

55

**THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC
CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR**

- Its Conception.
- Means and Ends.
- Organisation
- Plan of Work (81-82)
- The Constitution

FOREWARD

Trade Unionism is a social phenomenon. It is not an abstract datum or static form. It is an integrated part of the society. When we — in Egypt and other Islamic countries — began unionism, we copied the European pattern as we copied other patterns in education, politics, economics, etc.... thinking that these are the supreme perfection.

Many years had elapsed before we discovered that these forms had their defects and that they are not appropriate to us. So, a movement of restoration had begun. The thinkers who repudiated Islam in the thirties returned to it in the eighties. Corrective revolutions — as they were called — broke out in most Moslem countries. Prostitution, Usury, Alcohol which were tolerated under colonial liberal regimes were prohibited. Various attempts appeared to re-discover Islam, or interpret its old established principles into recent language, to apply them in the political and the economic spheres.

3

If we are calling now for Islamic Trade Unionism, this is not a deviation from the main stream. It is a part of a world wide movement which began in the post war and expressed the will of the masses, manifested in various walks of life. Trade Unions as mass organizations were supposed to be in the front. If the Pachas of the existing Trade Unions resist, they will meet the destiny of the Pachas and capitalists of the old regime who ignored the movement of the society, and captivated only by their narrow conceptions and own interest.

The International Islamic Confederation of Labour is a profound experiment to associate labour with the morals of Islam — especially Islamic Justice — for the benefit of both.

It deserves great attention from everyone interested in labour, whether Moslem or not, because it is a result of an extensive and polemical study of trade unionism, and an attempt to relieve it from some of its inherent defects. In his book "Crisis of Trade Unionism", Gamal El-Banna, the originator of this Confederation, proved that trade unions suffer an acute and permanent crisis in Capitalist, Communist, and Islamic Societies. In the Ca-

4

pitalist Society — they cannot repudiate or tolerate Capitalism. In the Communist Society, they have to play the role of the transmitting belt. In the Moslem world the trade unions lack the most characteristic of their members, e.g. Islam. Islam provides the trade unions with an objective and absolute criterion not only to determine the Labour-Management relations, but also to give trade unions a solid position, a sacred mission in their societies as organizations calling for justice and social peace and solidarity. This criterion is *Islamic Justice* derived directly from the Quran and the Prophet. No one even the head of the State has any prerogative towards it, or can be exempted from its reward. Moreover, Islam will inspire trade unions with its morals and ethics which are needed to resist corruption, governmental tutelage, to persuade every worker to do his duty with conscience bearing in his mind the Islamic ideal "*ALIH SAN*" or Perfection.

From this brochure, the reader will have a notion about this Confederation since it was an idea in the mind of an Islamic-Laborite thinker till it was established in June 1981.

5

CHAPTER I

THE REASONS AND THE NECESSITY OF THIS CONFEDERATION

1. The international representation of labour is confined in two federations. The first is the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.), which was established in 1915, its headquarters are in Prague. It comprises the communist federations and it is actually subject to the Soviet dominance. The second is the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.), which was established in 1949, its headquarters are in Brussels. It comprises the liberal-democratic federations and inspires the European-American policies.

In addition, there is The World Federation of Labour, which was previously called The Christian Federation of Trade Unions and it was — and still — considered by some observants as an ally of the I.C.F.T.U. especially after it transferred its head quarter from La Haye to Brussels.

6

movement is a repeated story, a permanent headache for the leaders of these trade unions.

Moreover, the trade unions in democratic and communist countries undergo a continuous crisis. In the former they play towards Capitalism, a double and contradictory role. The role of the ally and the enemy. This Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hide role is — as one of the German Trade Union leaders once said (in 1934), "a damned difficult task." In communist countries trade unions found themselves obliged to play the role of a "transmitting belt" which transmits the energy (and of course decisions, etc...) from the *Party* to the *masse*, and so they have no originality or independence.

3. These phenomenas, e.g., the confinement of international representation of labour in two federations only, whose headquarters are in Europe, and the subjection of trade union movement to political trends, give us two important facts :

A. The non-existence of an Islamic federation which represents Islamic labour force, although Islam in Moslem nations is, notwithstanding all allegations, the most prominent

8

2. The history of International Labour movement had proved that it cannot stand the political conflicts and the ideological contradictions. When the first International Federation of Trade Unions was established in 1904, it failed in attracting even the European Trade Unions. In the days of Amsterdam in the second decade of the century a hot quarrel broke between the Federation and the Soviet Trade Unions over Dawes Plan, that is the American plan to assist the vanquished Germany in the first world war. When the second world war permitted establishing The World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) in 1945, the tragedy was repeated on the same ground and for the same reason, e.g., over Marshal Plan, and the democratic liberal group withdrew from the Federation and established the I.C.F.T.U.

On the regional level The International Confederation of Arab Trade Union (I.C.A.T.U.) suffered a similar split over President Sadat policy, and its headquarter was transferred from Cairo to Bagdad.

On the national level, the story of the communist permeation into democratic trade union

7

character of these nations, indeed, Islam is the "trade mark" of the nations that believe in it, and that the Islamic labour force exceeds 300 million workers and has their special problems. This non-existence deprived the Islamic labour force from defending its right on international level.

B. The existence of an inherent defect in the established trade union nature. Trade Union movement, inspite of its human aims, has no objective, absolute principles. This degraded it to be a mere technique, a kind of pressure group with a subjective conception. It gave it an expedient — even opportunist — disposition. This deprived it from originality, independence and made it liable to governmental tutelage. If unions are based on objective, absolute values and principles, then governments cannot make the unions their satellite, trade unions can stand, play their role in the immunity of the heavenly principle (for there is no truly objective, absolute values but in religions).

It was a pity that the Christian Federation of Trade Unions changed its name. Christianity by all means has values that surpassed the capricious of politicians and Capitalists. However, it seems

9

that this change was inevitable, because the Christian values are essentially those of Love and Pity. No social order can be based on such sentimental values, even they are needed to modify the solid foundation of social order, that is *Justice*.

4. This survey indicates clearly that there is a necessity — an acute necessity — for establishing an International Islamic Confederation of Labour. This necessity emerged from :

a) A materialistic, expedient need requires establishing a federation which represents Islamic labour force, defends its interests, crystallizes its international existence vis-à-vis The two great international federations, otherwise the interests of the Islamic labour force can be neglected or victimised.

b) A principled need aimed at reforming the ideological defect in trade union movement by basing it on principles that give it immunity and independence from governmental tutelage, or political influence, and these principles can be found only in religion.

5. Moreover, the establishing of this Islamic Confederation will regain to labour its lost moral

Chapter II

ISLAM — AS IT IS UNDERSTOOD — BY THIS CONFEDERATION

The most important point in such federation is its understanding of Islam. There are many ritual, backward, fanatic conceptions of Islam, none of them suited the secked new confederation. The scope do not permit any detailed account, it is enough to draw these general lines :

1. Islam is the pure and last crystallization of celestial religions. It does not discriminate among them, or feel antagonism towards any, and consider all Prophets as venerables messengers from God, Mohamed spoke about prophets as brothers, about religion as a solid house with a gap in it which Islam rises to fill.

The existing contradictions and conflicts among religions are the bitter fruits of various churches, their desire to monopole religions, to interpret them according to their own interest or understanding.

value. The modern age deprived labour of its morality because the Capitalist philosophy as well as the Socialist philosophy is based on materialistic principles. The Capitalists produce all kinds of destructive weapons, disgusting materials. The workers are obliged to behave as the firemen of England had behaved in their strike when they resisted attempts to extinguish fires. When labour regains its moral values, this will provide a common climate, a sane milieu that assists in gathering employers and workers, and contribute in settlement the conflicts between them.

6. Finally, we must not forget that Islam is the most characteristic of Moslem nations. It was for more than thousand years the basis of economic and political organization. Quran preserved Arabic language from decaying or to be cut down by regional dialects — as it had occurred to Latin. If the language is the consciousness of the nation, if the history is the memory of the nation; and if the religion is the conscience of the nation, then Islam is all these to the Moslem nation.

Islam secures freedom of belief to Moslems and non-Moslems. It refuses any interference between man and God and does not recognize any tutelage or priesthood.

2. The keyline which governs Islamic conception and prevents its deviation is the conformity with Quran and the confirmed commands of the Prophet (Al Suna).

3. Meanwhile, we have the liberty in interpretation and understanding the texts provided this interpretation does not contradict with their meaning. Obviously our image will be different from our ancestors, this does not disturb us.

4. Inspiration the spirit of Islam is the best way to understand Islam. This can be done by surveying the Quran texts, and the Prophet commands as a whole.

5. The main character of Islam is *Justice*, this is what distinguishes it from Judaism and Christianity and suited it as the latest, all over world religion. The main character of Judism is Monotheism, of Christianity is Love. None of these two can be

a suitable basis for a social order, *Justice* only is the social virtue, the virtue of virtues.

Because the Islamic Justice is God Justice, Islam imposes it upon all — the governor and the governed, the rich and the poor. No one — even the head of the State — has any special prerogative or can be exempted from its award. No sectorial, or subjective interests are allowed. The *rule of law, the constitutional legality can be better attained by Islam than by any other doctrine*. If the Capitalist State is the Individual State, the Socialist State is the Party State, then, the Islamic State is the Divine Law State.

Let those who ignore Islam or the enemies of Islam say Islamic Justice is a mere word that means nothing, a slogan that eludes the masses. Communism is a word, Equality is a word and Democracy is a word. Islam put clear positive and negative regulations to apply Justice, to prevent injustice and established the society upon security. The Prophet and his Caliphes especially Omar put definite precedents and rules that make justice a living fact. So it is a gross mistake to speak about Islamic Justice as a mere slogan. It is the cornerstone of the Islamic Society.

14

Chapter III

REFUTATION SUSPICIONS

Some may claim that the establishment of this Federation will lead to discrimination upon religion, to sharpen the religious sensitivity and antagonism.

This is an allegation without foundation for these reasons :

1. Islam is the only celestial religion which recognized frankly and by name all the known religions because it is the latest of them. Moreover, the holy Quran refers to unknown Prophets. Islam gives the believers in all religions their complete freedom and bestows upon them his protection. The non Moslem minorities lived happily and peacefully under Islamic rule, enjoying their rights till the colonial regimes came and invented this allegation.

2. When differences in decisions among individuals or organizations occur, it is an established

16

6. The liberal-popular aspect in Islam did not attain — till now — the importance that it deserves. Most of the writers on behalf of Islam are not from those who seek — specifically — liberation or perceive the popular aspect. The establishment of this federation will accomplish this. Treating Islam from the common people approach will give Islam the vitality that was its character when the Prophet presented it to the poor and wretched folk of Mecca.

7. We are well aware of all allegations and antireligion propaganda that may arise in opposition to this Confederation. We acknowledge that religions were used in deluding the masses, and in justifying exploitation. Equality, liberty, democracy are also misused. Religion — in its pure form is considered to those who believe in it the Godly revelation, and to those who do not believe in it, the most ambitious discovery, Prophets are the super leaders. Religion represents the ideal and the moral value that the social order cannot dispense with. In all cases, inspiring true, pure religion is preferable than inspiring any other doctrine.

15

rule that the decision of the *MAJORITY* will be applied. This is what democracy requires and no other alternative can be found. We cannot make the majority submit to the minority. Diluting decisions and accepting contradictions are harmful and injustice. In European countries, this rule — (the rule of the majority) — injures the interests and freedom of minorities, as it is happening now to the Moslem minorities, but Islam protects minorities from such prejudice, because it gives the minorities a kind of natural and unalienable rights which the Islamic governments cannot violate. This is the advantage of Islam to which the minorities were aware, and make them — in many cases — prefer Islamic rule than their own rule, since many sectorial or doctrinal differences occurs among them, and prevent neutrality. History proved that Islam was towards Christians — as a whole — more kind and safe than many Christian regimes.

3. The true Christian religion — according to the Bible and Fathers is a spiritual one, its true mission is soul salvation. It leaves every secular matter to the civil authorities and temporal power. So there is no sensitivity in establishing Islamic

17

unionism, because trade unions does not treat soul matters, but conditions of work. Those who push Christianity amid secular or political matters work for their own accounts or ambitions and not for Christianity sake.

4. The trade unions — in a Moslem society cannot represent properly the workers if they ignore the most characteristic of their members, e.g., Islam. This negative attitude can be considered as a kind of contempt for their feelings, a participation in the colonial policy which aims at depriving the mass organizations — especially trade unions — from the vitality of Islam.

5. The International Islamic Confederation of Labour does not refuse — from the standpoint of Islamic freedom which conform with the trade union freedom — organizing Christian trade unions. Islam — in this point — differs from the totaliterian regimes which prohibit establishing organizations other than the established trade unions so that they block the way towards any freedom or opposition. Islamic point of view conforms with the classical trade union freedom laid by I.L.O. in its famous convention (87 of 1948) which acknow-

18

wealth for all mankind, a heritage of all nations, and generations which participated actively in the history of human civilization. The only required condition from the non Moslem trade unions is believing in Islamic Justice and not Islamic creed.

7. Another argument that usually mentioned in this context is the allegation that establishing trade unionism upon religion basis is an experience that failed in the past and lost ground in recent time, a fact that made the International Christian Federation of Trade Unions changed its name and get rid of its Catholic principles.

This is not the whole truth. It was the Craft Unionism that excluded religion and politics. History proves that trade unionism cannot be isolated from politics even the laws required that. The analogy can be the same with religion, if the society is interested in religion as it is interested in politics. This is the case in Moslem world where religion is the centre of gravity in the society. Islam differs from Christianity in this point to a degree that makes any comparison impossible, or at least unfair.

20

ledged the freedom of workers to establish trade unions of their own choosing.

But these unions will be in Moslem Societies minorities unions.

According to all democratic principles, in particular, the principles laid down by I.L.O. in cases of trade union pluralism, the most representative organization only will represent all the workers. This means that minorities unions have no chance of representing their own members, and so the affiliation to majority unions (Islamic unions) may be preferable to them since they will loose nothing and will have a chance for participate in decision making within the majority trade unions.

6. The International Islamic Confederation of Labour accepts willingly affiliation of non Moslem trade unions providing they undertake working under the banner of the Confederation, respecting its constitution. There is no paradox in this. Islam recognizes all other religions, treat their Prophets with reverence, attributes variance to churches, and priests, misinterpret and misconstruct texts. Islam is not a monopoly of the Moslems, it is a common

19

8. After all, the Christian-European societies accepted already marxist unions, why then they refuse Islamic unions ? At least the latters are pro-religion whereas the formers are anti-religion.

Every Islamic call is a call of international solidarity and brotherhood, not only by the objectivity of Islam, but also because it eliminates completely all racial, social and national barriers. The existence of various religions does not annoy Islam for it is the will of God to be so. This idea is frankly and repeatedly mentioned in Quran. When Islam swept the ancient world, it was not by sword only, but also by "the scale and the book" in the words of Quran, e.g. Justice and knowledge. After that, Islam did not try to convert the vanquished subjects Cristian, or Jews, in Spain, Balkan, Lebanon etc. Anyhow, the antagonism among religions is a matter of the past. The real Challenge that confront all religions is the destructive influence of Materialism and Communism that considered all religions as "Opium of the peoples" and denied the sacred Human Soul.

21

Chapter IV

WHAT TRADE UNIONS WILL GAIN FROM INSPIRING ISLAM

We do not deny the role played by trade unions in Islamic countries or the achievements attained by them, but we believe that their negative attitude towards Islam misled them, and caused their falling in three gross deviations, e.g., Opportunism, Communism and Governmental Subjection.

a. Opportunism in its best, that is taking advantages of whatever chance to attain benefits, can — in the absence of the objective Islamic criterion — lead trade unions far from the allowed limits, causing conflicts between trade unions and society. In its worst, Opportunism means corruption and racketeering.

b. Communism, in the absence of Islam — permeates most trade unions, succeeds, with variant degrees, in putting its agents in key posts. No immunity — except Islam — can stand in front

22

Sahabas. We can never find such real popular supermen in the old Roman Empire or the modern British Empire. The human trait of Islam is well known. Any movement will be proud of being associated with Islam, the real Islam, the Islam of Mohamed. No one can deny that Islam liberated in the past the masses from the shackles of the Persian and Roman Empires, and it can liberate the masses of the modern age from Capitalism and Communism.

Islam associated itself from its inception with equality. It distructed the heigh barriers of race, nationality, inheritance, social strata that dominated the pre-islamic societies. All moslems are brothers. Most of the great rulers, leaders and scholars in the carly islamic era were from the destitute folk, or the converted vanquished races.

b. The trade union movement will find an objective criterion by which all its claims can be measured, and transfer its claiming nature, and the sectorial feature to be a *claim of objective justice, from the struggle among classes to a struggle towards social peace.*

24

communism. Unless Islam safeguards trade union policy and practices, many trade union leaders will be the voluntary victims of Communism, or they will prefer the excess of Communism rather than the exploitation of Capitalism.

c. No trade union movement can enjoy a real independence in front its government unless it is based upon Islam, because Islam alone is more powerful than the government. Believing in it gives trade unionists power and immunity. Otherwise, they will be the hostage of governmental influence, caprices and fluctuations. This is the case of most Arab Trade Union Movements. In some Arab countries, trade unions became a semi state propaganda organs. They deepened the conflicts among Arab countries, transferred them from the rulers to the masses.

2. On the other hand, a trade union movement inspires Islam will gain :

a. It will associate itself with one of the greatest doctrine in the history of mankind. A doctrine based on Justice, maked the actual supermen from the Prophet Mohamed himself to his Caliphs and

23

This does not mean that Islamic unionism abandons defending the rights of workers but it means putting this defence within the framework of Islamic Justice, settlement any conflicts according to Islamic Justice. No doubt, the workers will be the beneficiaries in this bargain. Furthermore no one — even the head of the State — can escape from the Islamic Justice or exempted from its rewards, or having immunity from its obligations. Islamic Justice itself gives the workers the right of strike or using means of pressure if their legal rights were denied.

c. The trade unionism will regain its lost morals and ethics which were sacrificed on the alter of materialism. The Islamic morals are God morals and they surpass any so-called "Honour Charters" This will solve a complex problem in developing countries, the problem of sound trade union practice and sound work practice.

25

Chapter V

HOW THIS CONFEDERATION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED

It was supposed that this Confederation should have been established many years ago since there were many factors required its existence. Alas, a gap between trade union leaders and Moslem thinkers did not permit that. Many trade unionists have Islamic tendencies, but they cannot master the Islamic Jurisprudence, or can theorize the broad Islamic labour principles. There are Islamic thinkers with sympathetic attitude towards labour, but their knowledge about trade unions is very scarce and shallow, and have no idea about the complex relations between management and labour. Unfortunately a kind of aversion makes Islamic thinkers avoid trade unionism.

To establish an Islamic Labour Confederation, the a priori required condition is the appearance of an initiator who masters the two different but necessary fields of knowledge, namely Islam and

26

its leaders the scientific and the systematic way instead of working by trial and error. So he decided to do this sacred duty by translating and editing books on the history, the organization, the technique of trade unionism.

All references were in English. The trouble was not only in finding them, but in comprehension the expressions and the terminology. Nothing was written in Arabic on trade union organization and structure before he began his task, and it was necessary to spend almost ten years, before he mastered the subject. However, the harvest was abundant, and he put the manuscripts of many books. In 1963, the Egyptian Workers Educational Association was established and he was requested to deliver lectures on trade unionism. The Association was in great need for his books, and was eager to publish them. After that, he was considered par excellence — the acknowledged writer, lecturer and thinker in unionism.

His labour books exceed 20. Among them : "The Rise and Evolution of Trade Union Movement", "Trade Union Organization and Structure", "Comparative Trade Union History", "Lectures on

28

labour. This was very exceptional, but extraordinary circumstances led to the appearance of such originator, in the person of *Gamal El Banna*.

Gamal El-Banna was born in December 1920 from a family of knowledge, celebrated for its achievements. His father edited and published single-handed the most authentic Islamic encyclopedia "Al-Mosned" in 24 volumes. His brother established and led till he was martyred in 1949, the largest Islamic Association "Moslem Brothers". However, Gamal El-Banna, by virtue of his studies and inclination, was oriented towards a conception of Islam that differs from the Orthodox ancestral conception which was the established basis for all Islamic reformers. This conception goes directly to the two fundamental resources of Islam, the Quran and the Sunna, overlooking all the interpretations and conceptions of the ancestors.

Gamal El-Banna devoted himself to labour. In 1950 he was one of the leaders of textile trade union, the largest union in the labour force. For two years he worked hard, but at last he realized that the most needed service is to provide the Egyptian Trade Union Movement with knowledge, and educate

27

Trade Union Administration", "Workers Education Between Present and Future", "Rescarches on Workers' Education", "Freedom of Association", "The Workers' University" "Workers and Modern State" etc...

He translated from English the reports of I.L.O. Committee on Freedom of Association (Known as John Price Committee) about the trade union situation in United Kingdom, U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Sweden etc... (every report in a separate volume). In 1969 the Provisional Secretary of Arab Labour Organization committed to Gamal El-Banna the revision of the Arabic translation of International Labour Standards (I.L.O. Conventions and Recommendations) he fulfilled that. The Arabic version was published in three bulky volumes.

When the *Arab Labour Organization* was established in 1973, Gamal El-Banna was appointed as an Advisory Expert and was sent to many Arab countries to give lectures or to give his technical advice about workers' Education or trade Unions issues.

It is worth mentioning that Gamal El-Banna is interested in two other fields, the first is political

29

editing. His first political book (appeared in 1946) was "A New Democracy", the last (appeared in 1978) was "The Rise and Fall of Weimer Republic". The second field is social service. In 1953 he established the pioneer society in the rough and awed field "Prisons". "The Egyptian Society for Prisoners' Welfare" put the bases of most prisons reforms and prisoners' welfare.

Gamal El-Banna is, of course, and by his very milieu, an Islamic author. Among his books are ; "The Spirit of Islam", "Freedom of Belief in Islam", "The Contemporary Islamic Movements, the pros and cons", "Ramadan Declaration", etc...

In the early seventies, the idea of an Islamic Federation of labour came to the mind of Gamal El-Banna. In his pamphlet "Labour Policy in Islam" (appeared in 1971), we found the first hint to it, but the political atmosphere was not favourable for such an idea.

In the early months of 1978, Gamal El-Banna wrote a leaflet under the title, "An Invitation for The Participation in establishing the International Islamic Federation of Labour", in Arabic, English

30

Chapter VI

THE CONSTITUENT CONGRESS

Geneva 8-12 June 1981

The convening of the Constituent Congress was of course — the first step towards the actual establishment of this Confederation. However, before that can be done, we have to answer three difficult questions: Where, When, and How. At first we considered Karachi (Pakistan) where the National Labour Federation of Pakistan announced its readiness to receive the delegates, to undertake the necessary arrangements, but the date fixed was not appropriate. So we thought of Khartoum, the Sudanese Federation of Employees and Professionals Trade Unions supported the idea, but again some considerations prevented holding the Congress in The Sudan. After much deliberations we decided to hold it in Geneva where the International Labour Organization (I.L.O.) holds its yearly Conference in June, and the workers' delegates of 130 countries attend it. This decided the answer of the

32

and French, and sent many copies to his unionists friends in Islamic World.

In 1979, he made, on his own expenses, three journeys :

- a) The first was in March to Khartoum, where the General Conference of the Arab Labour Organization was held. He met most of the Arabic delegates.
- b) The second was in June to Geneva where the General Conference of the International Labour Organization was held. He met most of the Moslem Asian delegates, especially the Pakistanians who approved the idea at once, discussed the broadlines of the sought Federation.
- c) The third was in December to Morocco where he established close contacts with the Moroccan Federation of Workers.

As a result of these journeys, correspondences and contacts, five countries announced their affiliation. These are ; Bangladesh, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan and The Sudan.

Gamal El-Banna wrote a draft constitution to be discussed in the constituent Congress.

31

second question "When", for if the Congress will be held in Geneva, then it must be in June to concur with the Conference of I.L.O. and to avail ourselves of the presence of the workers' delegates. The third question was a hard nut. How many poor organizations can be represented in Geneva ? How can airplanes tickets, hotels expenses can be paid? True, some of our delegates will come as I.L.O. delegates and we have no financial obligations towards them, but most of our delegates are not necessarily I.L.O. delegates. However this dilemma was solved when the Cultural Islamic Foundation in Geneva had announced its readiness to be the host of these delegates.

The stage was set, Gamal El-Banna sent invitations to the affiliated organizations to send their delegates to attend the *Constituent Congress* from 8-12 June, 1981 in Geneva.

The agenda included :

- 1) Discussion the draft of the constitution.
- 2) Election candidates for key posts.
- 3) Deciding the Headquarter.

33

4) **Announcing the establishment of the International Islamic Confederation of Labour.**

Delegates from Labour Organizations in Bangladesh, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan and The Sudan attended the Congress. The meetings were held in the halls and cafeteria of *Palace de Nations Unies* where the settings of I.L.O. were held, or in *La Salle Communale* which was rented for this cause.

The delegates discussed the articles of the Constitution in Arabic and English one by one, they approved them after introducing some amendments.

An executive council was elected. It composed of Gamal El-Banna, as President with 3 vice presidents, a General Secretary, two vice General Secretaries and four members.

The Congress decided to postpone the subject of the Headquarter till the contacts with the governments attain a positive result. A second Congress will be held within a year to decide this point (The Headquarter). A temporary liaison office was established in Geneva.

34

tions, and that it will undertake a sacred and historical mission. About the small number of the delegates, he reminded his audience that all the great doctrines began by small numbers. Islam, Christianity, even Marxism began by individuals, and spread by the courage, devotion and heroism of small numbers.

Although five countries only were represented in the Congress yet the number does not give the real meaning of their representation. The number of the countries obliterates the size of every country and its population. We cannot compare Luxembourg or Monaco for example with U.S.A. or U.S.S.R., although each of them is a country. Their are Moslem countries with one million population or less, others with 100 millions or more. Two of the four largest Moslem countries were represented in the Confederation. Every one of them is equivalent — from population point — to at least ten of the medium size Moslem countries not to mention the small ones.

36

On 10 June the Congress invited the Moslem delegates attending I.L.O. Conference to a reception in the I.L.O. Restaurant. Most of the Moslem delegates attended the reception. The President of I.L.O. Conference — the Moslem Senegaleese Minister of Social Affairs and Labour was the guest of honour. Many of I.L.O. staff and Moslem personalities in Geneva attended too.

On 12 June, the Congress accomplished its deliberations by announcing the formal establishment of the International Islamic Confederation of Labour.

And so, without the traditional posters, banners, and slogans, this great event went, as some of great events, almost unnoticed.

In his final speech, Gamal El-Banna commenting on the Congress draw attention to the all important fact that distinguished this Confederation from other federations, namely its doctrinal nature. It is not the number, or the wealth that matter, but the belief and faith, and that he has no doubt at all that this Confederation will be one of the most important international mass-organiza-

35

Chapter VII

PLAN OF WORK FOR THE YEAR 1981-1982

The Executive Council put a plan of work for the year 1981-1982 comprises two fundamental parts, the first is the Educational part, the second is the Organizational part.

1. The Educational Part :

One of the characteristics of this Confederation is the great appreciation for Education. It is par excellence the most important means to achieve its ends, although it is an end in itself. As the Constitution says "Knowledge is strength, ignorance is humiliation, Islam gives knowledge priority over worship". No wonder the largest part of the plan has an educational character. This part includes the following schemes :

1. Organizing three Educational Corresponding courses for 500 participants in Jordan, Morocco and The Sudan. Some selected Labour-Islamic

37

books would be given to the participants with written questions to be answered. A meeting between the author and the participants will be arranged to let the latter ask any question or request from the author. The answers will be corrected and given degrees by the author. Symbolic rewards and incentives will be presented to the best ten (in every course).

Correspondence courses is the most appropriate and convenient means of education in developing countries because they do not require releasing participants, a big qualified cadre or large administrative expenses.

2. Translation of "Crisis of Trade Unionism", and "Islam and Trade Unions", both by Gamal El-Banna to English and French, printing 3000 copies of each.

To have an idea about these two books, let us quote here what the author wrote in the back cover of every one of them.

About "Crisis of Trade Unionism", the author wrote :

38

kind of trade unionism — *the Islamic Trade Unionism*.

About the second book "Islam and trade Unions" the author wrote :

"Although we can find some books about Islam and labour, yet we find none about Islam and trade unions. This topic was avoided as it was a Taboo. Indeed, most of the Moslem thinkers believed that trade unions do not conform with Islamic principles.

To refute this argument, the author wrote this book. He started it by a brief chapter about "What is Trade Unionism". The second chapter is about the negative attitude of the contemporary Islamic thought towards trade unionism and its serious effects upon trade unions and Islamic organizations. In the third chapter, the author proved, by actual evidence, that the early Islamic society acknowledged the predecessors of trade unions which were called "*Alasnaf*". In the fourth chapter the author confirmed this idea by theoretical proofs, proved that The Collective Agreements are the incarnation of one of the texts "*Aya*" of the Holy Quran. In the

40

"This book presents a social anatomy of the largest of mass-organisations e.g., Trade Unions, Recent Trade Unions appeared as an dialectical antithesis of capitalism. They supposed its existence, exist with it, in the meantime they oppose its freedom of work, the essence of capitalism, and so they play a double and paradoxal role, become a kind of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hide, oppose capitalism and co-exist with it.

In the Communist Society, the trade unions were obliged to play the role of the "transmitting belt". A role deprived them of any originality or independence.

Trade Unions in Capitalist and Communist Societies lacked the *Objective Criterion* upon which they base their claims. Moreover, the nature of the established trade union by its very conception, is *Material*. This caused a vacuum in the relations between the trade unions and their members, and — in turn — a kind of fragility in their structure.

These are the elements of the trade union crisis, to get rid of it, the author presents a new

39

final chapter, he presented a conception of the Islamic Trade Unionism as crystallized by the International Islamic Confederation of Labour".

No doubt, an English and French version of these two books will help to understand the idea and philosophy of the International Islamic Confederation of Labour and to deepen its perception in the English and French speaking Moslem people.

3. Publishing a periodical Bulletin to be issued every four months. It will publish theoretical researches and the Confederation news. It will be in Arabic, English and French.

4. Establishing a Translation and Publishing Centre to meet the requirements in this field. Initially, it would be in Cairo where the technical experience is available.

5. Starting the first stage of establishing "The International Islamic Institute for Labour Studies and Vocational Training". The point of originality in this scheme is introducing labour studies from an Islamic outlook. The Confederation has already a detailed study about the first stage,

41

its branches, duration and subjects, etc... It is suggested to be established in Khartoum. The Sudanese government is interested in the scheme, willing to support the idea.

The Organizational Part :

This part aims at intensifying and extending the membership, strengthening the organization of the branches, by a number of visits to the Islamic countries, hold meetings and seminars, etc...

* * *

To meet the *Financial obligations* of these schemes the Confederation intends to conclude a number of technical Assistance Agreements with International and Islamic Organizations, by which these organizations offer the financial resources and the Confederation offers experience, and application.

One of the decisions of the Constituent Congress held in Geneva 8-12 June 1981 was to appeal to the International Islamic Organisations and other interested organisations to build an *Establishment*

Chapter VIII

THE CONSTITUTION

P R E A M B L E

By the Grace of God and His Sacred Will.

Proceeding from our deep obligation towards all working peoples, especially the Moslem Working People.

Believing that this end cannot be achieved except by inspiring the principles and morals of Islam — the pure and last crystallization of all celestial religions, and establishing labour relations upon the *Ismalic Justice*.

Unifying the efforts to accomplish this end.

We — the undersigned delegates — establish on behalf of our Organizations the International Islamic Confederation of Labour.

Fund to enable the Confederation to go ahead and to avoid unnecessary waste of precious time owing to the shortage of resources. Article 15 of the Constitution states that the resources of the Confederation include "Unconditioned grants".

In the meantime, this Confederation hates spending lavishly, not only because its shortage in resources, but also from a principled point. Islam hates any kind of waste, "even in water from a running river" as the Prophet said. The originator of this Confederation and his companions worked voluntarily for three years.

Chapter I

HEADQUARTERS — LANGUAGE

Art 1.

In Geneva on 10 Shaaban 1401 H. (12 June 1981), the International Islamic Confederation of Labour was established according to this Constitution.

Art 2.

The Headquarter of the Confederation is () In the second Congress this point point would be reconsidered to decide the permanent Headquarters by two-thirds votes majority.

Art. 3.

The official language is Arabic, but the Confederation may use other languages used by Moslem countries.

The Arabic text is the authentic one.

Chapter II
CONCEPTIONS

Art. 4.

This Confederation is established by virtue of the interaction between Islam and Labour according to the specifying perceptions mentioned hereafter.

Art. 5.

A. Islam is the pure and last crystallization of celestial religions. It does not discriminate among them, or feel any sensitivity towards any, and considers all the Prophets venerable messengers from God. Mohamed spoke about about Prophets as brothers, about religion as a solid house with a gap in it. Islam came to fill it.

The existing contradictions and conflicts among religions are the bitter fruits of various churches, their desire to monopolize religions, to interpret them according to their own interest or understanding.

Islam secures freedom of belief to Moslems or non-Moslems, it refuses any interference

46

manuals or intellectuals, so it is possible theoretically to represent all workers through their organisations in the Confederation (including housewives associations, co-operatives, etc...) Although the traditional Trade Unions will be the core of the membership in the Confederation.

This innovation in the organization and structure of the Confederation will freed it from ploreterian complex which is considered now one of the nineteenth century anachronism, and contradicts the recent evolution of employment trends. Moreover this innovation will enable the Confederation to avail itself from the youth and intelligensia participation in the common interest.

B. Applying the Quranic meaning of (Work) requires that labour must preserve its Islamic eithics and morals in practice and content. Labour must be an instrument of construction, service and welfare, fulfilling the lawful needs. All forms of corruption, exploitation and deprivation must be eliminated. Work must be practiced by Islamic conscience. The Moslem hand is an honest and pure hand,

48

between man and God and does not recognize any tutulage or priesthood.

- B. Islam is the Holly Quran and the confirmed Sunna (Prophet's acts or commands) beyond these two, the Confederation does not commit itself to any of the various doctrines or sects.
- C. The Islamic characteristic which specifically concerns this Confederation and considers a qualification for affiliation is the Islamic Justice, because it is the criterion of labour relations, the determining factor among Labour, Management, and Authorities.

Whatever the variance in understanding or determining Justice, it remains the Justice that can't be confused with exploitation and arbitrariness.

Art. 6.

- A. "Labour" in this Confederation means the Work as it is mentioned in the Quran, and not the traditional economic labour. The term (Work) had been associated in the Quran with good acts, or mentioned to justify punishment or reward, this indicates the comprehensive nature of "Work", and that it embraces all workers whether for wags or not, whether they are

47

Art. 7.

The fundamental dimensions of Labour are :

a) Labour is the principle — almost the only — source of living for the individual, and so wages must secure to the worker a decent living. If his skill does not permit that, it is the responsibility of the Islamic State to train and retrain the worker to attain the required standard. Bending that the wages must be completed from the Islamic *Zakat* (Social Security).

b) Labour, too, is a way of self fulfillment, of providing the individual own contribution in the life of his society. Measures to enable harmony between work and apptitude such as occupational orientation and retraining must be taken.

Unions must provide advice and carry out their responsibilities towards this end.

c) Labour is a framework to all workers according to their crafts industries, etc..., to enable making collective settlements of labour relations which are established upon Islamic Justico through *Alshoura* (Consultation) between workers and man-

49

agement, so that obligations can be discharged by honest, rights can be attained by Justice.

d) Labour is the only way for construction, providing society with material and spiritual needs, filling the gap between under-developed and developed countries.

Art. 8.

The Confederation believes that a close link connects Islam and Labour, accomplishes the sought integration. Labour finds in Islam the doctrine of Mighty God, symbol of perfection and source of values. This doctrine embraces the individual, the society and universe, and put the relations upon the solid foundation of Objective Islamic Justice, and not upon brute force or capricious wishes. Islam will find in Unionism its basis and its people.

The Confederation considers that missing this link is one of the major reasons of the deterioration of the Islamic Societies. The recent Islamic Movements are concentrated in dispersed peasants, theoretic intelligensia and petty bourgeois whose main concerns are the individual aspects or the ritual formalities. The liberal and popular aspects of Islam are obliterated.

50

Islamic morals and ethics in deciding labour rules and laws, basing labour relations upon Islamic Justice to enable the application of Islamic slogan "Obligations by honesty, rights by justice".

e) Diffusion of knowledge and education, especially adult and workers education and vocational training to rationalize Trade Union practices and give it strength. Knowledge is strength, ignorance is humiliation. Islam gives knowledge priority over worship.

As a first step the Confederation organizes campaigns to abolish illiteracy under the Quranic command and Aya (Read) "Sourat Al Alak".

f) Calling for diffusion and learning Arabic language because it is the language of Quran and mother tongue of all Moslems.

g) Supporting liberation movements and international cooperation.

Art. 10.

The Confederation uses the following means to accomplish its aims :

a) Wise preaching and persuasion by all means of mass-media (press, meetings — seminars, etc...).

52

Chapter 3.

MEANS AND ENDS

Art. 9.

This Confederation aims at :

a) Representing the Moslem Working Force in International Organizations and securing their lawful rights. This includes the Immigrant Moslem Workers who work in other countries or Moslem Workers who work in their countries and face racial and religious discrimination.

b) Supporting the affiliated organizations in their struggle to improve conditions of employment, raising the material, social and spiritual standard and secure to all workers their present and future.

c) Defending Freedom of Association and provide international protection to trade union leaders to enable them to pursue their duties and responsibilities.

d) Combat all forms of exploitation or despotism in labour relations, calling for inspiring Is-

51

b) In the transition period, that is, from the present regimes to the sought Islamic regime, the Confederation uses the traditional trade union techniques such as collective agreements, consultation, arbitration, amending laws, etc...

The Confederation does not eliminate from the legal Trade Union practices means of pressure, but it considers them the last resort and tries to reduce to the utmost their bad effects upon the people.

c) When the transition period expires, the *Islamic Justice*, inspired directly from Quran and confirmed Sunna will have the last word. Employers and workers must abide by it.

d) The Confederation abstains from all involvement in political conflicts, governments, policies, also it refuses entering in doctrinal or sectarian arguments.

53

Chapter IV.
MEMBERSHIP

Art. 11

The membership in the Confederation shall be composed of :

a) The organizations that participated in the Constituent Congress.

b) The organisations which request affiliation and their requests are approved by the Executive Council. This membership will be valid as soon as the Executive Board approves it. The organisation can nominate its delegate in the General Council.

c) The Executive Council may — by two-thirds votes — grant an Honourable Membership to individuals or organizations in appreciation of their efforts in serving the ends of this Confederation and the Islamic Justice.

d) The Executive Council may — by two-thirds votes — grants a Creditable Membership to individuals or organizations to encourage them to persuade working for the cause of the Confederation in their own fields and by their own means.

54

Chapter V.
REVENUE

Art. 15.

The financial resources of the Confederation are :

- a) Admission tax.
- b) Contributions.
- c) Unconditioned grants.

Art. 16.

Admission tax shall be 200 American Dollars or equivalent by national currencies. It must be paid within two months from the date of affiliation.

Art. 17.

- a) Contributions shall be 1% from the yearly organization Budget.
- b) Contributions must be paid every six months.
- c) The Executive Council has the right to exempt temporarily or for a fixed period any member from paying the contributions or admission tax.

Art. 18.

The Executive Council shall submit a yearly financial balance to the General Council. A comprehensive account about the financial position of the Confederation would be submitted to the Congress.

56

Art. 12.

No organization can withdraw from the Confederation unless its competent organ decides so. The withdrawal shall take effect after three months from receiving the withdrawal notice, providing it would have fulfilled its obligations by virtue of its membership.

Art. 13.

The General Council can recommend expelling from the membership of the Confederation the member who :

- a) Refuses to comply with the constitution or the Confederation decisions.
- b) Injures the reputation of the Confederation.
- c) Refuses to pay the contributions for two consecutive years after repeated demands.

The defaulting member shall have a just hearing and defending himself. However, the dismissal recommendation suspends the membership till the Congress approves it.

Art. 14.

It is allowed for any member of this Confederation to be a member in other International Confederation after the approval of the Executive Council.

55

Chapter VI
ORGANS OF THE CONFEDERATION

Art. 19.

The organs of the Confederation consist of :

- a) The Congress.
- b) The General Council.
- c) The Executive Council.
- d) The Executive Committee.

Art. 20.

a) The Congress is held every three years by the General Council.

b) The Congress may be held in an extraordinary session by the request of half of the affiliated members or two-thirds of the General Council. The General Council shall issue the call for the extraordinary session within three months of such decision.

c) The meeting of the Congress shall be in the place and date fixed by the Council unless the Congress itself adopted a decision in a previous meeting.

Art. 21.

a) The Congress is the supreme authority in the Confederation. It consists of one delegate for

57

every affiliated organization that has 10000 members or less. One delegate for every consecutive 10000 members, providing that the delegates of the largest organisation would not exceed than 10 delegates.

b) Each delegate may be accompanied by advisors. The advisors shall not speak or vote except on a written request made by the delegate and sent to the Secretary of the Congress.

c) If the organization cannot send the number of the delegates to the Congress according to the ratio mentioned in (a) of this Article, the existing number would have all its entitled votes.

d) The organization which — for any reason — cannot send its delegates may send to the Congress its opinion in the items of the agenda in a written document approved from its competent authority. This opinion shall be taken in consideration when the Congress discussed the item.

e) If the organization cannot — for any reason — send its delegates, it can depute any existing delegate. This delegate has the right to speak and to vote on behalf of it providing the re-

58

cil about dismissal of the defaulting members.

- f) Electing the General President, the General Secretary and approving the nomination of the General Council members submitted by the relevant organizations.
- 2) The decisions of the Congress shall be taken by simple majority unless it is required by this constitution a special majority.

Art. 23.

a) The General Council consists of one delegate from every affiliated organization, plus the General President and the General Secretary.

b) Every affiliated organization shall nominate its delegate, it can change him when necessary.

c) The term of the General Council is three years.

d) The General President shall preside the meetings of the General Council.

e) The General Council shall hold one meeting at least every year. The meeting shall be consider-

60

levant organization submitted a written document requesting that, and approved by the competent authority.

f) The Credential committee shall examine the credentials of the delegates. It shall submit a report to the Congress to be discussed in its first meeting.

g) The General President shall preside the Congress, the General Secretary shall be its reporter.

Art. 22.

1) The Congress considers, particularly the following matters :

a) Drawing the broad lines of the Confederation general policy.

b) Discussing the report of the Executive Council.

c) Approval of the budget.

d) Amending the constitution and drawing the byrules.

e) Approval of the affiliated members and the recommendations of the General Council.

59

ed valid if it is attended by more than half of its members.

f) The text of the sub-articles (c) and (d) of Art. 21, can be applied in the meetings of the General Council.

Art. 24.

a) The General Council shall follow-up the Executive Council in its efforts to apply the decisions of the Congress especially the activity of Area Offices.

b) The General Council shall elect members of Executive Council for three years.

Art. 25.

a) The Executive Council consists of the General Secretary, the Assistant General Secretaries and the members.

The Executive Council must not be less than 11, and does not exceed than 35 according to the development of the Confederation and the decisions of the Congress.

b) The General Secretary is the president of the Council, and he is responsible for directing all its activities. He represents the Confederation.

c) The Executive Council elects a treasurer from its members.

61

d) The Executive Council shall hold at least one meeting every six months to follow-up the working of the Executive Committee.

Art. 26.

There shall be Area Offices, each will be presided by a member of the Executive Committee. The Area Office makes the necessary contacts with the branches in its area, coordinates their activities according to the rules issued by the Executive Council.

Art. 27.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the the General Secretary, the Assistant General Secretaries and the Treasurer. It undertakes the permanent activity and holds at least one meeting every two months.

Art. 28.

The General President shall draw the broad lines of the general policy, elaborates the doctrinal and theoretical aspects and submit suggestions. He shall preside the Congress and the General Council, has the right to represent the Confederation, to attend the meetings of the General Council and the Executive Council.

Chapter VII

THE NON-ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS

Art. 29.

The non-Islamic organizations may affiliate to the Confederation, providing that they have faith in the Confederation mission, respect its constitution. There is no paradox because Islam is the last of the existed religions. It recognizes them, attributes their contradictions to the priests. Islam is not a monopoly of Moslems only. It is a commonwealth for all mankind. After all, the particular character of this Islamic Confederation as a Labour Federation is the *Islamic Justice*. Believing in this principle is the indispensable condition for membership.

Affiliated Non-Islamic Organizations will have the full rights of the Islamic Organizations.

"Mondiale" Press—Cairo