

The two world federations represent the free workers of the world and both are actively anti-Communist. They take their stand against Communism on the ground that the all-powerful state is the enemy of freedom, including labour freedom. They are also agreed on the need for lifting the living standards of people everywhere, which they consider is the best means to counter Communist propaganda, tyranny and oppression.

Why Two Unions

A puzzle to some is why the two world anti-Communist federations of trades unions remain divided, if both are united on the basic principles of freedom and security. The origins of the division go back a half century into a Europe, unthreatened by Communism, when two vigorous schools of thought—the religious and the secular—debated the status of man and his mode of participation in human organization. The trade unions became involved in the debate and there resulted the establishment of two international federations of trade unions. However, within recent years there has come a recognition inside both groups that the mortal enemy of both internationals is world poverty, and the Communism that feeds upon human misery. Out of this recognition is developing a climate which should permit closer association between and, perhaps, unification of the two world organizations to conduct a concentrated world struggle against poverty and Communism.

The instrument of international Communism in the labour field is the World Federation of Trade Unions. This world body came into being in the closing days of the Second World War when there was not only a general weariness of war but an apparent desire in all countries to get together and work for the good of all mankind. The governments of the world were joining together in the aspiring United Nations and it was, therefore, believed by most free unions throughout the world that, if governments could find common ground for work on international problems, workers could also unite in one world trade union body to serve a common cause. The result was the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions to which most unions of all beliefs, Communist and non-Communist alike, adhered. Inside a year, however, it became obvious that the attempted fusion of opposites would not work. Free trade unionists realized that the Communist unions were not primarily interested in helping the workers of the world but in furthering the interests of communism and, by 1948, most of the free unions had left the new federation. Out of this departure of free trade unionists from the World Federation came the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions with the slogan of "Bread, Peace and Freedom". With virtually all the free unions having left the World Federation, that body is today largely representative only of what goes by the name of trade unionism in the Communist countries.

Communist unions are not free institutions dedicated to the welfare of workers. Inside Communist countries, unions are but organs of the state, used by the government to speed up production and strengthen the economy. Unions have no voice in bargaining for wages or working conditions: they must accept the wage levels and production norms set by the state. In free countries, unions controlled by Communists have as their basic function the propagation of Communist theory. The World Federation of Trade Unions, under Communist domination, is, therefore, an instrument of Communist propaganda abroad and of subjection of the workers in the Communist countries themselves.