Peace is a result not only of political treaties and disarmament pacts. It is equally dependent upon social justice—that is, upon the economic and social well-being of the world’s peoples, upon satisfactory conditions of work and pay, adequate employment opportunities, decent living standards and the enjoyment of basic human rights by all people everywhere.

That is what the International Labour Organisation has been concerned with since its founding in 1919 in the aftermath of the First World War.

It is that effort which was recognised by the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament when it awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1969 to the ILO.

On 10 December 1969, in the Aula of the University of Oslo, Mrs. Aase Lionaes, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, presented the award, which was received on behalf of the ILO by Director-General David A. Morse. Accompanying Mr. Morse was a delegation of the Officers of the ILO’s Governing Body, representing the tripartite composition of the Organisation, the governments, workers and employers of the ILO’s 121 member countries: H.E. Ambassador Héctor Gros Espeíl of Uruguay, Chairman; Mr. Gullmar Bergenström of Sweden, Employers’ Vice-Chairman; Mr. Jean Möri of Switzerland, Workers’ Vice-Chairman.

Present at the ceremonies were His Majesty King Olav V of Norway, Crown Prince Harald, Crown Princess Sonja, Members of Parliament, Government ministers, members of the Oslo diplomatic corps, representatives of Norwegian workers’ and employers’ organisations, and leading Norwegian judicial, educational and cultural personalities.

This booklet records the Nobel award address by Mrs. Lionaes and the acceptance speech by Mr. Morse on 10 December, as well as the lecture delivered by Mr. Morse at the Norwegian Nobel Institute on 11 December, in accordance with Nobel award tradition.
Mrs. Aase Lionaes, Chairman of the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament, presents the Nobel Peace Prize Medal and Diploma to the ILO's Director-General David A. Morse.
Det Norske Stortings Nobelkomite
har i Henhold til Reglerne i det af
ALFRED NOBEL
den 27. November 1895 oprettede Testamente tildelt
The International Labour Organisation
Nobels Fredspris for 1969

Oslo, 10. december 1969.

Aage Biong
Helge Refæum
Ole H. Engen
Leif Koppeland
ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION
OF THE AWARD
OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

by
Mrs. Aase Lionaes
Chairman of the Nobel Committee

When Alfred Nobel died on December 10th, 1896, his will and testament revealed that he had instituted five Nobel prizes: one for physics, one for chemistry, one for literature, one for medicine, and a peace prize.

While Swedish institutions were entrusted with the task of awarding the first four prizes, Nobel decided, for reasons not exactly known, that a committee of five members, appointed by the Norwegian Storting, should be entrusted with the great honour and responsibility of awarding the Peace Prize.

Alfred Nobel not only specified who was to award the Peace Prize, but he also laid down the rules to be followed by the committee in choosing a candidate for the Prize. He states in his will that the Peace Prize is to be awarded to the person who has done most to promote brotherhood among the nations.

With this consideration in mind the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Storting has awarded the Peace Prize for 1969 to the International Labour Organisation.

Beneath the foundation stone of the ILO’s main office in Geneva lies a document on which is written: “Si vis pacem, cole justitiam” – If you desire peace, cultivate justice.

There are few organisations that have succeeded, to the extent that the ILO has succeeded, in translating into action the fundamental moral idea on which it is based.
Why, we may ask, did the demand for social justice receive such a tremendous impetus when the ILO was founded fifty years ago?

I think the reason is because, at the conclusion of the First World War in 1918, the underprivileged members of the community were in an historical situation in which they were not only able to obtain the ear of Europe's leading politicians, but were also strong enough, should the need arise, to back their demands with force.

During the war, the working class had loyally set their own claims aside, to serve their national cause, and they had in full measure borne the sufferings and privations of war.

But at trade union congresses held in 1916, 1917, and 1918, the demand was made that the trade union movement should participate in discussing the future peace treaty. It was emphasised that workers should be guaranteed a minimum standard of working conditions after the war, and that a permanent body, to ensure the carrying out of international legislation in this respect, should be established.

In the wake of hostilities came a spate of violent social and political upheaval, of which the Russian revolution of 1917 and the German revolution of 1918 were typical examples.

For this and other reasons it was somewhat of a political imperative, when the peace treaties in Versailles in 1919 were to be drafted, to include clauses which aimed to secure peace not only among nations but among the classes in the various countries.

At its very outset the Peace Conference took the unprecedented step of setting up an international committee for labour legislation. The committee consisted not only of government delegates, but also of employers and employees, including Samuel Gompers, the USA trade union leader, and France's Léon Jouhaux. Politicians were represented by Harold Butler of the United Kingdom and Eduard Beneš of Czechoslovakia.

In this way the ILO, in common with the League of Nations, became part of the Versailles treaties, in which guidelines for international socio-political co-operation were laid down.

Reading this special section of the Versailles Treaty, and bearing in mind that it was written in 1919, one is compelled to agree with Paal Berg when he declared that this was one of the most remarkable diplomatic documents we have ever seen. The following citation has been taken from the Treaty: "... the League of Nations has for its object the establishment of universal peace, and such a peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice; and whereas conditions
of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship, and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required: as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organisation of vocational and technical education and other measures; the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries.”

This statement is followed by the guidelines for the ILO and the principal tasks this Organisation should aim to solve. These are summed up in nine points, which have often been called the Magna Charta of the working class.

These include, among other things, the principle that labour is not a piece of merchandise; and it lays down the right for employees, as well as employers, to organise themselves, the right of workers to receive a reasonable wage, the eight-hour day or the 48-hour week, a ban on child labour, equal pay for men and women for the same work, and every country is furthermore to organise a system of labour inspection in which women, too, are to play their part in ensuring that labour legislation is adhered to.

The ILO was organised as a specialist organisation, under the League of Nations, with a view to carrying out this programme.

And what has been the result? Have the fine words in a solemn document come true, or were they merely writing in the sand, a remote vision glimpsed by unpractical dreamers?

As we look at the everyday world around us today we are compelled to admit that many of the aims that the ILO set itself have been achieved in many parts of the industrialised world. Working earnestly and untiringly, the ILO has succeeded in introducing reforms that have removed the most flagrant injustices in a great many countries, particularly in Europe. By means of a levelling of income and a progressive policy of social welfare, the ILO has played its part in these
countries in bridging the gap between rich and poor.

How has the ILO succeeded in carrying out such significant parts of its programme?

I believe that the answer to some extent is to be found in the somewhat special form of organisation peculiar to the ILO.

The ILO's resolutions, passed at the annual Labour Conferences, are backed by discussions and negotiations in which not only government delegates participate, but also independent representatives of leading employers' and employees' organisations in every single country.

Joint discussions of problems between these three independent pressure groups create a possibility of arriving at realistic solutions of important social problems, as well as deciding how these measures are to be carried out in practice in the various countries.

This is the structure of the Organisation: but its decisive feature, what makes the mechanism work, is naturally the people themselves, far-seeing men of good will, inspired with a belief in the possibility of building a peaceful world based on social justice.

What means are at the disposal of the ILO in order to implement its programme?

In the first place the ILO aims to create international legislation ensuring certain norms for working conditions in every country.

In the course of its fifty years of existence the ILO has adopted a total of 128 Conventions and 132 Recommendations. These cover a wide range, from working hours to equal pay for equal work, from health insurance to the abolition of forced labour, from social security for foreign workers to the task of securing the rights of trade unions.

But are these measures respected in the various countries, are they incorporated as part and parcel of the national laws, or is the position this, that delegates in Geneva vote for the most sweeping resolutions, which are then consigned to the bottom drawer in a government department upon their return?

It is precisely in this field that the ILO, one of the first international organisations in the world to do so, has pioneered in the international sphere, creating organs which carry out the work of supervising the implementation of the Conventions adopted by member States, and their embodiment in national law and practice.

Time does not permit me, here and now, to illustrate this important point in detail: let me merely mention that the ILO's Constitution obliges member States to draw up annual reports,
stating what measures have been taken to observe the provisions contained in the ratified Conventions.

Another important point is that the ILO Constitution gives the labour organisations in a country the right to lodge a complaint if a government fails to carry out the Conventions which the authorities of that country have ratified. The right to lodge a complaint also includes the right of a State to prosecute a member State for violating provisions in Conventions that both States have ratified.

During these fifty years the ILO has adopted over 250 Conventions and Recommendations. And even though not all its 121 member countries have ratified anything approaching all the Conventions, I believe we are justified in saying that the ILO has permanently influenced the social welfare legislation of every single country.

Norway has not ratified all the Conventions as yet, but I am glad to be able to state that Norway occupies the seventh place among all member countries of the ILO with regard to the number of ratifications, having ratified a total of 63 out of 128 Conventions.

The Norwegian Minister of Social Welfare, Mr. Aarvik, declared at this year’s Labour Conference in Geneva that “out of 63 agreements that our country has ratified, not less than 43 have had an important influence on the development of working conditions and social welfare in Norway.”

When war broke out in 1939 the ILO was naturally faced with great difficulties. The Organisation moved to Montreal in Canada, where it continued its work for freedom and democracy against Nazism and dictatorship.

One of the most important events in the activities of the ILO during the war was the Labour Conference held in Philadelphia in 1944 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth jubilee of the Organisation. Forty-one States, among them Norway, were represented at this Conference. The Philadelphia Conference constitutes an historic milestone in the development of the ILO, because, apart from confirming the principles of the Organisation as they were adopted in 1919, it also drafted a declaration expressing a new and more dramatic conception of the ILO’s tasks and responsibilities with regard to combating insecurity and poverty.

At the invitation of President Roosevelt the Conference was concluded with a meeting in the White House in Washington. In a speech to delegates, Roosevelt stated that the Philadelphia Declaration was an historic document on a line with the United States’ own Declaration of Independence in 1776.
When the war was over and the United Nations Organisation was established in 1945, the ILO was linked to UNO as an independent expert organisation.

The ILO now had a far wider field of action than it had enjoyed during its first twenty-five years.

Just as it may be said that one of the motive forces for the foundation and Constitution of the ILO in 1919 was the social and political upheaval that followed in the wake of the First World War, so we can say that shifts in the international political balance of power, after the Second World War, proved decisive to the enlarged aims of the ILO in 1945 and on.

The old European colonial powers disintegrated, and over 60 new States were given independent status on the map of the world and in time, too, in the ILO. The ILO was no longer an essentially European organisation, dominated by the special conditions obtaining in industrialised Europe. The ILO had primarily become a global organisation, whose membership represented practically all races and religions in the world, whose traditions, culture, and history, economic and social problems, were entirely different from those with which the ILO was faced before the war.

After the First World War the main task of the ILO was to build a bridge between poor and rich in member countries. After the Second World War its task was a far more formidable one, that of building a bridge between the poor and rich nations.

Today it can be said that the dominant feature in the work of the ILO during the last twenty years has been technical aid and relief programmes in the developing countries. Working in close co-operation with UNO and its many specialised organisations, such as FAO, UNESCO, the World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and others, and with financial support from UNO, the ILO has succeeded in carrying out research projects and making basic investments in developing countries, with a view to developing their agriculture, industry, and other sides of their economic life.

The birth of new States in Africa and Asia has not only enlarged the ILO's scope of activity; it has also created a certain internal political tension in the Organisation, which we sincerely hope can be overcome.

The basic reason for this tension is that the ILO's special form of organisation, with independent representatives for governments, for free trade union organisations, and for employers' associations, has created problems with regard to the membership of new countries, because
many of them have not as yet developed free labour organisations. In these new countries governments nominate both workers' and employers' representatives. This is in complete violation of one of the decisive principles in the entire form of organisation on which the ILO is based. As yet we do not know how this conflict will develop, but it is vital to the whole future of the ILO that it should be solved in such a way that the independent and political neutrality of the ILO can be preserved.

It is primarily the economic and social problems in the developing countries that have faced the ILO with the tremendous task it has undertaken to solve during the next ten years, and which has been called "The World Employment Programme".

In the rich industrialised countries we consider ample resources of labour a sign of wealth. After the war, too, we have gradually learnt the technique of controlling the economic climate in such a way that we have avoided the unemployment with which, as a mass phenomenon, we were familiar before the war.

In the developing countries, on the other hand, unemployment and underemployment are today social evils which keep millions of people steeped in hopeless poverty.

While a certain growth can be noted in the economic life of these countries, on the other hand a population explosion is taking place which prevents this growth from promoting a rise in the standard of living of the whole nation.

Millions of people consequently live on the fringe of a physical minimum of subsistence, without any hope of enjoying their share in a progressive development.

The ILO calculates that by 1970 the population of the world will have reached a figure of 3,600 million people. Of these, 1,510 million will comprise able-bodied men and women. But in the course of the decade commencing in 1970, the able-bodied population of the world will increase by 280 million people. It is disturbing to contemplate that the bulk of this growth, viz. 226 million people, will take place in countries with the smallest capacity for finding them employment, whereas the industrialised countries, in which today there is frequently a pressing need to increase the labour force, will show an increase of only 56 million people.

How will the ILO tackle this gigantic task, that of finding work for the whole population of the world? And what possibilities has the ILO of solving in this way the problem which has loomed largest during our century: that of reducing, nay, removing,
the gap between the rich and the poor nations of the world, and adjusting the population explosion to a harmonious economic and social evolution?

At the ILO's fiftieth jubilee Conference in Geneva this summer the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. David A. Morse, expressed the hope he entertained for carrying out this plan in these words: "Let us make it possible for future generations to look back on this fifty years' jubilee Conference as the prelude to an epoch, an epoch where instinctive solidarity between the people of the world is mobilised in a joint world-wide attack on poverty."

This massed campaign against poverty will not only be organised by the ILO: it will be supported by all the UNO special organisations, as part and parcel of UNO's Second Development Decade.

The first task of the ILO will be to send experts to those parts of the world covered by the project - Latin America, Asia, and Africa - where, hand in hand with national authorities, a long-term plan will be drawn up laying down aims for vocational training and employment of the population.

The other task will be to participate in a programme of action which will give effect to the plans that have been drawn up.

The ILO cannot, of course, on its own create new jobs; but it can give advice and help to countries desirous of putting their populations to work.

The ILO can assist in such fields as the implementation of agrarian reforms, agricultural projects, industrialisation, public works, the development of training and vocational guidance programmes, choice of investment sectors, development of trade, etc.

For this reason the ILO's plan does not consist merely of collecting statistical data on the population aspects of the problems involved: in these areas it will also have a direct bearing on the entire economic and social development in these areas.

Through this work the ILO is endeavouring to promote the capacity of developing countries to help themselves. No help from outside, however well-intentioned and selfless it may be, can replace the developing countries' own will to help themselves.

For this reason carrying through the World Employment Programme will prove a challenge both to the developing countries and to the industrialised countries: if they can work realistically together, they will also achieve their ideal aim, a world living in peaceful co-existence.

The ILO's main task will be to
ensure that this new world is based on social justice: in other words, to fulfil the command that is inscribed on the document from Geneva: “Si vis pacem, cole justitiam” – If you desire peace, cultivate justice.

And may we add, by way of summing up our experience during these fifty eventful years, and as a guideline for the future: just as peace is indivisible, so also is justice.
No one who rises to accept the Nobel Peace Prize either in his individual capacity or, as in my case, on behalf of an organisation, can fail to be profoundly moved, particularly in view of the high quality and great variety of work which has been honoured in this manner over the past sixty-eight years. For the history of the Nobel Peace Prize is in large measure the history of man's efforts throughout the present century to establish a just and lasting peace. “Fraternity among nations”, the goal which Alfred Nobel so discerningly singled out in his will as an object of special attention, is so difficult of attainment that any recipient must feel, in the words of Woodrow Wilson on this same occasion in 1920, a “very poignant humility before the vastness of the work still called for by this cause”.

The quest for peace has many facets, and the one which is of particular concern to the International Labour Organisation relates to the creation of a foundation of social justice on which lasting peace can be built. I think Ralph Bunche, in his Nobel lecture in 1950, described our task succinctly: “If peace is to be secure, long-suffering and long-forgotten peoples of the world, the underprivileged and the under-nourished, must begin to realise without delay the promise of a new day and a new life”.

To the realisation of this promise
the ILO has devoted itself unceasingly during its fifty years of activity. But social justice is no less difficult to attain than the ultimate goal of world peace, of which it is in a sense the reciprocal. Although the social and economic conditions in the industrialised countries during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which gave rise to the creation of the ILO, have been greatly ameliorated since 1919, a whole set of new problems has emerged, problems which are in many ways even more baffling and intractable than those of an earlier era.

Broadly speaking, the economic and social progress in the ILO's industrialised member States has meant that the most acute problems of the early twentieth century, such as gross exploitation, physical and economic insecurity and child labour, have now to a large extent been understood and begun to be effectively dealt with. The ILO has also been concentrating more and more effectively upon certain essential human rights, including in particular freedom of association, freedom from forced labour and freedom against discrimination in employment. I think it fair to say that great strides have been made in the protection of the worker and the recognition of his rights and status in society.

But with the accession to independence of large numbers of former colonial territories significant new challenges have been encountered. Foremost among these is the need to find ways to combine rapid economic and social development with a system of distribution of the fruits of development which will result in improvement of the standard of living of all the people in the countries concerned, and particularly the most disadvantaged. Fundamentally that is what the development effort is all about. The key to attaining this goal lies in focusing the attention of the world on the urgent need to improve levels of employment in these regions. There are approximately 300 million people either unemployed or substantially underemployed at present in the developing world, and with the ranks of job-seekers certain to swell enormously in the coming decade as a result of the current population explosion, a problem of truly dramatic proportions has emerged. Unless this problem is effectively dealt with, it will constitute an insurmountable barrier to meaningful development and to peace.

The ILO has therefore launched this year a World Employment Programme. We have appealed to the world at large for help in solving this problem. We have been encouraged by the unanimous political support
for the aims of the Programme which we have received from governments, workers’ and employers’ organisations, as well as from organisations in the international community. Our message has been heard and understood. We are therefore confident that efforts to eliminate poverty through employment creation will be given a central position among the fundamental objectives of the United Nations system during the Second Development Decade, which is expected to begin 1970. In this programme, as in all other areas of ILO action, the continuing vitality of the tripartite principle which makes the ILO unique among international organisations, has been felt and clearly demonstrated. This tripartism is reflected on this occasion by the fact that I am accompanied here today by the Officers of the ILO Governing Body, the Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Héctor Gros Espeill, and Mr. Gullmar Bergenström and Mr. Jean Möri, the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairmen of the Governing Body.

What we in the ILO seek to achieve through all our programmes is the elimination of poverty, hardship and privation which weigh so heavily upon the dispossessed peoples of this earth. Our Organisation is central to the international effort to raise their standards of living to improve their living and working conditions, and to secure to them fundamental human rights to the end that they may take their place in society as free, dignified and self-governing people. To the extent that our efforts, and those of governments and members of the international community, are successful in achieving these ends, the basis will be laid for a stable and durable system of world peace. But in making this statement we have no illusions about the difficulties which stand in our way.

Though this is our fiftieth year as an organisation we are only at the beginning of our task. We have learned in these years that despite all the results achieved in the material and social fields men continue to be dissatisfied because they have found no satisfactory answers to their moral and spiritual needs. Our Constitution itself places upon the ILO responsibility for ensuring that conditions are created in which human beings can pursue “both their material well-being and their spiritual development”. I believe that our response to this fundamental mandate must be greater in the future. That is what the social dimension of the ILO’s greater objective means. Despite all that we and others have done in the past there still remains for society as a whole the problem of helping mankind achieve
a better balance in mental, spiritual, physical and economic well-being.

This dramatic issue has become more complicated with rapid technological advance and the inability of man and society to adapt quickly enough to this advance. What has happened in our contemporary period is that we have come to worship technological advance, but are horrified by the growing dimension of poverty in the world; that we are impressed by what science has devised, but are concerned at society’s inability to find the means of applying its benefits fairly and equitably, both within and between nations, for the general well-being of the ordinary man; that we are appalled and shocked at the magnitude of the sums invested for weapons of war and mass destruction and at how inadequate are the amounts provided for the economic, social and spiritual needs of man. The fear, anger and frustration which are caused by these frightening contradictions confront mankind with a vast and growing social and political danger. The efforts of the ILO, of the entire United Nations system, and of each and every one of us, must more than ever before be committed to the reduction and ultimate elimination of this danger. We must re-equip ourselves with the necessary means and understanding to meet these enormous new challenges to man’s ability to make and keep the peace.

On behalf of all our constituents, governments as well as employers and workers of our 121 member States, on behalf of all my staff, and in tribute to all those who in the past have faithfully served our Organisation, I should like to express our profound gratitude to the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Storting for having singled out the International Labour Organisation to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. This award will give us renewed strength to carry forward our work. It will be a continuing inspiration to us in all of our efforts, in the years to come, to help to construct a more just society in a world of peace.
"Universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice." This statement, which opens the preamble to the ILO's Constitution clearly and unmistakably places on the ILO a major role in the maintenance of peace. It shows that the founders of our Organisation in 1919 were convinced that there was an essential link between social justice within countries and international peace, and that this link was so strong and significant as to make it indispensable that an organisation to deal with labour matters should be set up as an integral part of the new institutional framework for the promotion and protection of world peace after the First World War.

The founders of the ILO had good reason indeed to hold this belief. For the century which preceded the establishment of the ILO had been one of profound economic and social change in Europe which had played a large part in bringing about the war that Europe had just passed through. Industrialisation had in particular led to an unprecedented growth of the economic power of European nations and to increasingly fierce competition between them, a competition which soon had an impact on the political plane and, ultimately, contributed to the outbreak of war. It had also led to serious social tensions within nations. By the end of this century a large industrial working class had become an organised, vociferous and
in many cases revolutionary force in society, often in open conflict with the established order.

Throughout the nineteenth century, however, and in the early years of the twentieth century, some far-sighted men had raised their voices in an attempt to avoid the social and political catastrophe towards which Europe appeared to be heading. As early as the 1830s and the 1840s, such humanitarian industrialists as Charles Hindley in England and Daniel Le Grand in France had proposed that co-ordinated action should be taken at an international level to regulate conditions of labour in order to ensure that no country which provided its workers with improved conditions would be at a competitive disadvantage in the international market. These men were ahead of their times. But as trade unions emerged as an organised political and social force in Europe’s industrialised States, they were able not only to make some notable social gains for their members at home, but also to begin forging links of international solidarity among workers in different countries. The first International Working Men’s Association had been formed in 1864, and although this and similar subsequent attempts to achieve true and lasting unity among the working classes of Europe were to fail, the workers nevertheless rapidly became a force to be reckoned with, internationally as well as nationally. Their attempts to prevent the outbreak of war between their countries were recognised by the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Storting itself when it awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1903 to the British trade unionist and pacifist, Sir William Randal Cremer, and much later, in 1951, to the great French trade unionist, my good friend the late Léon Jouhaux. The revulsion against war and the aspirations for peace on the part of workers were clearly and forcefully expressed by Jouhaux when he was here eighteen years ago to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. “War”, he said, “not only kills workers by thousands and millions, and destroys their homes, ... but also, by increasing men’s feelings of impotence before the forces of violence, it holds up considerably the progress of humanity towards the age of justice, welfare and peace.”

But the workers’ movement had from the beginning been divided, as it still is today, between those who preached revolution, and those who thought that greater social justice could and should be brought about by practical political and social reforms within the existing framework of society. And there were many men who at the end of the last century and
the beginning of this were deeply alarmed at the prospects of revolutionary upheavals in society and the threat that this might present to the peace of the world. Alfred Nobel himself, in one of his most famous phrases, warned in 1892 of the dangers of an impending social revolution, of a “new tyranny... lurking in the shadows”, and of its threat to world peace; and Frédéric Passy, the founder of the Ligue internationale de la Paix, who was awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901, stressed the need for governments to ensure internal stability through social reforms if international peace was to be preserved. Thus, even before the First World War very different trends in thought and action among very different classes of the population had led the peace movement to become inextricably linked with a movement for international action to promote improved conditions of labour.

When the First World War came to an end in 1918, many of the industrialised countries were passing through a critical period of social tension and unrest. The old regime in Russia had been overthrown, and revolution seemed on the point of engulfing much of Europe. The demands from the workers that the peace settlement should include measures to promote international labour legislation and trade union rights were so insistent that delegations to the Peace Conference included leading trade unionists such as Samuel Gompers from the United States and Léon Jouhaux from France. In these conditions it was hardly surprising that one of the main concerns of the Peace Conference should have been with “unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled”; or that one of its concrete – and, as it turned out, most lasting – achievements was the establishment of a permanent international organisation to promote improved conditions of labour.

* * *

Thus was the ILO born fifty years ago – a product of several different currents in nineteenth century and early twentieth century humanitarian, reformist and socialist thought and action in Europe. Its structure and its action since its inception have reflected these different – and in many ways conflicting – currents. The workers’ demands for effective international action have often been in contrast with the views of governments which have seen in the ILO an instrument for strengthening the stability of the sovereign nation State. And while the ILO has of course lived and operated in a world of sovereign States, it has nevertheless gradually
extended the scope and possibilities of transnational action. In this way, and in spite of the political calamities, failures and disappointments of the past half century it has patiently, undramatically, but not unsuccess-
dently by the three groups at the
Conference. This composition is re-
lected here by the presence of the
Officers of the Governing Body who
have accompanied me to Oslo for the
Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, Ambas-
sador Héctor Gros Espiell, Chairman
of the Governing Body, and Mr.
Gullmar Bergenström and Mr. Jean
Möri, respectively the leaders of the
Employers’ and Workers’ groups of
the Governing Body.
If the ILO had done nothing more
than offer the world a forum for
tripartite discussion, it would already
have rendered a great service to the
cause of peace. In 1919 the concept
of tripartism was hardly known, even
at the national level. By insisting on
tripartite delegations to its Confer-
ences and meetings, the ILO made it
essential for governments and em-
ployers to accept trade unions as
equals and as valid bargaining part-
tners, at least for the purposes of
representation at the ILO. And if the
concept could be accepted and applied
in Geneva, why not at home?
The implications of this were far-
reaching. It resulted in trade unions
and organisations of employers ac-
quiring a position at home which they
would not otherwise have had, and
encouraged the growth of independ-
ent interest groups where they might
otherwise never have developed. It
The ILO has provided the nations
of the world with a meeting ground,
an instrument for co-operation and
for dialogue among very different in-
terests, at times when men were more
disposed to settle their differences by
force than by talk. Let us consider in
this connection two essential features
of the ILO’s structure: tripartism and
universality.
Tripartism was both the most dar-
ing and the most valuable innova-
tion of the Peace Conference when it
set up the ILO. The ILO’s Constitu-
tion provides that each member State
shall send to the International Labour
Conference a delegation consisting of
two Government delegates and two
delegates representing respectively the
employers and workers, each of whom
is entitled to vote individually and
independently of each other. It further
provides that the Governing Body,
which has the responsibility of plan-
ing, reviewing and co-ordinating the
activities of the Organisation, shall
have this same tripartite composition,
its members being elected indepen-
also gave the world a new approach to the resolution of social conflict, an approach based on dialogue between the two sides of industry, and between them and the State. The ILO in short offered the world an alternative to social strife; it provided it with the procedures and techniques of bargaining and negotiation to replace violent conflict as a means of securing more human and dignified conditions of work.

If the ILO has in this way helped to create the conditions for labour peace within countries, its tripartite structure has also enabled it to broaden the scope of co-operation between countries. The ILO is still the only world-wide organisation where international co-operation is the business not only of diplomats and government representatives, but also of the representatives of employers and workers. It thus provides opportunities for contacts and for greater understanding within as well as among the three groups. It is only in the ILO that the different trends in the international trade union movement, which is today as divided as it was 100 years ago, can come together to seek common solutions to common problems. And it is only in the ILO that free enterprise employers meet regularly with managers of state enterprises in Socialist countries.

This brings me to the second aspect of the ILO's structure which has enabled it to make an important contribution to peace — its universality. The members and leaders of the ILO have constantly striven to make it a world-wide Organisation — universal in composition, in spirit and in influence. They have done so because, as the preamble to the Constitution states: “the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve conditions in their own countries”; or, in the succinct words of the Declaration of Philadelphia, adopted in 1944: “poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere”. Today, with 121 member States, we are far along towards the goal of universal membership.

A question which has often been raised in this connection is whether the ILO can properly aspire to universality. The very concept of tripartism, it is argued, presupposes an organisation of society which is peculiar to countries which have so-called “market economies”. Is the system in Socialist countries not incompatible with membership in the ILO? And in the developing countries, which now form the majority of the ILO's membership, are not trade unions often too weak or too severely controlled
by governments, to play an active, independent role in the ILO? In other words, can the ILO be both tripartite and universal?

Experience during the past few years has shown that it can; not only that it can, but also that it must if it is to make a major contribution to peaceful co-operation and mutual understanding among all the nations of the world. The fact of the matter is that while tripartism may not have the same meaning, or take the same form, in all countries of the world, and while governments, employers and trade unions may perform different functions in society in different countries, they nevertheless face a number of similar problems. Today, despite the very great differences among the ILO's member States, governments, workers and employers have at least learned to live together in the ILO, and, after years of mutual suspicion, are beginning to find a larger measure of common ground.

Thus, the ILO has not only served as a meeting ground for the nations of the world, as a "market place" for ideas and ideologies, and as an instrument for adjusting conflicting interests. It has also put forward a set of goals, and programmes for attaining these goals, with which the entire ILO membership can be identified. It has constantly sought to widen the areas of "common ground" in order to focus the attention of the nations of the world on those problems in which they have common interests and concerns, and to unite them in a major international effort to eliminate poverty and injustice wherever they exist.

There are two elements in the ILO's programme of activities to which I would draw particular attention in this respect - its international labour standards and its technical co-operation activities.

The setting of international labour standards - that is, internationally recognised principles and objectives of social policy - is the traditional function that the ILO was originally set up to carry out. These standards which are adopted by the International Labour Conference - that is, by the entire membership of the ILO - take the form of Conventions (which are open to ratification by governments) and Recommendations (which create no formal obligation for governments, but which are intended to guide their social policies).

The original aim of this international legislative function was to protect the worker against exploitation and against excessively hard and unjust working conditions (for example, his hours of work, his protection against industrial accidents, the elimination of child labour). As a result
of progress in the elimination of such unjust and inhuman practices, increasing emphasis has been placed, particularly since 1945, on the promotion of effective measures guaranteeing him such basic human rights as freedom of association, freedom from forced labour, freedom from discrimination, and on the promotion of policies for social advancement which contribute to the achievement of economic development – relating, for example, to employment policy, minimum standards of social security and labour-management relations in the enterprise.

The ILO has not been content simply to set these standards; it has also sought to supervise their effective application in member States, by pioneering a unique system of enforcement machinery. Thus, governments are obliged to report annually on the effect given to ratified Conventions; and their reports are analysed by an independent Committee of Experts whose conclusions are submitted to a special Committee of the Conference. In addition, special machinery and procedures have been set up to ensure respect for the ILO’s standards and principles on freedom of association, which are essential to the functioning of the ILO’s tripartite machinery.

While it is impossible to measure in precise terms the impact which these standards have had on national legislation and practice, there can be few countries, if any, whose social legislation and whose practices in the formulation and implementation of social policy do not bear the imprint of at least some of the ILO’s standards.

In this way the ILO has made a major contribution to international law, in broadening its scope to cover almost every conceivable area of social and labour policy and in seeking to ensure its wide and effective application. The ILO has thus proved that, despite the continuing primacy of the sovereign State, moral persuasion and moral pressure can be highly effective instruments to secure the observance of the rule of law at the international level, at least in the fields of social policy in which the ILO is competent.

While standard-setting remains an important function of the ILO today, it has been supplemented by another form of action, namely the provision of direct technical assistance to the developing countries. For as more and more of these countries became independent and joined the ILO as full Members, it became clear that the problems they faced in giving effect to the ILO’s principles and standards were often due not to perverse and reactionary policies on their part but
rather to the degree of backwardness and stagnation of their economies.

The idea of giving direct assistance to member countries was not new to the ILO. During the pre-war years, and even during the Second World War, the ILO was occasionally called upon by its member countries to give advice and assistance, particularly in the field of social security. It was not, however, until the 1950s, with the launching of the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, and subsequently the Special Fund (which are now merged in the United Nations Development Programme) that sufficient funds became available to the ILO for it to take a major role in the massive attack on poverty in the developing countries. This has made it possible for the ILO to contribute actively and on a relatively large scale to what the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme has called the "peace-building" activities of the whole United Nations family of organisations.

In what way does assistance to the developing countries constitute an effort of "peace-building"? It could be argued, and with some justification, that economic development results in social changes and social tensions in a developing nation that can, and often do, have very serious consequences for both internal stability and international peace. But this should not, I suggest, be taken as an argument against assistance for development. After all, what is the alternative? Many developing countries are so weak, politically and economically, and so lacking in social cohesion and stability, that they could offer little resistance to subversion or aggression by an ambitious outside power. To provide these countries with the resources, the technical and managerial know-how, and the institutional and administrative framework which are essential for viable nationhood in the modern world, while at the same time providing their populations with the benefits of some social progress during the difficult transitional period of modernisation: this, it seems to me, is an essential aspect of the problem of peace-building in the modern world. And it is for this reason that the ILO gives top priority in its work today to the strengthening of developing nations.

It may even seem paradoxical that the ILO, which has devoted so much effort to enlarging the scope and effectiveness of international action, should at the same time be giving priority to strengthening the nation State in the developing world. But the paradox is more apparent than real. We are strengthening the nation State
because it is still the only viable framework within which economic and social progress can take place. And it is only if each developing nation can become independent in fact as well as in law that each can play its full part in the institutions of the wider international community.

Where do we stand today in our efforts to build a more peaceful world? The day which Alfred Nobel predicted seventy-seven years ago "when two army corps can annihilate one another in one second" has long since come. It is now almost possible for whole nations to be annihilated in one second. But this has not, as the inventor of dynamite optimistically predicted it would, led all nations to "recoil from war and discharge their troops". Quite the contrary. The major powers continue to build up their stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, while even many small countries are investing heavily in the production and acquisition of weapons and the strengthening of their armed forces. The peace of today's world rests on a "balance of terror" which is based on the assumption that the destructive capability of modern weapons is such that no country will dare to be the first to use them. But this balance is now widely recognised as a precarious one.

Some small progress towards disarmament and towards limiting the spread of nuclear weapons has been and is being made. This is certainly of great importance. But full and effective disarmament cannot take place until we have eliminated the need for armaments, until we have laid the infrastructure of peace and thus established a climate of confidence in relations between nations and among men. For the tragedy of the modern world is that the immense progress that has been achieved in various branches of science and technology, and which is rightly recognised by the award of other prizes from Alfred Nobel's bequest, has not been paralleled by similar progress in social, human and international relations.

As I have already stressed, very considerable efforts have been deployed to assist in the development and modernisation of the developing countries. This has been a vast and unprecedented effort of international solidarity to which the ILO has been proud to contribute. What has been the result of this effort? Significant economic progress has clearly been made. Many developing countries achieved quite respectable rates of economic growth during the past decade - the first United Nations Development Decade - and creditable progress was made in building up the administrative and institutional framework necessary for development
and modernisation. But the balance sheet has a negative side which provides us with some sombre warnings for the future.

What concerns the ILO in particular is the fact that the economic progress which has been achieved has benefited only a small sector of the population. To some extent, the ILO itself may have contributed to this situation. By assisting in the development of institutions similar to those existing in the industrialised societies of Europe and North America – such as social security systems, trade unions and collective bargaining – it may have helped to strengthen the position of the privileged sectors of society – the civil servants, the managers and the skilled workers. I am not suggesting that the ILO should now abandon its fundamental principles; but I am suggesting that it should make every effort to redress the alarming imbalances that have arisen in the societies of developing countries.

Rural areas have been left to stagnate, while dynamic modern industries have provided jobs for only a small proportion of the urban population. Large numbers of rural dwellers have abandoned the land in the hope of finding jobs and higher standards of living in the cities – a hope which all too often turns out to be vain, with the result that they swell the ranks of the unemployed and live in conditions of appalling squalor in vast slum areas. The slums, and the countryside in some areas, have become a breeding ground for seething violence, frustration and discontent. Revolutionary movements are developing, particularly among younger people. And the problem is compounded by the explosive growth of the population in these countries, which is adding new elements of discontent to a turbulent social situation.

There is no need for me to stress to an audience such as this the dangers of this situation for the stability and prosperity of developing countries and hence for world peace. In my view, it is of the utmost urgency that a way be found of making economic development a meaningful term for the dispossessed masses before it is too late. That is why the ILO has decided to make the creation of higher levels of employment and employment opportunity the cornerstone of its action in the next decade – through a World Employment Programme. For employment is a prime source of income, and a family’s very existence will depend on whether or not the breadwinner is able to earn a decent livelihood from work. Today some 300 million workers are deprived of this opportunity in the developing
countries. During the next decade we estimate that an additional 226 million men and women will be added to the ranks of job-seekers. That is the magnitude of the challenge before us.

The ILO will be tackling the problem on several different fronts at once. We shall try to contribute to the reduction or halting of the drift of the population to the cities, by making rural areas more attractive for the peasant, the agricultural labourer and the artisan, through enabling them to earn a better living off the land and encouraging the growth of industries in the countryside. We shall encourage the use of labour-intensive techniques of agricultural and industrial production wherever it is economically feasible to do so. We shall attempt to mobilise the energies and enthusiasm of young people by giving them a role to play and a livelihood to earn in their country's development.

When I say "we", I refer, of course, not only to the ILO, since we cannot do this job by ourselves. I refer particularly to the governments of the ILO's member States, who have unanimously committed themselves to the objectives of the World Employment Programme, and who will now, with the stimulus and support of the ILO, be called upon to fulfil that commitment by making policies for employment a central feature of their development policies. I refer also to the whole United Nations family of organisations and the regional organisations who have agreed to assist the ILO in the task of implementing the World Employment Programme, and whose collaboration, within the framework of the Second Development Decade which is expected to begin in 1970, will be an essential ingredient in the success of the Programme. We will also look to workers' and employers' organisations for active support and for the kind of innovative thinking that the World Employment Programme will require.

While the creation of productive and remunerative employment will be the ILO's principal concern in the developing countries during the next decade, we shall also be concerned with the adoption of other measures which will raise the living standards of the very poor - for example, the extension of social security schemes to new categories of workers, the provision of housing and improved living and working conditions. And we shall continue to encourage the establishment and improvement of such vital institutions as trade unions and cooperatives and other rural organisations which will facilitate the participation of all sectors of society - rather than just a privileged few - in the economic and social life of their
countries. In all these ways we hope to make our contribution to improving the social climate and defusing the potentially explosive situation in the developing world today.

While the developing countries have claimed, and will rightly continue for a long time to claim, the priority attention of the international community, it would be erroneous to assume that all is well in the so-called advanced nations. The ILO must continue to be concerned with the problems here as well. In fact, the way in which the issues with which we are concerned in the developed countries are resolved will to a large extent determine the future balance of relationships with the developing countries and directly affect man’s efforts to build a peaceful world.

I would like to elaborate on this point for a moment. For the majority of the population in Europe and North America, the past half-century has brought impressive improvements in standards of living, in economic security, and in material comforts. Unemployment is no longer regarded as an unavoidable evil; on the contrary, full employment has now been embraced as a central goal of economic policy-making in most of these countries and unemployment has in most cases been reduced to very small proportions thanks very largely to the development of active labour market policies in which Scandinavian countries have played a pioneering role. Social security and welfare programmes, in which the Scandinavian countries have again given the world a lead, have been adopted to cover virtually the entire population; and numerous indices – such as the growing numbers of private cars, and the purchases of consumer goods such as television sets and washing machines – point to high incomes from work among large sectors of the population.

These are extremely encouraging developments. And yet there are two broad groups of problems which give cause for alarm in our industrialised societies. There is first of all the plight of those who live, often in misery, on the fringe of affluence – the lowest paid workers; the racial or religious minorities; the migrant workers and their families from the countries of Southern Europe or from other continents; the unemployed in the so-called “backward regions” and in the slum areas of some of our large cities; the elderly people, many of whom end their lives with pitifully small pensions, unprotected against rising prices and forgotten by a society to whose affluence today they contributed yesterday. Some of these – the elderly, for example – may not present a serious danger to social peace and
stability. That may be why they are sometimes overlooked by society, although it is certainly no reason why they should be. For one test of the success of any political or economic system must surely be the extent to which the weakest and most defenceless elements in society are cared for and are made to feel deeply involved in the aspirations of that society. But others among the disinherited do present such a danger. In recent years and months we have been forcibly reminded that certain categories of the population are not sharing in the benefits of our technological societies; to enable them to do so is a challenge of some magnitude for many industrialised States. And the ILO must consider one of its most important tasks in the coming years to be the promotion of policies to eliminate discrimination in all its forms, and to ensure a decent standard of living for all the inhabitants of the developed nations. For, unlike the developing countries, they have at present adequate resources to banish poverty among their citizens for good if there is a political will to do so. By so doing, they will at the same time lay the groundwork for a deeper sense of international solidarity; for only when the poor and the weak are properly cared for in their own countries can the need for helping the poor and the weak in the world as a whole be given the full attention it requires.

There is a second problem area in the developed countries which is particularly difficult to solve, in part because it has not yet been successfully defined. I refer to the growing social unrest among young people, many of whom can scarcely be considered underprivileged in any material sense. Universities and youth organisations have, of course, long been an arena where the most vocal forms of discontent with existing systems of authority have developed. But what is new in the present situation is that unrest among the young has found an echo among other sections of the population—especially among workers.

This is a novel situation, because the men and women involved are not revolting because they are the victims of poverty, injustice or oppression. While it has not yet been possible to define precisely the cause of the present malaise in industrial societies, many eminent social scientists have attempted to do so. I venture to suggest that it may be a sign of widespread boredom and frustration at the colourless technological civilisation in which we live and in which we are prepared to make too many sacrifices to material progress; that it may be a reaction against the horrifying human,
material and moral waste of war; that it may be frustration over the seeming inability of the existing institutions of industrial societies to seize the almost unlimited opportunities offered by today's technology, opportunities for greater freedom and for all people to lead fuller and richer lives in a spiritual as well as a material sense. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the creation of all the comforts and the security, of all the social and medical services of the modern welfare state, important as they are, is not enough to satisfy the deepest felt needs of the population. The challenge before us now is to make industrialised societies more human, to make man the master rather than the slave of modern technology, to offer more possibilities for the constructive use of leisure, for greater freedom, for greater participation, for more effective dialogue. For there is a serious danger that the fabric of these societies will be torn asunder by the complete disruption of the economic, social and political life of the nation, unless ways can be found of developing new institutions, new forms of authority, even new social values, which are acceptable to the population as a whole.

This raises far-reaching questions concerning the organisation and structure of society, many of which are far beyond the ILO’s competence, though none are beyond our concern. But there is one important aspect of this vast problem that does directly involve the ILO – the organisation of life and work in industry and in particular the relationships between employers and workers and between workers and trade unions. The days of the autocratic and paternalistic employer are long since past; the employer can no longer claim to be, and is no longer accepted as, the sole source of authority in the enterprise. The workers and their organisations demand to share in the authority as well as the responsibilities of management. But at the same time, new problems of communications have arisen between workers on the shop floor and the leaders of the organisations representing their interests; workers sometimes even appear to see their own trade unions as part of the “establishment” against which they are in revolt. The resulting situation, at least in certain countries, is alarming: greater absenteeism, more and more wildcat strikes, in short an erosion of industrial discipline which is the basis on which rests the progress and prosperity of society and, ultimately, of the workers themselves.

This, I suggest, is a major problem for consideration by the ILO and its membership in many industrialised
States. And it can only be resolved if there is far more informed and meaningful dialogue: more dialogue between employers and workers, on a far wider range of questions concerning the undertaking as a whole than is yet the case; more dialogue between the trade unions and their members, so that the eventual terms of a plant-level or nation-wide settlement concluded by the leadership are broadly acceptable to the members. Such dialogue has unfortunately all too frequently been lacking; but it is the only means by which the workers’ grievances and frustrations — whether or not they are substantial — can be known and understood. It is the only means by which the industrial enterprise can be humanised and the element of drudgery in work can be reduced.

But we also need more dialogue with and between those not represented in the giant organisations of modern society; and this may entail a thorough-going revision of the structures and decision-making processes of society. For these are the only means that I can see by which the workers’ frustrations and discontent can be prevented from becoming a truly explosive — or at least seriously erosive — force in society.

The ILO has given the world the concept of the industrial dialogue: in the years to come it must seek to broaden the scope, and increase the substance, of that dialogue. And it will be for other organisations — national and international — to transpose both the concept and the substance to all aspects of national life — to the schools and universities, to the churches, to the political parties and central and local government, to the youth clubs and welfare services — if society as a whole is to attain the cohesion and the sense of collective responsibility which are so essential to its survival.

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Much has been achieved over the past half-century. There has been a growing awareness and acceptance of man’s economic, social, political and civil rights; a far greater effort than ever before has been made to give each man a decent standard of living and a dignified place in society; men have become far readier to accept and live with people of different races, interests and ideologies; and there has been growing recognition of the need for a truly world-wide solidarity in the fight against poverty and injustice with the aim of building a more peaceful world.

The ILO is proud to have played its part in these achievements. But as we know and as you see from the
horizon that I have sketched, the task is still far from finished. The goal of “social justice” which the ILO’s founding fathers wrote into the Treaty of Versailles has proved to be a dynamic concept. As soon as one problem has been successfully tackled, new and unforeseen problems arise which present a major challenge to the social conscience of mankind. Thus, the ILO has never seen, and will never see, its role as that of a defender of the status quo; it will continue to seek to promote social evolution by peaceful means, to identify emerging social needs and problems and threats to social peace, and to stimulate action to deal with such problems. For there are still, to paraphrase the words of Frédéric Passy, dangerous explosives in the hidden depths of the community – the national community and the world community. To the defusing of these explosives, to the building of a truly peaceful world order based on social justice, the ILO, with the immense encouragement it derives from the unique distinction of the Nobel Peace Prize, solemnly dedicates its second half-century of existence.
ILO Director-General David A. Morse being presented to His Majesty King Olav V of Norway at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies.
ILO Governing Body officers and Director-General admire the Nobel Peace Prize Medal. Left to right: Mr. Gullmar Bergenström of Sweden, employers' vice-chairman; Ambassador Héctor Gros Espiell of Uruguay, chairman; Mr. Jean Mörl of Switzerland, workers' vice-chairman; Mr. David A. Morse.