

25 October 1954

WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHEMICAL AND PETROLEUM WORKERS

(Revised Report)

SUMMARY:

The decision to add petroleum workers unions to the Chemical Workers Trade Department apparently was made hastily by high WFTU officials, and the merger presented to the rank and file as a fait accompli. Lack of support for a separate petroleum workers federation, and the organization of the International Federation of Petroleum Workers in April 1954, contributed to the decision to merge chemical and petroleum workers unions in the WFTU. Delegates from the Soviet Bloc dominated the proceedings; free world participation in the founding conference was limited almost entirely to representatives of Communist unions. Since the top executive positions were retained by representatives of the chemical workers, the manner and degree of influence of petroleum workers on the policies of the trade department are unpredictable. The trade department is firmly in the control of loyal WFTU functionaries.

A. Events Leading to Organization

The decision to add a petroleum workers section to the existing trade department for chemical workers appears to have been hastily made on a high WFTU level, without consultation with the rank and file of either the chemical or the oil workers. As late as October 1953, at the Third World Congress of the WFTU, Vicente LOMBARDO Toledano spoke of plans for organizing an "international union of oil workers." 1/ Then, in January 1954, without any intervening publicity, the official WFTU publication World Trade Union Movement announced a coming conference of "Chemical and Allied and Oil Workers." 2/ In March 1954, in his report to the 25th session of the executive bureau of the WFTU, Luigi GRASSI reported that a petroleum workers section would be added to the Chemical Workers Trade Department.

The decision was preceded and attended by family quarrels within the WFTU. The merger was delayed, reportedly, because of international differences among East Bloc unions. The Miners Trade Department, which included some of the oil workers, objected strenuously to what it considered an attempt to weaken that trade department. The head of the Miners Trade Department, (fnu) TURELL, has long been a foe of the WFTU Secretariat and of Secretary General Louis SAILLANT. 3/

A number of factors probably conspired to force the WFTU's decision to merge the oil and chemical workers. The establishment in April 1954 of the International Federation of Petroleum Workers (IFPW), allied to the International Conference of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), undoubtedly prompted the WFTU to organize a rival trade department. At the same time, it appears that the WFTU discovered too little support for a separate Petroleum Workers Trade Department and so decided to join it to the already existing Chemical Workers Trade Department.

The amalgamation was presented to the workers as a fait accompli at the World Conference of Chemical and Petroleum Workers in Bucharest, Rumania, in September 1954. The singular lack of publicity, even in the Communist press, attending preparations for the conference may indicate a desire to avoid public discussion which might have mobilized opposition to the "party line" or jeopardized control of the body by loyal WFTU men. Even in Vienna, headquarters of the WFTU, there was little news concerning the coming conference, and in Italy, according to one report, the non-Communist unions were not even aware of it. 5/

In January 1954, the WFTU had issued an appeal to all chemical and oil workers, urging them to support and participate in the world conference in September. A preparatory meeting was held in April 1954 in Budapest to plan the agenda for the conference, and representatives of chemical and oil workers unions all over the world, both affiliated and not affiliated with the WFTU, were invited to attend. A second preparatory meeting was held in Vienna in June and a special invitation to attend the conference was issued to the IFPW. Public discussion of these meetings was avoided; even the fact that they were held was not generally known.

B. The Conference

The World Conference of Chemical and Petroleum Workers convened as scheduled in Bucharest on 21 September 1954. One hundred thirty delegates, supposedly representing 33 countries, participated, but only 17 of the delegates have been identified (see Appendix B). Press releases indicate that delegates or observers were present from the following countries:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| France | Iran |
| Italy | Kuwait |
| Germany | USSR |
| Venezuela | Chinese People's Republic |
| Mexico | Rumania |
| Cuba | Hungary |
| Ecuador | Czechoslovakia |
| Indonesia | |

Although the conference hall and delegates' hotel flew American flags, the presence of US delegates reportedly was denied. ^{5/} What delegates from Mexico attended is not known. When Ignacio PACHECO Leon, secretary general of the Mexican Petroleum Workers Union (Sindicato de Trabajadores Petroleros de la Republica Mexicana) was approached by a delegation from the CTAL inviting the federation to send delegates to the world conference, he refused on the advice of the secretary of government. He thought that the CTAL might persuade a few individual members of the Petroleum Workers Union to make the trip to Bucharest, but because they would not go as official delegates of the federation he had no way of knowing who they might be. ^{6/}

Of the identified delegates, eight were from Near East countries, six from the Soviet Bloc (including China), four from Western Europe, two from the Far East (excluding China) and only one from the Western Hemisphere.

According to a report from Djakarta, ^{7/} the conference discussed, in addition to industry problems, the atom and hydrogen bomb experiments and military pacts such as SEATO, and expressed opposition to colonialism and foreign military occupation such as the Dutch military occupation of West Irian, a disputed territory whose inclusion into Indonesian territory is at present being argued by "the Indonesian people" in the UN General Assembly ^{8/}—all tried and true Communist propaganda themes.

The predominance of Soviet Bloc representatives among the presiding officers and major speakers is in striking contrast to the original appeal for the conference, on which not a single Soviet Bloc name appeared. The preliminary agenda, drawn up by one of the preparatory committees, had called for a major address on "the struggle of the petroleum workers against exploitation by trusts and in favor of higher wages, trade union rights and the development of their industry in the interest of the people" by a representative of the Mexican petroleum workers. There is no indication that this report was given, and since the Mexican petroleum workers union snubbed the conference, it is likely that no Mexican speaker could

~~SECRET~~

be obtained. Indeed, the prevalence of Soviet Bloc representatives on the podium may have resulted from inability to obtain willing and competent speakers from the free world countries.

All of the officers elected at this conference represent chemical workers. One of the vice-chairmen, Edouard FINCK, heads the CGT's Chemical Workers Union, which includes French oil workers as well as chemical workers. He may be considered to have the interests of petroleum workers in mind, but these constitute a minority in his union. Undoubtedly the petroleum workers are represented on the central committee of the new trade department, but they hold none of the executive positions.

The pivotal power position of secretary general went to a Satellite representative, who retained the position he had held in the former Chemical and Allied Workers Trade Department. The largely honorary position of chairman, and one of the vice-chairmanships, were given to representatives of the two Western nations in which Communists have the strongest hold on labor: Italy and France. Representatives of the major free world oil producing areas, the Western Hemisphere and the Middle East, are significantly missing from the roster of highest officials.

Statutes of the new trade department will be approved by the WFTU Executive in the fall of 1954. Another conference of the trade department is planned for May or June 1955. The secretariat has been set up provisionally in Bucharest, with plans to transfer it in December to Vienna. 9/

No official account of the proceedings of the World Conference of Chemical and Petroleum Workers has been received. However, it has been possible to sketch a partial program from news and radio reports:

Proceedings 10/

21 September, First Session

(House of Culture of the Central Council of Trade Unions, March 6 Avenue)

1. Election of presidium.
2. Opening of conference by Luciano LAMA (Italy).*

* All radio reports received on proceedings of the conference refer to him as Bianchi LIMA. However, as nearly as biographic officers have been able to establish, it is probably Luciano LAMA, elected president of the WFTU International Union of Chemical Workers in October 1953.

~~SECRET~~

3. Participants greeted by Comrade Alexandru VERNESCU, chairman of the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Workers of the Oil, Chemical and Methane Gas Industries (Rumania).
4. Full report on the activity of the Chemical and Allied Workers Trade Department, WFTU, stressing the need for strengthening workers' international solidarity to achieve a better life and peace; by Ferenc BOZSOKI, secretary general of the Chemical and Allied Workers Trade Department.
5. Discussion.

Afternoon session.

1. Discussions on the report presented by Ferenc BOZSOKI at the morning session.
2. Address by Jean BAST (France), representative of the French workers, and Marino FERRARI (Italy), who greeted the conference on behalf of 25,000 workers from the chemical industries.

22 September, Morning and Afternoon Sessions
(House of Culture)

Morning Session

(Presided over by FINCK, France)

1. Opening speech, by FINCK.
2. Participants greeted by Ion DOBRE, on behalf of the Rumanian People's Republic Central Council of Trade Unions and the working people of Rumania.
3. Adoption of agenda.
4. Reading of salutatory telegrams from trade union organizations of various countries whose representatives could not participate in the proceedings of the conference.
5. Address of Luigi GRASSI, liaison secretary of the WFTU. Stressed that the conference, setting up an international union of workers in the chemical and petroleum industries, must create a body capable of competently defending in the present situation the present and future interests of those who work in these trades, to reinforce international and national unity and to secure international solidarity of the workers in the chemical, oil and allied industries.

Afternoon Session

(Presided over by Nicolai KOVALEV, vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the USSR Chemical Industry Workers Trade Union and leader of the Soviet delegation to the conference)

1. Report: "Tasks of Trade Unions in Chemical, Oil and Allied Industries for Strengthening the Unity of Action of Workers in the Struggle for Economic and Social Claims, for National Independence, and for Peace," by Luciano LAMA.
2. Floor taken by Iosif NEPOVIM (Czechoslovakia) and Osvaldo CALVETTI (France).

No reports of sessions on 23-25 September have been received.

~~SECRET~~26 September, Morning Session

1. Report of the credentials commission, which showed that the conference was attended by observers and delegates from 33 countries.
2. Passage of unanimous resolution, that the new trade department of the chemical and oil workers will lend its support to all unions, affiliated with it or not, whenever requested.
3. Unanimous approval of statutes of the new union.
4. Election of officers:*

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Chairman: | Luciano LAMA, Italy |
| Vice-chairmen: | Nicolai KOVALEV, USSR Edouard FINCK, France |
| Secretary General: | Ferenc BOZSOKI, Hungary |

5. Concluding speech by Luciano LAMA.

26 September, Closing Proceedings
(J. V. Stalin Square, Ploesti)

1. Meeting opened by Alexandru VERNESCU.
2. Floor taken by A. D. AHUNDOV, chairman of the Central Committee of the USSR Oil Industry Workers Trade Union, who said that "The Rumanian people, under the leadership of the Rumanian Workers Party--the workers' aid--have scored big successes in a short period of time in building the new life of their country. Along with all our people, we Soviet oilmen are proud of the successes of the Rumanian people."
3. Testimony by Osvaldo CALVETTI (France): The proceedings of the conference, and the warm reception given us by Rumanian workers, proves to the French workers that our struggle is not isolated. We shall soon return to France, more closely united in the struggle we must wage and which, with united forces, we shall win.
4. SUN Wei-cun (Chinese People's Republic): During our stay and our visit in the Rumanian People's Republic, we have witnessed the powerful enthusiasm of the working people for the building of socialism. We are deeply impressed and happy at your successes. In our work for the development of the oil industry in China we enjoyed the help of the working people of the Rumanian People's Republic, who sent us specialists. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the fraternal help.
5. Representative of Iranian oil workers (unidentified): After pointing to the "sanguinary exploitation" to which workers in his country are subjected, he spoke about their struggle to improve conditions, to satisfy economic and social claims, for national independence and peace.
6. Maximiliano GORCIA, Venezuela: We have arrived from rich countries where there is everything to make the life of our people happy. But foreign imperialism exerts an economic and political domination which hinders the development of our industry and the improvement of the living conditions of our people. Workers in Latin America express before you the resolve that no riches of our country should be put in the service of the plans of warmongers.

* See biographic sketches in Appendix A.

~~SECRET~~

7. R. N. KAUL (India): The Indian people yearn for peace. They are convinced that, through the growing unity of the working people, they will succeed in contributing to the smashing of the plans of the war fomenters.
8. Rapardy SITUMEANG (Indonesia): Your victory of free peoples is an example for our people who fight for liberty and national independence, for peace. From you we have learned that the unity of the working class lies at the basis of the struggle for victory.
9. Marino FERRARI (Italy): Enthusiasm, elan and confidence in the future we saw everywhere in the eyes of the workers, employees and technicians in the factories and enterprises. We have won and will win new victories. The Italian workers are convinced that, together with other workers, they form a great force which, by their struggle, will win freedom and the right to work and to live.
10. Prolonged demonstration by participants for the WFTU, for the International Workers Union of Chemical, Allied and Oil Industries, for friendship among peoples and for peace.

~~SECRET~~

C. Prospects for the New Trade Department

The WFTU attempted to give the new trade department an auspicious send-off by having in attendance top WFTU officials, who actually are concerned with neither the petroleum nor the chemical industries: Luigi GRASSI, head of the international liaison office of the WFTU; Louis SAILLANT, head of the WFTU general secretariat; Ernest THORNTON, leading WFTU official in Australia, Indonesia and Oceania; and other WFTU functionaries, including LIU Ning-i, Emil OTTO, Lazaro PENA, (fnu) KUTUZEV and MORARU. 11/

Although the conference was one of chemical and petroleum workers, most of the delegates came from the oil-producing areas. Of the 130 delegates, 63 were members of oil workers unions, and another 40 came from oil fields of underdeveloped countries. 12/ In what manner and to what degree the oil workers will influence policy of the trade department remains to be seen.

According to the conference protocols, the struggle for production control by the workers in Central Asian and Latin American areas is to be waged as part of the nationalist struggle. The tactics to be applied in this struggle are to be adjusted in such a way that the support of the oil workers by broad masses of the population can be assured. 13/

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

APPENDIX A
BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES ON OFFICERS OF CHEMICAL AND OIL
WORKERS TRADE DEPARTMENT

LAMA, Luciano 14/

In October 1953 Luciano Lama was elected president of the WFTU International Union of Chemical Workers. At that time, L'Unita, the Italian Communist Party's press organ, identified him as secretary-general of the CGIL (Italian Communist controlled labor federation) Chemical Union. He is also a member of the WFTU General Council, a member of the CGIL Directing and Executive Committees (elected December 1952) and a member of the Honor Committee of the Italo-Polish Cultural Association. An unconfirmed report of 1953 states that he is a member of the Economic-Industrial Office in the PCI Central Economic Office.

Lama in 1945 was a Socialist labor leader from Bologna and a CGIL vice-secretary. By 1947, however, he had apparently joined the Communist Party, and about this time, in addition to being a CGIL vice-secretary, he was also secretary of the (CGIL) Chamber of Labor at Forli. He attended the National Youth Congress for Work and Production (Communist-sponsored) in Genoa in February 1948; the WFTU Congress, Milan, June 1948; and the Second National CGIL Convention, Genoa, October 1948, at which he was re-elected a vice-secretary. In November 1950 he went to Moscow for October Revolution celebrations.

Lama was described in 1947 as a young, eager person, a power in local Forli activities and a man of violent rather than rational methods. While his birth date is not available, a picture of him appearing in L'Unita 24 October 1953 appears to be that of a man in his early or mid-thirties at the most.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

FINCK, EDUARD 15/

Nationality: French

Present Position: Secretary general of CGT Chemical Workers Union

Birthdate: 28 March 1891

Career:

1932 Secretary of Federation of Workers in the Chemical Industry (CGT)

1949 Attended constituent conference of International Chemical Workers organization at Bologna in November.

1952 Visited Bucharest in August.

Referred to as secretary general of CGT, Member of CGT National Committee.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

KOVALEV, Nicolai M. 16/

Nationality: Russian
Present Position: Chairman of Central Committee of Trade Unions of
Chemical Workers, USSR
Birthdate: 1907

Career:

- 1947 Chairman, Central Committee of Chemical Workers Unions, USSR
Member of delegation to All-Union Central Committee of Trade Unions, Italy, 3 June
- 1948 Attended First Congress of Austrian Trade Unions, 18 May
Head of USSR Trade Union delegation visiting Austria, 5 June
- 1949 Headed Soviet delegation to National Congress of Chemical Workers, Florence, Italy, 26-28 June
Present at organization of International Chemical Workers Organization at Bologna, Italy, 13 November
- 1950 Member of Executive Committee of International Union of Chemical Workers, elected 14 March
Member of USSR delegation to Bulgaria to attend constituent conference of International Federation of Trade Unions of Workers in the Chemical Industry, 18 March
President, USSR Chemical Workers Union
Member of Executive Committee of International Union of Chemical Workers
Member of delegation to Trade Unions of Glass and Porcelain Workers Congress, Helsinki, June
- 1953 Deputy chairman, WFTU
Member of Soviet delegation to Third World Congress of the WFTU, October

Remarks:

KOVALEV is an old member of the Bolshevik Party and a member of the "Red Guard" with the rank of captain.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

BOZSOKI, Ferenc 17/

Nationality: Hungarian

Career:

- 1949 Member of Parliament
- 1950 Hungarian delegate, International Conference of Chemical Industry Trade Unions, Budapest, 12-14 March
Named secretary of the World Federation of Chemical Industry Workers, March
- 1951 Leader of Hungarian delegation to Berlin conference against German remilitarization, March
Official, Central Council of the Hungarian Trade Unions, Budapest
Chairman, Hungarian Workers Committee
- 1952 Hungarian delegate, Moscow International Economic Conference, April
- 1952- Secretary, World Federation of Trade Unions' Chemical and Allied date Industries Workers Trade Union International
- 1953 Member, National Trade Union Council
Member, Presidential Board of the Union of Chemical Industry Workers
Member, Hungarian delegation to the All-China Trade Union Federation, Peking, China, April
President, National Hungarian Labor Committee
- 1954 Deputy, Grand National Assembly, January

~~SECRET~~

APPENDIX B
KNOWN DELEGATES TO WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHEMICAL AND OIL WORKERS
BUCHAREST, 22-25 SEPTEMBER

France:

Oswaldo CALVETTI, representative of Cardboard Workers Union, and member of National Committee of CGT.

Jean BAST

Edouard FINCK, secretary general of CGT Chemical Workers Union

Italy:

Luciano LAMA, president of WFTU's International Union of Chemical Workers

Marino FERRARI

India:

R. N. KAUL

Kuwait:

A. KAMEL (possibly Ashra KAMEL, who attended WFTU Congress in October 1953.)

Indonesia:

Rapardy R. SITUMEANG, secretary general of Executive Council of PERBUM

Jusuf BIJAVANA

Chinese People's Republic:

SUN Vei-cun

Venezuela:

Maximiliano GORGIA, member of Comite Sindical Unitario de Trabajadores Petroleros de Venezuela (COSUTRAFET), the Communist Union.

Rumania:

Ion DOBRE

Alexandrou VERNESCU, chairman of Central Committee of Trade Union of Workers of the Oil, Chemical and Methane Gas Industries, Rumania.

Hungary:

Ferenc BOZSOKI, secretary general of International Union of Chemical Workers.

Czechoslovakia:

Iosif NEPOVIM

~~SECRET~~

USSR:

Nicolai M. KOVALEV, chairman of Central Committee of Trade Unions
of Chemical Workers, USSR

A.D. AHUNDOV, chairman of Central Committee of the USSR Oil
Industry Workers Trade Union

~~SECRET~~

25X1A2g