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Victor G. Devinatz  
*Illinois State University*

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**A Cold War Thaw in the International Working Class Movement? The World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, 1967–1977**

**VICTOR G. DEVINATZ**

*ABSTRACT:* The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) emerged from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in 1949 after Western trade union affiliates in the latter organization expressed major policy differences over the Marshall Plan. For its first 20 years, the ICFTU refused all forms of collaboration with the WFTU, contending that the Federation advocated a politically monolithic Communism with its primary function being the promotion of Soviet policy. The ICFTU's position was disingenuous, given the WFTU's polycentric nature encompassing variants of Communist theory and practice dating back at least to October 1965. Moreover, even when the WFTU Secretariat condemned the August 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the ICFTU still refused cooperation. While a minor thaw between the ICFTU and the WFTU occurred during the early through the late 1970s, it was, at best, tentative, minimal and inconsequential.

**A**T THE START OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY'S second decade, with unions under attack in virtually all corners of the world, it is crucial for labor historians to try to better comprehend the history of the global obstacles to achieving working-class solidarity. Issues dividing working-class organizations remain a central issue in labor historiography that has largely been unexplored. This article attempts to understand the worldwide barriers to international working-class unity at the highest levels of global labor movements in the middle to latter part of the 20th century.

Such obstacles date to the origins of the First International (1864–1876), which sought to bring together socialist and anarchist political groups and trade unions for advancing the class struggle. After a major dispute between Marx and the anarchist Bakunin over working-class political action resulted in the expulsion of Bakunin and some of his followers in September 1872, the General Council of the First International was transferred to New York where internal disputes occupied the organization until its dissolution a few years later. The Second International (1889–1916), comprised of socialist and labor parties, crumbled during the First World War when these political parties abandoned the international proletariat and supported their own nations' war efforts (Lorwin, 1953, 13–15, 28–30).

By the late 1890s, unions in the same trades and industries throughout the world joined together in International Trade Secretariats (ITSs) to advance their interests in an increasingly globalized world. A majority of these Secretariats' national members were socialist, as were the ITSs themselves. However, most of the Secretariats' work dealt with practical concerns, emphasizing the improvement of wages and working conditions. By 1914, approximately 30 ITSs had been created, with most based in Germany (Dreyfus, 2000, 39; Windmuller, 1954, 4).

In August 1901, the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centers (ISNTUC) was established among predominantly European trade union confederations, to motivate the establishment of national federations in industrialized nations. At the group's last conference prior to World War I in 1913, the ISNTUC renamed itself the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). As with the Second International, the IFTU's work was suspended during the War when each nation's labor movement patriotically supported its own government's war efforts. The IFTU was reconstituted in 1919 after the War, as was the Second International in 1923 as the Labor and Socialist International (Goethem, 2000, 83; Dreyfus, 2000, 61; Windmuller, 1954, 8, 11).

The Russian Revolution of 1917 led to another rupture in international trade union unity. In order to promote the spread of revolution in Western Europe as well as throughout the world, the Soviet Union and other Communist Parties established the Third International (Communist International), as a vehicle in opposition to the Second International (Socialist International). Affiliated to the

Communist International were a number of subsidiary organizations, one of which was the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU), also known as the Profintern. Beginning as a trade union international which included revolutionary syndicalists as well as Communists, the Profintern increasingly came under Communist control, while the largely social-democratic unions were divided between the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) and the more established, industrially-specific federations, the ITSs. These divisions made international unity increasingly difficult (Goethem, 2006, 8; Carr, 1953, 207, 399–400).

By 1928, believing that capitalism was heading towards crisis and ready to be overthrown, the RILU called for the formation of revolutionary dual unions under Communist control, whenever and wherever this could be accomplished. However, with Nazism's rise in Germany in 1933 and the danger of fascism spreading to other European countries in 1934–1935, the Profintern advocated that the revolutionary unions be abandoned and that Communists return to the national trade union movements for building united fronts between Communists and Socialists in advancing the trade unions and defending political democracy within the industrialized capitalist nations. When an IFTU delegation visited Moscow and rejected the Red International's request for merger in November 1937, the RILU was abolished on December 27, 1937 (Tosstorff, 2003, 92).

When the allied powers achieved victory over fascism in 1945, it appeared that international trade union unity, which had been elusive between the two great wars, might actually be achieved with the founding of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in October 1945. The unity first expressed in the WFTU was short-lived. An emergent rift occurred between the Western trade union federations, led by the United States' industrial-oriented Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), and the Communist-led union federations in the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, France, Italy, Latin America and Asia.

With the increase of Cold War tensions continuing throughout the late 1940s, the Western and non-Communist-led union federations left the WFTU in 1949 and formed the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). One defining characteristic of the Confederation for the first 20 years of its existence was its adoption of virulently anti-Communist stances, combined with refusal to work with

Communist-led union federations in both socialist and capitalist countries. By taking such positions, the ICFTU's politics became aligned for all practical purposes with the practices of the anti-Communist Cold War forces.

By 1973, although the ICFTU retained its anti-Communist orientation, its positions towards the WFTU had softened a bit. At this time, because of détente and the Confederation's commitment to world peace, combined with divisions having appeared "in the monolithic structure" of the Communist nations, in the Confederation's own words — this was given as the ICFTU's major reason for the policy change — the Confederation argued that affiliates could participate with WFTU members, contingent on particular circumstances (ICFTU, 1973b, 1).

Although articles and books have been published concerning the breakup of the WFTU during the "early" Cold War period (*e.g.*, Weiler, 1981; Carew, 1984; McShane, 1992), this paper breaks new ground in dealing with the complex relationship between the WFTU and the ICFTU during the "middle" Cold War years. I will argue that the ICFTU's position was disingenuous, myopic and ultimately guided by Cold War politics, given that the WFTU was not a monolithic, but a polycentric, organization which included a number of variants of Communist theory and practice dating back at least to October 1965. Furthermore, even after the WFTU demonstrated independence from Moscow when its Secretariat *condemned* the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the ICFTU still refused collaboration in any manner with the Federation. Finally, I contend that, although the WFTU was guided by politics as was the ICFTU, its appeals to cooperating with the Confederation were class-based, aimed at aiding the working class of the capitalist nations. However, the ICFTU's anti-Communism appeared to override these class appeals, preventing the Confederation from working productively with the WFTU in any manner whatsoever.

### *A Brief History of the WFTU and the 1949 Organizational Split*

"The formation of the World Federation [of Trade Unions]," according to Victor Silverman (2000, 13), "marked a high point of the world working class movement." With Socialists and Communists joined in struggle and achieving victory over fascism in the Second

World War, the world labor movement was united for the first time in over two decades. Hope remained high that this unity could be maintained in the reconstruction of the industrial economies devastated during the war, and that the international labor movement would transform the world in labor's image. Such unity remained illusory and by mid-century two competing trade union internationals existed, each claiming to best represent the interests of the world's workers. As Silverman (2000, 13) notes, the splitting of the WFTU destroyed "the last chance for a worldwide social transformation created by the working class."

Although the self-reported role of the USSR's All Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) was that of a "transmission belt" for socialism within the Soviet state, throughout the war in Western countries there emerged a tripartite cooperation between labor, capital and the state in gearing up industry for the war effort. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom and the United States production during the Second World War served as an economic stimulus for ending the Great Depression with a concomitant increase in the power of the industrial unions. As such, it was believed that not only would labor continue to play a major role in rebuilding economies but it would also help to create liberal or social democracies in the liberated nations. Additionally, there was a commitment among trade union leaders in the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States that organized labor would play an instrumental role in encouraging world peace (Kofas, 2002, 28). It was within these hopeful conditions that the World Federation of Trade Unions was launched in Paris in October 1945.

At the founding congress, 346 delegates representing 64 million trade unionists, gathered and issued statements denouncing fascism, war, colonialism, discrimination and racism while calling for extending the rights of unions, improving working and living conditions as well as restricting and eliminating monopolies. Up to 1945, the WFTU "was the largest and most geographically extensive of any international trade union organization" (Herod, 1997, 167) that the world had seen. Although the CIO represented U. S. industrial workers, notably absent was the craft-oriented American Federation of Labor (AFL) due to its intense rivalry with the CIO, its ideological underpinnings of corporatism and business unionism, and its desire to play the leading role in any international labor grouping (Kofas, 2002, 23).

While there have been several treatments of the short history of the WFTU and the events leading up to the split, which are beyond dispute, there is disagreement over the *causes* of the rupture (Kofas, 2002; Carew, 1984; Weiler, 1981). According to Weiler (1981, 1), after the Western unions left the WFTU, these labor organizations' leaders put the entire blame on the Soviets, arguing that their aim was to use the federation to advance the Soviet Union's foreign policy interests. Additionally, the Western unions contended that while the Communist-led unions fought for objectives desired by the Soviet state, their own labor organizations were autonomous of government interference. However, archival research by international labor scholars from the 1980s through the 2000s has resulted in more nuanced positions.

Carew (1984) argues that the AFL, the TUC, the U. S. and British governments, respectively, are primarily responsible for the WFTU's breakup, because these American and British trade union combinations hoped to create an international trade union federation more sympathetic to the foreign policies of their own governments. Nevertheless, Carew (1984) also blames Communists for the split, arguing that they utilized the WFTU administrative machinery to pursue their own interests. Weiler (1981) contends that primary responsibility for the WFTU schism should be placed on the AFL's and the U. S. government's shoulders because they worked actively towards the Federation's destruction. According to Weiler (1981), even though the Soviets benefitted from affiliation with the WFTU, they did not aim to dominate it but sought cooperation with the Western trade union national centers. Finally, Kofas (2002) claims that although the WFTU's break-up was inevitable due to U. S.–Soviet tensions and that the Federation was controlled by the Soviet Union by 1950, this could not be claimed at the time of the WFTU's founding in 1945.

The unity first expressed in the WFTU began to fray when it was exposed to pressures external to the organization. Although the federation attempted to portray itself as a unified organization, issues arose concerning differences in ideology, views of trade unionism, political practices, and degrees of economic development of the member nations. With rising Cold War tensions between Moscow and Washington in 1946, some WFTU members continued to support a Popular Front strategy, while the CIO and TUC were pressured to fall in line with their governments' foreign policy. One year later in a meeting between Dean Acheson, the U. S. undersecretary of state,

and CIO leaders, Acheson argued that the Soviet Union was using the WFTU to attain its own political goals and had a different vision of trade unionism than that possessed by the CIO. Even though more than half of the federation's affiliates were pro-Soviet, Moscow did not want to jeopardize international labor unity by promoting policies that would be opposed by the CIO and the TUC. Nevertheless, the Soviets offered a resolution opposing the expansion of U. S. policies and business interests while passing a motion that called for expanding the rights of colonial peoples, a position opposed by the United States, Great Britain and France (Kofas, 2002, 35, 43, 46).

This schism was primarily caused by the execution of the U. S. Marshall Plan in 1947, designed to rebuild the Western European economies in the postwar era, which the Communist-bloc unions viewed as a way for the United States to obtain political and economic hegemony over the region. Moreover, these unions blamed the pro-business AFL for using the Plan to undermine unity within the WFTU (Kofas, 2002, 51). And that specifically *was* the AFL's strategy. This U. S. labor federation sought a new international trade union organization to carry out the Marshall Plan, to be comprised of only Western unions and envisioned as becoming the core of a new international labor grouping (Weiler, 1981, 16).

And that is exactly what happened. The Western unions established the European Recovery Program Trade Union Advisory Committee (ERPTUAC) in March 1948 for administering the Marshall Plan which one year later become the nucleus of the anti-Communist ICFTU. With the Western unions rallying around ERPTUAC, the Communist-led unions supported the Soviet Union with the French General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), and the Soviet and Eastern European union federations condemning the Marshall Plan as a U. S. imperialist adventure (Weiler, 1981, 18).

In spite of this wedge between the Communist-led and the Western unions in the WFTU caused by the Marshall Plan, at the WFTU's next major get-together in May 1948, the Soviets made concessions in order to keep the Federation from losing affiliates. Besides limiting the general secretary's power and placing restrictions on what could be published in the WFTU *Information Bulletin*, the Soviets also allowed each national trade union center to adopt its own position with regard



to the Marshall Plan. But it was too late: the CIO and the TUC were already committed to leaving the organization (Weiler, 1981, 19).

*The ICFTU's Formation and the Organization's  
Early Years, 1949–1954*

By the time of the ICFTU's founding conference in London on November 28, 1949, both the world and the international labor movement had changed dramatically. As the Cold War enveloped the globe, European nations were partitioned into what Carew (2000, 189) refers to as "two armed camps," with each one pursuing the construction of divergent economic systems. This situation was mirrored in the international trade union movement, with distinct labor organizations established in Germany's two halves and an enduring division arising from the 1947 split in the French labor movement. Similar developments occurred in Italy with the launching of vigorous attempts to win social democrats and socialists away from the Communist-led CGIL. Further north, the Socialists and Communists battled for domination in the Finnish trade union movement (Carew, 2000, 189).

With 261 delegates representing 63 national trade union centers, a constitution was adopted which defined "free trade unions" as labor organizations "independent of any external domination" for the purpose of serving as "free bargaining instruments . . . which derive their authority from their members." Affiliated organizations were to achieve their goals primarily through collective bargaining and would only "seek government assistance" when negotiation failed. Although many members were allegedly socialist or social democratic in orientation, no links existed to the Socialist International as such (Carew, 2000, 196–7). The ICFTU's 1949 manifesto, entitled "Bread, Peace and Freedom," expressed the Confederation's three key objectives: to deliver "bread" to hungry workers in Europe, "peace" to the world as opposed to Communist aggression and "freedom" from attempts to impose totalitarianism on allegedly democratic labor organizations (Windmuller, 1966, 360). In order to demonstrate the ICFTU's ostensible independence from both Communism and capitalism, conference attendee and United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther invoked the slogan, "Neither Stalin nor Standard Oil" to describe the Confederation's orientation (Sturmthal, 1950, 376).

From its inception, there were tensions within the ICFTU between industrialized and developing countries as well as with the largest national trade union centers, such as the TUC and the AFL, because these members were much more likely to support their governments' foreign policies. In order to protect the unity of the Confederation from dominance by any one of the largest affiliates, Brussels was designated as headquarters, and leaders were to be selected from the smaller members (Carew, 1996b, 121–122).

While the WFTU aggressively opposed fascism, the ICFTU committed itself to struggle against what it considered to be “all forms of totalitarianism — communist, fascist, phalangist, corporative or militarist,” and stated that it would attempt to prevent “the infiltration of labor organizations by totalitarian forces.” However, not all representatives, especially those from developing countries, agreed that Communism posed as serious a threat as seen by the ICFTU. The Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) representative, Phany Ghosh, claimed that too much concern existed with regards to “the spread of Communism,” and if the major goal of the ICFTU was to encourage anti-Communism throughout the world, he did not want to be affiliated with the organization. Arturo Jauregui of the Confederación de Trabajadores del Peru (CTP) and Hermes Horne of the Comité de Coordinación de Sindicatos Autónomos (CCSA) adopted similar positions, arguing that anti-Communism was used as the primary weapon to weaken and tame labor movements. They claimed that military dictatorship, not Latin American Communism, was the major problem confronting the region's workers (Carew, 2000, 197).

But even within the affiliates from the industrial nations there were differences in how anti-Communist tactics should be implemented. The AFL, for example, felt that the social-democratic European members were not aggressive enough in their anti-Communism while the Europeans, for their part, were dismayed at the crude practices of the AFL's semi-autonomous Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) in combating Communism, which the Europeans suspected was funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). For its part, the CIO took the side of the Europeans and the ICFTU leaders against the AFL on this issue. At the time of the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, CIO officials such as the autoworkers' Walter Reuther hoped that the AFL leaders such as George Meany would be won over to the CIO's foreign policy

positions, but Meany remained as much of a zealous Cold Warrior as ever (Carew, 1996b, 124–125).

These tensions could be seen at the ICFTU's Milan Congress in July 1951 and at the Confederation's Executive Board meeting that November. At the first gathering, the AFL introduced a resolution on "totalitarianism" which emphasized the harm that Communism posed to "free trade unions and to democratic countries" (Windmuller, 1954, 188). In Committee, the resolution was altered to include "the danger of right-wing totalitarianism," indicating that the Europeans did not view Communism as the sole threat to free trade unionism throughout the world (Windmuller, 1954, 187–188). At the Executive Board meeting later that fall, the AFL introduced a resolution calling on the ICFTU to defend Yugoslavia from all forms of Soviet aggression while condemning that nation for its anti-democratic regime in addition to calling for reestablishing free trade unions in Yugoslavia. When the motion failed to be seconded, the AFL harbored suspicions that the ICFTU was not sincerely dedicated to battling Communism (Windmuller, 1954, 200).

As Carew (2000, 201) has emphasized, "more than anything else, anti-Communism was the dominant theme in most of the Confederation's early programs." A portion of this activity was directed towards exposing Soviet forced labor, as indicated, for example, through the publication of *Stalin's Slave Labour Camps* in 1951. Although the ICFTU downplayed these efforts, further involvement focused on undermining the French and Italian Communist dockworkers' attempts to thwart the arrival of U. S. armaments in Europe. The most active arena for this work occurred in the Mediterranean ports where a French trade unionist, Pierre Ferri-Pisani, led these efforts. While having ties to organized crime, Ferri-Pisani worked intimately with the AFL's notorious Cold Warrior and agent provocateur Irving Brown who financed the operation with CIA funds.

Although the WFTU and the ICFTU traded insults after the ICFTU's formation in 1949, the WFTU approached the ICFTU in July 1951 about meeting so that joint work could be undertaken in "defense of the workers' vital interests" (Lorwin, 1953, 281). The overture was rejected by the ICFTU's Executive Board; the subsequent 1951 Milan Congress approved a sharply worded rejection to the WFTU. Nevertheless, at the WFTU's General Council meeting in Vienna in November 1951, a second proposal was tendered to the ICFTU for collaboration, to which the latter never responded (Lorwin, 1953, 280–281).

While the ICFTU formally claimed independence, its ties to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) show that, in reality, the organization was organically linked to the Western power bloc. The ICFTU's Ted Thompson was in *daily* contact with the NATO Secretariat. Furthermore, with the appointment of Lord Ismay as the first NATO Secretary General in 1952, the ICFTU General Secretary, Jacobus Oldenbroek, met with him to discuss the two organizations' ongoing relationship and common interests. That same year, the ICFTU organized a conference of NATO country members for the discussion of defense and armament programs. Although the ICFTU argued that NATO should only engage in defensive maneuvers and that it was against any forms of NATO aggression, the Confederation called "for rearmament which took account of workers' interests" and stressed the necessity of full employment with the conversion of economies to arms production (Carew, 2000, 205–6).

*The ICFTU's Position on Dealing with Unions  
in Communist Nations, 1955–1967*

During this 12-year period, the ICFTU took a very hard line with regards to its affiliates dealing with any WFTU members. Although its stance remained fairly consistent throughout this period, its policy did change in subtle ways as the WFTU's activities evolved over time. For the most part, the ICFTU argued that the WFTU unions were only interested in promoting Soviet policy and had no interest in improving the lot of the international working class.

The major motivation behind the ICFTU's adoption of an official policy concerning affiliates' relations with unions from Communist countries was "the peace offensive" launched by "Soviet bloc leaders" after Stalin's death in 1953. At this time, the Eastern trade unions tendered visitation offers to their Western counterparts (Carew, 2000, 245). The AFL, which played the key role behind the ICFTU policy, was the most virulently anti-Communist force within the Confederation. The U. S. federation became distressed in the summer of 1954 when a number of ICFTU members, including the TUC, did not vote against admitting the Soviet Union to the International Labor Organization (ILO) (Carew, 1996a, 159).

Tensions within the Confederation rose, however, several months prior to the ICFTU's Vienna Congress at the end of May 1955 when

two ITSs, the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers and the Miners' International Federation, accepted the Yugoslav trade unions' affiliation. This decision appeared problematic because the Confederation did not consider these labor organizations to be "free" as outlined in the ICFTU constitution. Because the ITSs operated autonomously from the ICFTU, there was little the Confederation could do, although the Vienna Congress requested that the ICFTU staff attempt to reverse this decision. Moreover, another complicating factor was that some Western European nations and Yugoslavia had been exchanging trade union delegations for years (Windmuller, 1956, 275).

In December 1955, the ICFTU adopted a resolution that *urged* all members of the organization to inform the ICFTU's General Secretary concerning any invited visits from a "labor delegation" from "communist-ruled countries." The purpose behind this action was so that these affiliates "may be fully appraised of the aims and consequences of this communist drive." The Confederation desired to "work all the more effectively in defeating this communist strategy of confusion and disruption of the free world labor movement" (Carew, 2000, 246).

The ICFTU argued that the purpose of invitations from labor organizations in Communist countries was fourfold: 1) to obtain "moral respectability and legitimacy" for the "State Company unions" from Communist nations; 2) to fool the workers of the "free world" into accepting these labor organizations "as bona fide free trade unions"; 3) to aid in "communist infiltration and subversion in the free world"; and 4) to encourage "the expansionist interests of Soviet imperialism." As such, the ICFTU argued that its affiliates should not engage in labor delegation exchange with nations ruled by Communist Parties (Carew, 2000, 246).

In spite of manifest violations of this policy, including ICFTU Executive Board member Albert Monk of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) taking a trade union group to Peking in 1957 (Carew, 2000, 246), three years later the ICFTU's position remained unchanged. In March 1958, the ICFTU reaffirmed the 1955 resolution approved by its Executive Board (EB). In response to invitations to a number of ICFTU affiliates by the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB), the German Democratic Republic's "communist-run trade union organization," for meetings on May Day 1960 in

East Berlin, the ICFTU EB decided to discourage “free trade union organizations” from engaging in exchange visits in June 1960 (Carew, 2000, 299–300).

For the most part, national trade union centers abided by ICFTU policy. If there were violations, these came largely from individual unions of Confederation affiliates. Even within the virulently anti-Communist AFL-CIO, there was increasing dissension among members, with the National Maritime Union’s President Joseph Curran visiting the Soviet Union in July 1960 after accepting the Soviet Sea and River Workers’ Union’s offer (Windmuller, 1961, 267–268).

With a growing split between the Soviet and Chinese Communist Parties and amid the Italian Communist Party calling for the adoption of more flexible approaches to local situations by the early 1960s, it was clear that the world Communist movement was becoming polycentric. Additionally, the WFTU intensified its “unity of action” campaign within the trade union movement while Cold War anxieties lessened in the aftermath of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Under such conditions, Western trade unions found it more attractive to engage in contacts with their Communist counterparts (Carew, 2000, 299–300). One major violator of the policy at this time was the TUC, which in 1963 sent ten of its General Council members to Yugoslavia to examine the country’s experimentation with worker self-management. In addition, the Dutch ICFTU affiliate hosted a small group of Soviet trade union leaders in the spring of 1965 (Windmuller, 1966, 361).

Nevertheless, the ICFTU remained firm and clung to its original position. In March 1962, the Confederation’s “Sub-Committee on the Problem of Relations with Organizations in Dictatorship Countries” decided that the EB’s 1955 resolution should remain intact. In March 1964, the EB reaffirmed its decision that ICFTU affiliates “should not associate” with trade unions “within the communist sphere of influence” because these organizations are “controlled by governments” and as such are “government agencies” that cannot be considered to be “genuine trade unions” (ICFTU, 1967a, 1–2).

Nine months later, the policy was extended to include Communist-led trade union federations in the capitalist countries such as the French CGT and the Italian CGIL. In December 1964, the ICFTU EB extended its policy to discourage its affiliates from interacting with “communist-controlled trade unions” such as the “WFTU-affiliated organizations in France and Italy.” Also at this time, the EB called for

the Confederation to reject cooperation in any manner with any ITS that has labor organizations “directly or indirectly affiliated to the WFTU.” In February 1966, the Confederation EB reiterated the tenet that the goals of “free trade unions” can only be obtained by the “free trade union organization themselves” and not through collaboration with “communist-controlled organizations.” As such, it was advised that the General Secretary remain in close touch with the targeted ICFTU members so that “the CGIL–CGT joint moves” would not adversely impact the “free trade union movement” (ICFTU, 1967a, 2).

In a June 1966 decision, the Confederation’s EB reaffirmed that there is “no mutual interest and no common ground” with regards to “the free trade unions” and labor organizations “controlled by totalitarian governments and the communist party.” Additionally, the General Secretary was called upon to closely monitor the progress and endeavors of the WFTU and its Trade Union Internationals with respect to its “unity of action” and “dialog” initiatives. Furthermore, it called for monitoring the Federation’s functioning in non-Communist nations and to keep all ICFTU branches and affiliated groups updated concerning WFTU activities. In October 1967, the EB decided to end cooperative endeavors between the International Graphical Federation (IGF) and the ICFTU. Finally, noting that there have been “increasing relations” between Confederation members and labor organizations in “communist-ruled countries” and/or “communist-controlled” trade unions, the EB decided that a committee should be created for investigating this “problem” and for determining the best enforcement strategy for ICFTU policies in this area (ICFTU, 1967a, 2).

These policies, however, as mentioned earlier, were not accepted by all of the Confederation’s members. In February 1964, the British TUC’s George Woodcock privately stated that the TUC was favorably disposed towards exchanging trade union delegations with the Soviet Union as long as these visits pertained only to trade union matters. Two years later a TUC delegation accepted the AUCCTU’s invitation to visit the Soviet Union. That same year, the West German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB), approved the promotion of similar missions to Eastern bloc nations (Carew, 2000, 300–1).

An ICFTU-conducted survey in January 1968 indicated that affiliates had adopted different positions concerning this issue. For example, one group of national affiliates and federations refrained

from all relations with WFTU members and would not contemplate cooperating with them under any circumstances. France's Force Ouvriere best characterized this viewpoint, which considered Communism to be the "arch enemy of trade unionism," as did the French General Confederation of Cadres (CGC) and the French Confederation of Christian Trade Unions. The Canadian Labour Congress, whose predecessor had expelled six Communist Party-led unions, the strongly anti-Communist Lebanese Ligue des Syndicats-Unis, and the International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers (IFPCW), which had always abided by the Confederation policies concerning WFTU unions, also expressed the same sentiments (ICFTU, 1968, 9–10, 13–14).

A second category of ICFTU affiliates had not established a relationship with WFTU members at the national level, although they had permitted their own member unions to establish contact with Federation affiliates. The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) represented this position, which at the national level had refused invitations from Soviet trade unions, although LO affiliates and local branches had visited the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the LO called on the ICFTU to allow affiliates discretion on this matter. Another national trade union center holding a similar position was the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (SGB), which had no relations with WFTU trade unions although SGB members had exchanged delegations with trade unions in the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The same stance was maintained by the International Metalworkers' Federation and the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, which did not meet with WFTU organizations although its affiliates had, at times, established contact. Finally, the Miners' International Federation reported that it was its members' decision to determine their level of interaction with WFTU unions (ICFTU, 1968, 8, 11–12, 14–16).

A third grouping revealed a much more positive view towards the WFTU, believing that it was important to cultivate relationships with Federation affiliates and/or had actively participated with such organizations in the past and planned to do so again in the future. In France, for example, the French Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions had closely cooperated with the CGT. The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) epitomized this perspective by engaging in exchanges with Soviet trade union delegations on "a regular and



frequent basis” and argued that such visits were important in encouraging “international understanding and peaceful coexistence.” The Austrian Trade Union Federation (OGB) felt the same as the Finns and had maintained “loose and friendly contacts” for mutual exchange of information through visits, written information, and “observers” at trade union congresses with Soviet, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian trade unions. The Malaysian Trades Union Congress’ delegation had visited the Soviet Union and always called for interactions between workers and trade unions throughout the world (ICFTU, 1968, 5–8, 9–10).

Finally, Japanese unions and union federations took particularly progressive positions on this issue. For example, the Japanese Confederation of Labor stated that it would contemplate conducting exchanges with WFTU unions on a case-by-case basis. The Japan Coalminers’ Union pointed out that it would continue having relations with the WFTU and its Trades Departments. Additionally, it contended that it would carry on with holding exchange visits with trade unions regardless of affiliation and/or ideological views. The Japanese National Federation of Metal Miners’ Unions reported on its interactions with Soviet trade union missions, believing that coexistence was important while the Japan Postal Workers’ Union (ZENTEI) had exchanged delegations since 1957, and claimed that it would retain this policy regarding the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries (ICFTU, 1968, 2–4).

### *The Internal Politics of the WFTU, 1964–1973*

The WFTU’s internal politics reveals the polycentric nature of the organization in the period spanning nearly a decade from the early to mid-1960s through the early 1970s. This is a crucial point, given that the monolithic nature of Communism was a major ICFTU argument for its refusal to cooperate with the WFTU. One can ascertain the polycentric nature of Communism developing within the Federation in the early 1960s from the differences of opinion expressed by Western European Communists, the Chinese, the Soviets, and other nations’ Communists, although the period of most intense internal division appeared between 1965 and 1969.

At the 13th WFTU General Council Meeting (October 19–24, 1964), Western European Communist-led trade union federations

criticized the operation of trade unions in the socialist countries. Several delegates raised critiques of General Secretary Louis Saillant's report on the WFTU's policy for defending the global proletariat's interests as outlined by the action program adopted at the organization's fifth World Trade Union Congress. Fernando Santi, the CGIL's Assistant General Secretary, argued that the report failed to adequately address how the socialist countries' trade unions activated the working class for achieving particular goals in the construction of socialism; he contended that this must be demonstrated more forcefully (ICFTU, 1967b, 8).

Agostino Novella, the CGIL's General Secretary, echoed Santi's comments: "The documents of the WFTU devote far too much attention to a positive assessment of the situation in the socialist countries, as well as to the aims which the trade unions in these countries set themselves. We are convinced that the documents and the position of the WFTU must be in keeping with the impartial and unified character which is peculiar to the WFTU." Five national centers voted against Saillant's report, while the CGIL and the Central Council of Rumanian Trade Unions expressed strong criticisms concerning at least one of the report's sections (ICFTU, 1967b, 8).

At the second Plenary Meeting of the World Trade Union Committee for Consultation and Anti-Monopolistic Unity of Action (December 14–17, 1964), additional critiques arose that the WFTU was insufficiently confronting the organization's most serious problems. Concerns surfaced that the organization's anti-monopoly initiatives might lead the WFTU to "lapse into economism" and to overlook struggling against the aggressive nature of U. S. imperialism (ICFTU, 1967b, 9).

For the first time in the WFTU's history since the 1949 split, real conflict emerged within the organization. Although the Soviets retained their leading position, during the WFTU Warsaw Congress (October 8–22, 1965), the ICFTU predicted that the Soviets would experience difficulty in remaining in control because of Chinese and Italian opposition. Compared with the past, the Italian CGIL demonstrated far less interest in WFTU activities and appeared to prefer to focus on European topics (ICFTU, 1966b, 1).

According to the Confederation's report, "the monolithic character of the WFTU has been dissipated and the admission that opposition exists was one of the most important features of the WFTU Congress"

(ICFTU, 1966b, 1). The Soviet delegation walked out twice; the first time on October 14 when an Albanian delegate condemned Soviet policy and the second time on October 20 in protest of a Chinese delegate who assailed the Soviets' tepid attitude towards Vietnam. When a Chinese delegate began to speak one day later, two Soviet delegates yelled "go home," leading to protests from the missions of all "Chinese bloc countries" (ICFTU, 1966b, 1-2).

Although most representatives had departed from the conference hall when the Albanian delegate, Quimo Quocani, took the floor, he argued that "the WFTU was a vassal of Moscow" and that "peaceful coexistence" was fundamentally an indication of "cooperation with American imperialism." Sugiri, who represented the Indonesian trade union center, SOBSI, strongly criticized Saillant's and Padilla's report, contending that peaceful coexistence interfered with the struggle against imperialism, which only benefitted the United States. Khang Jung-cha vigorously attacked the conference report, arguing that "a 'certain' country had turned 'the WFTU into an instrument of its power politics.'" He further condemned the Moscow Agreement for banning atomic bomb experiments and claimed "that peaceful coexistence was diametrically opposed to the expressed will of the working class." Finally, Ri Jong-Su, the North Korean delegate, declared that it was important that, in the future, the WFTU "go on unmasking the ICFTU as a henchman of imperialism even more effectively than before" (ICFTU, 1967b, 12-13).

The Chinese, Albanian, Indonesian and Korean delegations comprised the opposition. Additionally, the Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovakian representatives differentiated themselves slightly from the Soviet positions. Furthermore, the Rumanian mission was considered to be the Congress' "enfant terrible" and it was "quietly supported" by the Yugoslavs who possessed "observer" status (ICFTU, 1966b, 8-9).

The Italian CGIL, the French CGT and the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) differed in their orientations, while the CGIL reported that its delegation was divided concerning retaining affiliation with the WFTU (25 in favor, 10 opposed). The CGIL, with the CGT's assent, called for partial independence for the WFTU trade departments, flexibility for national trade union centers in their application of WFTU policies within a local context, establishment of regional organizations and partial autonomy for these structures (ICFTU, 1966b, 9).

In conclusion, the Confederation's report asserted:

There is no doubt that there have arisen more profound and more evident differences between the trade union delegations to the Congress from communist-ruled countries and those from democratic countries — mainly the Italian CGIL, the French CGT and the Indian AITUC. . . . While the WFTU pursues its communist political aims, its member organizations in democratic countries must also take into consideration the social demands of their members. This difference could well be the source of pressure for the demand for trade union unity and intended to complement efforts to establish “popular fronts” in the political field. (ICFTU, 1966b, 13.)

The political situation remained tense at the WFTU General Council Session (December 6–9, 1966). On the first day, open conflict emerged between “the pro-Chinese bloc countries” and the WFTU's pro-Soviet leadership. The Albanian representative denounced the Yugoslavs' attendance as observers and obtained the Chinese contingent's full support. During this discussion, the Albanian and Chinese representatives attacked the Soviet and Yugoslav trade unions. This conflict further escalated when Han Hai-ya, the Chinese delegate, desired to proceed with his insults directed at the Yugoslavs and the Soviets. The WFTU President, Renato Bitossi, instructed him to finish his pronouncement but when the Chinese representative refused to leave the rostrum, Bitossi called for a brief adjournment of the session. While the delegates were leaving the conference hall, Hai-ya continued speaking until only the Chinese bloc remained (ICFTU, 1966a, 1–2).

On December 7, the Chinese contingent wished to make a statement but “was voted down from the floor.” Although the Chair recognized another speaker, the Chinese representative continued to speak. When he stopped, he still remained on the floor for half an hour without uttering a word. Upon the session's adjournment, the Chinese delegate continued his speech while the others exited the hall. All in all, the Chinese representatives talked 11 times during the session without having been recognized by the Chairman. On December 8, the Chinese group in its entirety, including Han Hai-ya, was suspended due to its inappropriate behavior during the past two days (ICFTU, 1966a, 2).

The decision to suspend the Chinese, however, was not unanimous, with the Rumanian, North Vietnamese, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, North Korean, Cuban and Venezuelan

contingents opposing the resolution, arguing that the suspension posed a threat to WFTU unity and could lead to an organizational split. In solidarity with the Chinese, the Albanians refused to attend the December 8 meeting's afternoon session. The Hungarians, Czechoslovakians, Polish, Bulgarians and Mongolians backed the anti-Chinese proposal, while the Sudanese, Uruguayans and Indians condemned the Chinese position (ICFTU, 1966a, 2–3).

Setiati Surasto, the WFTU Secretary, delivered a statement communicating his disapproval of the Chinese delegation's exclusion (ICFTU, 1966a, 2). In response to the meeting's events, Agostino Novella, the CGIL General Secretary, remarked that "the situation inside the WFTU is certainly very serious, but it is still much too early to speak about a definite split" within the organization (ICFTU, 1967b, 17).

At the WFTU World Economic Conference (December 14–17, 1966), it was anticipated that the Chinese would stay home because of the WFTU General Council Session events earlier in the month. They did arrive in Budapest but remained in the hotel rather than attending the conference. Additionally, the Albanian, North Korean, North Vietnamese, and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam groups refused to appear at the conference hall either (ICFTU, 1966a, 3).

Members of other delegations attacked these dissidents' behavior. Stoyan Gyurov, President of the Bulgarian trade unions, maintained that the Chinese's attitude "has nothing to do with Marxism–Leninism and proletarian internationalism" and "is contrary to the radical interests of the working class, to the interest of peace and socialism: only the imperialist and reactionary forces in the world could be pleased with such an activity." Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Soviet and East German representatives expressed similar sentiments. The CGT, CGIL and AITUC referred to the Chinese and Albanian behavior as "monstrous injuries against trade union unity" (ICFTU, 1966a, 3–4).

The real reason motivating this dispute appeared to be the Chinese opposition to the constitutional changes mandated at the WFTU Congress in Warsaw in October 1965. These modifications included granting partial autonomy to several member national centers, in addition to allowing the WFTU trade departments, known as Trade Union Internationals, to operate more independently as well as decentralizing the WFTU's structure (ICFTU, 1966a, 4).

Perhaps the WFTU's most significant division occurred when five Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968. With the Federation's headquarters situated in Prague, the WFTU Secretariat could hardly overlook the incursion. While traveling in Hungary at the time of the invasion, Louis Saillant, the WFTU's General Secretary, although viewed as an ardent defender of Soviet interests, immediately denounced the occupation. Upon request from the Czechoslovakian trade unions, Saillant and the WFTU President, the Italian Renato Bitossi, sent a protest letter to the Hungarian Trade Union Council General Secretary who also served on the WFTU Executive Committee (Windmuller, 1980, 101–102).

Upon the WFTU Secretariat's first meeting in Prague after the incursion, the body deliberated on Saillant's statement, the Czech unions' appeal and Saillant and Bitossi's letter. On August 28, 1968, the WFTU Secretariat, by a vote of eight to one with the only dissenting vote being that of the Soviet Podzerko, issued a communiqué strongly condemning the invasion by the USSR, East Germany and the other Warsaw pact nations (Windmuller, 1980, 102; ICFTU, 1970a). The Secretariat also distributed a proclamation which declared in part:

The Secretariat of the WFTU . . . expresses its disapproval of the military intervention which contradicts all fundamental principles that form the basis of the life of the WFTU and which are freely established by all the national centers affiliated to the WFTU. The Secretariat expresses its full solidarity to the workers and people of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and pays homage to their calm and composure. (Windmuller, 1980, 102.)

After the occupation of Czechoslovakia, differences arose within the WFTU. Renato Bitossi, the WFTU president, and Saillant strongly opposed the invasion and supported the Czechoslovak trade unions' position that the troops be removed from the country. The Soviet trade unions, as well as the labor organizations of the five participating nations in the incursion, disagreed. Shelepin attempted to remove Bitossi and Saillant but backed down when the CGIL supported Bitossi. However, the Soviets later attempted to obtain WFTU backing for the mission. Nevertheless, many of the WFTU's western affiliates refused to support this position. In addition, the Rumanian trade unions also condemned the military action (ICFTU, 1969).

The occupation also postponed the WFTU's 18th General Council meeting, moving it from early October 1968 until mid-December 1968. At this gathering, the Italians, with Rumanian and French support, advocated for allowing member organizations to become more independent of the Soviet and Eastern European trade unions. Additionally, the Czechoslovakian trade unions took a strong stand against the Soviets (ICFTU, 1969).

Although the Soviets maintained control of the WFTU Budapest Congress (October 1969), they were unsuccessful in obtaining the WFTU's withdrawal of its August 28, 1968 statement, which had denounced the Czechoslovakian invasion. The Italian CGIL provided the main opposition by abstaining from the vote on the major policy resolution. China did not attend the Congress (ICFTU, 1970d, 1, 4, 6).

The WFTU Varna Congress (October, 1973) appeared to be less contentious than the previous quadrennial WFTU congresses, although the Russian trade unions dominated the meeting. The Chinese, once more, were absent. As raised at previous assemblies, only the Italians queried why the congress dealt exclusively with the non-Communist nations (ICFTU, 1973a, 1).

The congress' theme focused on promoting unity between the WFTU, the ICFTU and the World Confederation of Labor (WCL). Established at The Hague in 1920, the WCL's original name was the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU). It was composed of trade unions connected with the Christian Democratic parties of Europe. Because of fascist and Nazi suppression, the confederation disbanded in 1940 and was reestablished upon conclusion of the Second World War in 1945. Due to the inclusion of Moslem and Buddhist members in African and Asian nations, in 1968 the IFCTU renamed itself the WCL (World Confederation of Labour Archives).

According to the opening report of Pierre Gensous, WFTU General Secretary, the document proposed that the WFTU, the ICFTU and the WCL should meet, exchange information and work together to further European workers' demands at the second ILO European Regional Conference scheduled for January 1974 (ICFTU, 1973a, 1-2).

The Italians requested the implementation of a new associate membership in the WFTU. The CGIL desired to change its status from that of full member to associate member in order to promote trade union unity in Italy and Western Europe. Although the French CGT

opposed associate membership, the Soviet trade unions suggested that the CGT also should become an associate member but the French rejected this position. The meeting determined that the WFTU General Council's next session would discuss and determine the rights and responsibilities of associate members (ICFTU, 1973a, 2–3).

*A Minor Thaw: The ICFTU Policy Changes Concerning Relations with Communist-Led Unions*

A number of forces led to the ICFTU's modifications of its policies towards Communist nations' unions by the early 1970s. By 1967–1968, many more ICFTU members were conducting bilateral exchanges with Eastern bloc trade union federations, and it was believed that such contacts would increase unless something was done (Carew, 2000, 328–329). As a result, the ICFTU EB established a committee in October 1967 to examine the complexity of this issue. Not surprisingly, the group was unable to arrive at a solution (Windmuller, 1976, 255). With the AFL-CIO's disaffiliation from the ICFTU in 1969 because it perceived that the European members were becoming too soft on Communism, the most anti-Communist force within the Confederation, which advocated no contact with the WFTU or its members under any circumstances, had departed the organization (Windmuller, 1970, 522–3). Although the committee became dormant after the AFL-CIO's withdrawal, it was reactivated and issued a report which the ICFTU EB adopted at its Vienna meeting in July 1973. The document essentially acknowledged the ICFTU's schism over this issue and equally respected the positions of affiliates who had, and those who had refused, exchanges, with Communist countries' labor organizations. As such, the committee concluded that each trade union center had to determine its own policy on this matter, depending on its own situation (Windmuller, 1976, 254).

Because of détente and various ICFTU national trade union centers meeting with WFTU members, the Confederation modified its policy. The organization as a whole, however, as stated in a 1973 report, refused to enter into “any relationship with international or regional bodies whose policies are in diametrical conflict with free and democratic trade union objectives.” The report continued to argue that the rationale behind the “WFTU's world labor unity campaign” was only to help achieve “Soviet foreign policy aims” (Windmuller, 1980, 82).



Thus, in 1973 the ICFTU still willingly emphasized anti-Communism over class interests.

In spite of its position, a preliminary meeting was held in Vienna in 1973 between WFTU officials representing the national trade union centers of the Soviet Union, Hungary and East Germany with the “ICFTU’s Big Three” (Great Britain, West Germany and Sweden) where they agreed to hold a “consultative meeting” of European trade union officials within the confines of the ILO’s Regional European Conference (Windmuller, 1976, 255). As mentioned earlier, that meeting convened in January 1974 during the Second European Conference of the ILO, the first time such a gathering took place since the WFTU’s 1949 split. Although the two organizations’ general secretaries met informally at the conference, the ICFTU’s pronouncement with what had occurred was bizarre; it argued that neither it nor the WFTU had been formally “represented at the meeting.” Subsequent assemblies between European affiliates of the ICFTU, WFTU and WCL took place in 1975 and 1977 concerning “the work environment, the use of dangerous substances and products in industry, and trade union education and training” (Windmuller, 1980, 82–3).

*The WFTU’s Class Appeals to the ICFTU  
During the 1960s and 1970s*

Although the WFTU had always desired engaging in unified action with the ICFTU, as has already been demonstrated in this article, the Confederation would have nothing to do with the WFTU; anti-Communism clearly exerted more influence on its organizational practices than class-based appeals. This occurred even though the Confederation shared common interests with the Federation throughout the 1950s and 1960s with regards to the “dangers inherent in increased Cold War militarism, the need to oppose apartheid, the importance of improving the rights of female workers worldwide, and the need to utilize the growing number of intergovernmental organizations” (Myconos, 2005, 42).

The WFTU’s attempts at achieving “working class unity” intensified during the early 1960s. For example, at this time, it organized conferences, designed to attract Confederation affiliates, “of Latin American plantation workers in Havana, Pacific and Asian dockworkers in Tokyo; port, transport and fishery workers in Budapest and

in the mid-sixties those on the theme of ‘Solidarity with the North Vietnamese’” (Carew, 2000, 300; Windmuller, 1980, 107).

By 1970, the WFTU’s efforts towards achieving international class unity deepened, with attempts to organize a joint European trade union conference with the ICFTU. An August 25, 1970 letter from Ignacy Loga-Sowinski, President of the Central Council of Trade Unions in Poland, to ICFTU and WCL European trade union affiliates, called for the convening of a European trade union conference because of the common class interests confronting European workers:

In many European countries various steps are being taken with a view to regulate economy. These are *e.g.* programming, promoting of investments, income policies, various social and economic reforms are put into effect and they are all of immediate concern to the vitally important interests of the working people. The working class and its trade union organizations are facing up to new duties concerning the raising and defending standard of living; improving labour conditions; solving problems of employment; vocational training; insurance and social securities; safeguarding trade union rights. (ICFTU, 1970c, 2.)

Furthermore, two months later, at the WFTU General Council’s 20th Session (Moscow, October 13–16, 1970), the Federation realized that international class unity was necessary for achieving the workers’ class interests on a global basis. Due to the increasing internationalization of capital, the Federation referred to divisions within the international trade union movement as seeming “like relics from a by-gone age, incompatible with today’s requirements.” Noting that “in every country where there is trade union division, unity of action has been developed more and more to defend the workers’ common interests more effectively,” the WFTU called for unification of labor on the international level. WFTU President Pierre Gensous put forth the same argument in a November 1970 letter to ICFTU President Harm Buiter (ICFTU, 1970b).

### *Conclusion: Whither the WFTU and the ICFTU?*

The ICFTU’s virulent anti-Communism prevented it from working with the WFTU, even though the Federation continually made class appeals towards working with the Confederation. And while the WFTU was polycentric since the mid-1960s, which the Confederation

knew was the case, the ICFTU still refused to work with the Federation, contending that it was a monolithic organization. Even the WFTU Secretariat's condemnation of the invasion of Czechoslovakia had no effect on changing the Confederation's attitude towards the Federation. And while there was a thaw in the relationship between the WFTU and the ICFTU from the early to late 1970s, it was a tentative, hesitant and minor one at best, and failed to result in the two international organizations collaborating on joint projects in any meaningful manner.

Given the ICFTU's nature, this is hardly surprising. Although there were many Confederation affiliates that were ostensibly socialist in orientation, the organization as a whole was not. Marcel van der Linden (2000, 530) has noted that while the IFTU had used Marxist vocabulary and called for capitalism's abolition, "the ICFTU never made any such statements." Although the Confederation initially interpreted political democracy to be "parliamentary democracy" combined with "free collective bargaining" (530), the ICFTU thought that this political democracy might correspond with a "third way," an economic system that was neither capitalist nor Communist. But finding a middle ground between "Stalin and Standard Oil" (in Walter Reuther's words at the ICFTU's founding convention in 1949) never materialized. In spite of the Confederation protesting against the increasing economic strength and power of transnational corporations, van der Linden makes clear that the ICFTU consciously chose its side: "The ICFTU opted clearly for capitalism . . . and the Western military bloc, including NATO" (van der Linden, 2000, 531).

van der Linden's position receives additional support from more recent scholarship by Garcia (2010, 289–290). She argues that the ICFTU's position from 1949 to 1969 can best be characterized as one of "labor liberalism," although the organization cannot be described as a "working-class movement" as such. Rather, according to Garcia (2010, 290), the ICFTU represented a "multi-class movement" reflecting the views and policies of politicians, business leaders, the working class and the poor. Thus, if the ICFTU actually embodied a "multi-class movement" that was responsible for balancing the perspectives of various class forces, it is hardly surprising that it would be unwilling to align with the WFTU that perceived itself as defending only the interests of a single class, the proletariat.

And although there is no doubt that the WFTU often defended the Soviets' interests (despite its opposition to the 1968 Czechoslovakian invasion), the cataclysmic events of 1989 to 1991, which led to the destruction of the Eastern European socialist states and the Soviet Union, demonstrated that the WFTU had a life of its own after the Cold War, in spite of suffering significant defections in Eastern Europe. The Federation survives into the 21st century's second decade, largely representing trade union movements in the global South, vigorously challenging neoliberal economic policies (Herod, 2009, 211–213) while still strongly committed in its struggle against global capitalism and imperialism. The WFTU is perhaps the only international organization connected with the former Soviet Union that remains extant. Even after the socialist nations' disappearance in the early 1990s, the ICFTU still refused to cooperate with labor organizations that remained affiliated with the WFTU. Thus, with the Confederation still possessing a Cold War attitude towards the Federation after *its* side allegedly won, one might wonder what truly motivated the ICFTU in a world where official Communism barely existed after 1991.

While the WFTU retained close ties to the Soviet Union and perhaps, as the Italian CGIL argued, did not do enough to defend the rights of workers in the socialist nations even given the constraints that existed, this does not mean that the working classes in capitalist nations would not have potentially benefitted from the ICFTU's collaboration with the WFTU. The ICFTU's anti-Communism overrode any appeals to class unity in determining its policy toward the WFTU. And the job of the successor organization, the International Trade Union Confederation, formed through the merger of the ICFTU and the WCL on November 1, 2006, in defending the international proletariat's class interests has hardly become easier in a post-Communist world.

*Department of Management and Quantitative Methods  
Illinois State University  
Normal, IL 61790-5580  
vgdevin@ilstu.edu*

#### ARCHIVAL SOURCES

A portion of the citations in this paper contain archival sources that can be found in the International Confederation of Free Trade Union Archives at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam (the Netherlands). The author thanks the staff at this library and archives for their help during the author's research visit.

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