



ISSUED BY THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

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ALGERIA  
ARGENTINA  
BELGIUM  
CANADA  
CHINA  
DENMARK  
DUTCH GUIANA  
ESTONIA  
FINLAND  
FRANCE  
GREAT BRITAIN  
HOLLAND  
HUNGARY  
ICELAND  
INDIA  
INDO-CHINA  
IRELAND  
LUXEMBURG  
MADAGASCAR  
MOROCCO  
NEW ZEALAND  
NORWAY  
PALESTINE  
RHODESIA  
RUMANIA  
SWEDEN  
SWITZERLAND  
TRINIDAD  
TUNISIA  
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*Relations with unions in :*

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CHILE  
CUBA  
DUTCH EAST INDIES  
ECUADOR  
EGYPT  
MEXICO  
UNION of SOUTH AFRICA  
UNITED STATES

*Other relations in :*

AUSTRIA  
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BULGARIA  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
GERMANY  
GREECE  
ITALY  
JAPAN  
LATVIA  
POLAND  
PORTUGAL  
SPAIN  
and other countries

**TO TRANSPORT WORKERS IN ALL COUNTRIES**

**T**O-DAY the Hitler troops and warplanes have spread the war to Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg, sowing death, destruction and destitution over these territories, sparing nothing and nobody, neither hospitals, nor women, nor children.

Thus, one month later, are confirmed the words of the manifesto issued by the I.T.F. on the occasion of the invasion of Denmark and Norway: "The irrefutable logic behind the prosecution of this war is clear to all eyes. Hitler is continuing his policy of crushing and subjugating the small neutral countries of Europe one by one."

The Management Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation salutes the members of the I.T.F. and the workers in general of these three countries, it salutes these small peoples and their soldiers in their resistance to the hordes that attack them to plant the sanguinary standard of tyranny upon their free and democratic countries.

Is there in Germany a single worker whose conscience is not deeply shocked by the growing list of crimes of the ruler of the Third Reich, whose conscience is not heavy at the thought of the retribution for which all the hideous crimes committed in the name of the German people will call?

Workers of Germany!

If you wish to avoid that, at the end of a war which Hitler cannot win, the civilized world in an outburst of indignation and disgust inflict an extremely harsh fate upon your country, upon its present and future generations, then it is time to stay the arm of Hitler, to break his war machine, and to revolt against your oppressors. Hitler is leading you towards an abyss. Do not follow him. With even greater emphasis than a month ago we say to you: The time has come for a total sabotage of the Hitler regime!

You, comrades in the countries oppressed by Hitler, you have a duty to fulfil towards yourselves and towards international working class solidarity: Stop all transports to Germany. If necessary, stop them by sabotage, and organize such sabotage.

The same duty falls upon the workers of the few countries in Europe that are still spared the scourge of Hitlerism.

Let the comrades of overseas unions, affiliated and unaffiliated, consider what they can do to support us. Let them realize that the enemy which civilized Europe has to fight and overcome is terrible. A joining of all moral and material forces will hasten an ending of the European tragedy and the defeat of the most dangerous enemy of the workers of all countries.

London, 10 May, 1940. *The Management Committee of the International Transport Workers Federation.*

## French Transport Workers' Solidarity with the Men at the Front

Thanks to the generosity of their comrades who still remain at work, mobilized employees of a number of French public services, such as the Paris buses and underground railways, continue to receive their former wages, less the amount of their pay as soldiers or officers.

Normal working hours in the public services are 45 a week (they were originally 40, but were raised to 45, without increase of pay, by a decree of 24 June, 1939), but under war-time emergency legislation it has been laid down that in the passenger transport services 60 hours a week may be required. Where, however, arrangements have been made to continue payment of the wages of men mobilized, all pay for work in excess of 45 hours, and up to 60, goes to a special fund for this purpose.

There has been no opposition to this arrangement on the part of the men remaining at work, as they realize that it is an act of solidarity which nobody should try to evade. The French National Transport Workers' Federation has expressed its regret that these arrangements have not been extended to all public transport services, and this has led the Minister of Public Works to send to the Prefects of the "departements," on 20 February, a circular about the application of the 60-hour week in tramway, bus and local railway undertakings. In this circular he says:

"It has been considered desirable to facilitate the financing of measures agreed to on behalf of mobilized employees, and to establish between them and those employees who still remain in the service of the undertakings a bond of solidarity which is eminently desirable in present circumstances. For this purpose special régimes can be instituted by decrees of the Minister of Public Works and Transport. I am prepared to authorize such special régimes on the following bases:

That mobilized employees shall receive the following allowances:

Single employees, 20% of peace-time salary;  
 Married employees, 40% of peace-time salary plus 10% of such salary for each child; and that they shall receive, further, the same family allowances as the employees who have remained at work;

That it shall be laid down that no salary shall be paid for effective weekly hours in excess of 45, and up to 50 hours, worked by employees who have remained in the service, but that hours in excess of 50 a week shall be paid for.

Will you please draw the attention of entrepreneurs or concession-granting authorities to the desirability of the local railway lines in your Department adopting arrangements similar to those described above, to which I have no doubt the labour organizations will, for their part, give

their fullest support, in the spirit of solidarity to which I have already alluded.

The amounts saved as a result of the non-payment for hours worked in excess of 45 a week, up to a maximum of 60 or 50 or any other number of hours comprised between 45 and 60, shall be placed at the disposal of the concession-granting authority, to allow of the financing of the measures agreed to in favour of the mobilized employees."

In bringing this circular to the knowledge of the unions affiliated to our National Transport Workers' Federation, we wrote:

"These are, indeed, hard times for the workers who are struggling against the difficulties of life, and the Federation, like the General Confederation of Labour, is leaving nothing undone to lighten them. By the difficulties which have to be faced by those of our people who have had to give up all that is dearest to them, who are undergoing very great physical and mental suffering, and who are risking their lives every day to defend our liberties and gain the victory that will give us lasting peace and social justice, are entitled to our tenderest care. We feel sure, therefore, that every trade union organization will endeavour to get the company whose men they represent, and the concession-granting authority, to follow the happy suggestion of the Minister of Public Works."

The workers of many of the undertakings, and notably of the trams and buses of Marseilles and Poitiers, and the Lyons Eastern Railway, have responded favourably to this appeal.

EUGÈNE JACCOUD,

*General Secretary of the French National Transport Workers' Federation.*

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## PRAISE FOR CANADIAN RAILWAYMEN

A spokesman for the Department of National Defence of Canada praised the efficiency of the railways in a radio broadcast.

"Since the outbreak of the war," he said, "millions of dollars worth of war supplies, materials and munitions have been brought from all parts of Canada to the Atlantic seaboard. There has been no undue confusion in the ports, and the arrival of shipments of materials was timed to co-ordinate with the arrival and departure of ships for Britain and France.

"This meant the creation of a transportation machine which moved as smoothly as a symphony.

"Freight cars must be at the right place at the right time, and trains must move in such a manner as to prevent congestion and confusion at the Atlantic ports.

"This task is being performed by our railway men who are surely doing their bit on the home front."

## Bro. Ernest Bevin enters the British Government

The European war has taken a grave turn. The two principal nations at war with Hitler Germany have called new men to the government of affairs. Among these new men is a great labour leader who has never shown the slightest political ambition: Ernest Bevin.

Ernest Bevin is the general secretary of the biggest trade union in the world, the Transport and General Workers' Union of Great Britain. Great personal qualities gave Ernest Bevin a world reputation long before his association with the Management Committee of the I.T.F.

His new duties as Minister of Labour and National Service compel him to give up for the time being his national and international trade union work, and Brother Arthur Deakin, who has been appointed Acting General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, will also take over his duties as member of the Management Committee of the I.T.F. The following letter has been received from Brother Bevin announcing this decision:

May 14th, 1940.

**Mr. J. H. Oldenbroek,**  
**International Transport Workers' Federation,**  
**Kempston, Bedfordshire.**

Dear Oldenbroek,

*I sympathize with you very much and also with your colleagues from Holland and Belgium. I know what it means to you to know that your homes are being ravaged by the aggressor.*

*I have, as you know, taken office as Minister of Labour and National Service in the new coalition Government and that makes it impossible for me to attend the meetings of the I.T.F. During the period, therefore, that I occupy this office, Brother Arthur Deakin will act as my substitute.*

*One of the things that influenced me in coming to the decision to go into Government was the fate of my international colleagues in Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria. They may all rest assured that every ounce of energy I have will be used to restore a condition which will allow the International to be re-established firmer than ever, with a greater purpose and a greater opportunity.*

*. . . In addition to entering the Government to assist in providing the man power and equipment to resist this brutal aggressor, I am ever mindful of our comrades in the United States, South America, and other parts of the world that have not been attacked. If they are not actually in the fight, the blood that is now being shed on the battlefields of Europe is being shed for them as much as for us. If you are communicating with them, ask them, if by any chance they can in any way render assistance to the Allied cause, to do it in the name of liberty, humanity and justice for all peoples.*

*Yours very sincerely, (Signed) Ernest Bevin.*

## Conscription of Labour in Switzerland

Compulsory employment for all Swiss subjects, regardless of sex or occupation, is provided for under an Order issued on 17 May last. By this measure the Government aims to ensure the supply of labour necessary to the functioning of economic life and essential public services during the period when the greater part of the active male population and a part of the female population are required for the defence of the frontiers.

The Order of course hardly affects persons normally employed in essential public services, such as public administration, police, munition works, transport and communications, etc. It also does not apply to persons of both sexes under the age of 16, nor to men aged over 65, women aged over 60, or women having children under 18 or invalids in their charge. Apart from the foregoing, the following groups are excepted:

- (a) Persons engaged in scientific or artistic work of great national interest.
- (b) Ecclesiasts belonging to one of the recognized religions and exercising a ministry.
- (c) Students and pupils who may be expected to complete their studies or apprenticeship in a normal manner.

Authorities will have powers to commandeer labour when the supply is insufficient for the performance of work recognized to be in the national interest. The first call will be upon persons unemployed or available owing to the completion or suspension of the work in which they were engaged, secondly retired persons and persons without an occupation. They have the right to transfer labour from one undertaking to another, which implies the right by the withdrawal of labour to close undertakings whose functioning is not considered to be in the national interest.

Account will be taken of the physical and professional qualities of conscripted workers as well as of their family conditions.

Persons already engaged in work necessary to the life of the nation are obliged to continue such work.

Compulsory employment is equated with normal employment as far as general working conditions, protective labour legislation, workmen's compensation and social insurances are concerned. Only the commandeering authority is able to end such employment.

Individual differences are to be settled by competent judges. Collective differences are to be dealt with by arbitration machinery provided by law.

Refusal to perform the work to which a person is assigned will be punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year or, in less serious cases, a fine not exceeding 500 francs.

## SOME WORKERS' OPINIONS ON THE WAR

### **The importance of democracy as a world order**

"There has been fear expressed lest we be drawn into the present war . . . because of the alignment of the anti-democratic states against the two most important European democracies and because of the danger presented to such democracies as Finland and Norway. Regardless of our fears, however, there are certain conclusions which must be drawn from post-war expressions with respect to democracy. One is that the position of democratic states is less tenable when large areas of the world reject as a working principle the democratic hypothesis of the supremacy of law in their internal governmental arrangements and then inevitably project that rejection into the field of international relations."—*Harold M. Vinacke*, in the "Railway Clerk," Cincinnati (U.S.A.), May, 1940.

### **How to re-establish democracy throughout Europe**

"For if any one thing is made clear by the terrible events in Europe, it is that suppression of the industrial rights of the average working citizen is a first step toward the establishment of totalitarian government. When Hitler came into power, he liquidated the labor unions with the same dispatch that Stalin liquidated the middle-class businessmen. In the Fascist and Communist countries of Europe there is no freedom for labor. Every student of affairs knows that when labor regains its birthright in those unhappy countries that moment will mark the beginning of the downfall of dictatorship and the re-establishment of democracy."—*Senator Robert F. Wagner*, Washington, as reported by the "Railway Clerk," May, 1940.

### **How can America best serve Humanity?**

"We are in no way responsible for the mess in which the nations of Europe find themselves; it is not our fight, and while we may detest Stalin, Hitler *et al.*, and all that they stand for, we can best serve humanity by remaining neutral."—*Editorial*, "Machinists' Monthly Journal," Washington, May, 1940.

### **Can America not give a little gold and steel?**

"It is fighting, this time. Blood is flowing. Tens of thousands of men, women and children flee their bombarded towns and devastated villages.

It is barbarism let loose. The term is hardly an exaggeration; can any other better describe the acts of Hitler's followers? Do they not reach the very pinnacle of crime against civilization and humanity?

Knowing how Hitler makes war, can anybody imagine that he would behave otherwise if the time came to impose his peace upon us?

The responsibilities and mistakes of yesterday no longer claim our attention. Discussions about the past are of no interest. The only things that count are the responsibilities and mistakes of to-day.

We hear, from the Americas, words of encouragement. We welcome them, certainly, but is it not our duty to say that we expect something more? If they are convinced over there, as they appear to be, that Hitler is endangering civilization—and try as they may, they can hardly think otherwise—then it is time for deeds.

The deeds that are wanted are a reconsideration of the attitude of neutrality, the repeal of the "cash and carry" clause, a grant of credit and deliveries of material.

These are our immediate needs. Over here we are giving our blood for the future of humanity. Can they not, over there, give a little gold and steel?—*René Belin*, Secretary French General Confederation of Labour, in "Syndicats," 17 May, 1940.

### **If attacked, Switzerland will fight under all circumstances and by all means**

After the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg the Swiss railwaymen fear the worst for their country.

The whole of the Swiss trade-union press makes it unmistakably clear what will be the country's attitude in the case of aggression. The will of all the workers of Switzerland has been correctly formulated at the congress of the Swiss railwaymen in the following terms:

"The situation is desperately serious. Of fifteen small states in Central and Northern Europe ten have lost their independence or have had territory lopped off. Some fought or are fighting heroically, others resigned themselves to their fate. Brutal aggression has become the normal method, and took some peoples by surprise before they could defend themselves. But a people which does not defend itself has as good as ceased to be a nation. The Swiss people is a nation and wants to remain one. It is a nation which speaks several languages and belongs to several cultures and faiths. The Swiss people is a nation with a great, common ideal—Freedom.

"It is a nation that will defend this idea, its independence and freedom, in all circumstances and by all means!"

*Robert Bratschi, General Secretary  
Swiss Railwaymen's Federation.*

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*Have you opportunities of making contacts with seamen of other countries? If so, hand them this paper.*

## THE WAR AGAINST FINLAND

The war against Finland is condemned by working-class opinion in all free countries. Even in countries with a foreboding that their freedom was to be short lived the workers used that freedom to raise their voices against the crime perpetrated by the unworthy successor of Lenin.

### Homage to the Finns

The journal of the Swiss Transport Workers' Union expresses its sympathy for Finland:

"A small country in the north, Finland, a cultured free people, has been treacherously attacked. Fighting alone she was overcome after over a hundred days of heroic struggle. That hits us hard, and we deeply deplore the sad fate of this fellow people. And yet this very struggle between the little David and the towering Goliath has greatly strengthened our self-confidence. We now know that a well-armed small nation is not helpless if the whole of the resources of an inwardly united people are thrown into the struggle. The unprecedented fight of the Finns will always occupy a place of honour in the great struggle for justice. We salute Finland and do homage to such greatness."

"Solidaritat," 21 March, 1940.

### Communist Puppets

The role of the adherents of the Third International during the Finnish war was anything but edifying. In Denmark the contortions performed by the Communist Party and Press, which in their zeal were not content with serving their Russian master but were also solicitous about the interests of Hitler, were exposed in the following terms in the journals of the Danish Railwaymen's and Transport Workers' Unions:

"The Red Army is entering Finland not to conquer but to free her!" That was the cry of Danish Communists, whose joy knew no bounds when on 3 December they were able to announce the conclusion of a military pact between the 'Democratic Popular Government of Finland' and the Soviet Union.

"The gentlemen at Moscow and their lackeys at Copenhagen apparently thought that a revolution would at once break out in Finland, that large sections of the people would walk into the trap labelled 'Democratic Popular Government.' But these hopes were disappointed. There was no revolt in Finland, but desperate resistance to the invaders instead. The 'Popular Government' set up by the Russians never made a triumphant entry into Helsingfors and never implemented the treaty it concluded with Soviet Russia providing for the addition to Finland of '70,000 square kilometres of Soviet Karelia.' The puppet Government won the sympathy of none, in spite of all the long resolutions according to which Finnish (!) workers welcomed with great joy the constitution by the pioneers of workers' progress of a real popular government headed by Kuusinen."

"None of the expected effects manifested themselves. Instead, the Soviet Union began to negotiate with the legal Finnish Government, over the head of Mr. Kuusinen, whose government faded away, regretted by none, not even the

Danish Communist journal 'Arbejderbladet,' which only a few days earlier had sung the praises of Mr. Kuusinen as the man who was to set the Finnish people free. One touch of the string sufficed for the puppets to turn their backs on him whom they had cheered so enthusiastically.

"The whole framework of lies behind the Communist campaign against Finland was now revealed in all its hideousness.

"Not one of the phrases used by the Communists to justify the Russian attack on Finland had any relation to reality. The only plausible excuse offered for the Russian action was the wish of the Soviet Union to secure certain strategical advantages. This excuse is accepted by the Communists who, in addition, have the nerve to say that it is to the advantage of Denmark.

"After playing a sinister farce the Communists reach the limit of 'realism' in insisting upon the necessity for Denmark to 're-orientate her policy and economy.' It is certainly not at the orders of these worthies that she will do so."

"Arbejdsmaendens Fagblad" and "Jernbane Tidende," 1 April, 1940.

## THE EXTENSION OF THE WAR TO SCANDINAVIA

The European trade union press of April and May was filled with condemnations of the Nazi aggression on Scandinavia. The following are quotations from the transport workers' journals of a few small neutral countries:

### Sympathy and Horror

"We extend to the latest victims of power politics, the workers' and peasants' state Denmark, whose social legislation is an example to us, and to the free seafaring people of Norway, our hearty sympathy, and we hope that their freedom and independence will soon be fully restored."

"Stimme der Arbeit," journal of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, May, 1940.

"The Swiss people take a keen interest in all the events of the present. The Swiss people share the sufferings of the maltreated peoples of the Eastern and Northern countries. They see with horror how villainy and treachery have disrupted and undermined the states of the North."

"Der Oeffentliche Dienst," journal of the Swiss Public Employees' Union, 10 May, 1940.

### Inglorious End of Illusions

"The tragedy of the events enacted in these days and which seal the fate of entire countries is shaking us to our very depths.

"They who still cherished illusions as to what meaning should be given to neutrality, rights and obligations in the relations between nations in order that the home country be spared the scourge of war, must have been rudely awakened by the fact that other considerations decide the issue war or peace.

"It is true that the stage has not yet been reached, as in the last war, when it is proclaimed that necessity knows no law, but in fact that is the position. The weak unable to help themselves are one by one falling under the wheels, however much their whole nature revolts against a violation of their most sacred rights. Only the strong have rights. That is war, with all its horrors, which once again warns us with unmistakable clarity that all fine illusions are prone to suffer an early and inglorious end."

"*Le Signal*," *journal Luxemburg Railwaymen's Union*, 13 April, 1940.

### **Sweden refuses "protection"**

"Germany has sent to the Swedish Government a note informing us what she expects of what is called our 'neutrality.' The Swedish Government have answered that they reserve the right to take all steps necessary for the defence of Sweden. We do not wish to be defended after the manner of Denmark. The fact that the war problem presents itself on our western frontier does not lessen our attachment to freedom and our responsibilities for democracy and the future."

"*Signalen*," *journal of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union*, 11 April, 1940.

### **The crime of the century**

From the numerous condemnations which appeared in the trade union press of big countries, we quote the following from an American trade union journal:

"The crime of the century was perpetrated the past month when the Nazi blitzkrieg was unleashed in all its fury and added neutral Denmark and Norway to a long list of small nations which have been devastated by a powerful aggressor without conscience and without mercy. . . . The brutal Nazi invasion is a mortal blow to the highest type of government and general well-being that our present civilization has developed. The sympathies of the world go out to these peaceful peoples in one of the world's greatest tragedies."

"*Railway Clerk*," *Cincinnati*, May, 1940.

## **WAR IN HOLLAND, BELGIUM AND LUXEMBURG**

### **The choice: fight or disappear**

" . . . the war has not really broken out yet. Not that we should desire any such thing, but it would almost seem as if to pass away the time a quarrel is picked with the small neutral states. These have been the sufferers for years: Abyssinia, Albania, Spain, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, and now Denmark and Norway. It has come to be quite a formidable list of small countries who are more or less the victims of the actions of the big dictator powers.

"And what will happen to Hungary and the small Balkan states who must also feel themselves continually threatened? And finally with Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland?"

"Meanwhile there are grounds to hope that the extension of the front to the Polar Circle will require her to devote all her attention to the consolidation of that front.

"If things turn out otherwise it is difficult to suppose that Holland would follow the example of Denmark and submit to injustice without a struggle. In a country so densely populated as ours that would mean a slaughter much worse than witnessed in Finland.

"But we should have no choice. The choice would be between the defence or disappearance of Holland, and Holland's choice would be to defend herself."

"*Weekblad*," *Dutch Railwaymen's and Tramwaymen's Union*, 13 April, 1940.

### **There must be no weakness**

On the morrow of the aggression against the Low Countries the following appeal was addressed to the workers of France:

"In the face of new crimes committed against Justice and Humanity by Hitler Germany, in face of the unprovoked invasion of Holland, Belgium, of which the capital has been bombed, and Luxemburg, of the bombardment of French towns, in face of these crimes which prove an intention to wage the war with utter ruthlessness;

"The Executive of the General Confederation of Labour has a right to say to all workers that the defence of the country must be their constant concern.

"The whole of the forces of the workers must be applied to producing the means of defence which are indispensable to the country and to contributing the utmost to the defeat of the aggressor.

"There can be no other watchword.

"Workers must ignore orders coming from organizations other than their own. They must be on their guard against the propaganda of treachery and desertion.

"The discipline and the spirit of the workers must prove themselves equal to these tragic circumstances. The future of the country, the fate of the working masses, their liberties, their rights, their hopes, are at stake. There must be no weakness."

*The Executive of the French General Confederation of Labour.*

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"There confronts the nations to-day a clear-cut issue: Is the future of the world to be determined by universal reliance upon armed force, and frequent resort to aggression, with resultant autarchy, impoverishment, loss of individual independence and international anarchy? Or will practices of peace, morality, justice, and order under law, resting upon a sound foundation of economic well-being, security and progress, guide and govern in international relations?"

*Cordell Hull*, United States Secretary of State, in a broadcast on 16 August, 1938.

## TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF STRUGGLE

It was at the beginning of the year 1919, a year that will long be remembered in the history of the Argentine labour movement on account of the bloodshed witnessed in the City of Buenos Aires during what is known as the "Tragic Week," when, following a trade union dispute, a framed-up "extremist plot" was used as a pretext for a wave of brutal persecution directed against the working class. The tramwaymen had just lost a general strike in support of claims they had put forward, and many of them had been thrown on the streets. Notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances, a number of comrades who had been dismissed, and others who were still at work, got together and founded the *Unión Tranviarios* (Tramwaymen's Union).

There followed what we might call the period of experiment, or better still, improvisation, in the history of the Union. And how long and hazardous it was; how pregnant with bitter lessons, the application of whose teaching was often long delayed.

A very successful strike on the 1st of May of the same year awakened the enthusiasm of the tramwaymen, and a few weeks later they presented to the companies a list of demands which the latter refused to accept, with the result that a further strike was declared on the 28th of the month. It was kept up vigorously for twelve days, but then began to weaken, and finally ended in failure. It may be safely said that the disastrous results of this strike delayed for many years the building up of a strong and stable organization. A large number of comrades lost their jobs, the Union collapsed, while the companies set up a new union on lines more to their liking, and persecuted with still greater fury those who continued to carry on trade union propaganda; in which they had the assistance not only of the servile, but often also of the police.

In spite of this serious misfortune, there was no lack of comrades ready to take up again the job of reorganizing the tramwaymen, and the results were comparatively favourable; but two years later, in 1921, a general meeting resolved to declare a general strike on the 1st of May. It only lasted a few hours, and many men lost their jobs. A similar fate met another strike declared in 1923, also on Labour Day.

In spite of the enormous difficulties placed in the way by the employers, and the confusion sown by those who aimed to split the movement, the work of reorganization was continued, not without success, during the following years.

The year 1927 came along in due course, and in August a general meeting of tramwaymen declared a twenty-four hour strike as a protest against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, the two martyrs of the working class cause in the United States.

This strike was also a disaster, and the companies took severe reprisals against many comrades.

During the period that followed the tramwaymen were denied all rights, and the companies' officers constantly abused their position without the men being able either to defend themselves or to lodge complaints. Not only were the workers treated despotically, but they were not even allowed to read a labour or trade union paper, while those who engaged in trade union propaganda were dismissed, with the result that it had to be done secretly.

In the year 1928 the assistance of the railwaymen's unions was secured, and in March a general meeting adopted a new set of rules which aimed to make it possible for the organization to develop on more regular and stable lines. This marks the beginning of what we might call the second stage in the history of the Union, a period characterized by a more realistic line of action, when endeavours were made to avoid wasting powder in firing salvos, and to do methodical and constructive organizational work.

The earnestness and moderation of the methods adopted soon reawakened among the tramwaymen confidence in the Union, and little by little it grew in strength accordingly. It was not long before it began to score its first successes. The companies recognized the organization and the grievances committees; proper representatives of the workers concerned were appointed to the Board of the Pension Fund; agreements were negotiated with the companies about the application of the Working Hours Act, absences from work, restriction of services in case of bad weather or other causes, sharing of work among casual men, right of tramwaymen to sit in the cars when travelling, etc.

The Union, while continuing its endeavours to improve conditions, tried also to improve progressively the qualifications of tramwaymen. Branch libraries were established; an excellent paper was published; a fine building was erected, with a large meeting hall and rooms for offices; educational meetings were organized, and members were frequently called together to have explained to them the many problems affecting their conditions.

Financially the Union made very considerable progress during this period. On 31st December, 1929, the balance sheet showed a surplus of 31,253 pesos; nine years later, on 31st December, 1938, this had risen to the useful sum of 536,118 pesos. Income from contributions in the same two years was 48,427 and 123,683 pesos respectively.

At the request of a group of busmen the Tramwaymen's Union has been carrying on since 1935 active propaganda to organize that group of workers. The majority of them have already joined, and the Union is busily engaged in trying to improve their working conditions.

As a result of several years of work and propaganda prior to and since the unification of the passenger transport system of the city of Buenos Aires under a Passenger Transport Corporation, the Union has won many improvements for its members. Two of the most important have been the placing of all the running staff on a monthly basis, and the introductions of regular scales of wages and promotion, which have been in force since April, 1939.

The organization may now be regarded as entering upon a new period in its history. The pioneer work is over, but there is still much work to be done. We must develop, and if this is to be done no single tramwayman or busman should be left outside of the Union. We have not only to consolidate the gains we have already made, but we must extend them. For this continuous and increasing activity is required, and everybody's help is needed. In the face of the enemy we must form a solid block. Union is strength; let us not forget it, but rather work with enthusiasm to increase our strength. Let this be the basis of our inspiration at this new mile-post in the history of of organization.

(Adapted from *El Tranviario*, Buenos Aires, January, 1940.)

### ORGANIZATION OF SEAMEN OF GERMAN-OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

Immediately after the extension of the war to Denmark, the I.T.F., the I.M.M.O.A. (International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association), the British National Union of Seamen and the British Officers (Merchant Navy) Federation, set up a Co-ordination Committee with as first task to ensure, in conjunction with the Norwegian officials, the functioning of the Norwegian seafarers' organizations in England, and further to render assistance to the seamen of all countries temporarily occupied by the Nazi army. The measures taken by this Committee have produced the following results:

#### *Norway*

The Norwegian Seamen's Union is functioning in Great Britain with an Executive Committee and headquarters. It continues to represent the Norwegian seamen in dealings with the Norwegian owners and Government. Thanks to the assistance of the Co-ordination Committee, it has received from the British authorities the necessary facilities for its proper functioning.

#### *Denmark*

Danish officers and seamen are technically enemy aliens in the eyes of Allied authorities. Many of them, however, have responded to the appeal of the I.T.F. and the I.M.M.O.A. and have placed their ships at the disposal of the Allied Governments. In one case known to us the crew success-

fully mutinied and took their ship to an Allied port.

Danish seamen are being organized in a Danish section set up for them in the British National Union of Seamen. The secretary of the former Antwerp Branch of the Danish Seamen's Union has been engaged for the section.

#### *Holland*

England has also become the home country of Dutch seamen for the duration of the war. A militant member has been entrusted with the reconstitution of the Seamen's Section of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union and is receiving every possible assistance to that end.

#### *Belgium and Poland*

The Co-ordination Committee is ascertaining the Belgian and Polish seamen at present in Allied or neutral ports with the view of reconstituting the seamen's unions of these two countries. Meanwhile seamen are invited to apply directly to the I.T.F.

#### *Officer ratings*

The interests of the ships' officers of the German-occupied countries are being looked after by the British Secretariat of the I.M.M.O.A., to which those concerned are invited to apply direct.

#### *Addresses*

Norsk Sjoemandsforbund, 79, Lower Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16.

Danish Section of the British National Union of Seamen, 15, Ensign Road, London, E.1.

Seamen's Section of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union, 15, Ensign Road, London, E.1.

International Transport Workers' Federation, Crossland Fosse, Box End, Kempston, Bedford.

International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, 23, Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.3.

### RATIONALIZATION ON AMERICAN RAILROADS

For each employee, the roads in 1938 handled 52 per cent more freight than in 1920, while per dollar of wages the increase has been 49 per cent. That is on the basis of revenue freight. If gross tonnage is considered (which includes haulage of carriers' own supplies), the rise has been more astounding: going up 85 per cent. Operating revenues per employee have shot up similarly during that period.

There has been a huge improvement in the entire field. The amount of work turned out by employees greatly exceeds the past. The industry is more efficient to-day than ever before. It is producing more and more for less and less. The wage expense has become a constantly diminishing factor. The roads are getting more out of their men and their equipment.—*L. E. Keller*, statistician of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, giving evidence before the Railroad Industry Committee on behalf of "the forgotten men on the railroads" who ask for a minimum wage of 40 cents per hour.