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The ILO involvement in decolonization and development

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I. Introduction

The ILO and Development

The United Nations System played a key role in establishing a development discourse in the period after the Second World War. Right from when it was set up in 1945, it was one of, if not the central forum in which development issues were discussed and global benchmarks laid down. From these discussions, a common language and a common moral discourse of mutual responsibility and interdependence arose in which the entire world community was integrated. Furthermore, in the years following 1945, international organisations served as a pool and transmitter of expert knowledge on development policy, and thus made a significant contribution to ensuring that development thinking continued to evolve and approaches to development policy were realigned as the need arose. Perhaps no other field, then, illustrates the enormous increase in the importance of international organisations in the 20th century better than that of development policy.¹

While this fact is increasingly recognized in historical research, the specific, central role the ILO played in the propagation the development idea has, unlike in the case of the United Nations or the Bretton Woods institutions, been largely ignored to date.² In one way this is surprising – after all, as can be shown in the following paper the ILO has started to deal with development related problems even before the UN came into existence. In addition it has regarded technical assistance (or technical cooperation as it has been termed since the 1960s), in particular for the developing countries amongst its members, in a variety of areas, as one of its main pillars of activity for over sixty years, alongside and in conjunction with its traditional focus on creating and promoting International Labour Standards (ILS). On the other hand, it is precisely the position, unique in the consort of international organisations, which the ILO has built up for itself in the field of standard setting that has, at times, obscured the significance of its other areas of activity. Ironically, this means that the very thing that sets the development policy-related activities of the ILO apart from those of all other agencies

¹ The United Nation's pioneering contributions to the international development discourse post-1945 are the topic of many of the studies published under the roof of the United Nation's Intellectual History Project. For an introduction see Louis Emmerij/Richard Jolly/Thomas Weiss, *Ahead of the curve? UN Ideas and Global Challenges*, Bloomington/Indianapolis 2001. For a more general history of development ideas see Heinz Wolfgang Arndt, *Economic Development. The History of an Idea*, Chicago 1987.

² The UNIHP's project outline "Ahead of the curve" (see footnote 1) is but one case in point. Although the authors give credit to the ILO's employment activities of the 1970s, in particular to the WEP, it doesn't put them in the broader context of the ILO's post-war contributions to the international development discourse. Another recent symptomatic example of this is the study by Amy Staples, *The Birth of Development, How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965*, which by it's very title shows that the ILO is excluded from the picture. The book doesn't contain a single reference to the ILO!

active in this area – the fact that they are coloured by the Organization’s classic field of activity and informed by the norms of the International Labour Code and the principles of the ILO Constitution, is often overlooked.

With the aim of closing this gap, the following paper will explore the ILO’s ideas and activities in the area of development policy from 1919 onwards. Ideas which originated with or were popularized by the ILO will be explored in the context of the historical-political environment in which the Organization was moving at the time and which partly determined its actions. Vice versa, the ILO’s response to emerging situations and challenges in terms of specific actions and the development of institutions will also be looked at, as will the influence of the ILO on the development policy debate on a global and national level among the Organization’s constituents and others. In this way, the paper will provide a complete picture of the *specific* historical role of the ILO within the general global debate on development post-1919, and of its role within the spectrum of agencies of development policy. As will be demonstrated on the example of the ILO, the move of international organisations towards development policy-related activities after the Second World War was inextricably linked to the dissolution of the European colonial empires in Asia and Africa that was taking place at the same time. Within the ILO as elsewhere in the UN system, decolonisation set a radical process of transformation in motion, both with regard to the composition of its membership and with regard to its programmatic profile (By 1965 the ILO’s membership had more than doubled in comparison with 1947, from 55 to 115 countries. The great majority of this new members were ex-colonies).³ Its decision to focus on technical assistance was, in this context, first and foremost a response by the ILO to the questions thrown up by the arrival of a large number of new countries on the international stage, most of which were, to use the terminology of the time, economically and socially “underdeveloped”. Accordingly, the origins of and changes in the ILO’s commitment to the issue of development policy will be analysed in particular in the context of this epochal remodelling of the system of states in the 20th century.⁴

³ See Victor-Yves Ghebali, *The International Labour Organization*, Dordrecht 1989, p.117.

⁴ For a broad account of the ILO’s role against the backdrop of decolonization see the author’s German dissertation Daniel Maul, *Menschenrechte, Sozialpolitik und Dekolonisation. Die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (IAO), 1940-1970*, Essen 2007.

II. From 1919 to Philadelphia

Development and colonial minimum standards

The term “development” was first used in an ILO document at a relatively late point in time, in the context of the major wartime conference in Philadelphia in 1944. The now famous Declaration of Philadelphia set out the ILO’s intention to dedicate itself in the future to finding measures “to promote the economic and social advancement of the less developed regions of the world”⁵, and the “colonial” documents concerning “social policy in dependent territories” (SPDT) which were adopted at the same time called upon the colonial powers to actively support the economic development of their territories from now on in pursuit of an overriding social objective.⁶

The ILO thus played a pioneering role in two respects in Philadelphia with regard to the propagation of the development idea on the international level. Firstly, the Declaration of Philadelphia was the first document which implicitly made the economic welfare of the poorer (independent) countries the responsibility of the international community in general and international organisations, as the executive of the international community, in particular. It was thus a direct predecessor of the relevant passages in the UN Charter which was signed the year after.⁷ Secondly, the idea of development postulated in the SPDT Recommendation represented a change in *colonial policy* thinking that the ILO had been active in bringing about during the war.

This was not a coincidence. The ILO’s first indirect examination of problems in the field of colonial, or native labour, as it was called in the terminology of the time, which in themselves were essentially problems of development policy, had taken place before the Second World War. When it began drafting the so called Native Labour Code in the 1930s, the Organization found itself having to deal with the consequences of the policy increasingly pursued by the colonial powers of exploiting the resources of the colonies to serve the metropolises. In other words, colonial policy had become intensively geared towards the economic development of the colonies. Although the ambitious plans for a comprehensive *mise en valeur* as strived for for instance by the French colonial minister Albert Sarraut never came to fruition, the governments in London, Paris, Brussels and the Hague had unanimously put in place infrastructure projects and made considerable efforts to offer favourable conditions to private

⁵ The Declaration of Philadelphia, Section IV

⁶ ILO, Recommendation on Minimum Standards of Social Policy in Dependent Territories (1944)

⁷ Charter of the United Nations (1945)

capital.⁸ At no point was the increased need for manpower during the economic expansion of the 1920s met by free local labour markets. One of the consequences was that, in a way hitherto unknown, forced and compulsory labour became one of the main characteristics of colonial rule between the wars. The conventional social-conservative and particularistic colonial doctrines of the time, which regardless of national differences all conveyed in one way or another the idea of the need for a completely different set of rules for the colony and the mother country, only aggravated the situation.⁹ Basically, all colonial philosophies distinguished between a European and a “native” economic and labour sector and bridged manpower gaps in the first using methods of coercion. The result was pre-programmed social and political stagnation, and the often unscrupulous temporary poaching of manpower from the indigenous communities.¹⁰ Accordingly, all four conventions and a whole series of recommendations which the ILO passed between 1930 and 1939 as part of the Native Labour Code revolved around the problem of forced labour. From a humanitarian point of view, these initial attempts to tackle the consequences of the first colonial “development” initiatives were an undisputed success. However, the discussion surrounding the adoption of the Conventions and the final form they took as an ultimately less stringent set of norms separated from the realm of the regular International Labour Code – in itself evidence of the distinction made between colonial and metropolitan circumstances in terms of economic and social policy – had brought the limitations of thinking starkly to light and to a certain degree reproduced the prevalent particularistic colonial doctrines of the time.¹¹

Against this background, the colonial reform programme of Philadelphia represented a clear break with the past for the simple reason that, in the words of the Acting Director-General Edward Phelan, it was conceived as a “parallel operation” in the context of the general programmatic fresh start which Philadelphia effectively marked. The Declaration of Philadelphia, in which the ILO positioned itself on the side of the Allies and laid down the

⁸ Albert Sarraut, *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises*, Paris 1923. See also David K. Fieldhouse, *The West and the Third World*, Oxford 1999, 70-75.

⁹ The Ugandan political scientist Mahmood Mamdani compares the labour regimes in place in Africa during the inter-war period, regardless of the colonial philosophies behind them, to the situation under the South African post-war Apartheid regime. Roughly speaking, Mamdani sees all colonial societies as having been separated into the European realm of *citizenship*, which applied to the colonial masters, and the realm of artificially constructed “traditional” or “native” law which applied to colonial subjects. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject. Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton 1996.

¹⁰ For an account of the colonial forced labour situation in the period between the wars see ILO, *Social Policy in Dependent Territories*, Montreal 1944, 20-38. For Africa see Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society. The Labor Question in British and French Africa*, Cambridge 1996, 25-107. More specifically for French West Africa, see Babacar Fall, *Le travail forcé en Afrique Occidentale Française, 1900-1946*, Paris, 1993.

¹¹ Luis Rodriguez-Pinero, *Indigenous People, Post-Colonialism and International Law. The ILO regime (1919-1989)*, 2006; Daniel Roger Maul, *The ILO and the Struggle against Forced Labour from 1919 to the Present*, Labor History 48,4 (2007), 477-500.

social cornerstones of a future peacetime order, put forward for the first time in an international document the concept of universal social rights of the individual. It then made this the basis of its demand that member states commit to implementing economic policies governed by an overriding social objective. The call to establish welfare states in the postwar period, as the DOP could be read as, meant, translated to the colonies (for “the principles set forth in this Declaration are fully applicable to all peoples everywhere”), a move towards “welfare colonialism” .

Furthermore, the colonial reform programme of Philadelphia was the context in which the connection was made for the first time between economic and social development and basic human rights principles. This has been one of the main characteristics of the ILO-specific contribution to the development debate ever since. The inextricability of the two was made particularly clear in those passages of the reform documents which made freedom from discrimination and freedom from forced labour preconditions of “true” development. The prime example of this approach, though, was the endorsement of the principle of freedom of association¹², which contained the idea that development measures would only succeed if those concerned had the opportunity to participate fully and create local structures “from the bottom up” which would represent their interests. In the light of the particularistic reality which had characterised the colonial social order between the wars, this was not far from being a revolutionary step forward in thinking. The DOP and the colonial reform opus adopted in Philadelphia really did provide the postwar anti-colonial movement with an effective tool for uncovering the contradictions inherent in the colonial powers’ claim to rule and for formulating its own demands for participation and emancipation.

So how did the ILO manage to incorporate this idea of development based on human rights into its colonial work? By the beginning of the war, the colonial reformers within the ILO were already witnessing the first signs of a change in thinking in the colonial metropolises. This had its origins in the world economic crisis at the beginning of the 1930s, which had hit the colonies with their export economies particularly hard, both economically and socially. Criticism of the prevailing laissez-faire attitude to the colonial economies grew louder, and certain isolated colonial politicians, particularly in London and Paris, began to see active policy aimed more explicitly than previously at the economic development of the colonies and the social wellbeing of the colonial populations as an effective means of maintaining long-term control, something that was becoming increasingly necessary in the light of

¹² Interestingly, one of the Instruments subsumed under the heading “social policy in dependent territories” was a Convention on the Right to Association (Non-Metropolitan Territories) which actually predated the regular Freedom of Association Convention from 1948.

growing social and political unrest. This, then, was when the first cracks began to appear in the particularistic colonial doctrine of the inter-war period. The development idea drew its universalistic power from precisely that point where it attempted to counter indirect rule and other concepts which placed the natives into a separate sphere. It permitted the intellectual extension to the colonies of approaches used to tackle social problems in Europe, and called for the promotion of “modern” social institutions such as trade unions. Ultimately, the colonial crisis of the 1930s also helped to remove reservations about a policy of active economic development, or industrialisation, for the colonies and formed the starting point for the ideas of many of the “fathers” of the development theory of economics, including the Dutchman Julius Boeke and the Briton Arthur Lewis.

In the Native Labour Section of the ILO, these ideas, initially just a minority opinion within the colonial bureaucracy, had a number of vehement supporters as early as the end of the 1930s. The first tentative signs of a change on the political level, as provided by the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDWA) or in the policies of the French Popular Front government, were welcomed emphatically. The ILO’s strategy now was to work closely with the small circle of colonial reformers centred in Britain during the war, to praise those approaches already in place and to follow them through intellectually to a hypothetical point in the future, drawing conclusions that did not necessarily correspond with the actual intentions of the colonial politicians responsible.

The war offered an additional window of opportunity for an ambitious reform agenda. The loss in particular of the South East Asian possessions to the Japanese shattered imperial confidence and made the metropolises realize that postwar colonialism would have to be built on new foundations. In this respect, promises of economic and social reform were an opportunity for the colonial powers to demonstrate to the colonial populations their willingness to change. Endorsing the reform documents was tantamount to promising that the colonies, too, would profit if the democracies won the war. Agreeing to the reforms was also a way for the colonial powers to portray themselves as progressive and receptive to their powerfully positioned American war ally, which made no secret of its anti-colonial leanings. The often cited “American scare” was a strong motivating factor for all the colonial powers, but particularly for those governments in exile which were directly dependent on the good will of the American government to help them regain their old positions of power. The wide support which the ILO’s colonial reform proposals received from the side of the colonial powers had two main explanations, then. It reflected the new influence of colonial

development thinking in the official mind, and was simultaneously the expression of the propagandistic function attributed to colonial reform based on social rights.

Three years passed between the Philadelphia Conference and the conclusion of the colonial reform opus in 1947 with the adoption of various Conventions grouped under the heading Social Policy in Non-Metropolitan Territories which made the recommendation of 1944 binding under international law. This period also marked a watershed within the ILO. They were the years in which the first demands were heard within the Organization's forums for the ILO to get more involved in issues of development policy outside the colonial context. Certain Latin American and Asian countries put increasing pressure on the ILO to respond in a concrete way to the stipulation contained in the DOP that poorer independent nations should also be helped in their efforts towards economic and social progress. What these countries were essentially asking for was assistance in overcoming underdevelopment. Their main criticism of the ILO was that it continued to focus predominantly on the problems of the industrialised countries in Europe and America. What the Asian countries wanted, however, was for the Organization to concentrate its future work on helping them to build up their national economies, encouraging their efforts towards industrialisation and directing more attention to the rural areas in which the majority of their populations earned their living. In this way, the demands of the colonial territories for minimum standards turned into the demands of developing countries for practical assistance. The undisputed doyen of this group was the newly independent India. The fact that the country had attained its autonomy in precisely the year that the ILO concluded its chapter on colonial standard setting had a certain symbolic value. India's size, its economic potential and the confidence of its government, which intended to establish the country as the leading power in Asia, brought immediate pressure on the Organization to change. India's position was exceptional in that by the time it obtained independence, it already had long experience of the workings of the ILO. Since the 1930s, it had increasingly used its position to establish itself as the mouthpiece of the colonial world within the international arena. What the newly independent India wanted was to shift the focus of the Organization's work to the wishes and problems of the Asian continent. India intended to "decolonize" the ILO, and it was in a good position to do so. Nowhere else in the colonial world were conditions so favourable towards a policy of national economic development. The concept of "national development" had found its institutional expression in India well before it was established in other parts of the colonial world. As early as 1938, before the first British CDWA had come into being, the Congress Party had set up a national

planning committee to lay down the cornerstones of national development after independence. In addition, British efforts during the war to effectively turn the Indian economy over to the Allied war effort had given Indian politicians a range of planning tools that they could now use in putting their development ideas into practice. India took over the institutions of “colonial development” in the firm belief it would be able to turn them, freed from their political ties and with the support of the world community, into instruments of “national development”.¹³ At the ILO’s first “preparatory” Asian Regional Conference in the Indian capital Delhi in 1947, issues of post-colonial development were already high on the agenda. Prime Minister Nehru dedicated most of his opening speech to the new demands that extended beyond the day of independence. He formulated clear ideas of development and of the assistance he expected to receive towards it from the world community in general and the ILO in particular. His speech embodied a new discourse of moral claims addressed not just to the colonial powers but to the whole industrialised world. Addressing the ILO officials present, Nehru called for more activity in all areas of agricultural labour, and above all demanded assistance with industrialisation. For Nehru as for many leaders of national liberation movements, shedding the role of primary producer was synonymous with escaping from colonial economic dependencies. The ILO should, as it had been empowered to do by the Philadelphia mandate, help to generate the will of the world community and the funds that would aid development. Through its standard setting activities it should contribute to injecting social justice into a forced process of industrialisation. These activities from the “classic” catalogue of ILO work, however, were by no means to be the Organization’s only contribution to the development efforts of its un- or underdeveloped members – on this Nehru and most of the speakers that followed him were agreed. According to the independent Asian states, the ILO now needed to deliver more practical help, to provide technical expertise and to advise the New Nations in a variety of areas, from methods for increasing productivity to social security to occupational health and safety. Most of the European governments and union representatives, who at this point still largely dominated the political bodies of the ILO, and the majority of ILO officials, heard these demands with a good deal of scepticism. In the new Director-General from 1948 on, the American David Morse, however, the new nations were to find a willing listener.

¹³ Sugata Bose: *Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development. India’s Historical Experience in Comparative Perspective*, in: Cooper/Packard: *International Development and the Social Sciences*, p. 45–64, here p. 47. The memorandum “Economic Development for India”, which was named the Bombay Plan after the place it was produced, called for a “considerable measure of intervention and control” over key industries and infrastructure.

III. Technical assistance and the integrated approach to development: The ILO under David Morse in the 1950s

The majority of the reforms the ILO underwent under Morse's 22-year long time in office can be traced back to the parallel process of major transformation which took place in the international state system where over a period of less than 20 years - starting with Indian independence in 1947 - a large proportion of the world's people in Asia, Africa and other places liberated themselves from the dominion of European colonial powers. Especially the ILO's embarkment on technical assistance programmes in 1949 was closely connected to the progressing wave of decolonization in Asia, and through the 1950s and '60s the ILO continued to expand its technical functions in line with the needs and demands of the constantly growing number of developing countries in its ranks. It was during this period, that the ILO became an agency of international development policy, which far-reaching consequences both for the structure of its budget and the composition of its body of staff. As a consequence „development“ during the 1950s lost its colonial connotations and increasingly turned into the ideological basis, on which the ILO tried to shape the course of the decolonisation process in its own way.

Technical assistance

In his very first year in office, David Morse initiated, with the backing of the United Nations, the process which would lead to the setting up of ILO's technical assistance programmes. Within a short period of time his successful drive to transform the ILO into an operationally active organization providing technical assistance in economically and socially 'underdeveloped areas' of the world changed the face of the ILO "beyond recognition", according to one political scientist and ILO insider.¹⁴ Where in 1948 only 20 % of the ILO's budget had been earmarked for activities other than standard setting, just 10 years later technical assistance accounted for around 80%. During the first years of the technical assistance activities the ILO engaged mainly in fields such as vocational training and productivity issues, later on it extended the scope of its programs gradually.¹⁵ The move towards technical assistance also changed the composition of the Office, with the Organization's new activities bringing economists, social scientists and technical experts to an

¹⁴ John McMahon, *The International Labour Organization*, in: Evan Luard (ed.), *The Evolution of International Organizations*, London 1966, 177-199, here 178.

¹⁵ For a summary of the ILO's activities in the field of technical assistance during the first decade see ILO, *The Role of the ILO in the Promotion of Economic Expansion and Social Progress in Developing Countries*, Geneva 1961.

institution which had previously been dominated by lawyers with a high degree of affection to standard-setting. The ILO's reidentification of itself as a service provider for its poorer members was at the centre of the new approach which Morse brought to the Organization.

The ILO's departure towards operational activities during Morse's first years in office took place with the Cold War looming and the first wave of decolonization in Asia in full swing. Morse saw the Organization's new focus, embodied by the technical assistance programmes, both as a chance to win new 'clients' in the form of post-colonial states, and as a means of enabling the ILO, on the side of the West, to play an important role, particularly in Asia, in the global fight against communism. In a way, the new approach was an extension of Morse's activities as Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs in the Harry Truman administration, where Morse's duties had included securing the support of the American trade union associations AFL and CIO and their European allies for the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Indeed, Morse was ultimately one of the most important early advocates of extending the policies behind the Marshall Plan to the world beyond Europe. He saw in the Plan an effective means of shaping the domestic policies of the 'developing countries' in such a way - basically by raising the productivity of their economies - as to render them immune to the rise of Communism. By the time this idea took concrete shape in 1949 in the form of Truman's "Point IV Program", Morse was already heading the ILO, and the idea that he might be able to make effective use of the new position to gather support for these policies on an international level was undoubtedly one of the main reasons why the American government had pushed for his appointment.¹⁶

According to one of Morse's closest colleagues in the 1950s, the new DG "respected the traditional work of framing and applying labour standards but it did not excite him" – a fact he attributed not least to "an American preference for creative action over rule-making". On closer inspection, however, Morse's attitude to ILO norms in relation to the new developmental activities was rather complex. In fact he did believe that the ILO's 'classic' standard-setting work did have a role to play alongside the new technical activities. Addressing himself in particular to European governments and trade union representatives, the groups within the Organization who had profited the most from its standard-setting activities in the past and who therefore viewed a change in its portfolio skeptically and with concern,¹⁷ already at the ILC in 1949 Morse denied vehemently that technical assistance and

¹⁶ Taken from the author's own research on David Morse in the U.S. National Archives.

¹⁷ The strongest reservations came from the workers' group. For obvious reasons, they were keen proponents of the ILO's standard-setting activities. After all, the success which the trade union international had enjoyed up until then had mainly been due to what it had achieved in this area. The success story that the ILO's standard-setting had been since the First World War was inextricably linked to the successes of the trade unions in the

standard setting were necessarily irreconcilable, claiming on the contrary that operational activity had to be seen as complementary to the legislative work of the Conference, "for it is in fact the other half of the same coin".¹⁸ Technical assistance would make it possible to create the economic and institutional conditions necessary for standards to be applied. Morse went even further: promoting a process of development which took into account the aims of the ILO Constitution was, in his view, "precisely the purpose of technical assistance".¹⁹ He thus made international labor standards not just a goal, but a method of development, claiming that they helped to ease the consequences of the development process and paved the way for lasting ("sustainable" being a term that came into use only in the 1970s) development. In the first years of the technical assistance programmes the Director-General was forced on many occasions to repeat his assurances that there was an independent, ILO-specific route to development, based on the standards of the Organization. Persistent concerns about the Organization's new course and mistrust from various quarters within its ranks caused the discussion to flare up again and again and led to Morse and his supporters repeatedly having to explain and specify the new strategy. A case in point was the debate surrounding an initiative that Morse had been pursuing since 1950 to make "productivity" the general focus and overall direction of the Office's future work. Morse was constantly required to emphasize that the ILO would not only provide information about the purpose and consequences of higher productivity and deliver technical assistance towards it, but also ensure (through ILS) that increased productivity did "lead rapidly to improvements in economic and social welfare for the community in general".²⁰ Time and again Morse reassured the ILO's members that the ILO pursued an integrated approach to development, based on the standards and structure of the Organization and distinguishable from the purely economy-centred approaches of other development agencies.

ILO. The workers were also worried that technical assistance would weaken the tripartite structure of the ILO by forcing it to resort to external sources of financing. See Alcock, *History of the ILO*, 219.

¹⁸ ILC 32 (1949), Rep. I: Report of the Director-General, 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 259.

²⁰ See ILC 33 (1950), RoP, Rep. I: Report of the Director-General, 4. "Productivity" was also the topic of a number of statements made by Morse within the framework of the manpower program, and the International Labor Office released a whole series of publications on the subject in the first years of the TAP. Productivity was also down to be a priority topic in the 1953 Report of the Director-General to the Conference. At the same time, the first pilot projects within the TAP aimed at increasing productivity were already underway, in the machine construction and textile industry in India, for example. Morse's memorandum "ILO activities in the field of productivity" provides a good overview of the work at that time, 10/10/1952, in: ILOA-MF – Z 8/1/14: Meetings with Chiefs of Divisions.

The democratic path to modernization

It would be wrong, though, to regard solely as placatory formulas directed at worried members Morse's oft-repeated assurances that despite or precisely because of its move towards technical assistance, the ILO would remain true to its old standard-setting activities. In the early "Morse years" these assurances were based on the firm conviction that, in the current ideological climate, the ILO had a key role to play in the organization of the social change which increased efforts towards economic development outside Europe would bring. In Morse's eyes, the ILO was on the front line of a global conflict between democratic and totalitarian forces, caught up in a "struggle for the hearts and minds of men and women the world over on the outcome of which will depend peace or war and the survival [...] of civilisation or its destruction."²¹ In this respect he saw the values of the Declaration of Philadelphia, formulated as an intellectual response to the challenge by anti-democratic forces during World War II, as the key which would enable the Organization to keep the process of modernization on a democratic course. It would simply be necessary to bring the central Human Rights concerns of the Declaration to bear in the development process. Morse's thinking represented an early example of the specific contribution the Office was to make to the development and modernization discourse of the fifties. If Morse and his staff believed that certain core principles and standards such as freedom of association or freedom from discrimination and forced labour could play a crucial role in the development process, it was partly because they were observing this process from the same perspective as the representatives of modernization theory, a new and powerful academic trend which was emerging in the social sciences of the 1950s, predominantly in the USA.²² The integrated approach to development promoted by the ILO shared with this theory both its basic premisses and its historical origins in early decolonization and the conflict with communism.²³ Modernization theory also saw itself as an extension of the dualistic thought of the first generation of development economists and their narrow focus on economic processes, and extended the dichotomous perspective to all levels of society. It regarded modernization as a metahistorical process within which the transition from the traditional to

²¹ Morse, memorandum "The ILO and Economic and Social Development" 7/4/1951, in: *ibid.*

²² On the origins of the modernization theory see in particular Gilman, *Mandarins*; Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*.

²³ Especially close ties both intellectually and in terms of personal interaction existed to the branch of it known as Industrialism, most prominently represented by authors such as Wilbert Moore and Clark Kerr who saw industrialization as more than just the implementation of an organizational economic principle – it covered all areas of life and was a universal process which set universal imperatives. The Industrialism school started to form at the beginning of the fifties. Its most prominent representatives were the American sociologists Wilbert Moore and Clark Kerr. On the thinking behind Industrialism see Clark Kerr's influential essay *Changing Social Structures*, in: Wilbert Moore/Arnold Feldman, *Labor Commitment and Social Change in Developing Areas*, New York 1960.

the modern took place. Its proponents also believed the blueprint of modernization to be the road to development that Western European and North American societies had followed from an idealized past into modernity, the latter being deemed to be embodied by present day America. Finally, modernization theory could be interpreted as an intellectual answer to the challenge which the attractive authoritarian Soviet model of development posed to the West in the battle for the hearts and minds of the developing world during the Cold War.²⁴

If one accepted the premiss that Europe/North America's past was being repeated in the transition from the traditional to the modern observed in developing countries, the ILO really did hold a powerful range of tools for the promotion of democratic modernization. ILO standards could be interpreted as a set of answers which the liberal democracies of Europe and North America had found to the political and economic crises, linked to the development of their own capitalist orders, of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Morse and his colleagues knew however from the beginning that it would be illusory to draw from this conviction the demand that the developing countries embrace the entirety of international labor norms. The Office was well aware that the necessary socio-economic conditions were simply not in place. Critically however, the focus on human rights provided effective protection against the suggestions circulating that it may be desirable to replace ILS by regional norms that were better adjusted to the situation on the ground in the less industrialized areas of the world.²⁵ Their approach was based in particular on those basic values enshrined in the Declaration of Philadelphia – freedom from forced labour, freedom from discrimination and a democratically organized reconciliation of social interests through freedom of association. These values formed the core of the modernization project under Morse's leadership. In Morse's and most other officials involved in the design of the ILOs programmatic change during this early phase thinking, freedom of association was beyond doubt the core of the integrated approach to development. It was connected more than any other human rights norm to the ILO's idea of a specifically democratic path to modernisation. The notion of freedom of association expressed the idea that civil liberties were a precondition for the realization of economic and social rights. As a means of establishing adequate new forms of organisation in the transition from traditional to modern societies, it was the key to enabling the peaceful solution to conflicts of interest between social groups

²⁴ W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge 1960; On the reference to the communist challenge see Nils Gilman's excellent essay *Modernization Theory – the Highest Stage of American Intellectual History*, in: Engerman, *Staging Growth*, 47-81.

²⁵ A greater number of speakers at the ILO's Second Asian Regional Conference including India's Minister of Labour Lall spoke in favour of regional standards, Asian Regional Conference in Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon (1950), RoP.

within a pluralistic and democratic social order. From the perspective of the International Labour Office, this thought elevated freedom of association to a goal in its own right and, equally, to a method by which economic progress could be achieved. Similar was true of the abolition of forced labour and the elimination of discrimination in the world of work.

Morse's determination that the ILO's technical functions should be built on the foundation of the basic values – now principles of development - of the Declaration of Philadelphia was one of the reasons why standard setting took on a strongly human rights focus under his leadership. Although the initiative to adopt the five (core) human rights norms²⁶ that were all approved by the ILC during Morse's first ten years in office came from the political bodies of the Organization, in every case (Freedom of Association (1948), the Right to Collective Bargaining (1949), Equal Remuneration (1951) the Abolition of Forced Labour (1957) and Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (1958)) the Office was intensely active in the background to try and make the conventions as forceful as possible. The ILO's commitment to the successful outcome of the debates surrounding the adoption of the documents dealing with these issues was accordingly intense.

Promotional and educational approach

From the mid 1950s onwards, a whole series of factors necessitated a further shift in the ILO's work away from standard setting towards another extension of its new technical functions. There were important forces within the Organization who supported this change in its nature and openly welcomed the move away from standard setting. The most notable of these was the employers' group, whose sympathy for standard setting had traditionally never been very high anyway and whose line hardened in the 1950s under the influence of U.S. representatives who were particularly hostile to standardization. Their position reflected that of the U.S. government, which since the Eisenhower/Dulles Administration had come into power at the latest had pursued a consistent policy of non- commitment to international standards.²⁷ Washington strongly backed Morse in his transformation of the ILO into what was primarily a service agency and was, to put it mildly, uninterested in standard setting. The most important factor in the shift, however, was beyond doubt the (re)accession of the Soviet Union to the ILO in 1954. Up until that point the ILO had been a predominantly Western-dominated organization which took a clear position in the East-West conflict. After the entry

²⁶ Since they were mirroring basic principles of the Declaration of Philadelphia those standards were treated as core human rights standards, even though the term core labour standards was introduced only in the 1990s.

²⁷ The US government even went so far as to uphold this dogma even on the issue of forced labour, where it had been the main initiator of a new document. See Lorenz, *Defining Global Justice: The History of U.S. International Labor Standards Policy*, Notre Dame 2001.

of the Soviet Union and the ILO's conversion into a universal organization, however, this changed radically - with significant consequences for standard setting.

The Soviet Union's fundamental opposition to some of the Organization's basic principles, and the fact that the communist countries upheld an alternative concept of law with regard to basic principles such as freedom of association weakened, to some extent, the ILO's claim to universality, and certainly undermined the coherence of its values. Directly after the Soviet Union's accession for example, a bitter debate erupted about the tripartite character of the Organization, which eventually had an effect on the very substance of the freedom of association norms. The dispute, in which the West criticized the fact that the employers' and workers' representatives the Eastern Bloc states were sending were not "real", ended with a compromise worked out by various committees which was only made possible by the fact that most of the players (including David Morse, one of the staunchest supporters of tripartism) gave higher priority to the integration of the East into the ILO than to the strict application of the tripartite principle. In this as in other disputed cases nominally, the ILO's norms remained intact, but when it came to their practical implementation, extensive concessions were unavoidable.

The political and symbolic charge which the human rights discourse possessed against the backdrop of the Cold War and the resentments between the colonial powers and the newly independent states of Asia and Africa was such that on topics such as forced labour or discrimination, ideas were sought as to how the area of standard setting and implementation could be 'depoliticized'. In this connection it soon became clear that not only must the ILO find the right balance between technical activities and standard setting in its work, but that it must also try new approaches in the conveyance of its basic values/human rights norms if it was to prevent them from becoming utterly devalued.

As David Morse saw it there were two main things to be done. Firstly the ILO's technical functions had to continue to be strengthened and extended, which would not only help to meet the ever-growing need for technical assistance, but also contribute to depoliticizing the Organization's work. Secondly, conveyance of the ILO's basic principles had to a much greater extent than previously to be taken out of the political debates of the Conference and into the Office's practical activities. These were the main considerations behind the new 'promotional' or 'educational' approach which Morse presented in his human rights report of 1958.²⁸ The report's idea of a Labour-Management Relations Programme, which the ILO went on to implement, initiated and served as a model for a series of other programmes

²⁸Note Morse 29/4/1956, in: DAMP, B 89, F 14: Reflections.

organized by the Office as part of the TAP in the years that followed, including those, the most significant, in the areas of “management training” and “worker education”.²⁹ What they all had in common was that their primary addressees were developing countries, and that they were intended to help convey in these countries, in an indirect way, the principles behind the norms – first and foremost freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

The real “capstone of Morse’s promotional approach”,³⁰ however, was indisputably the establishment of the International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS), which from the end of the 1950s the Director-General worked tirelessly to promote amongst the various groups within the ILO’s membership. Eventually founded in 1962, the IILS provided a center of research and training which would mainly focus on the current socio-political problems faced by the developing world. Morse’s main intention was to create a working environment in which controversial topics such as industrial relations could be discussed away from the politically charged atmosphere of the Conference. As Morse put it, the IILS was intended to “promote rational examination of [...] emotionally explosive issues in an atmosphere somewhat removed from the field of battle”³¹. The Institute was to be a “world intellectual center”³² of social policy, offering a forum for discussion and exchange. However, “educational action” was its main purpose. IILS courses were directed at “potential leaders” from the social sector, as Robert Cox, one of the Institute’s first directors, explained.³³ The Office wanted to bring young, middle grade government staff together with employers’ and trade union officials from developing countries to teach them methods which would put them in a better position to analyze the problems facing their own countries.³⁴ From the point of view of the Office, the IILS was an extremely significant step on the road to the integrated approach to development. The world’s future policymakers would go to Geneva, encounter the methods and principles of the ILO and take them back to their home countries. The creation of social institutions was deemed to be extremely important as a starting point for the

²⁹ Ernst B. Haas, *Beyond the Nation State. Functionalism and International Organization*, Stanford 1964, 184-188.

³⁰ Bob Reinalda, *Organization Theory and the Autonomy of the International Labour Organization. Two Classic Theories still going strong*, in: Bob Reinalda/Bertjan Verbeek, *Autonomous Policy Making by International Organizations*, London/New York 1998, 55.

³¹ Morse, memorandum “The International Institute for Labour Studies” 12/6/1961, in: ILOA-MF Z 11/7/3: IILS 1961-1968.

³² David A. Morse, *The Origin and Evolution of the ILO and its role in the World Community*, Ithaca 1970, 70.

³³ Cox, memorandum “Aims and purposes of the IILS” 15/7/1965, in: *ibid.*

³⁴ Syllabus planning was supervised by an academic council which, in its makeup, reflected the Office’s close conceptual leanings towards modernization theory, especially the school of “industrialism”. The council contained many of the theory’s leading proponents such as Clark Kerr, Charles Myers, Frederick Harbison and John Dunlop, the authors of Industrialism’s major work “Industrialism and Industrial man”. For some time the council was chaired, at Morse’s personal request, by Clark Kerr, Morse to Kerr 6/6/1961, in: ILOA-MF Z 11/7/3: IILS 1961-1968

process of modernization, and the training of the world's future elite in accordance with the ideals of the ILO was a vital step towards anchoring these principles in the developing countries.³⁵

³⁵ Cox, memorandum "Aims and purposes of the IILS" 15/7/1965, in: *ibid*

IV. Development vs. Human Rights?: The 1960s as a post-colonial time of growing conflict and new initiatives

At the beginning of the 1960s, the wave of decolonization reached the African continent and swept through it with force. The "African year", as 1960 became known, saw a multitude of countries following the trailblazers Ghana and Guinea into independence. The "wind of change which is blowing through this continent",³⁶ in the words of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that same year, also left an indelible mark on the ILO. The Organization notched up 16 new members in 1960 alone.³⁷ Developing countries now finally and without any doubt formed the bulk of the ILO's members, and this majority was calling again emphatically to have its interests more strongly reflected in the structure and agenda of the Organization.

At the same time the ILO was taking part in a discussion that involved the whole UN system at the beginning of the decade, trying to find an explanation for the obvious failure of the development strategies of the fifties. This was the starting point from which employment went on to become the dominant theme of the sixties, with the "World Employment Programme" at the end of the decade finally enabling the ILO to package its specifically social perspective on the problems of development in a way compatible with the expectations and demands of the majority of its members.

With regard to the material prerequisites for such an undertaking, the position the Office found itself in at the beginning of the sixties was actually very strong. The ILO was benefiting from an upturn in multilateral aid in general during this period, caused by the fact that the strategic value which potential Western donor countries attached to this type of assistance in the global fight against Communism had been growing continuously since the middle of the fifties. Khrushchev's new strategy of actively courting the sympathies of the New Nations, regardless of their political orientation, drove the West in increasing measure to bring its own, superior, financial clout to bear. One result of this was the setting up in 1960 of the International Development Association (IDA) under the auspices of the World Bank, which until that point had not been an agency of development aid at all. The role of the IDA was to

³⁶ Macmillan's speech to the South African Parliament 2/3/1960, in: Porter/Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization* (2), Dok. 77: The Wind of Change: Speech by the R. hon. Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister, to both Houses of the Parliament of the Union of South Africa, Cape Town, 3 February 1960, 522-532, here 525.

³⁷ With one exception (Cyprus) all the members were newly, independent African states: Benin, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Chad and both Congos (the former French colony and the former Belgian Congo). See the list in Ghebali, *ILO*, 117f.

grant cheap loans to developing countries. At the same time, similar aid agencies were springing up under the aegis of other Western organizations such the OECD and the European Economic Community (EEC), which taken together meant that significantly more money was available for economic development at the beginning of the sixties than ever before.³⁸

The main implication of these developments for the ILO was the new seal of approval that through them, technical assistance received. As the capital made available to developing countries grew, so did awareness of the necessity of creating "pre-investment conditions" – the conditions which needed to be met for an injection of capital into the development process to be effective. Of all the ILO's activities, its manpower program was particularly consistent with this approach. As a result, the ILO was able to secure itself a healthy share of the takings when the United Nations reorganized its allocation of funds at the end of the fifties on the basis of "pre-investment" thinking. In addition in 1959, on the initiative of the developing countries, the United Nations Special Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED) was launched. Having access to SUNFED money marked, both qualitatively and quantitatively, a milestone in the TAP and provided a "big boost" to the development work of the ILO as a whole, as David Morse remarked with satisfaction.³⁹

As in Asia and Latin America in the fifties, Africa's interest in the technical assistance provided by ILO was keen. A resolution was passed at the First African Regional Conference in Lagos in 1960 underlining the continent's drastic needs in fields within the ILO's sphere of competence and reiterating the importance which the Organization attached to technical assistance, particularly during the decolonization process. It stated explicitly that the TAP was an important tool for helping African nations to full independence, independence that may otherwise "be compromised by insufficient economic autonomy."⁴⁰

The apparent harmony, however, between the goals of the ILO and the desires of its new members could not always mask the problems and insufficiencies.

The ILO in the North-South Conflict

In 1961 the UN General Assembly declared the sixties to be the "First United Nations' decade of development".⁴¹ This was in response to the general feeling within the international

³⁸ Between 1958 and 1962 a number of other international financing bodies and agencies were set up, including within the GATT framework or under the auspices of the EEC. See Heide-Irene Schmidt, *Europäische Entwicklungspolitik. Einführung*, in: CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HISTORY 12, 4 (2003), 389.

³⁹ Morse on a meeting with Paul Hoffman (SUNFED director) 5/29/1959, in: DAMP, B 89, F 14: Reflections.

⁴⁰ Resolution concerning the work of the International Labour Organization in Africa, in: AFRC I (1960), RoP, App. III: Resolutions, 257.

⁴¹ Resolution 1710 (XVI) of the UN General Assembly, 12/1961. The proposal was officially launched by American president John F. Kennedy. The General Assembly's primary goal in the "development decade" was to

community that previous efforts had fallen far short of the desired effect, and that specific new measures were necessary if the social and economic conditions faced by a large proportion of the earth's population were to improve. By the end of the fifties the developing countries' hopes of being able to catch up with the industrialized world were already turning into disappointment. The economic divide between the 'first' and the 'third' world had not become smaller since the end of the war but actually increased. In the light of realizations such as these, the rift between industrialized and developing countries began to increase on the international stage, too. In the fifties, the developing countries' demands on the rich industrialized nations had centered mainly around the extending of the provision of aid to overcome internal barriers to development. Now however, attention began to shift to external factors such as the biased structures of the world economy, which were said to be putting developing countries at a disadvantage. The structures of international trade came to be seen as the main culprit in the failure of all previous efforts to eliminate the colossal differences in prosperity separating mankind. This idea was supported by the findings of the structuralist development economists of the "dependency theory" school of thought which emerged at the end of the fifties.⁴² At the beginning of the sixties the group of developing countries, as large as the economic and political differences between them were, began to make concerted efforts to bring their new weight within the international organizations to bear. The Belgrade conference of non-aligned states in 1961 in this respect marked the beginning of a process of unification which reached its formal conclusion with the founding of the "Group of 77" at the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964. One result of this joining of forces on the part of the developing world was the emergence within the UN system of a clear division down the North-South axis when it came to issues of world trade. On one side of the front a largely united group of developing countries was demanding not only increased multilateral aid, but international agreements to secure the prices of raw materials and, under the catchy slogan "trade not aid", preferential access for their manufactured goods to the markets of the industrialized nations.⁴³

On the other side an equally united group of industrialized nations was showing, apart from the occasional increase in funds for multilateral development aid, absolutely no signs that it was willing to concede to any of these demands. The notion of regulating world trade so as to benefit developing countries had few if any supporters among the Western nations. It was,

increase economic growth in developing countries, although the campaign encompassed all the UN's fields of activity. See Emmerij/Jolly/Weiss, *Ahead of the Curve*, 44-50.

⁴² Raul Prebisch was the chairman of ECLA and later of UNCTAD. Hans Singer was head of the Department of Economic Affairs in the UN Secretariat.

⁴³ Schmidt, *Europäische Entwicklungspolitik*, 389f.

in fact, to avoid this very scenario that the capacity of the World Bank to grant loans to developing countries had been increased. The American government in particular, which had been instrumental in setting up the IDA and in getting its Western partners on board,⁴⁴ saw the Agency as a way of increasing general prosperity while avoiding the necessity to make compromises on the concept of a liberalized world trade order. It was precisely these considerations which were behind the "can-do-approach" of the new U.S. President John F. Kennedy, who made the "development decade" one of the slogans of his presidency. In this sense Kennedy's development offensive had nothing to do with realigning the coordinates of world trade.⁴⁵

It was difficult for the ILO to know what position to take on a battlefield where the fronts were so clearly defined. The developing countries, of course, pushed for the Organization to take their side in the fights which lay ahead. The resolutions passed by the African and Asian Regional Conferences in 1960 and 1962, for example, called upon the ILO to work on an international level to bring about agreements which would secure price stability for raw materials on the world market.⁴⁶ The authors of these resolutions based their demands on the Declaration of Philadelphia, which in principle gave the ILO a mandate for such measures.⁴⁷ But on this as on all questions concerning the world trade order, the Office's hands were tied. The industrialized Western nations claimed that such matters lay outside the ILO's competence and should be reserved for the financial institutions of the UN or be negotiated at the GATT talks. It wasn't only Western governments who were opposed to the ILO intervening on the side of the developing countries in matters of world trade. Any regulations which led to an increase in prices for raw materials or forced the rich industrialized nations to open up their markets would hardly have been in the interests of the Western employers' or

⁴⁴ The multilateralization of development aid through the World Bank had the added advantage, in the eyes of the USA, of facilitating the integration of the colonial powers, which had always preferred bilateral assistance and directed it at their former or existing colonies. It also allowed for the incorporation of the Federal Republic of Germany, a potential donor country which up until now had stood on the sidelines of the international development effort. The beginnings of West German development aid were thus closely connected to the American initiative. See *ibid.* On how the Federal Republic of Germany was incorporated see also H.-I. Schmidt, *Pushed to the Front: The Foreign Assistance Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1958-1971*, in: CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HISTORY 12, 4 (2003), 473-507.

⁴⁵ See Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World*, 59-85.

⁴⁶ Resolution concerning the Stability of World Commodity Markets and their Influence on Levels of Living and Employment, in: AFRC I (1960), RoP, App. VI: Resolutions and Conclusions Adopted by the Conference, 280f.; Resolution Concerning Measures to Promote Stable Prices of Basic Commodities in World Markets and Other Measures for the Effective Utilisation of Resources and the Improvement of Living Standards, in ARC V (1962), RoP, App. VII: Resolutions and Observations Adopted by the Conference.

⁴⁷ The issue of price stability for raw materials was an important one for the authors of the Declaration of Philadelphia (Section IV) in the light of the severe problems caused by the world economic crisis of the thirties. The Declaration of Philadelphia in: ILO, *Constitution*, 28.

trade unions either.⁴⁸ David Morse promised the developing countries that the Organization's priorities did lie with the needs of its poorer members ("the needs of those countries where poverty is greatest and which are making efforts to develop their economies have a prior claim upon our potential for action"), but couldn't do much more. Paradoxically, the ILO found itself facing a dilemma even over the question of industrialization, despite this being one of the Organization's proudest and most successful areas, and one where its competence and desire to lend technical assistance were very much in line with the interests of many developing countries. In the end, it was the emphasis which the developing countries placed on industrialization that came to be problematic. Since the late fifties they had been pressuring the UN to increase support for their development efforts. In 1960 the Economic and Social Council set up a body to focus on industrial development, and there were soon initiatives to turn this body into a new UN specialized agency. The problem for the ILO was that in many areas, and especially on vocational training, the planned United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) threatened to compete directly with the ILO's technical assistance program, which would have forced the ILO into a difficult contest for UN resources.⁴⁹ For this reason the Office was "strongly opposed to a new agency"⁵⁰ and did everything it could to torpedo the initiative. The controversy surrounding the setting up of UNIDO carried on into the middle of the sixties, but finally turned out as the ILO had hoped. UNIDO was set up as an autonomous organization and not a UN specialized agency, which meant that its status was inferior to that of the ILO. However, from the point of view of the ILO this outcome was flawed by the fact that it had mainly been brought about thanks to the efforts of the industrialized Western countries. From the beginning, the rich nations had wanted to limit the influence of the new organization as much as possible, and as they were the potential donors to UNIDO, they were in a strong position to wring compromises out the developing countries on its status.⁵¹ However, as a beneficiary of these compromises, the ILO was exposed to accusations that it had acted on behalf of the interests of the industrialized nations. It was conflicts such as these which increased the urgency of the ILO's need to find a

⁴⁸ On the growing conflict of interests which the national trade union confederations of the industrialized West faced in the sixties with regard to the developing countries' demands for industrialization see: John French, *International Trade Unionism and the Fight to Reshape the World that Trade Built. The Fight for International Worker Rights in a Globalizing World, 1959-1999*, in: International Conference of Labour and Social History (Hg.), *Labour and Social Movements in a Globalizing World System*, Linz, 2003.

⁴⁹ UNIDO threatened about 25 percent of the ILO's activities (especially within the manpower program). Alcock, *History of the ILO*, 349.

⁵⁰ Discussion between Morse and Harlan Cleveland (US Deputy Secretary of State) 1/10/1964, in: ILOA-MF Z 1/61/11: ILO Relations with USA, Kennedy and Johnson.

⁵¹ Alcock, *History of the ILO*, 350.

conclusive answer to the problems of the developing countries if it was not to lose the loyalty of its new members in the long run.

A Social Response to the Crisis

Throughout these conflict-ridden times for the Organization, from the beginning of the sixties onwards, the Office had been working on renewing and revitalizing its technical assistance program. The disputes surrounding the world trade order now made it more important than ever to prove to the developing countries the functional value of the ILO in overcoming the internal structures responsible for underdevelopment. The Office wanted the new-look TAP to provide a way (compatible with the goals of the ILO) out of the impasse into which the development policies of the fifties, with their concentration on economic growth, had all too obviously led. The proponents of the dual theory of development had assumed that a certain level of annual growth (initial estimates put it at two percent) would be enough to support a self-sustaining development process. By the end of the sixties, it was clear that this assumption had been false. Even in countries where governments were reporting high economic growth, it was not enough to increase the standard of living for the majority of the population by any significant amount. The scenario was the same wherever one looked: poverty in economically stagnant rural areas led to unchecked migration towards urban centers, which, as a result, grew rapidly and chaotically. Nowhere, not even in countries (such as India for example) where industrialization strategies had seen a certain level of success, did the cities provide even anything like enough employment to soak up the scores of migrants arriving from the countryside.⁵² The basic premisses, then, of the dualistic model of development had been proven false: the growth of the "modern" economic sector did not suffice to absorb the influx of labor from the "traditional" sector. The process was as devastating for the cities as it was for rural communities. Asia and Latin America were the areas most visibly affected, as the situation there was aggravated by high demographic growth.⁵³

Against this alarming backdrop a wide ranging debate had been initiated at the end of the fifties on the academic level and within international development agencies to try and find out what had caused the development policies of the past to fail, and to establish what lessons could be learned. The Office took the view, shared by many development economists at the

⁵² ILO, *The Role of the International Labour Organization in the Promotion of Economic Growth and Social Progress in Developing Countries*, Geneva 1961, 24.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 24ff.

time, that the growth-oriented approaches of the past had placed too much trust in the power of the "invisible hand" of the market. The answer, then, was for the state to play a more active role in economic planning and coordination. In some countries, such as India, this idea already had a long tradition, but it was, in theory, possible all over the developing world, with late colonial institutions often providing a good starting point.

The setting up of SUNFED allowed the ILO, too, to play more of a role in the planning processes of the developing countries. Not only did SUNFED provide more funding than EPTA for the Organization's technical assistance program, it also financed longer term projects of three to five years. Unlike in the fifties, where such long projects were the exception rather than the rule, the ILO could now put its energies into project planning as well as implementation. The mere fact that from the year it was set up, the ILO financed more TAP projects through the special fund than through EPTA (with the one exception of 1964), shows how quickly the planning element became one of the defining features of the technical assistance program.⁵⁴

With these new opportunities opening up before it, the Office began, at the beginning of the sixties, to formulate its specific contribution to the debates of the first development decade. It became more and more convinced that even increased economic planning would not, alone, solve the problems of the developing countries, and started to try and raise awareness of the social aspects of development, which had been more or less ignored up until that point. This position was unconventional, to say the least, in the development economic debates of the time. In the Office's view, neither classical development theorists such as Arthur Lewis, nor dependency theorists with their focus on the structures of world trade, paid enough attention to the social aspects of development.⁵⁵ Office officials believed that the real reason for the failure in so many Asian and Latin American countries of efforts to raise the standard of living for the greater part of the population was the fact that the social consequences of economic development had largely been ignored. In the words of David Morse, one of the bitterest insights that development efforts since the war had provided was that "social progress does not automatically emerge from economic progress". Indeed, for the millions everywhere living in subsistence conditions despite economic growth, or on the brink of starvation in urban centers which were spreading out of all control, the term "development" had, for precisely this reason, actually taken on negative connotations.⁵⁶ Morse made it the

⁵⁴ ILO, *A Great Adventure of Our Time*, 7-10. See also Alcock, *History of the ILO*, 338f.

⁵⁵ Morse criticized, for example, ECLA's development economic approach under its chairman Raul Prebisch, one of the "fathers of dependency theory". Minutes of a meeting between Morse / Rens and Prebisch 7/13/1961, in: ILOA-MF Z 14/2/10: ECLA

⁵⁶ David Morse, *The World Employment Programme*, in: INTERNATIONAL LABOUR REVIEW, 97, 6 (1968), 518f.

declared goal of the ILO to prevent the development ideal from being further discredited and to put an end to the political destabilization which this resulted in. The ILO would exploit the world's new recognition of the importance of planning, and bring to it a strong social component. And it would concentrate first and foremost on employment policy.

"First attempt at truly world-wide planning" – on the way to a World Employment Program

As time went by, the Office became more and more convinced that the ILO's role in getting the development process back on the road was to raise awareness within the developing countries of the necessity of focused planning and active policies to create "productive employment". From the beginning of the sixties onwards, the ILO began to refocus all of its activities, including the technical assistance program, in line with this new target.

The Director-General's report from 1961 on the "Role of the International Labour Organization in the promotion of economic growth and social progress in developing countries" proposed that creating productive employment was by far the most effective strategy that could be applied on the way to social development because, it was hoped, productive employment could counter the development-blocking consequences of unchecked population growth. The report criticized the fact that the developing countries' development plans had, in the past, seldom if at all contained clear goals relating to employment, and pointed to a lack of awareness of the problem amongst economic planners and general uncertainty about the possibly damaging effects of employment-oriented economic policy as a further underlying problem.⁵⁷ In the same year, the ILC passed a resolution calling on all countries to incorporate the goal of creating productive employment into their national plans.⁵⁸

Building upon this basis the Office launched, the following year, a global plan of action so ambitious that it towered above everything the ILO had previously done under its technical assistance program. The 'Ottawa Plan' which came out of the 1966 American Regional Conference⁵⁹ meeting was the first in the series of regional employment programs followed by similar initiatives for Asia and Africa,⁶⁰ which, taken together, would go on to form the

⁵⁷ ILO, *The Role of the International Labour Organization in the Promotion of Economic Growth and Social Progress in Developing Countries*, Geneva 1961, 22.

⁵⁸ ILC 45 (1961), RoP, 900-904.

⁵⁹ GB 160 (1964), RoP, 120.

⁶⁰ Two years later, the Asian Regional Conference in Tokyo launched the Asian Manpower Plan, an adaptation of the Ottawa Plan. At its meeting in Dakar in 1967 the African advisory committee then also laid the foundations for an African Jobs and Skills Programme, which was finally launched at the third African Regional Conference in Accra in 1969. Ibid, 358ff.

pillars of the WEP. Finally, in 1967, Morse presented to the ILC his plan for a global employment program.⁶¹

It is important to note that the WEP was from the beginning more than a second technical assistance program. To be precise, it was not, itself, actually a program, but a coordinated reorientation of the ILO's activities within various existing programs. All the work that was already underway, on the organization of the labor market or on wages policy, for instance, was turned to the service of the WEP. David Morse, who presented the WEP on the ILO's fiftieth anniversary in 1969, described it as "an entirely new departure" for the ILO. In his eyes, the program drew the right conclusions from the failure of the growth-oriented development model of the past and replaced it with one of active and far-reaching planning. In fact, he went as far as to term the WEP the beginning of a "first attempt at truly world-wide planning".⁶²

The WEP's most significant achievement, however, was in a different area entirely. The program marked the world's first attempt to come up with a development strategy which, unlike previous economics-centered approaches, concentrated on the problem of poverty. In this, it became a model for the work of all the international organizations in the seventies. The "basic needs" approach which the World Bank adopted under its new president Robert McNamara, and the UN's "human needs" campaign were both, as Morse later remarked, quite rightly, "really the World Employment Programme, but with a different name."⁶³

The ILO in the 1960s also turned to focus on the new, for the ILO, areas of rural labor and rural production, a move triggered by two main factors. Firstly, decolonization in Africa had given the Organization a large number of new members whose populations survived mainly on the basis of rural activities. Secondly, and just as importantly, prevailing thinking held that the problems currently faced by the developing countries were, in large part, due to the neglect of rural areas in the development concepts of the fifties.⁶⁴

New Directions in the Integrated Approach to Development

The ILO's intention at the beginning of the technical assistance program had been to find a specifically democratic road to modernization. The debates preceding the launching of the

⁶¹ ILC 51 (1967), RoP, 412f.

⁶² Morse, *Evolution of the ILO*, 89.

⁶³ See Morse's reminiscences in: *Oral History Interview with David Morse*, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University 1981, carried out by Peter Jessup, Columbia University in Washington, D.C., 7/19, 7/25, 8/2, 8/9, 10/11, 10/25 1980 and 1/11, 3/7 1981 (OHIM 3), 66. On how the WEP fitted in with the UN's strategy change towards a poverty centered approach see especially Emmerij/Jolly/Weiss, *UN Ideas*, 60-80, and Charles Oman/Ganeshan Wignarajan, *The Post War Evolution of Development Thinking*, New York 1992, 99f.

⁶⁴ ILO, *Africa and the ILO*, Geneva 1960, 23f.

WEP were an example of the new directions the ILO explored in its attempt to do so. A convention and a recommendation on employment policy adopted in 1964, both of which were, essentially, tailored to the developing world, provided the legislative framework around which the debate on the future shape of a technical program could begin.⁶⁵ These documents defined the basic principles and aims of active employment policies. They did not just take the form of technical guidelines on the role of planning in policymaking,⁶⁶ but contained a series of passages reflecting the core values of the ILO. The Convention emphasized the importance of free choice in employment, as opposed to forced labor. It called for employers' and workers' organizations to be involved in the process of defining employment targets and contained an explicit reference to the anti-discrimination Convention of 1958.⁶⁷

A similar impulse, aimed at creating a stronger link between the technical and the standard setting elements of the ILO's work, was behind the wide ranging structural and programmatic reforms of the Office which began in the mid-sixties as well as was behind the decentralization of the Office which took place parallel to this structural reform of the Geneva headquarters, and which was applauded by the developing countries. Between 1965 and 1968 the field offices were turned into area offices, with an "area" being a small number of countries within a larger region. The area offices were subordinate to the new regional offices, which were set up under the leadership of special coordinators. Unlike the former field offices, the regional offices were full subsections of the International Labor Office, and were responsible for all the ILO programs and projects within a particular region. Various functions which until now had been concentrated in Geneva were also decentralized at this point. The regional offices took over the duties of research and the provision of information, and above all monitored the application of international labor standards.⁶⁸

Thus, together with the ILS and the International Center for Advanced Training in Turin, opened in 1965, and directed first and foremost at skilled workers, vocational trainers and management personnel from developing countries,⁶⁹ over the course of the sixties, the ILO

⁶⁵ Convention no. 122 (1964): Employment Policy Convention; Recommendation no. 122 on Employment Policy, in: ILO, *Conventions and Recommendations*, 1249-1252; 1253-1266.

⁶⁶ They contained measures which were to be taken on both the national and international levels and covered areas ranging from investment and income policy to special methods for creating industrial and agricultural employment to the carrying out of demographic studies. They also reflected the developing countries' view that international agreements on commodity prices were a precondition for the success of employment policies. The unusually extensive recommendation, which made very detailed proposals concerning employment policy, also contained an annex on planning, which indicated how employment targets could be integrated into general economic and social policy. *Ibid*, 1265f.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 1249-1952.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 61-64.

⁶⁹ Even before the Center was set up, from the early days of the TAP, in fact, the ILO had been providing grants to skilled workers and civil servants from developing countries to visit industrialized nations for college/university or on the job training. The new Center was an ILO-internal extension of this, but with the

expanded the institutional basis from which it hoped to promote and implement its specific concepts of modernization, which aimed at reconciling economic growth and respect for human rights. However, although it did succeed, over the course of the decade, in convincing its new members of the value of its technical activities in the development effort, it had much less luck in winning them over to the universal character of its fundamental principles.

Development and standards

The ratification of human rights norms in particular was undeniably symbolic for the new states, marking both their arrival as equal members within the international community, and demonstrating to their populations, who under colonial rule had been completely or partially excluded from the rights in question, that the long struggle for emancipation was over. As an example, the AFRC in Lagos 1960, declared in this connection that the strict application of the human rights conventions was for all African countries a “question of honour and prestige”.⁷⁰ As a result, during this period the International Labour Organization recorded an unparalleled increase in ratifications of its norms, with human rights standards (discrimination, forced labour and freedom of association) collecting the highest numbers of signatures.⁷¹ All in all, the signs seemed to indicate that the post colonial nations were largely in favour of the ILO’s universalistic approach.

While welcoming the developing world’s public embracement of ILO norms, the Office was not blind to the strong currents actually moving against them. While in international fora the representatives of the newly independent states were voicing their support for the universal validity of human rights, a consensus was emerging amongst the governments of these countries that the unfiltered application of norms was irreconcilable with the goal of mobilizing all possible forces for the development effort. At the ILO’s annual conferences post 1960, more and more governments protested, in a moderate form, that when it came down to it, economic development must always take priority over compliance with norms. This view reflected a combination of various lines of argument which together constituted a qualitatively new discourse directed against the immediate validity of ILO norms within which the distinction between technical standards and human rights norms was blurred. The

added advantage, from the point of view of the Office, that visitors to it could be given a thorough grounding in the goals of the ILO. The center (wh.) was thus an important element in the "educational approach" which Morse had postulated at the end of the fifties. Ghebali, *ILO*, 258.

⁷⁰ Resolution Concerning the Work of the International Labour Organisation in Africa, in: AFRC I (1960), RoP, App. III: Resolutions, 256f.

⁷¹ From 1960 to 1964 the number of ratifications equaled roughly the number for the whole of the Inter-War period. Two thirds of the ratification certificates the ILO issued from 1963 to 1983 concerned post-colonial countries. Ghebali, *ILO*, 213. See for a detailed list: Maul, *Menschenrechte*, 451.

political rhetoric of the leaders of the new nations described the underdevelopment of their young national economies as an emergency situation comparable to a state of war. This compromised the ILO's norms in two ways. In terms of the outside world and the struggle for development within the international political and economic order, complying with ILO norms was tantamount to falling for a type of hidden protectionism that benefited the rich industrial countries. On the internal level, the development effort – defined as an emergency situation - justified, demanded even, the mobilisation of all forces for a common goal, and called for unity and a closed front. In this new discourse, governments were emergency regimes overseeing their countries' fight for (economic) emancipation and independence, which was now no longer taking place on the national level, but within the international order. As a consequence of this shift in perspective, the ILO's norms lost their emancipatory power and actually became an obstacle in the fight for development, or even worse, an instrument of neo-colonial control. So numerous were the voices taking this line in the ILCs, that at the beginning of the 1960s David Morse began to speak of a new "intellectual fashion" which held individual freedom and democratic forms to be in opposition to the demands of economic growth.⁷² This trend was particularly apparent with regard to two specific topics: the issue of forced labour and the matter of freedom of association.

*Forced Labour*⁷³

By the sixties, the issue of forced labour was one of the problems which most clearly illustrated the "growing conflict between economic development and the preservation and guarantee of human rights", as the American human rights expert and government representative to the Governing Body, George Weaver, observed with concern.⁷⁴

Many of the newly independent states did in fact have a very mixed attitude to the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention adopted by the Conference in 1957, which primarily targeted those forms used for development and political purposes. On the one hand, the profession of commitment to the freedom from forced labour, which was regarded as the classic "colonial crime", symbolized the break with the colonial past more than any other human rights topic. The significance which this possessed for post-colonial governments is evidenced by the

⁷² ILC 48 (1962), RoP, 446-453.

⁷³ On the ILO's activities in this particular field see the author's article Maul, Daniel Roger 'The International Labour Organization and the Struggle against Forced Labour from 1919 to the Present', in: *Labor History*, 48:4 (2007), 477 - 500.

⁷⁴ George Weaver, *The ILO and Human Rights*, Washington, D.C. 1969, 24.

literal flood of ratification certificates for the conventions of 1930 and 1957 which the International Labour Office issued to the newly independent states in the 1950s and '60s.⁷⁵ Implementing the conventions, however, was a different matter entirely. In 1962 the annual report of the permanent Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (COE) listed by name a myriad of West African countries whose methods of mobilisation of labour were described as being incompatible with both forced labour conventions.⁷⁶ The governments of these countries had, either under the auspices of the military or by creating a separate institution for the purpose, introduced compulsory labour service for young people. The 'recruits' generally worked on public development projects, and were in some cases provided with basic vocational training.⁷⁷ The COE pointed out to all concerned that labour services by their very nature contradicted the provisions of the forced labour convention of 1930, which only permitted compulsory military service for purely military purposes. They also, according to the experts, breached the provisions of the newer convention, which forbade forced and compulsory labour "as a method of mobilising and using labour for purposes of economic development". The Committee criticized the excessive use of emergency regulations to justify the services.⁷⁸

Soon after the publication of the report, the discussion surrounding the phenomenon of youth labour service in Africa began to extend to the very fundamentals and principles on which the ILO was built. True development, according to the Committee, was only possible where fundamental ILO standards were respected.⁷⁹ The accused states reacted with great indignation to the findings of the COE and more and more frequently the Office was forced to face the complaint that in its attempt to convey the merits of its concept of free labour in accordance with ILO conventions, it had come down clearly on the side of neo-colonial interests.

A similar controversy blighted the field of freedom of association, where Asia, rather than Africa, was the test site. From the beginning, David Morse was determined that the principle of free and democratic industrial relations must be anchored in the economic development process. Going by the approval this notion received at the Asian Regional Conferences, where

⁷⁵ Maul, *Menschenrechte*, 475.

⁷⁶ The report found systems of forced labour for which emergency powers were used as a justification, in all parts of the world, in independent countries like Kenya or India as well as in the remaining colonial territories. in: *Ibid.*.

⁷⁷ An Israeli institution, the *Nahal*, was the model for most of the youth labour services in Africa and Israeli experts in many cases helped African governments and military leaders in establishing them. Israel had been criticised by the COE already in 1958. In: *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Convention No. 105 (1957): Abolition of Forced Labour, in: ILO, *Conventions and Recommendations*, 1016.

⁷⁹ See ILC 46 (1962), Rep. III: Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, 4; 36.

the tone with regard to the principle of freedom of association was positive, his efforts had been successful. On this issue too, the commitment to the principle expressed in the speeches of many government representatives of newly independent states fulfilled the explicit purpose of marking an end to the colonial past,⁸⁰ and the situation on the ground differed dramatically from what the governments had embraced in theory. The free development of trade unions, as the debates in the following years would show, kept being hindered by two main obstacles. Firstly, governments had huge reservations about the trade union movement becoming politically active. They seemed to fear especially, in a general sense, the oppositional potential of the unions. Secondly, as time went by many Asian governments became increasingly doubtful about whether the concept of freedom of association in the form in which it was anchored in the ILO's norms could be reconciled with the demands of the national development effort. Many governments tended to subject the unions (and sometimes the employers' associations too) to tight state control. The common argument against the free development of organized social interests was that countries with a weak economic basis, whose goal was to increase productivity within a short time, needed to unite all their forces in the name of national development. A fragmented trade union movement with various political orientations and the free play of forces in industrial relations could only have damaging consequences. Even in democratic countries such as India the view was held, in the words of Nehru that it was "quite absurd when we are talking about increasing production [...] to waste our energy in industrial conflict".⁸¹

The situation was similar in Africa, where the discrepancy between public affirmations and the situation on the ground was nowhere as great as in the field of freedom of association. The problems seen in Asia not only manifested themselves seamlessly in Africa, they took on a quality which called into question the very concept of freedom of association as a principle of development. The core of the problem was the conviction of many African governments that in the process of nation building they needed to bundle all the country's social forces under their leadership. The role of the unions, most governments believed, lay less in the free organization of interests than in unifying the potential of the work force and making it available to the national development effort. Freedom of association was depicted by some as an imperialistic concept that both hindered Africa's development along autonomously African lines and opened the door to capitalist interests and their henchmen from the international trade union movement. A whole series of speakers at the second AFRC in Addis Ababa 1964 described the freedom of association standards as outdated and obsolete, and their criticism

⁸⁰ ARC II (1950), RoP, 15.

⁸¹ Asian Regional Conference IV, New Delhi (1957), RoP, 7.

culminated in a demand to revise the standards or ‘regionalize’ them. If standards were violated as a result of the bitterly necessary mobilization of forces for the development effort, then, as Tanzania’s government representative so succinctly put it, “the standards are wrong”.⁸²

In both cases (forced labour and freedom of association), by the end of Morse’s time in office in 1970, the ILO had managed to find formulas for dealing with the issues in question which defused the debates and left both the content of the disputed documents and the fundamental claim to universality of ILO norms intact. The balancing act that this entailed, however, was far from simple. In the case of forced labour the Office issued a report in 1968 which stated that the litmus test still had to be whether the use of coercion for development purposes was accompanied by a process of social democratisation. Only when democracy and the rule of law developed parallel to one another could abuses be avoided, the report once again stressed. Certain restrictions of the rights of the individual in favour of society as a whole were acceptable, but within those limits a just and stable order must guarantee the individual freedom from coercion with regard to work, participation in industrial relations and the exercise of his civil rights.⁸³ The original starting point of the debate – the issue of labour services, was also finally resolved, in the spirit of pragmatism, by a compromise that meant that none of the sides lost face.⁸⁴ In the case of freedom of association, the Director-General indicated as early as 1962 that he understood the developing countries’ wish to involve the trade unions closely in the general economic effort, and at the same time drew the attention of those countries to the range of advice and assistance the ILO could provide to help the governments find the right level of intervention.⁸⁵ Here David Morse saw no other way than to respond to the challenge with a redoubling of educational and promotional methods.⁸⁶ “The ILO must continue its work in the area of freedom of association without closing its eyes to

⁸² African Regional Conference II, Addis Ababa (1964), RoP, for example 84; 86; 80, 145

⁸³ ILC 52 (1968), Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, III: General Survey on the Reports concerning the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), Geneva 1968. A summary in: *Forced Labour: A Human Rights Survey*, in: ILO PANORAMA, 32 (1968), 26-32.

⁸⁴ In 1970 a recommendation was adopted which drew a distinction between training-orientated and work-orientated labour services. The former, whose primary end was the vocational training of recruits, were approved, while the latter, whose sole purpose was the mobilisation of manpower for economic growth, continued to be rejected. Recommendation No. 136 (1970): Special Programmes for Youth Services, in: ILO, *Conventions and Recommendations*, 1424-1433; See for the debates C. Rossillon, *Youth services for economic and social development. A general review*, in: *International Labour Review* 95,4 (1967).

⁸⁵ ILC 46 (1962), RoP, 226.

⁸⁶ On the institutional level the ILO tried to extend its „educational“ activities for the promotion of freedom of association in manifold ways from the middle of the 1960s onwards. The IILS for example from 1964 dedicated extensive research to the analysis of the impact of political systems on the industrial relations, Cox to Morse 6/9/1964 in: ILOA-MF Z 11/7/3: IILS 1961-1968.

the grim realities”, wrote Morse in his report on the ILO’s human rights work in 1968.⁸⁷ This meant putting every effort into keeping the norms intact and thus upholding them as principles of development. That was the aim, for instance, of a major study on the relationship between trade union rights and civil liberties published by the Office in 1970.⁸⁸

Due to the balance of political power and the majorities held within the ILO however, the Office did not feel it had the room for manoeuvre to employ more “aggressive” kinds of tactics. Furthermore, the discussion surrounding forced labour had shown that there were grave differences of opinion running through the Office itself when it came to the question of what actual value human rights standards had in the development process. In this question the Office was clearly divided into a “labour standards faction”, which emphasized the normative role of the ILO, and a “development faction”, which wanted to see the applicability of ILO standards coupled to economic factors such as productivity. This latter group supported a gradual implementation even of core standards, where necessary.⁸⁹ From this perspective, ILO standards were the end and not the means – which was in direct opposition to what the other side believed.⁹⁰

Partly because of these serious internal differences of opinion there was no alternative but to take an approach based on compromise. In this respect, the discussions surrounding forced labour and freedom of association were examples which both demonstrated the ILO’s unbroken commitment to universality in its standards and values right into the 1960s, but on the other hand which revealed the lengths it was having to go to try and find pragmatic solutions that would enable it to uphold these principles despite the problems and criticism of the developing countries. The World Employment Program was also promoted under this aspect. In connection with the WEP in particular, Morse used the end of his time in office to propagate once again the ILO’s commitment to human rights as part of an overall strategy for the achievement of economic and social progress. Under the caption “solidarity of human rights”, the significance which the ILO placed on the synchronous realization of economic and social rights on the one hand and civil and political liberties on the other was emphasized

⁸⁷ ILO, *The ILO and Human Rights*, Geneva 1969, 41.

⁸⁸ The Report could be interpreted as a reaction to the growing tide of military coups and the rise of authoritarian regimes all over Asia, Africa and Latin America, that took place from the early 1960s on, which was mirrored in the ILO by the myriad of complaints that reached the permanent committee on Freedom of Association. ILO, *Trade Union Rights and their Relationship to civil liberties*, Geneva 1971 .

⁸⁹ Cox, *ILO - Limited Monarchy*, 102-138.

⁹⁰ The debates reflected much of the academic discussion within the camp of modernization theory. Here one could trace the same basic arguments, whether “development dictatorships” or democratic governments were better prepared to meet the challenges which the social and economic process of modernization exposed their countries to. See Gilman, *Mandarins*, 224-235.

yet again.⁹¹ At the end of Morse's term in office the ILO still represented a decidedly democratic modernization concept in which economic and social development were two sides of the same coin.

Going by the hopes and visions that at the beginning of Morse's time in office had been connected with the formulation of the integrated approach to development and the creation of the promotional and educational approach to maintain the value of the ILO's standard setting, these statements could admittedly be seen as an attempt by the Organization to cover up its own incapacities. In the light of the massive resistance which the ILO experienced in the wake of decolonization to its attempts – driven largely by Morse - to lay emphasis on a small number of core human rights standards, they were undoubtedly also an expression of helplessness.

Nevertheless, alongside the redefinition of the ILO as a technical service and development agency the reorientation in the area of standard setting remains the most lasting achievement and the most significant legacy of the 'Morse Era'. Against the backdrop of the collapse of the European colonial empire, the most major upheaval in the international system of states seen in the 20th century, the ILO changed, under Morse's leadership, from a eurocentric organization to one that was truly globally active. During the same period, the Organization managed to protect the universality of the principles and norms that had been posited in Philadelphia as human rights through numerous perilous moments.

And even beyond Morse's time in office the new strategy continued to bring results. Ultimately, it was this strategy that enabled the ILO to protect the universality of its norms when in the discourse of the 1970s and '80s human rights came even more strongly under pressure from a culturalistic angle (Asian Values, Communitarism). It can thus be interpreted as a quiet echo of the Morse Era that in 1998, the ILO succeeded in adopting the "Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work" - a catalogue of core ILO labour and human rights standards⁹² which are binding upon all members of the ILO as a condition of membership, independently of the ratification of the corresponding documents – especially

⁹¹ ILO, *ILO and Human Rights*, 48-58.

⁹² Apart from the two Forced Labour documents the Declaration of Fundamental Rights at work contains the ILO-conventions on Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining (No. 87 and No. 98), Equal Remuneration (No. 100), Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (No. 111), and the two documents dealing with child labour (No. 138 and 198). See ILO, *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (1998).

because the realization of these liberties is defined as an integral part of a “global strategy of economic and social development”.⁹³

⁹³ The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work, in: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/declaris/DECLARATIONWEB> (15.12.2007).