

Charles Millard, A Canadian in the International Labour Movement: A Case Study of the ICFTU 1955-61

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Article abstract

Shortly after its formation in 1949, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) became hamstrung by disagreements over cold war issues. General Secretary Oldenbroek's caution was criticized by the Americans, and Charles Millard, Canadian Director of the Steelworkers, was appointed Regional Director, a post established to counterbalance Oldenbroek's influence and to revitalise the organization. However, Millard's zeal was insufficient to compensate for his shortage of international experience, and lack of guile left him vulnerable to opponents among the movement's power brokers. At odds with both the American and British union leaderships, he resigned in 1961, a victim of the constraints placed on labour internationalism by the Cold War.

Charles Millard, A Canadian in the International Labour Movement: A Case Study of the ICFTU 1955-61

Anthony Carew

Introduction

THE WORLD FEDERATION of Trade Unions (WFTU), the global union organization formed in 1945 in an ambitious attempt to continue in peacetime the alliance that had developed in World War II between the labour movements of Britain, the USA, and the Soviet Union, split apart in 1949 under the pressure of big power politics. Different approaches to internal structural matters, as well as policies on Marshall Aid in the context of the deepening Cold War, caused most 'western' labour federations to withdraw and create in 1949 an avowedly non-communist rival body in the shape of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The project that this new International set itself was to stimulate trade union development and cooperation around the world in a form that was 'free' from state control, with devolved regional structures designed to avoid the degree of administrative centralization that had been part of the WFTU. Within 5 years the ICFTU had secured the affiliation of 108 national trade union federations in 75 countries, representing in total 54 million members. On paper it was a powerful organization.¹

However, within the ICFTU there was an imbalance of influence between affiliates from developed industrial countries and those from developing nations.

¹On the formation of the ICFTU see Lewis L. Lorwin, *The International Labour Movement* (New York 1953) and John Windmuller, *American Labour and the International Labour Movement* (New York 1954). On the break-up of the WFTU see Anthony Carew, "The Schism Within the World Federation of Trade Unions: Government and Trade Union Diplomacy," *International Review of Social History*, 29 (1984), part 3 and Peter Weiler, "The United States, International Labour and the Cold War: The Break-Up of the World Federation of Trade Unions," *Diplomatic History*, 5 (1981).

Anthony Carew, "Charles Millard, A Canadian in the International Labour Movement: A Case Study of the ICFTU 1955-61," *Labour/Le Travail*, 37 (Spring 1996), 121-148.

Equally, among the largest affiliates there were ongoing mutual suspicions, especially between the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the American Federation of Labor (AFL), a legacy of the previous period when the former had been a loyal member of the WFTU while the AFL had never belonged and was the Federation's most vehement critic. This rivalry was reinforced by a tendency for national labour centres to identify in international affairs with the policy line of their own government, and in this respect there were often important differences between British and American foreign economic policies.²

Such mistrust between key trade union centres had the potential to undermine the Confederation's cohesion. To preserve organizational stability in this context and guard against the dominance of the International by one or the other of the big affiliates, it was agreed from the outset to locate the headquarters in Brussels rather than London or Paris, and it was understood that the leading officers of the Confederation would be drawn from smaller affiliates. This arrangement had the effect of projecting into the international limelight union leaders from the Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden. Though by no means small fry in terms of their financial contribution to the ICFTU, Canadian trade unionists too assumed a prominent role in the Confederation, their close relations with both the American and British movements and the respect in which they were held by national centres of the smaller European and unaligned states allowing Canadians to play the role of honest broker in international affairs.

This was how Charles Millard, the one-time Canadian Director of the United Steelworkers of America, conceived his role when in 1956 he was appointed Director of Regional Organization of the ICFTU, effectively the number two job in the International. Millard's prominent career in the Canadian labour movement has been well documented, but his international work for trade unionism is largely unknown.³ This article describes his career within the ICFTU while at the same time using his experience as a prism to demonstrate the limitations of the role of honest broker in a situation where internal power politics were so much in evidence. An examination of Millard's work in the Confederation from 1956 to 1961 highlights both the tensions operating in the field of international labour in this period and the powerful constraints on those who, for all their moral authority, simply did not command the big battalions. Despite the ICFTU's worthy intention to avoid dominance by the large affiliates, the practicalities of the international labour movement were that such pressures were hard, if not impossible, to contain.

The following sections explore the various phases of ICFTU politics in the 1950s: the background to Millard's appointment; the brief period of entente among the leading players that accompanied his appointment; the developing animosity

²On the roots of national differences in post-war foreign economic policy see Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War* (London 1968).

³L.S. MacDowell, "The Career of a Canadian Trade Union Leader: C.H. Millard 1937-1946," *Relations industrielles*, 43, 3 (1988).

towards him by the Americans over the communist question; his subsequent estrangement from the British over his position on colonialism; and his final demise and departure from the ICFTU.

Charles Millard was originally a cabinet maker from Oshawa who worked in the automobile industry in the 1930s before being laid off. Inspired by John Mitchell, the president of the Ontario Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), Millard helped form a CCF club in Oshawa and became an organizer among the unemployed. When re-hired by General Motors in the late 1930s he was a founding member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 222 and soon became that union's Canadian Director and a representative in Canada of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). From that base he helped organize the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) and was elected a vice-president. In 1940 he was made head of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) in Canada and remained the Director when SWOC transformed itself into the United Steelworkers. During the war he became the most prominent national figure in Canadian trade unionism, leading the 1943 steelworkers' strike against government wage controls.

He was, at one and the same time, a devout Christian as a member of the United Church and a democratic socialist who believed strongly in the political role of trade unionism and worked consistently to encourage union affiliation to the CCF. His democratic socialism led him into bitter conflict with powerful communist voices in both the UAW and the Steelworkers, and as a union leader he battled against the anti-democratic tendencies of the communists and their opposition to strikes in wartime. For this he earned their undying enmity and was routinely denounced as a "red baiter."

For a period after the war he combined his trade unionism with political office, serving two terms as a CCF member of the Ontario provincial parliament. Altogether, then, he was a familiar product of the 1930s industrial union movement, combining vast practical experience of grass roots organizing with a brand of ethical socialism. He was a man of principle who conducted his work with missionary zeal, a great motivator of colleagues, tactically shrewd but whose instinct to trust people could at times render him gullible. As a leading member of the CCL, he took an interest in international affairs and was a delegate at meetings of ORIT, the ICFTU's regional organization for the American hemisphere, and a member of the ICFTU's Regional Activities Fund Committee. It was with this record of service to the labour movement that he was appointed to the ICFTU Secretariat in July 1956. He was then a month short of his sixtieth birthday.⁴

⁴*Ibid.*; L.S. MacDowell "The 1943 Steel Strike Against Wartime Wage Controls," *Labour/Le Travail*, 10 (Autumn 1982); Transcript of Interview with Morden Lazarus, 1975, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 129, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; *AFL-CIO News*, 14 July 1956.

Tensions Among the Large ICFTU Affiliates

THE BRUSSELS BASED ORGANIZATION that Millard joined had suffered several years of internal discord, a catalogue of disagreements on matters big and small preventing the leading affiliates from cooperating in a spirit of harmony. At the heart of the matter was the question of communism in the labour movement and the approach to combatting it. In essence the division was between, on the one hand, the AFL and, on the other hand, the Europeans, in particular, the TUC. In this alignment the ICFTU secretariat, led by its Dutch General Secretary, J.H. Oldenbroek, came to be identified with the European group and thus lost the trust of the AFL leadership.

From the earliest days, the AFL leaders were critical of both the ICFTU's apparent lack of urgency in addressing the problem of communism and its ponderous approach to building a network of regional union organizations capable of administering such a programme. Their general hope had been that under American influence the new International would break with the pattern of domination by European socialist-inclined union centres that had characterized the international movement before the war. Yet it was evident to them that that pattern of domination still continued, with Oldenbroek at the centre of a web of like-minded European union leaders, foremost among whom was Sir Vincent Tewson, General Secretary of the TUC. Tewson and most of his colleagues were hardly less anti-communist than their AFL counterparts, but they were accustomed to living side by side with pro-communist elements in the British labour movement and they were disdainful of the crude, missionary zeal with which the AFL's semi-autonomous Free Trade Union Committee led by former American Communist Party secretary Jay Lovestone approached this problem.⁵ They were increasingly critical of inde-

⁵Windmuller, *op. cit.*, chs. 11-12. Jay Lovestone's influence on American labour's foreign policy in the post-war years is crucial for an understanding of developments within the ICFTU. He had been a founding member and leader of the American Communist Party who clashed with Stalin in 1928 and subsequently created his own Communist Party Opposition which continued in existence until 1940. He began working in the trade union movement in the late 1930s using his experience to help oppose Stalinist influence in the UAW and ILGWU before being appointed as head of the latter's International Relations Department at the beginning of the war. When a number of AFL unions created the Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) in 1944 to aid the trade union victims of fascism and assist the re-emergence of non-communist labour groups in post-war Europe, Lovestone became its Executive Secretary. From this base he was well placed to influence AFL international policy, despite the loose formal relationship that existed between the Federation and the independently financed FTUC. In 1963 Lovestone was finally appointed Director of International Affairs of the AFL-CIO, thus becoming formally responsible for an operation that many believed he had long effectively controlled.

For most of his career, Lovestone managed to preserve a veil of secrecy over his activities, but by the 1960s investigations of AFL-CIO international policy were beginning to focus on 'Lovestone diplomacy.' See Sidney Lens, "Lovestone Diplomacy," *The Nation*, 5 July 1965;

pendent programmes conducted by the FTUC — “Lovestoneism” as it came to be known — which were suspected of being supported by the Central Intelligence Agency. Meanwhile, the TUC was content to see the Confederation operate as a staid, bureaucratic organization, safe in the knowledge that in parts of the world where Britain had a particular interest it would be largely free to set its own agenda for activities, be they conducted independently by the British or under the umbrella of a sympathetic ICFTU.

Mild discord between the two camps had turned to outright hostility in 1951 when, against the unwritten understanding of the ICFTU’s founders that large affiliates should not seek positions of leadership in the Confederation, Tewson stood for the presidency and was elected. The AFL proceeded to boycott ICFTU meetings for most of 1952 in protest, and in particular they refused to contribute to, or otherwise be involved in the running of, the Regional Activities Fund launched in 1951 as the major vehicle for planning and financing organizational programmes around the world. Instead, the AFL continued to rely on independent international activity conducted through their own Free Trade Union Committee.

In contrast, the CIO, the industrial wing of American labour, supported the TUC and the ICFTU leadership against the AFL, its approach to communism akin to that of the British. And although the CIO had employed its own representatives in Europe during the Marshall Plan years, a parallel operation to that directed by Lovestone’s lieutenant Irving Brown in Paris, by 1953 its policy was to terminate this independent overseas work and operate exclusively through the ICFTU. As domestic circumstances in the US labour movement drove the two American centres to seek merger in 1955, it was the CIO’s hope that the AFL could be won over to a similar policy, with independent overseas activities abandoned in favour of central ICFTU programmes. For that to happen there needed to be a lasting rapprochement between the dominant figures in these two organizations — Walter Reuther, President of the CIO and George Meany, President of the AFL — but personal relations between these men were never cordial and in years to come would be strained to breaking point. Thus tension between the AFL and CIO, and later between the two components of the merged AFL-CIO, was also to play a significant part in internal ICFTU politics.

The Regional Directorship and the Politics Behind Millard’s Appointment

BY 1955 THE CONFEDERATION’S regional organizing activity was in danger of stalling largely due to lack of funding. With the AFL refusing to contribute to the

Ronald Radosh, *American Labour and United States Foreign Policy* (New York 1969), ch. 10 “Lovestone Diplomacy 1945-50.” Radosh concludes: “No other non-governmental figure, associated with a private institution, [wielded] as much power in the making of foreign policy,” 308. Since these early accounts, rather more documentation has become available on Lovestone, and with the release of his personal papers in 1995 a full scale review of his career is due.

Regional Fund, the TUC also announced that it would make no further payments but would instead increase expenditure on independent activities in British colonial territories through its own Colonial Development Fund.⁶ Besides the crisis in funding there was a problem of inadequate staffing of the Secretariat. Proposals had already been advanced by the Americans for strengthening the head office in Brussels by appointing additional assistant general secretaries. In part this was intended to facilitate a more professional approach to organizing, but it was also designed to reduce the amount of power concentrated in the hands of Oldenbroek whom the Americans mistrusted. In the course of their merger negotiations in 1955, the AFL and CIO finally agreed in principle to support an enlargement of the ICFTU Secretariat and, on the basis of adequate financing, to channel their international work through the ICFTU.⁷

For the AFL, that change in focus was predicated on the adoption of a more vigorous programme of anti-communism. It secured this at the ICFTU's 1955 Vienna Congress where George Meany won general support for a policy against affiliates having contacts with communist organizations. In light of this success he then supported the introduction of a one cent per member levy to expand the Confederation's organizing budget. The Congress also agreed to strengthen the Secretariat, not through the appointment of assistant general secretaries as previously canvassed but through the appointment of a Director of Organization. The AFL envisaged such a person being a powerful counterweight to Oldenbroek. The high status of the position was reflected in the decision that the incumbent should report directly to the Executive Board rather than to the General Secretary. He would effectively be the number two person in the ICFTU hierarchy.

It took a year to fill the position, the selection being the most sensitive political issue in the ICFTU. The manoeuvring that ensued brought out all the tensions within the Confederation. At the Vienna Congress, Pat Conroy, the respected former Secretary-Treasurer of the CCL, was briefly suggested for the job but this idea was quickly squashed by Lovestone: the person selected would have to be acceptable to the AFL. Laurie Short, an Australian with close links to Catholic Action and strong anti-communist credentials was a possible candidate and was talked of favourably in FTUC circles. But without doubt the AFL's preferred candidate for the position was Irving Brown, Lovestone's chief lieutenant in Europe who had long sought a senior post in the international labour movement. However Brown's record in Europe since 1945 as a combative representative of the Free Trade Union Committee meant that he was certain to be opposed by many European centres as well as the CIO.

⁶Krane to Becu and Millard, 10 January 1961, "Overseas Activities of the British TUC," Krane Collection, Box 16(3), Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, Detroit.

⁷Victor Reuther to All CIO ICFTU Congress Delegates, 1955, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 10 (1), Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, Detroit.

It was in this context that Charles Millard's name was suggested to AFL-CIO Vice-President Walter Reuther and CCL Secretary-Treasurer Donald MacDonald by Bill Kemsley, the Canadian-born representative in the ICFTU's New York office.⁸ Millard was advancing in years, and with younger men aspiring to lead the Canadian Steelworkers, his position in the union was becoming uncomfortable. Yet he had considerable experience in international labour affairs with the CCL, and as far as the ICFTU post was concerned, he enjoyed British support and was on good terms with the TUC International Committee Chairman Charles Geddes who also chaired the ICFTU's nominating committee. Behind the scenes Geddes worked with the CCL to win support for Millard's candidacy and at the end of 1955 both he and Reuther suggested Millard's name to Meany. But Meany told Reuther that he was opposed to any socialist or any Canadian getting the post. His antipathy to Canadians was allegedly on grounds that they were simply tools of the British TUC who in turn were stooges of the British Foreign Office.⁹

Millard's anti-communist credentials could hardly have been in doubt, though as a socialist the basis of his position here was different from that of Meany. The problem was almost certainly that Millard had friends in the TUC and the Reuther wing of the American labour movement whom the ever suspicious Meany did not trust. From his point of view, there were more reliable anti-communists available. Beyond this, Steelworkers International President David McDonald also informed Meany that he opposed Millard's nomination on the grounds that the Canadian was identified with an oppositional faction within the union.¹⁰

Still Millard was determined to keep his candidacy alive. Signalling clearly where he stood in the contest between the AFL and the ICFTU, he wrote to Oldenbroek explaining that while he would prefer to have David McDonald's support, he was prepared to stand without it:

I did want you to know that I was not seeking the Director of Organization post but allowed my name to go forward to offset any real attempt to put either Short or Brown in that job. ... However, having watched Meany and Brown in action at the ICFTU and knowing something of the importance of the job to be done, I just felt that, regardless of any personal risk we (that is, the ICFTU and our Canadian movement) couldn't afford to take the chance of letting an unwelcome choice be made through default on our part.¹¹

He certainly had reservations about his capacity to do the job, but his modest disclaimer about not seeking the post was not accurate and he was committed to winning support for the appointment. Consequently, he urged CCL Secretary-

⁸Kemsley to author, 15 June 1987.

⁹Barber to Greenhough, 20 June 1956, LAB 13/1218, UK Ministry of Labour Papers, Public Record Office, Kew; Millard to Oldenbroek, 3 January 1956, JHO Personal 0/12, ICFTU Collection, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

¹⁰*Chicago Daily News*, 14 December 1955.

¹¹Millard to Oldenbroek, *op. cit.*

Treasurer Donald MacDonald to step up the pressure by entering a formal nomination while at the same time seeking the Trades and Labour Congress's endorsement of it.¹²

He also confronted Meany in person over the charge of being a stooge of the TUC. Implicit in this move was the threat that if Meany did not withdraw the comment there would be a serious breach between the leadership of the United States and Canadian labour movements which Meany would not welcome.¹³ Their meeting saw no change in the position of the AFL-CIO President. On the other hand, David McDonald began to soften his opposition to the candidature, perhaps seeing the possibility of some personal kudos from having an officer of his own union in such a prominent international post. In Britain Charles Geddes continued to promote Millard's cause and the latter alerted him to the likelihood of an approach from David McDonald to enquire if the Canadian was acceptable to the TUC. "Of all my experiences in the labour movement," Millard wrote, "this business of seeking appointment to a job I don't feel up to and don't particularly want is certainly the strangest."¹⁴ Meanwhile, Bill Kemsley, who had originally floated his name and who had the ear of Oldenbroek, urged the General Secretary to support Millard if he were formally nominated. Oldenbroek himself seemed willing to work alongside Millard, doubtless comforted by the knowledge that he was no friend of Meany and that his appointment would frustrate the original AFL hope of creating an alternative focus of leadership in the ICFTU aimed at neutralising his own power. In early March, having received from the CCL a formal nomination on behalf of Millard, Oldenbroek expressed the private hope that the Executive Board would make an appointment in the summer.¹⁵

An appointment such as this would eventually be clinched on the basis of private power-broking and in this the key figures were Meany and Walter Reuther. The merger of their two separate organizations in the AFL-CIO in December 1955 had not resolved underlying differences over international policy and indeed serious disagreements now broke out between the two men. Meany made hawkish anti-communist pronouncements that were widely understood to reflect Lovestone's continuing influence, whereas Reuther was vocal in offering support to non-aligned statesmen such as Indian Prime Minister Nehru whom Meany was bent on attacking over his acceptance of aid from the Soviet Union. However, 1956 was a Presidential election year in the United States and the sparring between Meany and Reuther had to cease if American labour was to operate with any cohesion during the election campaign.

¹²Report of ICFTU EB, 12-18 December 1955, by C.H.Millard, 31 January 1956, CLC Collection, vol. 257, National Archives of Canada.

¹³Kemsley to Oldenbroek, 27 February 1956, JHO Personal 0/12.

¹⁴Millard to Geddes, 18 May 1956, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 34.

¹⁵Oldenbroek to Millard, 3 March 1956, JHO Personal 0/12.

Thus, after six months of public disagreement, the two men patched up their differences in June 1956 in a package of measures that appeared to reflect a victory for Reuther. He succeeded in reversing Meany's veto on Millard's selection as ICFTU Regional Director. Meany also affirmed once again that the Americans would work through the ICFTU in international affairs, and as an earnest of this it was decided that the AFL-CIO would pay the voluntary levy of one cent per member that was still being withheld.¹⁶ It was agreed further that the independent work of the FTUC would be phased out, though only over a twelve month period, and that Lovestone would then transfer his employment to the AFL-CIO and work under the Director of International Affairs. Under this arrangement the prospect was left open that the AFL's Irving Brown might, as a consolation, be appointed Assistant Regional Director for the Confederation. Finally, it was understood that Meany would assume the position of co-chairman of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Committee in which role he would be even more closely involved in the minutiae of international policy.

The Uncertain Truce — June to October 1956

REPORTS OF THIS AGREEMENT sparked renewed optimism about the ICFTU's prospects. Millard wrote to Geddes of a new direction in international affairs, especially "the definite moves being made toward putting all their international eggs in the one ICFTU basket."¹⁷ However, skeptics noted that the real question was whether or not the FTUC really would be wound up within twelve months or whether this apparent period of notice was really a device to buy time. Several doubted that Lovestone would be so easily neutralised: as Arnold Steinbach of the US Department of Labour's Office of International Affairs told British Embassy staff in Washington, Lovestone was likely to lose all battles but the last.¹⁸

In notifying Oldenbroek of his willingness to accept Millard for the post, Meany wrote: "I can assure you that it is the intention of the AFL-CIO to give him every possible support in the hope that he will secure the desired results." Yet in the same letter Meany moved quickly to damp down any belief that his position on international affairs had undergone a major change. He explained that the decisions taken by the AFL-CIO Executive Council were in the context of the need to make the ICFTU an effective agency for protecting workers from communism, something which, he claimed, it had not been in the past. He also placed in context the decision to allow the FTUC twelve more months in which to operate. The discontinuance of independent international work through the FTUC, he advised Oldenbroek, was conditional on there being visible results of the work of the Director of Organization and his department. Consequently, the AFL-CIO had agreed that in a year they would review the ICFTU's organizational activities and then

¹⁶Kemsley to Oldenbroek, 14 June 1956, JHO Personal 0/12.

¹⁷Millard to Geddes, 13 June 1956, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 34.

¹⁸Fane to Greenhough, 8 June 1956, LAB 13/1218.

determine the nature and scope of our future activities in this field Any intimation or statements that may have come to your attention — from the press or otherwise — to the effect that the AFL-CIO has made any definite decision as to what it is going to do one year hence in this field are absolutely false.¹⁹

At the ICFTU Executive Board meeting a few days later, Millard's appointment was confirmed, but there was considerable resentment at Meany's letter to Oldenbroek which effectively established a twelve month trial period before the AFL-CIO would deliver on its commitment to end independent activities. In supporting Millard's nomination, Geddes said that Millard had to be given the material support necessary and it would not be possible for him to achieve anything within a year. Proposing Millard, the CLC's Donald MacDonald stressed that no individual affiliated union centre had the right to stipulate under what conditions or reservations any appointments were made. Only the Executive Board itself had the right to decide whether or not a job was being done properly. There was, he insisted, no such thing as a one-year limit.²⁰

Yet there was no doubting the fact that Millard had effectively been appointed on probation and that his position lacked security. Resisting the line that the ICFTU could be relied upon to wage an effective anti-communist policy, Lovestone worked hard to convince Meany that, in this respect, the continued existence of the FTUC was indispensable. And from a Europe erupting with the sound of anti-Stalinist revolt in Poland and Hungary, Irving Brown wrote:

Anyone who sees this as we do over here cannot just understand how it is possible for the AFL-CIO to give up its independence in international affairs. Yes, keep ... the shadow — ICFTU — but don't give up the substance, an independent American trade union policy and operation relative not only to our American government but to all other governments plus the European unions.²¹

Moreover, coached by Brown, the AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer William Schnitzler, a loyal if unsophisticated follower of the Meany line in foreign policy, returned from an extended visit to Europe in late summer 1956 with lurid reports of the TUC coming under increasing influence from Communists and of a growing minority of its members ready to support dialogue with the Communist bloc.²²

The AFL-CIO response to what were perceived as disturbing developments in Europe and the ICFTU was for its International Affairs Committee, chaired by Meany, to draw up a Nine-Point policy programme intended for submission to the

¹⁹Meany to Oldenbroek and Becu, 25 June 1956, CLC Collection, vol. 257 (14).

²⁰Irving Brown, Report on ICFTU EB Meeting, 2-7 July 1956, Meany Collection, Box 56 (12), George Meany Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland.

²¹Letter from Irving Brown, 8-15 September, Hamburg/Vienna, Meany Collection, Box 56 (14).

²²Lovestone to Meany, 10 September 1956, Meany Collection, Box 56 (14).

ICFTU's Executive Board in November 1956. Presented as a response to the Kremlin's "new look" strategy for advancing Soviet domination and communist influence in the world labour movement, it aimed at countering what it saw as the vastly expanded "united front" and "popular front" strategies adopted at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). To re-assert American influence over ICFTU organizing activities it called for the appointment of a small committee to assist Millard's Organization Department "in the fight for free trade unions and against communism." And among various other anti-communist measures in the Nine-Point Programme, a concerted campaign against colonialism was demanded in order to limit the appeal of communism in the overseas territories of western powers.²³ Submitted so soon after a formula for ICFTU harmony had been agreed in summer 1956, these proposals came as a shock and were to enliven debate for much of the coming year.

Millard as Regional Director: Staffing and Finance

IN PRACTICE the publication of this programme meant that from the moment that Millard began his appointment as Regional Director he was faced with a proposal which would have seen him closely supervised by an American-led committee and denied much initiative or freedom of manoeuvre. By way of further restriction, Meany also insisted that there would be no retrospective payment of AFL-CIO contributions to the one cent levy fund for regional programmes for the period between the adoption of the policy at the Vienna congress and Millard's appointment a year later. Payments would only be made as of July 1956 when the post was filled. Thus, even before he began work in Brussels, the battle lines were drawn.

For his part, Millard made it clear that he was prepared to stand up to the AFL-CIO President. The first challenge he had to face was whether or not to appoint Irving Brown as his deputy, a move that would effectively allow the Lovestoneites a presence in his department. Initially Millard had indicated that he might accept Brown's appointment as a face-saving device for Meany, so long as it was understood that Brown worked for the ICFTU only and would not be running errands for the FTUC.²⁴ However, once installed as Regional Director, he decided that there could be no place in his department for Brown, and he chose instead Jay Krane, an American member of the ICFTU staff who had long-standing ties with the industrial wing of the AFL-CIO and was on good terms with the leadership of the British TUC. These were factors that inevitably made Krane suspect in the eyes of Meany.

In offering Krane the job, Millard knew that he was throwing down the gauntlet. Apparently unconcerned about the need to appease his paymaster, he advised Krane:

²³Proposals for Action, Respectfully Submitted by the AFL-CIO to the ICFTU EB Meeting, November 1956; Meany to Oldenbroek, 23 October 1956, Meany Collection, Box 56 (15).

²⁴Millard to Geddes, 18 May 1956, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 34.

... you need have no concern about what George Meany may think about the choice we have made. We have passed the point where we can afford to let him call the tune on such matters. I certainly want to work cooperatively with him ... but the majority, rather than a minority, no matter how powerful, must prevail if we are going to be successful in the organizational programme. ... [M]y guess is he will probably have difficulty in swallowing some of the proposals which I may make.

But, he added, "... we might just as well find out now who is going to call the tune."²⁵ It was a bold position to adopt, but it indicated a certain naivety on Millard's part in thinking that the AFL-CIO President could be so easily faced down. It was the sort of reckless approach that would ultimately cause Millard's undoing.

Millard arrived in Brussels in October 1956. Many in the ICFTU bureaucracy were optimistic that this fresh face would give the Confederation a new lease of life in a situation where morale was low. Oldenbroek was not widely liked by his headquarters staff. For years he had monopolised control in the Confederation, reluctant to share responsibility even though organizational efficiency suffered in consequence. As Millard recognised, it was tending to become a one-man band. Many hoped that his more open style and willingness to delegate would change matters. He was very much aware that there was an "uneasy peace" in the ICFTU which might not last. From the outset there were hints that the relationship between Oldenbroek and his new Regional Director was brittle. Oldenbroek himself seemed to be on his guard and keen to ensure that Millard did not disturb his control of the Confederation. According to ICFTU staffer Richard Deverall, an early request by Millard to see all outgoing correspondence was countermanded by Oldenbroek who was upset at the apparent lack of faith in himself.²⁶

The new Director of Organization's first Executive Board meeting came just weeks after the unveiling of the AFL-CIO's proposed Nine-Point Programme. The meeting went badly for the Americans: for the TUC Geddes attacked the proposals furiously as an attempt to undermine Millard and his programme, no more debate was allowed and further consideration was deferred for six months. To make matters worse, Krane's appointment was now formally announced, the final blow to Irving Brown's hopes for a position of influence within the ICFTU. "What a fiasco," Brown wrote to Lovestone, "the ICFTU now led by Oldenbroek, Millard, and Krane. How can we go on? Or should we go on?"²⁷

In this unpromising climate, the Executive Board turned its attention to a proposal by Millard to create a voluntary International Solidarity Fund to meet the ever-pressing costs of organizational work. This was his attempt to grapple with

²⁵Millard to Krane, 10 and 28 September 1956, Krane Collection, Box 17 (32); Lovestone to Meany, 24 September 1956, Meany Collection, Box 56 (14).

²⁶Deverall to Meany, 20 October 1956, Meany Collection, Box 56 (15). It should be noted that in Meany's office, Deverall was not always regarded as a reliable reporter. Information from Virginia Tehas, Meany's private secretary.

²⁷Brown to Lovestone, 12 December 1956, Meany Collection, Box 56 (16).

the problem of funding and to seek resources beyond what the one cent levy yielded. Without additional funding even his Department's current activities would generate an annual deficit of \$260,000 whereas the intention behind the International Solidarity Fund was to raise \$5.6 million over three years. To allow donors more control over expenditures, they would be allowed to earmark their contributions for particular projects.²⁸ The TUC, CLC, and other federations supported the proposal but in the existing climate there was no chance that the AFL-CIO would be willing to contribute. Indeed, the immediate outcome of the Executive Board was that the AFL-CIO even suspended its payments of the already agreed one cent levy on the grounds that Millard had insulted the AFL-CIO in referring to their lack of previous contributions.²⁹

Millard's World Tour

THE NEW REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S arrival on the international scene, then, served only to intensify the friction between the major players. With the ICFTU now embarking on a more active organizational programme there would be a growth in the number of areas and issues over which their interests clashed. From January to April 1957 Millard travelled in Africa, Latin America, Japan, South-East Asia, and India to initiate the first steps in what was intended to be a more centrally-directed programme, even if administered by devolved regional bodies. Wherever he went reminders of the tensions within the ICFTU fold were present.

In Ghana he attended the ICFTU's first African Regional Conference which was intended to mark a new phase of trade union organizational work in that continent. However, also signalling a new American interest in what was historically a British, French, and Belgian sphere of interest, the AFL-CIO was strongly represented at the conference. As the British well understood, unless carefully controlled by the TUC, further ICFTU activity in Africa would spell a diminution of their own, and a possible growth of American, influence.

In Central and South America Millard's purpose was to begin the process of developing an organizing programme for the ICFTU's hemispheric organization, ORIT. In this case it was Meany and Lovestone who were deeply mistrustful of plans which they saw eventually leading to Brussels' control of Latin American affairs. Millard feigned surprise, writing, "I just can't understand George Meany. ... [W]hat the dickens is [he] so scared about. I understand he is now using phrases such as 'Millard is out to get me.'" But in reality he fully understood the situation and mused, "Perhaps the forces who oppose the theory of a trade union Munroe doctrine for Latin American trade unions are getting too strong for Lovestone ...

²⁸Victor Reuther to Walter Reuther and Meany, 18 December 1956, UAW International Department, Reuther-Carlner Collection, 1956-62, Box 2 (6), Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, Detroit.

²⁹Millard to Schnitzler, 2 January 1957, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2, National Archives of Canada.

and George to cope with as in the past."³⁰ Travelling on to the United States for a confrontation with Meany, his ebullience was undiminished and he told colleagues, "I look forward to having a fighting good time if that is what it must be."³¹

If the AFL-CIO was ever to accept ICFTU leadership in international affairs much depended on Walter Reuther, the Confederation's best friend in the USA, exerting a strong influence among fellow American trade unionists. Reuther did indeed work hard for this end. But whatever hopes he might have had of winning Meany to a position of greater support for the ICFTU, their realisation was made more difficult as reports reached Washington of pronouncements made by Millard in the course of his travels.

While in Japan he had spoken to the press about a proposed Afro-Asian Trade Union Conference being promoted by the largest Japanese trade union centre, Sohyo, at the prompting of the People's Republic of China. This was widely seen as an attempt by the communist bloc to extend its influence among labour movements of developing countries and it posed a delicate tactical problem for the ICFTU. Sohyo was not one of its affiliates but the ICFTU had been patiently wooing it for several years, denying Meany's claim that the centre was already communist and that the ICFTU should concentrate instead on building up a smaller, break-away organization. Millard was sensitive to the ICFTU position and, careful not to offend the Sohyo membership, told Japanese reporters that he was neither in favour of, nor opposed to, the staging of the conference.³² When asked by Asian trade unionists generally what he thought of their accepting invitations to visit the USSR or China, his diplomatic reply was:

You belong to an autonomous organization. You have affiliated voluntarily with the ICFTU and you must therefore find your own answer to that question. But, at the same time, we suggest that the basis of your answer must solely be what good visits will do in making your union stronger and more effective³³

Reports also filtered back that, in discussion with Japanese trade unionists, Millard had pandered to the prevailing spirit of anti-Americanism by advising them against accepting American government-sponsored visits to the United States because of the odium of being associated with the US government.³⁴

³⁰Millard to Margot Thompson, *et al.*, 3 March 1957, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2. One of Millard's plans for keeping closer control of Latin American affairs was to appoint Canadian Jim Bury to work in the ORIT Secretariat.

³¹*Ibid.*; Millard to Oldenbroek, 18 January 1957, JHO Personal 0/12.

³²ICFTU Tokyo Office News Report No. 83, 7 March 1957. In 1954 there had been a split in Sohyo out of which a new moderate rival, Zenro was formed. Meany and Lovestone were strongly disposed to support Zenro against Sohyo.

³³*Free Labour World*, May 1957, 6.

³⁴Undated note from Lovestone (June?) 1957, Meany Collection, Box 56 (21).

At the ICFTU's Asian Regional Conference in Delhi in March, Millard expounded his personal view, and what he also stated was the official ICFTU view, on communism. Again he reflected an awareness of the wish of Indians and other Asian people to avoid taking sides in the Cold War:

On several occasions during my trip, I have been asked is the ICFTU anti-Communist? The answer is definitely no. The ICFTU is first, last and all time in a positive dynamic way 'for democracy.' We are no more anti-Communist than we are anti-employer, anti-management, and anti-government or political party except when they stand in the way or try to block the way to freedom, bread and peace³⁵

Following his visit to the Far East, Millard was very keen that the ICFTU should dispel the widespread suspicion that they were a pawn of the western powers and particularly the USA. He was convinced of the need to press for China's entry into the United Nations. Critical of the dyed-in-the-wool anti-communism of the American labour attachés he had met, he remarked to Canadian friends on the American inability to understand that, as in Latin America, there were places in the world where the United States authorities were not welcome.³⁶

Lovestone's reaction to all this was predictable: "I think the man is insane," he told Meany. "Some people might say Millard should be given a chance ... for my two cents ... Mr Millard should be given no chance to violate [ICFTU policies], not even for minutes, let alone months or years."³⁷ Irving Brown agreed that Millard's pronouncements were "catastrophic." "It is quite an anomaly," he wrote in his report, "to see an American-designated candidate as the champion of neutralism and what could be called 'anti anti-communism'."³⁸

Against this background there was now little hope of the ICFTU receiving official AFL-CIO backing for any international project that Millard might launch. The question was whether or not sufficient funds would be found even to commence a more ambitious programme. In fact, the TUC was willing to bridge the gap left by the Americans. Oldenbroek and Millard were invited to attend a meeting of the TUC International Committee to discuss the proposed International Solidarity Fund shortly after Millard returned to Europe. In practical terms their meeting with the TUC led to the British promising a substantial contribution of £500,000 to the Solidarity Fund, even before the precise details of the Fund's administration had been settled.³⁹

³⁵ Lovestone to Meany, 11 April 1957, Meany Collection, Box 56 (19).

³⁶ Millard to Margo, *et. al.*, 25 February 1957; 11 March 1957, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2.

³⁷ Lovestone to Meany, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Report of the Sub-Committee of ICFTU, 10 March 1957 in Irving Brown Report, 17 May 1957, Meany Collection, Box 57 (25).

³⁹ Millard to Margo, 11 March 1957, *op. cit.*; Lovestone to Meany, 16 July 1957, Meany Collection, Box 56 (22).

The TUC was evidently not prepared to allow financial pressure by the Americans to undermine the Confederation's regional work. What motivated this was deep British anger at that section in the AFL-CIO's Nine-Point Programme for anti-communist activity that called for concerted action against colonialism. The Americans had in their sights the African continent where the French in Algeria and the British in various countries in west, east, and southern Africa were the main offenders. On the subject of American conduct in general within the ICFTU, the TUC regarded themselves as long-suffering and had so far refused to become the spearhead of the opposition to AFL-CIO domination that some other European labour movements wanted them to lead. But given the American stand on the Nine-Point Programme and its implications for the colonies, they felt they simply had to oppose it.⁴⁰ And with the ICFTU Congress scheduled to take place in Tunis in July the likelihood of a major battle between the British and Americans was growing.

The AFL-CIO Programme for Africa

THAT SUCH AN OPEN BATTLE was avoided was due to Meany's pragmatic decision taken shortly before the Tunis Congress to shelve the Nine-Point Programme. His doing so was based on a recognition that the political tide in Africa was building up strongly against colonialism and that the TUC and other European centres which backed their government's colonial policy would soon be forced on the defensive. Already the Americans were cultivating African nationalist labour leaders like Tom Mboya in Kenya.⁴¹ With or without the Nine-Point Programme, the chances were that the ICFTU would turn sharply in the direction of anti-colonialism. Meany therefore accepted advice that the best course was not to appear at Tunis as a disruptive influence within the Confederation but instead to capitalise on the growing, restive mood of nationalism while maintaining the capacity for independent American work in the field.⁴² This general assessment was well-founded and American ties with African labour centres were greatly strengthened at Tunis. Building on this, one of the AFL-CIO delegates, A. Philip Randolph, a black railroad union leader, travelled on afterwards to East Africa from where he returned to the USA with recommendations for a programme of assistance for African labour, including training for union leaders in the USA. These proposals were adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council and \$50,000 was appropriated to meet the initial cost. The AFL-CIO was moving into independent African activities outside the control of the ICFTU. Perfunctory steps were taken to discuss the programme with

⁴⁰Braine to Myrddin-Evans, 5 February 1957, USA: Trade Unions, 1957, LAB 13/1270.

⁴¹Tom Mboya was General Secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labour and as such became the most prominent African trade union leader of the period. He played a significant role within the ICFTU before becoming a cabinet minister in the Kenyan government following independence. He was assassinated in 1969.

⁴²Irving Brown Report, 17 May 1957, Meany Collection, Box 56 (20).

the TUC and the ICFTU, but it was always clear within Meany's circle that, regardless of the outcome of these consultations, the programme would go ahead. The ICFTU could join in if they wished, but the initiative and leadership would come from the Americans.⁴³

In the event the ICFTU leadership expressed no enthusiasm for the idea of training Africans in the USA, and their mistaken impression was that in light of their cool reaction Millard would be invited by the AFL-CIO to develop an ICFTU training programme that would be financed initially by American contributions. He, himself, was certainly hopeful that the proposed training scheme would be incorporated into the ICFTU's own African work. However, he admitted privately that the existence of TUC administered independent trade union programmes in British Commonwealth territories complicated the issue for the ICFTU. Even if the AFL-CIO was prepared somehow to link their efforts to the Confederation's, it was unlikely that they would settle for less freedom to manoeuvre in Africa than the TUC claimed for itself.⁴⁴

However, contrary to ICFTU expectation there was to be no role for Millard. Without further consultation, Maida Springer, a black representative of the AFL-CIO, was assigned by Meany to go immediately to Africa to launch the American training programme, and barely a month after the talks with the ICFTU she was ready to leave. Even Walter Reuther, who had led the Americans in the talks with the ICFTU, was unaware of the details of Springer's mission. In a clear snub to the ICFTU, Springer made no attempt to call in at the Confederation headquarters in Brussels en route to Africa to inform them of her project or consult on what was needed there.

The Springer mission caused consternation in British government circles, especially when she was given a hero's welcome by nationalist leaders in East Africa. She was kept under close surveillance by the British authorities, her application for a visitor's permit to enter East African territories was the subject of lengthy consideration, and within a matter of weeks the Secretary of State for the Colonies was actively deliberating on whether or not she should be expelled. The official British policy was that East African trade unions should be developed under the general guidance of the TUC and ICFTU and that to permit a representative of an American union to participate in this would lead to confusion.⁴⁵

To forestall a major diplomatic incident, Walter Reuther arranged a further informal meeting for December 1957 in Atlantic City to be attended by British, American, and ICFTU leaders. His hope was to re-constitute the African training

⁴³Draft Resolution, 13 August 1957, Meany Collection, Box 56 (22); Treganowan to Greenhough, 16 August 1957, LAB 13/1270; Morgan to Wilson, 22 October 1957 and Morgan to Myrddin-Evans, 2 November 1957, USA: Proposed Contacts, LAB 13/1271.

⁴⁴Marsh to Greenhough, 11 September 1957, LAB 13/1270; Victor Reuther to Walter Reuther, 26 September 1957, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 25 (7).

⁴⁵Twining to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 29 October 1957, LAB 13/1271.

programme under ICFTU control, and pointing out that Meany still claimed to be willing to work in tandem with the ICFTU in Africa, he suggested that Millard immediately contact the AFL-CIO President and arrange for "appropriate representatives" of the American labour movement and ICFTU to meet and work out a joint approach to the African training programme. Millard was urged to act without delay to avoid giving Meany the chance to excuse his independent initiative on the grounds of ICFTU inertia. At the same time Reuther gave notice that he would not be attending the forthcoming ICFTU Executive Board meeting in November but would himself be taking part in the Atlantic City meeting only a few days later.⁴⁶

Millard's response reflected both indignation and disillusionment. The American programme, he complained, had been launched without any real attempt to consult the Confederation. They were now simply expected to cooperate with an activity already in progress. What would be the purpose, he asked, of seeking a meeting with the AFL-CIO, as Reuther suggested. If the ICFTU agreed to cooperate with the Americans, would they not be forced to respond in similar fashion to any future British, French, or Belgian proposal for field activities that might be initiated by one or another national centre? And how, he wondered, would that appear to national groups such as the Germans, Canadians, Swedes, and Dutch who always worked through the ICFTU? "Why should we or why should the AFL-CIO expect one code of behaviour for one affiliate ... and another code for others," Millard mused. Moreover, the fact that the Americans would not be sending their top delegates to the upcoming Executive Board was enough of a slight, but to upstage the Executive Board meeting with a proposed high-level gathering at Atlantic City restricted to only a few European and American union leaders was to rub salt in the wound.⁴⁷ Millard took his complaints to the ICFTU Executive Board and roundly criticised the independent activities of the American, British, French, and Belgian affiliates. It was a passionate attack, but the more important discussion was now scheduled to take place a week later in Atlantic City, a meeting to which Millard had not been invited.

The Atlantic City Accord and the Kampala Training College

THE ATLANTIC CITY meeting in December 1957 produced an important breakthrough in big power labour agreement. On the surface it seemed that Meany had capitulated. The African programme of the AFL-CIO was to cease forthwith. The \$50,000 was to be channelled through the ICFTU for the purpose of setting up a training college in Africa. The AFL-CIO leaders finally agreed to support the International Solidarity Fund and promised to seek their Executive Council's authorization to donate \$1 million. The Americans agreed once again to discontinue the work of the FTUC, ostensibly ending their independent activities, with

⁴⁶Reuther to Millard, 28 October 1957, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 25 (11).

⁴⁷Millard to Reuther, 4 November 1957, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 25 (12).

Lovestone brought directly under the control of the official International Affairs Department.⁴⁸

Sir Vincent Tewson was optimistic about the development, talking of a "new start" and telling Millard: "the conditions of the past nine years can probably be regarded as a phase which might afflict any young organization."⁴⁹ However, Jay Lovestone viewed the accord without concern, writing to a friend that nothing had changed:

I shall be continuing all the work I did under the new title. Please note there is no announcement of any dissolution of the Free Trade Union Committee. It can always be brought back since it was never dissolved. Actually, as you very well know, the Free Trade Union Committee has for some time been nothing and no one except Meany and myself
....⁵⁰

Lovestone was right: independent activities could be resumed as and when necessary. But for the time being, the important thing was that the AFL-CIO had secured a toe-hold in British colonial Africa. They had forced the ICFTU to embark on a programme in an area where previously they had deferred to the TUC, and the AFL-CIO would now have a claim to be involved in future ICFTU programmes there.

Briefly Millard shared the prevailing optimism about the Confederation's fortunes. He reflected on the fact that the regional activities budget had doubled and the staff employed on organizing work was expanding steadily. He believed that his presence had also increased the team spirit in the Secretariat and that there was now more consultation before decisions were taken. Canadian colleagues had often thought him too trusting, but he felt that this characteristic had paid off in Brussels: "that approach has been a first class counter weight to the mysterious, almost conspiratorial atmosphere which I found in the first half of my stay here" He had attempted to make the Secretariat more dynamic, urging the need for more effective publicity for its activities. Jay Krane agreed that the atmosphere had improved, noting that "Millard is a fine man to work for and he and Oldenbroek are working beautifully together and are fast becoming friends."⁵¹

But the sense of well-being was transitory and within weeks Millard's optimism began to dissolve. Following the Atlantic City accord, the concrete plan that now evolved was to open an ICFTU training college in Kampala, capital of the

⁴⁸Irving Brown Report on ICFTU EB of 17 March, 24 March 1958, Meany Collection, Box 57 (1); Millard to Margo, 1 January 1958, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2; Morgan to Wilson, 9 December 1957, LAB 13/1270.

⁴⁹Tewson to Millard, 16 December 1957, ICFTU, Correspondence re: relations with American Trade Unions, 1952-57, TUC Collection 292 919.75/2, Modern Records Centre, Coventry.

⁵⁰Lovestone to Deverall, 12 December 1957, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 31 (7).

⁵¹Millard to Margot Thompson, 1 January 1958, 17 August 1957, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2; Krane to Zouzou, 1 January 1958, Krane Collection, Box 14 (24).

British territory of Uganda. From this point on it was the British TUC that began to complain about ICFTU operations and were inclined to obstruct the progress of the college. Their basic concern with this project was that it would establish a vehicle for Americans "prancing around in Africa."⁵² The TUC and the Colonial Office only went along with it reluctantly on the grounds that the alternatives — an African college located in Ghana, as favoured by some Americans, or even the revival of the AFL-CIO's independent programme — would be worse.⁵³

At a meeting with the TUC's International Committee in February, Millard and Oldenbroek called into question the TUC's independent work in the African colonies. It was a heated encounter after which some on the TUC side spoke of having reached a breaking point with the ICFTU. There was subsequent talk of contributions from TUC affiliates to the International Solidarity Fund being held back. Excited at these signs of a major ICFTU-TUC rift, Irving Brown reported the development as perhaps "the biggest and decisive turning point in the international labour movement," an issue so important that he asked to be allowed to return immediately to the United States for strategic discussions.⁵⁴ To Meany and his associates the TUC and ICFTU leaderships had always appeared as one. Now increasing AFL-CIO opposition to colonialism was forcing them apart.

For Millard it was yet another cause for despondency. He had worked harmoniously with the British while Americans castigated him for being "soft on communism," but now increasingly he saw the TUC as the main obstacle to ICFTU harmony. This was a perception that would strengthen as the months passed. In the summer of 1958 he confided to CLC leaders Claude Jodoin and Donald MacDonald that his biggest disappointment was Tewson and the TUC:

Personally, I cannot and will not accept the 'double standard' concept ... the refusal to apply self-discipline or to give up a tiny bit of autonomy will eventually rob the ICFTU of any real meaning or importance.

He was depressed by "the knowledge that neither Tewson nor the TUC are prepared to live by the same rules that they have asked Meany and Randolph to accept at Atlantic City." The TUC might only claim the right to operate separately in British colonies, but for the scrupulous Millard the principle that international union activity should be conducted through the International covered all affiliates in all circumstances. There was no place for bilateralism and the carving out of special status by one national centre in any part of the world.

⁵²Walter Hood note 29 April 1958, ICFTU 1958-60, TUC Collection 292 919.66/2.

⁵³Morgan to Wilson, 29 May 1958; Wilson to Morgan, 3 June 1958, LAB 13/1271.

⁵⁴Confidential Report from Irving Brown, 1 March 1958, Meany Collection, Box 57 (1); Morgan to Wilson, 3 April 1958, LAB 13/1271; Millard to Tewson, 29 December 1958, International Solidarity Fund, 1958-60, TUC Collection 292 919 42/2. Indeed by the end of 1958 TUC contributions would amount to only £40,000 as against the £500,000 promised.

He was further upset by Tewson's new line that money collected in the International Solidarity Fund would have to stretch over five years rather than the original three years, thereby dashing his hopes of breaking out of the pattern of piecemeal financing of *ad hoc* projects and launching into a more ambitious organizing phase. After a tiring trip to Japan in summer 1958, he wrote to Jodoin and MacDonald:

In the first place, I doubted my own capacity to tackle the task which the Director of Organization was given. Now after nearly two years I am still doubtful on that score. ... [W]hile in the beginning I had hoped that my own lack of capacity and vision could be overcome by help from the Secretariat and Board, I now feel that this hope cannot be realised. I still have faith ... but that faith is nearly exhausted and time is running out.

For the first time he now began to consider quitting and he advised his fellow Canadians:

... if I were Walter Reuther and Charles Geddes or Vincent Tewson, I believe I owe it to them, through you, to let them know that they should now start looking for a successor I no longer see much if any chance of success and I simply cannot ask others in good conscience to undertake a task which has little chance of success.⁵⁵

At Odds With Americans, British, and Africans

ALTHOUGH MILLARD was committed to an ICFTU-led programme in Africa rather than a continuation of the quasi-colonial approach of the TUC, African labour leaders still criticised the Brussels Secretariat's lack of practical support for a devolved ICFTU structure in Africa under the control of Africans. This task of satisfying simultaneously the Americans, the British, and African nationalists was a daunting one that would ultimately defeat the ICFTU leadership. African leaders such as Mboya complained about lack of consultation over the siting of the planned training school, and also the appointment as African Regional Director of a Briton, Albert Hammerton, whose role there had previously been the subject of criticism by Africans.⁵⁶

Millard believed that Maida Springer was responsible for fomenting this discontent, feeding unjustified fears that plans for Africa were being imposed from Brussels. Aware of her closeness to Lovestone, the Director of Organization was "suspicious as to her US associations and motivation." He was adamant that full consultation with the Africans was always intended as soon as the broad pro-

⁵⁵Millard to Jodoin and MacDonald, 11 July 1958, CLC Collection, Microfilm H191.

⁵⁶In originally proposing Hammerton for appointment to the ICFTU, the reassuring TUC comment was that there was no idealism or evangelism in his approach. Ernest Bell memorandum, 12 November 1952, TUC Collection 292 919.22/1.

gramme was adopted and finances agreed. To one of his African critics, Rashidi Kawawa, Millard wrote:

The ICFTU has kept faith with the African trade union movement on every fundamental issue of policy. Consistently we have, and will continue, to support the right of the people of Africa to determine their own future.

But in reference to African criticisms of Hammerton and to ICFTU misgivings about the weak state of trade union development in the continent, he insisted that

this doesn't mean that we must be silent if a man is attacked because of his colour or his nationality or if we honestly feel that in some places in Africa trade union movements may be relying on unstable short-cuts, leaning on governmental tolerance and depending on financial largesse from outside the movement.⁵⁷

Relations between the British and American labour leaders deteriorated still further in early 1959 as the ICFTU programme in Africa advanced. Concerned about the growing American presence in "British" territories the UK government pressed the TUC to increase its overseas work, both within the ICFTU and in the form of independent activities.⁵⁸ Meanwhile the AFL-CIO leadership were increasingly worried about the possibility of Africa's nationalist labour leaders succumbing to the overtures of neutralist or, worse still, communist movements. Anxious over the delicately poised politics of Africa, the AFL-CIO stepped up the pressure for a stronger American presence in the region. Meany wrote telling Oldenbroek that the continent was now at a dangerous turning point. Since the AFL-CIO still had much goodwill among Africans, he offered to send one or two black Americans there to help stem, as he put it, the "anti-ICFTU tide."⁵⁹ Oldenbroek side-stepped his offer, insisting that he and Millard were working hard on the situation and that it was the ICFTU Executive Board's responsibility to decide policy for Africa. While help from affiliates would be appreciated, to be consistent with the Atlantic City agreement, he told Meany, it would have to be rendered through the ICFTU.⁶⁰ However, both TUC and AFL-CIO were now in the process of elaborating detailed position papers on Africa, advancing their own quite distinct analyses of the local trade union situation, and in each case seeking either to dominate or by-pass the ICFTU.

Millard felt that the climate was now worse than before the Atlantic City meeting. A tide of criticism was rising against the ICFTU, with himself, Oldenbroek, and Krane the prime targets of the Americans, British, and Africans. In effect the three of them were paying the penalty for upholding the central role of the

⁵⁷ Millard to Kawawa, 13 March 1958, Krane Collection, Box 14 (23).

⁵⁸ Marsh to Wallis, 12 March 1959, LAB 13/1271.

⁵⁹ Meany to Oldenbroek, 9 January 1959, CLC Collection, Microfilm H180.

⁶⁰ Oldenbroek to Meany, 21 January 1959, CLC Collection, Microfilm H180.

Confederation as the leading agency in the international field and holding back a tide of independent initiatives whose competing purposes would put at risk the prospects for cohesion in the international labour movement.⁶¹

The Proposed "Clean Sweep"

WHEN ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD members met in Geneva in March 1959 they failed to patch up the conflict between the AFL-CIO and the TUC. Increasingly disillusioned and frustrated, Millard spoke out strongly against the fact that ten travel grants had recently been awarded to Ghanaian labour leaders to study in the USA. If not a breach of the letter of the Atlantic City accord, it went against its spirit. In a rash emotional outburst Millard threatened to resign at the next meeting of the Executive Board. Following the Geneva meeting, he wrote bitterly to AFL-CIO Vice-President Jim Carey:

... unless our main affiliates can work in closer harmony with one another and with us; unless the trade secretariats can undertake to cooperate more among themselves and with us; and unless friendly governments can be depended upon not to obstruct at least; then, personally, I cannot do what my 'terms of reference' require and should no longer stand in the way of someone who might be more effective.⁶²

However, his resignation threat was a tactical blunder, made while under great stress. It weakened his position which was already coming under threat. Former friends in the American labour movement were growing more distant and Walter Reuther himself was rapidly losing faith with the ICFTU Secretariat. Visiting the United States in 1959, Tom Mboya had persuaded Reuther that time was running out for the ICFTU in Africa and that drastic changes were needed, perhaps including the removal of senior officers. Mboya left no doubt that if changes were not made in the Confederation then African unions might well desert the organization.

At an important round of meetings in Europe with fellow labour leaders in May 1959, Reuther explored the options for change. The leadership problems of the ICFTU were discussed and the idea revived of appointing new, additional assistant general secretaries to strengthen organizational efficiency. In addition the possibility was raised of General Secretary Oldenbroek being forced to resign.⁶³ All of this had major implications for Millard's position. In 1955 the idea of appointing three or four assistant general secretaries had been dropped in favour of the creation of a powerful Director of Organization. Revised thinking was that responsibility for regional organization should now be divided between a number

⁶¹Marsh to Wallis, 12 March 1959, *op.cit.*

⁶²Millard to Carey, 2 April 1959, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 33 (8); Deverall to Meany, 18 March 1959, Meany Collection, Box 57(4).

⁶³Memo of interview: Discussion with Mr Walter Reuther, AFL-CIO, 7 May 1959, Trades Unions US 1959-60, TUC Collection 292 973/16.

of assistant secretaries, leaving the Director of Organization surplus to requirements. In fact, Reuther was turning against Millard personally. By summer 1959, the latter was having second thoughts about resigning and expected to be asked to reconsider. But no lifeline was thrown to him by the Reuther camp. Elaborating the case against Millard, Victor Reuther advised his brother that the Canadian was in poor health, had made no attempt to learn any languages that would better equip him for his post, and was basically not up to the job.⁶⁴ The truth was that Walter Reuther now found it expedient to narrow the gap between himself and Meany and in this project Millard was seen as someone who could be sacrificed.

Leading the call in the ICFTU Executive Board for Oldenbroek's resignation, George Meany now talked in terms of the need for a "clean sweep" of the top officers, including Millard whose role would be divided up between other officials.⁶⁵ Seeing no future for himself, Millard kept his word and formally tendered his resignation to the Executive Board. He wrote to President Geijer:

Both for personal and organizational reasons I regret leaving the Secretariat at this stage of the ICFTU development. But if my going assists the Board, even in a small way, to focus the necessary added attention on the great need for more resources and more organizational work, then the most compelling purpose of my leaving will have been achieved.⁶⁶

Not all affiliates were persuaded of the merits of this proposed new administrative structure. The CLC leadership were skeptical of the likely outcome of replacing the Director of Organization with assistant general secretaries. The Canadian argument was that there would doubtless be pressure to nominate for these new posts from within the regions, with the appointees owing primary loyalty to their own area and administering what would become rival geographical empires in competition for resources, with the General Secretary being the final arbiter of competing claims. The absence of a sharp overall focus on organizing work, they claimed, would amount to a return to the unsatisfactory situation that had prevailed before the Vienna Congress when organization was neglected.⁶⁷

As political manoeuvring to oust Oldenbroek and re-define the organizing role took place in the run-up to the December 1959 ICFTU Congress in Brussels, Millard watched with some bitterness, complaining about a few men meeting informally during the AFL-CIO's San Francisco Convention to decide the future of the international trade union movement. He wrote: "I am conceited enough to believe that I do know a little about the subject I just don't believe that so-called leaders of the USA Trade Union movement have all the answers" Even at this late stage he clung to the hope that opponents of a wholesale dismissal of the top leadership

⁶⁴Victor Reuther to Walter Reuther, 21 April 1959, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 26 (5).

⁶⁵Geijer to Reuther, 6 July 1959, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 26 (10); Morgan to Wallis, 2 July 1959, LAB 13/1324.

⁶⁶Millard to Geijer, 23 June 1959, CLC Collection, Microfilm H180.

⁶⁷Kaplansky to Jodoin, 11 September 1959, CLC Collection, Microfilm H180.

might prevail and again considered the possibility of withdrawing his resignation and retaining his post.

... it now seems that the 'clean sweep' decision ... no longer has united support even among the so called 'big five' [ie. the Americans, British, Germans, Canadians, and Swedes] and may therefore give way to what I would call a more moderate and realistic change in the ICFTU structure in which yours truly might find some suitable niche in which to perform some suitable service.

The man who had resigned on principle only months earlier now seemed desperate to stay on. It was an undignified position for Millard to adopt, but the prospect of remaining in Brussels was such that he turned down a suggestion that he return to Canada to become a provincial secretary of the New Democratic Party.⁶⁸

The Brussels Congress was marked by disunity and distrust, a nadir in the history of internal ICFTU relations. Oldenbroek clung to office for another six month term and his opponents had to settle for the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee whose formal role was to review the future structure of the Confederation but whose real function was to negotiate the resignation of the General Secretary. Made up exclusively of representatives of the European and American affiliates, Millard commented wryly that the committee's composition served to prove the common charge of the WFTU that the ICFTU was part of the Western bloc.⁶⁹

The *ad hoc* committee examined closely the Confederation's administration, finance, and organizational work, leaving Millard with the impression that they were beginning to go beyond personalities and getting down to serious issues. This encouraged his belief that he might still retain his post in the Secretariat and in March 1960 formally withdrew his resignation, reasoning that whatever changes might be introduced, the Confederation also needed continuity.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, the committee identified in Omer Becu a possible successor to Oldenbroek who would have AFL-CIO support, and in August the general secretaryship changed hands.

Millard's Final Months

BECU'S FIRST TASK was to draft strategic proposals for a more devolved system of administration for the Confederation, one that would allow the large affiliates more leeway for independent activity. Millard fought a rearguard campaign against this thinking and in a written statement complained that whereas Becu's proposals were cast in formal institutional terms, the key relations were human ones. Only if there was mutual trust and confidence would relations between the Secretariat and the

⁶⁸ Millard to Margo, 4 October 1959, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2.

⁶⁹ Millard to Eileen [Sufrin], 14 December 1959, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2.

⁷⁰ Millard to Geijer, 3 March 1960, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 33 (8); Deverall to Meany, 23 February 1960, Meany Collection, Box 57 (7).

regions function smoothly. Moreover, since the prime requirement was to safeguard the *universal* working class movement and to transcend national and continental barriers, Millard believed that the emphasis should be against too much decentralisation.⁷¹

However, such criticisms were unlikely to weigh heavily. Becu shared the Americans' dissatisfaction with the ICFTU Secretariat and complained readily about the legacy of Oldenbroek. He wanted to replace Millard and Krane but proposed to act indirectly by eliminating their posts rather than dismissing the incumbents.⁷² There was now little left for Millard to cling to, though he was clearly reluctant to make the final break. Two new assistant general secretaries were being recruited, one of whom was expected to assume responsibility for organization. In March 1961 Becu wrote to Millard saying that the Executive Board had decided that the 1955 decision to appoint a Director of Organization had "lapsed." The Board, he said, wanted to continue to enjoy the benefit of Millard's knowledge and experience and so he was being offered the position of Special Assistant to the General Secretary with precise duties to be discussed once the new appointments had been made. The trouble with this proposal was that the Confederation had already issued a press release to the effect that Millard and Krane were leaving, and consequently Millard told the ICFTU President that he did not regard Becu's proposal as a serious offer. To the General Secretary he responded formally that he would consider taking on any future special assignment that the Board might request, but politely stated that it would be "unwise for me to continue in the service of the ICFTU ... without a break of some weeks or months at least."⁷³

Walter Reuther, whose support and protection he had lost two years earlier, wrote to commiserate and offer a *mea culpa* on behalf of Millard's erstwhile friends:

... your feeling of disappointment and hurt about many of the developments in the ICFTU are shared by others. My own feeling of disappointment is enhanced by the fact that the AFL-CIO has been more of a negative than a positive force within the world body.

Later, when Millard was home in Canada, Reuther went further, phoning to tell him he was sorry. "Charlie," he said, "we let you down."⁷⁴

Even after such a long period of uncertainty surrounding his job he was deeply hurt by the Board's decision and scornful of Becu's weasel-word reference to his

⁷¹Millard to Becu, 21 October 1960, Krane Collection, Box 17 (34).

⁷²Brown to Meany, 29 September 1960, Meany Collection, Box 58 (2).

⁷³Becu to Millard, 21 March 1961; Millard to Geijer, 3 April 1961; Millard to Becu, 28 March 1961, Victor Reuther Collection, Box 27 (6).

⁷⁴Reuther to Millard, 27 April 1961, UAW International Department, Reuther-Carlner Collections, 1956-62, Box 6 (24); Charles Millard — Transcript of Interview with Morden Lazarus 1975, Steelworkers Collection, vol. 129.

appointment "lapsing." Writing home to Canada, he told a colleague from the Steelworkers:

... I must confess to being just an old softy and let the recent action produce my second big emotional upset though I knew beforehand that it was almost inevitable that it should happen. The other time ... was when I left you and the work in Canada. In that case I guess it was fear of the unknown and a real sense of inadequacy and this time it was self pity and that stinking thing called pride, plus a sense of failure.

There had been a suggestion that he return to the CLC and take on the responsibility of raising Canadian contributions to the International Solidarity Fund, a task that was being neglected. It was a cause that attracted him: "Even if I have failed to make the *Big League in Trade Union Circles*," he wrote, "I'm still jealous of Canadian reputation and standing in the International Movement." But he insisted that he could not do the job unless he could be sure that the funds collected would be used wisely, and his experience in the ICFTU was that that was not always the case.⁷⁵

Conclusion

AS DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATION, Millard played a cameo role on the international stage. Yet during his five years in Brussels he was at the centre of quite dramatic developments and was the subject of much controversy. His period there was marked by widespread tension and mutual suspicion within the international labour movement, and his experience demonstrated the limited scope that existed for genuine internationalism in trade union activities, especially in a period dominated by the pressures of the Cold War. With the British and Americans insistent on the correctness of their own respective approaches to international labour issues, and other national affiliates insufficiently powerful or assertive to offset such dominance, the ICFTU Secretariat had little room to develop programmes that went against the grain of prevailing big power politics.

A bluff character, generous, and without guile, in retrospect Millard was perhaps better suited to the world of collective bargaining or community activism than the rarified atmosphere of international diplomacy. In Canada he had been an important figure, but in the ICFTU he came to be regarded by national labour leaders as just another functionary. He was aware of his own limitations and was often inclined to see the international task as too great for him. However, he lived his principles, foremost among which was an absolute commitment to the idea of worker solidarity, and his raw enthusiasm in pursuit of this contrasted with Oldenbroek's image as a career bureaucrat with an instinct for survival. It seems likely that the General Secretary viewed Millard as an ingenu who would sooner or later burn himself out if he too did not learn the laws of survival in the

⁷⁵Millard to Margo, 1 April 1961, Margot Thompson Collection, vol. 2.

international labour movement.⁷⁶ Certainly Millard was never able to acquire Oldenbroek's capacity for "rolling with the punches" and capturing the wind in whichever direction it happened to blow. From the outset the Regional Director failed to establish a positive working relationship with Meany, naively underestimating the American leader. This crippled his prospects almost before he had begun the job and from the earliest days he was fighting a losing battle.

Millard's honest commitment to the cause of international solidarity was something that conflicted with the obsessive anti-communism of the AFL-CIO and the half-hearted anti-colonialism of the TUC. This was his Achilles' heel. He well understood that the TUC were inclined to be more conservative in colonial matters than the British government's Colonial Office, just as he recognised that the AFL-CIO's international policy was often more reactionary than that of the State Department in Eisenhower's administration. As he used say, aid tends to corrupt, and anti-communist aid corrupts absolutely.⁷⁷ But his additional problem was that, working for an organization several of whose European affiliates were equivocal about the colonial policies of their governments, he failed to win the confidence of the more impatient African nationalist labour leaders, even though his own personal commitment to colonial freedom was unquestionable.

In the 1950s there was little chance that the British or Americans would tolerate any ambitious ICFTU programme that they did not control. Certainly adequate financing would not be made available. And since these two national movements were so much at odds with each other, the ICFTU was always going to be torn between them in their battle for control. In such circumstances the Brussels Secretariat was a place for survivors, not for outspoken people holding strong principles. Millard's job as supremo in charge of regional organization around the world proved too much for him, though the problem was largely internal to the ICFTU.

⁷⁶Interview with Kalmen Kaplansky, April 1993.

⁷⁷Millard to Margo, *op. cit.*