

trade union information

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN FRANCE

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TRADE UNIONISM IN FRANCE

Since the Law of 21 March 1884, included in the Labour Code by virtue of the Law of 27 February 1927, employees in France have enjoyed the right to set up trade unions. A trade union may be formed only by persons practising a specific occupational activity. Common interests alone do not suffice for this purpose, and the occupational link is the decisive factor.

Trade unions are associations with the sole aim of defending workers' interests and possessing legal status and the rights and obligations flowing therefrom.

The French conception of the trade union organization is that of the industrial trade union - as opposed to the occupational union - which unites all workers on both local and national levels, on the basis of the economic activity in which they take part, independently of the trade which they practise (for example: metallurgy, building, textiles, public services, and so on ...). However, recognition has also been accorded to trade unions which bring together wage-earners practising in the same trade but working in different sectors. This is the case, for instance, for administrative staff: bookkeepers, secretaries, and so on ...

Compared with the situations obtaining in other countries, the main feature of French trade unionism is its pluralism. Nevertheless, that has not prevented it from displaying a genuine effectiveness, which is apparent on comparing the social progress achieved in a range of different countries.

I. Trade union pluralism

French trade unionism features several types of organization:

- workers' confederations;
- sectoral organizations;
- independent or autonomous organizations.

A. The workers' confederations

CGT

The Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour - CGT) is still numerically speaking the largest of the French workers' confederations, even though for some years there has been a degree of

stagnation in the number of its dues-paying members, and a reduced influence is apparent in the results of union elections.

The CGT was founded in 1895, and for a long time Communist activists formed the minority of members. Thwarted in 1921 when they tried to make it join the Communist-oriented Trade Union International, they left the CGT only to return to it in 1936 with the political victory of the Popular Front. They were excluded again in 1939 after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Having attained to the overwhelming majority after the Liberation, in 1948 they provoked the departure of the non-Communists, who founded the Confédération Générale du Travail - Force Ouvrière (CGT-FO).

During the last six years, the development of the CGT has been marked by two major facts:

1. The signing of a joint governmental programme by the two principal parties of the Left which seemed to open up new prospects for trade union activism.
2. The economic crisis, seen initially as a transient phenomenon, which has not passed but has grown in extent, causing the CGT to adopt a rather more defensive strategy.

In 1978 the CGT joined the WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions), but recently loosened its ties with this organization, giving up the post of Secretary-General, which one of its members had held for many years.

The CGT has also applied for membership of the European Confederation of Trade Unions.

CGT-FO

The Confédération Générale du Travail Force Ouvrière arose out of the 1948 breakaway. It was joined by the Fédération Syndicaliste des PTT (Postal Workers' Union) and the Fédération des Cheminots (Railwaymen's Union) which had left the CGT in, respectively, 1946 and 1947.

The CGT-FO sees itself as the continuation of the pre-1940 CGT, and lays claim to its historical and doctrinal heritage. The Force Ouvrière unions solemnly affirm their absolute independence in regard to employers, governments, political parties, groups or organizations, philosophical sects

and, in general, their immutable rejection of any influence outside the trade union movement.

Statutes

For the CGT-FO the principles of the Amiens Charter (1906) are still sacrosanct. This is a reference to trade unionism defining itself as independent of any political and revolutionary school. The CGT-FO rejects any curtailment of union independence vis-à-vis the company or the state and champions the principle of free collective bargaining.

The CGT-FO has been a member of the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) and the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation).

CFDT

The Confédération Démocratique du Travail (CFDT - Democratic Labour Confederation) adopted this title at the Congress of November 1964 which, as the outcome of a lengthy period of reorientation within the CFTC, decided to delete from its statutes any reference to Christian social ethics and in its conclusions gave a decisively socialist orientation to the Confederation's programme.

Is the CFDT actually the successor of the CFTC, which was founded in 1919? The problem has not been resolved and the sole reference position is the agreement of 11 March 1971, which the two parties concluded in order to put an end to the legal conflict in which they had been embroiled since 1964. This agreement acknowledged that the CFTC alone would continue to use the title Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (French Confederation of Christian Workers) and the abbreviation CFTC.

In 1970 the CFDT proclaimed its adoption of a democratic socialism characterized by participation in management control, nationalization and democratic planning processes.

The CFDT was a member of the World Confederation of Labour, but withdrew from it at the 1979 congress. It has been a member of the European Trade Union Confederation since 1973.

CFTC

The Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC) is made up of those militants and members who, at the Paris Congress of 1964, refused to discontinue reference to Christian social ethics, as well as those workers in all sectors and categories who chose this ideological basis for their trade union activity.

In March 1975 the CFTC and the CGSI (Confédération Générale des Syndicats Indépendents - General Confederation of Independent Trade Unions) signed an agreement which, after two years, led to affiliation of the CGSI with the CFTC.

In its programme, which was updated in 1977, the CFTC reaffirmed its insistence on independence and non-politicization of trade unions and put forward a company reform proposal of which one of the main features is that wage-earners be represented at board level in limited companies.

B. The sectoral organizations

These are organizations which cater for certain groups of wage-earners to the exclusion of others.

FEN

The Fédération de l'Education Nationale (National Education Federation - FEN) is made up of the teaching and administrative personnel of state educational institutions and of establishments in the cultural affairs sector.

In 1947, at the time of the split in the CGT, a majority of these people refused to choose between the CGT and the CGT-F0 and opted for autonomy in order to preserve their internal unity. This situation led the big workers' confederations to set up their own unions for teaching personnel.

"An autonomous federation of lay inspiration consisting of autonomous trade unions", the FEN has only one union for each category, the various currents of opinion within the union movement being represented by the following "tendencies":

- a) "Autonomous tendency", Unité, Indépendance et Démocratie (Unity, Independence and Democracy), 55 to 60%, socialist in spirit and clearly aligned with the ideological thrust of the CGT-F0.

- b) "Unity and action tendency", Communist inspiration, about 30%.
- c) "Anarcho-syndicalist tendency", advocating the emancipated school, 5-7%.
- d) "United workers front tendency", led by Trotskyites, about 3%.
- e) "Education and self-determination tendency", founded in 1968; some of its militants joined the Syndicat Général de l'Education Nationale (a CFDT-affiliated teachers' union).

At international level, the FEN is affiliated as a Federation with the IFFTU (International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions).

CGC

The Confédération Générale des Cadres (General Confederation of Executive Staff - CGC) emerged in October 1944 from the fusion of the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Ingénieurs (1936) with the Confédération Générale des Cadres de l'Economie Française (1937). Its branch unions are made up of employees who have reached a certain hierarchical level (engineers and executives). At the international level, the CGC is affiliated to the International Confederation of Management.

It should be noted that there are Federations of Engineers and Executives within the "centrales ouvrières" (workers' federations):

- in the CGT : UGICT (Union Générale des Ingénieurs Cadres et Techniciens - General Union of Executive Engineers and Technicians)
- in the CFDT : UCC (Union Confédérale des Ingénieurs et Cadres - Confederal Union of Engineers and Executives)
- in the CGT-FO: UCI (Union des Cadres et Ingénieurs - Union of Executives and Engineers)
- in the CFTC : UGICA (Union Générale des Ingénieurs et Cadres - General Union of Engineers and Executives).

C. Other organizations

In France there are a certain number of so-called "independent" or "autonomous" trade union organizations. Usually they are associated with a sector or even company. They include:

- Confédération des Syndicats Libres (1977 title) (Confederation of Free Trade Unions) is the successor to the CFT (Confédération Française du Travail) established in 1959.
- Union Française du Travail (French Labour Union) founded in 1975 and also the product of the split in the CFT.
- Confédération Nationale des Salariés de France (National Confederation of French Workers - CNSF) influential among road haulage workers.
- Confédération autonome du Travail (Autonomous Labour Confederation - CAT) emerged in 1953 from the transformation of the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes, which was itself a product of the CGT split of 1947/48.
- Confédération Nationale du Travail (National Labour Confederation - CNT), founded in 1946; libertarian in inspiration and describing itself as the "continuation in France of the anarcho-syndicalist tradition in the labour movement".

II. Historical evolution

A. Revolutionary trade unionism

From its origins trade unionism has been associated with ideological options. The labour movement is extremely complex, highly nuanced and consequently rather hard to define. Nevertheless it is possible to identify the main lines of thought underlying its historical development.

1. A revolutionary perspective characterized by an optimistic VISION of the future inspired by the idealist notions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This VISION features many illusions, but nevertheless was an element in the essential thrust of socialism and the labour movement. In this context, Henri de Saint-Simon developed his influence and the prophecy of a transformed humanity living in full liberty in a society "without constraint and without State".

2. Utopian socialism: a movement of thought without any connection with the actual situation of a specific period. Not conceiving at the time the possibility of the proletariat achieving emancipation by their own efforts, and rejecting violent revolution, the adherents of this ideology hoped that class cooperation and the conversion of the bourgeois would lead to a better society. Fourier was one of the main representatives of this tendency.

3. Scientific socialism. Together with Marxism, this represents a totally different view of the conditions for the realization of socialism and the emancipation of the working class (Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels, 1848). It lays down that the proletariat, which is seen as the most disinherited class, is the only force capable of emancipating the human race by emancipating itself. This working-class emancipation is supposedly to come about through:

- the collective ownership of the means of production by a State run by the working class;
- organization in a political party which would inspire and lead the struggle;
- the withering away of the State and of the political function in order to arrive at a pure economic function;
- the administration of objects would replace the government of men.

4. The Proudhonnan tendency. This tendency rejects violence and hopes for a peaceful revolution, even envisaging in the case of necessity class collaboration as a means of reaching socialism. Mutualism, federalism and cooperation are essential aspects of this trend.

The Proudhonnan conception of social change is essentially economic for it directs working-class action towards the control of society by the basis and not by the State.

5. Anarchism. As far as the anarchist tendency is concerned, the State is essentially the oppressor and not only the exploiter. Hence it is necessary to destroy the State. Anarchism is primarily a form of exaltation of the liberty of the individual who is called to overthrow the oppressors by means of violent revolution.

Established initially on an underground basis, trade unions were able to come into existence legally from 1884.

At Limoges in September 1895 a major segment of the workers' organizations (trade union federations, local labour conferences, trade unions ...) met to found the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail - General Confederation of Labour).

This move is something of a surprise in view of the gradual development of the working class movement, marked as it was from 1848 onwards by conflicts arising out of the rapid expansion of industry, by the efforts of militants to use every opportunity to draw attention to the situation of the workers, to obtain more freedom of action (freedom of association, May 1864) and the right to organize, by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the crushing of the Paris Commune by middle-class forces, by the mistakes of the First International (1864) rent by quarrels between collectivists and anarchists and so on ...

In spite of all these difficulties and divisions, the trade unions developed and considerably increased their following. Since all attempts to break this working-class movement were doomed to failure, the powers that be attempted - in the law of 1884 - to slow down and control it.

Founded in 1895, the CGT, strongly marked by anarchist and Blanquist ideas, was to draw up a doctrine (Charter of Amiens - 13 October 1906) which was to prevail until World War I. (We should remember that until 1919, the year of the foundation of the CFTC, the CGT was the only trade union confederation in France). This document, which argues the case of revolutionary trade unionism, states:

"that it is an acknowledgement of the class struggle waged in the economic field by the workers in rebellion against all the forms of exploitation and oppression, both material and moral, practised by the capitalist class against the working class", and that the union movement is waging a "constant campaign of protest" to "coordinate working-class efforts" and improve the conditions of the working class.

It further states that "This task is only one aspect of the union movement's work: the movement is preparing the way for total emancipation, which can be achieved only by expropriation of the capital class; it advocates the general strike as a course of action and believes that the trade union, at present a resistance group, will in the future become the organization for production and distribution, the basis of social reorganization"

This was a change which only the working class, organized into trade unions, could bring about. This theory, sometimes known as "trade union imperialism", now seems utopian, but in those days it made it possible to inspire in workers that enthusiasm without which they would have been unable to bear the very hard conditions under which they worked.

The other means by which change might be achieved, especially universal suffrage and parliamentarianism, were seen as trickery in which the socialist parliamentarians participated. The middle class relied for its strength on the support of the State, hence of the army and the police, and the Church. This oppressive organization of society was presented to the people as deriving from a need for national solidarity and backed up by an artificial concept: the Fatherland. "The Fatherland manifests itself to the worker in the form of the boss, the foreman, the soldier, the judge and the jailer", or again: "Where the worker works is his Fatherland," said Griffuelhes.

Hence the CGT stated that it was internationalist: "Geographical frontiers are modified at the will of the propertied classes... The workers recognize only the economic frontiers which separate the two enemy classes: the working class and the capitalist class". The ground on which the battle was to be fought was therefore that of the social classes, the weapon for the class struggle being the general strike.

Within the CGT there was not unanimous agreement about this conception of trade unionism. Two other trends emerged: on the one hand, the Marxists who, while endorsing the revolutionary intentions, did not think that trade unionism on its own could bring about the Revolution without a political leadership, i.e. the Party, consisting of the elite of the working class; on the other hand, the reformists who wished to restrict trade union action to the economic and social fields and bring about in this way a gradual improvement of working-class conditions.

These tendencies co-existed within the CGT until the first World War, which saw the collapse of revolutionary trade unionism. The myth of the International crumbled. It was in the name of the "sacred bond" that the leaders of the CGT gave their support to the national cause, attributing their conduct to the surprising about-turn of the working class: "At that moment the working class would not have left it to the agents of the powers that be to shoot us; they would have shot us themselves", was how Merrheim,

Secretary of the Fédération des Métaux, put it. When the war ended, there were two mutually opposed tendencies within the CGT: those who wanted to carry out reforms in the social field, profiting from the good relations with the government reached during the war and those who wanted revolution. To the latter the Revolution of October 1917 brought hope and an example...

Another event occurred in the same period: the foundation, in November 1919, of the CFTC (Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens - the French Confederation of Christian Workers), bringing together Christian trade unions, some of which were founded in 1887, especially among white-collar workers, textile and clothing workers. Unlike the CGT, which bases its action on class struggle, the CFTC wishes to promote social progress on the basis of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church as set out in the encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891). In spite of its active and swift commitment in industrial disputes, which earned it attacks both from Catholic circles and employers in Northern France, it made slow headway in its efforts to win working-class support until 1930 when the "social Catholics" began to take a sympathetic attitude to its endeavours.

B. The burden of ideological tradition

The outstanding characteristic of the French trade union movement from this date is that it experienced within itself all the crises deriving from the great ideological conflict which was to divide the world after the 1917 October Revolution. The periods of trade union disunity, like those of relative unity, were no more than the outcome of the various phases of this fundamental conflict. The war brought about new divisions within the CGT, and the divergences between the majority Jouhaux faction and the minority Mommousseau and Semard faction grew worse, especially during the bitter disputes touched off by the painful process of industrial conversion and the economic crisis. The political schism (Congress of Tours, 1920) between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party was followed in December 1921 by a rupture of the CGT, when the minority supporters of the Red Trade Union International founded the CGTU (Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire). This was far from being a clean break, and the CGTU included both workers loyal to the Amiens Charter and others who had adopted Communist theories. Impelled by an accumulation of union and political responsibilities, the CGTU gradually came to identify itself with the Communist Party to the detriment of its independence. This development prompted a major drop in membership and a new schism, for in 1926 revolutionary trade unionists

founded the CGT-SR (Confédération Générale du Travail, Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire - General Confederation of Labour - Revolutionary Trade Unionist).

The rise of Fascism, first in Italy and then in Germany, political scandals in France, and the activity of extreme right-wing organizations in France brought about a swing towards unity in the working class which culminated, at the Toulouse Congress of March 1936, in the merger of the CGT and the CGTU. The enthusiasm for unity was considerable and was reinforced by the electoral victory of the parties of the Popular Front, which agreed to sign the "Matignon agreements" (7 June 1936), a source of numerous social advances for the workers.

But the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact, which approved by the Communists and denounced by the non-Communists, brought about a new division in 1939.

After the war (1945) the CGT, which had been dissolved by the Vichy government, was reconstituted and the highly active militants of the Communist Party gradually assumed a decisive influence in it. They were in the majority at the 1946 Congress and relegated to a minority position the relatively weak Trotskyite tendency and the reformists. This Communist influence and the refusal of the CGT to accept the Marshall Plan resulted in the formation of the CGT-FO (Confédération Générale du Travail - Force Ouvrière) in 1948 under the inspiration above all of Jouhaux, Bothereau and Neumeyer.

C. A parallel course

Alongside this branch of French trade unionism, torn between two antagonistic concepts, another development was going on: the slow rise and transformation of Christian trade unionism. A few reference points will point up this phenomenon:

- Even at its foundation, in 1919, the CFTC was inspired by two schools of militants: those who wished to keep the organization to a strict observance of Catholic social teaching and obedience to the hierarchy of the Church, and those who demanded a degree of independence of judgment and initiative.
- For Christian trade unions, 1936 was an opportunity for active participation in the social struggle.

In 1940, the CFTC, like the CGT, was dissolved by the Vichy government. The part played by its militants in the Resistance put them in touch with trade unionists from the CGT. After the Liberation the CFTC, anxious to protect and preserve its identity, turned a deaf ear to the CGT's proposals for unification.

The CFTC began to change around 1946, when the "Reconstruction" study groups led, in particular, by intellectuals and militants from the JOC (Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne - Young Christian Workers) began working for the replacement in the CFTC statutes of the reference to the encyclical Rerum Novarum by a simple reference to Christian social ethics and then for the removal of this new reference.

This development led to the founding in 1964 of the CFDT, while those who advocated keeping the reference to Christian principles and opposed politicization formed their own organization, retaining the title CFTC.

FRENCH TRADE UNIONISM AND EUROPE

In the early years of the movement for European unification, it became evident that the trade union organizations were far from unanimous in their attitude to it. For, while the CGT made its hostility very clear, the CGT-FO, the CFTC (1) and the CGC showed themselves in favour, though expressing some major reservations on goals and guidelines.

The changes which have since taken place in the economic, social and institutional fields, together with the enlargement of the European Community, are such as to call for a closer look at trade union attitudes to that Community.

There appears to be a certain amount of agreement among the unions that the Community's institutions, as they now stand, have not lived up to the wishes of the working class.

What - in the eyes of the unions - should a united Europe be?

(1) Situation before 1964

For the CGT, "If Europe is to meet present-day economic and social needs, it must be a Community of the workers which, while respecting national differences and independences, promotes cooperation and gives the workers control over the means of production - a peaceful Europe in which they will be able effectively and democratically to settle all national and international problems which concern them. In other words, it must be a Socialist Europe" (2).

For the CFDT:

"The CFDT has consistently advocated a democratic Europe freed from national egotisms, independent of the great powers which dominate the world and dedicated to the service of the peoples and workers."

"Europe, as it exists and operates today, is not a Community of the workers. There is a wide gap between the reality in which we live and the declarations of intent made by the spokesmen of the governing groups of the national states. There is no political will to create an economic, social and political entity dedicated to the service of the workers and the peoples."(3)

"The CFDT is advisedly European because it believes that the existence of a "European Socialist" community capable of endowing Europe with an identity would be a major asset in the struggle to emancipate and liberate workers throughout the world".

For its part, the CGT-F0 stated that:

"In view of the seriousness of the continuing world crisis, the deterioration of the international situation and the profound changes which mark today's world, we consider that a United Europe is more necessary than ever in order to ensure social progress, and preserve democracy, liberty and peace".(4)

The CFTC stated: (5)

"that it remained firmly committed to the unification of Europe and to the strengthening of the European Community, believing that this was not a matter of choice but of necessity. The reasons which from the start impelled it to support an organization of European States remain valid: eradication

(2) Document of the Executive Commission, April 1979.

(3) Declaration of March 1977 and January 1979.

(4) Resolution of the CGT-F0 Congress, at Bordeaux, June 1980.

(5) Declaration of September 1976.

of the old enmities which tore the continent asunder, development of technology and the enlarging of markets, the search for a society capable of defending and promoting the common fundamental values of liberty, solidarity and respect for the individual ..."

The guidelines of the French trade unions in respect of European unification

Having defined their view of what a united Europe should be, the French trade unions recommend a number of approaches to the main problems with which the European Community is faced.

- the CGT (2) reaffirms its concern that national independence be maintained through respect for the institutions of each country which should serve as the basis for a just and far-reaching cooperation.

It deprecates a process of integration which is taking shape in an increasing number of sectors - agricultural, economic and monetary, social and commercial - and which involves increasingly centralized decision procedures.

Maintaining that this process is one of adaptation to the interests and goals of transnational monopolies, it believes that integration, far from resolving the economic and social problems connected with the crisis, tends, rather, to exacerbate contradictions, increase the effects of capitalist competition, and develop a process of hypercentralization which moves the workers further and further away from the decision-making centres.

The CGT considers it necessary to do everything possible to create a basis for a united struggle by the workers of Europe, for while the Common Market is not to its taste, it is a reality which it takes into account in its policies.

Two major factors determine the CGT's strategy:

- a) struggle against the multinational companies
- b) a joint search for economic and social demands or solutions with those trade union organizations in other countries which share its endorsement of the principle of class struggle.

- "For its part, the CFDT is determined to act in such a way that Europe unites and asserts itself in political, economic, social and ideological terms. The aim is not to develop a European power capable of standing alongside the other powers, but rather - bearing in mind the problems of the working class and the hard facts of present-day Europe to develop policies which will enable Europe to contribute to the emancipation and development of peoples throughout the world. European socialism is not an exportable commodity; it is no more than a condition making possible the establishment of genuine cooperation between the industrialized and developing countries."

"Hence the CFDT advocates the adoption of genuine Community policies on energy, agriculture, transport, an upward harmonization of social advantages, and health ... and with a content likely to solve the real problems which confront workers and the general public."

"Moreover, if some kind of stability is to be maintained in the world, Europe needs to be a political entity independent of the great powers. National efforts alone are incapable of bringing about positive changes within the Atlantic Alliance and throughout the world. Only a European entity based on a desire for cooperation and solidarity, capable of asserting itself vis-à-vis the great powers and the big multinationals, can help to establish a climate of peace and security throughout the world. The fact that this is the kind of Europe we want is in line with the trade union tradition of working for genuine international solidarity and peace." (3)

- The Confederation CGT-F0 (4) believes that "only a political will to achieve effective solidarity and a real cohesion between the Member States will make it possible to overcome the present divergences - budgetary, agricultural and institutional - arising out of selfish attitudes and national demands, which threaten to call into question the very foundations of European unification."

The Confederation finds it indispensable and vital that in dealing with the major problems of the moment, most of which extend beyond the confines of Europe (energy, monetary policy, the international division of labour, human rights, disarmament, peace....), Europe should speak with one voice. The CGT-F0 believes that there is an urgent need for the governments of the Member States to draft and agree upon genuinely Community policies in the economic, social, monetary and regional spheres, the implementation and above all the coordinated application of such

policies involving a gradual but genuine transfer of a share of governmental responsibilities to the Community."

- Similarly, the opinions expressed by the CFTC (5) show that its views differ very little from those of the other trade union confederations.

The CFTC also believes that Europe must speak with one voice if it is to influence the world situation - in monetary, economic and political terms - and preserve a form of society which respects human rights.

The CFTC is in favour of setting up Joint European Sectoral Committees, believing them to be the most effective institutions for speeding up the implementation of common economic and social policies and keeping both sides of industry equally informed.

Fully endorsing the Commission's Green Paper on worker participation, the CFTC feels that the reforms it recommends constitute a genuine test of willingness to consider the workers as fully fledged partners in economic life.

"To achieve greater solidarity, the CFTC recommends that the European Community help to bring about a more equitable sharing of the world's wealth, that it step up its efforts to improve the organization of the market in raw materials and stabilize their prices, and that it continue its efforts to promote the development of Third World countries, believing that the Lomé Convention set a welcome precedent in this field.

- In view of the growing extent of the economic crisis, the CFTC demands that the European States, in liaison with the Community, propose the idea of a far-reaching international plan for the development and equipping of the Third World aimed at establishing a more equitable economic order and as an essential factor in a resumption of world-wide economic activity.

These statements show that the French trade union movement wants the following for the European Community:

- a) the establishment of a Europe which is much more receptive to the real and specific problems of the working class and the general public,
- b) the development of an economic and monetary policy which can check inflation and establish social justice,

- c) the creation of conditions whereby Europe may become a genuine political entity capable of throwing off the influence of the super-powers and the multinationals and based on a desire for cooperation and solidarity,
- d) an increased role in the provision of aid to developing countries,
- e) the allocation of priority to social objectives, improving the working conditions and standard of living for workers, so as to make possible their harmonization while the improvement is being maintained (implementation of the social objectives of the Treaty of Rome),
- f) the creation or development of conditions which would enable the trade union organizations to play their part fully, so that it is not the workers who - in the final analysis - find themselves bearing the costs of the European unification which they endorse.

Enlarging the Community

The problems presented by the enlargement of the European Community have a dual aspect as far as the French trade union movement is concerned.

First, it is quite certain that an increase in the number of Member States will not cause governments to rethink the process of economic integration they have inaugurated. It is also evident that, if even fundamental Community problems have still not been solved, the admission of new countries is bound to increase the economic difficulties of certain sectors and accentuate the economic and social imbalances resulting from differences in development within the Community. That is why measures must be taken to enable the agricultural, industrial and tertiary sectors of the countries in question to make the necessary changes at national level.

Though expressing these general reservations, the CFDT, the CGT-FO and the CFTC are in favour of enlarging the Community, whereas the CGT is distinctly more reserved, taking the view that this enlargement "comes at a time of structural crisis in the capitalist system and therefore weakens the productive apparatus and the economy as a whole".

"The CFTC believes that the European Community should continue to strengthen itself so as to become an entity capable of competing with the world's other great economic zones and acting as a magnet to all countries dedicated to freedom and progress."

But it thinks that this enlargement should not mean a watering-down of the Community's ideals and its transformation into a free trade area.

The CFTC is in favour of stepping up the process of political unification of the Member States and considers the election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage, as provided for by Article 138 of the Treaty of Rome, to be a positive measure.

The CGT-FO reaffirms its support for creation of a "United States of Europe" and is in favour of enlargement of the Community. Without underestimating the added difficulties, it regards as of prime importance the strengthening of democracy both in the new member countries and within the Community resulting from the new accessions.

The CGT-FO also believes that the acceptance of new member countries should not lead to a watering-down of the Community's ideals and its reduction to the status of a free trade area.

Membership and trade-union representation in France

A characteristic of French trade unions is that they have comparatively few members in relation to the working class as a whole. Though it is difficult to be precise in this area, since estimates vary appreciably depending on whether they emanate from the organizations themselves or from external sources, it may be estimated - without too much risk of contradiction - that something like 25 per cent of the employed population are union members.

Another fact should be pointed out in connection with union membership in France. The level of membership varies greatly from sector to sector. It is very high among teachers (some 90%), in the electricity and gas industry, in the health services, and local and regional administration, and sizeable in the public sector. By the same token the growth industries have a relatively higher level of union membership than the traditional industries.

Since we do not know the membership of the trade union organizations as a whole calculated on common bases, their representativeness can and must be estimated when it is a matter of allocating a particular right to a "representative" organization.

This need to define representativeness arises in two connections:

- a) the power to negotiate and sign collective agreements or wage agreements
- b) to determine which unions should be represented on semi-official or private bodies.

The question of which are the most representative organizations at both national and sectoral levels was settled in 1966 and the following are the only ones recognized:

CGT - CFDT - CGT-FO - CFTC - CGC

The voting of 12 December 1979 for members of Labour tribunals - the first general elections for 17 years - and of 8 December 1982 were a test of the actual support for the major trade union organizations among their electors (1).

These elections helped to reaffirm support for the five major representative confederations which receive 95% of the votes cast in 1979 and 96% of those cast in 1982.

(1) Civil servants coming under the jurisdiction of the administrative tribunals did not take part in this election.

The following tables give the results of the elections of

8 December 1982

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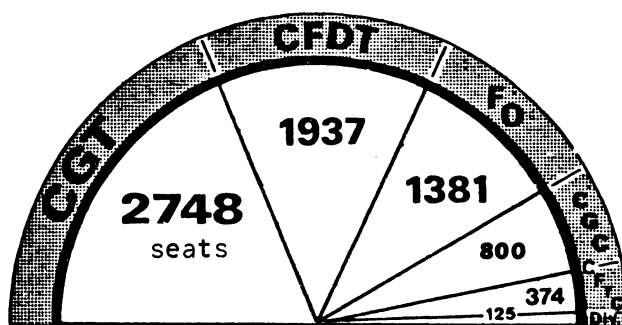
	1982		1979	
Members.....	13 547 411		12 323 163	
Votes.....	7 939 334		7 784 400	
Effective.....	7 642 557		7 517 156	
Abstentions.....	41,39 %		36,8 %	
CGT.....	2 813 458	36,81 %	3 188 036	42,4 %
CFDT.....	1 796 641	23,50 %	1 737 383	23,1 %
FO.....	1 359 126	17,78 %	1 313 309	17,4 %
CFTC.....	647 169	8,46 %	523 294	6,9 %
CGC.....	737 064	9,64 %	390 933	5,2 %
FGSOA.....	17 343	0,22 %	10 294	0,1 %
FMC.....				
Various.....	47 386	0,62 %	82 559	1,0 %
UFT.....	84 388	1,10 %	78 388	1,0 %
CAT.....	9 108	0,11 %		
ALS.....			192 860	2,5 %
CSL.....	130 874	1,71 %		

Syndicalisme hebdo [CFDT] 17.12.82

(In percentages. In brackets, trends since 1979)

	INDUSTRY	COMMERCE	AGRICULTURE	VARIOUS ACTIVITIES	MANA- GERIAL & SUPER- VISORY	TOTAL
CFDT	23,5 (+ 1,1)	23,4 (+ 0,1)	31,8 (- 2,0)	26,9 (0)	17,5 (- 0,3)	23,5 (+ 0,4)
CGT	45,0 (- 5,1)	36,7 (- 5,7)	28,2 (- 2,7)	30,2 (- 5,1)	13,0 (- 4,0)	36,8 (- 5,6)
FO	16,7 (+ 1,1)	20,5 (+ 0,9)	21,9 (- 1,1)	21,4 (- 0,6)	11,7 (- 2,3)	17,8 (+ 0,4)
CFTC	6,8 (+ 1,0)	9,5 (+ 2,1)	9,2 (+ 1,8)	11,9 (+ 1,1)	9,1 (+ 2,4)	8,5 (+ 1,6)
CGC	5,8 (+ 3,9)	5,8 (+ 4,2)	2,9 (+ 2,6)	4,9 (+ 4,1)	41,5 (+ 5,5)	9,6 (+ 4,4)
FGSOA	-	-	5,8 (+ 2,5)	-	0,2 (+ 0,1)	0,2 (+ 0,1)
CSL	1,9 (- 1,1)	1,5 (- 1,4)	- (- 0,3)	1,9 (+ 0,7)	1,7 (+ 0,2)	1,7 (- 0,8)
OTHERS	0,5 (- 0,5)	2,6 (+ 0,3)	- (- 0,5)	2,9 (+ 0,3)		1,8 (- 0,2)

Breakdown of union representation in the
labour tribunals



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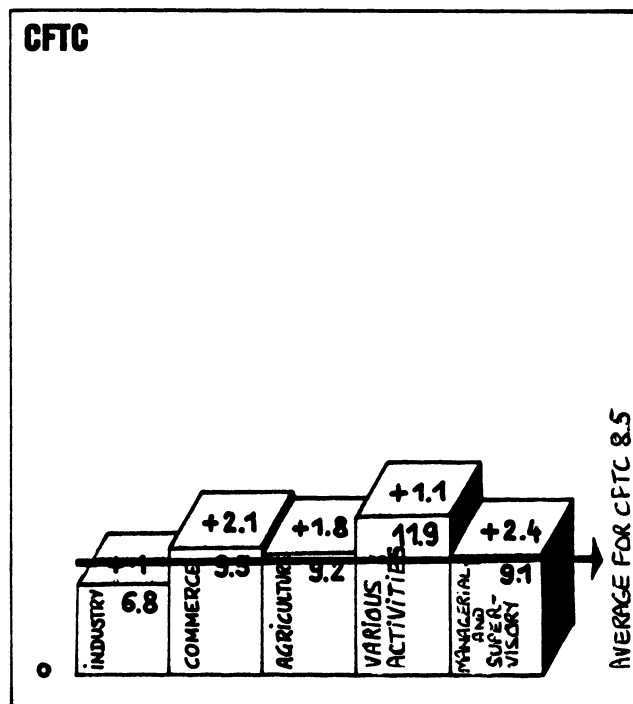
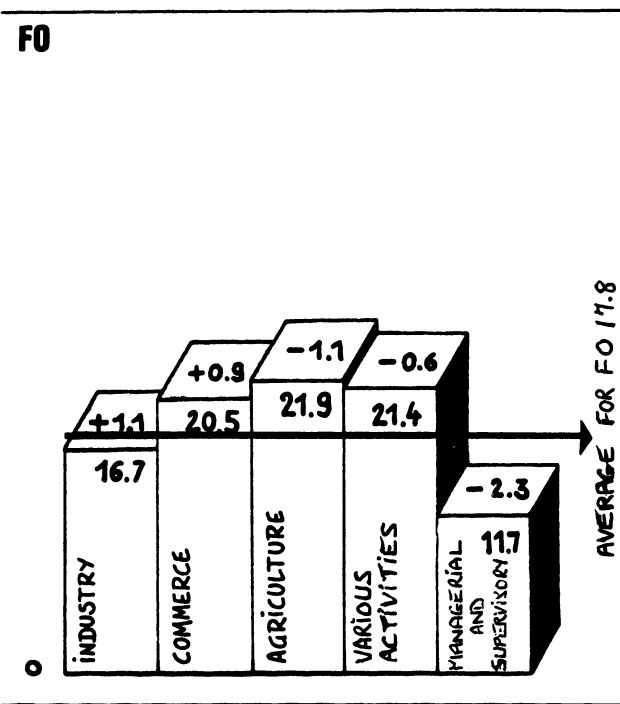
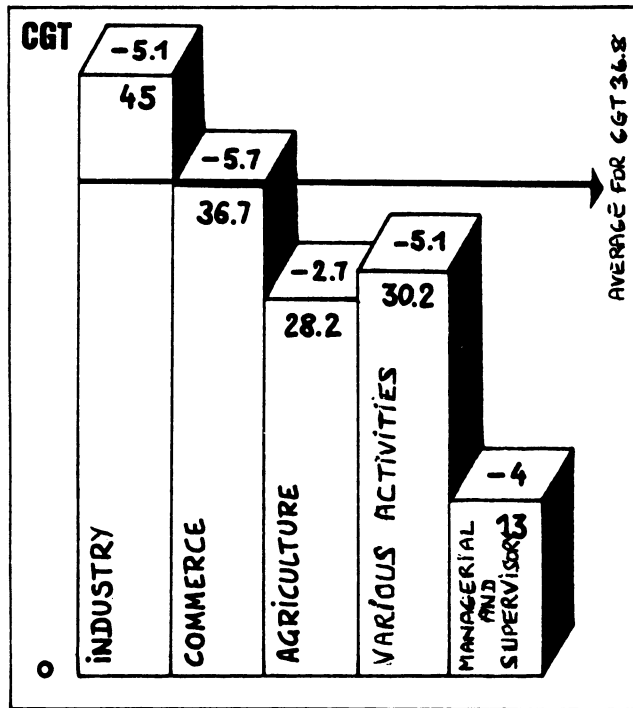
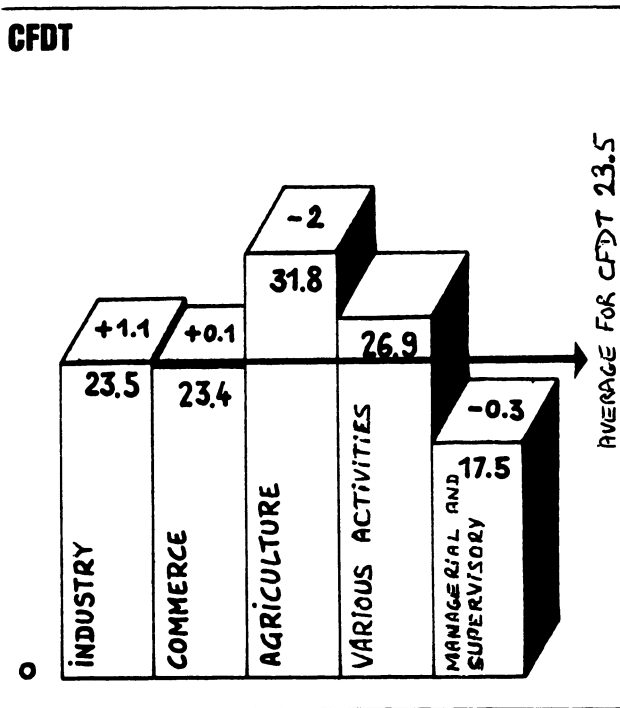
REGIONS	CGT		CFDT		FO		CFTC		COC	
	1979	1982	1979	1982	1979	1982	1979	1982	1979	1982
Alsace (1)	—	21,1	—	31,0	—	18,4	—	16,7	—	10,0
Aquitaine	45,7	41,4	18,9	20,0	22,2	21,8	5,5	6,7	5,0	9,0
Auvergne	41,1	36,7	26,0	26,9	17,0	17,4	6,4	8,5	4,4	9,5
Bourgogne	44,6	40,5	23,8	23,0	17,1	18,1	6,6	8,5	3,9	8,7
Bretagne	34,6	30,2	34,3	35,1	16,5	15,8	8,1	11,1	2,8	3,4
Centre	41,8	37,7	22,0	21,2	20,5	22,3	6,0	7,8	4,8	9,5
Champagne	48,0	40,6	21,7	21,0	18,7	20,2	4,2	7,8	3,8	6,0
Corse	58,4	54,8	9,2	13,4	30,8	28,3	0	1,1	1,4	3,5
Franche-Comté	38,8	34,3	26,3	27,4	17,4	18,7	7,9	7,6	5,9	10,1
Languedoc	50,9	45,8	17,4	19,2	17,8	17,8	6,6	8,8	3,9	6,0
Limousin	56,3	51,9	13,3	15,8	19,4	18,3	4,6	7,0	4,1	7,0
Lorraine (2)	40,1	32,1	27,8	27,2	17,8	17,6	8,0	12,1	4,8	9,4
Midi-Pyrénées	45,4	40,2	23,4	23,9	18,5	19,4	5,9	7,0	4,2	7,3
Nord	44,2	38,4	22,1	22,1	16,6	18,5	10,2	11,4	4,5	7,0
Basse-Normandie	29,2	27,7	30,1	29,1	22,1	23,2	8,9	10,9	2,7	7,1
Haute-Normandie	45,6	41,7	22,8	22,2	17,4	18,9	5,6	7,0	4,9	9,9
Région Parisienne	41,3	35,2	20,0	20,0	15,3	14,9	6,0	8,8	7,6	10,1
Pays de Loire	31,1	28,0	34,1	34,7	18,0	17,5	9,2	12,1	4,3	7,1
Picardie	47,5	43,2	19,9	20,0	18,9	20,8	6,7	8,0	3,5	7,3
Poitou-Charente	41,6	37,7	23,3	23,2	20,2	22,7	5,8	9,0	3,0	8,9
Provence-Côte d'Azur	47,3	42,7	17,5	17,1	19,8	20,3	6,2	7,8	6,1	11,4
Rhône-Alpes	43,5	39,3	26,2	25,7	15,3	15,4	7,6	8,8	4,2	8,4
TOTAL	42,4	36,8	23,1	23,5	17,4	17,8	6,9	8,3	5,2	9,5

(1) In 1979, Alsace-Moselle included Upper Rhine, Lower Rhine and Moselle.

(2) Except for Moselle in 1979. With Moselle in 1982.

THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF CONFEDERATIONS
BY SECTOR IN 1982

In percentages. Between brackets: trends since 1979.



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