

The World's Industrial Parliament

BY

E. M. OLIVER

Oxford University Extension Lecturer

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT BURNHAM.

*A short, popular account of the
International Labour Office set
up by the Covenant of the
League of Nations. It should
be of the greatest interest to all
Trade Unionists, employers,
welfare workers, and those
who are looking for social
reform throughout the world*

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
15, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

Two Shillings Net



Messrs. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

*have pleasure in sending the accompanying
work for review. They would be glad to
receive a copy of the notice on its appearance
(Ruskin House, 40 Museum St., W.C. 1)*

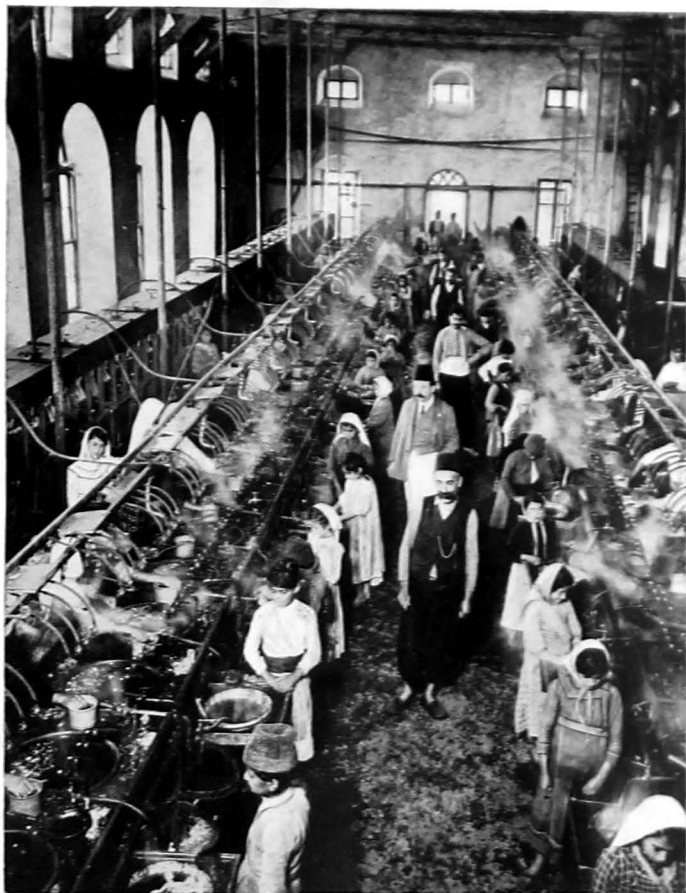
Title World's Parliament

Price 2/- net

Date of Publication. _____

THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIAL PARLIAMENT





CHILDREN AND SILK ON MOUNT LEBANON

(See note on p. 45)

Copyright by Underwood & Underwood, N.Y.

The World's Industrial Parliament

BEING A SHORT, POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
SET UP BY THE COVENANT OF
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY

E. M. OLIVER

OXFORD UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURER

WITH A FOREWORD BY
VISCOUNT BURNHAM

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

First published in 1925

(All rights reserved)

Printed in Great Britain

FOREWORD

IN the Treaty of Peace, which formally concluded the greatest war in history, the hopes and aspirations of mankind for a better ordering of things throughout the world were embodied in the Clauses and Covenants constituting the machinery of the League of Nations. They were designed to assuage and to reconcile national animosities and class antagonisms, and to deal with all industrial questions that affect the social welfare of the nations. The International Labour Organization, was set up as an essential and necessary part of the League, not unequal in its real importance to the political side. Its functions were divided between an office in continuous working as a clearing house of industrial information and a radiating centre of industrial inquiry and research, on the one hand, and an annual Conference on the other. In both aspects it has proved itself of sterling value in the relations of capital and labour throughout the industrial states of the world, and Great Britain has taken a leading hand in shaping its course and in increasing its usefulness. As she was the first of the Great States to become industrialized, so she is the most concerned in the humane development of industrial life, both in law and practice.

6 THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIAL PARLIAMENT

"The strength of England," as Savage-Landor truly said a century ago, "lies not in armaments and invasion; it lies in the omnipotence of her industry, and in the vivifying energies of her high civilization." Her industries may no longer be omnipotent, but the energies of her civilization still penetrate the whole range of industry, and her example counts for more than any other in the enactment and administration of labour laws all over the world. With the consciousness of our responsibility in these matters that so closely affect the daily round of the world's work, Mrs. Oliver has set herself to explain this great experiment in international relations. She tells her story simply and well, and having regard to the complexities and contrasts in the laws and customs of labour administration this is no easy thing to do. The inspiration of it all is her well-informed and sympathetic imagination which sees men, women and children at work throughout the world in conditions often below the requirements of modern civilization, kept lower than they ought to be in each country through a fear of international competition. The way to remove the grounds of that fear is to get industrial conditions levelled up all over the world by international agreements to which governments, workers and employers are equally committed, and which they have drafted in common council. How that is done, in ways which do not infringe that national sovereignty of which modern states are still so jealous, is here told with a pleasing lack of technical jargon.

Presiding over two successive annual sessions of the International Labour Conference, I became convinced

FOREWORD

7

that this new contribution to international government is rapidly becoming what is certainly the most powerful lever yet designed for raising the level of industrial civilization. Its human appeal and its scientific soundness are both reflected in Mrs. Oliver's book. I commend *The World's Industrial Parliament* warmly, not only to employers of labour and to the organized workers themselves, but also to the men and women of the general public who are served in their thousand daily needs by industries that are spread the world over, and who sometimes wonder how best to ensure social betterment and equal justice on the same terms, and with similar opportunities for all who carry on the world's work.

BURNHAM.

January 15, 1925

AUTHOR'S NOTE

MY chief sources of material in compiling this book have been, of course, the huge stock of pamphlets, special reports and Conference reports issued by the I.L.O. It would be tedious, and is unnecessary, to specify these in detail. Indeed, my chief excuse for writing this little book is the entire absence (so far as I have been able to discover) of any short, convenient handbook on the absorbingly interesting work of the International Labour Office. I have also consulted the *History of the Paris Conference*, Sir F. Treves's *Lake of Geneva*, M. Ruffin's *Carnet d'un Profane*, Mr. G. N. Barnes's *Address to the Manchester Engineers' Council in November 1923*, and Rabindranath Tagor's *Nationalism*.

My best thanks are also due to Mrs. Napier Malcolm for help with the chapter on Persia ; to Mr. Harding, of the Manchester League of Nations Union, and to Mr. Burge, of the International Labour Office in London, for reports published by the I.L.O., etc. ; to Captain Lothian Small, Labour Secretary to the League of Nations Union, for much valuable help ; and lastly, to the Editor of the *Manchester*

10 THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIAL PARLIAMENT

Guardian, for allowing me to quote the following most apt passage from a recent leading article :

We all know that the chief difficulty in improving labour conditions in one country has always been the fear that other countries would become more dangerous competitors. A hundred years ago British employers resisted the effort to shorten the terrible hours worked in our factories on the ground that foreign competition made it too risky an experiment. This was the chief obstacle in the path of men like Shaftesbury and Fielden. To-day, when British industry occupies a less advantageous position, that argument will be used with greater force, and reformers recognize that if the one advantage that the workers have preserved of the improvements that followed the war is to be kept, the battle must not be fought in one country only. The battle is being fought with varying success. It happens that the first Labour Government finds to its hand a weapon that did not exist when Parliament passed the Ten Hours Bill. The International Labour Office, like the League of Nations, of which it is an organ, will be weak or strong according to the wishes and resolution of the Governments that take part in its work. With this weapon a strong and determined Labour Government can defeat the most dangerous of all the attacks on the 8-hour day—the attack on the 8-hour day in Germany. In this case the German capitalist can appeal to the French politician who fears that reparations will suffer if the 8-hour day is kept. The British Labour Government must take the firmest stand on this question, or break faith with the workers here. If the leading industrial nation on the Continent is allowed to relapse, for any reason or on any plea, the cause of labour will be vitally injured throughout Europe. We hope that the Government will choose the most powerful spokesman it can find for Geneva, and that it will give a lead to labour all over the world by fighting this battle as if the issue was in form, as it is in fact, a British issue.

ALTRINCHAM,
May, 1924.

E. M. O.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	5
AUTHOR'S NOTE	9
CHAPTER	
I. WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION?	13
II. HOW DID IT START? WHERE IS ITS HOME?	17
III. WHOSE IDEA WAS IT?	20
IV. HOW IT WORKS	24
V. A TYPICAL CONFERENCE. (GENEVA 1921)	31
VI. ONE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE I.L.O.	40
VII. OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION.	46
VIII. THE ENEMIES OF THE PARLIAMENT	54
IX. THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE	58
APPENDIX	61

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, GENEVA, JUNE-JULY 1924

TWO-READING PROCEDURE.

After a Draft Convention or Recommendation has received a two-thirds majority, the Conference shall decide whether a final vote on it shall be taken at once, or deferred till the next annual Session. In the latter case, the Governments are at once to be informed of the decisions, so that they may have the chance of *suggesting amendments* to the next Conference.

(This procedure is provisional, till 1925.)

RECOMMENDATION FINALLY ADOPTED.

Utilisation of Worker's Spare Time.—Far from the tyrannical interference with individual liberty predicted by some critics, this Recommendation merely *asks* the Governments to *encourage* the provision of such things as public baths, allotments, parks and open spaces for games and sports, the extension of all kinds of education for young people and adults. They are also to try and see that the workers are not forced by economic pressure to work so much overtime as to nullify the legal limitations of hours in the interests of their own health. It is suggested that the hours of spare time might be made as continuous as possible; and that a considerable reduction in the time now wasted in travelling

62 THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIAL PARLIAMENT

to and from work might be effected. All this to be brought about by consultation and agreement between the parties concerned. *A special clause deprecates any encroachment on individual liberty by schemes for the wise use of spare time.*

DRAFT CONVENTION AND RECOMMENDATION APPROVED, BUT DEFERRED TILL 1925.

Alien Workers and Accident Compensation.—This simply lays down the principle that aliens should be entitled to the same benefits as nationals in case of accident; and asks the Governments to make the necessary arrangements for carrying this into effect.

DRAFT CONVENTION APPROVED, BUT DEFERRED TILL 1925.

Weekly Cessation of Work in Glass Works Employing Tank Furnaces.—A weekly cessation of twenty-four hours is provided for, if possible on Sunday or other customary holiday. A list of the *necessary* exceptions in each country is to be drawn up by the Government, after consultation with organizations of employers and employed.

DRAFT CONVENTION APPROVED, BUT DEFERRED TILL 1925.

Night Work in Bakeries is prohibited between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. (or between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.). Permanent necessary exceptions are allowed, but not for young persons under eighteen.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE.

On World Unemployment.—On this difficult and highly technical subject, the Conference warmly commended the work already done by the I.L. Office, and asked them to continue their investigations. An International Conference of Labour statisticians is to be arranged in the near future, to consult on the best measures for bringing about a steady, coincident increase in production and consumption throughout the world, so as to reduce unemployment, stabilize prices, and restore international credit. To help this forward, each

Government is asked to prepare a careful report on unemployment in its own country, its volume, its nature, remedies tried and suggested.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE.

On the Prevention of Anthrax.—To inscribe on the agenda of a future Conference a Draft Convention for the compulsory disinfection of horsehair, etc., prior to manipulation.



GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
LONDON: 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1
CAPE TOWN: 73 ST. GEORGE'S STREET
SYDNEY, N.S.W.: 46 CARRINGTON STREET
WELLINGTON, N.Z.: 4 WILLIS STREET