soit une des causes qui ont le plus fait pour éloigner du socialisme certains esprits étroits qui comprenaient mal la question."⁷⁸

Not surprisingly, the proposal to set up national sections in "les villes cosmopolites" caused some consternation among the delegates. Most were hostile to this idea, seeing in it a divisive measure. On the question of the international secretariat, however, all delegates were in favour in principle. Differences arose over the time-span involved. Chambers, Calame and Lambillotte all stated that they had no mandate to vote on the establishment of an international secretariat. Although generally in favour of the idea, they felt that national organisation had to come first. Chambers explained:

"En Angleterre, il n'y a que 2 millions de camarades adhérents aux organisations, sur 10 millions de travailleurs. Il estime qu'il serait préférable de grouper d'abord les camarades anglais, et ensuite on pourrait discuter les meilleurs moyens pour arriver à la création du secrétariat international."⁷⁹

Some of the French delegates were more impatient. Bourderon (Chambre syndicale des Tonnelliers, Paris) and Bouchet (Bourse du Travail, Lyon) protested against the constant postponement of action: "mauvaise habitude que d'étudier tout le temps et de ne
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jamais rien mettre en pratique". Nevertheless, the text finally voted reflected the provisional nature of the discussion, given the small number of foreign delegates present:

"Le Congrès corporatif international, tenu à Paris les 17 et 18 septembre 1900 donne l'ordre à la

Confédération Générale du Travail de se mettre en rapport immédiatement avec les organisations étrangères à la seule fin qu'au prochain Congrès international, la création d'un Secrétariat international du Travail soit un fait accompli."81

No date was set for the next international congress.

The congress then discussed the remaining questions on the agenda, beginning with the general strike. Guérard, representing the CGT, explained that the French wished to discuss the general strike because they were anxious to hear the views of the foreign delegates. They did not wish to impose any decision; rather, they desired to elicit views:

"Jusqu'ici, dans les Congrès Internationaux Socialistes, la question de la Grève Générale n'a pas été discutée; elle a fait l'objet de rapports hâtifs et dédaigneux, ce qui a pu laisser croire que les organisations syndicales des pays voisins repoussait [sic] une méthode de lutte qui nous paraît, à nous, irrésistible."82

In a long speech, Guérard explained that, in France, the general strike was advocated as a response to the failure of socialists to achieve any tangible results, as far as workers were concerned. Partial strikes were not the answer because they were weak and isolated. The general strike was the workers' ultimate weapon and, most importantly, it was the ultimate weapon of an autonomous labour movement.

If the French had hoped for a lively discussion on this subject, they were disappointed. The foreign delegates were reluctant to make any statements regarding the general strike. Lambillotte and Rigola both professed that their organisations had never discussed the subject, although both politely acknowledged the interest of the question. Calame accepted the general strike in theory, but expressed worries about the

practical organisation of the general strike in countries where only a fraction of the workforce was organised. As for the English delegate, he had to be pushed into making a personal statement of general agreement, whilst formally declaring that he had no mandate to speak on the subject.

Similarly, participation in the discussions on working hours and female labour was limited to the French delegates. The question of cooperatives, on the other hand, interested the Belgian and Swiss delegates, whereas the French had little to say on the subject. The report, presented by Lambillotte, urged workers to join cooperative movements in order to win them over to the wider aims of socialism. It was supported by Calame, and voted by the congress without further discussion.

Finally, the French made an attempt, at the 1900 international congress, to claim May Day demonstrations on behalf of workers' associations. As decided by the Second International, the May Day demonstration was a political one, claimed Bouchet. The congress decided that workers' associations should aim to organise an effective May Day demonstration the following year.

Overall, the congress was a disaster for the CGT, the more so because they had put a considerable amount of effort into organising it and had high expectations of the outcome. As Brécy⁸⁴ has pointed out, this congress sank into oblivion, so that the CGT's retrospective account of international activity, written in⁸⁵ 1925, did not even mention the 1900 congress. The reason for the failure of the congress was the absence of foreign delegates. The International Transport Workers' Congress, held immediately

after the international labour congress, was concerned with workers of just one industry, and yet it attracted five delegates from Germany, four from England, three from Austria, six from Belgium, three from Denmark, four from Holland, one from Norway⁸⁶ and one from Sweden. More importantly for the CGT, its congress had failed to attract labour representatives away from the International Socialist Congress, where the major European labour movements, with the exception of the French, were all represented.

Moreover, the Second International continued to discuss issues which the CGT saw as being within the domain of purely labour congresses. At the Paris congress of the Second International, Legien, on behalf of the German trade unions, condemned the general strike on the grounds that the labour movements were insufficiently organised:

"Aussi longtemps que le prolétariat ne disposera pas de syndicats fortement organisés et nombreux, il ne sera souhaitable que dans l'intérêt de la bourgeoisie qu'on déclare la grève générale, parce que cette grève générale n'aurait qu'une conséquence, ce serait de livrer le prolétariat à la bourgeoisie, qui le fusillerait ou l'affamerait."⁸⁷

At the same congress, a delegate of the Belgian Parti Ouvrier asked for reports, together with statistical information, on the situation of the labour movement in each country, to be given at each International Socialist Congress. The effect of this would be to fulfil the kind of tasks which the CGT wanted to see achieved by an independent international labour secretariat.

Whereas the response of the French CGT to the London International Congress of 1896 had been to organise a rival, independent congress in 1900, and the response of the English TUC

had been to seek links outside the International with like-minded groups abroad (the American Federation of Labor), the majority of the European labour organisations had preferred to remain within the Socialist International, in close liaison with the socialist parties of their own country. The reluctance of this majority to join in the CGT's initiative was no doubt fuelled by the anarchist image which the French labour movement had gained within the Second International.

The significant absence at the CGT's congress in 1900 was that of Germany. This was noted and regretted at various times⁸⁸ during the congress, particularly by the foreign delegates. The arrival of a German delegate during the last session of the congress did nothing to remedy the situation. Instead, the German delegate explained that he had no mandate to speak on any issue; his sole contribution to the congress consisted of a reminder that German law prevented trade unions from participating in⁸⁹ international associations. This argument had been used before by the Germans. Although by 1900 the Anti-Socialist Law had been lifted, it was still dangerous for trade-unionists to participate directly in international bodies. However, the Germans were able to circumnavigate this problem if they chose to do so, as is shown by the presence of Carl Legien and other German trade-unionists at International Socialist Congresses from 1889 onwards. Thus it was a question of choice for the Germans; they had opted for the International Socialist Congresses rather than for the French initiative, as was proved by the prominent role of Legien in the Paris congress of the Second International.

Carl Legien, head of the German trade-union movement, later claimed that the Germans had abstained from participating in the CGT's congress because the international labour movement, and the French movement in particular, was not organised or strong enough to allow international organisation.⁹⁰ Yet Legien had already approached the English with the idea of setting up an international committee in 1896. It was only one year after the 1900 Paris congress that Legien collaborated with the Scandinavian organisations in calling an international conference. Thus it is clear that the Germans were prepared to work only with those groups which they considered well organised, and the French did not fall into this category. In addition, the French were probably correct in thinking that "the Germans were, in fact, very suspicious of any international initiative which did not come from themselves."⁹¹ The French syndicalist leaders suspected that the Germans had deliberately boycotted the CGT's international congress to deprive it of any chance of success. Monatte, for instance, later claimed that this had been done because the Germans wished to wreck any initiative which was not social-democratic in origin.⁹² There was certainly an element of truth in this claim. The Germans, by their actions in 1900, showed that they belonged to the Socialist International in preference to any outside organisation, even one based solely on labour organisations.

For whatever reason, this refusal on the part of a major country to support the French initiative effectively wrecked the chances of the congress having any lasting results. The French were in exactly the same position as they had been before the

congress, isolated in their attempts to launch an international organisation based solely on labour.

Faced with the failure of their initiative on international organisation, the French CGT shifted the emphasis away from international congresses back to international co-operation on a less ambitious level, and back to their traditional allies, the English trade unions. A manifestation of solidarity between English and French workers was particularly significant because the turn of the century was a period of confrontation between the two nations, owing to conflicts over territory in North Africa. The atmosphere of anti-British feeling whipped up by the French press served to prove the need for a joint demonstration of some kind, to show workers' solidarity in the face of capitalist war-mongering. As French and English trade-unionists had exchanged visits many times in the past, the groundwork had been prepared for such a demonstration.

In the midst of the Fashoda crisis, the French CGT contacted the English trade unions via the Peace Society, and it was agreed that a delegation of English workers would visit Paris. The French reported:

"Pour répondre aux excitations bestiales et chauvines du jingoïsme en Angleterre, et du nationalisme en France, nos camarades anglais des Trade Unions envoient à Paris des délégués spécialement mandatés pour assurer au peuple français les sentiments fraternels du peuple anglais."⁹³

The "special mandate" mentioned above had been discussed at the 33rd Annual TUC held in Huddersfield in September 1900, when Congress had voted a motion condemning the nationalist agitation of the French and English press:

"The Congress deeply regrets that portions of the British and French Press frequently use irritating and dangerous language towards the Governments and peoples of these countries, and learns with satisfaction that arrangements are being made for the presentation of a fraternal address from British to French workmen at a great demonstration in Paris."

Introducing the motion, the Chairman added:

"These utterances of the Press were sometimes mistaken for the voice of the people, but the workers at any rate did not desire a war between the two countries. A war between France and England would practically ruin the commerce of both countries, and it would be transferred to other countries, where it would remain."94

The TUC was still wary enough of international links to refuse to allow an official deputation to accompany the delegation to Paris, but the discussion on the question showed an increased awareness of the international issue. Responding to a miners' delegate's protestation that the question of peace was outside the business of the TUC, Ward, of the London navvies, replied that

"the working people had to decide the war. They had to find the blood and the money, and yet Mr. Aspinall said the question was of no matter to the TUC. Wherever did the man get his ideas from?" 95

This was a more radical stance than that taken by previous speakers, and it is noteworthy that the speaker was a member of an unskilled workers' union.

The meeting in Paris was a great success, the more so because it was the first demonstration of its kind. This was particularly satisfying to the CGT in its attempts to forge independent international links and to give these links some useful purpose. The socialists looked with some envy at the success of the syndicats in this area; Vaillant, for example,

wrote to the International Socialist Bureau:

"Ne pensez-vous pas, comme je le crois, qu'une telle manifestation pour la paix internationale entre tous les peuples et tous les pays aurait une importance, une valeur sans égale si elle prenait un caractère non plus seulement syndical mais aussi socialiste..."⁹⁶

The success of this visit was followed up by a visit by French workers to London the next year. From the beginning of the year until the trip in June, the newly-formed organ of the CGT, La Voix du Peuple regularly gave bulletins on the details of the demonstration and the number of French delegates to attend, usually under the title of "Guerre à la guerre!". Shortly before the demonstration, Emile Pouget wrote two editorials which summed up the CGT's hopes for their new relationship with the English trade-union movement, and linked the question of peace with the increased interest in strike solidarity between the two countries. In May 1901, he wrote:

"De plus en plus le développement économique fait éclater les frontières: elles n'existent plus pour les capitalistes, - il est temps qu'elles existent encore moins pour les travailleurs."⁹⁷

On the weekend of the peace demonstration, Pouget wrote of the strength of internationalism now built up between French and English workers:

"Pourquoi n'en sortirait-il pas l'embryon d'une entente, d'une ligue ou d'un groupement international, qui, en tous pays, opposerait aux projets guerriers des dirigeants son action pacifique?

"L'Angleterre est le berceau du monde moderne: c'est en Angleterre que se sont préalablement concrétisées la plupart des grandes idées de progrès et d'humanité, ainsi que les moyens de propagande et d'action... Il est, en outre, inutile de rappeler que Londres a été, en 1862 [sic], le berceau de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs.

Pourquoi, une fois encore, l'Angleterre ne

continuerait-elle pas la tradition?"

Once again, the French and English workers had cause to be jubilant in the fact that they had shown the way forward for international action. Even the anarchists' most violent speeches against war had been enthusiastically greeted by the English workers, and the French believed that they were at last witnessing the foundations of a new, vigorous trade-union international:

"Il n'est pas exagéré de dire que viennent d'être jetées, à Londres, les bases d'une nouvelle Internationale des Travailleurs, non plus une Internationale globale, amoncelant par milliers et milliers des adhérents n'ayant en commun que des aspirations similaires, et, par cela même, pouvant difficilement coopérer à une action d'ensemble, - mais une Internationale corporative et économique qui n'est que l'aboutissement logique du groupement syndical déjà réalisé dans chaque pays."99

Beneath the surface, however, there were underlying tensions which the jubilant tone of the CGT ignored. Les Temps Nouveaux had been a little more cautious in its appraisal of the London meeting, noting "son caractère quelque peu officiel de délégués de syndicats rendant visite à des délégués de syndicats d'un autre pays", and remarking on the banquet given by the English which was "par trop bourgeois de l'avis de la plupart des Français".¹⁰⁰

If the CGT militants had been inclined to examine the meeting a little more critically, they would have noticed the differences between the French and English conceptions of working-class opposition to war. At the first meeting in Paris, one of the English speakers, Pickles, used the argument that war would be bad for English and French business:

"une guerre entre les deux grands peuples [...] aurait pour résultat le bouleversement des conditions

économiques universelles, l'Angleterre étant le principal client de la France qui y écoule le plupart de ses produits. Quelle que soit, en effet, l'issue d'un semblable conflit, [...] le résultat serait de détourner au profit d'un autre marché du monde cette activité commerciale qui fait vivre actuellement tant d'entreprises et industries."101

This kind of argument was not confined to one speaker; as we have seen, it was put forward at the TUC in 1900 as the main reason for opposing war. It was a far cry from Emile Pouget's violent condemnations of the capitalist economic system in La Voix du Peuple.

Some members of the CGT had already noticed that the French unions were becoming increasingly out of touch with the international movement. In the first edition of La Voix du Peuple, an article entitled "Pénible comparaison" expressed concern that the CGT might have acquired a bad reputation among workers abroad:

"Je ne sais quelle impression nos camarades de l'étranger ont emporté des Congrès internationaux corporatifs auxquels ils ont assisté récemment à Paris. J'imagine pourtant qu'ils ont dû constater la sincérité de l'accueil que leur ont fait les travailleurs français.

"Car nous sommes franchement, loyalement internationalistes et nous nous en vantons très volontiers; pour nous le préjugé de frontière n'existe plus et si nous sommes encore séparés des travailleurs des autres pays par des différences de langage, de mœurs et de caractère, nous ne les estimons pas moins avec la plus entière sympathie.

"Seulement - et c'est ce qui me peine - notre internationalisme ne s'exprime qu'en paroles."

The main reason for this criticism was the meagre amount raised by the French for those locked out in Denmark (1,952 francs), compared with the impressive sums collected by other countries, especially Germany (269,807 francs); this led the writer to conclude:

"Que doivent penser de nous les travailleurs étrangers? Nous crions bien fort notre internationalisme; eux le prouvent."102

The isolation of the French labour movement from that in other countries was shown at the London peace demonstration, when the French learned for the first time that a General Federation of Trade Unions had been created in Britain (it had been in existence since the beginning of 1899). More importantly, the French delegates received the information that this new English central organisation had already been in close contact with the federations of Germany and Scandinavia. At this stage the French were unaware that plans were already underway for leaders of the trade-union movements of these countries to meet in Denmark later that year. In the discussions on the possibility of an international trade-union organisation, the French were being left behind.

II.6.iii The German Freie Gewerkschaften, 1890-1900

The German trade-union movement was developing remarkably quickly. The key to this upturn was the Social-Democratic Party (SPD). During the period of the Anti-Socialist Law, only non-political trade unions kept working-class organisation alive. When this law was lifted in 1890, the party was free to develop as a mass movement, while the trade unions had to struggle in the face of economic depression. Whereas many of the trade associations had developed a tightly organised structure and clandestine methods of organisation under the Anti-Socialist Law (often forming the only contact between workers), these forms of organisation had no purpose once the law was lifted, and a whole

new set of tactics had to be elaborated. The greatest influence on the labour movement was the development of the SPD, which by 1890 had 35 seats in the Reichstag and nearly one and a half million voters.

Internationally, the rise of the German Social-Democratic Party coincided with the growth of links between the labour movements of different countries and notably the development of the Socialist International. With the French socialists split into many rival groups, and the English socialists isolated from the mainstream "pure and simple" trade-unionism, the German SPD with its impressive following was in a position to dominate the international movement and shape it according to its own design. In this, it had the added advantage of its image as heir to the Marxist tradition, which boosted its authority. Engels, an important figure if only for his symbolic value, saw the Germans as the lynch-pin of international organisation, as he wrote in a letter to Friedrich Sorge:

"In spite of everything, our French friends are again drunk with victory and crowing about the world and they would like to come to the forefront of the movement...What the few Italians, who are a muddled bunch anyway, do, doesn't matter a jot: whether the Germans will however let themselves in this way simply be towed along in the wake of the French is doubtful."104

The German trade-unionists, inspired by this model of strength and efficiency, saw their task as one of organisation rather than propaganda or militant action. The main protagonist in this sphere was Carl Legien, who, from the time of the first attempts to draw German unions together until his death in 1920, was the leader of the Free Trade Unions (Freie Gewerkschaften):

"Es war die Lebensarbeit Legiens, ihnen den Gewerkschaften die Richtung zu weisen, in der eine freie Entwicklung möglich war."105

His conception of trade-union activity was based on the all-importance of organisation, often at the expense of campaigns around workers' demands such as the reduction of working hours; in 1896, for example, Legien declared to the SPD congress:

"Für verkehrt[...] halte ich es, etwa den Arbeitern einreden zu wollen, sie könnten durch blosse Agitation den Achtstundentag erringen. Versammlungen, Agitieren, Protestieren nützt nichts! Die Organisation ist alles!"106

This was a message which Legien spelt out many times:

"In unserer Gesellschaft ist alles eine Machtfrage. Die Macht der Arbeiter liegt in ihrer Organisation. Stärken sie diese, so stärken sie ihre Macht."107

Legien, and a small number of like-minded men, were able to rise quickly to a position of great power in the trade-union movement, because they were able to harness the growing demands for stronger organisation. Around 1890, calls for some kind of organisational link between the various local unions came from many sides at the same time. This was not a new phenomenon; disjointed strike movements had since the 1850's given way on each occasion to demands for, and attempts at, greater
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organisation, but the more favourable conditions created by the lifting of the Anti-Socialist laws, coupled with the organisational and ideological example set by the socialist Party, reinforced this tendency. The Hamburg trade associations, for their part, were anxious to increase links with other local unions after a strike on May Day in 1890 had led to a large-scale lock-out. Metalworkers' representatives from various parts of Germany were even more specific in their demands; they were

pressing for the organisation of nation-wide federations based on industries. Legien, on the other hand, opposed industrial federations and favoured organisation on professional lines. This was more in keeping with traditional trade-unionism after the English and American models.

Because of the diversity of opinion on the question of amalgamation, a conference which was called to discuss the issue in 1890 in Berlin came to no agreed solution. Instead a commission was appointed to prepare a plan for the organisation of trade unions, to be submitted and discussed at a later congress.

Carl Legien was at that time very young, and unknown outside his own association. He was however known by that circle of colleagues as hard-working and utterly dedicated to the labour movement; Legien also had the knack of making an immediate impression upon meetings. Theodor Leipart, a lifelong colleague of Legien, recalled the first trade-union meeting which Legien attended: after a very learned lecture by the guest speaker, all of the members of the audience were too embarrassed to show their ignorance by asking questions, except Legien, who spoke at length and at ease.¹⁰⁹ As presenter of the counter-resolution in the name of the lathe turners' association, Legien evidently made an impression upon the 1890 conference; single-minded in his ideas and his commitment, he stood apart from the general confusion over the federation question:

"Wie kaum ein Zweiter unter uns war Legien schon in jener Zeit, als die Gewerkschaftsbewegung in Deutschland noch so schwach und unbedeutend war, sich klar über die Aufgaben und das Ziel der Bewegung."¹¹⁰

At the first German trade-union conference in 1890, Legien was appointed as one of the seven members of the Commission. At the first meeting of the commission, he was elected Chairman. A few months later, Legien brought out the first edition of the Correspondenzblatt der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands; with Legien as its editor for the first few years, it was to be a powerful tool in winning support for Legien's federation scheme and rooting the General Commission firmly within the German trade-union movement.

By careful preparation and through his own increasing personal authority, Legien was able to push through his own scheme for federation. It was based on trades, which would then organise in larger industrial groups. Each organisation had to be centralised: "Jede Organisation, welche sich die Gewerkschaften anschliessen will, hat sich zu zentralisieren."¹¹¹ Legien also elaborated a whole set of rules for the organisations; strikes, for example, could be decided only at a branch meeting of the local leadership. He even stipulated the approximate length and content of the trade newspaper. Also important was the insistence that politics were to be strictly excluded from the unions:

"Jeder Verwaltungsbeamte hat dafür zu sorgen, dass die Tätigkeit der Organisation sich streng im Rahmen des Statuts bewegt, und ist jede Politik aus dem Verein ausgeschlossen."¹¹²

A sign of Legien's efficiency in the midst of so much confusion was the fact that his proposal for the federation of trades was the only one worked out in detail in advance, and it was even distributed and printed before the second national conference. It was this careful planning which enabled Legien to

grasp, and maintain, control of the national trade union movement. Indeed, that the General Commission survived at all is itself a measure of Legien's organisational ability and increasing personal authority. Even at the first congress called by the General Commission, in 1892, Legien had to combat calls for the Commission to be disbanded; he refuted these calls personally and single-handedly. Gradually, mainly through Legien's hard work, the General Commission, trimmed down to five members, but always headed by Legien, came to be recognised as the legitimate representative body of the German Freie Gewerkschaften. Criticism came most strongly from the Lokalvereine, locally-based, loosely-organised unions which were opposed to the increasing centralisation of the Gewerkschaften. Like the French CGT, these unions were strongly imbued with syndicalist ideas and shunned party-political action, insisting that workers' associations themselves were the instruments of revolutionary change.

In their drive towards greater centralisation, the German trade-union leaders were strict disciplinarians and firmly resisted the influence of the Lokalvereine. Within the German Social-Democratic Party, the expulsion of Anarchists had become
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"almost a ritual" so that by 1896 the party had been fully "purged". Legien, a party stalwart, was a firm advocate of purges within the party to exclude anarchist dissenters, and he carried this attitude over to the trade unions. As in many other areas, it was an attitude which was to colour his views of the labour movement internationally.

At the same time, most of the trade-union leaders showed indulgence towards dissent from the "revisionists" within the German labour movement, such as Edouard Bernstein and Georg von Vollmar. The ideas formulated by these party members, with their emphasis on the need for immediate, piecemeal reform of society at the expense of long-term revolutionary goals, went beyond the Party line but fitted in with the trade-union leaders' views of the role of the labour movement. Trade unions, for them, had necessarily to concentrate on working within the existing social framework:

"Der Unterschied zwischen der politischen Tätigkeit, wie die Arbeiterpartei sie entwickelt, und der Aufgabe der Gewerkschaften liegt darin, dass die erstere eine Umgestaltung der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaftsorganisation anstrebt, während die letztere in ihren Bestrebungen, weil die Gesetze hierin Grenzen ziehen, auf dem Boden der heutigen bürgerlichen Gesellschaft steht",¹¹⁴

the Correspondenzblatt declared. Even though the legal framework was more favourable to a radicalisation of such policies after the lifting of the Anti-Socialist laws, this limitation of trade-union activity remained central to the attitude of the leadership. In 1899, Legien explained this opposition to the classical Socialist concept of revolutionary struggle, before a congress of the SPD:

"Gerade wir, die gewerkschaftlich organisierten Arbeiter, wünschen nicht, dass es zu dem sogenannten Kladderadatsch kommt, und dass wir genötigt sind, auf den Trümmern der Gesellschaft zu schaffen, gleichviel ob sie besser oder schlechter sind als die jetzigen. Wir wollen den Zustand der ruhigen Entwicklung."¹¹⁵

This, then, was the vision of trade-union activity which was soon to dominate the international trade-union movement.

II.6.iv German trade unions and the International, 1889-1901

Carl Legien's first contact with the international labour movement came in 1889, when he attended the "Marxist" congress in Paris. Although, due to the laws in force in Germany at that time, he could not officially represent his union, the lathe-turners of Germany, he was nevertheless regarded as the delegate of that union at the International Congress (an example of the Germans' ability to circumvent these laws when they chose to do so). The congress apparently made a deep impression upon the young Legien, as he wrote from Paris:

"Der Eindruck, den wir von Paris mitnehmen werden, wird grossartig sein. Gestern waren die Delegierten vom Pariser Gemeinderat zu einem Ehrenwein ins Stadthaus geladen. Die prachtvolle Einrichtung, die verschiedenen Musikkapellen, die Bewirtung - alles war, nun es lässt sich nicht leicht sagen. Wir sprechen uns noch über diese Erlebnisse."116

So enthusiastic was he about the outcome of the congress that he gave verbal reports of the proceedings at many meetings in his area. Thereafter, the German trade unions were represented at all the congresses of the Socialist International, and often by Legien.

The German trade unions never questioned their right or duty to attend International Socialist Congresses, but were always present to represent the economic arm of the German labour movement, along with the political arm, the SPD, in accordance with their principles of national organisation.

It was not only the mainstream unions which saw the international congresses as important, however; representatives of the Lokalvereine and anarchists, notably Werner and Landauer, tried to gain entry to the international congresses held in

Brussels and Zurich, but were excluded. On the question of the admission of anarchists, it was the German socialists, and some of the French, who were the most rigid; on the international as well as the national level, they were determined to shape the movement according to a certain pattern, from which no deviation could be tolerated.

Some of the main opponents of the exclusion of anarchists were, however, trade-unionists, mainly from France and England. This must have been a matter of concern for the German trade-union leaders, since the English trade-union movement was still regarded as the model for working-class organisation. During the next decade, German trade unions developed to such an extent that they no longer stood in the shadow of the English labour movement, so that Legien could declare, at the German trade union congress in 1908:

"Es sind fast zwei Millionen organisierte Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen, die durch diesen Kongress repräsentiert werden... Heute können wir konstatieren, dass wir nicht nur an Zahl die englischen Trade Unions erreicht haben, sondern dass auch in bezug auf die Finanzkraft und in bezug auf die Einwirkung auf das öffentliche Leben wir dem englischen Vorbilde nicht mehr nachstehen."¹¹⁷

In 1896, however, this was not yet the case, and the English trade unions had to be won over gently.

In the Correspondenzblatt, Legien explained why it was important to look to other countries, and in particular to England:

"Um das Wesen der Gewerkschaftsbewegung in allen Theilen klar zu erfassen, ist es notwendig, die Vorbilder des Auslandes und besonders des klassischen Landes der Gewerkschaftsbewegung, Englands, zu studieren."¹¹⁸

Legien especially, of all the German trade-union leaders, saw the advantages of informing workers about conditions in other countries. As the above quotation from the 1908 trade-union congress shows, Legien's main interest was to compare the trade-union movements of different countries according to two main criteria: the degree of organisation (judged by membership figures and financial strength) and the measure of influence exercised by the unions on public life. By comparing the growing trade-union movement in Germany with that in England, according to his own priorities, Legien saw that he could both increase the standing of German trade unions and shape the movement according to his own ideas.

In this context, the Correspondenzblatt, from its beginning, published reports on the trade-union movements of other countries, especially in England, whose example was valuable to Legien, but also in countries where the labour movement was shaped along lines similar to those in Germany, such as Austria and the Scandinavian countries. Concerning these countries, there were regular reports of conditions, accounts of trade-union congresses or conferences, progress reports on strikes, and statistical reports. When the Danish trade-union movement formed a central organisation in 1898, the Correspondenzblatt published on its front page the statutes of the newly-formed
119
organisation. Legien was also very interested in the North American labour movement, particularly the American Federation of Labor, admiring the degree to which the latter had penetrated public life; in this case as in others, Legien thought that

German workers could learn much from information about other
120
countries.

As the German trade unions grew in strength and organisation, Legien looked increasingly to contact with other countries. By 1896, Legien had already approached several leaders of the labour movement in other countries, notably at the London congress of the Socialist International. Early misgivings about the strength of the trade-union movements in different countries receded as the German trade unions grew in size and authority. It was from a position of strength that the German trade-union movement would participate in international projects. Thus the development of the trade-union movement in Germany, rather than the growth of trade unions in other countries, was the basis for German trade-union leaders' participation in international meetings.

The English TUC was however a source of concern for the German trade unions, since, despite attention from within the Socialist International and from their German counterparts, the TUC preferred to remain aloof from the international scene. From 1891 onwards, the German trade unions invited the TUC to send representatives to German congresses, but their offer was never taken up. The Germans therefore sent delegates to English trade-union congresses, in the hope of cementing links between the two countries. In contrast with the enthusiasm with which the American delegates were received, however, the German delegates met with a cool reception in England. As Legien reported later, his attempts to pin down the English trade unions on the question of an international secretariat at the Socialist International

Congress in 1896 received no response. The answer to this lay in the English trade-unionists' perception of the International Socialist Congresses as hotbeds of Socialist intrigue, and they saw the Germans as the main force behind this. The English trade-union leaders preferred the avowedly anti-socialist AFL to the German trade unions, with their close ties with the socialist party.

Thus, suggestions from the Germans were systematically ignored by the TUC. In 1899, the Plymouth TUC even decided against the collection and exchange of reports on the situation of the working class in different countries, and effectively decided against the exchange of delegates to national trade-union congresses. These resolutions had been put forward largely as a result of pressure from the Germans, which may explain the cool reception given to them by the English, whose contact with the Germans in the Second International had been enough to convince them that the Germans were dangerously radical. The report of the congress which appeared in the Correspondenzblatt was rather bitter about the conduct of the English unions:

"Das nähere Inverbindungtreten mit den Organisationen des Festlandes wurde mit 428 000 gegen 352 000 Stimmen abgelehnt. [...] Bemerkt sei, dass die Frage auf Drängen der Generalkommission auf dem Kongress zur Verhandlung kam. Die Generalkommission wollte an Stelle der vom Parlamentarischen Comité beliebten unbestimmten Erklärungen einen positiven Entscheid in der Sache herbeigeführt wissen."121

This experience left a bitter taste in Legien's mouth, which was reflected in his refusal to send a delegate to the congress in 1901 of the relatively new English General Federation of Trade Unions, on the grounds that the trade unions which made up the

GFTU were also members of the TUC. The General Commission would not send any delegates to England, declared Legien, until the English unions had reversed their policy on international links.
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Meanwhile, the formation of the General Federation of Trade Unions in England had signalled an important change in international relations. Born out of schemes which had been discussed in the English trade-union movement for a number of years previously, the GFTU had taken a concrete form at a meeting set up by the TUC in 1899. It was formed, not as a rival of the TUC, which continued to exist as a body for co-ordinating congresses, but as a means of federating in one single body all the English trades associations, and of controlling a central strike fund.

The GFTU never fulfilled the role for which it had been created: that of a strong central organisation. The TUC, although its role was entirely different, had gradually assumed control of the labour movement, and unions proved reluctant to transfer to a new method of organisation. In the first few years of its existence, the GFTU had to struggle for survival, slowly building up its membership. By the end of the first year, membership totalled rather less than a quarter of the numbers represented by the TUC,
123 and it stayed around this level. Its unrepresentative nature was shown by the fact that GFTU membership included only one in ten of the unions represented by the TUC. This meant that most of the membership (about two thirds) was concentrated in a few large unions, notably the

Amalgamated Society of Engineers and the Gasworkers' and General
124
Labourers' Union. The very powerful Miners' Federation
remained hostile to the GFTU and formed a centre of opposition to
it within the TUC.

With many of its functions in England overlapping with those
of the TUC, the GFTU found a useful role in contacts with trade
unions in other countries. The TUC had already signalled its
desire to avoid this area, which the GFTU could, with careful
work, use to its own advantage to bolster its standing abroad,
and thus, at the same time, at home.

The GFTU was, in the eyes of many trade-unionists abroad,
the ideal corresponding partner because it was a national,
central organisation with clearly designated tasks and the
authority to speak on behalf of all English trade-unionists. To
these leaders abroad, themselves in the process of strengthening
national organisation in this way, fraternal links with similar
organisations in different countries could only help to speed
the process of centralisation, in giving added authority to the
national centres. Legien had already discovered this, and was
already, even though his own organisation was not yet solidly
implanted, dealing with other organisations and institutions in
his own country, and trade unions abroad, on behalf of all German
workers. This gave the impression that his position was much
stronger than it actually was. This aspect of trade union work
was also important for the Scandinavian labour movements.

The Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, had
already shown the way forwards towards international co-
operation. From 1886, trade-union leaders of these three

countries held regular conferences, developing a unified outlook and policy, sharing organisational experience, and even implementing a number of agreements on, for example, the transfer of young workers to improve vocational training, and mutual strike assistance.

There were several reasons for this co-operation. Walther Schevenels of the International Federation of Trade Unions commented in his history of the international trade-union movement:

"That it should have been the Scandinavians who first succeeded in establishing a lasting and profitable international co-operation is no mere chance".¹²⁵

As Schevenels notes, the Scandinavian countries had the advantage of speaking very similar languages, so that there were no great linguistic problems, as well as common cultural and social references. Social and economic conditions in the three countries had been developing at roughly the same rate. In many ways, the three countries had a very similar outlook; of particular importance, however, was the political outlook of the labour movement in the different Scandinavian countries. Denmark had led the way: in 1880, local unions and political workers' associations merged to form a single party. In Sweden, a Social-Democratic Party based on the Danish model was formed in 1889, and the Norwegians soon followed suit. In all three countries, as in Germany, the trade-union movement had grown along with, and out of, the political (socialist) movement. They shared with the Germans a conception of the trade union as the economic arm of the Socialist movement. Like the Germans, they also saw the need

to form strong national centres, and they naturally looked to other countries where a similar development was taking place.

From the beginning, the Scandinavian trade unions played an important role in helping the English GFTU to shape its organisational policy and its attitude towards trade unions in other countries. To the Special Trades Federation Congress in January 1899, which marked the formation of the GFTU, the Swedish Transport Workers' Federation sent a telegram which expressed fraternal greetings and "hoped for unanimous decision in favour of national combination".¹²⁶ The Danish trade unions in particular initiated a regular correspondence with the GFTU.

Already in its first Annual Report, the GFTU declared its intention to keep in close contact with other countries:

"the movement [...] extends far beyond the borders of Great Britain, and it is our desire to obtain an acquaintance with the movement in other countries, which may prove valuable."¹²⁷

Having already been in touch with the leaders of the federations in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Denmark and Belgium, the GFTU printed in its first annual report articles on the AFL, the Danish Federation, the Australian Labour Federation Conference, and a membership list from Germany. Even at this early stage, the alliances which were to determine the future of international trade-unionism had been made. It is also worth noting that the organisational methods used later in the International Secretariat of National Trade-Union Centres - dialogue between officials of national trade-union federations - had already been established by the initial contacts between these countries. The question of national organisation was an

important factor in the formation of the trade-union international: those interested in shaping the national trade-union movement according to a certain pattern (in this case, national federation on professional, rather than industrial, lines, with a strong central leadership) sought out others with similar aspirations in different countries. On this basis, alliances were formed.

All this was further shown by the General Secretary's description of the GFTU in the Second Annual Report in 1901:

"On the Continent the best-organised countries - Denmark and Germany - have recognised the necessity for organising those following the same trade in trade unions, for the purpose of protecting the interests of that trade, the organisations so formed being exactly similar to those in this country, and united in federations similar to our own country."¹²⁸

According to this view of the European labour movement, Belgium was also an example of this trend towards national trade-union organisation, with its own trade-union section of the Parti Ouvrier Belge, while France was reported to be "following
¹²⁹suit". The GFTU seemed not to know that the CGT had been in existence in France since 1895. Evidently, the GFTU's conception of the labour movement in other countries was heavily dependent on the views of the Scandinavian and German trade unions.

II.6.v The Copenhagen Conference of 1901

The beginnings of what was to become the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres lay in the alliance of the German and Scandinavian countries and their success in drawing in the influential English trade unions, represented by
¹³⁰the GFTU. It was a new set of allegiances, marking a shift

away from the old links between the English TUC and the French syndicats, with their emphasis on independent, non-party-political action.

J. Jensen, leader of the Danish trade unions, profited from his close ties with the GFTU to invite Isaac Mitchell, his counterpart in the GFTU, to the Scandinavian workers' congress in August 1901. Also invited to the joint congress of the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian trade unions were the leaders of the trade-union federations of Belgium, Finland, and of course Germany.

Isaac Mitchell was delighted at the chance to see for himself and report back to the English trade unions the conditions in Denmark. He hoped that this would dispel the feeling prevalent among English trade-unionists that there was nothing to be learned from workers abroad. The Danish example, argued Mitchell, had

"done much to convey to the trade-unionists here that, as in commerce, so in organisation of labour, the foreigner has not a great deal to learn from this country."¹³¹

Mitchell returned from Denmark full of praise for the Danish labour movement. He had, he said, learned two main points from his visit:

- "1. That the whole movement - Trades Union, political, and co-operative, is in the hands of the trade-unionists.
2. That no divisions are permitted by the various branches. Each has its own work, and when opportunity occurs assists the others."¹³²

There were other important lessons which were conveyed at the congress. The Scandinavian trade-unionists discussed the question of participation in international trade federations as

opposed to national federations. The resulting unanimous decision, which was supported by the foreign visitors, was that "the primary duty of the unions of any country was to join with the other unions of that country in a federation", since

"the relationship between the different trades in any country were closer and more dependent on each other than those of the same trade in different countries".¹³³

As the international meeting had already taken place the previous day, the emphasis placed upon the importance of national organisation at the Scandinavian congress was highly significant. It showed clearly the self-imposed limitations of the co-operation between national trade-union leaders on the international level, and showed where the priorities of these leaders lay.

The meeting itself, which took place between the trade-union leaders of the countries concerned, on 21 August, 1901, was very brief, but of disproportional importance, since it laid down the foundations of future international trade-union organisation. Alphonse Octors, for Belgium, H. Drokila, of Finland, A. Pedersen, of Norway, and H. Lindqvist, of Sweden, met with Jensen, Legien and Mitchell with the express purpose of discussing international trade-union questions. Their mandate to discuss and make decisions on this matter was their position as full-time officials of the national trade-union federation of their country.

In international matters as in matters of national organisation, Legien was ready with a proposal. As none of the

others had prepared any concrete plans, it was Legien who took a very clear lead at this meeting and dominated the discussion on international links between trade-unions.

Earlier attempts at international trade-union organisation had failed because they were over-ambitious, explained Legien. He said that the Germans had refused to participate in these attempts, because they thought that the trade unions of the different countries were not strong enough to be able to take decisions affecting workers in other countries. As for discussion on general matters concerning the working class, they could be left to the International Socialist Congresses, whose job it was to debate such questions. Thus, while Legien agreed that there were matters, such as mutual strike aid, which could usefully be discussed between trade federations of different countries, this could be accomplished at short meetings of national secretaries, to take place during national trade-union congresses.¹³⁴ This proposal was accepted by all those present, as was a further proposal, that in future all appeals for strike aid should be sent via the national federation of the original country to the national federation of other countries.

Although the discussion was very brief and very little had been decided in concrete terms (it was a much less ambitious affair than the international labour congress organised by the CGT in 1900), all the most important principles of what was later to emerge as an organisation, the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, had already been laid down by this first and seemingly unimportant meeting. The secretaries of all the countries present had in fact accepted the German blue-print

for organisation: the organisation of strong national federations, with sole authority to act on behalf of the working class of their country (as implicit in the resolution on the sending of strike appeals); full responsibility of the trade-union leadership to act, without specific mandate, on behalf of the trade-union movement of their country; the division of work between the economic arm of the labour movement, the trade unions, and the political arm, the socialist party, on the international as well as the national level; the limitation of the competence of trade-union meetings to purely economic questions.

The other secretaries had also allowed Legien to take a clear organisational lead. Having succeeded in winning approval for his ideas on international trade-union links, Legien proposed that the next meeting should take place in Germany, and offered for the Germans to pay for any expenses incurred as a result of organising the meeting, and this was accepted. It was obviously an advantage for Legien to have the second meeting on his own territory, particularly as representatives from other countries, such as France, would be invited. Legien had emerged as the leader of this particular group of roughly like-minded trade-union representatives; whether he would be allowed to continue in this way once the circle had been widened to include trade-union leaders from other countries, some with a quite different outlook, remained to be seen.

It was clear that the newly-formed international organisation was not intended to upset labour involvement in the

Second International, much less compete with the latter. Legien was at pains to point out that the labour leaders who met in Copenhagen should continue to meet, to exchange information and views on purely practical questions concerning working conditions, and that these labour leaders would be happy to leave questions of a more general nature to the Second International. It was an international division of work which assumed some allegiance, on the part of labour organisations, to socialism.

The French initiative in 1900 had shown, however, that there was concern among some labour leaders about the acknowledgement of the necessity of political action, which participation in International Socialist Congresses implied. For the CGT, especially, international cooperation was necessary, but had to be achieved on the basis of labour organisations, with the exclusion of socialist parties.

The Copenhagen conference therefore represented a recognition that there was a need for international cooperation of labour movements, on practical grounds. This need could not be fully satisfied by participation in the Second International. In this sense, the Copenhagen conference amounted to a recognition that International Socialist Congresses were insufficient and did not address practical questions of international labour. Practical international cooperation, for the benefit of all concerned, could only be achieved by those directly interested - labour organisations. This did not, however, constitute a direct challenge to the Second International. The French CGT, on the other hand, wanted to promote a labour internationalism completely independent of, and even in competition with, the

Second International. The subsequent history of the ISNTUC is the story of the clash between the CGT's view of labour internationalism and that expressed by Legien and his allies at Copenhagen.

Chapter III. THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
OF NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTRES

II.2 The international trade-union conference of Stuttgart, 1902

The first meeting of national labour leaders in Copenhagen in 1901 had involved representatives from Germany, Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, Norway and Sweden in discussing the possibilities of international association. These labour leaders, with the exception of the English, all represented well organised central federations aligned with social-democratic parties. Their attitudes on all major questions concerning organisation and activities were therefore roughly similar. If the English GFTU represented an exception to this norm, the importance of England as an industrial nation and hence the importance of its labour movement were such that no international labour conference could be envisaged without the presence of English delegates.

Participation in the second such international conference in 1902 was, however, extended to include representatives of other labour movements. Notable among these new arrivals were the French and the Dutch. In both cases, the labour movement was autonomous and inspired by revolutionary syndicalism. In Holland, indeed, many of the important labour leaders were anarchists, and the Dutch delegation at the London congress of the Second International in 1896 had represented an exceptional case in that it was composed of a clear majority of anarchists. In addition, the labour movement in countries such as Italy and Spain was divided between social-democratic and syndicalist organisations. Whereas agreement had been straightforward at Copenhagen, the widening of the second international conference introduced elements of conflict into these gatherings of labour leaders.

If Legien was worried about the influence of these syndicalist elements, the key to marginalising them within the international movement was organisation. Indeed, the second meeting of the leaders of the main labour movements of Europe was in most senses a triumph for German organisation and methods of work. All sides had to acknowledge the undoubted lead of the German movement, as was reflected in the brief explanation which opened the official report of the meeting:

"The Conference was summoned by the General Committee [sic] of German trade unions to settle a number of questions concerning the international relations of Trade Unions."¹

In March 1902 Legien had addressed a circular to the leaders of the various labour movements, in which he invited them to a meeting on 16 June 1902², which would coincide with the German trade-union congress in Stuttgart. Legien asked that the meeting be kept secret, in order to facilitate entry into Germany by the foreign delegates.³ In fact, this method of organisation suited the German secretary ideally, since it meant that the conference would be free from any outside pressure such as that which would undoubtedly have resulted from long discussions on the nature of international activity in the pages of the French labour press, for example. Indeed, Victor Griffuelhes found it necessary to explain to the readers of La Voix du Peuple the reasons for the silence of the Comité confédéral on the subject of the international conference.⁴ At the same time, it meant that only members of the highest decision-making bodies of the labour movement would be able to participate in and prepare for the conference. This method of work reflected the German secretary's

own personal preference; at the German trade-union congress which took place immediately after the international meeting it was merely announced that, following the Copenhagen meeting, a second conference had just ended, in the context of the Generalkommission's attempt to build up friendly relations with trade unions in other countries. For the French syndicats, however, this method of organising important international meetings clashed with their federalist principles, and the Comité confédéral felt the need, at the 1902 congress of the CGT in Montpellier, to make it clear that the French delegate, Victor Griffuelhes, had no mandate to decide on the issues raised by the international meeting, being able to offer only "des avis et⁵ des indications sur les sentiments de ses mandants". The English delegates, too, made a similar point at the international conference. Pete Curran, of the GFTU, explained:

"The English representatives were not able at that moment to vote for an International Committee; they would, however, on their return home, begin to see what could be done in this direction."⁶

This was already one outward sign of deeper differences between the working methods of the various bodies represented at Copenhagen and Stuttgart. The 1902 conference did, however, succeed in establishing several important decisions, despite the brevity of the meeting, which consisted of one evening and one day session (and indeed Legien referred to only four hours' work⁷). Of the seven countries which had been represented at Copenhagen, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Germany each sent one delegate to Stuttgart. Great Britain sent two delegates, Pete Curran and J. O'Grady of the GFTU, whilst Belgium and Finland had

expressed regret at being unable to attend. In addition, Austria, Bohemia, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Holland and France each sent a delegate to the international conference for the first time, thus enlarging and strengthening the scope of the conference. The Stuttgart meeting was however seen as being directly dependent on decisions taken at Copenhagen (to which some of the participants at Stuttgart had not been invited), as Legien made clear in his opening address:

"At the Copenhagen conference it was then and there agreed that they did not recognise the necessity of holding separate international trade-union congresses, but that yearly Conferences of the various national secretaries should be summoned on the occasion of the holding of individual national trade-union congresses, and that all doubtful points should be settled there."⁹

The agenda had been drawn up by the Germans on the basis of these earlier decisions:

- "1. Is it practical that the mutual support of strikes in various lands should be affected by the other unions connected with the same trade; appeals and meetings to be drawn up and arranged only by national secretaries of trade unions generally?
2. What general statistical trade-union information could be uniformly arranged in all national trade unions?
3. Is the eventual formation of a Central International practicable for the exchange of important communications, publications, and writings?"

J. O'Grady had a fourth point added to the agenda, reflecting the current preoccupations of the English trade-union movement, in the wake of the Taff Vale case:

- "4. Would it be possible, in the event of the establishment of this Central International, to have laws, regulations, and important legal decisions, in so far as they affected trade unions and the right of association, made accessible in accurate translations?"¹⁰

Nevertheless, Legien's assumptions concerning the basis of the international meetings were not necessarily shared by all the delegates, and indeed they were challenged at the outset, immediately after the agenda had been agreed, by Van Erkel, of the Dutch National Arbeidssekretariat van Nederland. Legien and the other labour leaders meeting at Copenhagen in 1901 had agreed that future meetings should take the form of international conferences. Each country would be represented by the national secretary or president of its central labour federation. These labour leaders would exchange information and views and even conclude agreements on practical questions. On more general questions, however, they would have no direct mandate to reach decisions. The French and Dutch labour movements, however, advocated the holding of international congresses, at which each national labour movement would be represented by a number of delegates directly mandated to discuss and pass resolutions on a wide range of issues. Whereas the international conferences initiated by Legien had an official character, the international congresses envisaged by France and Holland were to represent all shades of opinion, and indeed to debate the merits of each of these shades of opinion. Moreover, international congresses, because of their representative nature, would have more authority and therefore present a challenge to the Second International.

In direct opposition to the Copenhagen agreement, which, without laying down a specific resolution, made a distinction between practical, trade-union questions (to be discussed at international conferences of national trade-union secretaries)

and wider, theoretical questions (to be left to the International Socialist Congresses) Van Erkel urged:

"That no resolution would be passed which bound national trade unions to attend the International Trade Union and Socialist Congress, but he anticipated greater results from the holding of international trade union congresses. His national organisation was opposed to the resolution of the Copenhagen Conference relating to this question."¹¹

Since the Dutch had not been invited to the Copenhagen conference, they considered it necessary to dispute its conclusions, which in any case had been of a preliminary and rather vague nature. The only way they could do this was by opposing the resolutions put forward by Legien, which were seen as a logical extension of the Copenhagen discussion. The Dutch could not put forward any counter-resolutions, since it was agreed at the beginning of the second sitting, on 18 June, that all resolutions had to be submitted in advance.

The main body of the discussions took place on 18 June, and concerned the nature of links between the labour movements represented. The main points of international labour organisation agreed at Copenhagen were to be consolidated in three main ways. Firstly, the need for international organisation was situated in the context of mutual strike aid. Secondly, the importance of strong national federations as the basis of international association was stressed. Thirdly, as well as the organisation of strike aid, the exchange of statistical information was seen as the other major area of concern for the international labour movement.

After an organisational decision that in future the president of the sessions should be elected from the Committees

of the country in which the Conference was held, and a unanimous decision in favour of the first point on the agenda, there followed a discussion on the merits of a central international committee, through which all correspondence, including appeals for strike aid, would be addressed. On this question, all countries, with the exception of England, were in favour of an international committee, and, after consultation between Legien and the two English delegates, it was agreed that the national organisation of one country would act as a central committee. Towards the end of the conference it was decided that Germany would act as the headquarters of the central international, and that accordingly the German unions would meet the costs of the central body until the next conference.¹² Jensen, the Danish delegate, had suggested that "the Conference should be held in connection with the National Congress in the country where the Central International had its headquarters", and although there was no definite endorsement of this suggestion, there seems to have been general agreement for this principle, which would logically entail the rotation of the Central International Committee.

Having resolved that the national organisation of one country might eventually act as Central Committee, it was a logical step for the meeting to decide that only one central national body be recognised in each country. This was also a natural corollary of the principles decided at the Copenhagen conference vis-à-vis the need for strike aid to be channelled through the national federations (which was also ratified at the

second meeting). It was a crucial decision, forming the basis of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres and later the International Federation of Trade Unions, and one which reflected the consciousness of the different movements of the need to assert their own authority, both nationally and internationally, in the face of political opposition. A. Hueber, for Austria, declared that as far as Austria was concerned, only the General Trade Union Committee of Vienna should be recognised, but the autonomy of the Czech and Austrian committees was also acknowledged. On the question of Bohemia and Moravia, no definite decision was reached, but this problem was to arise again later. The delegate from the Swiss Trade Union Federation, A. Calame (who had proposed this resolution), claimed that in Switzerland there existed only one organisation, the Swiss Labour Secretariat not being considered "an organisation". The fact that the Swiss delegate had put forward this proposition could be seen as an indication of the potential threat posed by the rival organisation in Switzerland. The situation was somewhat different in England, the mainstream trade-union movement facing no significant ideological opposition, but there was intense rivalry between the GFTU and the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, so that it was in the interests of the GFTU to argue that it "alone was represented at the Conference, and the Parliamentary Committee had refused to send a representative" and that therefore the GFTU should be the sole British member of the International Secretariat.

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On the question of the collection of statistics, the Germans took a clear and acknowledged lead. The Swiss, Italian

and French delegates drew attention to "special circumstances" which led to difficulties in drawing up statistical information, Griffuelhes blaming "the reactionary tendencies of the Conservative trade unions" in France.¹⁴ Legien stated that general statistics concerning trade unions were collected only in Germany, Austria and Denmark, and to a certain extent in Spain. In order to show other countries how this was achieved, Legien offered to have the German statistics translated and sent out to the various countries. As far as the English request to have legal information collected and translated, it was decided after some discussion that each country should send a brief summary to the Central Committee for translation.

In this way, the Stuttgart conference laid down the essential principles guiding the work of the embryonic international organisation. The broad direction of this international organisation had already been mapped out by Legien at Copenhagen. International association would take the form of regular meetings between labour leaders of various countries, to discuss purely practical questions and to exchange data. The respective competences of international congresses of the socialist movement (in the Second International) and international labour conferences were clearly demarcated; the primacy of the Second International in all wider questions concerning workers was recognised. The Stuttgart conference confirmed this broad direction and defined more closely the tasks involved for the international labour association: mutual strike aid and the exchange of statistical information. It also

confirmed the need, recognised at Copenhagen, for strong national federations and the elimination of small, rival organisations on a national level.

Once this had been established, the Stuttgart conference proceeded to dismiss the Dutch suggestion that international congresses should be organised. The English representatives opined that "International Conferences at this stage were of greatest practical value", as, in international congresses, "much¹⁵ would be said, but little accomplished". They were supported by Hueber, of Austria, and Jensen, of Denmark. Hueber declared that, in his opinion, even international conferences were superfluous and should only be called when specific circumstances warranted urgent discussion. Both the French and Dutch delegates spoke in favour of holding international congresses. Griffuelhes advocated three-yearly congresses, with provision for extraordinary congresses to be summoned by the International Committee. He expressed the view that "Congresses were as likely to do practical work as Conferences, it only depended on the people¹⁶ who attended the Congresses".

The debate was, however, cut short by Legien, who claimed, in a rather sweeping fashion, since no vote had been taken, that "with the exception of Holland and France, the general opinion on all hands was in favour of International Conferences", and resolved that "the Country which was decided upon for the next International Conference should summon it in connection with its National Congress." The President's proposal was agreed.

Finally, Legien secured agreement on the holding of the next international conference under the auspices of the English GFTU.

This was a crucial move as far as Legien was concerned. Not only was it important to secure the support and active participation of the English trade unions, given their undoubted prestige in the international movement. Legien also no doubt hoped to use English trade-unionism, practical and cautiously limited in its aims and methods, as a model for the benefit of the revolutionary elements within the international movement. He also knew that the English trade-unionists would ensure the exclusion of wider political questions from the next international conference. It is a measure of Legien's forcefulness that the conference (narrowly) agreed to this proposal, since even the English delegates were reluctant to commit themselves to such an undertaking.

In closing the conference, Legien could not resist a pointed remark evidently aimed at the French and Dutch delegates, to the effect that the meeting "had accomplished there in four hours more than an International Congress would effect in four days". Van Erkel was firmly on the defensive and countered that he did not take Legien's opinion as a criticism. This sharp exchange was indicative of deeper feelings. As both Schevenels and Sassenbach note in their brief examination of the 1902 conference, the meeting

"revealed how much ideas on international trade-union organisation and activity still diverged, and sometimes directly opposed each other, among the various national centres"¹⁸,

and even showed "how far they still were from a common perception of international organisation".¹⁹

II.2 Differing perceptions of the Stuttgart conference

The differences between those represented at Stuttgart were reflected in the way in which the meeting was presented by the delegates to their own membership. On the whole, there was a common consciousness of the importance of the growing international ties, and an effort to welcome the results of the Stuttgart meeting as at least a beginning.

As Legien seems to have understood, one of the most pressing requirements for the development of the international organisation was the whole-hearted participation of the English unions, and the debates at Stuttgart had shown that this was still far from accomplished. Legien saw that a strong international organisation without England was impossible; on another level, English influence on the international movement would help to keep political questions out of the trade-union sphere.

The Chairman of the GFTU, Pete Curran (a member of the ILP), probably more than Councillor O'Grady, was in favour of international links, and he presented a favourable picture of the proceedings at Stuttgart, albeit on a rather cautious note, in GFTU reports and proceedings. In the GFTU's Third Annual Report, June 1902, the two delegates argued the need for an international "bureau" and stressed German generosity in undertaking the secretarial costs, but they emphasised that "the Federation is in no way committed" and that the whole question of international links would be brought before the GFTU annual general council meeting in Leicester, as would the proposal to hold the next

international conference in Britain. In the article, headed "International" and accompanied by a full-page photograph of Samuel Gompers (the "respectable" face of foreign trade-unionism), Curran and O'Grady argued that

"the meetings will certainly have the effect of bringing the workers of all countries closer together, and there is immense possibilities [sic] for good in their continuance."²⁰

On presenting the report of the international conference (translated by the German secretariat), Curran and O'Grady commented favourably on the German trade-union movement and its congress, which they had attended in Stuttgart:

"We [...] found that the German Commission, which is the Management Committee of the Federated trades, has the movement well in hand [...] The business which appeared on their agenda was somewhat similar to that which appeared on our own Federation Conferences and Trade Union Congresses."²¹

At the third Annual General Council Meeting, held in Leicester in August 1902, which was to decide on the question of participation in the international organisation and the hosting of the next conference, Pete Curran (as Chairman of the GFTU) put forward the view that

"these International gatherings tend towards bringing about a better understanding between the workers of the various countries. And as things are at present, this is both important and necessary."²²

He instanced ways in which workers of different countries were kept in competition with each other to keep productivity up and wages down, concluding:

"All this goes to show how astutely International Capitalism can arrange matters in the way of keeping the workers against each other. If we sift this problem to the bottom, we will find that the very people who are exploiting labour in this

country have money invested in the going concerns of America, and of Germany, and vice-versa."23

Alderman Charles Hobson, J.P., addressed the meeting on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, saying that

"there was another department of the work of the Federation that was being watched by the employers with a jealous eye, but one which the Parliamentary Committee took deep interest and had great hope, viz., the international relations referred to in the Federation's Annual Report."

Here, he continued, was "a wide and fertile field which, by diligent cultivation and wise management, would yield an abundant harvest". With the GFTU's standing both in the labour movement and in the country as a whole thus boosted by their international links, the meeting decided that the next international conference be held under the auspices of the next
24
GFTU Annual Conference.

Legien had succeeded in building his own personal authority, both in drawing the English labour movement into the fold, and in firmly imposing his own methods of work and organisation on the fledgling international body. He could report back proudly to his own trade-union movement that the international organisation was working well, thanks to the leading role played by the Generalkommission:

"Wenn man das Fehlen von Vertretern aus Nordamerika und Australien auch mit Bedauern bemerkt wurde, so gab man sich doch der Freude hin, dass das internationale Wirken der Gewerkschaften, welches am lebhaftesten von Deutschland aus gefördert wurde, so sichtlich mit Erfolg gekrönt war."

The Germans' pioneering role in the international organisation had been recognised by all the other countries, claimed the Correspondenzblatt, the organ of the Generalkommission.

Indicative of this was the choice of Germany as international central committee:

"Dass diese Aufgabe einer Zentrale, unserer Generalkommission übertragen wurde, das bedeutet die Anerkennung ihrer bisherigen Initiative auf dem Boden internationaler Verständigung."25

International links in themselves were useless, argued the Generalkommission, unless they brought with them practical benefits. Listing the concrete decisions taken at Stuttgart, the Correspondenzblatt concluded:

"Die Einladung der Vertreter der Gewerkschaftsorganisationen aller Staaten diene rein praktische Berathungen über wichtige Fragen, welche die Organisationen in hohem Masse berühren, und dass diese Berathungen zu greifbaren Ergebnissen führten, darin liegt der besondere Werth dieser internationalen Demonstrationen."26

The Correspondenzblatt followed up this report with a long article entitled "Das internationale Zusammenwirken der Gewerkschaften", in which the motivation behind international meetings was explored. An exchange of information and assistance on an international level, especially strike aid, was felt to be useful and even necessary, and this need was best fulfilled primarily through the International Trade Secretariats. Paul Umbreit, editor of the Correspondenzblatt and a close colleague of Legien, used the International Trade Secretariats to show how the need for conferences and some form of international organisation had arisen out of initially loose ties, although here the proviso was made that the tasks of the international organisation must be strictly set out and limited. Another reservation was expressed, namely, that international organisations could not function unless all the members were at

roughly the same stage of development. Three main reasons for international organisation were presented:

- "1. Es ist nothwendig, genaue Kenntniss vom Stande der gewerkschaftlichen Organisationen, ihren Einrichtungen, Kämpfen und ihrer sonstigen Wirksamkeit zu haben;
2. Es ist nothwendig, die internationale Solidarität der Arbeiterklasse derart zu entwickeln, dass sie, ohne die nationale Initiative zu hindern, den Erfolg der Gewerkschaftskämpfe gewährleistet;
3. Es ist nothwendig, die Möglichkeit einer solchen Verständigung und Information bei allen auftauchenden Organisations- und Streikfragen zu schaffen."

The aim of international conferences, it was stressed, was the practical resolution of these objectives, insofar as they enhanced national organisation. There is a clear distinction between this stance and the pursuit of internationalism for its own sake. This article made explicit this distinction, to the point of condemning the alternative viewpoint. Theoretical questions of all kinds were to be banned from international labour conferences, since International Socialist Congresses were already an adequate forum for the discussion of such questions. Furthermore, the international movement should take a unified stance against those who sought to bring divisive and impractical discussion into international labour conferences. This was the reason for the Germans' refusal to participate in the early international conferences of 1883, 1886 and 1888, and the CGT's international congress of 1900. The article then singled out the French CGT for criticism in no uncertain terms, referring to French plans to discuss at international congresses (as in Paris in 1900) the general strike as "unausführbar und utopistisch".²⁷ It was a sign of the Germans' confidence in their own position that they could make such an outright attack.

If the Germans felt confident enough to lay down the law, on one hand, the French syndicalist leaders, on the other hand, had been placed somewhat on the defensive. The creation of an international secretariat was universally welcomed by the French labour and left-wing press. In a front-page article in La Voix du Peuple, Victor Griffuelhes gave a long report of the international conference, in which he spoke enthusiastically of the new secretariat:

"C'était là la décision primordiale qui marque une étape nouvelle de la lutte économique, en même temps qu'elle indique une orientation plus nette vers l'internationalisme. Depuis longtemps, en France, nous désirions voir se constituer un bureau semblable. Aujourd'hui, c'est chose faite, et la besogne a été facile, ce désir d'union ayant été manifesté par tous les délégués."²⁸

Since the French had, since the London congress of 1896, been calling for an international labour organisation based solely on labour associations, Griffuelhes signalled the Stuttgart conference as a welcome initiative. The work of the conference in recommending the establishment of an international labour secretariat corresponded to the CGT's efforts in that direction since 1896.

Griffuelhes' positive evaluation of the work of the Stuttgart conference was echoed in a report in the anarchist paper Les Temps Nouveaux, which stressed that the conference was "exclusivement ouvrière". Because of the provision of a secretariat with the aim of collecting statistical information, Les Temps Nouveaux concluded that "la conférence de Stuttgart²⁹ pourra faire un grand pas à l'internationalisme ouvrier".

Moreover, the enthusiasm of the French syndicalist

leadership for the international initiative led to a readiness to learn from the labour movement in other countries. The interest of the French labour movement in the German unions had been awakened by the developments in Copenhagen and Stuttgart. The CGT acknowledged the lead taken by the Germans in the international movement. In July 1901, a brief note in La Voix du Peuple showed the impressive financial and organisational strength of the German unions, and concluded:

"Ce faible aperçu du développement syndical en Allemagne devrait nous inciter à la modestie: nous autres Français, nous avons trop l'habitude de nous considérer comme marchant toujours à l'avant-garde du progrès. C'est de l'orgueil déplacé, - conséquence de notre ignorance des choses du dehors, beaucoup plus que de notre réelle supériorité."30

In the months preceding the Stuttgart conference, La Voix du Peuple produced the most comprehensive articles on the German trade-union movement which the French labour movement had yet seen. Written by H. Boegelsack, the articles ran from the beginning of May through to July, and traced the history of the German labour movement in some detail. Boegelsack pointed to the strength of the German labour movement:

"De tous les mouvements syndicaux de l'Europe, celui qui est appelé à fixer le plus notre attention c'est incontestablement le mouvement syndical en Allemagne. Ce sont nos camarades allemands qui ont fait le plus de progrès."31

Griffuelhes, too, thought that there were important lessons to be learnt from German methods of organisation, such as the elimination of political quarrels from the national movement. In his report on the German trade-union congress, which Griffuelhes had attended at Stuttgart, he recognised the growing might of the

German labour movement, "dont la force grandissante se manifeste
32
d'une si évidente façon". In comparing the German movement with
the French, he had some telling criticisms to make about his own
organisation:

"Tandis qu'en Allemagne une campagne engagée pour un
objet déterminé est poursuivie avec soin et méthode
pour donner d'excellents résultats, en France on se
contente d'une affirmation tapageuse qui, bonne en
elle-même, a le grand inconvénient de ne pas se
suffire."³³

Nevertheless, Griffuelhes understood only too well the
pitfalls of comparing the French labour movement with its
counterparts abroad. He recognised the practical problems posed
by the collection of data in France:

"Il serait naïf de croire que, du premier coup, pour
ce travail de statistiques, on approchera la
perfection, et je souhaite qu'une volonté d'aboutir
se manifeste, et dont les résultats se modifieront à
la pratique."³⁴

A certain uneasy defensiveness is evident in Griffuelhes'
declaration that the other countries represented at Stuttgart,
apart from Germany, were in the same position as France:

"Il est bon de dire que, sur ce point, toutes les
puissances, sauf l'Allemagne, firent part de leur
difficulté pour établir un tel travail. [...] Par là,
on voit que la France n'est pas, comme on se plaît à
le dire, dans un état d'infériorité bien marqué, mais
qu'elle est, comme d'autres, dans une situation
incomplète dans l'organisation."³⁵

In his reports in La Voix du Peuple, Boegelsack, too,
realised the feelings of inferiority which comparisons with
Germany could create:

"Nous pouvons [...] nous inspirer de l'exemple de nos
camarades allemands, ils ont travaillé mieux que nous
à leur émancipation. Ils sont bien supérieurs, il
faut l'avouer, et ils ont mieux compris que nous la
lutte de classe. Oui! nous pouvons leur reconnaître
ce mérite sans désavouer nos qualités."³⁶

Implicit in all these comments is a recognition that, while information on the labour movements in other countries was desirable and helpful, comparisons between the French and other (especially German) models might reflect badly on the French in some respects. Under fire from within their own ranks, the CGT leaders were often sensitive to any criticism and were placed on the defensive by such comparisons. The CGT therefore felt the need to compensate for the negative image of French syndicalism which this created, by playing up the positive aspects associated with the French labour movement: revolutionary élan and class consciousness. In La Voix du Peuple, activities of foreign labour movements were usually considered in the light of their relevance to the justification of revolutionary syndicalism. In May 1902, for instance, it carried a report on Niel's visit to Switzerland, where a debate on "la politique dans les syndicats" whole-heartedly upheld the French viewpoint; the visit was described as "une excellente journée pour la cause syndicaliste".³⁷ There was also, in the same issue, an editorial on the Swedish general strike which saw this as a triumph for the syndicalist cause and a concrete refutation of the pronouncements of the Second International. In a similar vein, Griffuelhes used the information on other countries gleaned at the International Conference to confirm the correctness of the CGT's methods. In the case of England, Griffuelhes was obviously twisting the facts to suit his own ends, arguing that the Taff Vale case had shown to the English trade-unionists the futility of Parliamentary action:

"Cette mesure des gouvernants anglais aura peut-être le mérite de donner à l'action ouvrière un esprit de lutte et de violence méconnu à ce jour. C'est là l'opinion des délégués anglais à Stuttgart."

As for Austria, Griffuelhes saw the granting of the nine-hour day
38
for miners in that country as a result of direct action.

This ambivalence was largely a result of the instability of the French syndicalist position, which was reinforced by comparisons between France and labour movements abroad (especially England and Germany). A recognition of the superiority of German methods of organisation ultimately questioned the validity of the CGT's methods in a country where around a fifth of workers were organised, and badly organised at that. Moreover, the revolutionary-syndicalist leadership of the CGT represented the smaller, badly organised federations, whereas opposition to the CGT leadership was rooted in the larger, more powerful federations. Voting procedures which allowed each federation, Bourse or Union equal representation, regardless of the number of members, kept revolutionary syndicalists in positions of power within the confederation, but there was considerable pressure within the CGT for a system of proportional representation which would have given much more influence to federations such as the highly organised, financially secure Fédération du Livre, or the socialist Fédération du Textile. These latter federations took as their model German trade-unionism.

As a means of compensating for the positive image of German unions, Griffuelhes reserved some telling criticisms of their methods. He noted the presence at the German trade-union congress

of government ministers: "Rien, à mon avis, ne justifie la présence des représentants de ceux qui personnifient le pouvoir patronal et capitaliste." Even more alarming was the thought that such invitations "peuvent constituer un précédent dangereux, ayant sa répercussion dans d'autres pays". In particular Griffuelhes made several references to what he saw as "bourgeois" pretensions on the part of the German unions, such as the exploitation of female workers in the trade-union building itself:

"Ce qui distingue le tempérament allemand du nôtre, c'est de voir que, dans la maison des syndicats, le service du café et du restaurant est fait par des femmes, dont la journée du travail atteint 15 et 16 heures [...] En France, nous aurions déjà parlé de 'démolir cette boîte' violant les principes syndicaux [...] Je n'eus pas l'occasion d'en demander le motif à un camarade administrateur de local, mais il est à présumer qu'il m'eût répondu que les nécessités du milieu bourgeois les obligeaient à agir ainsi. Il m'eût, sans doute, opposé la réalité, qui commande souvent; la France opposerait le principe."39

The CGT leaders were content to portray a favourable picture of the German unions, conscious of their power in the international movement, but, their pride pricked by the inferences drawn by comparisons with German methods, they could not resist criticising those methods wherever possible as a means of boosting French syndicalism. This ambivalence was necessary in order to justify the CGT's own methods of organisation.

On the international level, too, this ambivalence was evident. Whilst prepared to work with the Germans and other social-democrats in the interests of setting up an independent labour International, and whilst enthusiastic about the project for an international secretariat agreed at Stuttgart, the

CGT was conscious of the divide which separated the French (and the Dutch) from the rest of the labour representatives involved in the international labour conferences. If the CGT saw the Stuttgart conference as a good beginning for the international labour movement, its expectations went beyond the voluntarily limited scope of the international conferences.

III.3 From Stuttgart to Dublin: the French CGT, internationalism and antimilitarism

The CGT's praise of the work of the Stuttgart conference was based on the principle of internationalism:

"La facilité du travail fait, l'entente qui a régné sur les points en discussion, témoignent que, partout, germent les sentiments internationalistes."⁴⁰

Despite the obvious differences which had marked discussions in Stuttgart, Griffuelhes emphasised the international unity and solidarity which had resulted in the setting-up of an international coordinating committee. In explaining this solidarity, Griffuelhes glossed over the reality of the divergences within the International Conference itself and drew conclusions which the Germans and English, for their part, had never reached:

"C'est que, depuis longtemps, la dure exploitation patronale, l'ignoble répression gouvernementale ont fait sentir aux travailleurs ce qu'a d'absurde et antiouvrier ce sentiment, qui fait que des hommes, dont la vie est également pénible, se regardent en ennemis."⁴¹

He saw the development of the International Secretariat as part of a wider process of working-class solidarity in the face of capitalist deception:

"Et, quel que soit le langage employé par nos gouvernements et par ceux qu'ils représentent pour détourner l'attention des travailleurs, en les amusant des ritournelles patriotiques, il n'en est pas moins vrai que chaque jour, par le jeu de l'expérience, enregistre un progrès vers une plus large compréhension des choses."42

According to Griffuelhes, the significance of the International Conference was that it directly opposed national divisions within the working class:

" Les producteurs veulent dire, par leurs sentiments de solidarité, qu'il ne saurait y avoir véritablement une patrie là où il y a une exploitation et une misère."43

Coupled with the encouragement of international links, then, was the need to counter patriotic propaganda:

"Aussi, il appartient aux travailleurs de fortifier leur propagande contre l'idée de patrie, en démontrant que la sujétion économique provient de ce que le travail fait par eux profite à quelques-uns. [...] En faisant cela, les travailleurs augmenteront la force du nouveau bureau international, car celui-ci ne sera fort que de la force de leurs sentiments internationalistes. Il n'aura une force morale, surtout, qu'autant que les pays lui infuseront la vie qui crée et fait agir."44

As had been shown at Copenhagen and Stuttgart, the dominant German and English conceptions of labour internationalism were limited to purely practical questions, and were subordinated to the primary question of national organisation. The French conception of the role of the international movement was fundamentally opposed to this voluntary limitation of international activity. Instead, it was inspired by an ideological internationalism which recognised no limitations. According to the CGT, international activity had to be backed up with internationalist, anti-patriotic propaganda. Anti-patriotism, in line with CGT policy, was linked with anti-

militarism.

At the 1902 congress of the CGT, the labour movement was unified organisationally, with the Fédération des Bourses now linked organically with the CGT. As this had been a major problem within the French labour movement, preventing unified and coherent action, the 1902 congress was indeed, as Robert Brécy⁴⁵ remarks, "décisif pour l'existence de la Confédération", and at the same time marked the consolidation within the French labour movement of revolutionary syndicalism. The Fédération des Bourses, for its part, had since its inception been the champion of total autonomy for the French labour movement. It was also the guiding force behind the development of international links and the centre of antimilitarist agitation within the French labour movement. At the 1900 congress of the Fédération des Bourses du Travail, it was decided that links should be developed between the Bourses and conscripted workers. This was taken up at the CGT congress, held a few days later, and the decisions on the "Sou du Soldat"⁴⁶ marked the first important debates on antimilitarism. As Jacques Julliard has shown, the antimilitarism of the CGT at that time was centred chiefly around hostility towards the army in its role as strike-breaker, and did not probe deeply into the deeper issues of patriotism and war:

"Il n'y avait rien de vraiment révolutionnaire dans l'institution de ce Sou du Soldat. Certes, les considérants étaient rien moins que flatteurs pour l'armée; on réclamait même la 'suppression des armées permanentes'; mais il s'agissait là depuis une trentaine d'années d'une clause de style obligée dans la rédaction des programmes de l'extrême-gauche: on n'avait même jugé utile d'en discuter au cours du congrès. L'hostilité à l'armée reposait essentiellement sur des raisons corporatives: son

rôle dans les grèves, la propagande antisyndicale
subie par les soldats au cours de leur service
militaire."⁴⁷

Moreover, the practical difficulties of organising such a scheme,
in the face of Governmental opposition, meant that it was never
⁴⁸

really practised. However, the discussions on the subject and
the energy devoted to it within the Bourses showed that the
question was taken seriously. In 1902, the Congress of the
Fédération des Bourses urged its members to "faire de la
propagande antimilitariste avec tous les moyens et sous toutes
⁴⁹

les formes". In conformity with this decision, the Comité
Fédéral of the Bourses published the "Nouveau Manuel du Soldat"
in 1902, a brochure which aimed to "apprendre aux fils du peuple
de tous les pays qu'ils sont faits pour s'entendre et non pour
s'entretuer", and which advised young conscripts either to desert
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or to practise "la propagande de révolte" within the regiment.

This pamphlet was immediately successful; in less than one year,
⁵¹

100,000 copies were distributed. Prosecutions followed and
ensured the notoriety of the publication. The author of the
"Nouveau Manuel du Soldat" and the guiding spirit behind
antimilitarist agitation within the Bourses du Travail was
Georges Yvetot, a protégé of Fernand Pelloutier who had succeeded
his mentor, on the latter's death, as Secretary of the
Fédération des Bourses. He was also a founding member of the
anarchist Ligue Antimilitariste, which was established in 1902
and which was involved in the setting-up of the Association
Internationale Antimilitariste in 1904. The latter body was to
become famous in France through the publication of "une violente
⁵²
affiche antimilitariste", "Aux Conscripts", in October 1905. In

January 1903, Yvetot wrote an article in La Voix du Peuple entitled "Syndicalisme Antimilitarisme", in which he argued that "La propagande antimilitariste, qu'on le veuille ou non, doit être corollaire de la propagande syndicale", and admonished those unions (the reformist Fédération du Livre being the main target of his attack) which were refusing to carry out antimilitarist
53
propaganda.

In addition to these initiatives, the CGT, in 1902, issued, through the channels of the Bourses, a circular addressed "Aux camarades de la caserne", which ended with the exhortation:

"Souvenez-vous de ce que vous étiez avant d'être au régiment.
Songez à ce que vous serez lorsque vous le quitterez.
Syndiqués ou non, amenez-nous de vos camarades de la caserne. Ils seront bien reçus et voudront revenir."⁵⁴

Projects such the "Sou du Soldat" reflected less an ideological antimilitarism for its own sake than a desire to strength ties between working-class conscripts and workers. In
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any case, as Julliard has pointed out, the issue was essentially one of principle. Only in rare cases did the Bourses have the organisation and resources necessary to set up and maintain such activities. Maxime Leroy also notes that these
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projects were "plus doctrinaux que pratiques". Such votes were more or less a formality at CGT congresses. Those who were most committed represented only a handful of activists whose influence and resources precluded the realisation of such ambitious initiatives. Nevertheless, the CGT's resolutions were indicative of a small but committed group within the CGT, resolved to develop and strengthen antimilitarist discussion and

propaganda.

The CGT's antimilitarism was also linked very clearly with French involvement in the International Secretariat set up at Stuttgart. In 1901, the CGT had linked its international activity⁵⁷ with the question of peace. In March 1903, Yvetot ended his article in La Voix du Peuple on "La campagne antimilitariste" with the words:

"Les ouvriers savent maintenant que le jour est proche où ils auront enfin pu s'allier internationalement pour un commun effort, contre l'exploitation internationale."⁵⁸

In other words, the CGT's enthusiasm for international activities (and, in the absence of an alternative, this meant the International Secretariat) was in large part a function of its growing anti-militarist activity. That the majority of the international labour leaders were determined not to discuss such questions at international conferences (deeming them to be within the competence of the Second International) did not deter the CGT. Rather, the French syndicalists saw their role in the international movement as one of an educator and ideological avant-garde. According to this reasoning, the CGT could accept even the limited nature of international conferences with enthusiasm because it saw the chance of building upon these limited beginnings.

In line with these arguments, the CGT prepared for the 1903 International Conference in Dublin by drawing up a report on the French labour movement, which they hoped to present to the Conference (since the proposed agenda allowed for a report from each country). The CGT's report reposed on two issues:

antimilitarism, and the general strike (which had been constantly linked with international activity since the CGT congress of 1900).⁵⁹ This paper was the work of a commission nominated by the Comité confédéral and headed by Emile Pouget, who, as editor of La Voix du Peuple, had been advancing the internationalist cause at every opportunity. Indeed, it was Pouget who at the 1902 congress of the CGT had seen the importance of amending a statute proposed by the CGT's Commission des Statuts which may have offended the CGT's partners in the International Secretariat:

"Dans le but de favoriser la création d'une entente internationale du travail, la Confédération entretiendra des relations avec les organisations ouvrières et Bourses du Travail des autres pays."⁶⁰

Emile Pouget evidently placed his hopes in the International Secretariat, since it was he who ensured that the statute was amended to include the words: "La Confédération est adhérente au Secrétariat international corporatif".⁶¹ Thus the CGT's membership of the International Secretariat was formally included in its statutes.

The document on antimilitarism and the general strike which the CGT prepared for the international conference of Dublin in 1903 has since then been regarded as a classic expression of revolutionary syndicalist principles.⁶² Passed by the Comité confédéral at a meeting on 16 June 1903, the report was published in full in La Voix du Peuple.⁶³ It was to be presented in Dublin by the two French delegates, Victor Griffuelhes, as Secretary of the CGT, and Georges Yvetot, as Secretary of the Fédération des Bourses.

The report begins by explaining the reasons for its

compilation, stressing the need for information on the labour movement to be shared, not just on a purely statistical level, but on the basis of an understanding of the methods and aims of each body:

"Les conférences internationales [...] doivent avoir, à notre avis, pour premier résultat, de mettre les groupements corporatifs adhérents à ces organismes centraux en situation de mieux connaître les modes de propagande, d'agitation et de revendication usités en divers pays, ainsi que le degré de développement, de conscience et les tendances dominantes dans la classe ouvrière de chaque nation."

The CGT then went out of its way to argue the reasonable nature of its demands, presumably because opposition was expected:

"En demandant qu'il en soit ainsi, nous ne prétendons à rien qui ait un caractère exceptionnel. Nous pensons qu'il doit être procédé pareillement pour toutes les questions d'intérêt international. Notre conviction est que la mise en pratique de ce mode de vulgarisation aura une heureuse répercussion sur la mentalité de la classe ouvrière de chaque pays. Ce sera le moyen de nous familiariser tous avec les conceptions et les méthodes de nos frères d'outre-frontière."

French syndicalist tactics were summarised on the basis of two-fold aims: firstly, the achievement of short-term goals which would improve the living conditions of workers, and secondly, preparation for the long-term objective of radical changes in society:

"[...] seule, l'abolition du salariat est le remède définitif à l'exploitation et à la misère humaines, les organismes syndicaux français préparent l'expropriation capitaliste qui, en faisant des Fédérations corporatives et des Bourses du Travail les foyers de la vie sociale nouvelle, permettra à tous le développement intégral."

Strikes, boycotts, sabotage, were all means towards these ends, as were antimilitarist propaganda and the general strike.

In its exposé on antimilitarism, the CGT concentrates on the role of the army as tools of repression used against the working class. In the continuing struggle between capital and labour, it is argued, capitalists need the army in order to keep the upper hand. Without the army, the workers would prevail. The army is therefore actively deployed against the workers:

"[...] au moindre conflit, pour de simples menaces de grève, l'Etat mobilise l'armée et l'envoie sur le théâtre des événements, contre les travailleurs. [...] Toujours il lance l'armée contre les ouvriers! Nous avons même vu, en France, alors que des travailleurs faisaient grève pour exiger des patrons le respect de la loi, - même en de telles circonstances- nous avons vu les pouvoirs publics envoyer la troupe contre les grévistes, se faisant ainsi les complices des violateurs de la loi."

Patriotism is seen as the means by which the interests of capitalism are transmitted to working-class soldiers:

"Seulement, pour voiler aux fils du peuple, qu'on oblige à être les gendarmes du capital, ce qu'une telle fonction a pour eux d'illogiquement monstrueux, on met en avant des motifs patriotiques, et, par un entraînement pédagogique, machiavéliquement combiné, on leur fait accepter cette besogne criminelle sous le prétexte de protéger la frontière."

Patriotism in itself is not discussed; it is merely the use of patriotic arguments to make soldiers do what is by nature abhorrent to them, which is the subject of CGT condemnation here.

The report then details the CGT's activities to counter such anti-labour propaganda. They attempted to help recruits financially and morally, through the "Sou du Soldat" and by welcoming soldiers at the Bourses du Travail, and even by giving full support to those who decided to desert, although here the CGT were anxious not to be seen as actively encouraging such action:

"Il ne nous appartient pas d'apprécier la valeur de ces attitudes, qui relèvent de la conscience individuelle."

On the question of the general strike, the report referred to the slogan of the First International: "L'émancipation des travailleurs sera l'oeuvre des travailleurs eux-mêmes." Because the labour movement in France had for many years been torn apart by rival socialist factions, the CGT now firmly believed in the power of direct action on the part of the organised workers, exercised in particular through the general strike as the ultimate expression of solidarity:

"L'idée de la grève générale implique une conception qui fait reposer tout espoir d'amélioration - petite ou grande- sur l'effort conscient de l'organisation ouvrière; elle est la manifestation tangible de l'esprit de solidarité."

The report conceded that in practice general strikes were not always successful, but on the other hand no general strike had ever been a total failure, as there was usually some partial victory won, even if only later:

"De ces échecs, il serait téméraire de conclure à l'inefficacité de la Grève Générale. Jamais une défaite n'a suffi à condamner un mode d'action. [...] Qu'on mette en balance les résultats obtenus par n'importe quel autre moyen d'action et on reconnaîtra la supériorité de la Grève Générale; nul autre moyen peu de temps sic et avec la même somme d'efforts, n'a donné des résultats aussi concluants."

The report then attempted to show the way in which the general strike would lead forward to a new society. In so doing, the two issues raised in the report are linked, since, it is argued, the general strike, based on large-scale popular support, would completely outstretch the army's resources:

"En effet, ou bien la force militaire aura été neutralisée par la propagande syndicale, ou bien, en

la supposant encore assez inconsciente pour soutenir la bourgeoisie, il arrivera fatalement qu'il faudra la disséminer et éparpiller sur un champs d'action tellement vaste qu'elle ne pourra écraser le soulèvement prolétarien."

It is this last section which most clearly betrays the utopian nature of the CGT's position on the general strike and the army. Nevertheless, the document is not on the whole conceived in inflammatory terms and makes an effort to explain and justify, rather than to preach, CGT policy. On the subject of antimilitarism, the arguments are confined to the use of the army against workers and avoid wider issues not directly concerned with the working class. Although capitalists' use of patriotism as a device for subjugating workers was denounced, the thorny question of national defence was not mentioned. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether the views expressed in the report would have been whole-heartedly shared by other members of the International Secretariat, but the CGT evidently did not think that the report would actually alienate any of them. Rather they seem to have thought that by explaining their policies and methods of work to each other, the members of the International Secretariat would come to a deeper mutual understanding, without necessarily agreeing on all issues.

As a tract on antimilitarism and the general strike, this report was welcomed by anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist groups abroad. In Spain, an anarchist who translated and published the document was arrested and prosecuted, as was another who⁶⁴ translated and distributed "Le Nouveau Manuel du Soldat". In Germany, the paper was translated and published under the title "Antimilitarismus und Generalstreik" by the Anarchistische

Föderation Deutschlands. The German anarchists claimed that the German trade-union leaders had deliberately ignored the report, both at Dublin and in later accounts of the Dublin conference. In fact, the report was neither read nor distributed at the Dublin conference of 1903, not because of any deliberate attempts to block it, but because the French delegates, not realising that the conference would be so short, had left their copies in their hotel room. The conference was over before they had the chance to distribute the reports.

Later accounts of the French delegates' visit to Dublin in 1903 suggest that the CGT's dissatisfaction with the International Secretariat dates from the Dublin conference, because the French delegates were prevented from reading out their report; Maxime Leroy, for instance, notes: "Les délégués de la CGT revinrent fort mécontents: c'était la veille de la rupture." It was, indeed, shortly after the 1903 conference that relations between the CGT and other members of the International Secretariat broke down. In 1903, however, the CGT was still making an effort to work within the International Secretariat, and it was not so much anger at being unable to read their report, as dissatisfaction with the general air of inadequacy which surrounded the Dublin conference, which signalled the beginnings of the breakdown. Much more than the 1902 conference, the Dublin meeting served to reveal the lack of understanding within, and the severe limitations of, the International Secretariat; at the same time, it is generally acknowledged as the conference which laid the bases of future

international trade-union organisation.

III.4 The international conference of Dublin, 1903

Although, as has been shown above, there were particular reasons for the choice of Britain as host for the 1903 international conference, it was an unfortunate choice in some respects because many countries found it difficult to justify the expense of travel over so great a distance. Hence the number of countries was reduced to eight: Great Britain, Austria, Denmark, Holland, France, Italy, Germany and Norway.⁶⁸ This was seen as a slight set-back to the development of the International Secretariat. The French delegates, for instance, noted on their return to France:

"Cette Conférence n'aura pas eu l'importance, par le nombre de pays représentés, de celle de l'année dernière qui eut lieu, on se le rappelle, à Stuttgart. La cause peut en être attribuée à l'éloignement du siège, qui placé à l'extrémité occidentale de l'Europe, entraînait pour les pays de fortes dépenses [...] Nulle adhésion nouvelle permettait de marquer le développement des rapports internationaux."⁶⁹

Moreover, the work of the International Secretariat was further limited by the non-completion of the statistical reports for the year 1902 which had been promised for the conference. Switzerland, France, Austria and England had compiled general reports, although Legien, in his Secretary's report to the conference, expressed dissatisfaction with both England's and France's report:

"The former gives account of the situation of the Trade-Unions in the year 1901, while the latter is drawn up in quite general terms. Neither of the two

is based upon materials obtained after the method of statistical enquiries used in Germany."

It is not surprising that the German model had not been emulated, since, although Legien had boasted at Stuttgart of the German methods of collection of data and had offered to distribute a report for Germany as an example, this had not been done. Legien explained:

"The elections for the Reichstag now concluded claimed so much the strengths of the persons occupied in leading places in the Trade-Unions, part of whom were nominated for the Reichstag or engaged in the agitation, that all labours not absolutely pressing had to be put aside, so that the elaboration of statistical material in the different Trade-Unions could not take place."⁷⁰

It did not augur well for the future of the International Secretariat that many of the member organisations, including the Secretary himself, considered international activities to be "not absolutely pressing" and of secondary importance. The first international report, did however, appear in 1904, with reports from England, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Germany, Serbia,⁷¹ Holland, Hungary, Spain, Australia and France. This added to the impression fostered at Dublin that the International Secretariat was beginning to get off the ground.

In the brief space of time allotted to the International Conference (less than three hours, most of which time was taken up by the opening addresses of the English organising committee), several important decisions were made. The first, proposed by the GFTU, established the basis of the international reports:

"Recognising that a closer bond of unity should exist between the National Trade Union Federations of the world, and that such unity can best be fostered by an intimate knowledge of the progress of the movement in the various countries, the organisations represented

at this conference agree to forward a yearly report on the movement in their respective countries to the secretary. The secretary to have these reports printed, forwarding two copies of the reports to every federation. In case of greater conflicts and strikes a weekly report must be forwarded to the national secretaries."72

It was stipulated in the resolution that "such report should be
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confined to a statement of facts". The English evidently supported the Germans' constant insistence that wider questions of methods of work be kept out of International Conferences.

The second major decision concerned the central international committee, which function, in conformity with the Stuttgart decisions, was being exercised by the German Generalkommission. Legien had indicated in his report to the Conference that he was unhappy with this situation, claiming that it interfered with the autonomy of the Generalkommission in deciding on the suitability of strike appeals from German
74
unions. Accordingly, his proposition that an independent Secretary be elected was accepted:

"The International Conference of the National Secretaries of Trade Unions designates an International Secretary of the National Centres of Trade Unions, who is bound to keep up a correspondence with the national centres, to elaborate to the yearly reports of the National Secretaries and to send them to the different national centres in the official languages (English, French and German)."75

There was no election for the post of Secretary. Later it was proposed by the Chairman of the conference, Pete Curran of the GFTU, that the Secretaryship remain with Germany until the next Conference, although there seems to have been again a general
76
feeling in favour of rotating the post at a later date. Probably due to the lack of any clear alternative from the other

countries, rather than as a conscious choice, Legien was thus confirmed as Secretary of the international body.

It was further agreed that the British and German federations would each pay half of the expenses for the year 1902-1903, and that to meet future expenditure the federation of each country would contribute 6d. per 1000 members to a joint fund. On the subject of international conferences, Germany's proposal that in future the national secretaries should meet every three years was amended, on Holland's suggestion, to two-yearly meetings. The next conference would thus take place in 1905.

This, then, was the basis of the International Secretariat, as conceived at Copenhagen, developed at Stuttgart, and confirmed at Dublin. As Gottfurcht has noted, the Dublin conference marked the consolidation of the international movement with decisions which, although they may seem quite limited today, were regarded as quite far-reaching for that time.⁷⁷ It is interesting, in this context, to compare the International Secretariat with the Socialist International, which, although founded in 1889, had no central bureau until 1900, and which had no joint funds or collective reports. The Dublin conference certainly laid down the guidelines for the organisation in the years up to 1914, and confirmed Legien's position as administrator and central authority. The Dublin conference also reaffirmed the limitation of international conferences to purely practical questions, imposed at Copenhagen and Stuttgart.

There was no real challenge to this limited conception of

international activity. This was probably because the conference lasted only a few hours and consisted of little more than an opening speech (by Curran), a lengthy analysis by Legien of the reports which had been sent to him, and a short discussion on the nature of the secretariat. Certainly the French delegates expected more, and were presumably waiting until a later session (which never materialised) to lead the discussion on anti-militarism and the general strike. In one respect, however, the French challenged the authority of the international secretariat. After the opening speeches, Griffuelhes complained that the English organisers of the conference had prevented a Portuguese delegate, on the point of travelling to Dublin, from attending the conference. This point, although apparently minor and dealt with in a few minutes, was in fact crucial. It was to be, for the CGT, the beginning of repeated attempts to have syndicalist representatives from other countries represented at international conferences. Ranged against the CGT's attempts to widen the base of the conferences were the majority of the other delegates, who saw in this question a threat to their own authority. By insisting on the admission of only one representative federation per country, the national labour leaders were eliminating syndicalist competition from the international conferences. The only exceptions to this rule were the French and, for the time being, the Dutch.

In reply to Griffuelhes, Curran explained that the delegate did not represent the Portuguese federation which was affiliated
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to the International Secretariat. At this point Mr. G. Barnes took the opportunity to give his reasons for wanting to restrict

membership of the international organisation:

"They all desired to keep the movement as wide as possible. But some of them were Trade-Unionists pure and simple; some of them were Socialists; and as a matter of fact, there were some Anarchists among them; but anarchism had no place in their deliberations, for their object was organisation and not anarchy. They wanted to define their position, which was contrary to anarchism."79

Griffuelhes seems to have accepted this attack on revolutionary syndicalism in an attempt to keep the peace, but he proposed (unsuccessfully) that "all countries be invited to the International Conference, and that every country be allowed to participate in it".⁸⁰ The French delegates were obviously very much aware of their own isolation and keen to allow like-minded allies to join them in the International Secretariat; the others were equally determined to limit membership.

On the whole, the official report of the Dublin conference, because of the lack of time in which to argue and debate, gives an impression of relative harmony. Underlying these muted (and necessarily abbreviated) debates, however, were feelings of bad will among the delegates, caused by the poor organisation of the conference. The foreign delegates complained that they had been given dirty and inadequate accommodation, that no translation service had been provided, and that the English trade-unionists had shown no regard for the wishes of the foreign delegates during the conference proceedings. Whereas most countries were represented by one or two delegates, the official list of British delegates included sixteen members of the GFTU, as well as recording the presence of an M.P., Mr. Nanetti. Curran's and Nanetti's opening speeches took up half of the entire conference.

These feelings came to a head after the Conference, and threatened to split the fragile International Secretariat asunder, when the foreign delegates were on the point of leaving immediately. After Isaac Mitchell (secretary of the GFTU, and by nature a born diplomat) had spoken with the delegates, they agreed to stay, but wrote a letter of complaint to the GFTU, which was signed by all the foreign delegates and Mitchell. The hand of Legien is clearly discernible in the wording of the letter, and Legien personally commented at the end of the letter that the wording had been "softened at the request of certain delegates."⁸¹

The letter of complaint stated:

"The International Conference has given us the impression that the representatives of the British organisation were not in earnest about the matter. We have seen 25 to 30 British delegates, and heard 10 or 12 of them speak, but we still do not know which of these are the proper representatives of the General Federation.

"At Stuttgart, the delegates themselves decided, without being asked, to be very brief. At the Dublin conference only the two British delegates spoke for nearly an hour each. [...] Since, as far as we were concerned, the delegates of every country are equal, we declined to speak at all."⁸²

On the whole, the foreign delegates were very unhappy with the attitude of the GFTU:

"All these things have created in our minds the impression that the British organisation's delegates were not particularly pleased at having foreign delegates among them."

Finally, the letter ended with a threat to exclude Britain from further international work:

"The delegates of the continental organisations take very seriously the question of International Organisation and will, if necessary, bring it into

being among themselves, and wait until the British organisations, through capitalist pressure, are forced to feel their community of interests with the workers of all countries."

In his account of the Dublin conference, Sassenbach concludes that the incidents were entirely due to lack of knowledge on the GFTU's part of the way in which international
83
conferences were organised. This is true to some extent, since the GFTU was a relatively young and inexperienced organisation, and yet, on the other hand, it had participated in several conferences and congresses organised in other countries. An examination of GFTU internal reports shows that the Management Committee did very little to organise the Dublin Conference, particularly as it was so far from their own headquarters in
84
London. They seem to have been much more preoccupied with the organisation of a joint conference, with the Labour Representation Committee and the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, on the Trades Disputes Bill. The conduct of the British delegates can only be seen as a further example of the British attitude of superiority towards their 'continental' counterparts, which was prevalent earlier within the TUC, and perhaps even a conscious desire to ensure that, while the British point of view was stated forcefully, other opinions were kept in the background.

Whatever the reasons, the mismanagement of the Dublin Conference had placed the future of the International Secretariat under a dark cloud. Legien in particular was incensed by the conduct of the British, as is evident from the letter of complaint cited above. On the whole, however, there was a

conscious feeling that these differences would have to be played down in order to ensure the future of international work. The foreign delegates explained their reasons for not having disrupted the international meeting in protest:

"We eventually decided to refrain from making a protest because we knew from experience that where good will is lacking protests are useless, and we also did not want to raise a discussion in the presence of press representatives."⁸⁵

This would explain the apparent French docility in the face of overt attacks by Barnes, for example, as well as the general air of resignation to a fait accompli.

In 1903 there seems to have been a conscious effort on the part of most of the members of the International Secretariat to play down differences and to emphasise positive aspects of international work. Where this was not possible, a discreet silence was maintained. The English GFTU was understandably reticent in its reports of the Dublin conference, and made no attempt to add to the controversy by defending its position. The GFTU contented itself with a reproduction of the official conference report, merely adding the comment: "The meeting was limited in its usefulness by the short time at our disposal and
86
the difficulties of language." The German Generalkommission went a little farther in its evaluation of the conference, noting that some progress had been made. If the international organisation could be built up only slowly, it was argued in the Correspondenzblatt, this was because national federations had to be developed first. For this reason, the slow pace and the limitation of the work of the International Secretariat were deliberately set by the international labour leaders:

"Erst mit dem weiteren Ausbau der Landesorganisationen wird die internationale Verbindung der Gewerkschaften festere Gestalt haben. Von dem Gedanken ausgehend, dass hier nur langsam aufgebaut werden kann, haben sich die Gewerkschaftsvertreter auf den Konferenzen darauf beschränkt, nur das zunächst mögliche zu schaffen, in der festen Voraussicht, dass aus den kleinen Anfängen sich Grosses entwickeln wird."87

For the French delegates, the Dublin conference was a profound disappointment. It had graphically shown the limits of international cooperation, both on the basis of goodwill and on the level of initiating concrete international activities. On their return to France, Griffuelhes and Yvetot reported their pessimistic impressions to the Comité confédéral, but here a decision was taken not to publicise the negative aspects of the
88
Dublin conference. Instead, the CGT's Comité confédéral made an effort to present a cautiously optimistic view of the International Secretariat, stressing the value of international meetings per se. As Griffuelhes reported later,

"Nul de nous ne voulait diminuer l'intérêt de ces premières rencontres internationales. Nous supposons que ces incidents étaient dus à notre inexpérience. En un mot, ce n'était pas le travail fait que nous considérons comme une grande valeur, mais plutôt la création d'un lien international et des avantages que l'on en tirerait dans l'avenir."89

This attitude was summed up in later descriptions by the C.G.T. of the first international conferences: "Ce n'était évidemment pas grand'chose. C'était cependant le premier lien
90
international."

Accordingly, in La Voix du Peuple and at the next CGT congress in 1904, the French delegates' report of the Dublin conference confined itself to a brief summary of the official
91
report. The Comité confédéral was particularly disappointed by

the International Conference's decision to hold future conferences every two years, since the French delegates had gone to Dublin with the intention of offering to host the next conference on the occasion of the Bourges congress of the CGT in 1904. Their disappointment, and sense of wounded French pride, could not be hidden:

"Nous ne pouvons que dire notre regret de la décision, fixant 1905, car il eût été désirable que la France fût appelée à recevoir avec sa cordialité toute gauloise, les représentants des organismes des autres pays. La France internationaliste méritait bien cela."⁹²

Nevertheless, French comment on the workings of the International Secretariat was very muted, and stress was laid instead on the work which had to be done in the future. Griffuelhes ended his report in Le Mouvement Socialiste thus:

"Telle était la besogne qu'il importait d'accomplir dans les réunions internationales, mais qu'il faudra compléter dans les futures conférences, car elle serait insuffisante pour alimenter toujours l'examen et la discussion. Comment sera-t-elle complétée? Il serait prématuré d'établir des prévisions. Il suffit, pour l'instant, de savoir qu'une base de discussion plus large est nécessaire. C'est aux pays eux-mêmes qu'il appartient de la poser."⁹³

Already by 1903, the CGT had seen the limitations of the newly-founded International Secretariat. It was a project which the CGT had been calling for since the London congress of the Second International in 1896, and yet it was the German initiative in 1901, and not the French initiative in 1900, which led to lasting results. Nevertheless, the CGT was enthusiastic about the international secretariat which resulted from the German initiative. If the Copenhagen and Stuttgart conferences had been limited, it was nonetheless true to say that they

represented the beginnings of an international association which would develop with time. When, in 1903, it was seen that no progress had been made, as far as enlarging the scope of the international conferences, disillusion began to sink in.

The CGT refused to admit defeat, however. It resolved to put on a brave face and look to the prospects of future work with the international secretariat. The key to continued work was the CGT's self-perception as educator and propagator. The report on antimilitarism and the general strike was not abandoned. On the contrary, the CGT hoped to be able to present it at the next opportunity.

Chapter IV. 1904-1908: THE FRENCH OUTSIDE THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

IV.1 The CGT and the international movement, 1904-1905

As has been noted by Kriegel and Becker, the French CGT "élabore vite sa doctrine en matière de la guerre au rythme des crises internationales."¹ Thus from 1904, in the face of the increasing danger of war, the CGT responded to these international crises with various phases of international and antimilitary activity. In 1904, there was the first full debate at a CGT congress on antimilitarism. Although there was some confusion over the role of the CGT in antimilitarist campaigns, the congress expressed its opposition to war and urged all members to pursue antimilitarist propaganda.² There was no discussion of the complex issues involved, although both the Comité confédéral of the CGT and the secretary of the Bourses du Travail had explored the question of antimilitarism in their reports to congress. The report of the Bourses was particularly interesting, as it showed the practical results of the Bourses' earlier decisions on antimilitarism. Although the "Sou du Soldat" campaign had been decided in 1900, only now were the Bourses achieving practical work, the report stated. This consisted³ mainly of printing leaflets for distribution among conscripts.

In the Comité confédéral's report, the question of antimilitarism was firmly placed in the context of international activity, and most of the section "Action Internationale" was devoted to "La Guerre", motivated specifically by the conflict between Russia and Japan, during which the French ruling classes were actively siding with their ally Russia, and hostility towards Japan was hence widespread in the French press. In

response to the international situation, the Comité confédéral pronounced its judgement on war and the duty of syndicalistes:

"C'est sur la classe ouvrière que retombe toutes les charges des conflits engendrés par nos dirigeants qui en retirent tous les profits.

"Les prolétariats conscients doivent donc être contre la guerre, qui les met aux prises les uns contre les autres, et il importait que, dès l'ouverture du conflit que l'on voulait généraliser, fût connue l'attitude que tiendraient les camarades de France."4

Faced with an international situation which threatened war and exacerbated nationalist tendencies, the CGT saw the need to act in a spirit of international reconciliation among the working classes, as was pointed out in various articles in the CGT press:

"Il y a trois ans, des travailleurs organisés de France et d'Angleterre s'affirmèrent en des manifestations publiques comme les adversaires résolus d'une guerre entre les deux pays.

"Aujourd'hui, ils sont dans le même état d'esprit. La guerre, où qu'elle éclate, leur apparaît comme un crime de lèse-humanité."5

For the CGT, the primary duty of the international proletariat was to demonstrate its solidarity and opposition to war. The Comité confédéral therefore wrote to the International Secretary at the beginning of 1904 to request a special conference of the members of the International Secretariat in order to discuss possible activities against war. Legien replied in March 1904 that he would circulate the request to the various national centres.⁶

In May 1904, the CGT had received replies from Italy (where it was promised that the question would receive full attention) and Spain (a cautious assent dependent on the wishes of the other countries involved).⁷

In June, however, the Comité confédéral was forced to acknowledge a negative response from the International Secretariat as a whole; this, they felt, was due to

the Secretary, Legien, who had prejudged the whole issue by prefacing the referendum with his own views, hostile to the holding of such a conference. The Comité confédéral was dissatisfied with the way in which Legien had handled its request and decided to protest at "l'étrangeté du procédé."⁸ This was the beginning of a correspondence between Legien and the Comité confédéral of the CGT, destined to be long and increasingly acrimonious.

The CGT's request was a test for the newly-formed International Secretariat. The CGT's view of the International Secretariat acknowledged the limitations of the organisation, but was optimistic that pressure from the French and the Dutch centres would enlarge the scope of the international conferences. For the CGT, the key to this was the question of anti-war activities. If they could only arrange a discussion on such questions between the labour leaders represented in the ISNTUC, the CGT leaders felt that they could develop and broaden, however slowly, the outlook of their fellow ISNTUC members. At the same time, the CGT's own activities depended fundamentally on cooperation with labour bodies abroad and it was necessary for the CGT to find a forum in which to elaborate international strategies. For the CGT, therefore, the request for an anti-war conference was a test of how far they could go.

For Legien, too, the CGT's request was a test of his own control of the international movement. To agree to discuss such questions as measures against war would be to exceed the limits clearly set out by Legien at Copenhagen and Stuttgart. If Legien and the CGT leaders were equally determined in their opposing

views on this subject, it was Legien who, thanks to his authority and support in the international movement, was to gain the upper hand.

The CGT leaders were chafing under the constraints of the International Secretariat, which they felt to be a long way from their ideal of an active international organisation, modelled on the old-style First International. Outside the work of the International Secretariat, each contact with workers from other countries was given extensive coverage and was the occasion for wistful optimism; a member of a small delegation to London in August 1904, organised by the group "L'art pour tous", wrote enthusiastically in La Voix du Peuple of Anglo-French friendship societies which had been set up as a result of the visit:

"Sans vouloir donner une portée trop grande à ces deux Sociétés, on peut espérer que c'est le début d'une nouvelle Internationale: du reste, les militants se rappellent que c'est à la suite de voyages semblables que furent arrêtées, en 1864, au grand meeting de Saint-Martin's Hall, l'Internationale des travailleurs [sic]"⁹

A later visit by Yvetot to Switzerland was treated in a similar vein:

"Les conférences Yvetot étaient nécessaires, la semence est jetée maintenant, à nous militants de Suisse, à agir, à lutter pour refonder ce que nous désirons tant: l'Internationale des travailleurs par les Syndicats."¹⁰

At the same time, the CGT leaders were resolved to work with the International Secretariat and to try to steer it towards the type of international activity which they envisaged. In particular, the CGT planned to present its document on antimilitarism and the general strike, prepared for the Dublin

conference in 1903, at the next opportunity.

As the next International Conference was organised for June 1905, Pouget, on behalf of the Comité confédéral wrote to Legien in April 1905 in order to request the placing on the agenda for the International Conference of the questions of antimilitarism and the general strike (which the CGT had hoped to discuss at Dublin) and the question of the eight-hour day (a major preoccupation of the CGT in 1905-06). Pouget explained that, if the French request was received with hostility or indifference, the CGT would consider its presence at the international conference superfluous. Pouget stressed that the CGT merely wished the questions to be placed on the agenda and did not necessarily expect them to be approved by the conference:

"Nous n'avons pas la prétension de demander qu'on accepte les propositions que nous pouvons faire; il nous suffit qu'on veuille nous entendre. Libre ensuite à chacun de donner aux idées émises et discutées la suite jugée bonne."11

On 22 April, Legien replied that the International Conference itself should decide on the admissibility of such a discussion, but, since the CGT had made its participation conditional on the acceptance of the three questions for discussion, he suggested that the various national federations should be consulted in advance.

The Comité confédéral was incensed by this reply; it felt that its request had been "vetted" by the International Secretary:

"[...] à notre avis, toutes discussions ayant trait aux idées, tendances et tactiques diverses sont du ressort de la Conference International. Et nous ne comprenons pas que vous, secretaire international, vous vous arrogiez le droit de contrôle sur l'ordre du

jour proposé à la Conférence. Chaque centre syndical doit avoir pleine liberté pour porter à la connaissance des autres centres, par voie de discussion à la Conférence internationale, les questions qu'il juge utile de soumettre à l'appréciation des camarades d'autres pays."

Moreover, this was not an isolated incident; the CGT had not forgiven the International Secretariat for influencing, as they saw it, the decision of the other centres on the question of a special conference to debate the war issue:

"L'autonomie de chaque centre doit être complète, et un secrétariat qui s'arrogerait un droit de contrôle dépasserait ses fonctions. Cette observation, nous avons déjà eu l'occasion de vous la formuler lorsque, à propos de notre demande tendant à convoquer une Conférence internationale pour examiner l'attitude du prolétariat international en face de la guerre russo-japonaise, vous avez consulté les centres adhérents, en formulant, en même temps, une appréciation personnelle."¹²

Pouget repeated the CGT's insistence that if there was to be no discussion of the three questions, the travelling and expenses involved in attending the Conference would not be worthwhile.

Nevertheless, the CGT appointed Pouget to attend the Amsterdam conference, published the official agenda and circulars, and prepared their own reports, in anticipation of their request being approved by the other members of the International Secretariat. In the event, the CGT received no reply to the request and consequently the Amsterdam conference went ahead without the participation of French delegates. At the beginning of July, La Voix du Peuple reported that the French federation had received no communication from the International Secretariat and did not know whether their request had been accepted or not. Only the Dutch federation had written directly to the CGT with a copy of the reply which they had sent to

Legien. As organiser and host of the international conference the NAS felt that all questions addressed by members of the International Secretariat should be placed on the agenda, for the conference itself to decide. Indeed, the Dutch went even further and opined that, if the French proposals were not placed on the agenda, it would be better not to hold a conference at all; they pointed out that only the Dutch and the French had put forward proposals and that this reflected a lack of interest on the part of the other members:

"[...] nous considérerions comme inexcusable de notre part d'appeler pour la discussion de ces points les organisateurs à une conférence qui exigera beaucoup de sacrifices en argent pour frais de voyage et de séjour.

"A notre avis, il faut que la Conférence se tienne pour la discussion de points sérieux, de sorte qu'elle puisse aider à la fortification de l'organisation syndicale internationale.

"Le fait que, seules, la France et la Hollande ont envoyé des points pour l'ordre du jour de la Conférence internationale ne nous a pas donné une très haute conception du sérieux avec lequel les autres pays traitent l'affaire."¹³

The French were not pleased to learn from the socialist paper L'Humanité that the Conference had indeed gone ahead without the French and/or the Dutch receiving any reply to their questions. When they learned what had happened during the International Conference, they became even more angry.

IV.2 The international conference of Amsterdam, 1905

The fourth international conference took place in Amsterdam on 23 and 24 June 1905, and was attended by delegates from England, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Spain and a Czech representative. It was by

far the longest conference to date, lasting two full days.

Despite the absence of French delegates, the International Conference was dominated by the problems posed by the CGT's demands and the correspondence between the CGT and the International Secretary. Indeed, the most important debate centred around a resolution which did not even figure on the original agenda but which was put forward by Legien in response to the attitude of the French. As the Dutch centre had pointed out earlier, only two items were on the original agenda, and both had been proposed by Holland: the question of a joint international card for members, and the need for a common language for reports. Discussion on these points showed a general lack of interest, since both proposals were dropped after¹⁴ the briefest of discussions. Indeed, the English delegates did not see fit to even mention these two questions in their summary¹⁵ of the work of the Conference.

Two other questions, raised by individual national centres, reflected national preoccupations and were not taken seriously by the International Secretariat. The English delegates were interested in the question of "labour registries" (labour exchanges and joint boards), extracting an undertaking from Germany, Austria and Denmark to produce reports on the work which they had undertaken in this area. The Danish federation, on the other hand, brought up the question of a reduction in working hours (one of the points which the French CGT had attempted to put forward) and, in particular, proposed that an exhaustive study on working hours in different trades in the various

countries be put together.

The treatment of this purely practical suggestion by the International Secretariat and notably by the International Secretary himself, is indicative of the methods of work which characterised the international organisation. Olsen, introducing the proposal for Denmark, stressed the need for joint information about working hours and suggested that such a report could be achieved within a year. Hueber, of Austria, agreed on the importance of the project, but he stressed the difficulty of collecting information in such a short time.¹⁶ Legien echoed this warning and placed responsibility directly onto the members present at the conference:

"Vor Annahme des Antrages müssten sich die Landessekretäre erklären, ob sie sich verpflichten können, dem Antrage zu entsprechen. Kann diese Zusage nicht gegeben werden, so solle man auf einen zustimmenden Beschluss verzichten."¹⁷

In other words, the delegates should only agree to such a report if they were prepared to put a great deal of personal effort into it. As all the centres were in favour of the project in principle, the resolution was carried, but Legien's warning was not lost on the delegates: they agreed that the time-limit should be at least two years, and prepared the way for the question to be effectively shelved at the next international conference.¹⁸

The lack of interest shown in these purely practical questions did not bode well for the future of the international organisation, since it was precisely to discuss and reach agreement on such issues that the ISNTUC had been formed. Just like the Second International, the early conferences of the ISNTUC were almost exclusively preoccupied with questions of

membership, or more precisely the restriction of membership. Two major problems arose at the Amsterdam conference. The first concerned affiliation of representatives of small nations such as Czechoslovakia, an issue which was also a constant source of debate in the Second International.

A representative of the Czechoslovakian trade unions, Nemec, attended the conference to apply for affiliation on behalf of his organisation, as distinct from the Austrian trade-union federation, headed by Hueber. Nemec pleaded for separate membership in the face of an International Secretariat which closed ranks behind its ally, Hueber. The Austrian was adamant that no other organisation should be allowed to derogate from his federation's authority by representing their own particular interests:

"Man könne für jedes Land nur eine einzige Zentrale anerkennen, und für Oesterreich sei diese in der Gewerkschaftskommission vorhanden."¹⁹

As was evident at earlier Conferences, none of the national federations affiliated to the International Secretariat could claim to represent the entire labour movement of its respective country; several of them were under considerable pressure from rival groups, and therefore they saw the right to be the sole representative of their country at international conferences as fundamental to their own position. By protecting Hueber's position on this issue the other delegates were consolidating their own authority on a national level. In the event, Nemec was allowed to participate in the Conference only as a guest. There was one other highly significant aspect to this debate. Legien,

in summing up the debate, did precisely what the French were often to accuse him of: in expressing a personal wish, which due to his unique position within the group he imbued with a sense of official authority, he effectively issued a directive to the Czechoslovakian and Austrian Centres to arrange their internal affairs in a certain way:

"Hoffentlich komme es in Oesterreich bis zur nächsten Konferenz zu einer Einingung dahingehend, dass die gemeinsame Vertretung aus einem deutschen und einem tschechischen Delegierten besteht, oder dass abwechselnd ein Deutscher und ein Tscheche entsandt wird."20

In other words, the International Secretary's desire for uniformity in matters of national organisation effectively violated the principle of national autonomy which the ISNTUC had proclaimed since 1901.

But the most controversial aspect of the conference concerned the French demands. Legien explained that he had sent the results of his circular on the question of the French demands to the CGT, but that because he had omitted to put the street number on the address, the letter had been returned to him; the French had therefore not been informed of the result of the referendum and had decided to stay away from the Conference. This would not have mattered so much had it not been for the nature of the replies received by Legien, which he revealed for the first time at Amsterdam (and therefore in the absence of the French). As it happened, only four of the fourteen centres consulted had replied that none of the three questions - antimilitarism, the general strike and the eight-hour day - should be discussed. These were Germany, Serbia, Italy and Spain;

the latter specified that antimilitarism should be dealt with by the International Socialist Congresses while the other two questions were the concern of the national federations only. On the other hand, four federations - Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Switzerland - thought that the questions should have been placed on the agenda for discussion at the Conference. Of the remaining national federations, those of England, Denmark, Austria and Bulgaria expressed the opinion that antimilitarism should not be discussed, but consented to debate the remaining two issues. The Swedish federation would agree to discuss the eight-hour day only. Overall, there was a clear majority in favour of discussion on the general strike and the eight-hour day at least, and a general agreement that the delegates themselves should have²¹ the opportunity to decide on the agenda at the conference. The majority view effectively transferred the onus of decision away from the International Secretary (which had been the essence of the CGT's complaint over the treatment of its anti-war conference project in 1904) and onto the conferences themselves. Had the French been informed of these views therefore, they may well have decided to attend the conference, and indeed this is what they²² expressly maintained later. Legien was not in the least worried by his crucial administrative error, and his version of events showed a definite lack of sympathy with the French position:

"Er bedauert diesen unangenehmen Zufall, obgleich er nicht glaubt, dass dadurch eine veränderte Stellungnahme der Confédération herbeigeführt worden wäre [. . .] Die französischen Genossen hätten keine Veranlassung gehabt, wegzubleiten."²³

Hueber, of Austria, had even less sympathy with the French

centre. He accused the French of staying away simply out of resentment, because their anti-war conference had been opposed by the International Secretary. He was glad that the French had not attended the Conference since it saved the delegates from having²⁴ to decide on whether to listen to their reports. From the outset Hueber was fiercely opposed to any attempt to widen the scope of the international conferences. At Stuttgart in 1902, he had even cast doubt on the need for international conferences at all. He was therefore hostile to French attempts to widen the scope of the international conferences and especially to the French CGT's rejection of the authority of the Second International.

There was in fact some disagreement on the entire question of the competence of the secretary and the conference to decide on the admissibility of the subjects for discussion. Some of the delegates such as Olsen (Denmark) were obviously happy to approve any decision taken by Legien:

"Es sei gleichgültig, ob der internationale Sekretär seine Meinung beifüge oder nicht. Im übrigen nimmt der Sekretär einer Organisation eine leitende Stellung ein und darf daher wohl seiner Meinung Ausdruck geben."²⁵

There were others, however, such as the Dutch, Belgian, and Swiss representatives, who were less convinced, and Legien saw that the question needed to be resolved once and for all. He was determined to justify his own position, to present the International Secretariat as being united in opposition to the French standpoint. With the exception of the Dutch, the²⁶ Conference unanimously approved the conduct of Legien. Not

content with this, the Secretary put forward, after all the other business of the conference had been dealt with, a four-part resolution concerning the International conferences, their organisation and competence. This resolution was crucial for the International Secretariat and indeed represented the major policy statement of the entire conference.

The first two parts of the resolution concerned practical details of organisation:

"Die Sekretäre der dem Internationalen Sekretariat angeschlossenen Landeszentralen, respektive die von den gewerkschaftlichen Landeszentralen, ernannten oder von den angeschlossenen Gewerkschaften gewählten Delegierten treten alle zwei Jahre zu einer Konferenz zusammen.

"Zu diesen Konferenzen darf jede Landeszentrale höchstens zwei Delegierte entsenden."²⁷

This meant a recognition on the part of the Germans that some national centres preferred to send officially nominated and mandated delegates, rather than the national secretary (as the Germans preferred); it was a concession, not to the French and Dutch who had been pushing in that direction, as Legien was at pains to point out, but to Samuel Gompers, leader of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), whose affiliation to the International Secretariat Legien had been assiduously courting. The second sentence of the resolution also represented an attempt to build up the importance of the International Conferences in the eyes of the AFL by allowing for two delegates for each national centre. Both of these provisions were unanimously adopted by the international conference.

In contrast, the latter half of the resolution was aimed specifically, not at the Americans, but at the French, and there

was by no means a unanimous agreement on the subject. Even the wording of this part of the resolution caused problems. In the official report of the International Conference, the resolution reads:

"Aufgabe der Konferenz ist, zu beraten über den engeren Zusammenschluss der Gewerkschaften aller Länder, über einheitlich zu führende Gewerkschaftsstatistiken, über gegenseitige Unterstützung in den wirtschaftlichen Kämpfen und über alle unmittelbar mit der gewerkschaftlichen Organisierung der Arbeiterschaft im Zusammenhang stehenden Fragen. "Ausgeschlossen von der Beratung sind alle theoretischen Fragen und solche, welche die Tendenzen und die Taktik der gewerkschaftlichen Bewegung in den einzelnen Ländern begreifen."28

However, an examination of the ensuing debate shows clearly that the resolution made specific reference to the International Socialist Congresses as being the appropriate place for
29
"theoretical" discussions. The English delegates' version of this resolution, written shortly after the international conference, adds a much more specific final clause, which clearly sets out the respective competences of the ISNTUC and the Second International:

"All theoretical questions and those dealing with the tendencies and tactics of the Trade Union movements in the different countries, are excluded from the debates. It is the business of the International Labour Congresses [sic] to discuss the former; the latter questions should be decided by each nation apart from outside interference."30

Later references to this resolution stick to the more general German version. The English version suggests that either the original resolution was subsequently watered down for the benefit of the international audience, or at the very least that the sense given in the English translation was clearly and explicitly stated during the International Conference as the

meaning behind the more general wording.

In stating explicitly the nature of the relationship between the ISNTUC and the Second International, the Amsterdam resolution went much further than any of the previous policy statements made by the International Secretariat. When the ISNTUC was founded at Copenhagen in 1901, the primacy of the Second International in all general, theoretical questions was acknowledged by Legien and agreed by the other delegates present. It was also agreed, although again not by vote, that the role of the International Secretariat was to be to discuss purely trade-union questions. Thus the two arms of the international labour movement - economic and political - were seen to function separately but in harmony, with no conflict of interest between the two. This tacit agreement formed the basis of all later decisions of international conferences. Up until 1905, this division of labour between the work of the two Internationals was tacitly but not explicitly recognised. The reason for this reluctance to commit the ISNTUC to a specific area of work was two-fold: firstly, because the International Secretariat was a new body, still not fully developed; and secondly, because the national centres involved were themselves unevenly developed and far from unanimous in their views of the issues involved. Many delegates were unhappy about the Amsterdam resolution, which they felt bound them too closely to certain methods of work and to the decisions and workings of the International Socialist Congresses. Mitchell, of the English GFTU, was particularly worried by the references to the Socialist International, although he agreed that debate at

international conferences should be limited to "trade-union" questions:

"Er est dafür, dass die Konferenz praktische Arbeit leistet, aber dagegen, dass man ausspricht, dass der internationale Kongress mit einer Aufgabe betraut wird, die die Gewerkschaften angeht. Auf dieser Konferenz sollen nur Gewerkschaftsarbeiten gemacht werden, man dürfe aber keine anderer Instanz beauftragen, gewerkschaftlich theoretische Fragen zu behandeln."31

Octors, of Belgium, and Olsen, of Denmark, also opined that the resolution went too far in its strict demarcation of tasks between the International Conferences and the International Socialist Congresses. But, surprisingly, given the similarity of political orientation between Legien and Hueber, it was Hueber who expressed the most disquiet about the German resolution (apart from the Dutch who were uncompromisingly against the resolution). Hueber thought that by excluding certain questions from discussions in advance, the International Secretariat was causing problems for itself in the future; he argued that the Conferences should decide for themselves, at each juncture, what would be the major priorities and preoccupations:

"Die Ausschliessung gewerkschaftlich theoretischer Fragen sei unmöglich; wir müssten über unsere Taktik und unsere Forderungen sprechen."32

He put forward an amendment which allowed for fuller autonomy for the International Secretariat:

"Ausgeschlossen von der Beratung sind alle Fragen, die von der Majorität der Landeszentralen als nicht zulässig erklärt wurden."33

Despite these misgivings, the outcome of the discussion was not so much a reflection of the respective delegates' position on the question as a display of unanimity against the French. Legien

made this clear both in his introduction to the resolution, which he said had been motivated specifically by the demands made by the CGT, and in his exhortations to Hueber in particular to rally to the resolution:

"Legien (Deutschland) versteht nicht, weshalb Hueber gegen den Antrag ist. Die gemachten Ausführungen hätten seine Bedenken beseitigen müssen. Es sei betont worden, dass alle in unmittelbarer Beziehung zur Gewerkschaftsbewegung stehenden Fragen behandelt werden sollen. Grund des Antrages sei das Verhalten der französischen Genossen."³⁴

In this way Legien made the question appear as one of international solidarity in support of one of their leading members (himself) in the face of malicious attack (from the CGT). Both the last two paragraphs of the German resolution were carried, the last paragraph concerning the International Socialist Congresses being opposed by Belgium, Holland and Austria. Although the viewpoints of the various national centres were far from identical, especially on the crucial question of the relationship between labour and socialism, the national centres represented at Amsterdam (with the exception of the hosts, the Dutch) at least shared a common desire to oppose attempts (notably those made by the CGT) to radically alter the basis of the ISNTUC. The absence of the CGT made it all the easier for Legien to identify the French centre as the source of dissent. In so doing, Legien had succeeded in making the International Secretariat appear much more united than it was, and this perhaps explains the omission of the vital section in the official report concerning the division of work between the International Conferences and the International Socialist Congresses: it may have given rise to further debate within the

International Secretariat, which Legien was anxious to muffle. On another level, perhaps the German trade-union leaders, aware that the position at the International Secretariat on the International Socialist Congresses was an artificial one created as a convenient divide to separate the French and Dutch delegates from the majority of the federations within the International Secretariat, were anxious to conceal this from the Socialist International and in particular from their own Social Democratic Party at home.

IV.3 The German labour unions, the socialist party, and the Socialist International

The position of Legien and the other German labour leaders was far more complex than the usual three-way model used by historians to describe the international movement organised in the ISNTUC. According to this model, Germany was typical of those labour movements directly under the control of the socialist party, England represented those groups shunning political action and France represented those espousing revolutionary anarchist ideology.³⁵ These distinctions were often blurred or glossed over, or even, as in the case of Germany, deliberately used to suit particular purposes.

As is glaringly evident from the Third International Report of the Trade Union movement (for 1905), the members of the International Secretariat were acutely aware of their own insecurity. Both Belgium and Sweden reported competition from other groups "which campaign solely in an industrial sphere",

whilst Norway had to contend with dissenting groups within the main federation. The Austrian labour movement was by its very nature split by national differences. The Bulgarian labour movement was divided, like the political movement, into "small-³⁶hearted" and "big-hearted" unions. Switzerland faced rivalry from anarcho-syndicalist groupings and Spain too was divided by socialist and anarcho-syndicalist unions, whilst in Italy, a national centre existed only in name. In Germany, the Generalkommission was combatted not only by Christian and liberal trade unions but also by "Lokalisten", revolutionary groups which³⁷ were powerful in some areas of Germany.

This inevitably affected the way in which these national federations viewed international cooperation, which they saw as a means of asserting their own authority in the face of rival groups. Whereas, in countries such as Spain or Italy, rival syndicalist groups existed and competed with the social-democratic federations, the international organisation would allow no such dual representation. Since in most countries the social-democratic federations represented the majority or used their links with the socialist party to justify their claim to representativity, the restriction of membership to one national federation per country had the general effect of eliminating syndicalist groups from the international organisation. The exceptions to this general rule were, of course, the Dutch and the French; in these countries, revolutionary syndicalists represented the majority of the leadership of the organised workers. In Holland, however, the position of the rival federations was shifting, and the holding of the 1905 conference

in Amsterdam appears to have strengthened contact between the social-democratic elements of the ISNTUC and those in Holland. Overall, the question of membership of the ISNTUC represented a trial of strength between rival national federations which the dominant social-democratic group within the International Secretariat was determined to win.

This dominant group was not, however, entirely homogeneous. The question of rival national organisations led to complex positions within the International Secretariat, based on national circumstances. In particular, the leading role assigned to the International Socialist Congresses, as in the Amsterdam resolution, presented problems for many of the members. The GFTU, for example, was fighting for recognition at home, representing only a fraction of the members of the more powerful TUC. The TUC, despite its reluctance to become involved with international obligations, participated in the International Socialist Congresses because of a preoccupation with political (parliamentary) action. The GFTU, on the other hand, had quickly found that it was out of its depth in the International Congresses, after participation in the Amsterdam Congress of 1904:

"[. . .] we have decided not to take further part in these Congresses. This decision has been arrived at not because of any antagonism to Socialism, or even from any want of sympathy with the work done at these Congresses but solely because we think it is not our work. Our business is, we believe, to strengthen the economic position of the workers under any circumstances which for the moment may exist, so that they may be able to obtain fair and just conditions of labour. The Socialist Congress is mainly engaged in trying to change existing circumstances, and as there are national organisations in this country whose work

lies in a similar direction to that of the International Socialist Congress, we are content to leave this country's interests, so far as this matter is concerned, in their hands."³⁸

By voting to leave certain questions to the International Socialist Congress, the GFTU delegates were well aware that they were acknowledging the TUC's wider scope of action, and this was ³⁹ a source of some concern to Mitchell especially. Thus, for many members of the International Secretariat, the decision to leave certain questions to the competence of the International Congresses represented, not so much a will to subordinate the trade-union international organisation to the Socialist International, but rather a tactical means of concealing weaknesses within the International Secretariat and an expression of solidarity with other members rather than with the Socialist parties of the Second International.

Of central importance in this debate was the attitude of the German centre and of its leader, Legien. The German position is much closer to the English one than the three-way model, mentioned above, would suggest. On an ideological level, the Germans and the English were in fact very close, both stressing organisation and day-to-day activity rather than agitation for revolutionary change, and both aspiring towards representation in Parliament as a way to obtain protective legislation. Tactically, the German position was much more complicated, particularly in respect of the Second International, and reflected the unique situation of the German labour unions within German social democracy.

From its inception, the Generalkommission had to struggle

for recognition by both the mass of workers and the Socialist party. By 1900, the trade-union movement had developed to such an extent that it formed a separate power base within German social democracy. With one million members of the Freie Gewerkschaften by 1904, the ratio between the SPD and the trade unions was changing in favour of the latter. On the basis of this strength, Legien, as head of the Generalkommission (although also a socialist deputy), consistently pushed for recognition of the equal status of the unions. As many historians have since pointed out, but few observers had the foresight to see at the time, the emergence of the labour unions as a mass movement was of primary importance for the development of the German social-democratic movement, since the trade unions formed an important power base for the right wing of the party. John Moses, for example, sums up the position in 1900 of the German trade unions, under Legien's leadership, thus:

"In ten years of steady and determined work, Legien had actually liberated the unions from SPD tutelage. The developments during the next decade would show that it was the party which had to fear the tutelage of the General Commission."⁴⁰

This was because Legien saw the SPD not as an agent of revolutionary change but as a political outlet for the trade-unionist voters and the means of carrying forward workers' aspirations to the Reichstag (rather like the Labour Representation Committee, later the Labour Party, in England). In pushing for trade-union "neutrality", Legien was demanding not separation from the party, but freedom of action for the trade unions on one hand, and the right to veto any Party policy

relating to the work of unions on the other:

"Die Neutralität der Gewerkschaften darf nicht so aufgefasst werden, dass diese es abzulehnen haben, in irgendeiner Partei im Reichstag ihre politische Vertretung zu sehen, sondern ist sie nur dahin zu betätigen, dass von der Gewerkschaft Beitretenden ein politisches und religiöses Glaubensbekenntnis nicht verlangt und auf die Mitglieder kein Druck ausgeübt wird, einer bestimmten politischen oder religiösen Anschauung sich anzuschliessen."⁴¹

In this way, the German trade unions became an important force for reformism within the party. At the Dresden SPD Congress in 1903, for example, the main debate centred on revisionism. The leadership castigated revisionist tendencies within the party and even hinted that the trade unions, too, often ignored revolutionary principles. The resolution accepted by the congress denounced revisionism and excluded the possibility of socialist participation in bourgeois governments, but Legien made a firm stand on behalf of the labour unions. As a result of Legien's manoeuvring at the congress, non-revolutionary action was not completely eliminated from the list of tasks which the SPD set itself. A crucial clause which Legien managed to add to this list recommended the pursuit of social legislation. In other words, although the SPD leadership had wanted to place emphasis on the revolutionary role of the party, Legien successfully put forward a different point of view which saw the party as the vehicle for obtaining piecemeal reforms from the existing State institutions.⁴² The trade-unionists' priorities of social legislation were held to be as important as preparation for radical change.

The role of the German trade unions was equally crucial on an international level. The German labour movement developed "an

almost schizophrenic attitude to the spirit of the Second International"⁴³ which can be explained by tactical considerations in the party/trade union debate. Legien exploited the stress laid, in discussions within the Second International, on the need for strong national trade-union bodies, in order to reinforce his position in relation to socialist party leaders. In 1893, for example, when under attack from members of the Party executive, Legien quoted the recommendations of the Zurich International Conference, which not only recognised the trade union struggle but also saw the need for strong national trade-union bodies as the prerequisite for international cooperation.⁴⁴ Thus, international cooperation for Legien was less an expression of international solidarity than a means of justifying his own insistence on organisation as a precondition for action and as a lever in his attempts to force the policy of the SPD along certain lines.

On the other hand, the German trade union leaders were determined to prevent the International Socialist congresses from placing them in a position which they would not accept, for example over the mass strike debate. By 1906, the party executive had explicitly acknowledged the trade union veto on the question of the mass strike, as Bebel stated at the Mannheim SPD Congress:

"Ein Blick auf die bisherige Massenstreikdebatte zeigt, dass ohne die Zustimmung der Gewerkschaftsführer und -mitglieder an die Ausführbarkeit eines Massenstreiks nicht gedacht werden kann."⁴⁵

This SPD Congress formally recognised the equal status of party

and trade unions, in a resolution known as the Mannheim agreement. On all issues concerning both party and trade unions, there should be consultation between the two before any decision was taken. At all International Socialist Congresses, at least half, usually more, of the German Social-Democratic delegates were active trade-unionists. As John Moses has pointed out, this effectively meant that "the German free trade unions became the most important single organisation within the entire (socialist) International",⁴⁶ although this was not recognised because of the pre-eminence of political leaders such as Bebel, Liebknecht and Kautsky. Prior to the International Socialist Congress of Stuttgart in 1907, German trade unionists met with members of the SPD executive to discuss the attitude of the German delegation in particular towards the mass strike; Legien spelled out the Generalkommission's standpoint and suggested that the German delegation as a whole should try to minimise the effect of general strike propaganda from other countries:

"The trade unions are most anxious to see the mass strike question settled in their own interests. Therefore the party executive must examine whether the party and the Trade Unions can make common cause against the countries campaigning for a general strike."⁴⁷

On the question of the general strike, dismissed automatically by the Germany trade union leaders as an anarchist ploy, and of the May Day strikes, regarded as an unnecessary sacrifice, the German trade-union delegation acted as a brake on the Second International.⁴⁸ The role of the German trade unions in the international movement thus paralleled their role within German social-democracy.

Therefore, in insisting that all "theoretical" questions should be discussed by the Second International, Legien's position was much more complicated than it might initially appear, and certainly did not reflect a straightforward division of tasks between the political and the trade-union movement. Rather, it was the Austrian centre, led by Hueber, which represented the orthodox Marxist line on trade unions. The difference between the Austrian and German conceptions of the party/trade-union relationship was brought out at the Stuttgart congress of the Second International in 1907. Beer summed up the Austrian position:

"Nous considérons le syndicat comme un auxiliaire du socialisme, et nous croyons que la division de notre mouvement en action politique et action syndicale est nécessaire."⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Robert Schmidt thought it necessary to explain the difference between the Austrian and German labour movements:

"En Allemagne, nous n'entendons nullement fusionner les organisations politiques et syndicales, et les rapports entre syndicats et parti n'y sont pas si intimes qu'en Autriche."⁵⁰

Hueber's opposition to the Amsterdam resolution may have been motivated by the wish not to exclude joint activities between the ISNTUC and the Second International in the future.

For Legien, on the other hand, the Amsterdam resolution represented less a desire to submit to the authority of the Second International than a desire to impose an overall direction on the ISNTUC. It formed part of an overall conception of trade-union work which Legien would not allow anyone to disrupt, be it the "Localists" or the more radical party members on a national level, or the CGT leaders, with their emphasis on the general

strike, on an international level. In this context, it is not surprising that Legien did not allow the general strike to be discussed at International Conferences and that, beyond this, he needed to create a superficial image of unity and strength among the members of the International Secretariat, on the question of the respective competences of the International Socialist Congresses and the International Conferences, which did not necessarily correspond with the strict reality.

Moreover, Legien had quickly seen that the weak spot of the CGT was the question of political action. This was the German's strength precisely because, although it was generally accepted that the German unions were subordinated to the party, the Germans were by 1905 secure in their own power base. The requirement to work closely with the socialist parties on a national or international level no longer held any threat for the German trade unions, but it represented a major sticking-point for the French.

IV.4 The French CGT and the German General Commission, 1905-1907

For the French CGT, the German labour leaders represented the key not only to international activity, as leaders of the International Secretariat (and hence to the duty of internationalism which was an integral part of CGT policy), but especially from 1905 onwards, to the crucial questions of antimilitarism and the need to formulate policy in the face of a growing threat of war. Whereas England had earlier been seen as the potential enemy of France, the Morocco crisis of 1905 gave

rise to conflict between France and Germany, which evoked memories of the Franco-Prussian war and reopened the emotive question of Alsace-Lorraine. The Morocco crisis was the first in a chain of international incidents which showed, for the CGT, the need for joint Franco-German working class solidarity. Following the Amsterdam international conference, this posed a major dilemma for the French. The CGT leaders were furious that the Amsterdam conference had gone ahead without a prior response to the CGT from the International Secretariat, especially as they now had to rely on their Socialist party colleagues to give them a report of what had happened at Amsterdam; but they had even more cause for concern at the Amsterdam decisions concerning the a priori ruling-out of any discussions relating to tactics and tendencies at international conferences and the acknowledgement of the competence of the International Socialist Congresses, in this matter, since these had been explicitly intended as an attack on the CGT. Moreover, the CGT was now placed in an almost impossible situation, since all its plans for the International Secretariat and future international activities were completely useless. As far as the CGT was concerned, the International Secretariat had doomed itself to impotence by refusing to tackle questions which the French saw as being of primary importance. At a meeting of the CGT's Comité confédéral, on 19 September 1905, Pouget explained why he had not gone to Amsterdam and demanded that the CGT protest at the decisions taken in its absence, by writing to all the member countries concerned, since he felt that the Amsterdam delegates had no right to limit future

work in such a way:

"[. . .] les secrétaires, qui sont de simples mandataires, outrepassent leur mandat en engageant ainsi l'avenir; les conférences syndicales internationales ne doivent pas être des conciles."51

This proposal was adopted. It seemed that the CGT could do nothing for the time being except protest at the way it had been treated.

Just after the Amsterdam Conference, the CGT gave vent to its righteous indignation in La Voix du Peuple. It called the decision taken at Amsterdam not to discuss questions such as the general strike "un vote d'étouffement" and protested against the International Secretary's conduct in bitter terms. The overall tone was one of wounded national pride:

"Quoique la France ouvrière ne soit pas si bien 'organisée' que l'Allemagne, - ce qui ne nous empêche pas d'avoir davantage de grèves se terminant favorablement, que l'Allemagne, - elle peut désirer n'être pas traitée en quantité négligeable.
"Constatons, avec regret, que de tels procédés sont d'un internationalisme douteux."52

The CGT leaders comforted themselves with the thought that, sometime in the near future, the Germans would be forced to discuss the general strike by pressure within their own country, from Bernstein and from the localist unions:

"Par conséquent, il n'y a pas à s'émotionner outre mesure de l'excommunication lancée à Amsterdam contre les 'questions théoriques'; la question n'est pas étouffée pour cela[. . .] elle sera posée! Ou, plus exactement, elle est posée partout!"53

There were two principal elements in the CGT's reasoning: firstly, there was a deep sensitivity to criticism from Germany and a need to defend the CGT against this criticism; secondly, the CGT wished to boost the importance of groups within the

German labour movement outside the Generalkommission as a means of both promoting international contact outside the International Secretariat and attacking the mainstream German labour movement.

The CGT's sensitivity to criticism was ruffled by the attitude of the German unions towards the French labour movement. In April and May 1905, the Correspondenzblatt published a series of articles examining the First International Report, produced by Legien on the basis of reports submitted by the national centres. Paul Umbreit, editor of the Correspondenzblatt, tried to show that the way in which national centres had compiled their reports reflected wider methods of work and organisation. The German labour movement was thus seen as the model for all other countries, since, according to Umbreit, only the German centre had provided a complete and accurate account of its activities. The English GFTU had submitted a list of bills put forward in Parliament, thus demonstrating the English labour movement's preoccupation with lobbying MP's for protective legislation. The full thrust of Umbreit's criticism was, however, aimed at the French CGT. Umbreit marvelled ironically at the way in which the French labour movement sought to present its lack of organisation and resources as a positive feature:

"Wir brauchen kaum zu versichern, dass wir uns weder für diesen Disziplinmangel, noch für diese Abneigung gegen hohe Beiträge begeistern können; wir erblicken in beiden vielmehr die Ursachen der Ohnmacht und Rückständigkeit der französischen Gewerkschaftsbewegung."⁵⁴

Not only did Umbreit attack the French for their "powerlessness" and "backwardness"; he went so far as to claim that the state of the French labour movement was all the more lamentable because it

received fairer treatment at the hands of its government than any other labour movement. The French CGT had failed to take
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advantage of this situation, claimed Umbreit.

Griffuelhes responded to these comments in a series of articles published in December 1905 and January 1906. The first of these, in the form of an open letter to Umbreit, was extremely bitter and scathing about the German trade-union movement, which had been held up as a model by Umbreit; the Germans, claimed Griffuelhes, considered themselves to be world leaders:

"En lisant vos lignes, immédiatement sont venues à mon esprit les déclarations de bien des gens sur la façon d'enseigner l'histoire dans les écoles allemandes. L'instituteur fait croire à l'enfant que l'Allemagne est par tout son passé, faussement exposé, le pivot du monde! Qu'elle est la force qui étend son bras tutelaire sur les autres puissances et que son extension territoriale n'est que le retour à une situation naturelle! Tout dit, l'instituteur allemand se germanise! Tout pour une plus grande Allemagne! s'écrie-t-il. Je suis convaincu que cet enseignement n'a jamais reçu votre approbation, mais vos lignes laissent supposer que vous en avez subi l'influence."56

Griffuelhes followed this by a second article filled with statistics to prove that Germany was wrong in its proclaimed superiority and even that France was ahead of Germany in terms of the number of successful strikes; there was in addition an obvious satisfaction on Griffuelhes' part to be using statistics to prove a point, something which was usually the Germans' forte.
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The crucial question separating France and Germany in the International Secretariat, claimed Griffuelhes, was the right to discuss all questions, and it was ultimately a matter of French pride that the CGT could do this while the Germans could not:

"Des préoccupations d'un ordre social nous inspiraient tous.

"Vous répondrez, peut-être, que les libertés accordées au peuple allemand sont insuffisantes pour des manifestations de cet ordre. Nous regrettons pour vous qu'il en soit ainsi, car nous savons apprécier toute la valeur de ces libertés conquises il y a longtemps, par les travailleurs français."58

This theme was fundamental to the French syndicalists' self-image and their image of the German labour movement. Interestingly, it was shared by many French socialists, who, despite their impatience with the role of the German socialists in the Second International, at least took comfort from their conclusions on the superiority of French democracy.⁵⁹

Griffuelhes' articles also revealed the second aspect of the CGT's attitude towards Germany, taking up a theme which the CGT had been pushing since their relations with the International Secretariat had soured: the idea that the French were ahead of the labour movements in other countries but that there was increasing evidence of a change in the revolutionary consciousness of groups outside France. The most obvious example at the end of 1905 was Russia. The pivot of the world⁶⁰ proletariat was not Germany but Russia, Griffuelhes claimed. Events in Switzerland, Belgium and Italy were followed closely, and every minor success for the revolutionary syndicalists⁶¹ reported in La Voix du Peuple.

In particular, events in Germany were watched closely for any sign of the debate opening up, and especially for any criticism of the trade-union leadership which the French could use. In 1905, there was a long report on the German trade union congress, since it was at this Congress that a crucial debate on

the general strike took place. Bömelburg, the rapporteur on the question, violently attacked the general strike, which he was reported to have condemned as anarchist and a "grossière [. . .] naïve⁶² [...] conception." The report in La Voix du Peuple seized an example of criticism of the Generalkommission earlier in the Congress, in particular of the way in which the Generalkommission, as controller of purse strings during strikes, neglected smaller strikes in favour of large-scale actions, of the way in which some unions spent all their money on buildings instead of strikes, and especially of the "centralisation outrancière" of the Generalkommission. It is difficult to assess the representativity of these criticisms, since all the counter-resolutions opposing the leadership line, and any discussion of them, were ruled out of order, but it is clear from the large number of counter-resolutions which were put forward that opposition to the Generalkommission's actions was fairly widespread. That the Generalkommission survived its early years of existence at all is a measure of the extremely tight organisational control which it exercised over the whole of the movement, and the careful way in which it exploited links with the SPD.

It was from the Localists, however, that the main criticism of the leadership came. Since 1905, under the leadership of Dr Raphael Friedeberg, the Localist unions, which had formerly favoured closer union with the SPD, now espoused a more anarcho-syndicalist line and advocated the general strike. In July 1905, Dr Friedeberg gave a conference in Berlin on the general strike, and La Voix du Peuple commented:

"Après bien d'hésitation nos camarades de l'autre côté du Rhin semblent revenir de l'appréhension en laquelle ils avaient toujours tenu jusqu'en ces temps derniers l'idée de la Grève Générale."63

Favourable references to groups whose influence Legien was at pains to eradicate in Germany were calculated to fan the flames of conflict between the French and the German.

Nevertheless, during this period of worsening relations between the French and German labour movements, the CGT was still committed to a policy of international solidarity, particularly between France and Germany. In 1905 and 1906, the first Morocco crisis, bringing the states of France and Germany into conflict with each other, showed how quickly and powerfully national feeling could be turned against the people of another nation. For the CGT, it was vital to show solidarity and fraternity between the French and German proletariats, in order to counter-balance the effects of the hostility between the ruling classes of both countries, echoed in the press. The problem for the CGT was that, in the wake of the Amsterdam conference of 1905, relations between the CGT and its German counterpart were strained, if not downright hostile.

A visit by Griffuelhes to Berlin in January 1906 illustrates this paradoxical situation. In response to the effects of the Morocco crisis, the CGT's Comité confédéral decided to send Griffuelhes to Berlin to invite the German unions to participate in joint meetings to protest against war, along the model of the earlier Anglo-French demonstrations which had taken place during the Fashoda crisis. Significantly, however, the Comité confédéral evidently did not believe that the Germans would agree

to the proposal; the Comité confédéral kept the planned visit secret, because, as Griffuelhes claimed later, there was a good chance that the Germans would refuse:

"S'il fut gardé le silence sur ces décisions, c'est que, vu la gravité des événements, on ne voulait pas permettre à la presse, qui poussait à la guerre, par une interprétation abusive des résultats de cette délégation, d'affirmer qu'il n'y avait pas unité de vues sur la question entre les travailleurs d'Allemagne et ceux de France."⁶⁴

Griffuelhes himself was under no illusions about the ability or willingness of the German unions to participate in anti-war demonstrations, as is evidenced by his comments in the open letter to Umbreit published in December 1905.⁶⁵ The Comité confédéral was apparently aware of the improbability of its own project, but decided to attempt to carry it out anyway.

In the event, the outcome of the Berlin visit was even worse than expected. The German Generalkommission responded to Griffuelhes' suggestion by saying that they could not organise the kind of meeting proposed by the CGT, although they agreed that the possibility of war between France and Germany was a subject for much concern among German workers. One way around the legal restrictions, they suggested, would be for the meeting to be organised by the Social-Democratic Party. With this in mind, Griffuelhes was taken to the Reichstag to see Singer, a Social-Democrat deputy. Griffuelhes agreed that such an arrangement should be worked out, if possible, to allow the joint meeting to go ahead, as long as the French syndicats were free, on their side, to make their own arrangements.

"Les camarades de la Commission [...] finirent par reconnaître notre droit d'organiser comme nous

l'entendrions la manifestation, puisque nous ne leur contestions pas celui de le faire à leur guise."66

The SPD deputy, Singer, backed up by Bebel, could not, however, consent to this arrangement. If the French socialists were not directly involved, Singer stated, the SPD could not be part of a delegation to Paris.

Griffuelhes was outraged by what he saw as an unnecessary interference by the German Socialist Party in the affairs of the CGT; more importantly, he felt let down by the German trade unions who had supported the SPD to the detriment of their fellow trade-unions in France:

"Je fais remarquer qu'à aucun moment, je ne discutais avec Singer sur la valeur et l'urgence de nos propositions, puisque je n'avais rien à soumettre au Parti. Cette besogne revenait aux délégués de la Commission syndicale, qui, ayant fait sienne notre proposition d'une démonstration, devaient la présenter et la défendre. J'étais là pour donner corps, si je puis employer ces termes, à notre demande faite à des syndicats, qui, librement, la soumettaient à leur tour, pour une substitution, au Parti."67

He felt that the German trade union leaders had not defended the proposal in strong enough terms.

The Berlin visit was to have lasting effects on Griffuelhes and those in the Comité confédéral close to him. Griffuelhes himself never forgot the snub he received at the hands of the German trade-unionists:

"Je garde de mon voyage à Berlin un souvenir plutôt mauvais. Je n'y ai pas rencontré cette courtoisie prévenante qui facilite les rapports et atténue les difficultés."68

It has been claimed that Griffuelhes' visit to Berlin turned him
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into a lifelong Germanophobe; certainly, it contributed to his unyielding hostility towards the German trade-union leadership.

With feelings already high, the situation was exacerbated when the German socialists decided to publish their version of the Berlin visit in the Social-Democrat paper, Vorwärts. In this report, Griffuelhes was said to have demanded that the German unions participate in a meeting to discuss a general strike in the event of war. The Vorwärts report laid the blame for the lack of cooperation at the CGT's door, condemning the French for their refusal to cooperate with Socialist parties. Why the SPD should have wished to compromise the French is unclear; presumably Legien expected the French to protest publicly at the failure of their visit, as they had previously published all details of correspondence between them and the International Secretariat. By putting their version of events out first, the Germans would hope to gain support from their allies in the International Secretariat and further discredit the French in the eyes of the internationally organised labour movement. This tactic would suit the SPD leadership, too. By posing the question of party/trade union relations in this way, the SPD must have had in mind the debates which were due to take place in Stuttgart in 1907 on the party/trade union relationship and which had a particular topicality in France after the formation of a unified socialist party, the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière, in 1905, under the directives of the Second International.

Griffuelhes in turn published his own account in La Voix du Peuple, stressing that the CGT had never made any such demands on the Germans. In defending himself against these accusations, Griffuelhes' tone was resentful and bitter:

"A aucun moment je n'ai dit dans mes explications, qu'il s'agissait dans nos propositions d'organiser la grève générale militaire. Nous connaissons trop les camarades pour croire un seul instant que cette mesure qui exige de la part de ceux qui doivent l'employer une grande énergie et une forte volonté serait agréée par eux. J'avais eu soin de présenter nos propositions sous un jour et dans un esprit susceptibles de les faire adopter."⁷⁰

Griffuelhes then counter-attacked. He wrote to Vorwärts, claiming that the German labour leaders had treated him shabbily during his trip. Among other charges, Griffuelhes claimed that the German leaders had left him to wander about Berlin alone, cold, hungry and without accommodation.⁷¹ Johann Sassenbach, on behalf of the Generalkommission, angrily replied to Griffuelhes' claims in the Correspondenzblatt. He accused Griffuelhes of lying about the reception he had received in Berlin, and blamed the failure of Griffuelhes' mission on the CGT leader himself, who had gone to Berlin in a negative, bitter frame of mind.⁷²

The angry accusations and counter-accusations continued for months. It would seem - although this can not be verified - that Griffuelhes did indeed go to Berlin in a negative spirit, expecting his mission to fail and certainly harbouring hostile feelings towards the German labour movement, in view of the polemics with Umbreit. It is not surprising that the CGT's plans for a peace demonstration floundered.

Moreover, by breaking silence on the Berlin visit, the CGT leadership was exposing the weakness of its own policy. Yet it continued with this ambiguous attitude, bitterly resentful of the Germans and convinced that the Germans were the obstacle to international solidarity and yet committed to expressions of international solidarity in the face of the threat of war. Side

by side in La Voix du Peuple with sarcastic criticisms of the German trade union movement were enthusiastic proclamations that the German and French workers had more in common with each other than with their respective nations:

"On nous dit: 'Votre propagande antimilitariste est unilatérale; les travailleurs d'Allemagne n'ont pas notre mentalité . . .'

"C'est faux! Pas plus que nous, nos frères d'Allemagne ne sont en disposition de venir se canarder avec nous; ils ne veulent pas la guerre qui, pour eux, (comme pour nous!) ne signifie que dangers, avec risques de mort et, en tous les cas, pour ceux qui n'y auront pas laissé leurs os, signifie: accroissement de servitude et d'impôts - par conséquent, de misère."73

The ambiguity of the French position was inevitably to give rise to questions within the Confederation about CGT policy. Within the CGT, there were several notable centres of opposition to the leadership. The most important of these was the Fédération du Livre, which was a highly-organised federation with high membership and considerable financial strength. Under the leadership of Auguste Keufer, it pursued immediate, practical goals and often clashed with the revolutionary aspirations of the CGT leadership. Not surprisingly, Keufer's inspiration came from the German and English models of a highly organised, dues-conscious, pragmatic labour movement, and indeed descriptions of Keufer himself could equally be applied to Legien:

"La Fédération du Livre est véritablement l'oeuvre de Keufer. Ses adversaires lui reprochaient un tempérament autoritaire, son réformisme, des méthodes qu'ils appelaient de corruption, mais lui reconnaissaient l'honnêteté personnelle, et un sens organisateur hors de pair [. . .] Le syndicalisme de Keufer [. . .] allait dans le sens du travaillisme anglais ou du syndicalisme allemand contre la violence et l'impulsivité."74

Keufer and his allies used examples of the British and German labour movements to score points over their political opponents within the CGT. As early as 1901, articles in La Voix du Peuple had used examples of Denmark, Germany and England to demonstrate the necessity of building up finances and organisation:

"[. . .] puisqu'on a tant fait d'emprunter aux Anglais le boycottage et le sabotage, on devrait bien également leur emprunter un peu de leur méthode d'organisation car, bien qu'ils thésaurisent, - et probablement même à cause de cela - ils arrivent à des résultats que nous sommes loin d'atteindre."75

At the CGT congress of Bourges, in 1904, the examples of Germany and England were usually specifically to argue for proportional representation, which would have ensured more influence for unions such as the Fédération du Livre at CGT congresses. Moreover, allies of the Fédération du Livre, such as Coupat, of the Fédération des Mécaniciens, claimed that the CGT would be completely overtaken by the English, German and other national centres if they did not emulate their methods:

"Dans tous les Congrès internationaux, le prolétariat français paraît annihilé; une seule corporation peut faire figure à côté des Trades Unions Anglaises ou autres puissantes Fédérations étrangères, c'est justement celle du Livre. [Protestations]

"Eh oui! les travailleurs Anglais, les ouvriers Allemands, les militants de leurs organisations corporatives, ont bien compris comment il serait possible d'embrigader dans le syndicat les masses amorphes que retiennent seuls les résultats palpables! Ils ont bien compris que ce n'était pas avec des formules idéales et des spéculations métaphysiques qu'on retenait l'ouvrier au syndicat.

[. . .]

"Si vous voulez donc que le prolétariat français fasse figure, si vous voulez que la faiblesse de nos syndicats cesse d'être un objet de pitié [Protestations], pour nos camarades étrangers, il faut donner à notre organisme une autre plate-forme, d'autres cadres qui leur permettent de croître et de devenir réellement puissant!"76

The CGT leadership could not afford to allow federations such as this more representation at congresses. In order to justify their own position, the theory of "minorités agissantes" had to be constantly defended. It was thus absolutely essential for the CGT to discredit other methods of work which relied on financial strengths and high membership, the "gros bataillons":

"La vérité est que ce sont toujours des minorités qui sont plus actives et que, pour cela, il faut les laisser produire, ne pas les étouffer. C'est la minorité des travailleurs qui sont syndiqués, et ce sont dans les syndicats des minorités de syndicats qui poussent les autres. Les gros bataillons, embarrassés souvent de mutualisme, ne se mettent en branle que difficilement et il faut les entraîner."77

This led to a crude stereotyping both of other national characters and of the French temperament:

"Les Anglais, les Allemands, les Américains appartiennent à une race de tempérament froid, mathématique, positif [. . .], et il est tout naturel que leurs organisations soient dans une certaine mesure imprégnées de ce tempérament mathématique qu'on trouve dans le principe de la représentation proportionnelle. Mais nous sommes en France, il ne faut pas l'oublier, nous appartenons à cette race latine chez laquelle le sentimentalisme tient autant de place que le matérialisme, et il est aussi naturel que nos organisations se ressentent également de ce tempérament particulier."78

It is not difficult to see how this kind of defensive mentality clouded relations between French and German trade-union leaders, embedded as it was in the very organisational structure of the CGT itself. Nor was it confined to France. Legien always used highly scathing language when speaking of the CGT, portraying them as unrealistic, hotheaded and violent; here again, this had roots in the situation of the Generalkommission, under attack from groups which Legien could portray in the same way as the French. Following the polemics over Griffuelhes' visit to Berlin,

the Correspondenzblatt continued to criticise the CGT. It was stated, for example, that the CGT's judgement of its May Day demonstration in 1906 was not based on facts, but on empty

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slogans. The Correspondenzblatt also mocked the CGT for its fear of links with the French socialist party, and accused the revolutionary-syndicalist leadership of imposing anarchism on the French labour movement.

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Other members of the German social-democratic movement were equally scornful of the French labour movement, especially when the latter was used by German militants to argue for more forceful antimilitarist propaganda. At the Mannheim Congress of the SPD, for example, Bebel replied thus to Karl Liebknecht's allusions to French and Belgian anti-militarist agitation:

"It is incomprehensible to me how he can hold up to us the example of Belgium. A country which signifies nothing and whose army cannot be compared to Prussian military organisations. In France, it's the same. There anti-militaristic agitation has been carried out only in the last two years (Liebknecht: and excellently!) No! in such a one-sided and exaggerated fashion! (lively approval). If it were done in like manner in Germany - no, thank you! I should decline."81

Each side thus saw in the other a reflection of their own rivals on the domestic front and felt the need to attack, at the crudest level, opposing policies.

There were, however, crucial differences. Whilst the Germans' position on the international scene was secure and universally acknowledged, France was constantly struggling for recognition. Not only that, but France's failure to gain positive results from the International Secretariat and from relations with Germany was actively endangering two of the

pillars of revolutionary-syndicalist ideology - internationalism and antimilitarist agitation. At the same time, the battle within the International Secretariat went beyond the context of the CGT's internationalist ideology, and undermined the very basis of the CGT's policies and methods. As Vanderwort has pointed out in his biographical sketch of Griffuelhes, those who opposed the CGT leadership at home looked to their allies in the ISNTUC, and the CGT leadership therefore had to fight the battle on two fronts: national and international:

"Vers 1905, il était clair que la lutte contre la social-démocratie et les syndicats réformistes devait être menée aussi sur le plan international. En effet, la philosophie et l'exemple dont s'inspiraient les réformistes de la CGT leur venait du puissant mouvement syndical allemand."⁸²

At the Amiens congress of the CGT in 1906, which resulted in a triumph for the revolutionary syndicalist principle of autonomy vis-à-vis political parties, the question of international links again became a stick with which to beat the Comité confédéral. The Comité confédéral's report gave a brief account of the events of Amsterdam and Berlin and concluded:

"Le Comité, en prenant connaissance de ces résultats, après discussion, décida qu'il y avait lieu, le bureau international étant sans arrêt, de continuer à solder les cotisations mais à ne plus avoir de rapports réguliers.

"Par cette décision, le comité entendait affirmer la nécessité d'un lien international, sans vouloir collaborer à un travail fait uniquement de paperasses et de statistiques [. . .]"⁸³

Keufer condemned the Comité confédéral's attitude as intransigent; he thought that the Comité confédéral should have been prepared to give some concessions to the Germans for the

sake of internationalism:

"Je trouve que l'attitude du Comité confédéral a été intransigeante en renonçant à assister à la Conférence internationale, sous prétexte que ses propositions n'ont pas été prises en considération.

[. . .]

"Et enfin, nous ne pouvons pas prétendre que nous sommes seuls en possession de la vérité dans la marche, dans la direction à suivre; nous avons aussi à apprendre beaucoup de choses intéressantes dans les Conférences internationales."84

Coupat echoed this view:

"[. . .] le refus du Secrétariat international ne fut pas définitif. Ce n'est pas en refusant de participer aux conférences que vous ferez partager vos vues."85

The Comité confédéral was however unrepentant, reiterating its principled standpoint:

"[. . .] il ne peut y avoir d'internationalisme sans antimilitarisme."86

Griffuelhes backed up the Comité confédéral's stand by launching an unequivocal attack on the work of the International Secretariat:

"Jusqu'ici, le Comité confédéral n'avait pas voulu, pour ne pas froisser la susceptibilité des Anglais et de l'Allemagne, proclamer l'inanité de ces Conférences internationales. Or, il faut le reconnaître, la besogne qui y est faite se réduit à zéro.

"A Stuttgart, en 1902, quand il y fut délégué, l'ordre du jour n'était pas connu. [. . .]

"[Griffuelhes] avait demandé que les Conférences internationales fussent des sortes de Congrès; l'Allemagne proposa la tenue de simples Conférences - ce fut adopté.

"Voilà tout le bilan de la première Conférence! Quant à celle de Dublin, où il se rendit avec Yvetot, ce fut encore plus typique, le résultat fut: quatre jours de voyage pour trois heures de conférence!

[. . .]

"Voilà ce qu'ont donné ces conférences internationales. Que nous continuons à y participer, parfaitement! mais à condition qu'on y fasse quelque chose. Il ne faut pas que subsiste dans le secrétariat international l'état d'esprit actuel."87

Gone were all the earlier efforts to present the International Secretariat as a welcome, if limited, initiative; those who had been personally involved in the international Conferences were angry and resentful. At the same time, there was no doubt that some kind of international activity must be carried out, and the Comité confédéral had no alternative to offer. The outcome of the debate reflected the ambiguity which characterised the CGT's attitude at that time: a proposal by Delesalle was adopted, which committed the CGT to participation in future International Conferences but authorised the Comité confédéral to demand discussion of the three questions which they had tried to place on the agenda for the Amsterdam Conference:

"Le Congrès, après avoir entendu critiques et réponses sur le passage du rapport relatif aux 'Rapports internationaux', approuve l'attitude du comité confédéral d'avoir momentanément suspendu les relations avec le secrétariat international qui a refusé d'inscrire à l'ordre du jour des conférences internationales les questions de la Grève générale, la journée de huit heures et l'antimilitarisme;
"Il invite le comité confédéral à reprendre les relations avec le Secrétariat international en demandant à nouveau l'inscription à l'ordre du jour des questions précédemment refusées."88

Added to this was an amendment put forward by Pouget, which effectively removed any responsibility for reconciliation from the Comité confédéral:

"Au cas où le Secrétariat International s'y refuserait, s'abritant derrière la motion adoptée à Amsterdam, dont il ne voudrait pas demander l'annulation à la prochaine conférence, le Comité confédéral est invité à entrer en rapports directs avec les centres nationaux affiliés, en passant par-dessus le Secrétariat international."89

The Amiens Congress decisions did nothing to ease the impasse in which the Comité Confédéral found itself, nor did the CGT

leadership act in the months following the Congress to move away from this position. During this time, the few brief references to the German labour movement in the French CGT press were made in a mocking, ironic tone: in May 1906, for example, La Voix du Peuple reported on lock-outs in Germany:

"Reste à savoir si ce projet scélérat n'inciterait pas les ouvriers allemands, affamés par les exploiters, à chercher le salut en des moyens révolutionnaires, au lieu de l'attendre pacifiquement de la lassitude capitaliste?"⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the Comité confédéral still did not make any serious attempts to contact dissident groups in Germany or elsewhere. Committed by the 1906 CGT congress resolutions to resume contact with the ISNTUC, the CGT leaders were reluctant to act positively in this direction. Nevertheless, an active attempt on the part of the CGT leadership to look outside the ISNTUC for allies risked splitting the French labour movement. Despite the mocking tones in which the French syndicalist press taunted the German labour movements with reports of the "Localists", these reports were above all indicative of a desire to embarrass the German labour leaders and those who sought to follow their example in France. There was no serious attempt to set up formal links with revolutionary syndicalist groups abroad. Apart from the serious risk of a split, the relative strength of the groups involved in the ISNTUC seemed to suggest to the CGT that international organisation had to be based on those very groups.

For the CGT leadership to resume contacts with the ISNTUC on the basis of the Amsterdam resolution would have constituted a humiliating climb-down. In order to save face, the CGT needed to produce something concrete from its work with the ISNTUC, such as

an agreement to discuss antimilitarism or the general strike. This, then, was the compromise solution decided by the CGT leadership at Amiens. In agreeing to participate in future international conferences on the condition that such questions would be placed on the agenda, the CGT avoided direct conflict with Keufer and the "reformists", and also avoided yielding completely to their pressure.

With the CGT now expressly committed to international activity only on certain conditions, and with the French and German labour movements still as far apart as ever, there was little chance of agreement at the next international conference.

IV.5 The international conference of Christiania (Oslo), 1907

Not only did the French do nothing to facilitate a rapprochement with the International Secretariat, even sending their request for items to be added to the agenda too late for it to be considered, but they exacerbated the situation by sending out a circular to all the national centres involved in the International Secretariat, in which they protested again at the way in which they felt they had been unfairly treated. The circular complained once again about Legien's role in influencing national centres against the CGT's proposals, and criticised the resolutions taken at Amsterdam, which, it was claimed, represented "une barrière à toute discussion" and rendered the International Conferences "peu intéressantes, sinon inutiles."⁹¹ Referring to the decisions taken at the CGT congress of Amiens, the circular reiterated the CGT's request that its proposed

reports be discussed, and demanded the revocation of the Amsterdam resolution limiting discussion at International Conferences. In accordance with the Amiens resolution, the CGT's participation in International conferences was dependent on the acceptance of these conditions. At the same time, the circular pre-empted the refusal of these demands:

"[le Comité confédéral] s'inspirant du vote émis à son Congrès national qui s'est tenu à Amiens en septembre 1906, a décidé de ne pas se faire représenter à Christiania, mais, en même temps, de faire connaître aux organisations ouvrières des différentes nationalités les motifs de sa non-participation."⁹²

The circular was dated 28 August 1907. The Comité confédéral had therefore not strictly adhered to the Amiens decision, which would have obliged them to circulate their demands immediately after the CGT congress and wait for a response before deciding whether to attend the International Conference. In other words, the Comité confédéral had no intention of sending a delegate to Christiania. The French CGT thus stayed away from the International Conference of Christiania.

In the absence of the French, the Christiania showed evidence of a more self-confident and united international organisation. This is reflected in the composition of the delegations. The Scandinavian countries were represented by two delegates each, rather than just one (the International Conference taking place on the occasion of the five-yearly joint Scandinavian trade-union congress); England was represented by two members of the GFTU Management Committee; Germany's delegates were Legien and Johann Sassenbach (a later Secretary of the IFTU). Holland was no longer represented by Van Erkel but by Jan

Oudegeest (later to be a Secretary of the IFTU), whilst Belgium's delegate was Huysmans, known as Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau. Finland, Hungary and Italy were each represented by one delegate, whilst there were two delegates from Austria.⁹³ On the whole, the participants in the Christiania conference were much more politically homogeneous than ever before and reflected the consolidation and growing confidence of the International Secretariat.

If the "social-democratic" sections had consolidated their position in the ISNTUC, this new political stability and homogeneity was accentuated by the absence of the two centres which had been most clearly in opposition to the dominant concept of international activity: the Dutch and the French. In the Fourth International Report (1906), Legien wrote: "Two of the national centres affiliated with the International Secretariat seem not to be willing to remain so, viz the centres of France and Holland."⁹⁴

The 1905 international conference had angered the Dutch NAS, which decided to stay away from the next international conference in protest. Subsequently, the Dutch syndicalists abandoned their attempts to transform the International Secretariat from within and embarked on a new strategy, aiming to set up a rival international organisation. Legien reported at Christiania that he had read in the press of the NAS' attempt to form "an alliance composed of the national centres of the Netherlands and France and besides of certain unimportant groups of German and Italian trade unions not affiliated to their national centres."⁹⁵

At the same time, Legien recommended the affiliation of a rival social-democratic centre, the "Nederlandsch Verband von Vakvereenigen", commenting that "there is no doubt the Conference will admit this affiliation." As if to reinforce this, Legien's international report contained a report from the new organisation. The affiliation of the new group at the expense of the politically embarrassing NAS was a fait accompli.

Evidently, Legien was anxious to secure the affiliation of the new Dutch centre before the NAS could change its mind. This is all the more striking because the NAS had not formally withdrawn its membership but had merely announced its intention to stay away from Christiania. The presence of Oudegeest at Christiania, presumably at the invitation of the International Secretary, reinforces the impression that the Dutch decision to withdraw from the ISNTUC was as much (if not more) forced on them by the International Secretary as a conscious decision to pursue other channels.

The French centre could not be dealt with so easily, but the Christiania delegates felt confident enough to go beyond even the Amsterdam resolution:

"The French unionists must be clearly shown that the point of view opposed to that of the Confederation is not held up by some persons only, but is adopted by all centres."⁹⁶

Their confidence supported by a belief that the CGT might even have to undergo a change similar to that in Holland, the Conference even went so far as to express hopes that the dissidents (reformists) within the CGT would overturn the present leadership: Olsen (Denmark) remarked:

"The French trade union movement seems to pass through a critical time; we must wait for the issue with certainty, that in some years the French will be ready to join our ranks."97

Huysmans asserted:

"The present national centre of France is by no means the true representative of the majority of French trade unions."98

Legien expressly stated that the duty of the Conference was to keep to resolutions which would help the dissident groups in France:

"He proposes declaring that we hold onto the resolution of Amsterdam. The very interest of the French trade unions compels us to do so. Even now we see a number of French organisations disagreeing with the tactics of the Confédération générale."99

Legien, Huysmans and Olsen drew up a resolution with the French directly in mind. The resolution began by repeating the International Secretariat's standpoint as elaborated at Amsterdam, but went further than ever before, "formally
100
censuring the anti-political attitude of the French":

"The conference regrets, that the Confédération générale du travail not admitting the perfect correctness of the attitude taken by the international conference of delegates of the national centres relative to these questions has, on the contrary, made this attitude the pretext for keeping away from the international union.

"The conference most urgently begs of the workers of France to confer about the questions cited above in conjunction with the political organisation of the working class of their own country and to contribute towards the solution of those questions by participating in the international socialist congresses. And no less it begs of them to go on belonging to the international union for carrying on in the best way the trade union business."101

This resolution was adopted unanimously without debate. The directness of the attack against the French was remarkable. With this resolution, the International Secretariat went beyond a

formal statement of the limitations of its tasks, and adopted a moralistic and censoring attitude. Moreover, the ISNTUC was attempting to interfere directly in the CGT's internal affairs, by issuing directives on policy and by promoting one section of the labour movement at the expense of the CGT leadership.

Just as Legien had hoped, the International Secretariat was now politically unified in opposition to the French centre. On the level of activities, however, it still lacked cohesion, and even motivation. Even the reports, the main work of the International Secretariat, were brought into question at the 1907¹⁰² Conference. The international enquiry into working hours was effectively abandoned, Legien concluding:

"He had pointed out, at Amsterdam, already, the difficulty of the undertaking. After this debate he too thinks we had better abandon the performance. A simpler schedule was not practicable, if a clear result were to be obtained."¹⁰³

On the question of labour registries to regulate emigration, too, no agreement could be reached. Moreover, certain countries were against the idea as it might work against their national interests, and this was reflected in the resolution:

"[. . .] the conference is of the opinion, that labour registry for foreign countries cannot as yet be undertaken without endangering the positions gained by the trade unions."¹⁰⁴

A resolution calling for the international secretariat to look into the question of the international organisation of seamen was withdrawn, as some delegates felt that the organisation of seamen¹⁰⁵ on a national level was the foremost concern. Similarly, Germany's proposal that the workers of each country put pressure on their respective governments to prohibit the use of yellow

phosphorus was couched in such general terms as to amount to
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little more than an announcement.

The most important of the questions before the Conference, concerning possible measures to prevent the importation of blacklegs, again showed the inadequacy of the International Conferences. England, as the principal exporter of blacklegs, felt unable to do more than express regret at the situation; Curran explained:

"The English trade unions are infinitely regretting that of late scabs have been so easily got from England. But the trade unions are powerless in that matter. The lowest elements in England are here involved, houseless [sic] people mostly, on whom the trade unions can exert no influence whatever."107

This was an area in which the International Conference should have been able to make its mark, as the First International had done. The failure of the International Secretariat to come to any mutual agreement showed a lack of commitment in this sphere; priority was given to national preoccupations, and, where these interests clashed, national autonomy was preserved. The fundamental work of the Christiania conference, then, and the only area where agreement was universal, was a formal censure of the CGT and an implicit laying-down of political pre-requisites for work within the international labour movement.

IV.6 The Stuttgart congress of the Second International (1907) and the party/trade union relationship

The Christiania conference consolidated debates which had taken place the previous month within the Second International. The international censure of the CGT was thus complete. Because

of this, the debates at the Stuttgart congress of the Second International in 1907, which otherwise would not necessarily have had any impact on the CGT, must be examined in the light of the discussion at Christiania on the relationship between labour and socialism.

The main factor separating the French from the other ISNTUC members was the party/trade union relationship. Most other members were happy, even if only as a tactical measure, to derogate questions of general importance to the Second International, and most enjoyed good relations with the Socialist parties of their country, although not all were content to submit to the authority of the party. Despite the differences within the ISNTUC there was a unified stand against the French, and the question of the party/trade union relationship was clearly perceived to be the major factor. It was indeed the primary mark of identification for trade union federations at that time; the French syndicalistes accepted or rejected labour movements of other countries according to the guiding principle of their
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relationship with political parties.

The question of party/trade union relationship was of central importance to the international labour movement and crystallised the differences within the labour movements of different countries. This was reflected in the institutional separation of International Socialist Congresses and International Trade Union Conferences, but it was also deeply rooted in the basis of both of these separate organisations. Within the Second International, this came to a head at the

Stuttgart Congress which took place in August 1907 (one month before the International Conference of Christiania) where the question of the relationship between trade unions and political parties was debated, with the majority resolution calling for the unions to work more closely with Socialist parties, firmly within the context of the class struggle and Socialist action. This line of argument was supported by the Belgians, while the Austrians and Germans were wary of too close a relationship with the Socialist Party. Robert Schmidt argued for the German trade unions:

"En Allemagne, nous n'entendons nullement fusionner les organisations politiques et syndicales, et les rapports entre syndicats et partis n'y sont pas si intimes qu'en Autriche."¹⁰⁹

Trade union autonomy should be preserved, according to Schmidt:

"La question de savoir quelle forme doit prendre l'organisation des syndicats, ne peut être déterminée par un Congrès International."¹¹⁰

In other words, the German trade unions, the most important single bloc in the Second International, whilst wishing to place the trade union movement firmly within the framework of political struggle (thus eliminating the anarcho-syndicalists), were determined to assert their own autonomy, not only on the national level, where by 1907 this was a fait accompli, but also on an international level. Failure to assert the autonomy of trade unions could result in a situation where socialists decided on questions directly affecting labour organisations. The most obvious example was the question of the general strike. German labour leaders were determined that the Second International should not pass any decisions recommending the general strike.

For this reason, the German insistence on the separation of the international movement into the economic and political wings did not reflect an acknowledgement of the primacy of the Socialist International, but a desire for autonomy.

The situation was further complicated by the French SFIO delegates, who were anxious not to upset relations in the CGT (already in a delicate position) by being forced into a resolution which condemned the CGT or obliged the French socialists to put pressure on the syndicats to come under their wing. In preparation for the Stuttgart congress, the French socialists, under the leadership of Vaillant and Jaurès, had spent considerable time examining the question of the relationship between party and syndicat. At their congress of Limoges in 1906, the French socialists had adopted a conciliatory position towards the CGT in order to prepare the way for future joint action.

Under the pressure of all the different positions represented at the Stuttgart Congress, the resolution adopted was no more than a compromise. Nevertheless, it did stipulate that trade unions should work closely with their Socialist Parties, and it clearly took the German labour movement as a model for the international movement:

"Les syndicats ne rempliront pleinement leur devoir dans la lutte d'émancipation des ouvriers que si leurs actes s'inspirent d'un esprit entièrement socialiste
[. . .]

"Le Congrès est d'avis que les syndicats obtiendront d'autant plus de profit dans la lutte contre la spoliation et l'oppression que leur organisation sera plus unifiée, que leur système de secours sera plus parfait, que les caisses destinées à la lutte syndicale seront mieux remplies, que leurs adhérents auront une plus claire conscience de la conjoncture

économique, et que seront plus grande leur enthousiasme et leur esprit de sacrifice inspiré de l'idéal socialiste."111

The German and Austrian insistence on autonomy was, however, based on reciprocal agreement between the ISNTUC and the Second International. This position was in complete opposition to the French syndicalists' calls for complete independence of the international labour movement from any political tutelage whatsoever. This fundamental difference was spelled out at Stuttgart. There, the links between the Socialist International and the labour movements of the various countries were formally acknowledged:

"Le Congrès invite tous les syndicats se trouvant dans les conditions prévues par la conférence de Bruxelles 1899, ratifiée par le Congrès de Paris 1900, à se faire représenter aux Congrès internationaux et à se tenir en relation avec le Bureau Socialiste International de Bruxelles. Il charge ce dernier de se mettre en rapport avec le secrétariat international des syndicats à Berlin pour l'échange de tous les renseignements relatifs à l'organisation ouvrière et au mouvement ouvrier."112

The German and Austrian delegates, including Legien for Germany and Beer for Austria, were the guiding spirit behind this resolution.

The message for the French labour movement could not have been clearer, but, in case the CGT had missed the point, the Stuttgart Congress was the occasion for outright condemnation of the CGT, despite the reluctance of the French socialists to engage in such polemics. Troelstra, representing the new Dutch Social-Democratic labour organisation, showed that the CGT was no longer able to expect support from Holland in the ISNTUC:

"[. . .] quant à leur Confédération générale du Travail, celle-ci est conduite par des personnes qui

travaillent la classe ouvrière par des petites cotisations et de grandes paroles. Ce ne sont pas là des actes de réalistes, mais des actes d'utopistes et d'anarchistes."113

It was Legien who was most explicit in his condemnation of the CGT:

"Nous ne pouvons admettre que les syndicats et le parti se combattent. Si cette situation existe en France, c'est parce qu'il n'y a là ni forte organisation syndicale, ni puissante organisation de parti. Les camarades français ont coutume de dire: 'Nous n'avons pas d'organisation, mais nous avons du tempérament.' Ce n'est pas avec du tempérament que l'on combat la classe patronale. Aussitôt que les Français auront une sérieuse organisation syndicale, ils s'abstiendront de discuter à perte de vue la grève générale, l'action directe et le sabotage [. . .]
"Le jour où les Français auront une organisation sérieuse, ils n'entameront plus d'action pareille à celle du printemps dernier.
"Ils ne s'imagineront plus que l'on peut conquérir d'un seul coup la journée de huit heures. Pour obtenir pareille réforme, il faut d'abord créer de grandes et solides organisations et cela coûte de la peine et du travail."114

The isolation of the CGT was thus complete. The French labour leaders had been roundly attacked, not only at the international conference of Christiania, but also before the whole of the international socialist movement represented in the Second International, including French socialists. Moreover, the aim of the attack was not only to demonstrate how little sympathy there was within the ISNTUC for the CGT's position. The message was clearly stated: either the CGT should change its course or the ISNTUC would seek out other members of the French labour movement to join them. The fate of the Dutch NAS was particularly ominous for the CGT in this respect.

For the CGT, the prospects of gaining any tangible results from international organisation were becoming increasingly

remote. Indeed, it appeared that international organisation was actively working to undermine everything which the CGT held dear.

IV. 7 After Christiania and Stuttgart - the French response

The CGT had thus been bitterly attacked, in its absence, at both the International Socialist Congress and the International Trade Union Conference. In the context of the Stuttgart Congress, the Christiania resolution dealt a double blow to the French. This deeply offended the CGT, and increased its sense of isolation on the international level, but it was the instruction, implicitly directed to the CGT in all these resolutions, that it must adopt a certain course of action, which hardened the CGT's hostility. It saw the international resolutions, and in particular Legien's criticisms, as a violation of its national autonomy which had been guaranteed by the ISNTUC. Indeed, given the extent of the criticisms levelled at them, both at the International Socialist Congress and the International Trade-Union Conference, and the scarcely-veiled threats made at Christiania to aid dissident elements within the French labour movement to topple the CGT leadership, the CGT leaders could see the situation in no other way. Legien had resolved either to bring the CGT into the fold or to destroy its influence, paralleling his tactics regarding the Localists.¹¹⁵ Griffuelhes reacted angrily. The initial response was an article in La Voix du Peuple, "La Conférence Internationale de Christiania. Pourquoi la CGT n'y a pas participé", in which the CGT's absence from Christiania was explained by publishing the

circular sent by the CGT to all the members of the International Secretariat prior to the conference. The article also pointed out the futility of the International Conferences:

"[. . .] ce sont des réunions fermées, où l'air n'entre pas, où les sentiments qui agitent et émeuvent les masses ne peuvent arriver que difficilement. "Il est inutile de dire que la Confédération n'a jamais admis cette étroitesse d'esprit et a considéré que les Conférences doivent refléter l'esprit et les tendances des masses ouvrières organisées."116

The CGT resumed the attack against Legien by claiming that the Generalkommission leadership was being overtaken by revolutionary elements in the German labour movement. The fact that certain sections of the German labour movement had distributed the CGT's report on antimilitarism and the general strike, whereas Legien had refused to allow it to be discussed, was, claimed La Voix du Peuple,

"la preuve que si les organisations syndicales d'Allemagne ne subissaient pas l'écrasement d'un centralisme outrancier, les idées de grève générale et d'antimilitarisme y pénétreraient et que les classes ouvrières d'Allemagne et de France vibreraient à l'unisson."117

This view was supported by a report on an International Hairdressers' Conference, where Luquet, as French delegate, had been able to read the CGT's reports on antimilitarism and the general strike. This was proof, claimed Luquet, that the German trade-union leaders were not representative of the labour movement as a whole and that soon they would be ousted:

"Nous pouvons espérer qu'avant peu, la masse des syndiqués allemands, mieux informés, aura raison de ses 'chefs' trop subjugués jusqu'ici par le côté gouvernemental et surtout électoral du problème social."118

Luquet even went so far as to claim that there was enough support

among trade-unionists abroad to set up a rival international organisation and suggested that this was a viable proposition:

"J' [. . .] ai d'ailleurs lancé l'idée d'un véritable Congrès ouvrier international au Congrès des ouvriers coiffeurs, elle a trouvé l'assentiment personnel des délégués Allemands, Austro-Hongrois et Suisses.

"Qu'on y songe sérieusement en France et si après études la chose peut se faire, un Congrès international où tous les organes corporatifs nationaux seraient représentés auraient une signification, une bien plus grande importance et une force de pénétration bien plus considérable que n'en ont eu jusqu'ici les parlottes, où seuls les organes centraux des différentes nations étaient représentés."119

There is more than an hint of bluster in Luquet's proposals. Essentially, Luquet recommended only that the CGT think over the feasibility of such a project, the implication being that it would take some considerable time to realise. Moreover, Luquet's reference to the German masses triumphing over their conservative leadership reflects a certain amount of wishful thinking, but committed the CGT to nothing apart from waiting to see what happened. Perhaps even more importantly, Luquet's plan envisaged international congresses where all tendencies and opinions would be represented, and not just one section (be it revolutionary-syndicalist or social-democratic). Any plan which did not involve those already in the International Secretariat would therefore be doomed to failure. It is clear that the CGT's threats to form a rival international organisation were a defensive reflex rather than part of a serious plan.

Similarly, Griffuelhes' attacks on the International Secretariat, in two articles in La Voix du Peuple in October 1907, were less for the benefit of revolutionary groups abroad than for internal consumption. His main concern was to justify

the CGT's position. In these articles, Griffuelhes attempted a systematic and reasoned criticism of the Amsterdam and Christiania resolutions, which he saw as violations of the CGT's autonomy, and of the self-imposed limitations of the International Secretariat. In portraying the CGT as the injured party, Griffuelhes sought to appear as rational and reasonable:

"Il faut, à mon avis, débarrasser de toute considération sentimentale et de déférence notre action internationale. Les pays sont dans l'internationale, ce que les corporations sont dans les organismes nationaux. Dans ces derniers, il y a des groupements dont les droits de discussion ne doivent pas être subordonnés à une vague sentimentalité ou à une idiote déférence; dans l'internationale il en est de même."¹²⁰

Griffuelhes rested his condemnation of the International Secretariat on the argument that the Amsterdam and Christiania Conferences violated the autonomy of national centres, and even violated the principles of the International Secretariat itself, by interfering with the tactics and tendencies of the French movement, a claim which could reasonably be justified, since this was plainly the sense of the Conference decisions. This was Griffuelhes' central argument in his detailed criticism of the International Secretariat in his book 'L'Action Syndicaliste',¹²¹ published in 1908.

Soon, however, the CGT's defence of its own position developed into an all-out battle between the CGT and the German labour leadership. In February and March 1908, the pages of La Voix du Peuple were given over to the polemics between Josef Steiner (a German living in Paris and mouthpiece for the Freie Gewerkschaften)¹²² and a Localist contact of La Voix du Peuple.

The occasion which sparked off the debate was a weavers' strike in Crefeld, which was not supported by the mainstream trade union movement, but soon a fully fledged battle developed in the pages of La Voix du Peuple between representatives of the Freie Gewerkschaften and the "Freie Vereinigung Deutscher Gewerkschaften" (national confederation of the Localists). Naturally, the Localists had the last word:

"Steiner appartient à ceux qui nous parlent toujours d'une 'armée disciplinée', et qui rêvent de l'utopie de battre les patrons par une concentration des cotisations ouvrières. Nous autres, nous sommes des fédéralistes, nous espérons plus de sacrifice, même local, des populations directement intéressées et des grands mouvements de solidarité que d'une lutte du pot de fer (ou plutôt le coffre-fort) patronal rempli d'écus d'or et de billets de banque. [. . .] Nous en avons trop vu, précisément en Allemagne, pour ne pas dire que justement en Allemagne il serait temps de changer de tactique."123

Even more hardhitting was a series of articles in the French syndicalist press entitled pointedly "La Banqueroute de la méthode syndicaliste allemande". In these, Rieger made a caustic attack on the leadership of the German trade union movement, with its emphasis on mutual assurance funds, its intolerance of political dissent, and its administrative bureaucracy:

"[. . .] les leaders des grands syndicats allemands se distinguent par les qualités suivantes; une arrogance offensant vis-à-vis de tous les hommes d'autre conviction, un dédain tenace, nourri de longue date contre toute initiative révolutionnaire des masses ouvrières; l'amour d'un ministérialisme cru qu'ils propagent continuellement parmi leurs co-membres; le désir d'exercer une tutelle sur les masses par une concentration avisée de tout le pouvoir entre les mains d'eux, les meneurs [. . .]"124

The articles reinforced the old image of warlike, expansionist Germany, and attributed these traits to the German trade union leadership:

"La diplomatie allemande a obtenu, par sa 'politique mondiale' (Weltpolitik), se frottant tantôt à un pays, tantôt à un autre, que l'Allemagne est considérée dans le monde entier comme un perturbateur de la paix, brutal et avide.

[. . .]

"La génération actuelle traîne en grande partie avec elle les péchés des ancêtres, et le bâton-béquille par lequel Frédéric premier avait l'habitude de régner ses sujets, exerce encore son effet sur la génération de nos jours, invisiblement peut-être, mais néanmoins avec une rigueur réelle. Cependant on ne saurait nier que notre génération fait de son mieux pour mériter la renommée équivoque dont le Michel allemand se rejouit depuis tant d'années. Le plus de succès dans cette direction ont eu, ces temps derniers, les leaders du mouvement ouvrier allemand, lesquels ont su s'assurer, par leurs efforts assidus l'hégémonie dans l'Internationale ouvrière."125

In other words, if the CGT could not find support for its view in the International Secretariat, this was only because the imperialist German labour leaders had "colonised" the international movement.

One way out of this situation, as perceived by the CGT, might have been to ally themselves firmly with the Localists in Germany and those elements in Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy and elsewhere, which opposed political tutelage of the labour movement. Yet despite contacts with Rieger and other Localists, the CGT leadership remained aloof from the Localist movement, acknowledging its numerical weakness¹²⁶ and eschewing any formal contacts. Similarly, Griffuelhes undertook a speaking tour of Switzerland in November 1907, which, it was suggested in La Voix du Peuple, might result in the formation of international links more useful to France than those hitherto made.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Griffuelhes seemed less preoccupied with reporting the successes of his propaganda tour than with exposing malicious

tactics used by opponents. ¹²⁸ The contacts in Switzerland were
never followed up. ¹²⁹ The idea of setting up a rival
international organisation was clearly no more than a threat. In
1904, the Comité confédéral had received a communication from the
Spanish Federacion Regional de Trabajadores, which proposed the
organisation of an international congress, with the aim of
setting up a fully-fledged labour confederation. ¹³⁰ Despite the
support for the initiative from other groups not involved in the
International Secretariat, and the CGT's own absence from
international conferences, the Comité confédéral did not respond
to this proposal.

The CGT's half-hearted espousal of groups in other countries
was thus not a positive commitment but a negative, essentially
defensive response to its rebuttal in the International
Secretariat. It supported the Localists primarily as a means of
placing the German labour leaders in a bad light. This also
helped to decrease the CGT's sense of isolation in the
international movement. On the other hand, the CGT was well aware
that the groups with whom the CGT entered into contact, such as
the Localists, were numerically weak and often bitterly divided.
None of them was in the same position as the CGT, that is, none
of them represented the majority confederation of its country.
The CGT could therefore not envisage an international alliance
where it would represent the only major national confederation.
This was especially true because the CGT relied on its image as
"avant-garde" of the masses and on its claim to representativity
on the same level as the German Generalkommission.

At the same time, this attitude must be seen as a parallel

on the international level of the CGT's own position domestically: La Voix du Peuple attacked German centralism precisely because of agitation from within the CGT from federations such as the Fédération du Livre which favoured German methods of organisation. Thus, it followed logically from this that a split on the international level might also mean a split within CGT ranks, something which the leadership was obviously anxious to avoid. After the threats pronounced by German and other labour leaders at Christiania and Stuttgart, the CGT could not doubt that the possibility of a split was a real one.

Whatever the reasons, the overall effect of this negative strategy on the part of the CGT meant that there was no compensatory positive portrayal of German workers. Even when reporting events in the German labour movement outside the Generalkommission, the French syndicalist press resorted to an ironic, mocking tone. Under a heading, "Bravo les Allemands", for example, an account of a demonstration against unemployment in Berlin ended:

"Bravo! Ce n'est pas nous qui critiquerons la classe ouvrière allemande sur les formes de son action. Il nous est arrivé de regretter que cette force énorme qu'est la social-démocratie et les syndicats qui lui sont inféodés n'ait pas l'allure révolutionnaire. La voici qui entre en branle, qui fait de l'action directe.

"Bravo! Qu'elle fasse mieux encore. Nous serons les premiers à nous en réjouir."¹³¹

Ultimately, it was implied, the German labour movement was steeped in imperialist ideology. This view was all the more forceful because it coincided with growing criticism within the French socialist movement of the German social democrats. At the

Amsterdam congress of the Second International in 1904, Jaurès had made a blistering attack on the SPD. He accused the German of wishing to mould the world proletariat in their own image:

"[les socialistes allemands] cèdent à une funeste illusion; ils s'imaginent que la conception politique et sociale de l'Allemagne, avec laquelle ils sont aux prises, peut servir de mesure uniforme, de règle inflexible, de niveau impérieux à l'action du socialisme de tous les pays."132

This illusion could only harm the labour movement as a whole, claimed Jaurès, because despite their huge electorate, the German social-democrats were completely powerless:

"En ce moment, ce qui pèse sur l'Europe et sur le monde, sur la garantie de la paix, sur la garantie des libertés publiques, sur le progrès du socialisme et du prolétariat, ce qui pèse sur tout le progrès politique et social de l'Europe et du monde [...] c'est l'impuissance politique de la démocratie sociale allemande."133

At the Stuttgart international congress, in 1907, the attack was led by Gustave Hervé:

"J'aime le beau peuple allemand, placide et bienveillant. J'admire votre science, votre organisation, vos grands militants.
"Mais vous n'êtes qu'une admirable machine à voter et à cotiser. Vous n'avez aucune conception révolutionnaire. Vous pouvez aller très loin dans les nuages de la pensée, mais devant un gouvernement, vous reculez, vous cherchez des faux-fuyants. Vous avez peur de la prison."134

From 1907 onwards, Hervé put this view across to the large section of the French working class which read his paper, La Guerre Sociale.

As for the anarchist sympathisers in the French labour movement, they had for some time been reading similar scathing commentaries of the German labour movement, as in this report in Les Temps Nouveaux, for example:

"Un million de syndiqués, c'est très joli, et payant leurs cotisations, c'est admirable; mais ce qu'on ne sait pas assez en France, c'est que les syndicats allemands ont recruté leurs adhérents parce que, grâce au gouvernement allemand, ils ont pu instituer des caisses de secours pour les assurances. [...] ils n'osent pas s'engager à fond dans la lutte quotidienne, parce qu'ils craignent (au moins autant que le gouvernement allemand) de compromettre leur propre organisation et leurs puissantes mutualités."135

Perhaps even more damaging to the image of Germany as transmitted to the French working classes were critics from Germany, whose outspoken assaults on the German social-democratic "electoral machine" were welcomed with open arms by the French syndicalist leaders. On 3 April 1907, at a conference at the Société de Géographie in Paris, Griffuelhes made the inevitable comparison between the French and German labour movements:

"En Allemagne, il y a une masses de syndiqués; en France, il y a un syndicalisme, théorie qui résume et contient toute l'action ouvrière [...]"136

But it was Robert Michels, a German socialist who was present at the conference, who went farthest in his biting analysis of German labour bureaucracy:

"Nous n'avons pas comme vous un syndicalisme révolutionnaire qui propage et nourrit les sentiments incompressibles de la liberté [...]. Pour que le syndicalisme puisse se développer pleinement chez nous, il faut que les libertés politiques soient conquises. [...] Aussi, malgré ses trois millions et demi de suffrages socialistes, l'Allemagne pèse-t-elle sur l'Europe comme une menace de guerre et de réaction."137

Michels' detailed analysis of the rise of bureaucracy in the labour movement, with specific reference to Germany, was published in 1908.
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Of course, these attacks on the Germans delighted the French ruling classes, since they betrayed the impossibility of the

CGT's hypothesis that the workers of each country were more ready to fight for their counterparts in other countries than for their own nation. The CGT's much-vaunted views on militarism and patriotism depended heavily on a complex network of issues, but central to them all was the assumption that workers of all countries had more in common with each other than with the ruling classes of their own country. On the other hand, the French ruling classes also depended on the strength of patriotic feeling to maintain social peace and cohesion. The issue of working-class internationalism was therefore ultimately a propaganda battle between the CGT and the government. If the ruling classes in France could point to the difficulties which the CGT had in dealing with the German labour leadership, the whole of the CGT's multi-faceted propaganda, from antimilitarism to the general strike, was undermined.

At the trial of Grandjouan and Vignaud for the publication of a special edition of La Voix du Peuple on conscription, in January 1908, the prosecution claimed that the CGT's antimilitarist campaign was endangering France because it was not reciprocated by the Germans:

" [...] dans des procès antérieurs on évoquait la propagande faite en Allemagne en même temps qu'en France, et on ajoutait qu'en cas de guerre, les Allemands ne marcheraient pas plus que les Français. "Mirage! Affirmations fausses! proclame l'avocat général. Au Congrès de Stuttgart, les socialistes allemands se sont prononcés contre cette thèse et ils ont laissé entendre qu'en cas de guerre, pas un socialiste ne manquerait pas à l'appel, que tous marcheraient contre 'l'ennemi héréditaire'. "Ainsi, l'attitude de socialistes Allemands permet à l'avocat général d'arguer qu'il n'y a pas entre les travailleurs de France et ceux d'Allemagne, la solidarité de classe qui devrait leur faire oublier

les excitations chauvines des capitalistes et des gouvernements."¹³⁹

The bourgeois press took up this theme, and Le Temps in particular took pleasure in praising the German trade-union leaders at the expense of the CGT. When the CGT refused to take part in the Christiania conference, Le Temps carried an article on the International Secretariat which praised the work of its members, describing them as "des gens sérieux et modérés qui s'occupent de leurs intérêts particuliers, mais refusent de compromettre l'intérêt général."¹⁴⁰ In July 1908, Le Temps covered the German trade-union congress in Hamburg, making much of the German labour leadership's pragmatic attitude towards methods of action and their lack of revolutionary ideology. In particular, the German example was used to ridicule the CGT's stand on antimilitarism and the general strike:

"L'ordre du jour du congrès donne une preuve nouvelle de l'esprit pratique et du sens de ce qui est immédiatement réalisable qui caractérisent le mouvement syndical allemand. Il n'y est même pas question de la grève générale ou d'antimilitarisme. La fameuse question du Premier Mai même ne vient que comme un point subsidiaire du chapitre qui concerne la propagande en général."¹⁴¹

Even worse, the article quoted a leading member of the Generalkommission in a direct attack on the CGT's policy of direct action to obtain a reduction in working hours:

"Ce n'est pas, me dit un des principaux délégués, parce qu'on aura inscrit sur des bandes de calicot, comme le fit votre Confédération Générale du Travail, 'A partir du Premier Mai nous ne travaillerons plus que huit heures', que le résultat sera atteint. Ces vantardises, lorsqu'elles ne sont pas suivies d'effet, sont ridicules tout simplement."¹⁴²

One member of the Generalkommission was reported to have gone even further in his insults:

"Quant à notre Confédération du Travail, on en parle généralement ici comme d'une assemblée de fantoches dont M. Griffuelhes est le plus bel ornement!"¹⁴³

If the last comment came more probably from the pen of the Le Temps journalist than from any member of the German labour movement, the criticism of the CGT's May Day campaign had been made by the Germans several times before, notably at the Stuttgart congress of the Second International. Whether or not the Germans actually uttered these remarks is not as significant as the CGT's response to the report. Whereas the CGT had responded to earlier criticisms by re-asserting international solidarity, this time they fell into the trap of defending their own position and counter-attacking. The Temps article was reproduced in full in La Voix du Peuple,¹⁴⁴ and was followed by sarcastic comments which accused the German labour leaders of playing the capitalist game: "être félicité par Le Temps¹⁴⁵ équivaut à avoir droit à la reconnaissance des exploités."

The CGT's response showed just how touchy the French labour leaders were. That the French were ready to believe the worst about their German counterparts revealed just how little solidarity existed between the labour leaderships of France and Germany; it also indicated the essentially negative image which the CGT had of the German labour movement. Perhaps most significantly, the Temps episode demonstrated the fundamental weakness of the CGT, and the strength of the ruling class "divide and rule" strategy, in the propaganda battle.

For the rank and file readers of La Voix du Peuple, this duelling between the French and German labour leaders could only

complement and reinforce the nationalistic message propagated by the ruling classes, at a time of conflict between the French and German governments in North Africa. There was not even a pretence of international solidarity, and the CGT's declarations of a general strike in the event of war evidently posed no threat to the government.

It was evidently time for the CGT either formally to abandon this policy, or to put some effort into making it work.

Chapter V. FRANCE RETURNS TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

V.1 The Marseille Congress of the CGT, 1908

By 1908, the conflict between the CGT and the German-led International Secretariat was threatening to undermine the CGT's constantly reiterated principle of internationalism and opposition to war. The "reformists" within the CGT realised that this was their opportunity to consolidate their position, particularly as they had the acknowledged support of the powerful German unions and of the ISNTUC itself. Legien and Hueber had gone out of their way at the international conference of Christiania to make it clear that they would welcome any split from the revolutionary syndicalist leadership in France with open arms. The question of international relations thus became a weapon for the reformists in the struggle for leadership of the French trade-union leadership, as Paul Louis noted a few years after the Marseille congress of the CGT:

"Les réformistes n'avaient pas, [sur la question des rapports internationaux], la même conception que les révolutionnaires. Ils trouvaient, dans le relâchement de ces rapports avec le Secrétariat, un grief, un argument de poids contre leurs adversaires de tendances, et ils espéraient, en s'appuyant sur la masse de l'Internationale Syndicale, dont les thèses différaient de celles des leaders de la C.G.T., préparer leur propre succès pour l'avenir."¹

Foreseeing problems in this area, Griffuelhes had already to some extent tried to ward off suggestions that the Comité confédéral was acting without the backing of the rest of the movement. In a pointed attack on both the International Secretariat's methods and those French federations which sought to emulate them, Griffuelhes argued that such activities as collecting statistical information, which constituted the major area of work of the ISNTUC, were, for the French labour movement,

inappropriate and time-wasting:

"En conformité d'une décision du Comité [confédéral], un questionnaire absolument identique à celui adressé par le bureau international fut adressé aux Fédérations. Très peu répondirent et celles qui le firent étaient celles précisément qui ne possédaient aucun des services indiqués plus haut. [...] Une seule Fédération en France possède les services de mutualité indiqués dans le questionnaire et celle-ci ne donna aucun renseignement.

"[...]"

"Les organisations apportaient de la négligence dans l'application de la résolution de Stuttgart [sic] ou, ce qui me paraît être la vérité, elles considéraient les rapports de cette nature comme étant sans intérêt."2

If even the Fédération du Livre, singled out for special mention here, saw no use in such questionnaires, then Griffuelhes could only conclude that the CGT leadership's position was correct and had the support of the whole of the French labour movement. Griffuelhes was using the "reformists'" arguments against them, in anticipation of the Marseille debate to come.

In the event, however, Griffuelhes was unable to put forward this view at the 1908 congress in Marseille, since all the members of the Bureau confédéral were arrested and detained on 1 August 1908, because they had voted a forty-eight hour general strike in support of the building workers. The result of this was that the Comité confédéral's report on International Relations, like all the issues facing the congress, became, in the absence of its authors, a bone of contention between the "reformists" and the militant antimilitarists, at a congress where opinions
3
were even more polarised than usual. Since the Comité confédéral was not present to defend its own conduct, the dissidents within the CGT seized the opportunity to criticise it, in the aim,

presumably, of obtaining a vote of no-confidence in the CGT leadership.

The attack was directed against the Comité confédéral, on two counts. Firstly, it was claimed that the Comité confédéral had deliberately failed to comply with the Amiens decision, by sending their request, for antimilitarism and the general strike to be placed on the agenda of the next international conference, too late for it to be resolved in time for the Christiania conference in 1907. This request had been sent by Griffuelhes on 28 August 1907, a few days after the Comité confédéral had received official notification of the conference, which was due to take place on 15 September 1907. The Amiens congress of the CGT had authorised the Comité confédéral to first ask the International Secretary to place on the agenda of the next conference the questions of antimilitarism and the general strike, and, in the event of a refusal, only then to contact the other national centres directly. The Comité confédéral had waited until the agenda of the Christiania conference was already prepared before contacting Legien, and had, almost immediately afterwards, contacted the other national centres, without waiting for the reply of the International Secretary. In order to ascertain that the Comité confédéral had not contacted the International Secretary immediately after the Amiens decision in 1906, Saint-Venant, of the Bourse du Travail de Lille (Lille being a Guesdist stronghold), had written to Legien before the Marseille congress. This was a clear sign that the "reformists" had planned their attack on the Comité confédéral in advance. Saint-Venant claimed that, as the Comité confédéral had waited

until after the official invitation to Christiania to address their demands regarding antimilitarism and the general strike, the Amiens decision had been flouted.⁴ This was an argument which even supporters of the Comité confédéral found difficult to refute. Merrheim, of the Metalworkers' Federation, and a close ally of Griffuelhes and Pouget, could only say that the Amiens decision had been respected "sinon dans sa forme, dans sa lettre,⁵ tout au moins dans son fond". Nevertheless, there was a general agreement that the international conferences held little interest for the CGT. There was, in fact, much common ground in this dispute; all sides agreed on the need for international links of some kind, and all agreed that the present international organisation left much to be desired. The conflict centred on the method of dealing with the International Secretariat, and here the differences were heightened for tactical reasons.

The second major thrust of the attack against the CGT leadership concerned the questions of antimilitarism and the general strike, to which the "reformists" were opposed. Pierre Coupat, leader of the Fédération des Mécaniciens,⁶ and Guérard accused the CGT leadership of having boycotted the ISNTUC simply because the majority of its members disagreed with the CGT. Guérard claimed that this reflected chauvinistic pride and arrogance on the part of the Comité confédéral:

"Peut-être la thèse soutenue par les camarades de l'étranger est-elle même mauvaise, mais nous n'avons pas la prétension que nous sommes toujours dans la vérité, ce serait un chauvinisme que vous n'avez pas et je pense que ce Congrès sera unanime pour déclarer qu'à l'avenir le Comité devra participer aux conférences internationales."⁷

Coupat likewise claimed that if French methods were superior to German ones, the way to show this was to try to influence the Germans by contact and not by staying away from international conferences.⁸

It was, however, Niel, known as the champion of labour unity, who led the attack against the CGT leadership. Not viewed as one of the "reformist" camp within the CGT, Niel was nonetheless opposed to many of the more radical stances adopted by the CGT and was critical of the Comité confédéral's dealings with the International Secretariat.⁹ Niel accused the CGT leadership of deliberately wrecking any chances of French participation in the ISNTUC, because they did not agree with the policies and methods of the International Secretariat:

"[...] je vois là le désir de plus en plus manifeste, avéré, prouvé, de ne pas s'allier avec l'association internationale du Travail, parce que ce Bureau international n'est pas dans l'esprit de notre syndicalisme français."¹⁰

According to Niel, not only was the Comité confédéral wrong to infringe the Amiens decision, but its whole conduct towards the ISNTUC was to be denounced. Indeed, Niel's condemnation of the CGT leadership went so far as to imply that the logical consequence of its conduct would be to cause a split in the French organisations:

"Si vous ne vouliez pas participer à tous les travaux du Bureau international, à ses rapports internationaux, à ses enquêtes sur des questions économiques, c'est peut-être parce que vous trouvez que tous ces travaux exécutés par le bureau international ne sont pas exécutés selon notre orthodoxie syndicaliste française; c'est possible, mais est-ce là une raison suffisante pour vous retirer du Bureau international? Et que diriez-vous, camarades, si demain, sous prétexte qu'elle demanderait l'inscription à l'ordre du jour d'une

question qu'on déciderait de n'y pas mettre, une de nos organisations, le Textile, par exemple, se retirait de la Confédération?"¹¹

Opposing these demands for unconditional resumption of activities within the ISNTUC, Robert (a member of the commission nominated in 1903 to draw up the paper on antimilitarism and the general strike for the international conference of Dublin) spoke of the futility of the international conferences:

"A Stuttgart [sic], on a envoyé Griffuelhes; qu'en est-il résulté? Une petite parlotte de deux heures, mais rien ou à peu près rien au point de vue de l'action ou de l'agitation, ou même de l'entente entre le prolétariat international."¹²

For Merrheim, the essential question was not the conduct of the Comité confédéral, but the usefulness of the ISNTUC:

"Au moment de la guerre russo-japonaise, le Bureau syndical international répond aux démarches de la CGT par un refus; au moment des incidents du Maroc, Griffuelhes fait le voyage de Berlin et on ne l'a pas reçu [...]. Quelle sera notre situation vis-à-vis de ce Secrétariat qui systématiquement écarte l'un des objets les plus chers du prolétariat, celui d'éviter la guerre, de ne pas permettre le massacre des peuples?"¹³

Merrheim's question summed up the dilemma which faced the CGT. Any solution which required the CGT to resume participation in international conferences on the basis of the Amsterdam and Christiania decisions would mean a loss of face and a sacrifice of principles, and yet they could not afford to be seen to refuse to work with the ISNTUC.

There seemed to be little room for compromise, despite the common ground which underlay the question. Robert and Latapie rejected the International Secretariat as useless, whilst Niel, Coupat and Guérard argued for unconditional re-entry into the international organisation. This was because at stake was not

only the question of participation in the ISNTUC, but the whole of CGT policy and methods and indeed the leading position of revolutionary syndicalism within the French labour movement.

A compromise resolution was, however, formulated. Luquet, interim secretary of the CGT, and Merrheim presented a joint proposal to the congress which emphasised that relations with the International Secretariat had never ceased and exonerated the Comité confédéral of any blame. The resolution, which was passed by 831 votes to 278 against, looked forward to future cooperation with the ISNTUC, but stressed the inadequacy of the organisation and hence the need to expand its scope to include full congresses and the discussion of more general questions. Finally, the Marseille resolution reiterated the Amiens decision, but changed the emphasis slightly; the CGT would now work within the ISNTUC to secure discussion on antimilitarism and the general strike, instead of making discussion of these issues an a priori condition.¹⁴

The question of international links was seen at the Marseille congress as the lynchpin of CGT policy and action. In particular it was the key to the discussion on antimilitarism. The Marseille congress pronounced in favour of a general strike upon declaration of war, in a resolution which showed both the militant resolve of the CGT and at the same time the fundamental weakness of CGT policy:

"Le Congrès déclare qu'il faut, au point de vue international, faire l'instruction des travailleurs enfin qu'en cas de guerre entre puissances les travailleurs répondent à la déclaration de guerre par une déclaration de grève générale révolutionnaire."¹⁵

It was the first affirmation of the CGT's resolve to prevent war by a general strike, and it showed the links between the doctrinal pillars of internationalism, antimilitarism and the general strike, by making antimilitarist action, and indeed the general strike against war, dependent on an international campaign. On a purely theoretical level this provided a coherent whole. On a practical level, however, this resolution exposed the weakness of CGT ideology. How could the CGT hope to carry out such a policy of international education when the very partners whose cooperation they needed refused to even discuss antimilitarism and the general strike? Since these doctrinal pillars supported the whole which was CGT policy, if the internationalism pillar fell because of the CGT's isolation abroad, the rest of the CGT's ideological support fell with it. Coupat, an opponent of the CGT's antimilitarist campaign, pointed out this crucial problem in discussing international relations at Marseille:

"Dans quelle situation vous mettrez-vous, vous qui avez mis à l'ordre du jour du Congrès la question de l'antimilitarisme en cas de guerre, si vous repoussez la reprise des rapports internationaux, au cas où nous serions menacés d'une guerre? [...] Si nous avons boudé contre les Allemands ou les Anglais, quelle situation nous sera faite lorsque nous voulons communiquer avec eux?"¹⁶

This fundamental weakness in the CGT's internationalist strategy thus also undermined its policies on antimilitarism and the general strike.

A second vital qualification also undermined the CGT's antimilitarist campaign, indicating a lack of real commitment: in the Marseille resolution on antimilitarism, the CGT was committed

not to organise the general strike, but to educate the workers towards this aim.

Although the resolution on antimilitarism and the Marseille congress' approval of the Comité confédéral's attitude towards the ISNTUC could be seen as victories for the revolutionary syndicalist leadership, the Marseille congress revealed the CGT's deep insecurity faced with the double problem of total isolation within the organised international labour movement and disunity within its own ranks. Indeed, the domestic problems were fuelled by the international situation. Secure in the knowledge that they would be supported by the powerful labour movement representatives in the ISNTUC, the "reformists" in France threatened to force a split on the issue of international relations, as Merrheim wrote anxiously to Monatte:

"Mon Niel, poussé au bout, a été amené à déclarer que si nous ne voulions pas assister aux conférences [internationales], avant deux ans, il y aurait comme [en] Hollande deux confédérations, une adhérente au Bureau International, l'autre pas. Je lui ai demandé si c'était au collimateur. Il n'a répondu ni oui, ni non, et Guérard a protesté en disant qu'il n'irait pas jusque-là. Coupat s'est tu. Serait-ce la scission qui commencerait?"¹⁷

The nature of the problem facing the CGT leadership could not have been made clearer.

The onus was now on the CGT to make some approach to the International Secretariat. Events within the CGT took a hand in this. In February 1909, Griffuelhes resigned, following a bitter personalised squabble which was only the latest in a series of attacks and disputes. The tide seemed to have turned against the revolutionary syndicalists when Niel was elected, by a margin of only one vote, as Griffuelhes' successor. Although not strictly

speaking one of the "reformist" camp, Niel was seen by them as "their" candidate (especially since his interventions at Marseille) against the revolutionary syndicalist nominee Nicolet:

"Les réformistes considéraient [...] l'élection de Niel comme un moindre mal, comme une première étape vers la transformation de l'organisation du prolétariat français qui le mettrait à l'unisson des prolétariats étrangers par l'union des trois fractions: socialiste (c'est-à-dire politique), syndicale et coopérative."¹⁸

With Niel at the head of the CGT, relations with the International Secretariat were immediately resumed. Reproducing the text of the Marseille resolution, Legien noted in his Fifth International Report that the CGT had "evidently manifested its intention to remain represented on the International Secretariat" and gave his personal seal of approval by welcoming the French back into the fold, even agreeing that there was now "no reason" for the international conference not to comply with the CGT's¹⁹ desire to discuss the holding of international congresses. Since Legien's line had long been that there was no point in discussing the holding of congresses until there was uniformity within the ISNTUC on all major questions, Legien's apparent softening towards the French can only have been prompted by what he saw as a significant change of direction in the CGT.

In accordance with this new policy of conciliation towards the French, it was decided that the CGT should host the next international conference. It appeared to some observers in France, therefore, that Paris had been chosen as the venue of the next international conference precisely to celebrate the victory of the "reformists" in France and to give them support for the

continuing power struggle. If this was the case, however, the celebratory aspect lost its significance when, in May 1909, Niel was forced to resign amid allegations of incompetence and failure to support a large-scale postal workers' strike. In July 1909, Léon Jouhaux was elected general secretary of the CGT. Although a relative outsider, Jouhaux was known as a close friend and protégé of Griffuelhes, and his election was seen as a return to traditional CGT revolutionary syndicalism; in 1909, Jouhaux was viewed, as his biographers have pointed out, as "un militant²¹ libertaire bien dans la ligne de l'anarcho-syndicalisme". Suddenly, the future of the CGT in the International Secretariat, which had seemed settled, now looked uncertain.

V.2 The international conference of Paris, 1909

The international conference which took place in Paris on 30 and 31 August and 1 September 1909 was remarkable for several reasons, as Walther Schevenels has pointed out.²² In the first place, Schevenels draws attention to the prominence of the individual delegates: most of the post-war IFTU leaders (Appleton, Jouhaux, Oudegeest, Legien and Sassenbach) were present, as was Huysmans, secretary of the International Socialist Bureau. Secondly, this conference was attended by Samuel Gompers, leader of the American Federation of Labor. Legien had been assiduously courting the AFL for several years, in the hope that the linking of the American and European labour movements would make the ISNTUC a truly international and more solid, representative body. Thirdly, the Paris conference marked the return of the French labour movement to the International

Secretariat. These three factors all pointed to the consolidation of the ISNTUC's authority as sole representative of the labour movements of the industrialised nations. Indeed, the International Secretary was able to portray, in his report to the conference, an optimistic picture of the international organisation, with sixteen countries now affiliated, representing a total membership of almost ten million, and the prospect of²³ these numbers being swelled by the imminent entry of the AFL. The Paris conference was the most representative to date, all the affiliated centres except Finland and Sweden having sent at least one delegate, and Gompers, Loukof (for Bulgaria) and Racovsky (for Roumania) being present as observers.

In the event, however, the Paris conference was notable for other reasons, for conflicts rather than for its positive aspects. The conflicts, more acute than at any previous conference, were exacerbated by detailed and widespread reporting of the conference proceedings in the press. It was the first international conference to come under such rigorous scrutiny from the international press of all political persuasions. Indeed, the opening session of the conference was occupied with a discussion on whether the press should be allowed, the French, as organisers of the conference, arguing that the press should be excluded "in order to avoid overcrowding and disturbance",²⁴ according to Yvetot. At all previous conferences, the host country had decided on the question of press admittance. In arguing for privacy, however, the French were laying themselves open to criticism, as they had consistently portrayed France as

the home of democracy and freedom (particularly in opposition to Germany's repressive police state). Indeed, Hueber lost no time in using this opportunity to criticise the French:

"It would be much better for the conference to hold all discussions in public. This would also be a good thing for the French trade unions. This French proposition seemed to be based on a fear of publicity."²⁵

Hueber's reference to the interests of the French trade unions is revealing, since it hints at the real reason why the ISNTUC leaders wished the press to be admitted: they presumably hoped that French workers, reading accounts of the international conference in the press, would come to the conclusion that the ideas and proposals of the CGT leadership were not shared by labour leaders of other countries, and that the methods favoured by the latter were more reasonable and practical. The vote went against the French, and the press were duly admitted.

It was thus clear from the outset that the French had been re-admitted to the International Secretariat strictly on the terms of the other members, and that there would be no concessions just because the French were hosting the conference. This was further made apparent by a series of seemingly petty squabbles between the French delegates and the other ISNTUC members.

Immediately after the secretary's report, Huysmans demanded clarification on the CGT's membership figures, since, as the CGT had suspended relations with the International Secretariat, they had paid subscriptions at the old rate, unaware of the increase in levies. This, argued Huysmans, gave a false picture of the CGT because according to the new rates it would appear that CGT

membership had decreased. It was a malicious snipe, clearly intended for the benefit of the press. Legien tried to smooth out the differences by explaining the administrative processes which had given rise to this anomaly, but Yvetot's sensitivity was immediately ruffled:

"The statements made by the C.G.T. do not result from an error, but are the natural result of the indifference shown by the I [nternational] S[ecretary]."26

What should have been a minor clarification soon turned into a heated debate. Legien, stung by accusations of indifference, retorted in kind, claiming that it was the CGT's negligence which had caused the problems. He went on to outline the conflicts which had occurred between the CGT and the International Secretariat, and blamed them all on the CGT's wilfulness:

"We want to arrive at free arguments between the workers of the different countries, but we do not want certain tactics forced upon us. The C.G.T. would not work with us, simply because we would not agree with their propositions."27

The argument was ended only because Gompers intervened to express his own views. In so doing, he opened up another discussion, since it became clear that the AFL's entry into the ISNTUC was by no means settled. Gompers began by stating the desire of the AFL to draw closer to the labour movements of Europe, but he stressed that it would take some time for the AFL to formally make a decision on membership and that he would first have to report back on his impressions of the Paris conference. The implied message was that the AFL was willing to join only if Gompers was satisfied with what he saw. Gompers also stressed the need for the complete autonomy of all affiliated centres, and

expressed some criticism of the decision-making procedures of the ISNTUC:

"We are in complete agreement with all Legien has said, that it must be left to every country to decide on its own policy and methods of action. [...] The members of my organisation must decide and not the President on such questions. [...] What we want in the near future, however, is the formation of an International Federation of Labour."28

Hueber, of Austria, was most indignant in his reaction to Gompers' speech:

"I am not surprised at Gompers' speech, which means briefly, Gompers does not desire the union of the proletariat of the two hemispheres. [...] We can also tell a story of the battles and the misery of the European proletariat. But we veterans in the movement do not need to do that. [...] We are convinced the time will arrive when the American proletariat will see that the adherence to the International and that Gompers will ask for it himself."29

It was decided, after some more discussion, that Gompers should be admitted as a guest, with a view to AFL membership in the near future, and that a report on this should take place at the next conference. The discussion had, however, shown the intransigence of the International Secretariat, best expressed by Hueber. His reference to "we veterans" showed clearly that the ISNTUC leaders were prepared to give in to no-one, not even to the powerful (at least in numerical terms) AFL, and that they saw themselves as the guardians of the orthodox line. This spirit of intolerance was to guide responses throughout the conference.

It was during the second day that most of the work of the conference was carried out, although not without incident. A resolution condemning the Turkish government for laws restricting working-class organisation was passed without discussion, as was

a Belgian proposal that "only those resolutions presented by the affiliated trade union centres will be discussed" (presumably in the light of the previous resolution, which had been proposed by the Roumanian delegate, who was merely a guest). Similarly, a Norwegian resolution recommending the preparation of guidelines for uniform statistical reports was passed without further comment, together with a second proposal by Legien that the same
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apply to strike statistics.

The major question for discussion was the possibility of holding international congresses. This question had been placed on the agenda at the request of the CGT. It was preceded by a proposal by Samuel Gompers that the establishment of an International Federation of Labour be seriously considered,

"the purpose of the federation being for the protection and advancement of the rights, interests and justice of the wage-earners of all countries and the establishment of international fraternity and solidarity."³¹

Gompers made it clear that the International Secretariat in its present form was inadequate according to the AFL's expectations, and that if the Americans were to participate in future international work they would try to transform the ISNTUC into a more solid organisation. However, the differences between this proposal and the French conception of an international federation was made equally clear:

"The name I[n]ternational S[ecretariat] does not mean anything at all to us. We desire another name and a better form for this important organisation. There should be no room in our international organisation for the discussion of academic questions, only serious and practical questions concerning the welfare of the workers should be considered and discussed."³²

In other words, Gompers envisaged consolidating the existing

organisation by changing the title and by making the decision-making process more "federal", that is, elected delegates from each country would decide on specific issues, instead of this being the role of the national secretaries of each country without specific mandate to vote on particular issues. Discussion would be strictly limited to "bread and butter" issues and exclude more general discussion of policy and tactics. The French, on the other hand, wanted to widen the scope of the international organisation as much as possible, to include representatives of all shades of political opinion, and to discuss all questions which they saw as affecting the working class, including of course antimilitarism and the general strike.

The difference between the French and American proposals was obvious to the ISNTUC members. If the conference was happy to indulge the AFL's wishes and at least consider the question of forming an international federation, the patience of the ISNTUC leaders did not extend to the French. The CGT's proposal that future international meetings take the form of congresses was essentially in line with Gompers' request, but it went far beyond the American's and indeed the ISNTUC's vision of international organisation. Huysmans at first attempted to have the question moved to the end of the agenda, where there would undoubtedly be insufficient time for a full discussion, but on the French delegates' insistence he withdrew this suggestion. Jouhaux then briefly outlined the reasons for the French proposal, arguing that labour movement representatives should be allowed to discuss and decide on all questions concerning workers, regardless of the

Socialist International. Huysmans and Hueber had not, however, abandoned their attempts to have the question thrown out. Whilst Jouhaux was speaking, Huysmans had circulated a document among the delegates, for them to sign. As soon as Jouhaux had finished speaking on his proposal, Hueber read out the document, which had been signed by representatives of Britain, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Austria and Croatia:

"We appreciate the reasons for the French suggestion. We recognise that in France there are causes for making such proposals. We are however of the opinion that the international conferences already present sufficient difficulties. We consider the calling together of international congresses to be an impossibility. It has already been shown that the decisions cannot be carried out against the will of individual national centres. We must refrain from calling congresses at the present time in order that the workers may be spared bitter disappointments. But there is still another reason for our attitude; we stand by the policy of the joint political and trade union struggle. These are the two arms of the body, which are controlled by the head of the organised working-class. We must carry on the fight with the left arm as well as the right. So long as the capitalist class oppresses the workers politically and industrially, it would be a crime against the workers to march separately."33

The directness of this attack was astonishing. In the first place, the way in which the French proposal had been met showed an absolute lack of respect for the CGT leaders, and it was calculated to show the isolation of the organisation (again, Hueber and his allies were mindful of the presence of the press). It also showed the lengths to which certain members of the organisation were prepared to go to counter the French.

Equally direct was the reasoning behind the calculated snub. Hueber's and Huysmans' statement spelled out the ideological divide which separated the French from the remainder of the

International Secretariat and which made acceptance of the French proposal impossible: the dividing line was determined by the attitude towards International Socialist Congresses. Hueber and Huysmans were asserting leadership of the ISNTUC by virtue of their ties with the Socialist International. It was their ideology which they were imposing on the International Secretariat with this statement.

The attempt to shelve the question failed, however, because the Germans and the Swiss refused to sign the declaration, not from lack of sympathy with the ideas expressed in it, but because they thought that it was more important to discuss the question more fully. This represented a radical departure from Legien's earlier position, reflecting a recognition of the importance placed by the French on discussion. There was of course no chance that the proposal would be accepted, as the feeling of the majority was undoubtedly against the idea, and Legien was secure enough in his authority to know that the discussion would alter nothing. Even so, the willingness to engage in discussion showed some softening of the German position. The presence of the press may have prompted Legien to encourage discussion, as the arguments against the French proposal would be reported widely in France and elsewhere. Equally important for Legien was the desire not to alienate Gompers by placing too much emphasis on the role of the Second International.

The debate was effectively opened by Legien, who gave his reasons for not signing Hueber's document. Declaring that the Germans considered it necessary to hear the various opinions on the subject, Legien went on to give his own opinion:

"Our present conferences are simply for the work and study of practical organisation. [...] For the questions that concern the general working class movement we have the international socialist congresses. [...] The hypothesis on which [international] trade-union congresses are founded must be close, well developed, active national federations, perfectly ready for all forms of self-sacrificing effort. I hope that the French comrades will not be hurt, if I tell them that in these respects they are far behind many of us."34

For the first time, the debate between the two sides was open and public, and very direct. Observers could not fail to notice the conflict between the two main points of view and between the two main protagonists, Legien and Yvetot. La Petite République's account of the session was printed on the front page, under the title "L'ANTAGONISME entre les deux tendances du syndicalisme". In this article, the contrast between the personal styles of Legien and Yvetot was underlined:

"M. Legien a parlé d'une voix ferme, mais d'un ton très tranquille. M. Yvetot va répondre [...] avec sa fougue habituelle et son âpre éloquence va produire également une grosse impression sur la conférence."35

Yvetot was indeed forceful in his defence of the French position:

"On parle statistique. Nous sommes, dit-on, les derniers. Les statistiques de grève établissent que nous sommes les seconds. Et cependant, nous ne sommes pas riches!

"Nous voulons bien vous imiter pour vos caisses, pour vos cotisations. Mais nous voulons garder notre élan, nos moyens d'action, même violents, comme ceux que savent employer dans leur vigoureux mouvement les ouvriers du Bâtiment.

"Notre tactique vaut la vôtre. Vous pouvez interroger les gouvernants de tous pays.

"La tactique qu'ils redoutent le plus, c'est la nôtre. Aucune classe ouvrière n'est redoutée des gouvernants comme nous le sommes."36

Jouhaux backed him up, criticising Hueber's attempt to pre-empt discussion and accusing the ISNTUC of deliberately painting a

false picture of the French labour movement. He claimed that the ISNTUC was being used as a smokescreen to conceal socialist interference in trade-union matters.

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Oudegeest defended the International Socialist Congresses against the French criticism. Gee, for the English GFTU, expressed the opinion that congresses would waste time and money, with no practical results. Hueber, for his part, refused to be drawn into the discussion and demanded a categorical rejection of the proposal. The main debate took place between Legien and the two French delegates, Legien reproaching the French for their lack of practical sense:

"Our French comrades believe more in using spontaneous outbursts of enthusiasm [sic]. We as the responsible leaders of an organisation believe that we are bound to put on the brake when the workers are not strong enough to gain a victory. We do not wish to spill the blood of the workers without absolute necessity."38

Yvetot and Jouhaux were equally forthright in making their point, stating clearly their belief that the ISNTUC's refusal to consider the CGT's proposals was motivated by the fear of offending political parties. Socialist parties, asserted Jouhaux and Yvetot, should not interfere in workers' organisations.

Nevertheless, the discussion ended quite amicably, thanks mainly to Legien, who, as observers noted, made an intervention

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"empreinte d'un grand esprit de conciliation". Legien put aside Hueber's categorical refusal and insisted that the question should not be decided then, but should be left open for future conferences to resolve:

"I personally believe also that the development of the trade union movement will necessitate some day the holding of international trade union congresses. We can accept the principle of discussing this question

again at our next conference."

Following Legien's lead, Belgium and Italy, who had earlier associated themselves with Hueber's statement, now said that they too were prepared to discuss the question again at a later date. The debate thus ended, with Yvetot withdrawing the French proposal and asking the national federations to consider the question before the next conference.

The conflicts had not been entirely appeased, however. At the close of the agenda, Jouhaux moved a resolution which drew attention to remarks, made by some national centres in the international reports, which condemned rival groups. Jouhaux asked the national centres to avoid such comments in the future. In particular, he quoted reports from Holland and Spain which attacked anarchist groups. This was Jouhaux's way of reminding those present that the CGT was not entirely without friends abroad, and that the federations affiliated to the ISNTUC were not representative of the whole of the labour movement of their country. The International Secretariat closed ranks against Jouhaux. Both Oudegeest, for the Netherlands, and Barrio, for Spain, protested that their criticisms of the anarchists were perfectly justified. It was Legien who counter-attacked and put the French back firmly in their place:

"[...] the French comrades always take the side of groups not affiliated to us. Especially of all groups with a purely political character, with whom the French are supposed to have nothing to do. For the French, 'anarchism' seems not to be a political question, but 'socialism' [is]. It is also possible that one day there will be a difference of opinion in the C.G.T. and then their secretary will surely criticise those who do not hold his opinions."41

Thus rebuked, the French withdrew their proposal. Legien's remark

was a reminder to the French that they were completely outnumbered in the International Secretariat and that their opinion could not be taken seriously by the rest of the delegates. It was also a measure of the direct way in which members of the ISNTUC addressed each other; there was no polite veiling of criticism. Legien's reference to the differences of opinion within the CGT, however, provides the key to his treatment of the French. Confident that Griffuelhes' departure signalled a change in direction for the CGT, Legien was using the conference, held in France and widely reported in the French press, to encourage the dissident groups in the French labour movement and show them the weakness of the CGT leadership. It is in this context that Legien's change in tactics in favour of more discussion (an apparent concession to the CGT leaders) must be seen. On this occasion, discussion worked in Legien's favour, since it was a case not of stifling dissent but of actively encouraging it.

Legien's shift towards more discussion served another purpose. His attitude was seen in contrast to Hueber's and Huysmans' intransigent stance. Throughout the conference Legien constantly asserted his own authority and attempted to diminish the influence of Hueber and Huysmans (and, with them, the Socialist International) in relation to himself. Although their position was not questioned, it was Legien who took and maintained a clear lead.

Legien was playing to several different audiences: firstly, to the International Secretariat itself; secondly, to the CGT

leadership and the wider audience of the French labour movement; thirdly, to the world press; and finally, to Samuel Gompers. To all of these audiences he asserted his control over the international movement and portrayed an image of responsible leadership.

V.3 Responses to the Paris conference

On the whole, the Paris conference was by far the most exhaustive and wide-ranging of the international conferences to date. Bringing together representatives of all the major countries of Europe and the USA, it tackled questions of primary importance, such as the problem of blacklegs,⁴² and the need to draw up uniform strike statistics and produce international strike bulletins, as well as fundamental questions of organisation. Until the Paris conference, the guiding principle of the International Secretariat had been a refusal to take on board any potentially divisive issues. By debating the question of international congresses, the Paris conference inevitably laid itself open to conflict and discord. It was a measure of the bad feeling between the French and some of the other delegates that discussion was so direct and often personalised. Equally, it was a measure of the French sense of isolation that they were particularly sensitive to criticism and ready to fight to defend their own position. The deep divisions had been apparent to all the press observers and had been reported widely.

Nevertheless, both the French and the German centres cautiously pronounced the conference a success. Legien's main aim in reporting the conference was to present the ISNTUC to the

French labour movement as a reasonable and worthwhile organisation, in the hope that the CGT would conversely be seen as unreasonable and out of touch with reality. In this way, Legien hoped that the French labour movement would put pressure on its leadership to change its overall direction and toe the ISNTUC line. In this context, Legien was pleased to be able to report that, despite the airing of differences, the conference had ended amicably. There had been compromise on all sides, and the International Secretariat had emerged intact. In a letter published in La Voix du Peuple, Legien demonstrated what he clearly intended to be seen as a new spirit of compromise and reconciliation:

"La Conférence qui vient de se terminer nous a cependant clairement démontré qu'il est absolument nécessaire qu'on discute les questions sur lesquelles les opinions ne sont pas semblables. Et c'est alors qu'on peut, avec la bonne volonté nécessaire, toujours arriver à s'entendre, pourvu qu'on se borne à l'étude des questions bien déterminées sans en sortir, sans se laisser entraîner à des discussions superflues.

"A mon avis, la VIe Conférence a prouvé que les organisations syndicales de tous les pays veulent une action commune et internationale."43

The change in Legien's attitude had not passed unnoticed by the French. Those who had been following events closely saw in this a reflection of the German labour movement's relationship with the socialist party. Legien, under whose leadership the German trade unions had become a strong base for reformism within the SPD, was politically a natural ally of the anti-socialist Gompers rather than the orthodox socialist Hueber. Griffuelhes noted that Legien's attitude during the Paris conference had been guided by his desire not to discourage the AFL from affiliating;

too much emphasis on socialism and the Second International would have alienated the American labour leader. At the Paris conference, it had been Hueber who took upon himself the task of upholding socialist orthodoxy and of scolding those who he thought were falling behind (the English, who were not doing enough to prevent strike-breakers from leaving England, the Americans, and the French). Again, French syndicalist observers thought they had the answer to this:

"Hueber, vous le connaissez peu. C'était le général social-démocrate à la Conférence. Autrefois le généralissime, dans les Congrès politiques comme dans les Congrès syndicaux, appartenait de droit aux Allemands. Depuis deux ans, les Autrichiens leur ont donné le pion; ils ont envoyé plus de 80 députés au Parlement. L'Allemagne en possédant moins a dû abdiquer la direction de la social-démocratie. Et il fallait voir comment Hueber menait son escouade et tançait les indisciplinés ou cognait sur les adversaires."46

In fact, both the Germans and the Austrians were equally opposed to the CGT leadership's attempts to enlarge the scope of the international gatherings. Hueber and Huysmans saw the work of the ISNTUC complementing the work of the Second International, thus reflecting on an international level the situation in Austria and especially in Belgium, where the trade unions were the means by which the socialist parties transmitted their message to the mass of organised workers. The German situation was different, in that the German labour leaders did not accept the right of the socialist party to speak on behalf of labour organisations; rather, they saw the role of political parties as being to represent the interests of trade unions in Parliament. On an international level, this meant that the trade unions effectively controlled the Socialist International as a means of

preventing it from taking decisions affecting organised workers, the most obvious example being the question of the general strike. This did not mean that the Germans thought that the international labour organisation should discuss such questions, however. Like Gompers, Legien believed that labour organisations should confine their activities to purely "trade-union" questions such as wages and working conditions, as well as activities of a wider political significance, involving labour and social legislation, which would include lobbying politicians and government bodies.⁴⁷ In other words, Hueber and Huysmans opposed the CGT because they believed the economic concerns should be subordinated to political concerns, whereas Legien and Gompers opposed the CGT because their standpoint was essentially reformist and anti-revolutionary. There were, then, important nuances which caused divisions within the "social-democratic" ISNTUC, which meant that Legien appeared to be conciliatory whereas Hueber's position was more entrenched. On the other hand, the CGT, which regarded its autonomy as an essentially revolutionary principle, was isolated in the ISNTUC and encountered the same fundamental opposition from Legien as it did from Hueber.

The shift of antagonism away from Legien to Hueber did, however, have the effect of relaxing somewhat the strained relations between France and Germany, although it could only strengthen the CGT's conviction that the International Secretariat was no more than a "famille social-démocrate"⁴⁸ and hence that the chances for real change were very slight. The more

militant anarcho-syndicalists were in no mood to compromise. In his analysis of the Paris conference, Griffuelhes (who still wielded considerable influence within the CGT) concluded that, although more serious work was being accomplished by the international conferences, the basis of the international organisation had not changed:

"L'axe du mouvement syndical international se situe de plus en plus à droite. Ce n'est pas les partis sociaux-démocrates qui s'en plaindront, n'est-il pas vrai? C'est à cette seule condition qu'ils peuvent paraître révolutionnaires."49

Similarly, in a long and very bitter article in La Vie Ouvrière, Pierre Monatte wrote of "Le Secrétariat International contre l'internationalisme". Huysmans, referred to as "papelard", and Hueber, described as "le général" and "un vieux lapin", were accused of underhand practices at the Paris conference, which meant that the French proposals were doomed from the start:

"Vous pouvez, délégués de la C.G.T., dire tout ce que vous voulez, vous connaissez d'avance le sort de votre proposition. Elle a contre elle toutes les nations. Vous avez donc intérêt à rentrer vos discours."50

Nevertheless, by appearing as the conciliator, Legien had put the CGT in an awkward position. Although Jouhaux and Yvetot, and others within the CGT, knew that the scope for real change was still no greater than before, the apparent concessions made to the CGT - the fact that a discussion on the holding of congresses took place at all - made the CGT's position appear intransigent and doctrinaire. This was, of course, Legien's aim.

As a result of the Paris international conference, the CGT was now under increased pressure from reformist groups at home to accept a compromise and continue working within the ISNTUC - on

the terms laid down by the latter. After all, one of the CGT's main demands, the holding of congresses, had been discussed at Paris. In the socialist paper L'Humanité, Albert Thomas, who had been giving considerable support to the reformists within the CGT, enthused about the spirit of compromise which he saw as the essence of the Paris conference:

"Yvetot a reconnu que les fortes caisses ne nuiraient pas à l'élan français, et Huysmans, non sans malice, a conseillé aux Anglais d'imiter parfois un peu l'ardeur française."⁵¹

With even more concessions on the part of the CGT, he argued, more could be achieved:

"Sans doute, [...] les représentants de la CGT se sont trouvés en opposition complète avec le reste de l'Internationale, en minorité, et même isolés. Et - ils me permettront de le dire - personnellement, j'ai l'impression que, par une attitude moins intransigente, moins absolue, ils pouvaient obtenir, pour leurs propositions mêmes ou leurs vœux, pour les idées qu'ils ont soutenues ou pour les tendances générales dont ces idées sont une expression peut-être forcée, des concessions importantes qu'ils obtiendront plus tard."⁵²

Political mileage was being made on the slightest of concessions. Although Yvetot had indeed professed his admiration of the German unions' financial strength, he had nonetheless concluded that French methods were ultimately superior.⁵³ Similarly, although Huysmans had indeed recommended the CGT's methods of dealing with strike-breakers to the English delegates, this was not done without irony (at both the CGT's and the GFTU's expense),⁵⁴ as Thomas acknowledged. Albert Thomas' exhortations to the CGT to be less intransigent, in the hope that the ISNTUC would eventually yield the desired results, could be justified

to some extent in the light of the Paris conference. But the political motives behind such an interpretation were self-evident.

It was no coincidence that, in July 1909, an influential group of reformists within the CGT had sent out a circular announcing the formation of the "Comité d'Union Syndicaliste", with the express aim of forcing the transformation of the whole basis of the CGT. Albert Thomas published this circular in La
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Revue Syndicaliste, and subsequent issues of the review offered statutes of federations of other countries, notably Denmark and Germany, as suitable alternatives to the CGT constitution. At the next congress of the CGT in 1910, Liochon, of the Fédération du Livre, boldly asserted that it was only because of the reformist elements in the CGT that the French labour movement was able to deal with the International Secretariat at all:

"J'ai la conviction que si Griffuelhes et Pouget étaient restés à la tête de la C.G.T., cette Conférence internationale ne se serait pas produite; je considère que c'est la présence de Niel au Comité confédéral qui a permis la réunion de cette Conférence [...]."56

All this left the CGT leadership in a precarious position. By acknowledging any room for progress within the ISNTUC, they had to be prepared to soften their attitude and accept a dilution of their demands. On the other hand, criticism of the ISNTUC would make the CGT appear ungracious and doctrinaire. Either position was dangerous at a time when an important section of the confederation had declared itself ready to take over the leadership and had received support in this from socialists at home and from the International Secretariat.

One way in which the CGT leadership attempted to glean something from the Paris conference was to claim that the correctness of French methods had been implicitly acknowledged by the other countries. Griffuelhes pointed out that the international conference had passed resolutions which proclaimed support for the Swedish workers on general strike and expressed sympathy with "the heroic Spanish comrades, who resisted the war preparations by means of a general strike"⁵⁷. Thus, the international conference, whilst refusing to discuss the general strike and antimilitarism, in fact endorsed both the general strike and antimilitarist action in practice.⁵⁸

Monatte made a similar point. Despite the unfair methods used against them, he claimed, Yvetot and Jouhaux had been able to make some valuable interventions at the Paris conference:

"Yvetot et Jouhaux, cependant, ont foncé dur et droit toute l'après-midi montrant et remontrant le point où pèse le bât: Vous craignez que ces Congrès internationaux nuisent aux Congrès socialistes. "Ils l'ont fait avec ardeur, ténacité, habileté. Ils n'ont convaincu personne. Mais, à tout le moins, ils ont dit les vérités qu'il fallait faire entendre et prouvé qu'on n'était pas dupes."⁵⁹

For the time being, then, it appeared that the CGT was going to stay within the ISNTUC, for want of a better alternative. The International Secretariat could not satisfy the CGT's internationalist aspirations because its work was so limited and because it was ultimately an organ of social-democracy. But the way out of this impasse was not to be found in the formation of a rival international organisation. Calls for the French, as the leading revolutionary syndicalist grouping and the only one which formed the majority of the national federation, to take the lead

in such an initiative came from the Dutch in November 1909:

"Est-ce que le moment n'est pas venu pour rechercher sérieusement si cette situation peut continuer plus longtemps encore? On attend l'initiative de la France, nous le savons, mais elle pourrait tarder, de sorte que de grands intérêts sont négligés entre temps. [...] Il nous semble [...] nécessaire qu'on se pose sérieusement, dans tous les pays, la question de savoir si l'isolement des organisations syndicalistes révolutionnaires doit continuer."60

For the French CGT, however, the answer was not to split away from the International Secretariat, but to work with all groups abroad to ensure that international links became more solid:

"Il est trop facile de prévoir que si le premier organe est volontairement impuissant, le deuxième ne le serait pas moins malgré toute notre volonté.
"La première tâche à faire c'est de nous resserrer moralement, de nous connaître mieux, de nous informer mutuellement."61

Even anarchist comrades in Les Temps Nouveaux were not altogether hostile to this strategy, despite references to the "stagnation" of the International Secretariat:

"En somme, il vaut probablement mieux, pour l'avenir immédiat des idées et du mouvement social, que les rapports entre les révolutionnaires de tous pays, syndicalistes et non-syndicalistes, se créent, s'entretiennent et se développent en dehors de tout bureau, de toute centralisation, quelle que soit son étiquette."62

For the CGT leadership, the hope, as expressed officially at the congress of Toulouse in 1910, was that the other national centres in the ISNTUC would develop along the path already forged by the CGT:

"Il faudrait, pour atteindre ce résultat [l'adoption des propositions françaises], que les organismes syndicaux étrangers fussent, comme l'organisme français, absolument autonomes.
"Le temps, seul, et les événements de la lutte économique peuvent amener les organisations étrangères

de se pénétrer de cette nécessité.

"Quoi qu'il en soit, les relations internationales sont aujourd'hui renouées effectivement: la France participe, suivant les conceptions qui animent son organisation syndicale."⁶³

This conception of international work effectively removed any responsibility from the CGT. By merely participating in international conferences and putting forward its own demands (which the others would accept when they were ready), the CGT was fulfilling its international obligations. Others would have to take up the task of reorganising the international organisation.

The key to continued work within the ISNTUC, and the new hope for change, was the American Federation of Labor, to whom the CGT now looked to take up this responsibility.

V.4 Samuel Gompers, the AFL, and the international labour movement

Samuel Gompers, as long-standing President of the AFL, had for some time been keen to build up contacts with trade-unionists abroad. In 1889 and 1893, Gompers tried to organise an international trade-union congress in the United States. The only response to these invitations came from England, and relations between the AFL and the English unions grew friendly over the next few years. Gompers attributed the lack of interest from other countries to the influence of socialism, particularly when the International Socialist Congress of Brussels in 1891 refused the AFL's invitation to a congress in Chicago two years later. The presence of Lucien Sanial (a member of the Socialist Labor Party of America) at the Brussels congress further fuelled Gompers' suspicions of a socialist conspiracy:

"This incident was the spark which exploded the hostility of Gompers and the A.F.o.L. to the Second International. From that time on, Gompers began to draw a sharp line between the trade union and socialist movements, and he became eager to establish a purely trade union organisation, distinct from, if not in opposition to, the Socialist International."65

Faced with growing problems posed by increasing immigration of skilled and unskilled labour into the US, and inspired by a personal interest in the peace movement, Gompers was eager to promote the idea of an international federation of labour which, composed solely of trade-unionists, would deliver the international labour movement out of the hands of the socialists. After repeated invitations from Legien between 1905 and 1908, Gompers was delegated by the AFL convention of 1908 to attend the next international conference in 1909, with the express aim of proposing the establishment of an international federation of trade unions, and also with the purpose of finding out more about those involved in the International Secretariat.

Gompers' presence at the Paris conference was welcomed by the French because they saw that the AFL alone could transform the ISNTUC into a more solid organisation. Of course, Gompers was in agreement with Legien and the others on the limitation of the competence of the international organisation. Nevertheless, the American proposals to strengthen the labour organisation (at the expense of the Socialist International) could only help the CGT's attempts to obtain support for the idea of international congresses. Surely it was out of respect for Gompers that Legien did not reject the CGT's demand for international congresses out of hand. If the international conference had ruled out the possibility of holding congresses, this would have created

problems with the AFL later, since Gompers made it clear that he considered the ISNTUC's decision-making procedures inadequate. The presence of the American delegate also lessened, to some extent, the CGT's sense of isolation because he too stood outside the "social-democrat family" and therefore incurred the wrath of Hueber. Jouhaux and Yvetot felt that Gompers had understood their point of view at the Paris conference and could be a useful ally in the future.⁶⁶

In fact, this impression was based on an ignorance of the situation in the USA, an ignorance which the CGT leaders were aware of and anxious to correct. At this stage, the CGT had little contact with the AFL's rival, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The first contact seems to have been in 1908⁶⁷ when William Haywood met CGT leaders during a trip to Europe. Based on such limited knowledge of the American situation, the CGT's judgement was dictated by the impression made by Gompers and by expediency. To mark Gompers' visit to Paris, Yvetot wrote several articles in La Voix du Peuple in which he attempted to portray a favourable picture of the AFL president, concluding:

"Ce que je me permets de dire, c'est la bonne impression que m'a de suite faite l'homme de confiance des Camarades Unionistes d'Amérique."⁶⁸

Jouhaux, in an article which laid out the CGT's aspirations for future international work, counted on the AFL's continued support.⁶⁹ But it was Monatte who was foremost in advancing the AFL as the greatest chance of success for the ISNTUC. This earned the CGT the indignation of some of their anarchist comrades, who had begun to criticise the CGT for staying within the

International Secretariat, and who now demanded to know how the CGT could be on such friendly terms with Gompers:

"C'est sans doute la puissance apparente de ces 'leaders' des autres pays qui a conduit nos camarades syndicalistes à vouloir étudier 'ce qu'il peut avoir de bon' dans ces organisations vermoulues. [...]"

"Qu'importe enfin que la Fédération Américaine du Travail atteigne un chiffre de deux millions de cotisants, si ce chiffre ne représente que les unités d'un troupeau de moutons résignés et dociles!"⁷¹

Monatte himself was certainly under no illusions about the nature of Gompers' intentions:

"C'est si loin l'Amérique et les sentiments internationalistes de l'American Federation paraissent si peu vigoureux!"

"[...] Dans l'esprit de Gompers comme dans celui de Legien, il est certain que l'Internationale devrait être animée d'un esprit terre à terre."⁷²

Faced with pressure from militants at home and revolutionary syndicalists abroad for the CGT to withdraw from the ISNTUC, the CGT had to find some reason for remaining within the organisation. They therefore put forward the AFL as an agent for change:

"C'est de la Fédération Américaine, cependant, que dépend la création véritable de l'Internationale syndicale. Elle seule pourrait fléchir le Secrétariat et décider les syndicaux allemands à constituer à côté de l'Internationale parlementaire une Internationale ouvrière. [...]"

"Qu'elle se constitue et nous verrons bien si les nécessités de la défense ouvrière ne relèveront pas son idéal et son tempérament. Pour ma part, je ne suis pas pessimiste."⁷³

Gompers himself was unsure about the International Secretariat. In particular, he was unhappy with the socialist domination of the ISNTUC, and noted the divisions which this caused:

"The Paris reporters present in general took it for granted that whatever was said by Hueber, Oudegeest,

or Huysmans, as the leaders on one side, was one word for trade-unionism and two for Socialism."⁷⁴

Even those French papers sympathetic to the socialist trade-union leaders commented on the virulence of Hueber's speeches, Gompers⁷⁵ noted. Gompers certainly had some sympathy with the French delegates' opposition to socialist tutelage, and he deplored the tactics used against the French by Hueber and Huysmans, which he thought revealed "the spirit of intolerance actuating the party⁷⁶ whose members believe its 'virtues' entitle it to rule".

The AFL president was, however, equally cautious in his treatment of the CGT leaders, noting that "their opponents refer⁷⁷ to them as Anarchists". Gompers made use of his visit to Paris to study conditions in Europe, and his most favourable comments were reserved for the German labour movement; he referred to "its present commanding position among social reform forces" and its "excellent organisation, with some of the best features of⁷⁸ English and American trade-unionism". In France, Gompers consulted the Minister of Labour, Viviani, and praised the French government's efforts on behalf of the working class. Viviani told Gompers⁷⁹ that the CGT represented a marginal and extreme current. This view was reinforced by Gompers' second choice of informant on the situation in France, Niel. The circumstances surrounding Niel's resignation had made him very bitter towards the CGT leadership. After consulting Niel, Gompers concluded: "Unionism has closed the front door to the Socialistic virus, to⁸⁰ open the back door to the Anarchist poison." Gompers was a natural ally of those within the CGT, such as Keufer and Niel, who believed that labour organisations should limit themselves to

purely "trade-union" questions and social reform. Indeed,
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Gompers' main contact in France at this time was Keufer.

If the CGT was reluctant to criticise the AFL, Gompers showed no such reticence in condemning the methods of the CGT leadership. It was, however, this uneasy alliance which was envisaged by Monatte and other syndicalists as the chief means of transforming the ISNTUC.

At the same time, the CGT had other plans for internationalist activity. If they could not transform the ISNTUC from within (a task which they were now leaving to time and the AFL), the French would attempt to change the international movement outside the International Secretariat. This did not signify a split or the formation of a rival organisation. It meant a return to other plans for international action: international meetings and demonstrations, which could be linked with the question of antimilitarism. The CGT decided to put pressure on the ISNTUC outside the normal channels of international conferences.

V.5 International meetings against war, 1909-1911

Important changes in the sphere of international activity were taking place outside the international conferences. Perhaps the greatest triumph for the CGT at the Paris conference was the organisation of a public meeting which was timed to profit from the presence in Paris of speakers from abroad. It was hoped that the international conference would make it impossible for
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invitations to the meeting to be declined.

The international meeting against war took place on the

evening of 2 September (date of the final session of the international conference) in the Salle Wagram, and it attracted a huge audience. It was the first major international meeting of its kind since the Anglo-French delegations of 1901, and it had the added advantage of speakers from all the major European nations plus the United States. The meeting was a special triumph for the CGT because it included speakers from the German labour movement.

Appleton opened the meeting with a speech enumerating the costs of war, in what to many French observers appeared a typically English, businesslike way:

"Avec un sens pratique admirable, une documentation précise, le représentant du prolétariat anglais, pour mieux prouver tout ce que la guerre a d'odieux, en établit le coût."⁸³

Nevertheless, he ended with an appeal for united action against war. Gompers too spoke of the need to take a firm stand against war. But the warmest welcome was reserved for Legien, who declared that "les ouvriers français et allemands ne connaissent pas d'ennemis de ce côté-là ou de l'autre de la frontière".⁸⁴

According to French reports, Legien was forceful in his affirmations of the duty of workers to oppose war:

"Si les bourgeois veulent se battre, qu'ils aillent à la guerre, mais qu'ils n'envoient pas l'ouvrier pour se faire tuer à leur place. Il faut que le prolétariat dise bien haut qu'il n'a pas de patrie à défendre et qu'il se refusera à faire le jeu des intérêts capitalistes."⁸⁵

Ending with an affirmation that the Germans would do everything in their power to prevent war, Legien's declarations earned him warm and prolonged applause. It is difficult to assess the

accuracy of French reports of Legien's speech, since Legien did not repeat the contents of his speech to a home audience. Precisely because he was in France, and because his speech did not commit him to any action or policy, Legien may have felt able to go beyond even his own beliefs in this speech, as a rhetorical or propaganda device. As has been noted elsewhere,⁸⁶ it was customary in German social-democracy to use revolutionary phraseology, particularly in public speaking of this kind, which in no way corresponded with practice. It is not inconceivable that Legien, in a sincere attempt to show opposition to war, and in an attempt to gain the support of the French workers, might indulge in some hyperbole in public speaking, especially when out of Germany. On the other hand, the proclamation that workers had no fatherland to defend would certainly be out of keeping with Legien's character and would contradict Legien's own belief that workers did have a stake in their own country. It is therefore more likely that a strong declaration of opposition to war and international solidarity on Legien's part was, in translation, rendered more in keeping with the CGT leadership line.

Several violent episodes, caused by an unruly crowd who appeared to have been carried away with revolutionary fervour, revealed just how far the public meeting was from organisation of practical steps to prevent war. When Tudeschi, the Italian speaker, rose to apologise for Rigola's absence, as the latter had returned to Italy to organise demonstrations against the Czar's visit, the crowd seemed to understand that Rigola had gone to pay respects to the Czar. There was a wave of protest at what was perceived as Rigola's betrayal of the working class, and the

meeting ended in uproar. La Petite République commented wryly:
"Les meilleures intentions peuvent parfois être trahies par les
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circonstances."

In this case, however, the disorder in which the meeting ended was overlooked by the CGT leaders, who pronounced the meeting an unqualified success. For the CGT, indeed, the gains were two-fold. Firstly, the good attendance had shown that French workers were interested in anti-war action (although the unfortunate incidents should perhaps have served as a warning that the enthusiasm generated at a public meeting was not necessarily indicative of a serious will to work). Secondly, the French had succeeded in making the Germans discuss matters which the latter had never wished to raise in international conferences. The resolution which was passed at the meeting theoretically committed all those labour representatives present, including the Germans, to unite in action against war and even to oppose war by means of the general strike:

"Les ouvriers syndiqués réunis salle Wagram, au nombre de 6.000, après avoir entendu les délégués d'Angleterre, d'Allemagne, d'Espagne, d'Italie, des Etats-Unis et de France sont unanimes à partager leur horreur de la guerre;

"Sont unanimes à vouloir entreprendre tout ce qui sera possible pour empêcher la guerre;

"Les 6.000 participants de la grandiose manifestation organisée par la C.G.T., à l'occasion de la clôture de la 6e Conférence Internationale, sont d'accord avec les militants ouvriers et se déclarent résolus à opposer à une déclaration de guerre, celle de la Grève générale et, sans doute, de la révolution. Les 6.000 manifestants contre la guerre envoient à leurs frères d'Espagne et de Suède et à tous ceux qui luttent pour l'émancipation et la révolution, leurs sentiments de solidarité et d'admiration.

"Tous les peuples sont frères;

"Plutôt la révolution que la guerre!"⁸⁸

This, of course, was a classic CGT tactic. In this way, the CGT's own policy was apparently endorsed, not only by the thousands of French workers in the audience, but also by the foreign speakers who had taken part in the meeting, and even (since the meeting had been specifically linked by the CGT resolution to the international conference) by the International Secretariat itself.

The problem with this kind of tactic was that it disguised the very real differences which existed. The passing of such a resolution was a purely formal act, and in any case, given the uproar and confusion which marked the latter part of the meeting, it is doubtful whether the foreign speakers actually heard the resolution at all. It was not put to the vote. In other words, the resolution in reality committed the meeting to nothing. As for Legien and the other speakers, at no time did they pledge support for a general strike against war.

Yvetot drew the completely unfounded conclusion that the Germans and other members of the International Secretariat had come round to the CGT's way of thinking:

"Il n'y a donc pas qu'en France où l'antimilitarisme fait école. [...]"

"Ce n'est pas nous qui descendons à la méthode corporative des étrangers, ce sont les étrangers qui montent à notre méthode syndicaliste."⁸⁹

The CGT leadership's strategy was to present a façade of international revolutionary resolve which concealed the very real problems, divisions and weaknesses which lay behind it. In line with this strategy, the international peace meeting in Paris represented a propaganda coup. There were, however, some signs of real progress. Legien's declarations of Franco-German solidarity

ran counter to the negative impressions of the German labour movement which had been circulating in France, encouraged by such newspapers as Le Temps, which, L'Humanité noted, was furious at Legien's words. For the first time it began to appear that some cooperation between the German and French labour movements, with the aim of preventing war, might be possible.

The CGT was now determined to push ahead with its own demands on the international level; "L'inoubliable manifestation internationale du 1er septembre 1909 est le premier pas!", it was proclaimed. Nevertheless, the idea of organising further international meetings received no immediate response from the International Secretariat, and during the following year the CGT was too preoccupied with national concerns (in particular the question of workers' pensions) to follow it up. Towards the end of 1910, however, the Durand affair provided a spark for further agitation for concerted international action. As a practical measure, the CGT urged the an international boycott of French goods to force Durand's release, and also envisaged organising meetings modelled on those which had taken place in 1909, all over Europe, for the release of Spanish trade-unionists imprisoned during a wave of governmental repression in Spain. It was a practical way to show international cooperation. An international meeting in protest at Durand's treatment was planned for 1911, but the idea was dropped when Durand was released in February.

The new spirit of reconciliation which had made the international meeting of 1909 possible was reinforced by the

presence of Sassenbach and Appleton and Gee, as representatives of Germany and England, at the 1910 congress of the CGT. It was from this encounter, and not from CGT pressure, that the most significant example of Franco-German cooperation resulted.

In his speech before the CGT congress, Sassenbach stressed the internationalist aspirations of the German workers and regretted the past differences between French and German representatives within the ISNTUC, which he attributed to a lack of knowledge:

"Dans ces dernières années, quelques différends dans les opinions entre les syndicats français et allemands, qui provenaient de ce qu'on les connaît trop peu et qu'on ne sut pas avoir égard aux différents caractères des deux pays, ont pu exister; heureusement il est prouvé maintenant, depuis la Conférence internationale, qui a eu lieu à Paris l'année dernière, qu'on peut travailler avec plus de camaraderie."95

If only the French knew more about the German labour movement, Sassenbach insisted, they would notice how much they had in common. For this reason he proposed a French study visit to Germany:

"Nous nous efforcerions avant tout de vous faire connaître nos institutions syndicales; alors les ouvriers français remarqueraient que les camarades allemands se sont donné beaucoup de peine pour travailler à l'amélioration du sort de l'avenir et qu'ils y ont réussi."96

Implied in this invitation was, of course, a defence of German methods and a certain amount of boasting.

Nevertheless, it was the first such invitation to come from the Germans, and the CGT was keen to take it up. The congress unanimously passed a resolution, signed by Jouhaux, Griffuelhes and others, calling for a delegation to Germany:

"Le Congrès, prenant acte de l'invitation par la Commission générale des Syndicats Allemands invitant les organisations françaises à envoyer une délégation d'ouvriers en Allemagne, accepte son invitation, charge le Comité confédéral d'organiser cette délégation et de s'entendre avec la Commission générale pour fixer la date et les détails de cette démonstration internationale pour la paix."97

Already, there was a significant difference of opinion on the character of the proposed delegation. Whereas Sassenbach had spoken only of a study visit, with the aim of learning about German methods, the congress resolution saw the proposed visit as a continuation of the CGT's strategy of international anti-war demonstrations. If the CGT was eager to accept Sassenbach's offer, it was on the CGT's own terms.

International events - renewed clashes between France and Germany and between England and Germany in Morocco - served to reinforce the CGT's determination to make the Berlin trip into a massive demonstration of the French proletariat's rejection of militarism. La Voix du Peuple called upon the French workers to join the delegation, planned for July 1911:

"Voulant faire de cette délégation, qui se terminera par un grand meeting public, une véritable démonstration ouvrière contre les guerres, toujours possible, avec les agissements des capitalistes, exemple le Maroc, le Comité confédéral engage toutes les organisations confédérées à faire le sacrifice nécessaire pour s'y faire représenter par un ou plusieurs délégués."98

The Berlin visit was linked with further international demonstrations, planned for August 1911 in Paris, Barcelona and Madrid:

"Le guêpier marocain nous réserve des surprises. [...] Ainsi s'affirme la nécessité de multiples démonstrations internationales [...] . C'est donc une vaste agitation internationale que nous allons entreprendre pour opposer la volonté de la classe

ouvrière à celles des affameurs du peuple."

La Bataille Syndicaliste similarly placed great hopes in the forthcoming trip to Berlin:

"Pour la première fois depuis plus de quarante années, des travailleurs français iront fraterniser avec les travailleurs allemands. [...]"

"Le voyage à Berlin est une garantie de paix internationale. Il préparera une nouvelle entente cordiale, d'autant plus forte qu'elle sera fondée non sur les calculs des diplomates et des gouvernants, mais sur le désir des travailleurs."100

The virulently antimilitarist and antipatriotic La Guerre Sociale took up the same theme:

"Qui sait si, de même que la démonstration franco-anglaise de 1901 a ouvert la voie à l'entente cordiale [...] qui sait si la démonstration franco-allemande de juillet prochain ne pourrait pas être le premier geste d'une cordiale réconciliation entre Français et Allemands?"101

The Anglo-French delegation of 1901 had now suddenly been elevated into a major feat of international diplomacy. Similarly, from a modest study delegation, the Berlin trip was being built up into a massive antimilitarist demonstration and a major step forward for world peace. The invitation from the Germans, and its response from the CGT, exemplified the "dialogue of the deaf" between the two labour movements, in which each interpreted questions and answers in totally different ways, and on its own terms.

Despite the grandiose hopes formulated in the French syndicalist press, fewer than forty delegates made the trip to Berlin on 22 July 1911. Nonetheless, most of the delegates seemed eager to make the most of their journey, and the signs for reconciliation seemed encouraging. From Cologne, even before reaching Berlin, Christian Cornelissen (anarchist and sworn enemy

of the International Secretariat) wrote:

" [...] déjà nous nous sommes rendus compte, par les conversations avec nos camarades, que le peuple allemand ne nourrissait pas à l'égard des Français les sentiments d'hostilité que la presse nationaliste des deux pays lui prête. C'est bon signe; souhaitons qu'à Berlin l'accueil soit aussi réconfortant."104

Amédée Dunois wrote an article in La Bataille Syndicaliste which was much more conciliatory than usual towards the Germans:

"Rien, pour les Allemands, ne valait les méthodes allemandes; nous étions convaincus de l'éminente vertu des méthodes françaises. Qui sait si la vérité n'est pas dans la réconciliation des deux méthodes, des deux tempéraments, des deux esprits?

"Si même il ne prend à Berlin que des leçons d'organisation, de discipline et de patience, le syndicalisme révolutionnaire français n'aura pas perdu son voyage."105

If the Germans had hoped to use the trip to convince the French of the superiority of German methods, they certainly succeeded with the Hervéists. Eugène Merle, La Guerre Sociale's correspondent from Germany, wrote excitedly of Sassenbach's response to French questioning during the trip:

"-Dites bien, s'écrie-t-il, que nous ferons tout pour empêcher la guerre.

"-Tout?

"-Tout, répète Sassenbach. Et l'accent qu'il met dans ce 'Tout' indique bien une volonté réfléchie, une conviction profonde."106

Merle's most fervent enthusiasm was reserved for the organisational strength of the German labour movement:

"Nos camarades de la C.G.T. viennent de découvrir l'Allemagne. Ils en viennent émerveillés, peut-être même quelques-uns - les plus clairvoyants - un peu humiliés de la comparaison qu'ils ont fait entre notre état d'organisation et la formidable organisation de la classe ouvrière allemande.

"Qu'est-ce que nos 400.000 adhérents à la C.G.T. à côté des 2.500.000 adhérents à la C.G.T. allemande?

"Qu'est-ce que nos misérables feuilles de chou à côté des feuilles syndicales ou socialistes allemandes, aux

puissants tirages?

"[...]

"Il y a quelque chose de plus admirable que ces gros effectifs et cette richesse, c'est la discipline avec laquelle marche toute cette armée ouvrière, et jusqu'à cette centralisation à laquelle on est forcément conduit quand on veut livrer non plus de simples escarmouches, mais des combats de masse.

"[...]

"Après le retour de Berlin il ne doit plus y avoir qu'un mot d'ordre chez nous: 'De l'organisation, encore de l'organisation, toujours de l'organisation!'"107

As for the image of Germany as a repressive state, it too was erroneous; even the police were better than the French police,
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Merle claimed.

Others were also favourably impressed by what they saw in Germany, if to a lesser extent. Luquet, for L'Humanité, gave a detailed and informative account of the delegation, which stressed the cordiality of the welcome received in Germany and the impressive strength and wealth of the German labour movement (with repeated references to "la magnifique maison des syndicats", "les vastes locaux du syndicat du bois", etc.). There were, he concluded, important lessons to be learnt from the Germans:

"Certes, le syndicalisme français a bien quelques qualités, mais outre qu'on les retrouve - sous une forme moins exubérante sans doute, mais non moins adéquate - dans le syndicalisme allemand, on y constate un perfectionnement organique et une force que nous pouvons envier."109

Even Jouhaux admitted, much later, in private notes, that he had been impressed by the German labour movement, although he kept quiet about it on his return to France:

"Les rapports de la délégation française avec les représentants des syndicats allemands furent amicaux. Ceux-ci s'efforçaient surtout de nous convaincre de la supériorité de leurs réalisations sociales: sièges de

Fédérations, caisses d'assurances, banques, bibliothèques, cours d'études, institutions d'enseignement professionnel, tout nous fut montré en détail. Il est compréhensible que les syndicalistes allemands aient été fiers de montrer combien ils étaient en avance dans leurs réalisations matérielles sur les organisations des autres pays, et plus particulièrement sur celles de la France. Si l'esprit de combativité et d'initiative péchaient chez les travailleurs allemands, leurs réalisations matérielles étaient, il faut le reconnaître, parfaites. Pour nous, Français, ce n'était nullement une humiliation d'en convenir. Nous devions, au contraire, puiser là un exemple utile en ayant soin de veiller à ce que ces matérialisations ne viennent pas émousser ni la foi en l'idéal ni l'ardeur combative des travailleurs français."110

Despite Jouhaux's affirmation that the French should not be afraid of admitting the superiority of German labour organisation in some areas, the fact that his impressions were not published at the time of the Berlin trip is a measure of the acute sensitivity to critical comparison which the CGT displayed. Charles Rupert, writing for La Bataille Syndicaliste, could not bring himself to concede anything to the Germans. His mocking accounts of the visits to federations and cooperatives portrayed the German labour leaders as unable to do more than recite boring speeches: "Décidément, Legien est un cicerone infatigable",¹¹¹ he scoffed, and "Si l'Allemagne est par excellence le pays des fonctionnaires, elle est aussi celui des maîtres d'école."¹¹²

The German labour movement, for its part, was not above using French admiration and praise for its own ends. Merle's fulsome tribute to German organisation, quoted above, was reproduced in full in the Correspondenzblatt.¹¹³ There was no comment, but the inference was clear: the study trip had been a success because it had converted the French labour movement to German methods. Jouhaux's reticence about his favourable

impressions of Germany was therefore justifiable, in the sense that to admit to being impressed by German methods of organisation would ultimately mean a repudiation of revolutionary syndicalism in France, so entrenched had both sides become. This inability to respect the other point of view was evident on both sides.

The contradictions in the various accounts of the trip became all the more apparent when it came to the international peace demonstration on 28 July. Whereas the Germans had presented the delegation as a study trip, the French put forward the peace demonstration as the main reason for the journey, all other aspects of the delegation being seen as incidental. The French pinned all their hopes on the peace demonstration, with some disastrous results. In a farcical episode, Yvetot, about to preach antimilitarism to a German audience on 25 July, narrowly missed arrest by the German police. He secretly travelled back to France before the German authorities could arrest and expel him. Later, Jouhaux and another member of the delegation, Diem, were arrested in Yvetot's hotel room as they went to collect his luggage, and they had to spend the night in a police station before Sassenbach's intervention prompted their release. It was a humiliating experience for the leader of the CGT.

The speech which caused the action against Yvetot had been made a few days before the peace meeting, but it dealt with antimilitarism. Rupert relayed the offending words to La Bataille Syndicaliste, indignantly claiming that they did not justify police action:

"Quelle folie que celle qui veut dresser un peuple contre un autre!

"Si les gouvernants essayaient de faire se lever deux peuples l'un contre l'autre, s'ils voulaient entraîner deux nations à la guerre, alors nous leur montrerions que les peuples ont de plus beaux devoirs à remplir!

"Venez-y donc, ô imbéciles! Essayez de faire se dresser un peuple contre un autre, et vous verrez si les peuples ne font point un usage inattendu des armes que vous leur aurez mises entre les mains!"¹¹⁵

Yvetot, who habitually used such terms, and often stronger terms, (although not always with impunity) in his own country, returned to France with a less than favourable impression of Germany and a great sense of relief at being home: "Expulsé d'Allemagne, me voici de retour en France. Salut à ma patrie!"¹¹⁶ Since Yvetot was well known in France as an arch anti-patriot, this exclamation, coming on top of conflicting reports of the Berlin delegation, must have confused and disorientated the readers of the French syndicalist press.

At the same time, a more positive view of the Berlin delegation was evident in accounts of the peace meeting itself. To begin with, the French syndicalist delegates were impressed with the size of the crowd (an estimated 20,000), so huge that the audience had to be separated into two rooms and all speeches had to be duplicated.¹¹⁷ Even more impressive, in the eyes of the French, was the enthusiasm with which the German audience greeted the French speakers. Jouhaux, in a long speech devoted to the question of the CGT's anti-war activity, defended French syndicalist methods and placed international cooperation firmly within the context of the CGT's strategy and tactics. In so doing, he also attacked the parliamentary action favoured by German social-democracy:

"L'action parlementaire ne peut plus aujourd'hui prétendre déterminer l'avenir. Cet avenir sera la conséquence directe de l'action ouvrière exercée sur les champs de grève et de sa répercussion sur les cerveaux prolétariens.

"Aussi préparons-nous tous les jours davantage les bataillons ouvriers à matérialiser l'idée de la grève générale. [...]

"[...]

"Longtemps, dans les milieux étrangers, l'on a cru voir en cette idée de grève générale, préconisée par la Confédération du Travail, une fanfaronnade des militants français.

"Cette fausse interprétation doit aujourd'hui disparaître; si les militants français oeuvrent tant pour la matérialisation de cette idée, c'est que, sincèrement et puissamment, ils croient que seule la grève générale pourra éviter bien des périls présents et que, seule également, elle est susceptible de donner aux peuples la possibilité de s'affranchir de la tutelle capitaliste.

"[...]

"Si le syndicalisme français n'avait pas eu cette conception de son action, ses délégués ne seraient pas aujourd'hui parmi vous pour clamer leur haine de la guerre et leur amour de la paix."118

Although Jouhaux's message was essentially anti-nationalistic, it was hardly a conciliatory speech. Rather it assumed that the Germans had to be told how to act, and it focussed on the CGT as the leader in the international struggle against war. Once again, the Anglo-French meetings of 1901 were evoked as the example for the Germans to follow:

"En 1901, comme aujourd'hui, les travailleurs français animés des mêmes sentiments et estimant que leur action devait s'exercer sur tous les terrains, s'en allèrent à Londres pour demander aux travailleurs anglais de s'allier avec eux afin d'empêcher toute possibilité de massacre.

"Cette intervention pratique de l'internationalisme ouvrier eut l'heureux résultat que l'on connaît: elle prépara l'Entente Cordiale aujourd'hui réalisée entre les deux peuples.

"Nous voulons aujourd'hui, alors que les conditions sont identiquement les mêmes, obtenir les mêmes résultats."119

Both Jouhaux's and Luquet's speeches, ending on the now

familiar cry of "A bas la guerre!", were greeted with prolonged and thunderous applause, as was a statement by Yvetot which was read out to the meeting. In the French syndicalist press, this reception was portrayed as indicative of a real groundswell of German opinion in favour of peace and internationalism:

"Les applaudissements frénétiques qui ont salué à Berlin les discours d'Yvetot et de Jouhaux contre la guerre sont significatifs.

"Nos camarades allemands sont aussi décidés que nous à employer tous les moyens, tous, pour s'opposer au crime des crimes."120

The inference was that, although the German labour leaders might obstruct French efforts to discuss antimilitarism in the International Secretariat, the German masses were receptive to revolutionary ideas. This was reinforced by French coverage of the meeting, which concentrated on the audience response and ignored what the German speakers had to say (thus separating the rank and file from the leadership). The German labour movement's coverage of the event was, on the other hand, limited. The Correspondenzblatt gave only the briefest of details about the meeting and the speeches, but reproduced the text of the resolution in full. The resolution of the peace meeting expressed solidarity between workers of different nations in opposition to war:

"Die Versammelten erklären, dass sie sich eins fühlen mit der Arbeiterschaft Frankreichs wie auch anderer Länder in dem Bestreben, den Völkern den Frieden zu erhalten und allen Machinationen der zum Kriege drängenden herrschenden Klassen entgegenzutreten. Der Krieg dient nur den Macht-, Raub- und Profitgelüsten einer kleiner Minderheit, während die grosse Mehrheit aller Völker den Frieden will, da die allein die Opfer der Kriege zu tragen hat."121

The resolution called upon German and French workers to stand

ready and use all their influence (an indirect reference to the socialist party and its representatives in Parliament) to prevent war. In particular, it recommended a meeting of "people's representatives" to work out solutions to international conflicts; this was presumably an echo of Jaurès' calls, in the Second International, for international arbitration. Nowhere was there any mention of joint demonstrations or other activities; there was certainly no mention of the general strike against war.

The French version of events was, of course, a subjective interpretation of the peace meeting in the light of the CGT's own objectives. At the very most, what the Berlin meeting had shown was that German workers were enthusiastic about displays of opposition to war (not in itself a revolutionary standpoint) and inspired by affirmations of international solidarity.

The CGT's attitude was problematic. By presenting this dual image of the German labour movement (workers versus leaders), the CGT was implicitly acknowledging that any action it proposed would be obstructed by the German labour leaders. At the same time, the presentation of the German masses as being full of revolutionary fervour, without any clear direction in which to channel it, raised hopes which the CGT leadership could not fulfil. On another level, although the German audience had been enthusiastic in welcoming foreign labour movement representatives, it did not necessarily follow that they endorsed every single aspect of French tactics outlined in their speeches. Rather, it showed that German workers were opposed to war and motivated by sentiments of solidarity, at the most basic level. Claims in La Bataille Syndicaliste that the German workers were

now ready to take up the general strike were no more than
122
wishful thinking.

On the other hand, French delegates returned to France with a great sense of achievement and a real impression of German workers' opposition to war. This was especially true since the delegation had ended on the high note of the peace meeting. Overall impressions of the delegation were favourable and led to a revision of the former image of the dull, regimented Germans; for example, Bougé, of the Fédération des Ouvriers sur Métaux, wrote with enthusiasm of the German crowds and commented: "La légende de l'ouvrier allemand indolent, caporalisé, vrai machine
123
à cotiser, sera en partie détruite." The CGT leadership evidently viewed this enthusiasm as a threat, since Jouhaux received a telegram from Griffuelhes shortly after the Berlin meeting. Although the French delegation was due to continue its tour of the major industrial towns, Jouhaux was instructed by the telegram to return to Paris. Jouhaux later explained this sudden change of plan:

"En rentrant, j'ai appris que Griffuelhes n'avait pas agi seul, mais qu'il avait répondu au désir d'un petit groupe d'extrémistes qui estimaient que la délégation durait trop et que tout cela pouvait porter de l'eau au moulin de nos camarades réformistes."124

Instead of seeing favourable impressions of the German labour movement as a positive result of the Berlin delegation, the CGT leadership was evidently so insecure that it could only see such impressions as a threat.

The Berlin trip was a milestone in the history of Franco-German relations. While presenting the trip as such for the wider public, the CGT leadership had in fact missed an opportunity,

which was never to present itself again, to strengthen ties between the two countries, largely through their own attitude. The Berlin trip had been conceived by the CGT leaders as a propaganda tour, and as such it backfired. By refusing to concede anything to the German labour movement (which had, after all, been the ostensible purpose of the visit) and by presenting the peace campaign exclusively on their own terms, the CGT leaders were setting conditions for future work which they privately knew were impracticable. Police spies knew what the CGT leadership was keeping from its own rank and file:

"Les membres de la C.G.T. retour de Berlin disent que les syndicats berlinois leur ont donné à entendre qu'en cas de guerre ils ne pourraient pas agir facilement et devraient se borner à des protestations verbales. D'ailleurs ils sont très discrets sur leurs impressions, qu'ils doivent publier en brochure mais soigneusement revues et corrigées."125

One other aspect of the Berlin trip and the peace demonstration, which was glossed over at the time (although Alphonse Merrheim was far-sighted enough to pick out this question), was the limited nature of the project. Although Franco-German rivalry in North Africa was still keen, the year 1911 saw increasing hostility between the two powers of England and Germany. This spilled over into relations within the international labour movement. When Jouhaux visited the GFTU annual congress in Dundee early in 1911 (a congress also attended by German delegates, as agreed at the Toulouse congress of the CGT), he noticed this increased tension:

"A Dundee, nous reconstrûmes les délégués des différents pays et parmi eux, les délégués allemands. Depuis les incidents d'Agadir, la situation internationale était assez tendue et les syndicats

anglais manifestaient une certaine froideur à l'égard des syndicats allemands. Tablant sur cette situation et poursuivant la réalisation de notre idée, nous essayâmes de déterminer la General Federation à proposer avec nous au secrétariat syndical international la tenue d'un Congrès ouvrier international contre la guerre. Malheureusement, nous n'y réussîmes pas."126

If Jouhaux's allegations of a certain amount of chauvinism on the part of the English trade unions were perhaps prompted by resentment at their refusal to cooperate with the CGT, it was nevertheless true that the English unions refused to become involved in any joint anti-war activities. It was equally true that, given the international situation, the English would have to be involved, in order for demonstrations of working-class solidarity to have any real significance.

Even before the French delegation had returned from Berlin, Merrheim dismissed the trip as a waste of time. He claimed that as a study trip it was useless, since nothing could be learned in five days, and that to frame the international situation in terms of relations between France and Germany was misleading:

"[...] en réalité, dans le fond, il n'y avait pas à proprement parler de conflit entre la France et l'Allemagne, mais bien entre l'Angleterre et l'Allemagne [...] et le Maroc n'était que le rideau masquant la brûlante question de la rivalité commerciale anglo-allemande dans le monde et particulièrement en Asie."127

Merrheim's was a lone voice, and the failure on the part of the CGT and indeed the international labour movement as a whole to raise this question seriously undermined any efforts at international cooperation.

The obvious problems posed by the Berlin visit did not, however, prevent the CGT leadership from proclaiming it as a

great triumph and proceeding with further demonstrations in Paris, Barcelona and Madrid. The Paris meeting, held on 4 August 1911 in the Salle Wagram, aimed to capitalise on the Berlin trip, linking both peace demonstrations together, and to extend the action to other countries. The first of these aims was almost wrecked when, at the last minute, the Germans refused to take part because of the non-participation of French Socialists.¹²⁸ The absence of the Germans would have deprived the meeting of any significance in the eyes of French observers, so the CGT agreed to ask the SFIO to participate. In this sense the Paris meeting was remarkable, since it was the first time that German pressure had succeeded in forcing the CGT to cooperate with the Socialist Party (a demand which had always been flatly refused, most notably in 1906 at the time of Griffuelhes' trip to Berlin). However, the CGT had been cooperating to some extent with the SFIO anyway, especially as the SFIO became increasingly preoccupied with the question of war, so that the demand did not embarrass the CGT unduly.¹²⁹ In the event, Lavaud (a Socialist deputy) spoke for the SFIO at the meeting in a very unobtrusive way, stressing the importance of the meeting and the need for international links. There was no question of the SFIO taking the lead.

On the subject of English participation in the meeting, the problem was more tricky. The GFTU refused to attend the meeting in Paris because of "international tension".¹³⁰ The situation was saved to some extent by the participation of Tom Mann. Mann, on his return from Australia in 1910, spent some time in France to learn from the CGT's methods, which he aimed to put into practice

in England. His tactic was to work within the GFTU to influence it towards revolutionary syndicalism, as he wrote in July 1910:

"The only existing organisation in this country which is, as it were, marked out to undertake the all-important task, is The General Federation of Trade Unions, of which Mr. Appleton is the able Secretary, and there is no reason why it should not become the responsible, constructive agency, and supervise, control, and direct the entire Unionist movement."131

Mann was therefore well known to the French labour movement. To his French audiences he would stress the revolutionary potential of the English trade-union movement, as at a meeting in June 1910:

"Tom Mann dit que c'est aussi une erreur de croire que les idées révolutionnaires ne peuvent être propagées en Angleterre avec chance de succès. Il croit le contraire, et l'antimilitarisme lui-même lui semble aussi utile en France, et il approuve ceux qui se sont faits les propagateurs."132

The representation of the English labour movement by Tom Mann at the Paris meeting of August 1911 was therefore a natural situation as far as the CGT was concerned, and one which inspired hope for the future of the English labour movement. Nevertheless, the GFTU's refusal to participate in international demonstrations (particularly since the beginning of the Agadir crisis) was an obvious set-back to international activity and indicated the depth of national feeling within the labour movement.

It was, however, the Germans who were the focus of attention. Before a huge and enthusiastic crowd of around 133 6,000, Bauer, of the German Generalkommission, claimed that the links between French and German workers would prevent war:

"Plus l'organisation ouvrière grandit et se fortifie, plus la paix du monde est assurée. Pour combattre la guerre, il faut rendre le prolétariat plus fort.

"Chaque pays a sa tactique propre, suivant le tempérament des peuples. [...] "La grandiose manifestation de ce soir scellera le lien qui unit les travailleurs allemands aux travailleurs français et le rendra si fort qu'il sera indestructible."134

Bauer ended his speech with the cry of "Guerre à la guerre! Vive la solidarité humaine!" to thunderous applause, but he had avoided any mention of action to avert war, and his references to the need for organisation represented a return to the traditional German theme. The second German speaker, Molkenburg, an SPD deputy, called for workers to protest against war: "Il faut protester pour empêcher que cette guerre éclate",¹³⁵ he urged, but he was careful to specify that he meant political protest.

La Voix du Peuple made a distinction between the two Germans and later speakers, especially Vicente Barrio, who spoke "sur un ton et une attitude qui font un curieux contraste avec les orateurs précédents".¹³⁶ Barrio's speech was full of the fiery antimilitarism associated with the Spanish workers after their general strike to oppose mobilisation:

"En Espagne, personne ne veut la guerre. Déjà, en 1909, la campagne de Melilla a amené l'insurrection de Barcelone, et nous n'étions pas préparés pourtant. Si elle éclate, ce sera chez nous la révolution!"137

Jose Negre, also for Spain, Kolthek, for Holland, and Tom Mann all vowed support for international action against war, Mann stressing the need to go beyond verbal protestations:

"[...] il ne suffit pas pour cela d'affirmations de fraternité, il faut que les travailleurs soient résolus à agir efficacement. Des manifestations comme celle de ce soir sont infiniment heureuses et désirables. Mais il faut agir."138

But, as usual, it was Yvetot who went the farthest:

"Pour montrer votre courage, je vous demande de faire

le premier usage des armes qu'on mettrait entre vos mains en les tournant contre ceux qui auraient déchaîné la guerre!"139

The resolution voted by the meeting, too, was the most explicit to date in terms of committing the labour movements of various countries to action against war:

"Les travailleurs, réunis le 4 août 1911, à la salle Wagram, sont unanimes à protester hautement contre les gouvernants de toutes nations qui, pour résoudre leurs antagonismes industriels, cherchent, sous la poussée des pirates de la finance, à entraîner les travailleurs dans une conflagration internationale.

"A cette concurrence capitaliste, les ouvriers opposent leur solidarité de classe.

"En conséquence, les délégués des organisations ouvrières allemands, espagnols, hollandais, français se déclarent prêts à s'opposer à toute déclaration de guerre par tous les moyens en leur pouvoir.

"Chaque nation représentée prend l'engagement d'agir suivant les décisions de ses Congrès nationaux et internationaux, contre toutes les menées criminelles de la classe dirigeante, et les travailleurs se séparent aux cris de 'Guerre à la guerre!'"140

The important qualification here was that any action was subject to, and could only be decided by, national and international congresses. In other words, international action still had to be carried out in accordance with the decisions of the International Secretariat. The CGT was effectively shifting the responsibility for action onto the international conferences.

Just as at the 1909 international peace meeting, there was an incident during the August 1911 meeting, when Bidegarray, of the "yellow" railwaymen's federation, attempted to speak. He was heckled, apparently because of patriotic declarations he had made a few days' earlier at his federation's congress. Once again, this incident revealed the internal strife within the French labour movement which threatened to wreck any chance of concerted action, and presented the CGT in a bad light to the foreign

participants. Despite this, the CGT leaders were delighted with the meeting, since they could claim that they had forced representatives of the labour movement of various countries, most importantly Germany, to agree on common action against war. In reality, of course, the resolution committed no-one to any action.

The CGT's sense of the importance of these meetings was reinforced by the success of similar initiatives in Spain. At a peace demonstration on 6 August 1911 in Madrid, the two French delegates, Dumoulin and Marie, were overwhelmed by the size and the antimilitarist fervour of the Spanish crowd. More than 10,000 Spanish workers, according to Dumoulin and Marie, "accueillirent¹⁴¹ par des vivats répétés l'arrivée des délégués français". The French exhortations to fight against war by all possible means met "une ovation frénétique", attested a Spanish correspondent¹⁴² of L'Humanité. A few days later, an estimated 25,000 people attended a peace meeting in Barcelona. Spanish and French representatives spoke against war and even against "l'idée de¹⁴³ Patrie". Dumoulin and Marie returned from Spain apparently convinced of the readiness of the Spanish labour movement to declare a general strike in the event of war.

The problem underlying these peace meetings was precisely that they gave the participants a feeling of exaltation, a real conviction that war was impossible because of the strength of emotion against it, whereas they required no commitment in terms of work, organisation, and resources. As Mann had pointed out, such meetings could only be the starting-point for action, not an

end in themselves. It was all too easy for the CGT to believe that this was the way forward, rather than the slow, methodical and often painful work involved in participation in the International Secretariat. On the other hand, the peace demonstrations had certainly contributed to the tightening of links between members of the ISNTUC, especially the French and the Germans. Some concessions had been made on both sides, although these were often veiled by the adoption of intransigent stances. Whether this would have any perceptible effect on the International Conferences was shortly to be seen. After the heady days of the international peace demonstrations of July and August 1911, the labour leaders of the various countries met in Budapest in August 1911 under the auspices of the ISNTUC. Indeed, Jouhaux, Yvetot and Barrio left together for the International Conference immediately after the meeting in Paris on 4 August - a significant link, at least as far as the CGT was concerned, between the demonstrations and the international conferences.

V.6 The Seventh International Conference, Budapest, 10-12 August 1911

The Budapest conference had a larger attendance than any of its predecessors. ¹⁴⁴ Legien had already signalled the increasing consolidation of the International Secretariat in his Eighth International Report, noting the total of 19 member confederations in 1910, with an aggregate membership of 6,212,406:

"This is certainly a very considerable progress which has been achieved in a very short space of time, in the way of uniting the labour movement on an international basis, if we consider the great

differences of opinion prevailing in some countries, as regards the direct aims of and the methods employed by the trade unions. The international relationships of the trade union movement, however, will never develop properly unless we all bear in mind the various peculiarities found among the trade unions of some countries, limiting the sphere of our conferences and mutual agreements to things common to all the organisations working in harmony with us. Nevertheless our international cooperation is bound by and by [sic] to smooth down all these contrasts. [...] The more this necessary adjustment of differences can be achieved, the less divergences are found in the practical daily work of the unions of the various countries, the sooner will it be possible to replace the present incoherent form of international organisation by a closely united body with all this implies."145

In other words, the French would get their international congresses - but only when they fitted in with all the others. Still, it was the clearest sign yet of hope for the CGT, and at the same time a warning to them to avoid the kind of polemics which had marked the Paris conference. Certainly the tone of the conference was much more subdued than that of its predecessor, although the meeting was not without its incidents.

The main sticking-point was the question of rival federations, raised by the presence of representatives of the "narrow" Bulgarian unions (the "broad-hearted" unions having been accepted as the sole national federation) and of Foster of the American IWW. The question of the American unions in particular quickly grew into a major discussion which occupied a whole session, largely because of the bitterness existing between the two rival federations, the AFL and the IWW. Duncan of the AFL opened the debate with a claim that Foster had "molested him and
146
tried to strike against him". Foster, on the other hand, held that the AFL was not the rightful representative of the American

workers. He accused the AFL of being a tool of the bosses and the State; in particular, he claimed, AFL leaders were members of the Civic Federation, an arbitration body set up by the Government to prevent strikes. The members of the International Secretariat quickly took up position on the AFL/IWW conflict, according to their own interests and tendencies.

Interestingly, the CGT had switched from its original support for the AFL to full backing for the IWW. Indeed, it was the CGT which had proposed the affiliation of the IWW, in response to a letter from the IWW, explaining its revolutionary standpoint and the reformism of the AFL. Jouhaux reiterated Foster's condemnation of the AFL, claiming that

"Of the two national centres existing in the United States, the I.W.o.W. represent the real and bona-fide trade union movement of America."147

The IWW had gained the backing of the CGT because it made no bones about its revolutionary aims and tactics, as opposed to the expressly reformist and anti-Socialist AFL. In this they had the support of their old adversary, Hueber, who also disliked the AFL's methods:

" [Hueber] did not agree with Legien that we should pass over the political side of the Labour movement. The attitude of the C[ivic] F[ederation] to the labour movement is well known to us through the newspapers. In any case it would be of great use to us if Duncan were to inform us, why American Labour Leaders are members of the C[ivic] F[ederation] ."148

It was not altogether surprising that the CGT and Hueber should stand together on this issue, since the IWW comprised both revolutionary syndicalist and socialist (DeLeonite) currents.

The chief supporters of the AFL were England and Germany. Since the GFTU was on good terms with Gompers, and since the GFTU

leaders were themselves in favour of conciliation bodies such as the Civic Federation, they refused to take part in any attack on the AFL.¹⁴⁹ Legien turned the criticism back on the French, restating the remark made at the Paris international conference that the CGT's own political preferences were far from desirable.¹⁵⁰

Clearly, the old antagonisms were far from dead. On this occasion, however, the French did not take the bait, and were unusually conciliatory in their solution to the problem. Instead of insisting on the IWW's admittance, Jouhaux stated that the French delegates "simply want to press upon the labour movement¹⁵¹ of every country the urgent necessity for unity". The French motion, that the IWW be admitted to the International Secretariat, was rejected.

Returning to the theme of unity stressed by Jouhaux on the subject of the AFL/IWW, the CGT made a point of proposing a resolution in this sense, which was the third item on the agenda:

"For the purpose of achieving its final ends, the trade union movement should include, on the economic field of the class war, wage-earners of all shades. The representatives of the French C.G.T. therefore invite the delegates of the proletariat of all countries, assembled at the Seventh International Conference, to pledge themselves that they will do all in their power, while leaving all questions of personalities aside, to bring about the unity of the labour movement in their respective countries."¹⁵²

This could have been a direct appeal to those elements of the French labour movement which had been undermining the CGT leadership. It was certainly indicative of the CGT's preoccupations at that time, faced at home with internal strife and squabbling. On the international level, this was also an

expression of the CGT's own policy; unity was all-important, and there could be no question of setting up a rival international organisation. The CGT had also for some time been following events in other countries, especially Spain and Italy, and expressing hopes for unity in those countries. It was a demand with which all the centres represented at the conference could concur, and it was the only resolution voted unanimously without any debate. All the labour leaders hoped for unity but for very different reasons; in particular, they were divided about what the outcome of unity should be.

Following on from this, Jouhaux came to the subject closest to the CGT's heart, the organisation of international congresses. He suggested that this question be discussed in conjunction with the AFL's proposal on the establishment of an international federation of labour, presuming that the AFL's suggestion would have more chance of success.

Duncan, however, stressed that the AFL asked only that the International Secretariat consider the idea of forming an international federation, and immediately won the support of Legien for this:

"Legien sees no reason why we should not vote for the American resolution, because it points to a thoroughly necessary and logical development of the trade union movement. It will be necessary, however, to greatly improve our international relations and to work for more uniformity of all institutions of our movement, ere the American suggestion will become of truly practical value. The French motion, on the other side, correspond [sic] in no way with the necessities of the time being. The development of the international secretariat and its extension is only a matter of time. Unnecessary hurry in this matter would only do harm to the whole cause."153

Legien had already to some extent prepared the way for an acceptance of the American proposal in his analysis of the international situation in the International Report (quoted above). With Legien now accepting the possibility of an international federation, the International conference agreed to refer the proposal back to the national centres for approval and further discussion at the next conference.

The French proposal for the holding of international congresses could not be accepted so easily, however. Legien once again revealed the reason for the International Secretariat's opposition to the CGT's proposals: "The French intend to compete with the regular International Socialist and Labour Congresses."¹⁵⁴ He could not refrain from adding criticism of French syndicalist methods:

"We are not in want of mere demonstrations, all we need at the present time is serious work in the interest of the trade unions of all countries."¹⁵⁵

Legien was backed up in this by Bergmans, of Belgium, and Hueber.

Jouhaux responded to some of the barbs directed at the CGT by once again accusing the other national secretaries of being motivated solely by deference to the Socialist International.¹⁵⁶

The international conference was in agreement with the principle of holding international congresses, Jouhaux claimed, but the differential treatment shown to the CGT and the AFL indicated that it was just ill will towards the French federation which provoked a refusal.¹⁵⁷

Since even Legien had agreed that congresses would come about in time, and since the French considered that the favourable reception given to Duncan's proposal indicated that

the ISNTUC was in favour of the "underlying principle", the French delegates were happy to let their proposal be referred back to the national centres, along with the American resolution. It had been made clear that the extension of the International Secretariat's scope was only a matter of time - if the CGT was prepared to wait. As usual, the International Secretariat had wriggled out of making a decision on an important issue.

Even on concrete issues of direct relevance to trade union organisation, the International Conference found it difficult to reach a decision. A general statement of endeavour to prevent emigration in periods of economic depression or industrial conflicts abroad, put forward by the AFL, was passed.¹⁵⁸ It was however a statement of desire rather than a concrete proposal. On the other hand, items put forward by Holland and Sweden, which required specific types of action, ran into the usual obstacles. The Swedish proposal, which invited labour representatives in Parliament to

"do all in their power to get bills passed prohibiting night work in all industries where it is not absolutely necessary"¹⁵⁹

met with the approval of the English and Italian delegates, while the French, naturally, felt it necessary to protest against the emphasis on Parliamentary action in the resolution. Nevertheless, Yvetot showed more willingness to compromise than had been evident at previous conferences:

"[Yvetot] is prepared to work for the abolition of night work, but not by means of parliamentarism, the only practical means being direct and trade union action. In this sense the French delegates are going to vote for this resolution."¹⁶⁰

Because the French were willing to gloss over this crucial difference in tactics and actually vote for a resolution calling for Parliamentary action, the resolution was passed unanimously. Hueber was not prepared to make similar concessions on tactics, as was shown on the debate on the Dutch proposal concerning the appointment of special committees to monitor home work or participation in committees already in existence. Indignant at this suggestion of working with "middle-class social reformers", Hueber tried the customary delaying tactics, arguing that the question should be referred back to the national centres. Huggler, of Switzerland, and Legien agreed that the situation differed so much from country to country that any resolution would be impracticable. It was finally decided that Legien would¹⁶¹ collect and circulate information on the subject of home work. As for a French proposal on the adoption of Esperanto as the official language of the International Conferences, it was not taken seriously by the other delegates and the whole question was dropped.

One other question merits attention, as another apparently minor suggestion which emerged into a debate on differences of tactics. Huggler put forward a series of suggestions which sought not to modify existing rules but to tighten up organisational procedure in the International Secretariat. In particular, he wished to lay down strict conditions for appeals for strike aid:

"Since the establishment of the International Secretariat, we have done away with the old method of simply appealing to the workers of the world in case of trouble. It becomes more and more necessary that in case of international appeals for financial assistance the International Secretariat should be informed regularly as to the development of the conflict.

Pressure should be brought to bear on some countries in order that they might show more solidarity; this is especially necessary in the case of Great Britain."162

This resolution seems to have been inspired by a discussion which had taken place at the International Socialist Congress of Copenhagen in 1910. At the 1910 congress, the Swedish workers had reproached some countries for having failed to support the Swedish general strike of 1909. More had to be done to promote international solidarity, it was argued. In particular, the English were strongly criticised for having failed in their duty, but the French labour movement also received a stinging rebuke from the German Cohen:

"Les Anglais ont, lors de la récente grève générale suédoise, gravement négligé leurs devoirs. La question des statuts est simplement une excuse, ils ont bien autrefois soutenu de grandes grèves. (Nombreuses approbations). Les Français, le plus souvent, s'en tiennent à de belles paroles. Ils ont envoyé aux Suédois une longue résolution terminant par ces mots: 'Vive la révolution sociale!', accompagnée de 20 francs. (Grande hilarité. On crie: Moins de révolution et plus d'argent aurait mieux valu!) Et pourtant, les syndicats anglais sont riches, et, avec un peu de bonne volonté, les Français aussi auraient pu faire leur devoir."163

During the ISNTUC conference of 1911, the English unions remained conspicuously silent on the question of financial solidarity, but the French took the opportunity to defend their position:

" [Jouhaux] strongly opposes the Swiss proposition, because it would encourage centralisation far too much and thereby endanger the full autonomy of every country. It would, in any case, be unfair to disclose, at the beginning of an industrial struggle, the financial position of a union. [...] In his opinion every union which fights the employer ought for this sole reason to be entitled to the solid support of all. The French have, as far as international solidarity is concerned, never neglected their duty, which cannot be said of all other countries."164

This was a reflex response based on the French feeling of insecurity and inferiority, especially on the subject of finance. The CGT leadership was particularly vulnerable to this kind of criticism, as had been shown during the Berlin visit. The response was to deflect the criticism into an attack on centralism.

Bergmans, of Belgium, dismissed the French charge of excessive centralism, as L'Humanité noted at some length:

"[...] il faut centraliser les efforts ouvriers contre les forces centralisées des industriels, dont l'entente a été si lumineusement montré par Merrheim dans la Voix du Peuple.
"Cette concentration nous oblige à tirer des leçons dont, malheureusement, nos camarades français ne veulent pas profiter."165

Legien refused to be drawn into this debate, remarking that the French interpretation was mistaken, since Huggler's resolution merely expressed more precisely rules of the ISNTUC already in force. The only innovation was the requirement that every union applying for international assistance should be member of its respective trade international, and Legien recommended that this section be dropped, since it could lead to confusion. Thus amended, the resolution was carried, Jouhaux now evidently feeling able to accept it (and perhaps feeling that by his intervention the CGT had been vindicated of charges brought against it at the International Socialist Congress).

Once again, the French showed sensitivity to criticism which had taken place within the Socialist International, as well as within the ISNTUC. It could not accept resolutions which were clearly seen to violate CGT principles, such as one which

demanded greater centralisation. On this occasion, however, concessions were made all round to ensure that a compromise was reached.

The Budapest conference as a whole therefore showed none of the fiery conflicts which had marked the preceding conference in Paris. Jouhaux and Yvetot displayed an unprecedented spirit of conciliation and acceptance, even voting for a resolution which expressly recommended parliamentary action. Their protest over this, and other questions of tactics, seemed to be merely a token statement of the French position, which would not hamper work within the ISNTUC. Other members of the International Secretariat evidently felt safe enough in the atmosphere of apparent consensus to suggest that the international conferences should in future be held at the same time and place as the International Socialist Congresses.¹⁶⁷ The French did not have the chance to protest against this, since Legien and Duncan flatly opposed the resolution. The AFL, of course, would have been most reluctant to associate with the Socialist International, and it had Legien's support in this. In any case, it is extremely unlikely that Legien would have relinquished the organisational independence of the International Secretariat.

Legien's position was strong enough to impose his perception of the labour movement as distinct from, but working closely with and even exercising an influence over the Socialist parties, even though there was a strong and vocal majority within the ISNTUC which favoured closer union with the socialists (Holland, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland). Legien also had the added muscle of the AFL and the English trade unions as a counter to the

purely Socialist influence. The French position in this scheme was much more tenuous. If the French were prepared to restrain criticism at Budapest, this was largely due to a recognition of the futility of disruptive tactics.

The CGT had by now become almost resigned to the limited nature of work in the International Secretariat. The AFL's insistence on the reorganisation of the ISNTUC would eventually bear fruit, as the CGT recognised. The problem was that in recognising this, the CGT was effectively renouncing any claims to leadership and having to wait for the initiative of others. At the 12th congress of the CGT at Le Havre in 1912, the Comité confédéral's report on the Budapest conference was in a tone of resigned pessimism:

"Disons simplement que les débats furent ternes, les questions d'idées, de principe et de méthodes de lutte, qui donnent à des discussions de la couleur et de la chaleur, étant rigoureusement bannies de ces conférences. Les délégués représentant les organismes centraux de chaque pays ne sont appelés à émettre leurs votes que sur de simples questions administratives, qui ont certes leur utilité dans l'organisation ouvrière, mais ne sont cependant pas tout le mouvement.

"Une fois de plus, la proposition de la C.G.T. française [...] fut renvoyée aux calendes grecques, sa discussion étant subordonnée à l'élaboration d'une proposition de l'American Federation of Labor d'Amérique, se rapportant aux Fédérations internationales de syndicats.

"Quel que soit cependant le dépit éprouvé, la Confédération générale du Travail doit, comme c'est son devoir, rester adhérente au Secrétariat international. Sa mission est de travailler, au dedans de cet organisme, pour le transformer selon ses aspirations. Qui sait, les événements ouvriers internationaux qui se précipitent et s'accroissent de plus en plus dans le sens de la lutte des classes, nous ferons peut-être parvenir plus vite que nous l'espérons au résultat désiré."168

The reference to events which would precipitate the ISNTUC

towards more concrete action was of course a return to a familiar theme. This time, however, the CGT felt that this hope was founded, because of the success of the international peace meetings. Despite the lack of concrete initiatives and revolutionary commitment in the International Secretariat, and despite the criticisms which the CGT had to swallow at international conferences, it was worthwhile to continue with these links because they allowed the CGT to pursue other activities. This was stated explicitly by Yvetot in his account of the Budapest conference:

"Cette réunion des secrétaires nationaux eut son importance. Elle en aura davantage quand d'autres avec nous sauront mieux préconiser l'action.

"Ce serait mentir que de déclarer, pour ne déplaire à personne, que nous sommes satisfaits. Nous y avons eu peu de relief. Le système allemand prévalut à cette Conférence. Personnellement, je puis dire qu'elle me laisse un peu la même impression que nous laissa - à Griffuelhes et à moi - la Conférence internationale de Dublin.

"On y sentait une atmosphère d'organisation centralisatrice et de syndicalisme réformiste qui choquaient véritablement notre conception fédéraliste et notre esprit révolutionnaire. Nous n'en sommes pas découragés.

"Que cette déclaration réjouisse les Fédérations du Livre, du Textile et autres centrales du syndicalisme de France, cela ne nous émeut pas plus que ça nous surprend.

"N'avons-nous pas, par compensation reconfortante, les événements actuels qui viennent à point comme pour nous consoler et nous dire que l'avenir n'est pas au vieux syndicalisme corporatiste, ni à l'administration paperassière des Syndicats formidables et lourds de l'Allemagne, de l'Autriche, de la Hongrie, de la Suède, de la Norvège, etc. Ces événements, c'est ce qui se passa à Berlin, c'est ce qui se passe à Londres.

"C'est l'enthousiasme des travailleurs allemands lors des paroles révolutionnaires prononcées à Berlin par les délégués français.

"Cela, ce fut la revanche du rejet, à Dublin, de notre rapport sur l'antimilitarisme."169

The references to Dublin, acknowledged as the all-time low point of the International Secretariat, showed the depth of Yvetot's disappointment and disillusionment. Despite the exultant tone of the references to the Berlin meeting, the long list of those centres opposed to the CGT served only to accentuate the enormity of the task facing the French confederation. Indeed, that the CGT had to rely on events outside the ISNTUC showed precisely the extent of the CGT's failure within the international organisation.

Nevertheless, the great difference between Budapest and Dublin was that this time the CGT was prepared to stay within the ISNTUC, in the hope that outside events would put pressure on the International Secretariat to change. This hope rested on three main hypotheses. In general terms, the CGT tried to portray an international labour movement which was essentially revolutionary at the base, but constrained by its reformist leadership. In time, the CGT argued, the revolutionary base would oust the reformist leadership. This view was, of course, not based on any serious analysis of rank and file demands; rather, it was wishful thinking on the CGT's part. It also reflected the CGT's desire to place emphasis on what it saw as its strong point, namely, revolutionary fervour, at the expense of areas in which the CGT was weak: organisation, resources, membership, political influence.

Secondly, the CGT hoped that the pressure of international events would force the labour movements of other countries to make an unequivocal stand against war. This would justify the CGT's own preoccupation with the question of antimilitarism, and

radicalise labour internationalism, according to the CGT's scenario.

Finally, the presence of the AFL at international conferences signalled a new force in the struggle against socialist orthodoxy within the ISNTUC, as well as the hope that the organisational basis of the international organisation would be reinforced within the next few years.

These scenarios which the CGT presented as the basis for future international activity rested not on a factual assessment of the situation, but on hopes and wishes. The German labour leaders were relatively secure; the "Localist" dissidents were too weak to pose any threat, and there was little chance that the rank and file would oust its leadership. International peace meetings had provided important propaganda coups for the French syndicalists, but their value was more apparent than real; they did little to organise concrete support or prepare mass action, even less to prepare the general strike. As for Gompers and the AFL, while they may have been opposed to socialist influence in the international labour movement, they were no less hostile to revolutionary syndicalism. The alliance which the CGT saw between French revolutionary syndicalism and American anti-socialist labour unionism was at best a tactical one, which would not stand the test of wider issues.

Perhaps even more significantly, as far as the CGT's internationalist and antimilitarist action was concerned, the French decision to remain within the ISNTUC rested less on a positive appraisal of the international organisation's work and

future prospects than on a reliance on outside forces, based upon a recognition of the CGT's own inability to influence the international movement. The onus for internationalism and opposition to war was shifted away from the CGT onto outside forces. It was a "wait and see" policy that rested ultimately on the lack of any real alternative.

Chapter VI. THE CGT AND THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT IN THE
IMMEDIATE PRE-WAR YEARS (1911-1914)

VI.1 The CGT faced with the worsening international situation:
from the Agadir crisis to the Balkans wars (1911-1913)

As has been pointed out earlier, the CGT's policy on militarism and war was formulated in direct response to world events.¹ It was also dependent on, and at the same time at the very heart of, the complex relationships and issues within the French labour movement. During the period leading up to the outbreak of war in August 1914, important changes were taking place within the CGT which coincided with major events of international impact.

Jacques Julliard perceives a change in the CGT's attitude towards internationalism and antimilitarism dating from the Marseille congress of 1908, at which a group around Merrheim (representing the CGT leadership) successfully steered the movement away from the more extreme antipatriots associated with Hervé's Guerre Sociale.² On a more general level, historians point to an evolution in the CGT beginning with the election of Jouhaux in 1909, a phase known as the "rectification de tir".³ This process is usually associated with the CGT leadership, notably Jouhaux and Merrheim, and denotes, not a break from revolutionary syndicalist tradition as such, but a new emphasis on putting ideas into practice, as Julliard explains:

" [...] il s'agissait de réduire la portée de déclarations trop ambitieuses et trop imprudentes, en partant du possible et non du souhaitable."⁴

The essential and interdependent revolutionary syndicalist principles of internationalism, antimilitarism and opposition to war, and the general strike were crucial factors in this

evolutionary process. At the same time, events of major international importance not only pushed these factors to the forefront, but also posed the fundamental question of the link between the ideal and the practicable. The issue was not only how to put policy into practice, but how to formulate policy which could be acted upon.

It is this problem, and the responses to it, which, in essence, underlay the period in question and allow demarcation from earlier periods. As Merrheim's biographer has pointed out, the fundamental tenets of CGT doctrine remained intact, but increasingly, revolutionary syndicalist practice contradicted⁵ these (nonetheless sincerely held) beliefs. Since Merrheim was, in the words of the same author,

"the person who did more than anyone to shape the CGT's general theoretical revolutionary posture and antimilitarist attitude before World War I",⁶

this "rectification de tir" process was central to the CGT in general before 1914, and particularly to the CGT's attitude towards internationalism and antimilitarism.

The Agadir crisis, in the summer of 1911, served both to reinforce and justify the CGT's insistence on international action to prevent war, and to throw up even more questions concerning strategy. Early in 1911, the CGT, most often through the voice of Merrheim, had issued loud and urgent warnings about⁷ the danger of war. When, in July 1911, the Agadir crisis erupted on the international scene, the whole of the European labour and socialist movement was frightened into action, and the CGT was finally able to realise its plans for international peace demonstrations. The climate of fear engendered by the Agadir

crisis vindicated the CGT's stance both at home and abroad.

The Socialist International, too, stirred into action by world events, was the scene of important debates on the question of war. Whereas the CGT had frequently attacked the German socialist party's conservatism and reluctance to act, the French socialists, like most other members of the Second International, had, while being aware of this obstacle to international activity, refused to openly criticise the Germans, for fear of playing into the hands of the ruling classes. Instead, the French socialists sought to remove the Germans' effective veto on international action by increasing the power of individual members to call extraordinary meetings of the International Socialist Bureau. In this, they had the support of the English section and other members of the International. The German socialists agreed to send representatives to the CGT's meeting against war in August 1911, but this was because the German trade unions had already made the presence of socialist party representatives a condition of their own participation. Embarrassed by the publication of letters exposing the Germans' extemporising tactics, shown to be out of tune with public alarm at the international situation (especially when Germany became directly involved in the crisis), and having lost the initiative to the French, the German socialists were spurred into organising several meetings in late summer-autumn 1911 to demonstrate the German proletariat's desire for peace. Huge meetings in Berlin in late August and early September completely overshadowed the French CGT's initiative.

These events inevitably had some influence on the CGT. They felt that their earlier criticism of the SPD's lack of internationalism and militancy was now vindicated; moreover, the CGT's own example had forced the German socialists (including the trade-unionists) to move away from their intransigent position. In other words, the CGT felt now that its policy of influencing the international movement by example was bearing fruit not only as far as the ISNTUC was concerned, but also even within the Socialist International.¹² All this seemed to reinforce the CGT's view that the German rank and file was totally united with the French proletariat in opposing war, and that the pressure of world events would eventually force the social-democrat leaders to act. In addition, the CGT could now claim that their action was assured of victory since it was reciprocated by other countries (an area where they had always suffered criticism).¹³

Nevertheless, the lessons of the Agadir crisis provided some very difficult problems for the CGT. Foremost among these was the question of the overlap between the CGT's activities and those of the Socialist International. The question of party/trade union relations was posed once more, and at a critical time. The French socialist party was widely viewed on the international scene and in French public opinion as the chief promoter of anti-war activity, and it clearly saw the Socialist International as the rallying-point for action (thus effectively excluding the CGT). Recognising this, and in the climate of real fear of imminent war, the CGT took the unprecedented step of organising a joint demonstration with the SFIO on 24 September 1911, at the Aéro-Parc in Paris. The Aéro-Parc demonstration thus formed a clear

link between the CGT's own anti-war activities and those of the Socialist International, as well as between the French labour movement and that of other countries. The parallels between the French demonstration and those taking place in Germany were constantly stressed.¹⁴ Since the CGT had suffered earlier from not being able to say that their aspirations and plans were reciprocated by the Germans, they now made the most of the idea of international solidarity of action:

"La guerre immédiate apparaît improbable. Plus que jamais, disons-nous qu'elle est possible.[...]
"Pour que cette catastrophe soit impossible, il n'est de salut suprême qu'en la révolte solidaire des proletariats d'Allemagne, d'Angleterre et de France."15

In order to reinforce this impression of solidarity, Otto Pohl (a German socialist living in Paris) was asked to represent the German labour movement at the Aéro-Parc meeting. He was warmly received by the French crowd as he proclaimed:

"C'est au nom de mes camarades du Club socialiste allemand de Paris [...] que je prends la parole. Mais je peux dire que je suis, à ce moment, le porte-parole de tout le prolétariat organisé de l'Allemagne, dont les manifestations récentes de fraternité internationale, opposées à la frénésie chauvine et aux jeux dangereux des maquignons de la diplomatie capitaliste, trouvent ici un écho grandiose et émouvant.[...]
" [...] La paix mondiale reste désormais sous la protection du prolétariat international."16

Supported by the Socialist Party, the meeting was a success for the CGT, with a large crowd applauding Jouhaux's proclamation: "La déclaration de guerre sonnera la déclaration de la grève générale expropriatrice."¹⁷ The CGT speakers all insisted on the general strike as the ultimate means of combatting war, as for example Marie:

"Notre manifestation aura une double portée: elle est une affirmation puissante contre la guerre, mais que cette affirmation ait un lendemain, pour qu'elle ne demeure pas platonique, pour la rendre complète, une autre affirmation s'impose: celle de la grève générale de demain."¹⁸

The CGT triumphantly celebrated the Aéro-Parc meeting as a vindication of their belief in the revolutionary strike. Unity was the theme, as the CGT used the demonstration to show that working-class opposition to war was fundamental, in Germany as in France, and that the CGT's policy of the general strike in the event of war was now recognised not only by French workers but also by French socialists and even, by extension (by virtue of the link between the Aéro-Parc demonstration and those in Germany), by the previously hostile German labour movement. Yvetot pursued this point in an article published a few months later, looking back on 1911:

"Nous avons, entre autres faits, celui qui nous donna le bonheur de constater que nos idées logiques d'antimilitarisme et antipatriotisme n'étaient pas seulement localisées en France, mais qu'en Allemagne encore on les aimait et on les approuvait aussitôt connues.

"A cause de cela, nous pouvons nous réjouir de tout coeur de la portée de notre démarche et nous pouvons être fiers du succès et de la marche de nos idées révolutionnaires dans les centres les plus actifs du monde ouvrier international."¹⁹

This unity of action was, however, superficial. It was a tactic of the CGT, used at the international demonstration of August 1911, in order to make it appear that the German trade unions had accepted the general strike as a means to combat war. At the Aéro-Parc meeting, the CGT used the same tactic to give the impression that the French socialists were following CGT policy. If they were prepared to participate in joint action, it

could only be on their own terms. Similarly, the much-vaunted links with the German peace demonstrations were not as solid as the CGT tried to claim. Whereas the CGT had based their demonstration on the idea of the general strike, the German demonstrations had been careful to avoid any mention of direct measures to avert war and instead recommended parliamentary action.²⁰ Indeed, the French syndicalists were aware of these differences, noting the importance placed by the Germans on electoral results. The catalyst to unity was the very real fear of imminent war felt by the French and German public in July-August 1911, and once this immediate danger had passed the CGT²¹ resumed its criticism of SPD electoralism and even went so far as to accuse the SPD of being essentially preoccupied with²² national interests.

For the CGT, the danger was that the Agadir crisis, whilst superficially confirming its policy and extending its international scope, represented a peak of activity which could easily be followed by a trough. Albert Thomas, one of the socialist party speakers at the Aéro-Parc meeting, spelled out this danger and pleaded for unity:

"[...] il ne suffit pas de manifester aujourd'hui, il faut que l'écho de cette journée se répercute autour de chacun de nous, dans la famille, dans l'atelier. Demain, l'heure du danger passé, ceux dont les intérêts réclament la grève générale tenteront de lancer un mouvement nationaliste et chauvin contre la C.G.T. et le Parti socialiste. Unis comme aujourd'hui, nous le réduirons sans peine."²³

With this problem in mind, representatives of the Fédérations and Bourses met on 1 October 1911 in an extraordinary congress to discuss policy on the two main questions facing the

French labour movement: the high cost of living, and measures to take in the event of war. It was characteristic of the CGT that they should link the two questions in this way. In theory at least, there was no clear-cut line between antimilitarism and the more basic "bread and butter" issues; rather they formed part of the same overall vision. According to CGT policy, workers should decide and act directly on all issues which concerned them, and not just on immediate, work-based demands. The extraordinary congress had been decided by the Comité Confédéral at a meeting on 18 September and the aim was to go beyond pure rhetoric and to provide a realisable anti-war strategy:

"[...] d'examiner les moyens de mettre en application les décisions des Congrès confédéraux sur l'attitude du Prolétariat en cas de guerre."24

There was no question of reversing or even altering previous congress decisions. The general strike was sacrosanct, as was the affirmation of complete trade-union autonomy. Precisely because the immediate danger of war had passed, there was a need to reaffirm and put into practice the CGT's resolve to prevent war, as Jouhaux stressed:

"Dans cette conférence, les délégués syndicalistes se préoccupèrent de matérialiser les engagements pris par les travailleurs dans leurs divers meetings.

"Moins que jamais on ne doit rien laisser au hasard. Il ne faut pas que nous nous laissions surprendre par des événements qui, simples hypothèses aujourd'hui, peuvent devenir demain de terribles réalités.

"Une solide et sérieuse besogne de préparation à la résistance doit être le but de tous les militants ouvriers. Les discours de réunions publiques ne suffisent pas."25

The conference accordingly endorsed the Marseille decision to respond to a declaration of war by the revolutionary general

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strike.

The vital element in this reaffirmation of policy was the creation of unity between the various tendencies within the CGT. Of the 130 organisations represented, only five voted against the antimilitarist resolution.²⁷ In its reporting of the conference proceedings, the CGT was insistent on this point:

"Il convient [...] de faire remarquer que toutes les tendances, même réformistes, se sont rencontrés sur le terrain antimilitariste avec un désir commun d'entente. On peut dire que la question qui jusqu'alors avait servi à classer les divers modes de propagande syndicale et qui fut souvent une cause de dissentiments et de divisions est celle qui, hier, a réalisé l'unité ouvrière. Il n'y eut pas de note discordante."²⁸

It was of course vital for a CGT under siege from within to display unity on a question which had always been seen as divisive. It was equally vital to show that the organised French working class was united if the general strike was to be a viable proposition.

At the same time, the Comité confédéral had shifted the onus away from itself to all the individual organisations concerned, which had committed themselves specifically through this conference to preparation for the general strike and to anti-war activity. This was part of a wider process of reorganisation²⁹ which the Comité confédéral had instigated in 1911. As Julliard has pointed out, these were the first steps towards transferring the responsibility for the general strike away from the CGT³⁰ leadership. The Comité confédéral, by emphasising the commitment of local organisations to coordinate the general strike, was effectively ensuring that, as a body, it had no direct responsibility for leading the general strike. It was no

the task of the CGT leadership, but that of the local organisations, to prepare and coordinate anti-war activity at the grass-roots level.

There were other signs of this evolutionary process. Yvetot, in an article in La Bataille Syndicaliste, placed the responsibility for the general strike on mass action without any reference to organisation of this action:

"Le signal de l'action individuelle sera donné par l'action collective des masses ouvrières répondant à la déclaration de guerre dans chacun des pays en conflit."31

Jouhaux, in an article published on the day of the conference, gave an explicit warning of what was to come:

"Ce qu'il faut, c'est préparer par un travail d'ensemble les masses laborieuses à imposer spontanément leur volonté, sans qu'elles aient besoin d'attendre autres ordres que ceux qui seront dictés par leur propre initiative; c'est aussi prendre certaines mesures qui donneront à notre propagande antimilitariste son maximum d'efficacité et qui feront qu'aux heures critiques de nombreux bataillons passeront de l'autre côté de la barricade, le nôtre, pour assurer au peuple la victoire."32

The aim therefore was education of workers, and the role of the CGT leadership was to set the example, thereby creating confidence in the possibility of the general strike. Once more, the appearance of unity was a crucial factor. This double task of education and creation of confidence was all the more necessary because, as it became clear during the course of the conference, very few militants were prepared to accept the full consequences of the Marseille decision. Once the debate concentrated on practical details, the delegates had a different story to tell; all but one delegate had to give pessimistic reports about the

chances of organising the general strike in their union. The one delegate who did declare that his union was actively involved in preparing measures in case of a declaration of war was the miners' representative, Bartuel. Although Bartuel in fact represented only one faction of the organised miners, his organisation had, as early as 1907, decided to respond to mobilisation by general strike and even sabotage. Naturally, the CGT seized on this isolated example as one which proved the general rule:

"Au cours des débats, très intéressants, de graves déclarations ont été faites, notamment par le délégué des mineurs, qui a affirmé que les travailleurs du sous-sol avaient décidé depuis 1907 de répondre à la guerre par la grève générale et qu'ils étaient prêts à exécuter cette décision."³⁴

The propaganda value of such a statement was obvious. Although this discussion did not yield much in the way of practical measures, the miners' delegate at least helped to foster the climate of confidence which the CGT was seeking.

In accordance with the tactic of educating workers so as to prepare them for a spontaneous mass strike, the syndicalist press continued, throughout 1912, to emphasise the ever-present danger of war (despite an apparent lull). Merrheim, Delaisi and Harmel constantly pressed home this message:

"[...] je m'étonne quand des camarades affirment que les dangers sont écartés. Sans doute, nous ne sommes pas revenus encore aux heures critiques de l'an dernier, mais tout nous ramène infailliblement vers une crise nouvelle, irréductible celle-là parce qu'elle mettra aux prises tous les intérêts et toutes les ambitions sur tous les points de l'Europe."³⁵

Occasionally, there would be perceptive warnings about the strength of nationalism even among organised workers. Monatte,

for example, thought that more attention should be paid to the presence of workers in nationalist demonstrations:

"Il y a en nous quelque chose de plus fort que la raison, il y a les sensations, les émotions, le sentiment. Gare à ça!

"[...] Ce qui montera aux lèvres, ce sera le souvenir des deux ans ou les trois ans de régiment où l'on souffrit bien, mais dont on ne se rappelle plus que les bons moments."36

Despite these warnings, however, the position of the CGT had changed since the Agadir crisis. There was a feeling that the CGT's activities during 1911 had been a major factor in preserving peace:

"Au moment de cette crise internationale, la classe ouvrière put cependant faire entendre sa voix pour dire qu'elle refuserait de se laisser mener docilement à une boucherie effroyable. La révolte dont les menaçaient les travailleurs, a empêché les gouvernants de commettre l'épouvantable crime qu'ils s'apprêtaient à décider.

"Raison de plus pour que le prolétariat poursuive inlassablement son action contre la guerre internationale!"37

In other words, the CGT was now saying that war could be prevented without actual recourse to the general strike; the threat of it alone would suffice. As well as seeking to create a climate of confidence among workers, the CGT therefore aimed its propaganda also at the ruling classes:

"Forbans qui détenez le pouvoir, domestiques des affameurs, des exploiters et des mouchards, arrangez-vous pour éviter au peuple le spectacle horrible d'une guerre. Vous ne pouvez ignorer quels dangers courraient vos maîtres et vous-mêmes. [...]

"Voilà, semble-t-il, assez de temps que le peuple affirme que son ennemi n'est pas à l'extérieur, pour que vous puissiez supposer qu'il se précipitera à la frontière dès que vous battrez le rappel. Vous le savez bien, profiteurs de la République!"38

At the same time, antimilitarist propaganda was returning to old themes. During 1912, many meetings and demonstrations were

held to protest against conditions suffered by conscripts. The
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case of Aernoult and Rousset was typical, focussing on
maltreatment of ordinary soldiers and appealing to a very large
audience. A second theme was the use of the army against workers.
This trend away from criticism of the army per se was consecrated
at the Le Havre congress of the CGT in 1912, where one of the
major questions, the campaign against war, centred on a
discussion of the role of the army, prompted by specific events
on the French political scene, in particular the Berry-Millerand
law. This law was passed in March 1912 and modified in December
1912. It laid down penalties for defamation of the army and
incitement to desertion. It also stipulated that those found
guilty of certain crimes under common law, as well as strikers
found guilty of breaking the law, should be sent to the notorious
battalions in North Africa. This measure provoked a huge outcry
in labour circles, not only because of the severity of the
penalties envisaged for strikers, but also because of the
association made between strikers and common criminals (including
sex offenders). These repressive measures were commonly referred
to as "les lois scélérates".

Whereas antimilitarism as such was the subject of
controversy within the CGT, opposition to the "lois scélérates"
was unanimous within the French labour movement and even caused
antimilitarist declarations in publications of the Fédération du
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Livres. This was because the Berry-Millerand law was seen to be
aimed directly against the organised working class and was
therefore considered a trade-union issue. Accordingly, the

Merrheim/Jouhaux/Desplanques resolution, which was voted unanimously, authorised the Comité confédéral to organise a vigorous campaign for the repeal of the law. The congress also invited each Federation to organise its own "Sou du Soldat" and confirmed all the antimilitarist decisions of earlier CGT congresses.

The role of the army as such, and the question of patriotism, were therefore not discussed at this congress, except by the reaffirmation of earlier decisions. In other words, whilst commitment was formally pledged to the total antimilitarism of previous years, the emphasis was transferred away from this to a criticism of the use of the army against the working class: "antimilitarisme corporatif" as opposed to "antimilitarisme total".⁴¹ Indeed, Merrheim was at pains to dissociate the CGT from some of the more extreme antipatriotic utterances which had⁴² been attributed to it.

In a key text of 20 August 1912, the Comité confédéral of the CGT had already distanced itself, in no uncertain terms, from the antipatriotism of the Hervéists, who, it was claimed, had tried to take over the syndicalist movement, just as the socialist parliamentarians had done:

"Il y a vingt ans déjà se dressaient les convoitises politiciennes; il y a douze ans s'exerçait la corruption déprimante d'un gouvernement encouragé, soutenu, par une fraction socialiste gagnée par le pouvoir; il y a six ans se manifestait une excitation étrangère à toute idée, sous le couvert de l'antipatriotisme, production bâtarde d'une réclame outrée; en même temps se produisaient les convoitises politiciennes hypocritement écartées par les congrès socialistes de Limoges et de Nancy. Depuis des mois, les mêmes convoitises s'étaient.

"[...]

"A l'action organisée des syndicats, on voulait

substituer l'acte personnel, esquissé dans une pose théâtrale, ou traduit par une expression violente, souvent grossière. Du 'browning' et de 'Mademoiselle Cisaille', on faisait un drapeau, alors que l'un et l'autre ne sont que des moyens extrêmes auxquels on se résout; l'antipatriotisme, sans expression et sans objet, tentera d'éliminer l'antimilitarisme ouvrier, affirmé par le congrès confédéral de 1900.

"C'est l'excès sans contrepoids, sans équilibre. C'est la proposition sans point d'appui."43

As well as the more extreme anarchists and the Hervéists, the socialists - or certain sections of the socialist party - continued to pose problems for the syndicalist movement. The attitude of the CGT to the French socialist party was complex, and operated on various different levels. Within the socialist party itself, there was no united position on relations with the CGT. Vaillant had always aimed towards unity between the party and the CGT, but on equal terms and with the agreement of both parties. Until the syndicats felt in a position to move closer to the party, everything should be done to facilitate rapprochement, based on respect for the autonomy of the syndicats. This was the Vaillantist position, defended at the national socialist congresses of Limoges (1906) and Nancy (1907) against Guesdist arguments for subordination of the syndicats to the party. Jaurès, who had been closer to the Guesdist position than to Vaillant on this question at the early congresses of the Socialist International, was moving towards Vaillant's point of view. The leading section of the socialist party was therefore increasingly willing to work with the CGT whilst respecting its autonomy and its viewpoints. Because of this, and given increased government repression, the CGT was in practice prepared to collaborate with the socialists, particularly around issues such

as opposition to war. The socialist deputy Renaudel played an important part in this collaboration, as he had done in 1909 when the presence of socialist representatives was a condition of German participation in the international peace meeting organised by the CGT.

On the other hand, the Guesdist position remained entrenched and continued to upset relations between the CGT and the unified socialist party. The deputy Compère-Morel was prominent among those who sought to belittle the CGT's methods. In December 1911, Compère-Morel and a fellow socialist deputy, Ghesquière, criticised CGT antiparlamentarianism in the Chambre des Députés. This attack was seen as doubly treacherous by the CGT because the socialist deputies were using institutions of the State in order to criticise the labour leaders, at a time when the CGT was being directly threatened by the government by means of the "lois scélérates". For some time, relations between the CGT and the socialist party were hostile.⁴⁴ In January 1912, the polemics continued as Compère-Morel and the CGT leaders denounced each other in the socialist and syndicalist press, the CGT claiming that the socialists merely wanted to turn workers into a docile electorate.⁴⁵ These incidents were criticised by Vaillant and others at the SFIO congress of Lyon in 1912, but much damage had been done.

A more direct threat to the CGT itself was posed by those within the confederation who sought to use the issue of relations with the party as a weapon against the leadership. An important group around Renard, secretary of the Fédération du Textile, was closely associated with the Guesdist socialists, and constantly

pushed for closer ties with the socialist party, in line with the Guesdist vision of labour unions as "auxiliaries" of socialism. This struggle within the CGT came to a head at the congress of Le Havre in 1912, and helps to explain the awkward position in which the CGT found itself in relation to the SFIO at that time. On one level, CGT leaders recognised the need to act in conjunction with socialists, especially in large-scale campaigns such as that against war. They also realised that some important results could be achieved by socialists working within Parliament. On another level, to formally acknowledge these views would be to encourage Renard and his allies to continue their agitation within the confederation, with the aim of destroying syndicalist autonomy. The CGT therefore placed emphasis on the "Charte d'Amiens" as the basis for action, and formally ruled out the possibility of working with the socialist party. This was also a means by which the CGT could hope to put pressure on the socialists to be more flexible in their dealings with the syndicalists. In practice, the CGT continued to discuss plans for joint action with the socialists. As in many other spheres of activity, the CGT's revolutionary syndicalism was tempered by practical considerations. Although the CGT leaders were prepared to work with socialist leaders, they felt the need to reaffirm the basic revolutionary syndicalist principle of total autonomy.

One other important aspect of this complex position concerned the role of outside labour movements, especially that of Germany. This was seen at the CGT congress of Le Havre, which Sassenbach attended on behalf of the German labour movement.

Sassenbach gave a rousing speech of solidarity:

"Camarades, les gouvernants et les classes réactionnaires essaient souvent de dresser les uns contre les autres les travailleurs des diverses nations. C'est surtout le cas pour les prolétariats de France et d'Allemagne. Ces efforts seront déjoués, car les ouvriers savent bien que ce serait une folie d'aimer mieux la classe opprimante de son propre pays que les frères de travail placés au-delà des frontières. Ils savent bien aussi qu'ils ont des intérêts communs et qu'il faut se soutenir les uns les autres."46

It is perhaps surprising that the CGT did not attempt to make much more of this declaration of solidarity. One reason for the distance placed between Sassenbach and the CGT is to be found in another section of his speech, which followed a statistical run-down of the strength of the German labour movement:

"Il est douteux qu'il eût été possible pour nous de réaliser ces progrès sans nos relations amicales avec le parti politique de la Social-Démocratie. Chez nous, le mouvement politique et le mouvement syndical marchent ensemble dans un accord absolu; ils assistent l'un l'autre et se dirigent en commun contre les ennemis de la classe ouvrière, c'est-à-dire contre le gouvernement et contre le patronat. De cette manière, nous avons avancé et nous avons pu remplir le devoir syndical, qui est d'améliorer la situation des travailleurs."47

The other foreign delegate at the Le Havre congress, Bergmans, of Belgium, was even more high-handed in his message to the CGT:

"Vous n'ignorez pas qu'en Belgique les rapports entre le parti socialiste et la Commission syndicale sont encore plus étroits qu'en Allemagne.

"[...] Depuis que nous marchons ainsi, nous avons fait des progrès considérables. Nous sommes arrivés à sortir de la situation chaotique qui régnait jusque il y a quatre ans; nos organisations localistes, à l'esprit très étroit, ont été transformées pour la plupart en organisations nationales sur les bases des organisations syndicales allemandes, c'est-à-dire de l'union nationale.

"Nous, en Belgique, nous pouvons déclarer que nous suivons de très près le mouvement syndical français; nous ne laissons pas passer une occasion de nous y intéresser; et alors nous constatons ceci, et nous le

constatons avec plaisir: c'est que, depuis des deux dernières années, les syndicats français commencent à comprendre qu'il faut verser les cotisations; nous constatons également qu'à chaque congrès professionnel qui est tenu sur l'un ou l'autre point de votre pays, l'on décide de renforcer l'organisation au moyen de plus fortes cotisations. Enfin, on marche de plus en plus vers une centralisation plus caractérisée."48

The purpose of the presence of the two foreign delegates was thus spelled out: it was international solidarity of a specific kind. Having perceived that the CGT was evolving towards a more solid organisational structure, based on greater financial strength, and that the CGT had cooperated with the socialist party in organising anti-war demonstrations, the German and Belgian delegates had gone to France to lend support to those changes and to encourage greater movement in the direction which they advocated.⁴⁹

It was no coincidence that the major debate of the Le Havre congress, besides the question of opposition to war, was concerned with the relationship between the CGT and the socialist party. The impetus for the demand for greater unity with the socialist party came from the group around Renard (as opposed to the politically neutral Keufer), who based his arguments firmly on the German example. Renard defended the Generalkommission against attacks by the CGT leadership⁵⁰ and held up the German labour movement as a model: "[...] vous ne pouvez pas donner des leçons à une organisation forte [...] de 2.500.000 membres."⁵¹

In order to fend off Renard's demands, the CGT leadership had to distance itself from its fellow members of the ISNTUC. Dumoulin replied to Renard:

"Les organisations étrangères n'ont rien à voir dans ce débat. Nous n'avons pas à savoir comment nos

camarades de l'étranger s'organisent, ni eux à s'occuper de ce qui se passe chez nous. Ils respectent notre autonomie, nous respectons la leur!"52

This was quite a strong statement to make for an ardent internationalist, and it reflected the insecurity of the CGT leadership. This attitude also had implications for the anti-war policy pursued by the CGT, as the same Dumoulin pointed out later in the debate:

"Ne croyez-vous pas [...] qu'il est nécessaire de donner une adjonction à la motion de Toulouse et de dire que la C.G.T. devra se mettre en relations avec les organisations syndicales étrangères pour mener contre la guerre une action commune, internationale?"53

On the question of CGT/SFIO relations, the Comité confédéral won a clear majority for its reaffirmation of the Amiens resolution:

"Le syndicalisme, mouvement offensif de la classe ouvrière, s'affirme encore une fois décidé à conserver son autonomie et son indépendance."54

Nevertheless, the pressure from within the CGT to pursue closer links with the socialist party did not disappear. This factor was crucial in determining the CGT's attitude towards the socialist party at home and towards other labour movements abroad.

Although the CGT leadership had emerged victorious from the skirmishes at Le Havre, its position was still very insecure. In order to try to consolidate that position, to build on the unity created by opposition to the Berry-Millerand law, and to carry on the process initiated by the extraordinary congress of October 1911, the Comité confédéral held a special meeting on 15 October 1912. The external motivation was provided by fresh conflicts between Greeks and Turks in the Balkans. In an article in La

Bataille Syndicaliste on the day of the meeting, Jouhaux set the tone:

"Jamais la situation internationale n'a été aussi critique.[...]"

"Demain, le prolétariat de tous les pays peut être lancé dans un terrifiant conflit!"

"Est-ce que la classe ouvrière va rester inactive devant le danger qui la menace? Est-ce que les travailleurs ne vont pas faire entendre leur voix?"⁵⁵

On an international level, Jouhaux argued, the initiative had to come from the CGT, because only the CGT represented the true revolutionary working-class tradition and in particular the tradition of the First International:

"Cette opposition à toutes les guerres, mais c'est la plus nette tradition ouvrière! Elle a été la pensée imprescriptible de toutes nos organisations depuis leur origine. La C.G.T. l'a reprise après l'Internationale."⁵⁶

The first decision of the Comité confédéral was to draw up a declaration for publication, which would reiterate congress decisions and call for action. The resulting text, "Guerre à la Guerre!", was published within a few days of the meeting. In it, the CGT warned that the Balkans war, arriving on top of the Moroccan crises (for which French capitalists were singled out as responsible), threatened to extend into a European war. The crucial factor in preventing war was seen as public opinion:

"Les puissances voudront-elles, aujourd'hui, localiser le conflit, en limiter la durée? Oui, si l'opinion publique, enfin éclairée, veut et sait intervenir. Si tous les partisans sincères de la paix entre les peuples ne se montrent pas vigilants et actifs, en élevant une vigoureuse protestation, ils risquent de voir les événements se précipiter et les trouver désemparés devant la brutalité du fait accompli."

"Quant aux travailleurs, leur haine de la guerre s'est trop souvent affirmée pour qu'ils restent impassibles."

"Pour les uns, comme pour les autres, c'est notre devoir et c'est notre intérêt à tous d'intervenir. La

C.G.T. les y convie."

After recalling the Marseille congress resolution, the Comité confédéral urged both workers and the wider public to participate in action against war. Finally, the declaration ended on a note of internationalism:

"Pour cela, la C.G.T. appelle à l'action nécessaire les travailleurs organisés de l'Internationale ouvrière.

"Et s'il est vrai qu'une concordance de vues anime en ce moment les gouvernements français et allemand, dans une même tentative pour sauvegarder la paix européenne, il est d'autant plus indispensable aux peuples allemands et français d'être au premier rang dans l'intervention et la protestation imposées par cette redoutable éventualité: LA GUERRE!"⁵⁸

The "Guerre à la guerre!" cry rested on two main assumptions: firstly, that the workers of France were already firmly committed to opposition to war (and the appeal called for this action to be extended to the rest of the public); and secondly, that the workers of France and Germany, and indeed workers internationally, were united in theory and action.

On both these counts, more needed to be done, as the Comité confédéral admitted privately. At the Comité confédéral meeting on 15 October, Jouhaux stressed the need to go beyond a verbal protestation and recommended a demonstration. Luquet and Le Guery felt that, in order for any demonstration to be effective, it would have to be echoed in London and Berlin. Le Guery suggested contacting the International Secretariat. At this stage, however, as with the organisation of Griffuelhes' trip to Berlin in 1905, there was a real fear that the Germans in particular would turn down any request for joint action, and Savoie expressed the opinion that, if the Germans did agree to participate in any

activities, it would be through the SPD. The question was eventually left to a commission composed of Griffuelhes, Luquet and Desplanques, who decided to contact the foreign centres⁶⁰ directly.

To the public, the CGT was presenting an image of international solidarity against war. In accordance with the campaign of agitation decided by the Comité confédéral, the Union des Syndicats de la Seine produced a circular which proclaimed the will of the international proletariat to oppose war:

"Plutôt que de s'entregorger, les travailleurs lutteront pour leur affranchissement. Les ennemis des travailleurs sont ceux qui les exploitent et qui, par la force, les maintiennent dans la servitude.
 "Les travailleurs allemands, anglais, autrichiens, russes, italiens, américains, espagnols, sont prêts. Nous aussi!"⁶¹

This optimistic view was not, however, shared by the Comité confédéral which met on 30 October, in order to discuss replies received from the German, Austrian, Danish and Italian centres to the CGT's request for joint or simultaneous demonstrations. Bauer, for Germany, had replied to the French request by referring to the previous year's demonstration in Paris, which had taken place with the cooperation of the socialist party. This time, too, the German trade unions would only consider participation in a demonstration in which the French socialist⁶² party was also represented "sous l'une ou l'autre forme". Bauer reminded the CGT that the German workers had already demonstrated their opposition to war, in conjunction with the SPD.

Hueber's letter was worded more strongly and represented a definite refusal. He reminded the CGT that the Austrian workers had already held demonstrations but that these had taken place

under the auspices of the socialist party, for legal reasons. Moreover, this was the natural state of affairs, according to Hueber:

" [...] nous pensons que l'exécution de telles protestations est l'affaire unique et seule des partis politiques."

Finally, Hueber ended his letter on a rather ironic note:

"Comme nous avons rempli notre devoir dans la question de la manifestation de la paix, nous avons l'honneur de vous en informer pour en prendre connaissance."

The Austrian letter in particular could not have been better designed to anger the CGT. The Danish reply, too, laid down similar conditions for participation, but it was the German and Austrian replies which caused the most damage. The Italians had accepted the CGT's invitation. As Jouhaux pointed out, all this left the CGT in an awkward position:

"Maintenant, qu'allons-nous faire?

"Il est indispensable que nous fassions quelque chose, bien que la situation s'offre à nous par un côté difficile."63

It was finally agreed that the CGT would organise a demonstration of its own, perhaps with the help of the English. There was no doubt that the Germans and the Austrians had deliberately posed unacceptable conditions in order to sabotage the CGT's efforts, and there was no question of acquiescing in these demands. The only debate lay in the nature of the response to Germany and Austria.

Jouhaux saw the replies as the final breaking-point, which the CGT had tried to avoid: "[...] on nous fait dire ce que nous n'avons jamais dit au sujet des délégués du Parti socialiste Allemand." He felt that the replies should be published as a

lesson to their authors: "[...] il y a lieu de répondre du tic au tac aux leçons données par les lettres venues des voisins." In this, he had the support of the other members of the Comité confédéral. Bitterness towards the German and Austrian labour leaders was so strong that there was a need for revenge. How far the rift would go was another matter. Furinet expressed the problem neatly: "Nous n'avons qu'à les imiter ou à nous détacher d'eux." In other words, the row over the CGT's demand for a peace demonstration now threatened to force a split away from the ISNTUC. Griffuelhes asked:

"[...] quelle peut être l'utilité d'un semblable bureau international qui n'est qu'un rouage sur beaucoup d'autres, un rouage de paperasseries?"

Bousquet regretted that the CGT had not remained in closer contact with like-minded, revolutionary groups in Germany, instead of remaining within the ISNTUC.

On the other hand, Guinchard and Péricat insisted on remaining within the International Secretariat. Despite the evident strength of feeling against the ISNTUC, the CGT leadership was evidently scared of making a break away. Yvetot justified this reluctance to take an initiative:

"Les leaders allemands et autrichiens du Syndicalisme ne sont pas éternels et quand ils auront disparu, les ouvriers de ce pays, d'eux-mêmes, viendront à nous. En attendant, sachons agir sans eux, tout en restant dans l'Internationale Syndicale."

Once again, at a crucial point, the CGT leadership backed away from the prospect of a split. Yet under such circumstances the CGT's affiliation to the International Secretariat was merely an official stance which was belied by day-to-day reality.

On the French side, the position was just as intransigent as that of the Germans and Austrians. The CGT's position can be seen as a defensive measure against encroachment from the socialist party, and, above all, a statement of autonomy. Once in a position of autonomy, the CGT could act as it pleased, and indeed the CGT was not opposed to cooperation with the socialist party on its own terms. On a formal level, autonomy had to be stressed. As usual, the CGT rested its arguments firmly on previous congress decisions.⁶⁴ In practice, however, this did not exclude cooperation with the socialist party. The socialist demonstration of 17 November, organised on the initiative of the International Socialist Bureau, was publicised in the syndicalist press, and the CGT wished it well. Yvetot, however, made a clear distinction between the socialist demonstration and the CGT's own plans:

"L'une sera pour ainsi dire un charitable avertissement des collègues parlementaires, avec leur suite innombrable d'électeurs socialistes ou de socialistes tout court; l'autre sera la menace salutaire d'une masse ouvrière prête à agir... Et voilà!"⁶⁵

In order to assert its own autonomy vis-à-vis both the French socialist party and the foreign organisations, the CGT therefore attached vital importance to its own meeting, to be held on the same date as a second extraordinary congress. The CGT was now committed to going alone:

"[...] nous avons été pour ainsi dire éconduits par nos camarades d'Allemagne, d'Autriche, etc.[...] Qui sait même si ce refus n'aura pas été l'occasion pour la C.G.T. de bien montrer à tous la force et la souplesse de son organisme?"⁶⁶

The extraordinary congress of the CGT, which met on 24 and

25 November 1912 to discuss anti-war measures, and the public demonstration on the evening of the 25th, have been described by Annie Kriegel and Jean-Jacques Becker as the climax of the CGT's campaign against war.⁶⁸ Indeed, the congress did mark a peak of activity, and the build-up to it was rigorously prepared, from the point of view of activity (by a series of smaller meetings throughout the country, organised by the individual Fédérations or Unions), and also both morally and theoretically, as Jouhaux⁶⁹ constantly developed the theme in the syndicalist press.

Moreover, the tone of the build-up to the congress was one of revolutionary resolve. The Marseille decision was repeatedly emphasised, as was the central importance of the general strike:⁷⁰ "la seule forme d'action efficace". In the congress itself, this revolutionary message was conveyed through the central resolution:

"[...] il apparaît qu'à aucun moment il ne peut exister entre les classes en opposition la moindre communauté de pensée et d'action.

"Mieux que tout autre événement social, une guerre fait éclater cette opposition, puisqu'il s'agit pour la classe ouvrière, sans profit aucun pour elle, de répondre à l'appel guerrier du capitalisme en courant sus aux prolétaires, victimes inconscientes du capitalisme voisin; que, ce faisant, la classe ouvrière se prêterait à la plus criminelle besogne devant augmenter la force d'exploitation du capitalisme et affaiblir, pour de longues années, le mouvement ouvrier, condition essentielle de son émancipation. Pour toutes ces raisons, le Congrès confédéral déclare qu'il ne reconnaît pas à l'Etat bourgeois le droit de disposer de la classe ouvrière."⁷¹

The tone was also one of optimism. Instead of emphasising the lack of support from the masses, Jouhaux returned to the traditional CGT theme of the "minorités agissantes":

"L'essentiel est donc de posséder une notion de ce qui

peut advenir, de se rendre aptes à utiliser les événements. Une minorité le peut toujours lorsque chez elle existe la confiance. C'est à elle qu'échoit le rôle d'entraîner les masses, hésitantes et incertaines."72

Once again, the key word was "confidence"; the major task of the congress was to create the climate of confidence in the power of working-class action which would make the general strike possible. For this reason, Jouhaux argued for the congress to be open to the press.

The climate of confidence was to be created in three ways: firstly, by assuming unanimity of views and strength of support; secondly, by commitment to positive action on the basis of earlier congress decisions; thirdly, by an emphasis on the feasibility of CGT policy. It took skilful direction from the CGT leadership to achieve all three conditions. From the start, Jouhaux took a firm lead and all but decided the congress resolutions beforehand.⁷³

The objective was to spread responsibility through the regional and local representatives to their respective membership, and through to the wider masses. As a first step in this process, the CGT stressed the large number of organisations represented at the congress. Around 700 delegates were present, many times more the number of participants at the conference of October 1911, representing a total of 1504 organisations. Of these, only a handful of delegates opposed the leadership line, most notably Soudry (faïenciers de Montceau) and Klemczynski (well known as a supporter of closer ties with the socialist party). Six resolutions which regretted the CGT's refusal to work more closely with the SFIO were presented to the congress, one of

which also reproached the Comité confédéral for not having participated in the Basle congress of the Socialist International. Overall, however, and by a very large majority, the congress was adamant in declaring its autonomy not only from the socialist party and its international organisation, but also from the labour movements of other countries.

The most serious challenge to the leadership line involved precisely this stance of international isolation. Cleuet (employés d'Amiens) asked pointedly if the CGT's action would be backed up by other countries: "Nous n'avons pas de lien international. Est-ce la faute à la C.G.T? Est-ce la faute aux autres pays?"⁷⁴ Challie (mécaniciens de Paris) demanded union with other countries, for the sake of effective action against war, although he acknowledged "le caractère fâcheux" of the German and Austrian letters.

In response, Jouhaux stated once again that the objective of the congress was not unity of action on an international scale, but action on the part of the CGT alone, which would have a catalytic effect on the wider public. That this position was generated by wounded pride was expressed by other delegates, for example Bled:

"On nous a dit: vous êtes isolés, vos violons ne s'accordent pas avec ceux des camarades étrangers.
"Pardon! Nous avons voulu les accorder. On nous l'a refusé, on nous a dit: 'Adressez-vous à la boutique à côté!...'"⁷⁵

Despite the discussion of problems which the CGT leadership had hoped to pass over, the congress satisfactorily agreed on the plans put forward by Jouhaux and the Comité confédéral. The next

step was to have this attitude, and the policies decided by the congress, publicly endorsed by the wider masses. This was, according to Comité confédéral member Savoie, the significance of the public meeting on the evening of 25 November:

"La manifestation et le congrès de la C.G.T. ont montré comment le peuple est prêt à recevoir l'ordre de mobilisation.

"Nous sommes la minorité, il est vrai. Mais je suis certain que nous pourrons empêcher la guerre; je le dis, parce que je connais la lâcheté des gens qui sont au pouvoir; ils ont peur de perdre leurs privilèges. Ils savent que le peuple, en réponse à la déclaration de la guerre, tâchera d'obtenir son émancipation."⁷⁶

This was all part of the process of "dégagement des responsabilités" referred to by Julliard.⁷⁷ In this process, the resolutions passed at the congress played an important part. Firstly, the working class was urged to demonstrate its opposition to war in a committed way by participating in a twenty-four-hour strike in December. The responsibility for the organisation of this strike fell on the local Syndicats or Unions.⁷⁸ Secondly, the longer-term policy of the CGT was also left to the local representatives and to the wider proletariat as a whole. The main thrust of the CGT's anti-war resolve appeared in this part of the resolution:

"[...] si, par folie ou par calcul, le pays au sein duquel nous sommes pincés se lançait dans une aventure guerrière, au mépris de notre opposition et de nos avertissements, le devoir de tout travailleur est de ne pas répondre à l'ordre d'appel et de rejoindre son organisation de classe pour y mener la lutte contre ses seuls adversaires: les capitalistes.

"Désertant l'usine, l'atelier, la mine, le chantier, les champs, les prolétaires devront se réunir dans les groupements de leur localité, de leur région, pour y prendre toutes mesures dictées par les circonstances et le milieu, avec, comme objectif: la conquête de leur émancipation et, comme moyen: la grève générale révolutionnaire."⁷⁹

Although the revolutionary phraseology remained, the concern of the CGT leadership was clearly based on a practical assessment of the situation and a desire to make the implications of this assessment understood by all the delegates, as Merrheim stated clearly in presenting the resolution:

"Nous nous sommes dégagés des mots et des formules; nous avons essayé de déterminer ce qu'était et ce que devait être dans la réalité l'action confédérale. Nous avons voulu signifier à la classe ouvrière que, le jour d'une déclaration de guerre, il n'y aurait pas de C.G.T., pas de mot d'ordre. Qu'on se détache bien en province et dans tous les centres de cette idée et qu'on n'attende aucune indication, mais qu'au reçu de l'ordre de mobilisation les travailleurs doivent se refuser à y répondre et se rendent dans leurs Bourses du Travail voir ce qu'il y a à faire."⁸⁰

This was a logical and practical step; the CGT leadership had every reason, in the climate of government repression, to assume that they more than anyone would be prevented from acting in the event of war. Nevertheless, it did mark a step away from earlier revolutionary-syndicalist affirmations, which had been based on principle. Jouhaux himself noted this change, in his evaluation of the congress:

"Ainsi a été faite une fois de plus la preuve que notre syndicalisme est largement et profondément imprégné d'idéalisme.

"Mais il l'est aussi au sens très net des réalités. La motion de la Commission, c'est surtout une résolution pratique et qui détermine l'action du prolétariat."⁸¹

A second qualification was apparent. The CGT leadership made a clear distinction between activities designed to prevent war and measures to be taken if war actually broke out: "ce que nous
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ferons avant, ce que nous ferons après". In organising the workers and showing the strength of feeling through demonstrations, the CGT was warning the French government not to

become involved in war:

" [...] ce n'est pas contre la guerre qu'il faut se dresser d'abord; il importe, avant tout, que la guerre soit évitée. C'est donc une action préventive qu'il convient d'engager, de soutenir."⁸³

The threat of the general strike was absolutely vital in this preventive strategy, without necessarily a real commitment to carry it out. In this context, the warning of a general strike could suffice to prevent war, and this was the sense of the 24-⁸⁴ hour strike planned for 16 December. Following this strategy, it was crucially important to uphold previous CGT decisions advocating the general strike. In reality, this entailed less a commitment to organising the general strike than a refusal to surrender the CGT's trump card.

The extraordinary congress of the CGT in 1912 also marked a peak of activity in the sense that the anti-war campaign fell off to a great extent following the congress. In many ways, the congress had in itself achieved many of the objectives of the campaign. The strike of 16 December was not a complete failure: according to official figures, around 30,000 responded to the strike call in Paris, and 50,000 in the rest of the country. In some places, Lyon, for example, the strike was more successful⁸⁵ than in others. The CGT, of course, claimed a much higher figure of 600,000 strikers overall. Yet, despite the fairly large number of strikers in some areas, and despite the obvious alarm which the strike caused in government circles (as shown by the considerable efforts to diminish the strike in the right-wing press), the CGT had hoped for a much more paralysing effect, given that the strike had been planned as a warning of what would

happen in the case of a declaration of war. In particular, the key sector of transports had still managed to function almost normally in most areas. The tone of CGT reports on the strike was sober and reflective, if not pessimistic:

"En ce qui concerne les organisations ouvrières elles-mêmes, constatons qu'un grand nombre d'entre elles ont fait tout leur devoir. Parmi elles, il en est qui, pour la première fois, prenaient part à des mouvements protestataires. De premier coup elles n'ont pas, certes, la perfection. Une prochaine fois, nous enregistrons un mieux sensible."⁸⁶

Yvetot spoke of "pessimisme utile", which he thought would allow the French labour movement to probe more deeply into its own actions. In particular, he castigated those within the movement who were acting against the spirit of the wishes of the majority.

The CGT's policy and actions against war were inevitably caught up in the complex issues of relations within the socialist party and the struggle of different tendencies within the movement itself, and relations with the labour movements of other countries. During the years 1912-1913, the CGT was in practice moving closer to those labour movements in the International Secretariat with which it continually clashed. In 1913, the CGT's campaign against militarism centred increasingly on conditions in the army rather than opposition to the army itself. The major campaign of 1913 rallied opposition to the government's bill, which became law later in the year, extending military service to three years. At the same time, the CGT's own position grew more threatened by government raids and arrests of leading militants. The three-year law and government measures against syndicalists became the major focus of the CGT's activity. Once again, the campaign was above all one of unity, and the CGT worked closely

with the socialist party in organising meetings and demonstrations against the three-year law. At the same time, the CGT leaders blocked the more extreme antimilitarist sections of the movement.

At a special conference in July 1913, for example, Merrheim angrily rounded on those militants who attempted to push the movement beyond the measures proposed by the CGT leaders. Royer (Rhône), demanded that:

"[...] la Conférence donne mandat au Comité confédéral de préparer une grève générale pour le cas où le gouvernement voudrait dissoudre la Confédération ou détruire les libertés syndicales."⁸⁷

By not committing itself to organising a general strike, claimed Marchand (Fédération du Tonneau), the CGT was inviting ridicule. Merrheim's response was blunt: "Le ridicule, il est pour ceux qui⁸⁸ apportent de pareilles propositions!" As Jouhaux himself noted, the resolution which was voted deliberately avoided any reference⁸⁹ to specific action. Obviously the CGT leadership was unwilling to commit itself to actions which might be counter-productive, creating an impression of disorganisation instead of strength and unity. Yet the evident departure from earlier positions did not⁹⁰ pass unnoticed by the various tendencies within the CGT.

Another important nuance was brought out in Jouhaux's justification of the anti-war campaign, with a new emphasis in 1912 and 1913 on the humanitarian aspect:

"Etre contre les boucheries internationales et le montrer virilement, c'est travailler pour l'humanité tout entière, pour la civilisation, pour le progrès, mais aussi et surtout pour l'émancipation des classes laborieuses."⁹¹

This was much closer to Legien's attitude towards trade-union

activity than Jouhaux would have cared to admit.

Yet instead of these changes bringing about closer cooperation between the French and German labour movements, and between France and the ISNTUC generally, the opposite was true. Entrenched in its own ideological position, insisting above all on the principle of autonomy, the CGT was unwilling to concede anything to those who it saw as would-be captors of the movement: the extreme antipatriots on one side, the parliamentary socialists on the other. In its attitude towards the German labour movement, the CGT played a curious game. In order to combat the argument that the labour movement and the socialists were playing into the German government's hands by allowing German military expansion while seeking to block the French military build-up, the CGT attempted to demonstrate that the German proletariat was equally resolutely opposed to militarism. Such attempts, however, were usually confined to vague, sweeping statements. As concrete proof of this assertion, the CGT had to resort to quotations from the nationalist paper La Patrie.⁹² The only other source of evidence was a manifesto drawn up by the German socialist party, which led the CGT to conclude:

"C'est le même cri, contre la guerre, c'est la même condamnation de la paix armée qui retentissent à la fois dans les deux pays."⁹³

Yet, at the same time, the CGT was undermining this message with negative images of German social-democracy. In November 1912, for example, just before the extraordinary congress was due to debate measures to prevent war, La Bataille Syndicaliste reproduced an article taken from the German Localists' paper, Die Einigkeit,

under the title "La 'Sozial Démokratie' est patriote". In February 1913, as the three-year law was being debated in parliament, the most devastating attack yet on the German socialists, Charles Andler's Socialisme Impérialiste, was published in La Vie Ouvrière. Here, Monatte cited the CGT's experience with the Germans as proof of the accuracy of Andler's claims that the SPD was deeply and fundamentally nationalistic and pro-imperialist.⁹⁵ Jaurès' attempts to refute Andler's assertions served only to draw further attention to the claims, and, as a result, the debate continued for some months and reached the pages of La Bataille Syndicaliste in April 1913. The message which reached the readership of the French syndicalist press was that Andler's conclusions were essentially correct.⁹⁶ Such statements were obviously at variance with affirmations of the German socialists' efforts to oppose the arms build-up.

In all of this, there was no mention whatsoever of the German trade unions' involvement in the anti-war campaign. The CGT's anti-war campaign was obviously suffering as a result of the lack of any real international links.

VI.2 The CGT and the issue of international unity

The CGT's response to the problem posed by the lack of international cooperation was to emphasise the leading role of the French labour movement: "l'héritière directe de la première organisation internationale du prolétariat".⁹⁷ Where the CGT led, the others would eventually follow, just as the English trade unions had taken up the CGT's example of militancy during 1912:

" [...] dans le monde ouvrier international se

manifestent des symptômes d'évolution, non équivoques, vers le syndicalisme français.

"[...]

"L'Angleterre s'achemine dans cette voie, dont nous n'avons cessé d'affirmer l'utilité. Demain, comme l'indiquent les événements, l'Allemagne s'y engagera à son tour."98

Article after article on the English strikes took up the theme of revenge against those who sought to belittle revolutionary syndicalism:

"Je me rappelle encore avec quels sourires sceptiques nos déclarations de principe furent accueillies par la presque unanimité des délégués, à la conférence internationale des centres syndicaux à Budapest. Nous étions, pour nos camarades, de petits enfants, non encore parvenus aux méthodes syndicalistes 'modernes'! [...] Et, cependant, aujourd'hui, les faits viennent donner raison aux petits enfants contre les grands personnages."99

Consequently, the CGT could best serve the international labour movement by concentrating on its own struggles, argued Jouhaux:

"Internationalistes, nous le sommes, mais l'internationalisme signifie surtout, union effective des travailleurs du monde entier dans les efforts de résistance à l'oppression et dans l'action pour l'émancipation du travail. A aucun moment nous n'avons pensé que le fait d'être groupé internationalement pouvait exiger de nous une dépendance totale."100

In other words, the principle of internationalism could best be respected by following French patterns and methods of organisation, because this would ultimately benefit the international labour movement more than a slavish adherence, on the CGT's part, to international norms. Internationalism was clearly seen as a certain type of activity, along the lines of the activities which the CGT pursued. Jouhaux was therefore clearly stating that the CGT's internationalism was of a selective nature. This statement also evokes Jacobin traditions

prevalent among the French Left, which saw France's revolutionary heritage as a kind of beacon which would illuminate the world.

The ambivalence of the CGT's attitude towards international activity, and particularly towards the International Secretariat, was further strained by growing demands from revolutionary syndicalists abroad for France to take the lead in creating an alternative, revolutionary international organisation. Following the Dutch attempt in 1909 to pressurise the French CGT into heading an international revolutionary-syndicalist organisation,¹⁰¹ which was rejected by the CGT, the French had received several similar calls from foreign syndicalist groups, most notably from the IWW. The IWW strongly criticised the "censeurs internationaux" of the International Secretariat who refused to discuss the French proposals, and concluded:

"Aucune alliance internationale de représentants des aspirations et revendications ouvrières ne saurait s'accomplir avant que les ouvriers aient repoussé la tutelle des leaders bureaucrates et des lieutenants ouvriers du capitalisme."¹⁰²

The French syndicalist press published these appeals without comment, as if unsure what to do about them. The first indication that the CGT, or some of its leading members at least, might be prepared to act on the appeals came at the Comité confédéral's meeting of 30 October 1912, in response to the Germans' and Austrians' refusal to participate in the CGT's proposed anti-war¹⁰³ demonstrations. It was decided then that the CGT would remain in the ISNTUC, but the Comité confédéral made it clear that it was not happy with the situation. When the Ninth International Report was received from Legien in January 1913, it met with

little enthusiasm from the French centre. Rupert noted in La Bataille Syndicaliste:

"[...] il faut se rappeler que c'est plus spécialement les Unions syndicales de tendances réformistes qui sont organisées dans le secrétariat international de Berlin et que la C.G.T. française est, en effet, la seule Centrale nationale adhérente dont les tendances sont révolutionnaires."104

By 1913, the question of international links was a very sore spot indeed for the CGT leadership, and revolutionary syndicalist groups abroad, seeing this, began to put pressure on it.

Conversely, the year 1913 also marked the turning-point for revolutionary syndicalist groups outside France. By this time, they were sufficiently established at home to seek to develop international ties. The catalyst to action was the growing movement against war.

As well as the CGT in France, there were significant revolutionary syndicalist groups in the USA (sections of the IWW), Britain (Tom Mann's Industrial Syndicalist Education League), Germany (the Lokalisten), Spain (the CNT), Italy, Holland (the Nationaal Arbeidssecretariat, which had been a member of the ISNTUC until 1907), Scandinavia, Belgium, Australia, South America and South Africa. Of these groups, only the French CGT represented the majority in the unified labour movement. In England and Norway, the revolutionary syndicalists agitated within the existing unions to propagate their ideas. In the majority of countries, however, revolutionary syndicalists represented minority organisations in rivalry with the mainstream labour movement. On an international level, therefore, most syndicalist groups were not represented, even indirectly, by any

existing international organisation.

Because of this situation, the Dutch sent out a circular early in 1913 to measure the support for an international revolutionary syndicalist congress. The circular roundly condemned the ISNTUC (from personal experience) and deplored the lack of an international forum for revolutionary groups, but did

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not put forward any concrete proposals. At the same time, but quite separately, the English ISEL published the text of a resolution, proposed by Tom Mann and voted unanimously by the London conference of the ISEL in November 1912, which authorised the ISEL to convene an international syndicalist congress in London in May 1913. In deciding on this international congress, Mann and the ISEL stressed the need for international action to

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prevent war. The French syndicalist press did not comment on these initiatives straight away, preferring to wait for reactions from other sections of the left in France and from syndicalists abroad. Charles Rupert merely expressed the opinion, in La Bataille Syndicaliste, that the decision to hold the congress in May did not allow sufficient time for preparation.

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The German localists' paper, Die Einigkeit, was wholly in favour of the project, as was the Italian organ L'Internazionale. The Swedish group around Syndikalisterna and the Austrian Wohlstand für alle, whilst firmly in favour of the idea, both agreed with the French opinion that the proposed date was too early. Accordingly, the English syndicalists postponed the congress until September 1913.

In France, on the other hand, the initial response was unfavourable. Monatte, in La Vie Ouvrière, again refused to

entertain the Dutch suggestion:

"[...] nous répétons aujourd'hui ce que nous écrivions ici en décembre 1909, c'est qu'il est impossible, pour le mouvement français, de partager le point de vue de nos camarades hollandais. Ce deuxième Secrétariat International, cette deuxième Internationale qu'ils projettent seraient aussi impuissants que les organisations existant sous la tutelle socialiste."108

As for the English group, Monatte rebuked, they should stick to their tactic of working within existing trade-union organisations:

"C'est au sein de leurs vieilles organisations, singulièrement rajeunies en quelques années, qu'ils doivent porter leur propagande en faveur de véritables congrès ouvriers internationaux. [...] Si la Ligue d'Education Syndicaliste prend une autre voie, elle commettra une grave faute de tactique qui pèsera longtemps sur le développement du syndicalisme en Europe et pour le monde."109

These remarks opened up a long and often bitter debate between Monatte, Mann, Cornelissen, De Ambris (of Italy) and other syndicalists in the pages of La Vie Ouvrière and internationally.
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The central question was that of revolutionary syndicalist tactics: the strategy of "boring from within" versus that of rival groups. As far as France was concerned, the key word was unity, and there could be no question of setting up a rival international organisation because this would mean the organisational division of the international working class into two fundamentally opposed groups. If this happened, the syndicalist group would have even less impact than the ISNTUC because of the small numbers involved:

"Nous tiendrons peut-être des assises internationales. Mais elles n'auront de congrès que le nom; le gros des ouvriers anglais, allemands, autrichiens, etc., n'y

sera pas représenté. Quant aux conférences des secrétaires nationaux, elles continueront à se tenir sans plus d'intérêt ni de profit pour l'internationalisme ouvrier."¹¹¹

If the international movement was to have any significance, the only option was for the CGT to work within the ISNTUC to transform it.

Luquet, writing for L'Humanité, was equally categorical in his rejection of the proposed international congress:

"Bien aveugle qui ne voit pas que l'existence de deux rouages syndicaux internationaux amènerait fatalement la rupture des unités nationales: confédérations, fédérations locales ou régionales et syndicales."¹¹²

Luquet's comment hit the nail on the head. The CGT's greatest fear was that of a split. In 1908, at the CGT congress of Marseille, the possibility of a split within the French labour movement precisely on this question of international links had been made explicit. This inevitably influenced the decision of the CGT to rejoin the ISNTUC in 1909 and to reject Dutch plans for a rival international organisation. In 1913, the position of the CGT leadership was no more secure.

Because of this danger, the CGT had no intention of leaving the International Secretariat. They were, however, reluctant to condemn the English initiative outright. Perhaps, by leaving their options open, the CGT leaders hoped to put some pressure on the ISNTUC to accede to the French demands for international congresses. Equally, the CGT was anxious not to alienate those within its own ranks who would be receptive to the idea of a
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revolutionary syndicalist international. The CGT was also particularly sensitive to the claim, made by those in favour of the revolutionary syndicalist initiative, that unless

revolutionary syndicalism developed internationally, it would
always be seen as a French idiosyncrasy.¹¹⁴ Nor did the French
wish to be seen as the defenders of the International
Secretariat,¹¹⁵ which they had criticised as much as anyone. In
short, the CGT's revolutionary credentials had to be maintained,
but not at the price of a split in the French labour movement.

The CGT therefore refused at first to limit its
options. Circulars concerning the revolutionary syndicalist
congress were reproduced in the French syndicalist press, with
the message that, if the CGT's hands were tied in this matter
through its allegiance to the ISNTUC, the individual Unions and
Fédérations had no such obligations and were free to attend the
rival congress.¹¹⁶ By the time the revolutionary syndicalist
congress took place, in September 1913, the CGT had been
officially represented at the conference of the ISNTUC earlier in
the month.

Very few French delegates attended the London congress,
although the proceedings were reported in the syndicalist press
in France. La Vie Ouvrière noted, not without some satisfaction,
that the congress had been a failure.¹¹⁷ The absence of French
support and guidance was of course a major factor in the failure
to set up a viable alternative to the International Secretariat.
At the same time, the other groups themselves had displayed a
lack of cohesion and solidarity. Although the French had long
complained about the organisational basis of the ISNTUC, the
revolutionary-syndicalist alternative was shown to be no more
tenable.¹¹⁸

This was perhaps some comfort to the CGT. On the other hand, the existence of a rival international grouping, however badly organised, did throw the spotlight on the key problems surrounding the CGT's participation in, and now explicit commitment to, the International Secretariat. To many syndicalists within the CGT and abroad, the central question was clear, as Wayne Westergard-Thorpe formulates it in his study of the revolutionary syndicalist international:

"Did not the ideals and objectives embodied in the Berlin Secretariat constitute a greater threat, despite French claims, to the CGT than the latter did to the ISNTUC?"¹¹⁹

In particular, as we have seen, the anti-war strategy of the CGT had been undermined at a crucial time by the CGT's dependence on foreign organisations which not only outnumbered the French within the ISNTUC, but actively sought to influence the French syndicalist movement according to their own objectives.

Whilst recognising this fundamental weakness, the CGT leadership justified its continued support of the International Secretariat in four main ways. Firstly, the CGT maintained its assertion that the other countries would eventually, and inevitably, rally to the French point of view. The question of congresses could not be put off forever. Secondly, the French sought to make the agenda of the international conference more interesting in other ways: by emphasising the importance of questions such as immigrant workers, and by placing on the agenda items which were already of interest to French syndicalists, but not so controversial that they would be defeated: in the case of the Zurich conference, the question of May Day. Thirdly, the CGT

declared that the international conference would be important to the continued campaign against war, by the very fact of its existence. The main reason for this was simply the large number of workers involved, which was constantly increasing as the ISNTUC grew in strength and influence. Finally, the CGT claimed that its own role in the International Secretariat could not be ignored, because the French labour movement too was growing in strength and organisation:

"Oui, la C.G.T. n'a cessé, depuis l'année 1900, d'accuser une montée sensible; ses effectifs, comme ses ressources, se sont accrus, et elle s'affirme, dans ce pays, comme l'organisation la plus forte et la plus active. [...]

"Dans la situation internationale, si elle montre à la statistique des chiffres globaux moins importants que dans certains pays, elle peut quand même, dans la vie de la nation, revendiquer un rôle d'une importance égale, sinon supérieure."120

It is noteworthy that the CGT's claim to be arguing from a position of strength rested precisely on those criteria which it had long affected to despise when used by other countries as a measure of importance: organisation, membership, financial resources.

Furthermore, this statement did not offer any new strategies for ensuring that the CGT's point of view would be heard by the other national centres. It rested on the old tactic of waiting for the "force of events" to prove the CGT right. There was, however, one means by which the CGT could hope to actively influence the ISNTUC: the international trade secretariats. For the first time, the ISNTUC invited the international trade secretariats to attend, in a non-voting capacity, the international conference in Zurich and to take part in a

discussion on ways of drawing the whole international movement together. For the CGT, this had two advantages: the added forces of the trade secretariats would bring about a wider and more representative international grouping, thus hastening the transformation of the ISNTUC; and there was also the possibility of influencing the ISNTUC through the trade secretariats.

The CGT was under no illusions about the room for manoeuvre in this area. Of the 26 international trade secretariats listed by Schevenels as being in existence in 1914, only five had their headquarters outside Germany: the Miners' Federation and the Textile Workers' Federation, with headquarters in England, the Stoneworkers' International, based in Switzerland, the Diamond Workers' International (95% of whose membership came from the two big unions of Antwerp and Amsterdam), organised from Belgium, and the Postal Workers' International (with a predominantly French membership), based in Switzerland.¹²¹ Although many of the trade secretariats had originated in France or Switzerland, by 1910 they had become dominated by the German unions and the headquarters had been transferred to Germany. Of those remaining outside Germany, only the Miners' and the Textile Workers' Federations represented important organisations with high membership. This German domination of the international trade union movement was increasingly resented by the French and English in particular.¹²² The international trade federations based in Germany were restricted by German laws concerning political neutrality of trade organisations, a situation which the French suspected of being simply an excuse for the Germans to dictate their own policy. Under these conditions, the move

towards greater unity between the ISNTUC and the trade secretariats was clearly calculated to reinforce the German power base, particularly since Legien had not suggested such a move earlier, before German domination of the movement was consolidated.

The extent of German domination of the international trade secretariats was acknowledged by the CGT.¹²³ At the same time, it was recognised that the congresses of the international trade groupings could be used to put pressure on the ISNTUC. At the very least, the ISNTUC's initiative would wean the trade secretariats away from the Socialist International and create a more solid, purely trade union international movement. Whereas previously many of the international trade organisations had held their congresses to coincide with International Socialist Congresses, the invitation to the international conference of Zurich in 1913 provided an alternative focus.

Throughout 1913, international trade secretariats received close attention from the French syndicalist press. Most notable was the International Miners' Congress, with its declarations against war. When the French labour movement was represented at any of these international gatherings, the tactic of the French delegation was to call for international trade union congresses,¹²⁴ as they had done within the ISNTUC. At the very least, it would be a means of building up support, however slowly, for the French idea of international congresses. In time, the CGT hoped that the international trade secretariats would pass their own antimilitarist resolutions and put forward these ideas at the

ISNTUC gatherings.

For the time being, however, there was little prospect of change within the International Secretariat, and it was in a spirit of resigned pessimism that the French delegates, Jouhaux and Dumoulin, departed for the Zurich conference of the ISNTUC in September 1913.

VI.3 The eighth international conference, Zurich, 1913

The Zurich conference of the ISNTUC marked the consolidation of the international organisation in several ways. Firstly, the presence of the International Trade Secretaries strengthened the organisation and added to the feeling of increased confidence. Also significant was the presence of Bowerman, secretary of the English TUC's Parliamentary Committee. The TUC, a more representative body than the GFTU, was showing the first signs of interest in the ISNTUC.¹²⁵ On a more general level, the International Secretary was once again able, in his report to the conference, to point to a steady increase in overall membership of the ISNTUC.¹²⁶ Finally, and most importantly, the Zurich conference marked the beginnings of a transformation of the organisational base of the International Secretariat.

It was decided that subscriptions should be increased (to 4 Reichsmarks per 1000 members). The conference also reported the publication, from the beginning of 1913 onwards, of a regular newsletter, printed in German, French and English.¹²⁷ In several different areas, the need for greater unity was stressed. On the GFTU's proposal, it was agreed that there should be greater centralisation in the nomination of delegates to foreign trade-

union congresses, so that these delegates would represent not only their own organisation but also the International Secretariat as a group. The International Secretary would coordinate such delegations centrally. During discussion on this question, O'Grady, of the GFTU, stated:

" [...] we desire the International Movement to use the same influence everywhere, speak with one voice, with uniform information and instructions through the International Secretariat."128

The mood was in favour of greater international coordination. Oudegeest, too, suggested that the International Secretariat should coordinate more closely the policy of national centres on individual questions. As an example, he pointed to an international conference on home work which had taken place in the previous year. It was regrettable, he said, that the different national trade-union centres represented there had put forward conflicting views, especially in the presence of state representatives and middle-class reform groups:

"In all such questions, the International Secretariat could prepare the material for the National Centres in order that they would take up a uniform attitude and thereby considerably increase their influence on all such occasions."129

Oudegeest's point was not taken up by the conference, but it did reflect the growing concern for unity. It is interesting to note that the conference responded unanimously in favour of a Swedish proposal that Labour members of Parliament should bring in bills prohibiting night work where not absolutely necessary and for the
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eight-hour day. The French agreed to this interpretation of priorities without a murmur. The ISNTUC was thus moving gradually towards a more uniform stance on matters of direct interest.

On the question of Trade Secretariats, it was agreed that the ISNTUC should emphasise the necessity of joining international trade organisations. In order to strengthen organisational ties between the two instances, an international translation bureau was to be formally set up under the auspices of the ISNTUC.¹³¹

Finally, the discussion on the French proposal (for international congresses) and the American proposal (for an international trade-union federation) did bring about certain changes. Jouhaux, in presenting the French motion, merely asked the conference to consider the question:

"J'ignore quel sort sera réservé à la proposition de l'Amérique, mais je déclare que, quelle que soit la décision que prendra la conférence, la France est décidée à représenter sa proposition devant les conférences prochaines, jusqu'à ce qu'elle ait obtenu satisfaction.

"La présence ici des secrétaires des fédérations internationales montre que notre demande est fondée. Tous sentent aujourd'hui qu'il est nécessaire d'élargir la forme de ce réunions. Les faits parlent plus fort que les théories et nous sommes convaincus qu'un moment viendra où notre ténacité l'emportera."¹³²

Jouhaux's statement, that the CGT was content to continue presenting its request until it was accepted, was seized on by Hueber as an opportunity to refer the proposal once again without discussion.¹³³ Legien, however, thought it necessary to give the reasons why the proposal was not yet acceptable. Once again, Legien expressed the view that congresses would in time be a logical and necessary development. Only when all the countries represented held the same views would Legien consider the holding of international congresses.¹³⁴ The first step, according to

Legien, was to deal with the American proposal. Jouhaux therefore asked that the French and American proposals be put together to the vote.

On the question of the formation of an international federation of trade unions, the American delegate was less than clear. Instead of asking for a change in the organisational basis of the ISNTUC, Perkins, for the AFL, merely proposed a change of nomenclature, so that the title of the organisation would carry more authority. Legien seized on this suggestion as a means of satisfying the Americans' demands without actually changing the basis of the organisation, and Perkins' proposal was therefore accepted unanimously. This meant that the title of the International Secretariat was now changed to the International
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Federation of Trade Unions. In accordance with this change of title, the post of the International Secretary was similarly upgraded to that of International President. Without any question
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at all, Legien was unanimously elected to this new post.

These modifications did not, however, imply a decision on the main motion, which read:

"The Zurich International Conference recommends to the trade union centres of all countries the discussion of the proposition of establishing an International Federation of Labour, the autonomy of each country being ordained and guaranteed, the purpose of the federation being for the protection and advancement of the rights, interests and justice of the wage-workers of all countries and the establishment of international fraternity and solidarity."¹³⁷

The AFL motion, therefore, merely repeated previous resolutions calling for the question to be examined by the national centres. Since this request had been accepted at the previous conference,

it was unclear what the AFL was actually asking of the Zurich conference. Perkins then confused the debate even more by adding a clause of his own, which recommended the organisation of a special committee to examine the question. As a result, there was no real lead from the USA.

On the other hand, those who opposed the American motion had a very clear view of what they wanted. Hueber took the lead in criticising Perkins:

"In Paris, where the American motion was referred to the consideration of the National Centres, I paid great attention to this suggestion, but even today I do not yet understand the purpose of this motion. [...] The suggested committee would itself not know what [...] to do."138

In reply, Perkins was unable to clarify the role of the proposed committee. The debate was now so confused that Oudegeest commented:

"The discussion of the French and American motion only causes me to wonder what the International Secretariat has been doing in the past and what its future tasks are."139

Legien's opinion, that congresses would be useless because there would never be any agreement on general issues, appeared to have some justification in the light of the debate on the American proposal. Only Hueber, a fierce opponent of the proposal, appeared to be in command of the question:

"In our opinion the development of the Trades Union Movement must take the following course. First, a united movement with uniform ideas and aims in one's own country; the international combination and agreement in separate trades, and finally like a keystone, the International Federation of National Centres of Trades Unions with our International Secretariat at the head. If we begin work at the other end, we shall have wretched disorder. When all trades unions are affiliated with their own National Centres and with their International Trade

Secretariat then we can think about a closer combination among the National Centres. Alongside the trades union organisation we maintain, moreover, that an independent political organisation is necessary also."¹⁴⁰

In this explicit and forceful statement, Hueber was expressing what Legien had said, more indirectly, since the creation of the ISNTUC. At the Zurich conference, the message was central to all the debates. Only when all the national centres in the international organisation conformed to the Social-Democrat model would there be an international federation, and only when there was no chance of disagreement would there be international congresses. Hueber's reference to an independent political organisation was an echo of the Second International's stipulation that only those organisations which accepted the political struggle could participate. The CGT had sought to escape that condition by joining a purely trade-union international. At Zurich, Hueber told the French that there was no escape.

The confusion surrounding the American proposal served to blur the message sufficiently for Perkins to accept the final decision. Unanimously, it was agreed that the question would be sent out to National Centres and that the results would be presented at the next conference. The French proposal was similarly referred to an enquiry among the National Centres. Since this had already been agreed at previous conferences, the debate represented no progress at all.

The French delegates remained silent throughout the discussion on the American proposal, knowing that their contribution would not have helped matters. The attitude of the

other delegates towards the French had been established early in the conference, during discussion on international assistance to strike movements. Hueber led the attack against the French:

"I should like to ask the French delegates why the contribution of their National Centre has not been paid to the International Secretariat. The slight interest also which is taken in matters of international assistance is conspicuous and regrettable. Either their names are entirely absent from the list or it appears with a sum of 100 francs. Not once, as far as can be seen in the accounts of the Belgian General Strike, did they make any sacrifice, even though this - the general strike - is in their opinion the ideal method of fighting. These comrades must realise that our international connection should not be merely a matter to pass resolutions about, but that its purpose is to give mutual practical assistance."141

Even the English, usually at the receiving end of such criticism, joined the offensive:

"We have also seen with astonishment in the International Secretary's report that the French Centre is in arrears with its contributions, because, as they say, the Government are persecuting them. But that cannot be taken as an excuse. The French delegates should tell us plainly why their contribution was not paid in good time."142

Jouhaux, in reply, maintained that government persecution had delayed the sending the membership fee, which had in the meantime been received by the International Secretary, and ironized about those trade-union leaders who claimed to have a good knowledge of other countries, but were ignorant of the
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situation in France. In fact, Jouhaux claimed, the CGT was fulfilling its international obligations over and above the effort made by other countries, since, despite the fact that government confiscations had prevented many affiliated organisations from sending in their dues, the French national

centre had still paid the normal fee. As for assistance to the Belgian general strike, Jouhaux indignantly accused Hueber of twisting the facts in order to pour scorn on the French labour movement.¹⁴⁴ Legien confirmed that the CGT's subscription fee had been received, and Hueber denied that he had intended to scoff at¹⁴⁵ the French labour movement.

This apparently insignificant debate, concerned with late payment of dues and the question of strike aid, represented a major humiliation for the French, and was clearly intended as such by Hueber. Not only had the French been portrayed (in front of all the other trade-union leaders) as poor and lacking in commitment, but the government persecutions which they had seen as a threat to their very existence were dismissed by the conference as insignificant.¹⁴⁶

In reporting these incidents at home, the French delegates played down the humiliation which they had received at the hands of the other national secretaries, stressing instead the impact of Jouhaux's spirited defence.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, they could not deny that, in the eyes of the other members of the international organisation, the French CGT was the "parent pauvre".¹⁴⁸ Nor could they claim with any justification that the "wait and see" policy of the CGT was paying off, since the reformist domination of the international organisation was as strong as ever. As Dumoulin pointed out, the only reference throughout the entire conference to the class basis of trade-unionism was made by Legien in a clever speech designed to win support for the proposal to hold the next conference (in 1915) in San Francisco.¹⁴⁹ On the question of May Day, Jouhaux's proposal that

the international workers' demonstration should have a more truly international character, with internationally coordinated demonstrations and strikes, met with a cool response. Sassenbach opined that each national centre should concentrate on its own effort, and that the international aspect could be catered for through the International Secretariat. With that, the question was considered closed.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, the only reference to war was made in relation to money collected for national centres as a¹⁵¹ result of the Balkans situation.

The main work of the conference - the debate on the organisation of the international labour movement - resulted in little more than cosmetic changes. The new title of International Federation reflected a desire to add to the standing and image of the international organisation, without conceding any real changes in organisation or tactics. Only when all the centres shared the same outlook would this come about, as the delegates at the Zurich conference had made clear. In this respect, the Zurich conference represented, if anything, the reinforcement of the social-democrat position, which was now stated clearly and unambiguously.

The hopes which the CGT had placed in the American proposals had been disappointed. This was partly due to the vague and clumsy way in which Perkins had broached the subject. Had the American delegate been ready with more concrete suggestions and less prepared to back down, the CGT felt, he might have won more¹⁵² concessions from the conference. As it was, although the American proposal was not treated with the same contempt as was

the French, the AFL was bought off with minor concessions (notably the decision to hold the next conference in the USA, as well as the change of title).

The Zurich conference was to be the last before the war. In spite of the CGT's attempts to change the basis of the ISNTUC, the difference between the work of the Zurich conference and the international activities envisaged by the CGT was enormous. Nevertheless, the CGT delegate Dumoulin, after attending an international conference for the first time, summed up the CGT's position thus:

"Nul souffle d'idées n'a animé les débats de cette conférence d'affaires. Le Secrétariat International m'est apparu come un organe de centralisation matérielle, j'allais dire commerciale, - du syndicalisme mondial. Nul désir de transformation, nul espoir de grande bataille dans laquelle les six millions de syndiqués des deux mondes s'attaqueraient à leurs ennemis de classe, mais des sentiments étriqués, des désirs d'exportation de méthodes d'organisation, de domination de ces méthodes. [...]"
"Est-ce à dire qu'on n'y ait rien fait? Est-ce à dire qu'il n'y ait pas encore d'Internationale ouvrière? A travers la besogne matérielle, commerciale d'aujourd'hui, on sent se préparer, se former, naître l'organisation mondiale véritable de demain. [...]"
"[...]"
"Les choses n'iront certes pas toutes seules, elles iront lentement, mais elles avanceront. Elles avancent déjà."153

As for Jouhaux, the Zurich conference had done nothing to alter his view that the best way for the CGT to express internationalism was to carry on alone. Basing his faith in internationalism once more on the CGT congress decision of Marseille in 1908, Jouhaux reaffirmed:

" [...] il est un sentiment qui domine parmi les travailleurs organisés: c'est qu'au-dessus des frontières et en dépit d'elles, il n'y a qu'une Patrie pour le prolétariat, c'est la classe dont il fait partie."154

Unfortunately, Jouhaux had no concrete examples of international activity with which to back up this statement, and he knew it.

VI.4 1914: the approach of war

The anti-war activities of the CGT, and of the French socialist party and the Second International, continued into 1914. As a sign of this, Jouhaux published a series of articles in February and March 1914 in La Bataille Syndicaliste, in which he warned of the dangers of the arms build-up and pointed to the ever-present threat of war. The thrust of the CGT's antimilitarist activities was, however, opposition to the three-year law, backed up by a sustained campaign highlighting bad conditions in the barracks (particularly the spread of serious diseases).¹⁵⁵ Opposition to the three-year law and demands for an end to government repression formed the theme of the CGT's May Day demonstration in 1914, and this prompted the extreme nationalist Charles Maurras to label the CGT as "l'ennemi de l'intérieur".¹⁵⁶ The extreme right's denunciation of the CGT, the threat of physical attack by ultra-nationalist groups, and the political climate in general, which caused the syndicalist leaders to live in constant fear of attack or arrest,¹⁵⁷ had two main effects. Firstly, these tensions destroyed any feeling of confidence within the trade union movement - the prerequisite for any mass response against war, as the CGT leaders had themselves recognised. On the contrary, morale was at an all-time low. On the other hand, the campaign against the CGT in right-wing circles paradoxically made the CGT's activities appear to be much

more important than they really were. In other words, the illusion of the general strike against war was constantly being fostered, whilst the reality of the general strike was being increasingly undermined.

Confidence was in fact little more than a façade. The mood of pessimism, based on the growing feeling that the working class had become resigned and apathetic, was summed up in La Bataille Syndicaliste's retrospective view of 1913:

"L'année 1913 fut une mauvaise année; elle ne réalisa rien des espoirs si ardents que nous avions placés en elle. Il a paru que la classe ouvrière, fatiguée par un long effort antérieur, se disposait au repos avant même d'avoir pu livrer bataille.

"Des défections nombreuses, une indifférence générale, procédant sans doute du courant d'apathie qui avilit notre génération; des échecs dus au manque de solidarité, d'initiative, d'esprit de suite; des grèves avortées; un encerclement de notre mouvement par les puissances politiques rivales; et surtout un affaissement continu des idées et des consciences."158

Since the CGT's ideology and action were profoundly rooted in a belief in rank-and-file revolutionary consciousness, such an admission signalled a real crisis which threatened the very survival of the organisation. Certainly it made the prospects of large-scale resistance to war extremely remote.

In contrast with the CGT's vigilance and hyperactivity during the international crises of 1911 and 1912, but in keeping with the mood of fatalism which dominated 1914, the events of 1914 were followed more cautiously in the French syndicalist press. The first sign of the possibility of war appeared when the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated on 28 June. Although, with the benefit of hindsight, historians recognise the assassination as the event which triggered off preparations for

war, the French syndicalists at that time shared the widespread view that the incident would not affect France. Indeed, La Bataille Syndicaliste claimed that the Austrian archduke, a fanatical power-seeker and expansionist, had represented more of a threat to world peace whilst still alive, and even published an article by Charles Malato congratulating the assassin.

The first real shock came towards the end of July. The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, on 23 July 1914, caused La Bataille Syndicaliste to warn: "La paix est de nouveau en péril." On 26 July, the CGT began its mobilisation against war. La Bataille Syndicaliste led with a reiteration of CGT congress decisions under the title "Nous ne voulons pas de guerre", together with a commentary by Léon Jouhaux which once again called upon the working class to act:

"On croyait écartées toutes les menaces immédiates contre la paix européenne, et l'incident surgit inattendu!

"En faut-il plus pour insister sur le rôle de la classe ouvrière laborieuse, pour prouver la nécessité d'une entente entre les travailleurs de tous les pays, et pour montrer enfin que le recours à la force du travail, manifestée par la grève générale qui est sa formule vraie, s'impose à tous les travailleurs avec véhémence, puisque ce sont eux qui en subiront les dernières conséquences.

"Puisque ce sont eux, en fait, qui sont en vérité responsables de la paix du monde, il faut qu'ils se tiennent constamment prêts à l'imposer."162

The appeal to the working class to stand ready represented something of an admission of failure on the part of the CGT, which had itself evidently been caught off guard. During 1913-1914, the CGT had been too absorbed in its own internal struggles and resistance against the government to make a serious evaluation of world events, much less frame its activities within

the international context.

Moreover, the CGT had made a conscious decision to concentrate activities on the national level, based on its feeling of isolation in the international arena. This insular attitude had far-reaching implications. In the event of a German attack against France, what would the CGT do if the German labour movement rallied to its country's cause? What would the French syndicalists do if France attacked Germany and the German workers sprang to the defence of their country? These questions had never been tackled even on the most abstract level by the CGT because it had stuck to the hypothesis that the working class internationally would automatically (partly through instinctive class consciousness, partly as a result of syndicalist education) stand up in opposition to war. Yet this question posed itself concretely - and constantly - at every encounter between the French and German labour leaders.

In July 1914, a crucial meeting between Jouhaux and Legien took place. The meeting is crucial, particularly because of the importance placed on it later by Jouhaux, in order to justify his own actions at the outbreak of war. It was later blown up into a major row between Jouhaux and Dumoulin, an opponent of Jouhaux's conduct during the war. Because of this, because of the timing of the meeting, and because of the central importance of the Franco-German relationship in the CGT'S attitude towards internationalism and militarism, the meeting between Legien and Jouhaux is examined here in some detail.

The occasion for this meeting was the Belgian trade union congress, held in Brussels, 26-27 July 1914. Jouhaux and Dumoulin

attended the congress specifically to meet with Mertens, the Belgian trade union leader, and Legien, to discuss the question of war.¹⁶³ Legien refused to hold any special meeting with the French labour leaders. Jouhaux and Dumoulin, through Mertens' intervention, joined Legien for coffee on the afternoon of the final session of the Belgian congress. Although the meeting with Legien lasted less than fifteen minutes, it was to assume a central role in Franco-German relations.

After persuasion from Mertens, Legien agreed to answer only two questions from Jouhaux (translated by Mertens); the questions and replies were over within five minutes.¹⁶⁴ According to Jouhaux, the questions which he posed were the following:

"Que comptez-vous pour éviter la guerre qui se prépare? Etes-vous résolu à faire un mouvement? Nous sommes, pour notre part, prêts à répondre à votre appel, ou à marcher en même temps, si nous décidons ainsi."¹⁶⁵

Jouhaux claimed that Legien remained silent:

"A ces questions plusieurs fois posées, Legien ne fit aucune réponse. Qu'en fallait-il conclure?"¹⁶⁶

According to Dumoulin, Jouhaux's first question was: "Que pense-t-on en Allemagne de la situation?", to which Legien was said to have replied: "En Allemagne, nous pensons que le péril est grand, mais tout espoir de paix n'est pas disparu." Jouhaux then asked: "Que comptez-vous faire pour empêcher la guerre?" Legien's reply, translated by Mertens, was apparently incomprehensibly vague, and so Jouhaux repeated the question. The second time, Legien reportedly replied: "En Allemagne, nous continuerons nos manifestations en faveur de la paix."¹⁶⁷

The differences between the two French syndicalists'

versions of the meeting lay, in fact, less in the reported content of the discussion than in the significance attached to it. For Jouhaux, writing in September 1914, Legien's refusal to resist war meant the end of the bluff which the CGT had been maintaining. Without the solidarity of the German workers, any CGT moves were doomed to failure. It is significant that Jouhaux's version, written after the outbreak of war, poses the question of action in terms of the French following the German initiative, in an obvious attempt to shift responsibility onto the Germans. Dumoulin, in whose view Jouhaux was wrong to rally to the war effort in August 1914, accused Jouhaux of using Legien to justify his own conduct.

Legien's own view of the incident was more straightforward. His first reference to the meeting with Jouhaux was at the SPD congress of Berlin in 1916:

"Ich habe ganz einfach geantwortet, dass wir uns unserer Haut wehren würden. Die Genossen waren entsetzt darüber, sie hatten erwartet, dass ich den Massenstreik empfehlen würde. Von uns hatten sie den Massenstreik erwartet. In einem Lande mit der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht, wo ein Drittel der für den Massenstreik in Frage kommenden Männer zum Heeresdienst eingezogen wird und ein weiteres Drittel arbeitslos ist, ist der Gedanke an einen Massenstreik ja einfach Unsinn."168

Legien's affirmation that the German workers would "save their own skin" is perfectly consistent with his attitude, and that of the German labour leadership as a whole, before, during and after the war. At a meeting between the Generalkommission and the SPD executive in 1913, to decide on common policy on the question of war, Gustav Bauer (deputy chairman of the Generalkommission) openly stated that the German trade-unionists could and would do

nothing to prevent war, both because of the strength of the patriotic message exploited by capitalists, and because of the real benefits which tied workers to the nation.¹⁶⁹ At a second meeting in December 1913, the Generalkommission categorically rejected the question of the mass strike. Legien insisted that the SPD should veto any international resolution calling for a general strike against war, at a time when this question was being debated within the Second International.

Whilst war was destructive and therefore must be opposed by means of demonstrations to put pressure on parliament and government, Legien's view was that, in the event of war, it was the duty of workers to rally to the national cause.¹⁷⁰ For Legien, the most important consideration was the preservation of what had been slowly and painfully acquired throughout the years. The worst catastrophe which could befall the German working class would not be war, but government suppression of the trade union movement as a response to trade union activities against war. This was the sense of Legien's message: "Wir werden uns unserer Haut wehren!" The German labour leadership simply refused to see opposition to war as an issue, although on both socialist and humanitarian grounds they supported the SPD's demonstrations against war. In the pages of the Correspondenzblatt, there was no mention of war until 1 August 1914. The great concern of the article was for German industry, which, it was claimed, would be devastated if war broke out. Opposition to war was thus strictly economic. Even then, the article, under the title "Die Kriegsgefahr", placed the blame for the international situation

squarely on Austria and refused to criticise the German
government.¹⁷¹ German workers could therefore do nothing to
prevent war breaking out because the decision rested with the
Austrian nation. The silence of the Generalkommission on the
subject of war, prior to this article, was perfectly in line with
its general policy of excluding discussion of all issues which
did not directly affect working conditions. This policy explains
why war was examined only in terms of the cost to German
industry. The wider issues of war, militarism and international
diplomacy were simply not within the competence of the labour
movement.

On the international level, even more, Legien insisted that
the question of war was not one which should preoccupy trade
unionists. The German labour movement used its influence in the
SPD to ensure that the Socialist International's resolutions on
the general strike to prevent war were blocked. In the trade
union international, Legien's role in blocking such questions was
more direct, as we have seen in his treatment of French requests
to discuss antimilitarism and the general strike. Even Gompers
failed to make Legien see the seriousness of the situation. In
1913, Gompers wrote to the International Secretary, asking him to
circulate an AFL resolution endorsing Winston Churchill's
proposal for a "naval holiday" between England, Germany and the
United States. Legien refused, on the grounds that the
International Secretariat had already rejected French appeals to
deal with similar questions.¹⁷²

The significance of the Legien-Jouhaux meeting in July 1914
is that, whilst not adding anything new, it provided a point of

reference to both labour leaders. Legien, accused by certain elements within the labour movement in 1919 of having betrayed his socialist principles in 1914, could point to the Brussels meeting and affirm, in all honesty, that he had made his position clear before the war. For Jouhaux in July 1914, the meeting with Legien served only to confirm what he already knew.

In confirming the CGT's pessimistic view of the possibility of an international general strike against war, the Brussels meeting added to the fatalistic attitude prevalent in the French labour movement, and made the chances of decisive French action even slimmer. Jouhaux reported his version of the Brussels meeting to the Comité confédéral on 28 July. It is not clear whether the Comité confédéral considered this an important development or merely a confirmation of the situation as perceived by the CGT. In any case, the Comité confédéral could only have been deeply discouraged by the unambiguous lack of support on the part of the German labour movement (and the evident lack of sympathy which Legien had displayed towards the French delegation in Brussels). No illusion could possibly remain about the chance of an international general strike against war.

The CGT continued as before with its plans to campaign against war, in response to the deteriorating international situation. The timing of the Legien-Jouhaux conversation was, however, crucial, since on 28 July, the day when the Comité confédéral met to discuss Jouhaux's report of the Brussels meeting, Austria declared war on Serbia. The urgency of the situation was such that the CGT, if it was to act at all, had to

act swiftly and decisively. In reality, the lack of preparation for such an eventuality meant that the CGT's action was already too late. The CGT still refused, however, to admit defeat. On 28 July, La Bataille Syndicaliste reported on the previous evening's meeting against war with the headline "Le Peuple s'insurge contre la guerre", and made an urgent appeal to the French working class:

"Les signes évidents de préparation à la guerre forcent notre angoisse. Nous sommes au bord du gouffre.

"[...]

"Et il ne reste plus qu'un espoir au monde pour éviter le retour à la barbarie, une seule espérance pour que l'homme se retrouve humain:

"La Révolution ouvrière!

"Dès aujourd'hui, serons prêts!"¹⁷³

On 29 July, the Comité confédéral reiterated its formal position and called once again upon the workers and the French public in general to rise up in protest:

"Dans la grave situation présente, la Confédération Générale du Travail rappelle à tous qu'elle reste irréductiblement opposée à toute guerre.

"Que le devoir des travailleurs organisés est de se montrer à la hauteur des circonstances en évitant, à travers tout le pays, internationalement et par-dessus les frontières, le plus grave péril mondial de se réaliser.

"La C.G.T. déclare que la guerre européenne peut, doit être évitée, si la classe ouvrière, jointe à celle de tous les partisans de la Paix, est assez formidable, pour faire taire les clameurs guerrières.

"[...]

"L'heure est tragique, et nul n'a le droit de rester indifférent.

"[...]

"Faisons tout pour éviter la guerre. Que partout, dans les villes industrielles, comme dans les communes agricoles, sans aucun mot d'ordre, la protestation populaire s'élargisse, se fortifiant, s'intensifiant au fur et à mesure que les dangers deviendront plus pressants."¹⁷⁴

Just how far this appeal for mass action was bluff on the

part of the CGT, it is impossible to evaluate. Clearly, the CGT felt the need to demonstrate the general strike was still possible, both to the government and to the French workers. The conditions were certainly not conducive to any large-scale protest action. Already on 29 July, demonstrations against war were banned by the French government, and La Bataille Syndicaliste reported panic among the Parisian public. It was fairly widely known that the government had an extensive list of activists, who would be rounded up and arrested in the event of a national emergency.¹⁷⁵ The CGT leadership was certainly under no illusions about the state of mind of the French public. Nationalistic sentiments were spreading rapidly, even among CGT militants. Rosmer denounced, for instance, the anti-Austrian aggression displayed at the 27 July meeting; for many syndicalists, he claimed, this aggression was easily transferred¹⁷⁶ towards Germany.

In the light of the Legien-Jouhaux encounter in Brussels, which had crystallised over ten years of mutual misunderstanding, the Comité confédéral's reference to international action was evidently a bluff. On 28 July, La Bataille Syndicaliste attempted to link the Paris meeting with demonstrations against war which were taking place in Germany. On 30 July, Jouhaux addressed a telegram to Legien as head of the international trade-union international:

"Confédération Générale du Travail française
résolument contre la guerre, demande prolétariat
international intervenir par pression sur
gouvernements pour obtenir localisation du conflit.
"La paix reste possible, doit triompher, si
travailleurs organisés internationalement restent
unis dans même pensée: éviter toute conflagration.

"Cette paix est entre les mains de la classe ouvrière internationale si elle sait être à la hauteur du péril.

"Ici manifestations pacifistes se poursuivent. Nous croyons fermement à la paix car nous sommes énergiquement résolus à éviter la guerre.

"A bas la guerre! Vive la paix garantie par Internationale ouvrière."177

This telegram met the same fate as other correspondence between the French, English, German and other labour leaders sent out at the same time; it was seized by the German authorities and never reached its destination. The gesture was purely symbolic. 178

The CGT continued to publicly pronounce its intention to prevent war. In a last-ditch attempt to launch an international initiative, La Bataille Syndicaliste of 31 July headlined dramatically: "Prolétaires de tous les pays, unissez-vous!", and an article by Yvetot appealed:

"Frères de toutes nations, travailleurs de l'internationale syndicale, restons les hommes que nous avons déclaré être pour oser formuler partout, en ce moment tragique, notre sentiment d'amour et d'entente entre nous!"179

Once again, the value of the appeal was purely symbolic.

In fact, the German unions had already made their move. When Legien returned from Brussels on 30 July, mobilisation was already under way. At the next meeting of the Generalkommission, Legien is said to have argued for the trade unions to support the war effort. 180 On 1 August, the trade union leaders and SPD leader Albert Südekum entered into negotiations with government ministers, the result of which was an agreement that, in return for a no-strike pledge, the government would not ban the trade unions. A conference of union federation leaders which took place on 2 August endorsed this agreement, and all strike movements

were suspended. The decision of the SPD deputies on 3 August was thus pre-empted by the trade union leaders. In taking such an initiative, Legien and the other labour leaders had clearly intended to prevent the SPD from taking any other course of action.
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In France, the acceptance of the war situation was not so clear-cut, and a definite about-turn is apparent between Yvetot's appeal for international action on 31 July and the report of the collapse of any resistance on 2 August under the headline "La folie triomphe de la raison":

"Les forces mauvaises sont sur le point de triompher. Une lueur d'espoir perce encore, mais si faible qu'il faut envisager les pires éventualités.

"Cependant qu'entraînés vers le gouffre, nous voulons conserver l'espoir d'une paix possible.

"Jusqu'à cette heure, le Comité Confédéral est resté à son poste de combat, luttant pour la cause de la Paix.

"[...]

"Si ses efforts ne paraissent pas avoir donné ce que nous étions en droit d'attendre, ce que la classe ouvrière espérait, c'est que les événements nous ont submergés."182

Annie Kriegel has shown that the socialist leader Jaurès was
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involved in this series of events. She points out that Jaurès' victorious resolution at the extraordinary French socialist congress of July 1914, advocating the general strike as a means of preventing war, can only be properly understood in the light of his attempts to win over the CGT and present a unified opposition to war. Police reports show that Jaurès and the CGT were indeed working towards unity of action, and Annie Kriegel claims that the "Comité d'Action", set up after negotiations between French socialists and syndicalists in September 1914, did not represent a departure from pre-war behaviour, but rather the

resumption of negotiations which had already begun in 1914.

On 31 July, CGT leaders Jouhaux, Dumoulin, Bled, Merrheim and Minot met with Jaurès, Vaillant, Dubreuilh and Renaudel, of the SFIO. It would appear that the meeting took place on the CGT's initiative, and that the CGT proposed bringing forward to 2 August the socialist' anti-war demonstration, planned for 9 August. The CGT was keen to make this into a joint venture. It was Jaurès who blocked this initiative, apparently because he believed that international tensions would soon die down and he therefore did not wish to throw the French people into unnecessary panic about the imminence of war.

What is particularly interesting about this account is that the CGT leaders, who convened later that evening to discuss the meeting with the socialist representatives, acknowledged Jaurès' leadership. Not only did they agree to participate in the demonstration on 9 August, but they specifically spoke of putting aside the CGT's principles, including their commitment to the general strike, in order to pursue the immediate goal of united action for peace. In other words, the CGT leaders capitulated to the socialist party before they gave in to the situation of war. These accounts are of course based on police reports, and must therefore be treated with caution, but it is reasonable to assume that these reports formed the basis of the decision taken by the Minister of the Interior, Malvy, just a few hours later, not to apply the measures stipulated in the "Carnet B", because they would not be necessary.

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Malvy was informed almost immediately of the CGT's decision to renounce the general strike in the

interests of proletarian unity, and his reaction confirms the authenticity of these reports.

News of Jaurès' assassination reached the CGT leaders towards the end of their meeting, and finally shattered all hopes of concerted action against war. Having abandoned the idea of the general strike in favour of joint action with the socialists, the CGT leaders must have been doubly shocked at Jaurès' death, and the prospect of any action at all receded. It is clear, however, that the CGT's decision had been reached before Jaurès' death.

Resigned acceptance of the situation had already been anticipated by the Comité confédéral's circular of 29 July, which by singling out Austria as the aggressor had taken a partisan approach to the international situation. Dumoulin later pointed to this circular as the beginning of what he regarded as the betrayal of the working class by Jouhaux and his allies. In July 1914, Dumoulin was later to claim, the Comité confédéral was already convinced of the futility of the CGT's professed resistance to war:

"Déjà nous n'avions plus d'espoir. Au Comité confédéral, sachant parfaitement ce que Paris pensait, ce dont il était capable, nous nous sommes rendu compte de l'impracticabilité de nos résolutions de congrès, de l'inanité des ordres que nous aurions pu donner pour déclencher la grève générale et faire échec à la mobilisation. La C.G.T. fixa pour elle-même et au regard de l'histoire les responsabilités de la guerre. A mon avis, il y avait déjà là un premier acte contraire à notre esprit révolutionnaire et à nos convictions internationales. Le mouvement syndical français portait déjà sur les événements un jugement faux qui devait avoir pour lui des conséquences funestes en l'entraînant dans l'Union sacrée."186

Dumoulin's report of the Comité confédéral's state of mind is

reflected in the attitude of another leading syndicalist, Rosmer, whose gloomy view of the possibility of preventing war was summed up thus in a letter to Monatte in July 1914:

"Ils [les Allemands] ont eu de belles réunions et une manifestation dans la rue. Nous n'avons pas fait davantage."¹⁸⁷

The CGT's determination to prevent war was thus projected as part of the elaborate bluff which they had built up since 1900. A fundamental part of this was the pretence, which the CGT had maintained despite abundant evidence to the contrary, that the CGT was acting in complete harmony with the organised
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international proletariat. This is not to say that the CGT's position was wholly cynical. Ultimately, the CGT's fatal weakness was its reliance on the revolutionary instincts of the working class. Just as the CGT had believed that the International Secretariat would eventually be transformed by the pressure of the rank and file (or had been forced into adopting this belief because of their own isolation), so too the CGT's opposition to war rested on faith in the spontaneous action of the revolutionary working class.

The intellectual gymnastics which the CGT had to perform in order to explain away the events of July and August 1914 were a product of the dilemma which had underpinned the CGT's conduct since 1900: how to affirm internationalism and initiate international activities when the CGT was isolated in the international arena. In particular they were a product of the CGT's schizophrenic attitude towards the German labour movement.

For the German labour leaders, on the other hand, the

outbreak of war posed no such problems of intellectual and ideological honesty. For Legien, the trade-unionists' attitude towards the outbreak of war did not in the least signify a betrayal of the pre-war aspirations of the German labour movement. Rather, the reverse was true; the war offered the German trade union leaders the first real chance to be recognised as negotiating powers with the government and as partners in the establishment and implementation of social legislation.¹⁸⁹ Legien stated this explicitly in 1916:

"Die Politik des 4. August ist die Voraussetzung für die Zukunft der Gewerkschaften, für die Verwirklichung ihrer grossen Ziele und Ideale, denn nicht von aussen her kommt uns die Befreiung vom ökonomischen Lohnjoch, sondern wir müssen dereinst die Kraft haben, uns selbst zu befreien."¹⁹⁰

It was Legien who initiated the demands for the expulsion of antimilitarist Karl Liebknecht from the SPD in December 1914.¹⁹¹

So little did Legien feel that the outbreak of war changed his position that he assumed that his role as head of the trade union international would remain the same throughout the war. In September 1914, Oudegeest wrote to Legien to suggest that International Secretariat be transferred to a neutral country. In reply, Legien expressed the opinion that it would be possible to keep the International "fully in being" from Berlin.¹⁹² Even in 1919, when international trade union representatives met for the first time since the beginning of the war to reconstitute the International Federation of Trade Unions, Legien remained unapologetic, an attitude which caused considerable ill feeling among the other delegates:

"Die Haltung der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung bei Ausbruch des Krieges war bestimmt durch die

Verhältnisse in Deutschland. Die deutsche organisierte Arbeiterschaft war der festen Überzeugung, dass es sich für Deutschland um einen Verteidigungskrieg handelte. Die deutsche Arbeiterschaft ist stets ein Gegner des Krieges und der Rüstungen gewesen und hat niemals imperialistische und annexionistische Bestrebungen unterstützt."193

In the case of both the German and French labour movements, despite the differences, the decision not to resist the war effort had been prepared over many years. It is, however, the French position which seems the most problematic, because of the ideological trap which the CGT leaders had themselves set. Revolutionary syndicalism was conceived as the guide by which the "minorités agissantes" led the struggle for the emancipation of the working class as a whole. Logically, this implied that the masses were too bound up in immediate concerns to give constant support to long-term revolutionary campaigns. At the same time, the CGT's campaigns depended on the revolutionary élan of the masses. Time after time, CGT campaigns failed because they just did not have mass support. When this support failed to materialise, demoralisation set in. Papayanis' comments on Merrheim are revealing:

"[...] when World War One broke out he had no reason to believe that the French workers would suddenly and magically overcome all their organizational weaknesses and educational deficiencies, become genuinely revolutionary, and bring down the state and capitalism."194

This underlying pessimism is the key to the "rectification de tir" process, and nowhere is it more evident than in the areas of antimilitarism and internationalism. The Comité confédéral shifted responsibility for the general strike away from itself on to the local organisations, perhaps because it knew its members

would be arrested, and also because it feared that the general strike would not gain mass support and knew that the marginalised movement would be quickly suppressed. Its continued proclamations of the CGT's commitment to the general strike were a bluff, designed to keep public pressure on governments, and therefore make war impossible. The CGT did not believe that war would break out, any more than Jaurès did, and the question of who would organise the general strike was academic.

As for internationalism, the CGT's dealings with labour movements abroad and the work of the ISNTUC had never at any stage squared with the idealistic statements issued by the CGT, which continued its elaborate bluff strategy. Isolated in the international labour movement, the CGT could do little but drift along in the wake of international events. On a deeper level, questions concerning the attitude of workers to their counterparts in other countries during wartime were never seriously considered because it was quite simply assumed that they would never arise.

It was because the CGT leaders, and many of their followers, had sincerely and fundamentally believed in this bluff, or at least in its power to shape international events, that the collapse of 1914 shattered the labour movement so completely.

CONCLUSION

An examination of relations between the labour movements of different countries before 1914 shows that labour internationalism, rather than an automatic response to a perception of common (class) interest, was an attempt to project national preoccupations onto an international level. Theoretical internationalism was uncontested, but it did not commit labour unions to anything, and it could easily be ignored or flouted in practice. It was on a practical level that internationalism mattered, and here national priorities and interests were paramount. English trade union leaders, for example, were involved in the First International, but on a purely rational basis. International links were helpful because they could prevent English workers from being undersold by cheap imported labour, and they could raise impressive sums of money in support of strikers. Employers feared international links between workers, and therefore workers gained power in their struggle against employers by organising internationally. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, English trade-unionists lost interest in international links because they saw no advantage in them. English trade-unionism was gaining influence at home, and therefore, whilst English labour leaders were happy to allow foreign labour leaders to study and emulate English methods of organisation, they had no desire to learn from their Continental brethren.

The French CGT was anxious to assume the role of international leader which the English trade unions had abandoned. By now, a new force had emerged - German social democracy - which tried to shape the international movement into

the social-democratic mould, by uniting socialism and labour into one international body. The internationalism of the French CGT was largely a response to this attempt, on an international level, to confine labour unions to the socialist sphere. In France, the struggle for labour autonomy had already been won, although pressure from within the confederation to unite with the French socialist party remained. After the formation of the Second International, international activity for the CGT represented a constant struggle for syndicalist autonomy. In the case of France as well as that of Germany, labour internationalism reflected domestic preoccupations and struggles.

French syndicalism and internationalism

According to French syndicalist doctrine, internationalism was a basic element of working-class consciousness, which the ruling classes tried to divert or destroy by education and propaganda. French syndicalists therefore felt themselves to be internationalist in outlook, and from the beginning they sought to join the CGT with the labour movements of other countries into an international federation of labour. Internationalism was also a necessity, because CGT doctrine was also based on antimilitarism and the general strike.

For the more extreme antimilitarists in the CGT, such as Yvetot, opposition to the army was associated with a repudiation of nationalism and national loyalty. Yvetot and others within the CGT quoted Marx, to the effect that workers had no fatherland. National barriers did not exist for workers. This view was

accepted unquestioningly by many within the CGT, as is evidenced by the results of the questionnaire on "La Patrie", published in ¹
Le Mouvement Socialiste in 1906. Internationalism was a natural corollary of this antimilitarist doctrine.

The general strike, according to CGT theory, was the ultimate weapon of the workers. It required no outside help, no parliamentary or electoral agitation. It was the means by which workers would liberate themselves by their own forces. In order for a general strike to be successful, workers needed to combine their forces internationally, so that strikes and blockades could not be broken. Ideologically, therefore, internationalism was an integral part of CGT doctrine and one which was inextricably linked with other revolutionary aspects of CGT doctrine, such as antimilitarism and the general strike.

This was French syndicalist internationalism on a purely ideological level. In practice, internationalism for the CGT depended on other factors. In particular, internationalism was seen by the CGT as a weapon in the struggle for autonomy. On an international level, this meant opposition to German hegemony within the Second International. The CGT, one year after its creation, following the International Socialist Congress of London in 1896, decided to push for an international labour organisation independent of socialism. The CGT wished to see its autonomous, revolutionary-syndicalist direction mirrored on the international level.

By 1914, however, relations between the CGT and the French socialist party had improved and, given the external impetus of threats to world peace, some kind of unity of action was

possible. Official statements by the CGT did not reflect this situation; they reiterated the inviolable principle of syndicalist autonomy, as expressed in the "Charte d'Amiens". A similar gap between doctrine and reality is evident in all areas of CGT activity in the years leading to the outbreak of war. Antimilitarism, while still presented as a key element of CGT policy, centred on campaigns which did not call into question the use of the army, or workers' identification with the nation, or national frontiers. CGT campaigns focussed instead on popular demands: on hygiene and general conditions in barracks, on the extension of national service, on the use of army units as punishment stations. CGT leaders believed less and less in the possibility of the general strike, and increasingly based their campaigns on "reformist" (as opposed to revolutionary) demands, such as prices, wages, pensions, etc.

Nowhere was this gap between theory and practice more in evidence than in the area of internationalism. By 1914, the CGT's policy had become entrenched, even "fossilised", as Wayne
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Westergard-Thorpe remarks. The hardening of official policy was a function of the gradual disintegration of revolutionary syndicalism. As the CGT's own cohesion became increasingly threatened, it clung to absolute principles which had little bearing on reality. Up until the last minute, the CGT adhered to a belief that workers would unite in opposition to war. This belief alone could prevent war, it was thought, because governments would not wish to risk the consequences of declaring war against the wishes of the people. The belief would never be

tested because the occasion would never arise. When war did break out, the labour leaders of France, and those of other countries, were simply not prepared for it. The CGT's internationalism was no more than a façade which tried to conceal the very real differences which separated French and German workers, and, perhaps even more so, French labour leaders from their German counterparts.

German labour and internationalism

The German labour leaders refused idealistic interpretations of working-class consciousness in favour of immediate responses to practical situations. For them, internationalism represented a logical continuation of the drive for greater organisation. International organisation meant the ability to conclude agreements which would increase the strength and bargaining power of labour unions in Germany and elsewhere. International agreements produced concrete results, in terms of supporting workers' demands or strengthening union membership; they gave workers' organisations an added dimension in their struggle against employers; and they increased the stature and authority of national federations. For all these reasons, German labour leaders considered international organisation an advantage. Indeed, the Germans had the most to gain from international organisation, since they, more than any other labour movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, suffered as a result of competition from immigrant workers. In this respect, the ascendancy of the German labour movement internationally, motivated by the gains to be made by international organisation,

corresponds to the decline of the role of English trade-unionism as an international force.

Motivated by practical benefits to be gained by international association, the German labour movement sought a particular kind of international organisation, based on a pragmatic approach to internationalism. This was reflected in the organisational basis of the ISNTUC, the organisation in which the Germans took a clear lead.

The German labour movement's attitude towards internationalism, which paralleled the national concerns of German organised labour, had far-reaching consequences for the international labour movement. The German labour leaders saw that, in order for national labour federations to conclude practical international agreements, they had to be in roughly similar positions, as far as representativity (membership figures), rates of subscription, provision of strike and other funds, and other facilities were concerned. The experience of the English trade unions had shown that, if one national labour movement was far ahead of the others in these matters, it could not hope to gain anything by financial agreements with foreign labour movements. Uniformity became the mot d'ordre.³ This applied not only to subscription rates, but to wider methods of organisation. Since Germany assumed a leading position in the ISNTUC, its methods of organisation, with emphasis on discipline and financial stability, became the model for the international movement. Centres which did not conform to this model, such as the French CGT, were not only marginalised, but they were

pressurised to modify their demands and their direction in accordance with the social-democratic model.

Moreover, the ISNTUC's concentration on practical questions, to the exclusion of issues of wider political significance, implicitly acknowledged an international division of work between labour and socialism. The German labour leaders were happy to allow the Second International to speak on behalf of the international proletariat, as long as it did not interfere in practical questions of labour organisation. This effectively gave the German labour unions the right to veto international socialist projects such as the general strike or May Day strikes, and the German unions were therefore a force for reformism within the international movement. By acknowledging the coexistence of "two arms" of the international labour movement, the ISNTUC put an end to the CGT's hopes of an autonomous labour International.

The clash between the French and German labour movements

Given these fundamental differences in conceptions of international organisation and activity, it is not surprising that relations between the French and German movements were stormy. Each labour movement judged the other by the yardstick of its own priorities and activities, and these views were further dependent on the respective positions of the two labour movements in the international movement.

The relationship between the French and German labour movements was conditioned by a set of reflexes, images and perceptions, which operated on a fundamental, psychological level. These images were reinforced by feelings of insecurity,

especially on the French side. The French image of German workers was that of an army of disciplined, obedient soldiers; their leaders were portrayed as authoritarian, even autocratic. The imagery was usually militaristic, and comparisons were often drawn between the German labour movement and the imperialism of the German ruling classes.⁴

This image, used chiefly as a contrastive device, heightened the differences between the French and German labour movements, and, as such, it was at the heart of the French syndicalists' self-image. In contrast with German military methods of organisation, France was seen as the homeland of democracy; French love of debate and respect for federalist principles were compared with German centralism. German organisation, often referred to in conjunction with the epithet "heavy", was seen as the foil to French revolutionary fervour and militancy. In other words, German methods of organisation were seen in a negative light in order to boost French revolutionary syndicalism. French syndicalism depended on a negative assessment of German methods such as high dues, strike and pension funds.

What these images also reveal is the fundamental nationalism of French syndicalists, despite repeated claims that the French workers had no stake in the nation. The Jacobin tradition, which saw France as the home of democracy and enlightenment, was no less important for French syndicalists than for French socialists.

Equally, the German labour leaders were unable to present the French labour movement in a positive light. Even after the

1911 French delegation to Berlin, when German labour leaders could afford to be indulgent towards their French visitors, German coverage of the delegation concentrated solely on self-congratulation. The German labour movement saw its role in the international movement as one of educator and model, and hence other national labour movements could only be judged according to the extent to which they emulated German methods. The German workers who read the Correspondenzblatt had an image of French syndicalists as inept, half-mad anarchists who were leading French workers to ruin, while French workers received, from the pages of the syndicalist press, the impression that German workers formed an inert mass with no will of their own.

At the same time, CGT policies of opposition to war depended on a public image of international solidarity. For this reason, an elaborate façade of international solidarity and concerted activity was constructed. Behind it lay years of misconceptions, misunderstandings and often outright hostility.

Mutual recriminations in 1914 over responsibility for the war were the culmination of earlier clashes. Lefranc, speaking of the French and German labour movements in 1914, has pointed out that:

"On se défend mal de l'impression que, chez quelques-uns, la rupture de l'Internationale fut accueillie avec soulagement, comme la fin d'une liaison pesante, impatiemment supportée."⁵

Certainly, given the enormous strains which international activity placed on the revolutionary-syndicalist leadership of the CGT, the Jouhaux-Legien encounter in Brussels in 1914 must have provided the CGT leadership with the convenient excuse to

renounce the myth of international solidarity in opposition to war which they had been promoting.

The shattering of the internationalist myth in 1914 also tore apart the international labour movement. It was a different international labour movement which emerged from the war, and one in which coexistence between radically different organisations, which had been the uneasy basis for international organisation before the war, could no longer take place. The CGT's dream of an international labour organisation in which national centres of all political persuasions could exchange opinions, and eventually reach agreement, was never achieved.

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26. Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiterkongresses in der Tonhalle Zürich, vom 6. bis 12. August 1893, produced by organising committee, Zurich, 1894, Minkoff Reprints, Geneva, 1977, p.50.
27. Ibid., pp.51-52.
28. Joll, op. cit., p.71, refers to the "slashing attack" made by Bebel on the anarchists.
29. Zurich Congress, Protokoll, p.66.
30. Ibid., p.5.
31. See a brochure by Christian Cornelissen, Les Diverses Tendances du Parti Ouvrier International. A propos de l'ordre du jour (du Congrès de Zurich), published in Brussels in 1893.
32. See Georges Haupt, Jolyon Howorth, Edouard Vaillant, délégué au Bureau Socialiste International: correspondance avec le Secrétaire international (1900-1915), Milan, Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1976, p.222.
33. Augustin Hamon, Le Socialisme et le Congrès de Londres, étude historique, Paris, 1897 (2nd edition), Geneva, Minck Reprints, 1977, p.74.
34. TUC, Parliamentary Committee, Minutes of Meeting, 4 February 1895.
35. One of these, Augustin Hamon, set out to define socialism in order to prove his point that anarchism, just like communism or collectivism, or indeed social-democracy, was one particular form of socialism. See Hamon, op. cit., pp.1-10.
36. Hamon, op. cit., p.76.
37. Ibid., p.102.

38. Ibid., p.114.
39. Ibid., p.112.
40. Ibid., p.111.
41. Congrès International Socialiste des Travailleurs et des Chambres Syndicales Ouvrières, Londres, 26 juillet- 2 août 1896, Geneva, Minck Reprints, 1980, p.7 (English report of the London congress, also given in French and German).
42. Hamon, op. cit., p.105.
43. Ibid., p.119.
44. Ibid., p.147. The rapporteur was Vandervelde.
45. Congrès International Socialiste, Londres, 1896, cit., préface de Michel Winock, p.3.
46. Hamon, op. cit., p.187.
47. Report of the Twenty-Sixth Annual TUC held at Belfast, September 1893, p.21.
48. Alice Prochaska, History of the General Federation of Trade Unions 1899-1980, London, Allen & Unwin, 1982, p.91, claims that the experience of the London congress was the direct cause of the TUC's rejection of all direct appeals from other national federations after 1896.
49. See, for example, TUC, Parliamentary Committee, Minutes of Meetings, 26 July 1895 and 8 June 1898.
50. Report given by two delegates, Fox and McNeill, to the 30th Annual TUC, 1897 (p.24 of Report).
51. Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement Syndical sous la Troisième République, Paris, Payot, 1967, p.52.
52. From Le Journal du Peuple, 10 April 1899, quoted in Jacques Julliard (ed.), Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe, Paris, Seuil, 1971, p.352.
53. At the preceding Congrès national des syndicats, held in Nantes, in 1894, the Guesdists had walked out after the principle of the general strike was adopted by the congress. After this, the Guesdist fraction continued to meet separately, leaving the remaining syndicats free to develop autonomously.
54. Georges Lefranc, Le Mouvement Syndical sous la Troisième République, Paris, Payot, 1967, p.128.
55. Robert Brécy, Le Mouvement Syndical en France, 1871-1921 -

essai bibliographique, Paris, Mouton, 1963, p.37.

56. Ibid., p.25.

57. Office du Travail, Les Associations Ouvrières, tome I, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1894 (1899), p.258. The report on unemployment, according to this book, was published as "Le chômage: ses causes, sa durée et ses effets, dénoncés par les Chambres syndicales de France et d'Algérie" (V. Renou, rapporteur, Paris, Imprimerie Allemane, 1893). On meetings of the Secrétariat national du Travail, see Le Prolétaire, 1891-1892, Le Parti ouvrier, 189-1892, La Bourse du Travail and Bulletin des Bourses du Travail, 1891-1893.

58. Le Prolétaire, no.44, 4e série, 28.8.1891, p.1, Henri Galiment, "L'utilité des Secrétariats nationaux du Travail".

59. See, for example, Le Prolétaire, no.63, 9.1.1892.

60. See, for example, Le Parti ouvrier, no.384, 21.11.1891, no.397, 12.12.1891.

61. Brécy, op. cit., p.41.

62. Quoted in Edouard Dolléans, Histoire du Mouvement ouvrier 1871-1920, Paris, Armand Colin, 1967, p.103.

63. Brécy, op. cit., Introduction, p.XII.

64. Hamon, op. cit., p.193.

65. Quoted in Joll, op. cit., p.14.

66. Victor Griffuelhes states this clearly later; see Le Mouvement Socialiste, no.127, 1.9.1903, "La VIIe Conférence Internationale": "Les incidents qui éclatèrent au Congrès international de Londres (1896) amenèrent les syndicats des divers pays à ne plus prendre part à ces Congrès mi-politiques et mi-syndicaux."

67. Quoted in Jacques Julliard, Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du Syndicalisme d'action directe, Paris, Seuil, 1971, p.353.

68. Confédération Générale du Travail, 5e Congrès national, Paris, September 1900, Compte rendu des débats, p.131.

69. Ibid., p.133.

70. Ibid., p.205. This was adopted by the congress as a statement of their basic understanding of internationalism.

71. Ibid., p.132.

72. Ibid., p.107.

73. Ibid., p.206.

74. The official report of proceedings, CGT, Congrès International Corporatif tenu à la Bourse du Travail de Paris, 17-18 septembre 1900, Compte rendu des travaux, Paris, 1901, states that the German delegates would not be named for fear of action against him on his return to Germany. This is echoed in La Petite République's account of the congress, 19.9.1900, p.2. The official list of delegates, however, names Stiviner, of the Hamburg seamen's union (a false name?). In any case it is clear that the German delegate was in Paris for the International Transport Workers' Congress.

Lefranc, Les Expériences Syndicales Internationales, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1952, mentions the presence of a Swedish delegate. Here he would seem to have confused the international labour congress with the transport workers' congress, at which Lindley represented Swedish workers. Lefranc also has the congress taking place in December 1900.

75. Soulery, Compte rendu, p.14.

76. Compte rendu, p.17.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p.15.

79. Ibid., p.30.

80. Ibid., p.34.

81. Ibid., p.53.

82. Ibid., p.43.

83. Ibid., p.43.

84. Brécy, op. cit., Introduction, p.XII.

85. CGT, La C.G.T. et le mouvement syndical, Paris, Editios CGT, 1925.

86. See list of delegates, Compte rendu, pp.87-88.

87. Compte rendu sténographique non officiel de la version française du Cinquième Congrès Socialiste International, Paris, 23-27 septembre 1900, Paris, Cahiers de la Quinzaine, 1900, p.200.

88. See, for example, Calame, Compte rendu, p. 29.

89. Compte rendu, p.79.

90. Première Conférence Internationale des Secrétaires Nationaux

des Syndicats, Copenhague, 21 août 1901, p.10.

91. Joll, op. cit., p.73.

92. La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.1909.

93. Reported in Le Petit Sou, 27 October 1900; quoted in Georges Haupt, Jolyon Howorth, op. cit., p.237.

94. Report of the 33rd Annual TUC, held in Huddersfield, 1900, p.91.

95. Ibid., p.92.

96. Haupt, Howorth, op. cit., p. 236.

97. La Voix du Peuple, 5-12 May 1901.

98. La Voix du Peuple, 16-23 June 1901.

99. La Voix du Peuple, 20-23 June 1901.

100. Les Temps Nouveaux, 29 June-5 July 1901, p.2.

101. Report in Le Petit Sou, 29 October 1900, quoted in Haupt, Howorth, op. cit., p. 11.

102. La Voix du Peuple, 1-9 December 1900.

103. James Joll, op. cit., p.11.

104. Ibid., p.62.

105. Heinz Josef Varain, Freie Gewerkschaften, Sozialdemokratie und Staat, Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1956, p.10.

106. Ibid., p.38.

107. Correspondenzblatt, 1898, p.270.

108. See Gerhard A. Ritter, Klaus Tenfelde, "Der Durchbruch der Freien Gewerkschaften Deutschlands zur Massenbewegung im letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts", in Heinz Oskar Vetter (ed.), Vom Sozialistengesetz zur Mitbestimmung, Cologne, Bund Verlag, 1975, pp.62-64.

109. Theodor Leipart, Carl Legien: Ein Gedenkbuch, Berlin, ADGB, 1929, p.14.

110. Ibid., p.16.

111. Ibid., p.24.

112. Ibid., p.25.

113. Joll, op. cit., p.26.
114. Quoted in Varain, op. cit., p.11.
115. Varain, op. cit., p.20.
116. Leipart, op. cit., p.36.
117. Varain, op. cit., p.37.
118. Correspondenzblatt, 1898, p. 53.
119. Correspondenzblatt, 1898, p.117.
120. See, for example, Correspondenzblatt, 1899, p.1 (9 January).
121. Correspondenzblatt, 1899, p.301.
122. Correspondenzblatt, 1902, p.102.
123. GFTU, First Annual Report, June 1900, p.7.
124. Prochaska, op. cit., p.18.
125. Schevenels, op. cit., p.19.
126. TUC, Report of Proceedings, Special Trades Federation Congress, 1898.
127. GFTU, First Annual Report, June 1900, p.7.
128. GFTU, Second Annual Report, June 1901, p.15.
129. Ibid.
130. See an article by Soren Federspiel, "Fagforeningsinternationalen og DsF til 1914", Aarbog for arbejderbevoegelsens historie, 1978, p.6-54, on the influence of the Danish labour movement in the early years of the ISNTUC.
131. GFTU, Ninth Quarterly Report, September 1901, p.8.
132. Ibid., p.9.
133. Ibid., p.8.
134. (Carl Legien), Première Conférence Internationale des Secrétaires Nationaux des Syndicats, Copenhagen, 1901 (leaflet printed in Hamburg, trade-union press).

Chapter III

1. Report of the Second International Conference of Secretaries of National Trade Union Organisations, Stuttgart, 1902, published in the General Federation of Trade Unions, Third Annual Report, June 1902 (pp.13-18), p.13. This report is a direct translation of the official report originally written in German and translated and distributed by the International Secretariat. All quotations from the Conference proceedings, unless otherwise stated, are taken from this English translation.
2. See La Voix du Peuple, 29 juin- 6 juillet 1902, "La Conférence Internationale" by Victor Griffuelhes. In fact, the meeting took place on 17 and 18 June.
3. See Sassenbach, op. cit., p.10, for the wording of this request in English.
4. La Voix du Peuple, 29 juin- 6 juillet 1902.
5. XIIIe Congrès national corporatif, Montpellier, 1902. Comptendu officiel des travaux du congrès, p.63.
6. Report of the 1902 International Conference, p.15.
7. Ibid., p.18.
8. There has been some confusion in later accounts over the countries which were actually represented. In Lefranc, Les Expériences Syndicales Internationales (op. cit.), for example, Belgium is listed as present at Stuttgart, but the Scandinavian countries are absent (p.12).
9. Report of the 1902 International Conference, p.13.
10. Ibid., p.14.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p.18.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p.16.
15. Ibid., p.17.
16. Ibid., p.18.
17. Ibid.
18. Schevenels, op. cit., p.30.
19. Sassenbach, op.cit., p.8.

20. GFTU, Third Annual Report, June 1902, pp.9-10.
21. Ibid., p.12.
22. GFTU, Report of the Third Annual General Council, Leicester, August 1902, p.10.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p.12.
25. Correspondenzblatt, 1902, p.450.
26. Ibid.
27. Correspondenzblatt, Nr. 29, 21 Juli 1902, p.498.
28. La Voix du Peuple, 29 juin - 6 juillet 1902.
29. Les Temps Nouveaux, 28 juin - 4 juillet 1902.
30. La Voix du Peuple, 28 juillet - 4 août 1901.
31. La Voix du Peuple, 4-11 mai 1902.
32. La Voix du Peuple, 29 juin - 6 juillet 1902.
33. La Voix du Peuple, 3-10 août 1902, "Le Congrès des Syndicats Allemands".
34. La Voix du Peuple, 29 juin - 6 juillet 1902.
35. Ibid.
36. La Voix du Peuple, 4-11 mai 1902.
37. Ibid.
38. La Voix du Peuple, 6-13 juillet 1902.
39. La Voix du Peuple, 27 juillet - 3 août 1902.
40. La Voix du Peuple, 29 juin - 6 juillet 1902.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Brécy, op. cit., p.59.
46. It was decided at the 1900 congress of the CGT that young

conscripts should be put in contact with the Bourse du Travail of the town in which they were stationed, and that funds should be established to help conscripts financially through these links with the local Bourse. This was seen as a means of keeping syndicalist propaganda alive and avoiding the creation of divisions between soldiers and workers. The idea of the fund became known as the "Sou du Soldat".

47. Jacques Julliard, "La CGT devant la guerre (1900-1914)", Le Mouvement Social, No. 49, 1964, p.47.

48. The Comité confédéral reported at the 1907 Congress of the CGT that although these decisions had been taken in 1900 they were only now being put into practice. See Compte rendu, p.31.

49. Brécy, op. cit., p.58.

50. Maxime Leroy, La Coutume Ouvrière, Paris, Giard et Brière, 1913, tome II, p.802.

51. XIVe Congrès national corporatif, Bourges, 1904. Compte rendu des travaux, p.32 (Rapport du Comité fédéral des Bourses du Travail).

52. See Julliard article, op. cit., p.49.

53. La Voix du Peuple, 4-11 janvier 1903.

54. See Leroy, op. cit., p. 802. The full text of the circular is reproduced in the Compte rendu of the Congrès des Bourses du Travail, Alger, 1902, p.115 (Rapport du Comité fédéral).

55. Julliard article, op. cit., p.49.

56. Leroy, op. cit., p.802.

57. See La Voix du Peuple; for example, No. 29, 16-23 juin 1901.

58. La Voix du Peuple, 8-13 mars 1903.

59. See the Compte rendu of the 1900 Congress, Paris. See also above, Chapter II.

60. Article 36 of the CGT statutes proposed at 1904 Congress.

61. Compte rendu, p.185.

62. Brécy, op. cit., describes the report as a "document caractéristique" (Introduction, p.XIII). Frederick Ridley in his book Revolutionary Syndicalism (op. cit.) uses the report as a basis for his evaluation of the CGT's doctrine. See p.135.

63. The full text was published in La Voix du Peuple, No. 141, 5-12 juillet 1903. All the following extracts are taken from this source.

64. Reported by the Comité pour l'Internationalisme of the Section des Bourses de la CGT, to the 1904 Congress of the CGT, Bourges. This part of the report concludes: "C'est dire quels liens nous unissent avec nos braves camarades d'Espagne." Compte rendu, pp.38-39.

65. Antimilitarismus und Generalstreik, Berlin, Anarchistische Föderation Deutschlands, 1904.

66. See Griffuelhes' later account in his book, L'Action Syndicaliste, Paris, Rivière, 1908, p.55. Also Pierre Monatte takes up the same points in "Le Secrétariat International contre l'Internationalisme", in: La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.

67. Leroy, op. cit., p.803.

68. J.-B. Séverac's section, "Le Mouvement Syndical", in Compère-Morel's Encyclopédie Socialiste, Syndicale et Coopérative de l'Internationale ouvrière, Paris, Quillet, 1912, (12 volumes), has Spain included in the list, but then seems to correct this when he states that only 8 countries were represented (as opposed to the nine which he actually names). See p.413.

69. La Voix du Peuple, 19-26 juillet 1903, "La Conférence Internationale".

70. Report of the International Secretariat of the National Trade Union Centres for the time from June 1902 till June 1903, appended to the Report of the Third International Conference, Dublin, 7 July 1903, p.8.

71. First International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1903, published Berlin, 1904.

72. "Decisions of the International Conferences in force in 1910", in the Sixth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1908, published Berlin, 1910, p.47. The Conference report gives the proposal in its original form and the amendments separately.

73. Report of the Third International Conference, 1903, p.5.

74. See International Secretary's Report, pp.9-10. These reports are translated from the original German and are very badly worded in places.

75. Report of the Third International Conference, 1903, p.5.

76. Lefranc, in Les Expériences Syndicales Internationales (op. cit.), seems to have got the impression that the GFTU tried to use the fact that the Conference was taking place in Britain in order to wrest the Secretariat away from German hands. See p.12: "Profitant du fait que la Conférence se tient dans les Iles Britanniques, les délégués des Trade-Unions proposent de changer

chaque année de secrétariat, à ce que diverses centrales en soient à tour de rôle chargées." There seems to be no evidence that this was the case; indeed the opposite would appear to be true, as it was Curran who proposed that Legien continue as Secretary. The whole attitude of the GFTU was too lackadaisical to suggest any intended take-over bid. The request for the Secretariat to be rotated had in any case already been made at Stuttgart, by Hueber, the Austrian delegate, who was a close political ally of Legien.

77. Gottfurcht, op. cit., p.31.

78. Barnes, a trustee of the GFTU's Management Committee, was later to become a member of the British Cabinet during the war and was subsequently involved in the drafting of the Peace Treaty.

79. Conference Report, p.4.

80. Ibid.

81. The text of the letter is reproduced, in English, in Sassenbach, op. cit., pp.10-12, and it is from here that the extracts are taken.

82. Ibid.

83. Sassenbach, op. cit., p.12.

84. There are cursory mentions of the International Conference in May and June 1903 (Minutes of GFTU Management Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings), but these are limited to confirmation of venue and date.

85. Sassenbach, op. cit., p.12. The presence of the press raised a few questions. This was the first time that press representatives were allowed admittance to the International Conferences. The Management Committee of the GFTU reported in its meeting of 17 June 1903 that the Press Association had written to request Press admission to the International Conference, and the Management Committee agreed. (Minutes of Management Committee meeting 17 and 18 June 1903) Thus the decision was left entirely to the organising body.

86. GFTU, Seventeenth Quarterly Report, September 1903.

87. Correspondenzblatt, Nr.30, 27 Juli 1903, p.471.

88. See Griffuelhes, "L'Action Syndicaliste", op. cit., p.55.

89. Ibid., p.56.

90. La CGT et le mouvement syndical, Paris, Editions CGT, 1925, p.653.

91. La Voix du Peuple, 19-26 juillet 1903, "La Conférence Internationale" (front page), followed by reports on the English trade-union congresses (GFTU and TUC) in La Voix du Peuple, 20-27 septembre and 27 septembre- 4 octobre 1903; Congrès de la CGT, Bourges, 1904, Compte rendu, pp.5-6.

92. La Voix du Peuple, No.143, 19-26 juillet 1903.

93. Victor Griffuelhes, "La Conférence Internationale de Dublin", Le Mouvement Socialiste, No.127, 1 septembre 1903.

Chapter IV

1. Annie Kriegel, Jean-Jacques Becker, 1914 - La Guerre et le mouvement ouvrier français, Paris, Colin, 1964, p.14.

2. XIVe Congrès National Corporatif (VIIIe de la Confédération), Bourges, 12-20 septembre 1904. Compte rendu des travaux, p.231.

3. Ibid., pp.31-33 (Rapport de la Fédération des Bourses du Travail).

4. Ibid., p.6.

5. La Voix du Peuple, no.175, 21-28 février 1904.

6. Séance de la section des fédérations, 22 mars 1904, résumé in La Voix du Peuple, No. 190, 5-12 juin 1904.

7. Séance du 17 mai 1904, résumé in La Voix du Peuple, No. 190, 5-12 juin 1904.

8. Séance du 7 juin, résumé in La Voix du Peuple, No. 197, 24-31 juillet 1904.

9. La Voix du Peuple, No. 199, 7-14 août 1904.

10. La Voix du Peuple, No. 219, 25 décembre 1904-1 janvier 1905.

11. La Voix du Peuple, No. 241, 28 mai-4 juin 1905. The correspondence between Legien and Pouget prior to the Amsterdam conference was reproduced in full in this issue of La Voix du Peuple.

12. Ibid.

13. La Voix du Peuple, No. 246, 2-9 juillet 1905.

14. Bericht über die vierte internationale Konferenz der Sekretäre der gewerkschaftlichen Landeszentralen, 23 & 24 Juni 1905, Amsterdam, published in: Zweiter Internationaler Bericht über die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, 1904, published 1906, Berlin, pp.27-28.

15. See Mitchell's and Mallalieu's report on the conference in GFTU, 25th Quarterly Report, September 1905, pp.34-36.
16. Bericht, p.29.
17. Ibid.
18. See Report of the Fifth International Conference of the Secretaries of the National Trade Union Centres, 15 & 16 September 1907, Christiania, pp.10-11.
19. Bericht, p. 20.
20. Bericht, p.21.
21. Bericht, pp.22-23.
22. See report of the CGT congress of Amiens, 1906, in La Voix du Peuple, No. 314, 14-21 octobre 1906. The résumé of a meeting of the section des Fédérations, 6 June 1905, in La Voix du Peuple, No. 263, 29 octobre-5 novembre 1905, suggests that Pouget was prepared to attend the conference if only one of the questions was accepted for discussion.
23. Bericht, p.23.
24. Bericht, p.24.
25. Ibid.
26. Bericht, p.25.
27. Bericht, p.30.
28. Ibid. The English translation of this resolution, as given in footnote 30, is fairly accurate; the difference lies in the addition of the extra final clause in the English delegates' version.
29. See, for example, Isaac Mitchell's intervention on this subject, which makes a clear reference to the International Socialist Congresses, Bericht, p.31 (quoted below - see footnote 37).
30. Mitchell and Mallalieu, The Fourth International Conference of Trade Union Federations, GFTU, 25th Quarterly Report, September 1905, p.35.
31. Bericht, p.31.
32. Bericht, p.32.
33. Ibid.
34. Bericht, p.31.

35. See, for example, Louis Lorwin, Labor and Internationalism, cit., pp.102-103.

36. The "broad" or "big-hearted" socialists represented the reformists within the labour and socialist movements in Bulgaria, whilst the "narrow" or "small-hearted" groups represented the leftist tendencies. The rivalry between these two sections of the labour movement also caused considerable problems within the Second International, especially when in October 1911 the ISB attempted to set up a special conference on the Balkan crisis (see Haupt, Socialism and the Great War, cit., pp.68-69).

37. Third International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1905, published 1907, Berlin.

38. GFTU, Sixth Annual Report, June 1905, p.10.

39. Bericht, p.31.

40. John A. Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, 1869-1933 (2 vols.), Vol. I 1869-1918, London, George Prior, 1982, p.138.

41. Carl Legien, "Die Stellung der Gewerkschaften zur sozialpolitischen Gesetzgebung", in Sozialistische Monatshefte, 1903, Bd. I, p.323.

42. Heinz Josef Varain, op. cit., p.27.

43. Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, cit., p.163.

44. Correspondenzblatt, 1893, No. 18, pp.69-71.

45. Varain, op. cit., p.34.

46. Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, cit., p.164.

47. Quoted in Georges Haupt, Socialism and the Great War, cit., p.164.

48. For further reading on this, see Carl E. Schorske, op. cit., also Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, cit., pp.163-176. Moses sums up the situation thus: "Precisely because the Germans were the best organized, had the reputation of being ideologically better equipped and were, in addition, most successful in national elections, they became automatically the leading, and at the same time, most conservative group within the International. And if the party leaders had from the beginning behaved conservatively it can be no surprise that the trade union leaders took up a still more conservative - read national - position."

49. VIIe Congrès Socialiste International, tenu à Stuttgart, 16-24 août 1907. Compte rendu analytique publié par le Bureau Socialiste International, Brussels, 1908, p.190.

50. Ibid., p.192.
51. Résumé in La Voix du Peuple, No. 264, 5-12 novembre 1905.
52. La Voix du Peuple, No. 247, 9-16 juillet 1905.
53. Ibid.
54. Correspondenzblatt, Nr.17, 29 April 1905, p.251.
55. Ibid.
56. Victor Griffuelhes, "Dans l'Internationale", in La Voix du Peuple, No. 271, 24-31 décembre 1905.
57. La Voix du Peuple, No. 272, 1-7 janvier 1906.
58. La Voix du Peuple, No. 271, 24-31 décembre 1905.
59. See, for example, Jaurès, at the 1904 congress of the Second International: "Il y a des dévouements admirables dans le prolétariat allemand. Il n'a pas, historiquement, une tradition, révolutionnaire. Ce n'est pas lui qui a conquis sur les barricades le suffrage universel. Il l'a reçu d'en haut, et si on ne peut pas penser à l'arracher à ceux qui l'ont conquis eux-mêmes, puisqu'il leur serait aisé de le reconquérir, on peut, au contraire, penser à retirer d'en haut ce qu'on avait donné d'en haut." VIe Congrès Socialiste International, tenu à Amsterdam du 14 au 20 août 1904. Compte rendu analytique publié par le Bureau Socialiste International, p.79.
60. La Voix du Peuple, no.271, 24-31 décembre 1905.
61. For example, see La Voix du Peuple (rubrique 'A l'extérieur'), No. 219, 25 décembre 1904 - 1 janvier 1905 (Switzerland), No. 232, 26 mars - 2 avril 1905 (Belgium), No. 223, 22-29 janvier 1905 (Italy), No. 272, 1-7 janvier 1906 (Belgium).
62. La Voix du Peuple, No. 243, 11-18 juin 1905. This quotation is backed up by Paul Barthel, Handbuch der deutschen Gewerkschaftskongresse, Dresden, Verlag Kaden & Comp., 1916, p.130. Barthel says that Bömelberg condemned "anarchists and people without experience in the economic struggle".
63. La Voix du Peuple, No. 257, 17-24 septembre 1905.
64. La Voix du Peuple, No. 315, 21-28 octobre 1906.
65. See Footnote 50.
66. La Voix du Peuple, No. 277, 4-11 février 1906.
67. Ibid.

- 68 . Quoted in Edouard Dolléans, op. cit., p.131.
69. See Dolléans, op. cit., p.131; also Bruce Vandervort's biography of Victor Griffuelhes in Jean Maitron, Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier, Part Three, "1871-1914. De la Commune à la Grande Guerre" (Vols. 10-15), Paris, Editions Ouvrières, 1974. Of Griffuelhes, Vandervort says: "Ses articles montrent que son 'défensisme' vient partiellement d'une germanophobie de longue date", and "il était, après tout, un germanophobe bien connu" (p.333).
70. La Voix du Peuple, No. 277, 4-11 février 1906.
71. Vorwärts, 14.10.1906.
72. Correspondenzblatt, Nr.42, 20 Oktober 1906, p.731.
73. La Voix du Peuple, No. 275, 21-28 janvier 1905. Other examples of this can be found in La Voix du Peuple; for instance, No. 312, octobre 1906 (special issue), publishes a translated extract from the Berlin Arbeiterzeitung: "Vraiment, il faut une certaine impudence pour vouloir me persuader que je possède une patrie"; No. 283, 18-25 mars 1906, concentrates on Franco-German solidarity, in an article entitled "Nos frères allemands", but has to look back to a meeting at the international exhibition in Chicago in 1871 for a concrete example of this.
74. Jean Maitron, Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier, cit., p.133 (on Keufer).
75. La Voix du Peuple, No. 17, 24-31 mars 1901.
76. XIVe Congrès National Corporatif (VIIIe de la Confédération), Bourges, 12-20 septembre 1904. Compte rendu des travaux, p.153.
77. Bourges, 1904, Compte rendu, p.178. The speaker is Luquet.
78. Ibid., p.164.
79. Correspondenzblatt, Nr.44, 3 November 1906.
80. Ibid.
81. Quoted in Schorske, op. cit., p.72.
82. Maitron, Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier, cit., p.332.
83. XVe Congrès national corporatif (IXe de la Confédération), Amiens, 8-16 octobre 1906. Rapport du Comité confédéral, p.5.
84. Amiens, 1906, Compte rendu, p.94.
85. Ibid., p.95.

86. Ibid., p.94 (Bousquet).
87. Ibid., p.96.
88. Ibid., p.98.
89. Ibid.
90. La Voix du Peuple, No. 292, 13-20 mai 1906.
91. La Voix du Peuple, No. 364, 29 septembre - 6 octobre 1907.
92. Ibid.
93. See Report of the Fifth International Conference of the Secretaries of the National Trade Union Centres, 15 & 16 September, Christiania, p.1. The French version of the report gives a slightly different attendance list, omitting Holland, Belgium and Denmark; the reason for this is unclear.
94. Fourth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1906, published 1908, Berlin, p.31.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., p.15.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Wayne Westergard-Thorpe, "Revolutionary Syndicalist Internationalism, 1913-1939. The origins of the International Working Men's Association", Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979, p.41.
101. Report of Christiania conference, p.4.
102. Ibid., p.7.
103. Ibid., p.9.
104. Ibid., p.10.
105. Ibid., p.11.
106. Ibid., p.12.
107. Ibid.
108. This is evident in coverage by La Voix du Peuple of events abroad in 1907-1908.

109. VIIe Congrès Socialiste International, tenu à Stuttgart, 16-24 août 1907. Compte rendu analytique publié par le Bureau Socialiste International, Brussels, 1908, p.192.

110. Ibid., p.193.

111. Ibid., p.214.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., p.365.

114. Ibid., p.202.

115. This was Legien's customary tactic, and he treated all political dissidents, whatever their tendency, in the same way; see John A. Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, cit., Vol. I, p.240, referring to the Communists in 1918: "All actions undertaken against the policy of the Generalkommission were to be seen in the anarcho-syndicalist tradition of the earlier Localists."

116. La Voix du Peuple, No. 364, 29 septembre - 6 octobre 1907.

117. Ibid.

118. La Voix du Peuple, No. 363, 27-29 septembre 1907.

119. Ibid.

120. La Voix du Peuple, No. 366, 13-20 octobre 1907.

121. Victor Griffuelhes, L'Action Syndicaliste, Paris, Rivière, 1908: "La finale de ce texte de la résolution de Christiania dit clairement à la France ouvrière: 'Changez la tactique affirmée au récent Congrès ouvrier d'Amiens, et qui provient de la tendance donnée à votre mouvement syndical! Allez dans les Congrès politiques internationaux pour collaborer à la même besogne que les Partis socialistes!

"Ainsi les délégués sont pris à leur propre piège. Ils en sont réduits à produire la plus criante contradiction qui soit, c'est-à-dire proclamer à la fin d'une résolution le contraire de ce que dit la première partie." (p.63).

122. Steiner was the porte-parole in France of the Freie Gewerkschaften, and took it upon himself to promote German methods wherever possible, often to the detriment of the CGT's methods: see La Voix du Peuple, No. 404, 28 juin - 5 juillet 1908, "Centralisme contre Fédéralisme".

123. La Voix du Peuple, No. 390, 22-27 mars 1908.

124. La Voix du Peuple, No. 421, 18-25 août 1908.

125. Ibid.

126. See, for example, La Voix du Peuple, No.404, 28 juin - 5 juillet 1908, "Centralisme contre Fédéralisme", where the Freie Vereinigung is referred to as "les faibles organisations fédéralistes".

127. La Voix du Peuple, No. 372, 24 novembre - 1 décembre 1907, "Griffuelhes en Suisse".

128. La Voix du Peuple, No. 376, 22-29 décembre 1907: "De ces visites, je rapporte cette impression très nette, c'est que nos conceptions révolutionnaires pénètrent dans ces milieux, malgré les procédés employés. Procédés consistant à nous montrer sous un jour mauvais."

129. See biography of Griffuelhes in Jean Maitron, Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier, cit., p.332: "En 1907, Griffuelhes fit une série de discours en Suisse, exhortant les syndicats suisses à renverser leurs chefs sociaux-démocrates. Mais ses efforts ne portèrent que peu de fruits, la campagne n'étant pas menée aussi rigoureusement et agressivement qu'elle n'aurait pu l'être."

130. La Voix du Peuple, No. 198, 31 juillet - 7 août 1904.

131. La Voix du Peuple, No. 381, 27 janvier - 2 février 1908.

132. Sixième Congrès Socialiste International, tenu à Amsterdam, 14-20 août 1904. Compte rendu publié par le Bureau Socialiste International, Brussels, 1904, p.76.

133. Ibid., p. 77.

134. Ibid., p. 123.

135. Les Temps Nouveaux, 28 octobre 1905, "La tactique allemande".

136. Griffuelhes' speech was published as a brochure, Les Caractères du Syndicalisme français, Paris, Rivière, 1908.

137. Michels' speech was published in Le Mouvement Socialiste, No. 188, 15 juillet 1907.

138. Robert Michels, Zur Soziologie des modernen Parteiwesens, Leipzig, W. Klinkhardt, 1911.

139. La Voix du Peuple, No. 380, 19-27 sic janvier 1908.

140. Le Temps, 26 septembre 1907.

141. Le Temps, 1 juillet 1908.

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.

144. La Voix du Peuple, No.405, 5-12 juillet 1908.

145. La Voix du Peuple, No.364, 29 septembre- 6 octobre 1907.

Chapter V

1. Paul Louis, Histoire du mouvement syndical en France (2 vols.), Vol. I. (de 1781 à 1918), Paris, Librairie Valois, 1947, p. 275.

2. Victor Griffuelhes, "Dans l'Internationale", La Voix du Peuple, no. 367, 20-27 octobre 1907.

3. Jacques Julliard notes that, because of the arrests, the Marseille congress was dominated by anarchists and antimilitarists, that Merrheim later admitted that it had been a struggle to prevent the congress resolutions from being too extreme. See Julliard, "La CGT devant la guerre (1900-1914)", Le Mouvement Social, no. 49, 1964, p.47.

4. XVIe Congrès national corporatif (Xe de la CGT), Marseille, 5-12 octobre 1908, Compte rendu des travaux. Rapport du Comité confédéral, p.39.

5. Congrès de Marseille, Compte rendu, p.159.

6. The reformist Fédération des Mécaniciens was a craft federation which refused to obey CGT directives to join the industrial federation, the Fédération des la Métallurgie, the latter being predominantly revolutionary-syndicalist in outlook.

7. Congrès de Marseille, Compte rendu, p.61.

8. Ibid., p.71.

9. Niel's position may be judged by his contribution to the debate on "la patrie" published in Le Mouvement Socialiste in Autumn 1905. Whereas the majority of the replies from syndicalists were outright condemnations of militarism, patriotism and nationalism, and advocated the general strike against war, the only one to directly oppose this viewpoint and recognise the legitimacy of "la patrie" was Auguste Keufer. There were, however, notable nuances in the position of Merrheim and Niel. Merrheim placed his emphasis on deeds rather than slogans. Niel's response showed a careful and thoughtful examination of the issues involved, and concluded that a military general strike was not possible. See Le Mouvement Socialiste: nos. 160-161, août 1905 (for Niel's reply), 162-163, septembre 1905 (Keufer), 166-167, novembre 1905 (Merrheim).

10. Congrès de Marseille, Compte rendu, p.158.

11. Ibid., p.63. The Fédération du Textile was foremost among those federations in France pushing for closer ties with the socialist party. Indeed, the industrial north, where the weavers were principally based, was one of the strongholds of Guesdism and the fortunes of the Fédération du Textile were closely bound up with those of the Guesdists.

12. Ibid., p.61.

13. Ibid., p.159.

14. Ibid., p.160.

15. Jacques Julliard has noted this contradiction, pointing out that action was made conditional on cooperation with other countries, but that the resolution at the same time "traduit mieux la radicalisation des thèses de la CGT relatives au militarisme et la guerre". Op. cit., p.51. Resolution is on p.213 of Congrès de Marseille, Compte rendu.

16. Congrès de Marseille, Compte rendu, p.72.

17. Monatte Archives, quoted in Christian Gras, Alfred Rosmer et le mouvement révolutionnaire international, Paris, Maspéro, 1971, p.85.

18. B.Georges, D.Tintant, Léon Jouhaux. Cinquante ans de syndicalisme, tome I (des origines à 1921), Paris, PUF, 1962, p.22.

19. Fifth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1907, published Berlin, 1909, p.15.

20. This at least is the opinion of Christian Gras, see op. cit., p.85: "pour bien affirmer sa victoire en France". A Ministère de l'Intérieur report notes the importance of the choice of Paris as venue: "Comme on le voit, l'ordre du jour écarte encore une fois la question de l'antimilitarisme et de la grève générale, mais étant donné que la conférence se tiendra à Paris, les relations entre la C.G.T. et le Bureau international sont reprises, à la satisfaction de tous." Ministère de l'Intérieur, 16.6.09., Archives Nationales F7 13572. The CGT's own view, as expressed later, in 1925, was that the international conference took place in Paris because it was seen as the only way to bring the French federation back into the fold. The CGT's version also notes that the International Secretariat, fearing that the CGT would sabotage the conference plans, made arrangements for the conference to take place in Amsterdam if necessary. See CGT, La CGT et le mouvement syndical, Paris, Editions CGT, 1925, p.655.

21. B. Georges, D. Tintant, op. cit., p.27.

22. W. Schevenels, op. cit., p.41.

23. Report of the proceedings of the Sixth International

Conference of the National Trade Union Centres, Paris, August 30 & 31, September 1 1909. From Sixth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1908, published Berlin, 1910, p.21.

24. Report, p.20.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p.22.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p.23.

29. Ibid.

30. See Report, pp.25-29.

31. Report, p.27.

32. Ibid.

33. Schevenels, op. cit., p.26. This is a slightly different version from that given in Report (p.31) - probably simply a better translation.

34. Report, p.32.

35. La Petite République, 1 septembre 1909.

36. L'Humanité, 1 septembre 1909, gives a more detailed account of the French speeches. See also Report, p.32.

37. Report, p.33.

38. Report, p.34.

39. See L'Humanité, 1 septembre 1909.

40. L'Humanité, 1 septembre 1909. A Ministère de l'Intérieur report suggests that Legien's speeches were softened in French press reporting, noting of Hueber and Legien that "ils ont littéralement bafoué Yvetot." Ministère de l'Intérieur, 1.9.09. Archives Nationales, F7 13573. While it is true that much was made in L'Humanité and other papers of Legien's softened attitude and that in fact many of Legien's speeches directly criticised the French, nevertheless it must be noted that Legien's overall attitude (rather than the words used) was a conciliatory one in comparison with that displayed at earlier conferences and with Hueber's attitude. There does not appear to have been a deliberate attempt across all sections of the French press to soften Legien's words, although the Ministère de l'Intérieur report is probably correct in the sense that newspaper reports tended to omit some of Legien's nastier remarks (which are evident in the Report).

41. Report, p.39.
42. The delegates felt that any effective measures must be dealt with in private, and therefore no record of the confidential discussions on this question exists.
43. "Les impressions du Secrétaire International", La Voix du Peuple, no.467, 5-12 septembre 1909.
44. Griffuelhes, "Syndicalisme français et syndicalisme international", Le Mouvement Socialiste, no. 218, février 1910.
45. See Report, p.38.
46. Pierre Monatte, "Le Secrétariat International contre l'internationalisme", La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.
47. Moses, especially in his article "The Trade Union Issue in German Social Democracy 1890-1900" (in Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, 19/20, December 1973, pp.1-19), has been at pains to point out that although Legien's conception of the role of labour unions rested on the exclusion of "theoretical" questions and of revolutionary socialist activity, it was not apolitical. Moses makes the distinction between "Sozialpolitik" and "politics"; Legien considered it necessary for trade unions to become involved in the former, and this entailed working with government agencies. This is in line with Gompers' conception of the role of labour, but not with socialists such as Hueber who would condemn work with the ruling classes. The distinction is an important one.
48. Monatte, La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.
49. Le Mouvement Socialiste, n. 218, février 1910.
50. La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.
51. L'Humanité, no. 1965, 3.9.09, "Après la conférence internationale".
52. Ibid.
53. See above, footnote no. 32.
54. "Generally we do not agree with the C.G.T., but we are sufficiently marxists, to understand how under the pressure of circumstances they have reached their present opinions. And as far as blacklegs are concerned, I would like to advise our British comrades to study the weekly paper of the C.G.T. and also their method of action." Report, p.38.
55. See La Revue Syndicaliste, no. 62, juillet 1909.

56. XVIIe Congrès national corporatif (XIe de la CGT), Toulouse, 3-10 octobre 1910. Compte rendu des travaux, p.187.
57. See Report, pp.20-21. Spanish workers were on strike as a protest against conscription.
58. Griffuelhes, Le Mouvement Socialiste, No. 218, février 1910.
59. La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.
60. Quoted in an article by Pierre Monatte, La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.
61. Monatte, *ibid.*
62. A. Pratelle, "A propos d'un projet d'Internationale ouvrière", Les Temps Nouveaux, 23.7.10.
63. Congrès de Toulouse, 1910, Compte rendu. Rapport du Comité confédéral, p.27.
64. See Lorwin, *op. cit.*, p.118.
65. *Ibid.*, p.119.
66. See Georges, Tintant, *op. cit.*, p.112.
67. Paul Frederick Brissenden, The I.W.W. A study of American syndicalism, New York, Columbia University, 1920, p.273, gives an account of this visit, and notes that the AFL was particularly displeased that the CGT had met the IWW delegate.
68. La Voix du Peuple, no. 460, 18-25 juillet 1909.
69. Jouhaux, "Ce que peut être dans l'avenir l'action internationale", La Voix du Peuple, no. 465, 22-29 août 1909.
70. See, for example, M. Pierrot, "A propos de la Conférence internationale", Les Temps Nouveaux, 18.9.09.
71. Les Temps Nouveaux, 13.11.09.
72. La Vie Ouvrière, 20.12.09.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Samuel Gompers, Labor in Europe and America, New York, Harper, 1910, p.138.
75. *Ibid.*, p.139.
76. *Ibid.*, p.136.
77. *Ibid.*, p.130.

78. Ibid., p.71.

79. Ibid., p.49.

80. Ibid., p.51.

82. In particular they feared a last-minute refusal from Legien. Indeed, Legien wrote to the CGT to express his view that the meeting would be unnecessary, but the situation in Spain, where labour and socialist opposition to conscription was met with repression by the government, provided the example which the CGT could use to demonstrate the urgency of concerted international action. See Ministère de l'Intérieur report, 9.8.09. Archives Nationales F7 13573. (The preparations for the International conference and meeting were watched closely by police spies within the CGT.)

83. L'Humanité, 2 septembre 1909.

84. La Petite République, 2 septembre 1909.

85. L'Humanité, 2 septembre 1909, La Voix du Peuple, no. 468, 12-19 septembre 1909.

86. See, for example, Dieter Groh, Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus, cit.

87. La Petite République, 2 septembre 1909.

88. La Voix du Peuple, no. 468.

89. Ibid.

90. This at least was the view of the French government, as is evidenced by the interest taken by the police and the Ministère de l'Intérieur in the meeting. See Archives Nationales F7 13573 which has extensive reports and press cuttings on the meeting.

91. La Voix du Peuple, no. 468.

92. Jules Durand was the revolutionary syndicalist secretary of the newly-formed Syndicat des charbonniers du Havre. In August 1910 the union went on strike against further mechanisation and for higher pay. During the strike, a blackleg was killed and four strikers arrested and tried for his murder. It was also claimed that Durand had instigated the killing, and in November 1910 Durand was sentenced to death (while those responsible for the act were sent to prison). A massive campaign was conducted on Durand's behalf, both in France and internationally through the efforts of Ben Tillett and the International Dock Workers' Federation, and in January 1911 the sentence was commuted to 7 years' solitary confinement. In February 1911 Durand was set free, but he was not proclaimed innocent until 1918. Durand died insane in 1926.

93. See La Voix du Peuple, no. 533, 11-18 décembre 1910, "La loi du Talion".
94. See correspondence with Legien on this, Archives Nationales F7 13573.
95. Congrès de Toulouse, Compte rendu, p.3.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid, p.37.
98. La Voix du Peuple, no. 563, 9-16 juillet 1911.
99. La Voix du Peuple, no. 564, 16-23 juillet 1911 (editorial: "Notre voyage à Berlin" by Jouhaux).
100. La Bataille Syndicaliste, 22 juillet 1911.
101. La Guerre Sociale, no. 23, 7-13 juin 1911.
102. This phrase is used by Jolyon Howorth to describe relations between the Left in France and Germany prior to 1914, "The Left in France and Germany, Internationalism and War: A Dialogue of the Deaf, 1900-1914", in Eric Cahm, Vladimir Fisera (eds.), Socialism and Nationalism, Vol. II, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1979, pp.81-100.
103. The sense of the trip's importance was however boosted by the French government, which forbade naval workers to participate in the delegation and generally made a commotion about it.
104. La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 89, 24 juillet 1911.
105. La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 90, 25 juillet 1911 (editorial: "France et Allemagne").
106. La Guerre Sociale, no. 30, 26 juillet-1er août 1911.
107. La Guerre Sociale, no. 31, 2-8 août 1911.
108. Ibid. Les Temps Nouveaux mocked Merle's overnight conversion to German methods, pointing out the reformism and parliamentarism of the German labour leaders: "cette discipline n'a été obtenue qu'en étouffant toute voix indépendante, en sacrifiant les minorités révolutionnaires." (19.8.11.) L'Humanité too made fun of Merle's enthusiasm: "C'est merveilleux! ne cessait de répéter Merle qui nous accompagnait." (31.7.11.)
109. L'Humanité, 4.8.11.
110. Léon Jouhaux, "Notes inédites". Used in Georges, Tintant, op. cit., p.115.
111. La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 91, 26 juillet 1911.

112. La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 92, 27 juillet 1911.
113. Correspondenzblatt, Nr.32, 12 August 1911, p.502.
114. Telegram from Rupert to Griffuelhes, 27.7.11. Archives Nationales, F7 13572.
115. La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 92.
116. La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 95, 30 juillet 1911.
117. See Georges, Tintant, op. cit., p.116. Jouhaux remarked at the time on the presence of uniformed police officers, but even more disturbing to Jouhaux was the aggressive behaviour of some of the French delegates towards the police officers!
118. Jouhaux's speech in Berlin, 28 July 1911, published later in brochure form as "Contre la guerre", Paris, Rivière, 1913.
119. Ibid.
120. La Guerre Sociale, no. 31, 2-8 août 1911. The reference to Yvetot is not a mistake. A speech of Yvetot's was read to the audience, and the meeting applauded a statement condemning the police's treatment of Yvetot.
121. Correspondenzblatt, Nr.32, 12 August 1911.
122. See La Bataille Syndicaliste, no. 94, 29 juillet 1911: "L'idée de la grève générale en réponse à l'ordre de mobilisation a été approuvée avec enthousiasme."
123. L'Humanité, 4.8.11. Bougé reported in the same account of the meeting that, at the peace meeting, "on a senti les masses vibrer, se laisser enlever par les tirades des orateurs, et les applaudissements venaient souligner que les idées émises étaient partagées."
124. Georges, Tintant, op. cit., p.116. Taken from Jouhaux's "Notes inédites".
125. Ministère de l'Intérieur (Préfecture de Police) note, 1.8.11. Archives Nationales F7 13573.
126. Georges, Tintant, op. cit., p.114 ("Notes inédites").
127. Alphonse Merrheim, "A propos de voyage à Berlin - La menace anglaise à l'Allemagne", La Voix du Peuple, no. 566, 30 juillet-6 août 1911.
128. Ministère de l'Intérieur note, 5.8.11. Archives Nationales F7 13572.
129. René Mouriaux in his history of the CGT notes that although

Jouhaux was careful to maintain the purity of the Amiens resolution, he was by this time moving closer to the Socialist Party, a rapprochement which was marked by the CGT's participation in SFIO meetings in November 1912. Mouriaux, La CGT, Paris, Seuil, 1982, p.45.

130. See Ministère de l'Intérieur note, 5.8.11., Archives Nationales F7 13572.

131. Tom Mann in the Industrial Syndicalist, vol. I, no. I, July 1910, pp.18-19.

132. La Voix du Peuple, no. 507, 12-19 juin 1910.

133. According to L'Humanité's estimate. La Voix du Peuple claimed there were too many in the crowd to count.

134. La Voix du Peuple, n. 568, 13-20 août 1911.

135. L'Humanité, 5.8.11.

136. La Voix du Peuple, n. 568.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid.

141. La Voix du Peuple, no. 569, 20-27 août 1911.

142. L'Humanité, 7.8.11.

143. La Voix du Peuple, no. 569.

144. Appleton and O'Grady (England), Jouhaux and Yvetot (France), Bergmans (Belgium), Oudegeest (Netherlands), Carl F. Madsen and Carl Gran (Denmark), Arvid Thorberg (Sweden), Legien and Johann Sassenbach (Germany), Hueber and Franz Rautenkranz (Austria), F. Rauscher (Bosnia-Herzegovina), S. Jaszai and K. Teszarsz (Hungary), W. Bukseg (Croatia), D. Laptschewitsch and D. Tucovitsch (Servia), J. Sakasoff and G.Karpousoff (Bulgaria), G. Christesco (Roumania), Huggler (Switzerland), D'Arragona (Italy), Barrio (Spain), James Duncan (USA). There were also three delegates from the rival Bulgarian centre, Georg Dimitrow, W. Kolarow and I. Grantschew, and Foster of the IWW. Increased membership had brought an increase in administrative work, resulting in the appointment of an assistant/translator to Legien, A. Baumeister.

145. Eighth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1910, published Berlin 1911-1912, International Secretary's report, p.18.

146. Report, p.20.
147. Report, p.21.
148. Report, p.21.
149. See O'Grady's intervention, Report, p.21.
150. Report, p.21.
151. Report, p.22.
152. Report, p.23.
153. Ibid.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.
156. Report, p.34.
157. Ibid.
158. See Report, p.34.
159. Report, p.35.
160. Report, p.36.
161. Ibid.
162. The full text of the resolution reads:
- "a) The international secretariat shall only then take part in any appeal for monetary help, if at the same time, several trade or industrial federations of a country are engaged in industrial disputes, and if the necessary funds cannot be raised in this country alone nor by the international trade federations to which the unions engaged in the struggle are affiliated.
- "b) An international appeal shall only be issued by the secretariat, if the following conditions have been complied with:
1. The national centre to which the federation in want of help is affiliated, should forward a formal demand with full explanations, to the affiliated secretariat. This demand must contain: a brief report on the cause and development of the dispute and a review of the numerical and financial strength of the unions in want of assistance.
 2. These organisations must be affiliated to some national centre represented at the international secretariat, if this should not be impossible on account of the political situation in that particular country.
 3. Organisations applying for such help must be affiliated to their respective international trade federation and should, first of all apply to these federations for assistance.

4. International assistance shall only be continued in the case of those organisations, which regularly provide the International Secretariat with information as to the development of the movement, undertake to publish a financial report on the movement, after the dispute has been settled.

"c) The international secretariat shall issue an appeal for help if the conditions sub b) have been complied with. The letter of appeal addressed to the national centres should contain: a brief statement as to the reasons for the appeal, the advice of the international secretariat and further, as far as this may be possible, suggestions as to the manner in which best to conform with the desires of the applicants.

"d) It shall be incumbent upon the international secretariat to keep those centres, who favorably reply to the appeal, constantly or from time to time informed as to the actual situation of the movement, and to see that in every case a financial report on the cost of the movement be submitted, as soon as possible, to those national centres." Report, pp.26-27

163. Huitième congrès Socialiste International, Copenhague, 28 août-3 septembre 1910. Compte rendu analytique, BSI, p.163. That this subject should have arisen at an International socialist Congress is interesting, since the appeal for solidarity and strike aid had already been claimed as being within the competence of the ISNTUC. Both the Belgian and Swedish Socialist Parties requested the intervention of the ISB to coordinate strike appeals. Branting, for Sweden, specified that this did not constitute an attack on the ISNTUC's autonomy: "Notre but n'est pas de faire trancher par le congrès des questions purement syndicales. Cela est du ressort du Secrétariat International Syndical de Berlin. Mais nous croyons qu'il serait bon que le Congrès indiquât la marche à suivre pour les autres pays." (pp.162-163) Nevertheless, this discussion did, by the fact that it took place at all, imply that the socialist parties had some guiding role to play. Huggler, who presented the motion at budapest, had been the rapporteur of the session at copenhagen on this question. The French may therefore have regarded Huggler's proposal as having been inspired by the Socialist International, and this may help to explain their hostility towards it.

164. Report, p.28.

165. The question of finance was a major weapon for the reformists in France. The Fédération du Livre was the only federation which possessed any kind of financial strength. Geary has noted that in 1900 the annual income of the Fédération du Livre was 10 times greater than that of all the unions in the CGT combined. See Dick Geary, European Labour Protest, London, Croom Helm, 1981, p.100.

166. L'Humanité, 15.8.11.

167. This was proposed by Oudegeest for the Netherlands and Belgium. See Report, p.30.

168. XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif (XIIe de la CGT), Le Havre, 16-23 septembre 1912. Compte rendu des travaux. Rapport du Comité confédéral, p.13.

169. La Voix du Peuple, no.570, 27 août- 3 septembre 1911. The reference to events in London is an allusion to the upsurge of strike activity from 1910 onwards, especially the railway strike.

Chapter VI

1. See above, Chapter IV, p.205.

2. See Julliard, art. cit., p.52. Julliard stresses the CGT's closeness to Hervé during the earlier period of "antimilitarisme total" up to 1908, hence the significance of the later, repeated and direct attacks against Hervé's group, especially round 1912.

3. Some observers at the time, and historians since then, associate this phase with a "crise du syndicalisme révolutionnaire". See for example Dolléans, op. cit., p.151f.

4. Julliard, art.cit., p.52.

5. Nicholas Papayanis, Alphone Merrheim. The emergence of reformism in revolutionary syndicalism 1871-1925, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff, 1985, p.xi. Papayanis writes of the "central contradiction between [Merrheim's] revolutionary theory and reformist practice".

6. Ibid., p.xii.

7. See Merrheim in La Vie Ouvrière, 5.1.11: "Nous nous trouvons à la veille d'un gigantesque conflit européen." Merrheim, together with Delaisi, a middle-class intellectual who was an expert on industrial conglomerations and who also wrote for La Guerre Sociale, had regular articles in La Bataille Syndicaliste detailing the extent of commercial rivalry in the colonies.

8. In particular, German reluctance to join in international activities, demonstrated during the Casablanca crisis in 1908, was behind Vaillant's resolution authorising emergency meetings of the ISB on the suggestion of a single national section. See Jolyon Howorth, "The Left in France and Germany, Internationalism and War: A dialogue of the deaf 1900-1914", in Socialism and Nationalism (ed. Eric Cahm and Vladimir C. Fisera), Vol. II, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1979, pp.91-2.

9. See Douglas J. Newton, British Labour, European Socialism and the Struggle for Peace 1889-1914, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985, p.246.

10. See Haupt, Socialism and the Great War, cit., pp.46-47.

11. See Haupt, Socialism and the Great War, cit., p.48. Police

estimates of the Berlin meetings gave a figure of 50,000-60,000 participants, whilst Vorwärts claimed 200,000.

12. See La Bataille Syndicaliste, 17.9.11, "Il y a quelque chose de changé en Allemagne", in which Charles Rupert argued that the SPD had acted only because driven by the trade union movement and ultimately by the French trade union movement, especially after the Berlin delegation.

13. This was the message of Jouhaux's article in La Bataille Syndicaliste, 13.9.11, "Contre la guerre. La tradition ouvrière", in which the fundamental desire of workers of all countries to oppose war was stressed.

14. See, for example, La Bataille Syndicaliste, 22.9.11: "Ce que 400.000 travailleurs allemands ont librement pu faire il y a quinze jours dans l'empire du Kaiser, la classe ouvrière française a le devoir de faire dans la République de Caillaux."

13. Merrheim in La Bataille Syndicaliste 25.9.11. The English, for their part, had held a rally, organised jointly by the trade unions, the Labour Party and the various socialist groups, in Trafalgar Square in August 1911, with speakers from the French socialist party. German speakers were not, however, invited.

16. Account of meeting in La Bataille Syndicaliste 25.9.11. Anderson of the ILP also sent a message conveying support of English workers.

17. La Bataille Syndicaliste, 25.9.11, gives a figure of 60,000.

18. Ibid.

19. La Voix du Peuple, no.588, 31.12.11.-7.1.12, "Mauvais souvenirs, Bons espoirs". Yvetot portrays the Aéro-Parc meeting and the earlier international meeting in August 1911 as the only high spots in an otherwise gloomy year for the CGT. A similar message is conveyed by Yvetot in La Bataille Syndicaliste 31.12.11: "Cela restera une des plus belles pages du syndicalisme international. A lui seul, ce fait-là vaut la peine d'avoir vécu l'année 1911."

20. Haupt makes this contrast in Socialism and the Great War, p.48.

21. See account of the SPD congress in La Bataille Syndicaliste 12.9.11, and sarcastic references to German trade unions and the question of electoralism in La Bataille Syndicaliste 13.9.11.

22. See discussion on the question of the SPD and national interests in La Bataille Syndicaliste 12.12.11 and 25.12.11.

23. La Bataille Syndicaliste 25.9.11.

24. La Voix du Peuple no.574 24.9.-1.10.11.

25. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.10.11.
26. See above, pp.279-289, on the Marseille congress.
27. Brécy gives a total of 130 organisations represented: 41 Fédérations, 2 Syndicats, 87 Unions ou Bourses. He has 119 votes for the resolution and 5 against, whereas La Bataille Syndicaliste gives 111 for, 5 against and 3 abstentions. See Brécy, op. cit., p.76, and La Bataille Syndicaliste 2.10.11. The main objection to this presentation of unanimity is that the number of delegates present was much lower than the number of organisations represented, most of the delegates representing at least two different organisations. The margin between the votes thus appears to be much wider than it actually was.
28. La Bataille Syndicaliste 2.10.11.
29. The CGT was hoping to make the local bases stronger by uniting Syndicats and Bourses in Unions; the most successful of these was the Union des Syndicats de la Seine.
30. See Julliard, art. cit., p.57, on this question of "dégagement des responsabilités", an important part of the "rectification du tir" process.
31. La Bataille Syndicaliste 28.9.11, "Salutaire accalmie".
32. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.10.11.
33. See Julliard, art. cit., p.57.
34. La Bataille Syndicaliste, 2.10.11. French miners were an important part of the International Miners' Federation, one of the few trade internationals which had its headquarters outside Germany. At the International Miners' Congress in 1910, the French delegation tried to have the question of the general strike in opposition to war discussed, but were blocked by the Germans. The majority of the English federation were also in favour of the general strike against war, particularly Smillie, who was also President of the international organisation. Only the Germans prevented the International Miners' Federation from taking a more militant stance against war. See Newton, op. cit., p.277.
35. Harmel in La Bataille Syndicaliste 5.6.12.
36. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.4.12, "La vague nationaliste".
37. Harmel, "Guerre à la guerre!", in La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.5.12.
38. Yvetot in La Bataille Syndicaliste, 28.9.11.
39. Aernoult died in July 1909 in military prison in North Africa, having been physically abused by superior officers.

Another prisoner, Rousset, who denounced the conditions leading to Aernoult's death was himself accused of various crimes and taken before the Conseil de guerre. This flagrant example of bad conditions and corruption in the North African battalions spurred a vigorous campaign on the part of workers' organisations. Aernoult's funeral was transformed into a mass demonstration against militarism. Rousset was cleared two years later.

40. See Leroy, op. cit., p.817.

41. At the Le Havre congress, for once, there was agreement with Péricat's view (Fédération du Bâtiment) that: "L'antimilitarisme est indissolublement lié à la question syndicale." (Account of congress in La Voix du Peuple no.628).

40. These terms are used by Julliard in art. cit.

42. See Leroy, op. cit., p.818. Merrheim's efforts to dissociate the CGT from deserters may of course have been directly influenced by the effects of the Berry-Millerand law.

43. La Bataille Syndicaliste 20.8.12, "Notre position", signed by Jouhaux, Griffuelhes, Voirin, Savoie, Bled. This text is also referred to as "L'Encyclique syndicaliste".

44. See La Bataille Syndicaliste, 4.2.11 and 15.12.11.

45. See la Voix du Peuple, 21-28.1.12 on this exchange.

46. XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif (XIIe de la CGT), Le Havre, 16-23 septembre 1912, Compte rendu des travaux, p.2. La Voix du Peuple no.627 29.9.-6.10.12 and La Bataille Syndicaliste 17.9.12 give shortened versions. Leroy, op. cit., p.818, notes that even Le Temps quoted the speech at more length.

47. Compte rendu, p.2. Again, this section does not appear in the syndicalist press reports.

48. Compte rendu, p.2.

49. One of Jouhaux's priorities was indeed the question of organisation. At the Le Havre congress, it was decided that the Bourses should be gradually transformed into Unions and federated into Unions départementales. This involved changing art.3 of the CGT's statutes and laid down a triple obligation for Syndicats: membership of the Fédération d'Industrie, membership of the Union locale or Union départementale, and subscription to La Voix du Peuple. At the same congress in 1912, membership fees were raised.

50. In particular, the Germans were annoyed by a sarcastic reference made in La Bataille Syndicaliste 10.4.12 to Legien's trip to the United States where, it was claimed, the German labour leader had dined with mayors, governors, capitalists and even millionaires. Sassenbach went to the Le Havre congress armed

with a note from Legien in his own defence.

51. La Bataille Syndicaliste 18.9.12.

52. La Bataille Syndicaliste 19.9.12.

53. La Voix du Peuple 7.-14.10.12.

54. The vote was 1028 in favour, with 34 against and 12 abstentions, according to Compte rendu p.XLVI.

55. La Bataille Syndicaliste 15.10.12, "Contre la guerre. Le rôle de la C.G.T."

56. Ibid. Reference to the First International was nothing new for the CGT, but the year 1912 saw renewed attempts to claim the First International as the true international organisation, in opposition to the Second International, and to promote the view that the CGT alone represented the true International. See for example James Guillaume's article in La Bataille Syndicaliste 5.4.12, in which he referred to "le rôle historique de la C.G.T., seule continuatrice et héritière, en France, de la grande Internationale."

57. "Guerre à la guerre!", published in La Bataille Syndicaliste 18.10.12. and La Voix du Peuple 20.-27.10.12.

58. Ibid. The appeal to "l'Internationale ouvrière" refers, evidently, not to the International Secretariat but more generally to the organised proletariat of all countries. The CGT often used the term in this sense.

59. Account of this meeting in La Voix du Peuple no.635 24.11.-1.12.12.

60. The Comité confédéral's decisions were summed up in La Bataille Syndicaliste 17.10.12:

"le Comité a décidé d'engager une campagne d'agitation dans le pays, avec le concours des Bourses du Travail, à l'effet de préparer la classe ouvrière à une action énergique contre toute guerre éventuelle.

"Il a chargé le Bureau confédéral d'organiser une démonstration internationale contre la guerre, à Paris, comme celles qui eurent lieu l'année dernière à Berlin et en Espagne et comme celle qui se tint à Londres en 1900, lors du conflit franco-anglais.

"Le bureau confédéral est également chargé de s'aboucher avec les organisations étrangères pour que des démonstrations semblables à celle de Paris s'organisent le même jour à Vienne, à Berlin et à Londres, avec le concours de délégués français."

61. La Bataille Syndicaliste 3.11.12.

62. This letter, and that of Hueber, are reproduced in La Bataille Syndicaliste 11.11.12, and La Voix du Peuple no.634 17.-

24.11.12, and La Vie Ouvrière no.76 20.11.12.

63. Account of Comité confédéral meeting of 30.10.12 in La Voix du Peuple no.635 24.11.-1.12.12. All quotations from meeting are taken from this source.

64. For example, an account of a Comité confédéral meeting in La Bataille Syndicaliste 13.11.12 shows that a formal proposal from the socialist party, to organise a joint demonstration against war, was rejected on the basis of the Amiens and Le Havre congress decisions. That this incident was evidently meant as an example to the socialist party, and a formal indication of the CGT's position, is reflected in the publication of the discussion in the press.

65. La Bataille Syndicaliste 14.11.12. Jouhaux himself spoke at the 17 November meeting.

66. Ibid. The use of the word "souplesse" is interesting, as it is not a term usually associated with the CGT public image.

67. The timing of this congress could not have been entirely fortuitous, coinciding as it did exactly with an extraordinary congress of the Socialist International in Basle to discuss anti-war measures. Although the CGT did not wish to ignore the Basle meeting (it was reported in La Bataille Syndicaliste 25.11.12), it clearly wanted to assert its own autonomy, and used the occasion to make a clear distinction, as with the French socialists' meeting on 17 November, between socialist activities (which the CGT supported but which formed only part of the overall picture) and the CGT's activities, which represented the whole of the working class.

68. Kriegel, Becker, op. cit., p.16.

69. See La Bataille Syndicaliste 14.-17, 19.-25.11.12. The same articles are grouped together in La Voix du Peuple nos.634 and 635, 17.-24.11.12 and 24.11.-1.12.12.

70. Jouhaux in La Bataille Syndicaliste 23.11.12.

71. La Voix du Peuple no.636 1.-8.12.12.

72. La Bataille Syndicaliste 23.11.12.

73. See, for example, La Bataille Syndicaliste 17.11.12, in which Jouhaux spelt out the procedure to follow: réunions corporatives, then meetings locaux, then démonstrations régionales. He also outlined the standpoint to take: "L'orientation doit aller contre la possibilité de guerre, le langage doit exprimer la nécessité d'un acte devenu indispensable, l'objectif est de rendre impossible tout conflit meurtrier." Jouhaux also stipulated the necessity of a one-day strike at this point, well before the congress was to decide on the question.

74. La Bataille Syndicaliste 25.11.12.
75. La Bataille Syndicaliste 26.11.12.
76. Ibid.
77. Julliard, art. cit., p.53.
78. La Voix du Peuple no.636 1.-8.12.12.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. La Bataille Syndicaliste 27.11.12.
82. Jouhaux in La Bataille Syndicaliste 16.11.12.
83. Ibid.
84. See Jouhaux in La Bataille Syndicaliste 26.11.12: "La grève de 24 heures sera un avertissement au gouvernement."
85. See Kriegel, Becker, op. cit., p.16.
86. Jouhaux in La Bataille Syndicaliste 17.12.12.
87. La Bataille Syndicaliste 16.7.13.
88. Ibid.
89. See La Bataille Syndicaliste 17.7.13: "Sans rien abdiquer des responsabilités prises dans les événements, la conférence, par un ordre du jour nullement équivoque, a affirmé sa volonté de voir la C.G.T.continuer son oeuvre sociale, tout en restant maîtresse de l'heure et du moment de son action."
90. See for example La Bataille Syndicaliste 23.8.13, "L'opinion des militants". The Comité confédéral replied in its own defence on 27.8.13.
91. La Bataille Syndicaliste 7.12.12. See also Jouhaux's evaluation of the 1912 extraordinary congress in which he says that the resolutions taken, as well as being revolutionary in spirit, were also "vraiment humaines au sens le plus noble du mot, puisqu'elles tendent à empêcher par tous les moyens une boucherie internationale où disparaîtraient par centaines de milliers les vies humaines, et les libertés péniblement acquises et les progrès lentement réalisés." (La Bataille Syndicaliste 27.7.12.)
92. See La Bataille Syndicaliste 2.3.13.
93. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.3.13.

94. La Bataille Syndicaliste 4.11.12.
95. La Vie Ouvrière no.83 5.3.13.
96. Guillaume in La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.4.13.
97. La Bataille Syndicaliste 23.8.13. The description follows a list of resolutions against war taken by the First International.
98. Jouhaux in La Bataille Syndicaliste 30.8.13. He had just returned from England, where he had represented France at the annual TUC and at the GFTU annual conference.
99. Jouhaux, "Les mineurs anglais et l'action directe", in La Bataille Syndicaliste 17.3.12.
100. La Bataille Syndicaliste 30.8.13.
101. See above, Chapter V, pp.309-311.
102. La Bataille Syndicaliste 5.11.11, "Une nouvelle Internationale Syndicale".
103. Account of Comité confédéral meeting in La Voix du Peuple no 635. Bourderon regretted that the CGT had not actively sought links with revolutionary syndicalists abroad at an earlier date.
104. Rupert in La Bataille Syndicaliste 30.1.13, commenting on the Ninth International Report of the Trade Union Movement. Rupert concentrated on those sections of the labour movement not involved in the International Secretariat, for example, the IWW, the largest part of the English trade union movement, etc.
105. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.3.13 and La Vie Ouvrière no.82 20.2.13.
106. Tom Mann's resolution read:
"Whereas cases of international importance are getting every day more numerous, the work of the Trade Unionists of all countries should be co-ordinated, and an international policy decided upon;
"Whereas war is the greatest calamity that could befall the international working class movement, it is most urgent that common action should be decided upon by the workers of all countries;
"This Conference calls upon the I.S.E.L. to convene an International Syndicalist Congress to be held in London as soon as possible." (See account of the ISEL conferences in The Syndicalist, December 1912.
107. See La Bataille Syndicaliste 3.3.13.
108. La Vie Ouvrière no.82 20.2.13.
109. Ibid.

110. See for example La Vie Ouvrière no.85 5.4.13, no.95 5.9.13, no.96 20.9.13.

111. La Vie Ouvrière no.85 5.4.13.

112. L'Humanité 4.3.13.

113. The CGT leadership was criticised in Les Temps Nouveaux for its failure to support the English initiative, and the argument constantly used by the CGT against the Germans - that the leadership was out of touch with its more militant rank and file - was here used against the Comité confédéral. See Les Temps Nouveaux 27.9.13.

114. See De Ambris in La Vie Ouvrière 5.4.13: "[...] il est temps pour le syndicalisme révolutionnaire de cesser de n'être qu'une mode française (comme nos ennemis en Italie le prétendent), et de devenir une affirmation internationale."

115. See De Ambris' sarcastic comments in La Vie Ouvrière no.95 5.9.13: "A moins que les camarades de France ne considèrent le secrétariat réformiste de Berlin comme l'Eglise unique et universelle, seule dépositaire de l'absolue vérité syndicale, indiscutable, suprême et éternelle, hors de laquelle il n'est pas de salut." After the congress, the Spanish syndicalist J.-S. Duque wrote an article in Les Temps Nouveaux 18.10.13, which accused the French of wanting to sabotage any attempt to undermine the International Secretariat.

116. See for example La Bataille Syndicaliste 6.8.13.

117. See La Vie Ouvrière 20.10.13: "Nous avons été bons prophètes."

118. The Germans and Dutch, although representing fewer members than the Italians and the other groups, insisted that the vote be taken on the basis of number of delegates. The German and Dutch delegates were of course more numerous than the Italians. This was the subject of acrimony, especially when deciding on the headquarters for the new international body which had been decided by the congress. Because of the system of voting, Holland was chosen against the wishes of the majority of countries. According to Alfred Rosmer, writing for La Vie Ouvrière (20.10.13), De Ambris had then threatened to set up an international organisation without the Germans and Dutch, to which a German delegate, Roche, replied that the Germans and Dutch would establish their own International. See also The Syndicalist's self-critical evaluation of the congress (Vol. II, no.5, December 1913). For a more extensive examination of the preparation for and the work of the international revolutionary-syndicalist congress of September 1913, see Wayne Westergard-Thorpe, "Revolutionary Syndicalist Internationalism, 1913-1939. The origins of the International Working Men's Association", Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1979.

119. Westergard-Thorpe, 1979 Ph.D. diss., p.47.
120. La Bataille Syndicaliste 13.9.13.
121. See Schevenels, op. cit., pp.55-62, for complete list.
122. See Douglas J. Newton, British Labour, European Socialism and the Struggle for Peace 1889-1914, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985, pp.90-91. He quotes Ben Tillet of the Dockworkers' Union as complaining that the transfer of the International Transport Workers' Federation headquarters to Berlin in 1904 was "undemocratic and calculated to retard and repel British organisations from affiliations" (p.90). Similarly, John Hodge said of the International Metal Workers' Federation that "it became evident that the Germans would never be satisfied until the headquarters were situated in Germany" (p.90). Schevenels, op. cit., p.35, notes that the French and Dutch contested the limitations of the trade secretariats from the outset, even before German domination became a fait accompli.
123. See Rupert's analysis of the International Report and of Legien's invitation to the trade secretariats in La Bataille Syndicaliste 30.1.13.
124. See, for example, account of French preparation for the International Building Workers' Conference in Jena, in La Bataille Syndicaliste 8.1.13.
125. See Prochaska, op. cit., p.122, and Pelling, op. cit., p.147, on the way in which the TUC, under pressure from the Miners' Federation, began to edge out the GFTU in the international arena.
126. The number of affiliated countries stayed at 19, with a total membership of 7,702,368. All countries except Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia had seen an increase in membership figures. See Tenth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, 1912, published Berlin, 1913, p.7.
127. Report of the Eighth International Conference of the Secretaries of National Trade Union Centres, 16-18 September 1913, Zurich, in Tenth International Report of the Trade Union Movement, p.32. It must be noted that the publication of a bulletin represented a considerable step forward for the international movement; the Socialist International, for its part, had no such bulletin.
128. Report, p.33. The resolution was carried, but qualified by an explanation by Legien that the scheme would be carried out on a provisional basis in order to test its validity.
129. Report, .21.
130. See Report, pp.37-38.

131. See Report, pp.44-46.

132. Dumoulin's report in La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13. Rosmer in La Bataille Syndicaliste 19.9.13 gives exactly the same wording, whilst the English translation of the speech, Report p.33, gives a fairly accurate if truncated account.

133. The French versions render Hueber's intervention as more severe. Dumoulin quotes Hueber as saying that the CGT's continued presentation of the motion was "une manifestation vaine et sans portée" (La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13.). Rosmer in La Bataille Syndicaliste 19.9.13 also has Hueber speaking of the French proposal as a mere "manifestation". In the official ISNTUC version of the conference, Hueber asks the conference to pass immediately over the question, while Legien speaks of international congresses as "scarcely anything more than an international demonstration" (Report, p.34).

134. See Report, p.34.

135. See Report, p.34. In French this was reported as "Union Syndicale Internationale" instead of "Fédération Syndicale Internationale". See La Bataille Syndicaliste 19.9.13, La Vie Ouvrière, also Le Mouvement Socialiste no.255-256, September-October 1913, "La VIII^e Conférence Internationale des Syndicats". This may be because the French delegates wished to distinguish between the international federation which they desired and the new organisation, which was an international federation in name only. It is clear that the choice of the title "federation" was deliberate, as this was the only name which meant something to the Americans.

136. See Report, p.41. The difference between the role and function of International Secretary (an administrative role) and those of International President (a representative/ leadership role) was not questioned at all. This is perhaps an indication of the way in which Legien had interpreted his role as secretary from the very beginning.

137. Report, p.35.

138. Ibid.

139. Report, p.36.

140. Ibid.

141. Report, p.22. The total figures for international strike aid for 1912-1913 were as follows: 80,000 Reichsmarks (Rm) (£ 4,000 for trade union reconstruction in Serbia and Bulgaria; 10,400 Rm (£520) for the Belgian general strike for universal suffrage); 8,500 Rm (£425) for the Italian federation, severely hit because of financial collapse caused by the Balkans war; 49,400 Rm (£2,470) for Dutch tobacco workers' strike. These figures are

given in Schevenels, op. cit., p.51.

142. Report, p.23.

143. See Report, p.23: "It seems to us that the reason why our contribution was not sent in at the proper time is sufficiently clear in the International Secretary's report. Those who are engaged in the labour movement should also have some knowledge of what is going on in other countries."

144. La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13 and La Bataille Syndicaliste 18.9.13:

"Hueber, selon son habitude, a quelque peu ironisé. Il a dit que les Français se préoccupaient plus d'idées que de cotisations, de mots plus que de réalisations. [...]"

"Hueber, toujours selon son habitude, a déclaré en matière de solidarité internationale, la C.G.T. se payait de mots. Mais il a été bien mal inspiré en prenant l'exemple de la grève générale belge, car il n'est pas de pays qui ait fait plus que la France pour apporter une aide effective et efficace aux ouvriers belges."

145. See Report, p.23.

146. Later, Jouhaux proposed a motion condemning government repression in France, which was voted, but only after it had been amended to include repression in all countries. The Hungarian delegate pointed out that the situation in France was relaxed in comparison with some other countries. See Report, p.37.

147. See Dumoulin in La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13: "Quand Hueber réplique, il est sensiblement moins arrogant." Rosmer (La Bataille Syndicaliste 18.9.13) also says that Jouhaux succeeded in forcing Hueber to back down somewhat.

148. Dumoulin in La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13.

149. La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13. Legien spoke of the proposed international exhibition to mark the opening of the Panama canal in 1915. The militarists and the ruling classes would all be celebrating there, so the workers should be represented there, too, argued Legien. (See Report, pp.50-51.) The decision to hold the next conference in San Francisco was a controversial one and was voted only narrowly; 10 for, 7 against, according to the official report, p.51; the French syndicalist press has the vote as 9-7, with Spain abstaining (see La Bataille Syndicaliste 20.9.13 and La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13). There was some resentment that the decision should have been taken, obviously to please the Americans, when so many centres were opposed to the idea.

150. See Report, p.40.

151. See Report, p.21.

152. Even before the discussion closed, Perkins declared that he

was quite happy just to have raised the subject and that it would suffice to put it on the agenda for the next conference. Legien had to take the debate in hand, and after this the American proposal was carried. See Report, pp.36-37.

153. La Vie Ouvrière 5.10.13.

154. La Bataille Syndicaliste 2.10.13, "Internationalisme ouvrier".

155. See La Bataille Syndicaliste's account of the meeting organised by the Union des Syndicats de la Seine on 28 January 1914 on these themes, described in the edition of 29.1.14 as "un avertissement".

156. See Mouriaux, op. cit., p.46. The demands of May Day 1914 were: "contre les trois ans et la réaction militaire, l'application des lois scélérates, les condamnations pour le Sou du Soldat, l'immoralité et la criminalité du régime capitaliste; pour la liberté de penser, de parler et d'écrire, le Sou du Soldat et [nos] oeuvres ouvrières, les soldats mutins, la réduction des heures du travail et la Semaine anglaise, affirmer [notre] idéal d'affranchissement." (La Bataille Syndicaliste 21.4.14.)

157. See Georges, Tintant, op. cit., pp.124-125. Most of the syndicalist leaders, like socialists and other revolutionary activists, were scared to sleep at home; some only went out accompanied by large dogs or even armed in some way; others, like Jouhaux himself, thought of fleeing abroad, usually to Spain.

158. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.1.14, "Au terme d'une année". Rosmer replied, in an article in the edition of 3.1.14, "Ayons confiance", that the CGT should try to draw hope from the adverse situation, since it demonstrated that syndicalism was making headway.

159. La Bataille Syndicaliste 30.6.14.

160. La Bataille Syndicaliste 13.7.14.

161. La Bataille Syndicaliste 25.7.14.

162. La Bataille Syndicaliste 26.7.14.

163. It is perhaps significant that this incident coincided with a meeting of the ISB in Brussels (29 July), convened specially to discuss the question of war. Once again, the CGT was perhaps consciously trying to show that it was the syndicalist movement, and not the socialist movement, which had to deal with such questions.

164. See Dolléans, op. cit., p.218; his version is based on that of Dumoulin. Up to this point, there is general agreement. After this point, there are differences of interpretation, Dumoulin,

for his part, insisting that " Jouhaux a simplement bu une tasse de café avec le secrétaire de la centrale allemande." Dumoulin, "Les Syndicalistes français et la guerre" (brochure, 1918), published in Alfred Rosmer, Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre. De l'union sacrée à Zimmerwald, Paris, Librairie du Travail, 1936 (appendices), p.530.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. This is Dumoulin's version as given in a letter to the Comité confédéral, summarised by Rosmer in op. cit., p.167. This is also the official account of the meeting as given by Schevenels, op. cit., p.65: "No records of these conversations exist, but from statements made later on it can be established as certain and in fact it has never been denied when reference has been made to it, that from the French side assurances were made to rouse the opposition of the working class against any mobilisation and that if Germany called for open resistance the French workers would follow. The German side expressed their determination to continue the large scale demonstrations they had already started in that country in favour of the maintenance of peace, but on the second point the German leader was evasive."

168. See Leipart, op. cit., p.101; also Varain, op. cit., p.71.

169. See Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, cit., Vol. I, p.183.

170. See John Anthony Moses, "Carl Legiens Interpretation des demokratischen Sozialismus. Ein Beitrag zur sozialistischen Ideengeschichte", Diss. Phil., Friedrich-Alexander-Universität zu Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1965, p.16: "[Legien] war sowohl ein patriotischer Bürger des deutschen Reiches als auch ein von der offiziellen Gesellschaft kaum anerkannter 'Vaterlandsloser Geselle'. [...] Die Arbeiter waren de facto Teil der Nation und diese Tatsache bestimmte weitgehend Legiens Interpretation des Sozialismus."

171. Das Correspondenzblatt 1.8.14.

172. See Lorwin, Labor and Internationalism, cit., pp.132-133.

173. La Bataille Syndicaliste 28.7.14.

174. La Bataille Syndicaliste 29.7.14.

175. On the infamous Carnet 'B', see Becker, Le Carnet B, cit.

176. See Gras, op. cit., p.101.

177. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.8.14.

178. Jouhaux's biographers, Georges and Tintant, op. cit., p.132, note that the telegram was apparently sent in response to an

inquiry by Legien into the situation in France. Jouhaux later tried to claim, in 1915, that it was the CGT, and not Legien, who had taken the initiative. In the light of this, the publication of the telegram in La Bataille Syndicaliste on 1 August (when, as we shall see, the Comité confédéral had already decided, on the evening of 31 July, to abandon any plans for a general strike) may be seen as the Comité confédéral's attempt to justify its conduct for posterity.

179. La Bataille Syndicaliste, 31.7.14.

180. See Pohl and Werther, "Die freien Gewerkschaften im ersten Weltkrieg", in F. Deppe, G. Fülberth, H.-J. Harrer et al., Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung, cit., p.98.

181. See Moses, Trade Unionism in Germany, cit., Vol. I, p.189, and John L. Snell, "Socialist Unions and Socialist Patriotism in Germany, 1914-1918", in American Historical Review 1953/4, Vol. LIX, p.67.

182. La Bataille Syndicaliste 1.8.14.

183. Annie Kriegel, "Jaurès, le Parti socialiste et la C.G.T. à la fin de juillet 1914", Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes jaurésiennes, No.7, octobre-décembre 1962, pp.1-11.

184. Ibid., p.8.

185. On Malvy's decision, see Annie Kriegel, Aux origines du communisme français, Paris, Mouton, 1964, Vol.I, pp.57-58.

186. CGT congress 1918, quoted in Georges, Tintant, op. cit., p.127. The authors note that Dumoulin is not on record as having voiced opposition to the Manifeste at the time of its publication and that the criticism was therefore made in hindsight, more particularly in the light of the terrible experiences of war. The same can also be said of Dumoulin's and Jouhaux's clash over the Legien meeting in July 1914.

187. Rosmer to Monatte, 27.7.14, quoted in Gras, op. cit., p.101.

188. Savoie said as much at the CGT congress in 1918: "[...] c'était un peu de bluff, plus on prononcerait d'expressions extrêmes, mieux on réduirait le gouvernement bourgeois, on ferait reculer les gouvernements bourgeois." Quoted in Georges, Tintant, op. cit., p.134.

189. This point has been made by various historians of the German trade union movement. See Moses, "Trade Unionism in Germany", cit., pp.177-178, and Varain, op. cit., pp.70-73.

190. Paul Umbreit, Die deutschen Gewerkschaften im Weltkriege, Berlin, 1917, p.114.

191. On this, see John Anthony Moses, "Carl Legien und das

deutsche Vaterland im Weltkrieg, 1914-1918", in Geschichte und Unterricht, 1975, Vol. X, p.596.

192. See Lorwin, Labor and Internationalism, cit., p.178.

193. Quoted in full in Moses dissertation, cit., p.122. See also Sassenbach, op. cit., p.73. On the Amsterdam congress in 1919, see Report of the Proceedings of the International Trade Union Congress, held in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, July-August 1919, Amsterdam, IFTU, 1921.

194. Papayanis, op. cit., p.xiii.

Conclusion

1. See Le Mouvement Socialiste, nos. 160-161, 162-163, 166-167 (août-novembre 1905).

2. Westergard-Thorpe, dissertation cit., p.50.

3. See, for example, Theodor Leipart, "Die Stellung der Gewerkschaften in der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung", Die Arbeit, 1924, Vol.I, p.26:

"Da der Zweck aller Gewerkschaften und damit auch der Zweck aller Landeszentralen auf das gleiche Ziel errichtet ist, so bilden diese Gleichartigkeit der Ziele und gewisse übereinstimmende Prinzipien die Grundlage für die Wirksamkeit des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes."

4. See, for example, Lagardelle, in Henri Dubief, Le Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire (textes recueillis), Paris, Colin, 1969, p.116:

"Le même rôle réactionnaire que l'Allemagne impérialiste joue dans l'Europe moderne, on peut dire que la social-démocratie le tient dans le socialisme contemporain. C'est la même pesanteur dogmatique, la même peur de toute liberté, le même fétichisme de l'autorité."

5. Lefranc, Les Expériences Syndicales Internationales, cit., p.19.

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