

ISSUED BY THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

CROSSLAND FOSSE
BOX END
KEMPSTON
BEDFORD
England

In memoriam—Edo Fimmen

General Secretary of the I.T.F.

Affiliated Unions in :

- ALGERIA
- ARGENTINA
- AUSTRALIA
- BELGIUM
- CANADA
- CHINA
- DENMARK
- DUTCH EAST INDIES
- DUTCH GUIANA
- ESTONIA
- FINLAND
- FRANCE
- GREAT BRITAIN
- HOLLAND
- HUNGARY
- ICELAND
- INDIA
- INDO-CHINA
- IRELAND
- KENYA
- LUXEMBURG
- MADAGASCAR
- MOROCCO
- NEW ZEALAND
- NORWAY
- PALESTINE
- RHODESIA
- RUMANIA
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SWEDEN
- SWITZERLAND
- TRINIDAD
- TUNISIA
- UNITED STATES
- YUGOSLAVIA

Relations with unions in:

- CHILE
- CUBA
- ECUADOR
- EGYPT
- MEXICO

Other relations in :

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



18 JUNE 1881—14 DECEMBER 1942

The I.T.F. mourns Edo Fimmen

Trade unionists all over the world, and members of the transport workers' organisations in particular, will have felt the death of our comrade Edo Fimmen almost as a personal blow. For more than thirty years he was an active and conspicuous figure in the International Trade Union Movement. With commanding abilities not only as a linguist but as an administrator and organiser, and with a genial and friendly personality, he was peculiarly qualified for the positions he held in the course of his active career.

It is perhaps an indication of the spirit that animated him throughout his life that he first identified himself in public activities with religious organisations, the Salvation Army and other religious missions with a social purpose.

His first contacts with the Trade Union Movement came when he associated himself with other pioneers of working - class organizations in Holland to form, at the beginning of the present century, the Dutch General Union of Commercial and Office Employees. He became General Secretary of this Union and within a few years his active service and exceptional abilities led to his election as Secretary of the International Federation of Commercial and Office Employees, one of the international trade or industrial organizations popularly known as international trade secretariats.

This brought him directly into the international trade union movement, in the maintenance of which, during the 1914-18 war, he was to play so active a part. This was greatly facilitated by the fact that during the war he became secretary of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions, which was requested to act, during the first world war, as a branch office of the International Federation of Trade Unions, this branch office soon becoming as important, if not more so, than the Berlin headquarters itself. In addition Fimmen, as secretary of the Dutch Federation, was in close contact with the many other international trade secretariats associated with the I.F.T.U., most of which gradually concentrated in Amsterdam after the war began, many of them transferring from Berlin. His international activities therefore spread far and wide.

When the war ended he played a creative part in re-establishing the International Transport-workers' Federation, being appointed its

provisional secretary at the reconstruction conference held in Amsterdam in the Spring of 1919. A few months later, when the International Federation of Trade Unions also assembled in Amsterdam for its first meeting after the 1914-18 war, Fimmen became, together with Jan Oudegeest, its joint general secretary.

Through these official connections Edo Fimmen did as much as any single man in the International Trade Union Movement to build up its weakened organization and to re-establish the morale of the organized workers of the world. He helped to guide both the I.F.T.U. and the I.T.F. through difficult years of controversy and conflict. His policy did not always command the

general assent of his colleagues, but no one ever questioned the sincerity of his views or his single-minded devotion to the workers' cause. His transparent honesty and integrity of character were combined with a subtle and very keen intellect. He was a man of strong views, but he was well able to defend them by his dialectical skill and by his wide knowledge of industrial

questions and social history. He held his views tenaciously, and was prepared to make personal sacrifices to uphold them, as he did when he resigned his position in the I.F.T.U. because the attitude of the International Federation of Trade Unions did not coincide with his own.

Thereafter for nearly two decades he gave his whole energies to the development of the I.T.F. He made it one of the most influential of international organisations. The value of the machinery he built up has become particularly apparent during the present war. Unhappily ill health overtook him about a year before the imminent outbreak of war made it necessary to transfer the Secretariat to England, and it was greatly aggravated by the shock of the Nazi invasion of the Low Countries. He continued, however, to give attention to his work until, in October, 1941, on the urgent advice of his medical men and the persuasion of his friends, he sought recovery and restoration of his health in Mexico. The hopes we entertained that he would become strong again were disappointed, and on December 14th, a cerebral seizure brought to an end the career of one of the ablest and most influential leaders of the Trade Union Movement that this generation has produced.

JOHN MARCHBANK, Vice-President.

EDO FIMMEN'S SUDDEN DEATH IS A SAD BLOW TO THE TRANSPORT WORKERS AND TO THE VERY GREAT NUMBER OF OTHER WORKERS WHO LEARNED TO ADMIRE HIS ARDENT ENDEAVOURS TO HELP THE OPPRESSED AND THE SUFFERING. HIS WORK WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN: HIS NAME WILL BE PERMANENTLY ENGRAVED UPON THE SCROLL OF HISTORY IN CONNECTION WITH THE AID FOR AUSTRIA AFTER THE LAST WORLD WAR; HIS INITIATIVE IN CALLING THE PEACE CONGRESS AT THE HAGUE; AND HIS FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN HUNGARY AND AGAINST FASCISM AND NAZISM IN ITALY, GERMANY AND SPAIN; AS WELL AS HIS EAGER EFFORTS TO BETTER THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION. HIS MEMORY WILL ALWAYS LIVE AMONG THE WORKING CLASS.

SENATOR CHARLES LINDLEY (Sweden),
President of the I.T.F.

On the passing of "one of God's good men"

Some cables received at I.T.F. headquarters

I AM DEEPLY GRIEVED BY THE DEATH OF MY FRIEND EDO FIMMEN. HE WAS ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING LEADERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. UNTIL THE END HE WAGED A CEASELESS WAR AGAINST THE FOES OF DEMOCRACY WITH FEARLESS COURAGE AND COMPLETE REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE. HIS WORK WILL AGAIN BEAR FRUIT WHEN THE NAZI TERROR IS DESTROYED AND THE I.T.F., OF WHICH HE WAS THE FOUNDER, COMES INTO ITS OWN ONCE MORE.

HAROLD BUTLER,
Former Director of the I.L.O.

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WE DEEPLY REGRET TO LEARN OF THE DEATH OF EDO FIMMEN, WHOM WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER AS A TRUE FRIEND AND SUPPORTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE. PLEASE ACCEPT THE EXPRESSION OF OUR FOUND SYMPATHY.

EDWARD PHELAN,
Acting Director of the I.L.O.

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BY EDO FIMMEN'S DEATH THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HAS LOST ONE OF ITS TRUE INTERNATIONAL LEADERS, A MAN WHO SERVED THE CAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY WITH THE MOST COMPLETE SELF-ABNEGATION. AS ONE OF HIS OLDEST FRIENDS, HAVING WORKED WITH HIM FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS I BELIEVE I AM EXPRESSING THE SENTIMENTS OF THOUSANDS OF COMRADES IN MANY COUNTRIES, WHO CANNOT MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD AT PRESENT, IN PAYING A HEART-FELT TRIBUTE TO THIS GREAT LEADER AND MOST LOVEABLE MAN, WHOSE CONSECRATION TO THE CAUSE OF LABOUR HAS STIMULATED SO MANY OTHERS TO FOLLOW HIS INSPIRING EXAMPLE. HIS NAME WILL LIVE IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT TO WHICH HE WAS SO RELIGIOUSLY DEVOTED.

A. STAAL,
Chief of the Workers' Organizations Service of the I.L.O.

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WE MOURN THE LOSS OF A GREAT POPULAR LEADER AND UNTIRING ORGANIZER WHO FOUGHT THROUGHOUT HIS LIFETIME FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MANKIND. HIS SPIRIT AND DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF THE WORKING MAN, AND HIS UNCEASINGLY RESOURCEFUL BATTLE AGAINST THE ENCROACHING FORCES OF FASCISM AND NAZISM WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. MAY HIS SPIRIT GUIDE THE I.T.F. IN THE FUTURE, TO THE BENEFIT OF THE WORLD TRANSPORT WORKERS' MOVEMENT, FOR WHICH NO DEVOTION, ENERGY OR SACRIFICES HAVE BEEN TOO GREAT FOR HIM.

OMER BECU,
General Secretary (on leave), International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, Honorary Secretary, I.T.F. Branch in U.S.A.

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FIMMEN WAS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THE FIGHTER AND THE BUILDER. AN ANTI-FASCIST FROM THE VERY FIRST MOMENT, HE UNCEASINGLY DREW ATTENTION TO THE DANGERS, IMPLICIT IN FASCISM, FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND FOR THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY. HE WAS AN EAGER PARTISAN OF WORKING CLASS UNITY, AND HIS VIGOROUS MENTALITY AND CLARITY OF THOUGHT WERE ALWAYS AT THE SERVICE OF THE WORKERS. I FIRST MET HIM IN MEXICO IN THE YEAR 1926, AND WE BECAME GREAT FRIENDS AND WORKED TOGETHER IN SEVERAL SUBSEQUENT CONFERENCES. I ALWAYS VALUED HIS COUNSEL VERY HIGHLY.

FRANCISCO PEREZ LEIROS,
Vice-Chairman of the Workers' Confederation of Latin America.

ARGENTINA

WE HAVE LEARNED WITH THE DEEPEST GRIEF OF THE DECEASE OF COMRADE EDO FIMMEN, WHOSE TENACITY AND OUTSTANDING WORK ON BEHALF OF THE HIGHEST AND PERMANENT INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS WERE WATCHED WITH SPECIAL INTEREST BY THE ARGENTINE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, WHICH COUNTED HIM AMONG ITS MOST BELOVED FRIENDS. WHEN THE SAD NEWS CAME THE CONGRESS OF THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR WAS IN SESSION, A FACT WHICH GAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MAKING MANIFEST THE VERY STRONG BONDS OF SYMPATHY WHICH UNITED FIMMEN AND THE LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS OF THIS COUNTRY. A SPONTANEOUS AND SINCERE TRIBUTE WAS PAID TO HIS MEMORY.

AN EXAMPLE, IN LIFE, OF LUMINOUS CONDUCT AND CONSISTENCY IN IDEAS, THE DEATH OF EDO FIMMEN LEAVES A GRIEVOUS GAP IN THE RANKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

JOSE DOMENECH,
General Secretary of the Confederation of Labour of Argentina.

AUSTRALIA

MY COUNCIL DEEPLY REGRETS TO HEAR THE NEWS OF EDO FIMMEN'S DEATH. THE TRANSPORT WORKERS OF THE WHOLE WORLD WILL MOURN HIS LOSS, AND WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM AS ONE WHO SACRIFICED HIS HEALTH IN THEIR SERVICE.

TUDEHOPE,
Maritime Transport Council (Seafarers Unions) of Australia.

AUSTRIA

A COURAGEOUS AND SELF-SACRIFICING LEADER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM US BY DEATH. NEVER SHALL I FORGET WHAT HE DID FOR THE AUSTRIAN RAILWAYMEN WHEN HE CAME PERSONALLY TO VIENNA TO SUPPORT US, ACTING AND ADVISING US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AUSTRO-FASCISM; AND HOW HE HELPED US IN THE HOUR OF DEFEAT, AND LATER IN THE UNDERGROUND BATTLE.

FIMMEN IS NOT DEAD. HIS MEMORY WILL ALWAYS LIVE IN THE HEARTS OF THE AUSTRIAN RAILWAYMEN.

BERTHOLD KOENIG,
Exiled President, Austrian Railwaymen's Union.

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I AM DEEPLY MOVED TO HEAR OF THE DEATH OF EDO FIMMEN. THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION HAS LOST ITS MOST FAR-SEEING REPRESENTATIVE AND ITS MOST VALIANT FIGHTER. THE WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THEIR STAUNCHEST DEFENDER. HIS EARNESTNESS, HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST WAR AND THE IMMENSE AMOUNT OF WORK HE HAS DONE FOR THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT ARE UNFORGETTABLE. A FLAME WHICH REPRESENTED THE BURNING DESIRE OF WORKING CLASS HUMANITY HAS BEEN EXTINGUISHED. I PERSONALLY HAVE LOST A DEVOTED FRIEND.

KARL WEIGL,
Exiled President, Austrian Transport Workers' Union.

CANADA

THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES HAVE LEARNED WITH DEEP REGRET OF THE DEATH OF EDO FIMMEN, WHOSE OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY MADE HIM ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT LABOUR LEADERS. WE HOPE THAT THE MEMORY OF HIS UNSELFISH SERVICE TO HIS FELLOW-MEN WILL LONG REMAIN TO INSPIRE EFFORTS TO BUILD THE WORLD OF PEACE AND FREEDOM FOR WHICH HE STROVE SO VALIANTLY.

A. R. MOSHER,
President, Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees.

CHILE

DEEPLY SHOCKED AT THE SUDDEN DEATH OF EDO FIMMEN, THE LEADER OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS, THE CHILIAN WORKERS, AND ESPECIALLY THE MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION, ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH THE GRIEF OF THE WORKERS OF THE WHOLE WORLD. WE LEADERS OF THE CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS OF CHILE, WHO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF KNOWING AND APPRECIATING THE GREAT LEADER WHO HAS DIED, FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW GREAT IS THE LOSS THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD HAVE SUFFERED. HIS ENERGY AND DISINTERESTED SACRIFICE WON FOR HIM AN OUTSTANDING POSITION IN THE LABOUR WORLD. THE CHILIAN WORKERS WILL THEREFORE INSCRIBE HIS NAME ON THE SCROLL OF THE MEN WHOM IT WISHES TO HONOUR IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL JUSTICE WHICH PROMISES TO FOLLOW THE PRESENT WORLD CONFLICT. THE UNFORGETTABLE FIGURE OF THE LEADER WILL BE A NEW SYMBOL OF THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE WE ARE CARRYING ON FOR THE FREEDOM OF ALL WHO ARE OPPRESSED

Confederation of Workers of Chile.

BERNARDO IBANEZ,

General Secretary.

ARTURO VELAZQUEZ,

Railwaymen's Representative.

CUBA

WE DEEPLY REGRET THE DEATH OF COMRADE FIMMEN, WHO WAS AN INDEFATIGABLE FIGHTER FOR THE INTERNATIONAL UNITY OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS. THE WHOLE OF THE CUBAN WORKING CLASS JOINS US IN OUR SORROW.

**JUAN AREVALO,
LAZARO PENA,
LEON RENTERIA,**

*Executive of the Confederation of Workers of Cuba and
Confederation of Maritime Workers of Cuba.*

EGYPT

THE DEATH OF LEADER EDO FIMMEN IS A GREAT LOSS. THE TRANSPORT WORKERS OF EGYPT OFFER DEEP CONSOLATION WITH VERY SAD HEARTS

MOHAMED IBRAHIM ZEIN EL DIN,

President, Chauffeurs' General Union of Egypt.

GERMANY

I AM DEEPLY AFFECTED BY THE LOSS OF A DEAR FRIEND AND ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING FIGURES OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR. EDO WAS AN INSPIRATION AND AN EXAMPLE OF UNSELFISHNESS, LOVE OF HUMANITY AND COURAGE. MEN LIKE HIM ARE NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO DEFEAT FREEDOM'S ENEMIES AND BUILD A NEW WORLD. ALTHOUGH HE HAS GONE HE WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE US.

(Miss) **TONI SENDER,**

*Official of the former Engineering Trades Union of Germany.
Exiled Socialist Member of the former German Reichstag.*

EVERY ONE WHO KNEW THE GREATNESS OF EDO FIMMEN KNOWS THAT IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FILL HIS PLACE. HE WAS NOT ONLY FIMMEN OF AMSTERDAM, IDENTIFIED WITH THE I.T.F.: HE HAD THE CONFIDENCE OF THE WORKERS IN ALL COUNTRIES IN A MEASURE WHICH NO OTHER SINGLE OFFICIAL IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT HAS EVER ENJOYED.

X. X.

*Organizer of Clandestine Anti-Nazi groups of Seamen in the
German Merchant Fleet.*

HUNGARY

FIMMEN'S WORK IN RESTORING THE HUNGARIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE REVOLUTION IS IMPERISHABLE. HE ORGANIZED A BOYCOTT OF TRANSPORT TO HUNGARY, AS A MEANS OF FIGHTING REACTION: HE FOUGHT WITH THE POWER OF A GIANT TO GIVE LIFE TO THE RAILWAYMEN'S UNION AND TO ENABLE IT TO CONTINUE PUBLISHING ITS JOURNAL. THE CLASS-CONSCIOUS WORKERS OF HUNGARY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM WITH LOVE AND RESPECT.

EUGEN HOROVITZ,

Exiled President of the Transport Workers' Union.

FIMMEN'S DEATH HAS DEEPLY SHAKEN THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS. HE SYMBOLIZED GENUINE SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY, AND WAS EVER THE PROTECTOR OF THE PERSECUTED AND THE OPPRESSED. HE LED THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WHITE TERROR AND POLITICAL PERSECUTION, AND FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE WORKERS OF HUNGARY. WHAT HE DID IN THE YEAR 1920 TO ENCOURAGE SOLIDARITY AND ORGANIZE THE INTERNATIONALS FOR THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WHITE TERROR WILL REMAIN FOR EVER INSCRIBED IN THE ANNALS OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT. IN EDO FIMMEN WE MOURN A MILITANT SOCIALIST WHO WAS THE INCARNATION OF THE NOBLEST SOCIALIST IDEALS. THE VILAGOSSAG GROUP, WHICH HAS STRUGGLED UNFLINCHINGLY FOR TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGAINST THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION, IS PROUD TO HAVE FOUGHT ON FIMMEN'S SIDE. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE DAY IS APPROACHING WHEN HIS IDEAS WILL TRIUMPH. THE ENTIRE HUNGARIAN WORKING CLASS WILL THEN PUBLICLY THANK FIMMEN AND HONOUR HIS MEMORY.

WILHELM BOEHM,

Commissar of Defence in the former Soviet Government of Hungary.

INDIA

I AM EXTREMELY GRIEVED TO LEARN THAT EDO FIMMEN IS NO MORE AMONG THE LIVING. THE LOSS IS IRREPARABLE, IN THE MIDST OF WAR AGAINST FASCISM THE DEATH OF A MAN OF THE CALIBRE OF FIMMEN IS A PARTICULARLY SEVERE BLOW. BUT WE WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND OWE IT TO FIMMEN TO CARRY ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND ALL OTHER ENEMIES OF LABOUR UNTIL VICTORY IS WON AND SOCIAL JUSTICE SECURED. THE INDIAN SEAMEN PLEDGE THEMSELVES TO THAT TASK WITH RENEWED ENERGY AND GREATER DETERMINATION.

AFTAB ALI,

President, All-India Seamen's Federation.

FROM JAIL MY HUSBAND SENDS HIS CONDOLENCES. HE HIGHLY APPRECIATES THE SERVICES FIMMEN HAS RENDERED TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD, AND MOURNS HIS DEATH AS THE LOSS OF A DEEP PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP.

MRS. V. V. GIRI,

*Wife of the President of the Bengal Nagpur Railwaymen's
Union and of the All-India Trade Union Congress.*

WE ARE GREATLY SHOCKED TO HEAR OF THE DEMISE OF EDO FIMMEN, WHO ESTABLISHED THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL LINK BETWEEN THE TRANSPORT WORKERS OF EAST AND WEST. HIS LOSS IS AN IRREPARABLE ONE. HE ALWAYS INSPIRED COLOURED COLONIAL LABOUR WITH GREATEST CONFIDENCE. THE INDIAN RAILWAYMEN GRATEFULLY SALUTE HIS MEMORY, PLEDGING THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT TO WHAT WAS HIS MISSION IN LIFE, THE PROMOTION OF THE CAUSE OF ANTI-FASCIST INTERNATIONAL LABOUR. FIMMEN IS DEAD: LONG LIVE FIMMEN AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION.

GURUSWAMI,

General Secretary, All-India Railwaymen's Federation.

THE TRANSPORT WORKERS AND THE WHOLE LABOUR MOVEMENT OF INDIA DEEPLY MOURN THE DEATH OF EDO FIMMEN, THE BELOVED AND TRUSTED LEADER OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS OF THE WHOLE WORLD. HIS DEVOTED WORK, VIGOROUS CHAMPIONSHIP AND BOLD POLICY GREATLY ADVANCED THE TRANSPORT WORKERS' CAUSE AND STRENGTHENED THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT. THE ASIATIC WORKERS GREATLY APPRECIATED HIS BROAD-MINDED INTERNATIONAL SPIRIT AND WIDE SYMPATHIES, AND REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE THE COURAGEOUS AND GENEROUS SUPPORT HE GAVE THEM IN THEIR FIGHT FOR EQUALITY AND FREEDOM. EDO FIMMEN WAS A BRAVE FIGHTER AGAINST THE FORCES OF REACTION, AND WORKED UNTIRINGLY TO PREVENT THE EXPLOITATION OF THE DOWN-TRODDEN. HIS LOSS IS KEENLY FELT AT THE PRESENT CRITICAL JUNCTURE.

N. M. JOSHI,

General Secretary, All-India Trade Union Congress

MEXICO

THE MEXICAN WORKING CLASS REPRESENTED BY THE CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS OF MEXICO DEEPLY MOURNS THE DEATH OF THE GREAT GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION, WHOM THEY CONSIDER TO HAVE BEEN THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LEADER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT, AS WELL AS A GREAT SOCIALIST AND PALADIN OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND IN DEFENCE OF FREEDOM.

FIDEL VELAZQUEZ,

General Secretary, Confederation of Workers of Mexico.

NEW ZEALAND

WE DEEPLY REGRET THE PASSING OF COMRADE FIMMEN, WHO GAVE SUCH WONDERFUL SERVICE TO THE TRANSPORT WORKERS AND TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT HAS LOST A STERLING FRIEND, AND THOSE WHO KNEW HIM A GRAND COMRADE. NEW ZEALAND LABOUR SENDS CONDOLENCES TO YOUR ORGANIZATION AND TO HIS RELATIVES.

J. ROBERTS,

Former General Secretary, New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation. President New Zealand Labour Party. Water-front Control Commissioner.

NORWAY

THE NORWEGIAN SEAMEN'S UNION DEEPLY DEPLORES THE LOSS OF EDO FIMMEN, WHO DID SO MUCH TO HELP THE INTERNATIONAL SEAMEN'S MOVEMENT IN ITS INFANCY, AND GAVE US SO MUCH SUPPORT IN OUR STRUGGLE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SEAMEN'S CONDITIONS. IN THIS CRITICAL HOUR FOR WORLD FREEDOM AND FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT FIMMEN WILL BE DOUBLY MISSED. THE NORWEGIAN SEAMEN ARE CONVINCED THAT WITHIN THE I.T.F. HIS SPIRIT WILL NEVER DIE, BUT WILL REMAIN STRONG AND UNWAVERING.

INGVALD HAUGEN,

President, Norwegian Seamen's Union.

RHODESIA

I AM GRIEVED TO LEARN OF THE DEATH OF MY OLD COMRADE EDO FIMMEN. HE DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO LABOUR'S CAUSE, AND HIS WORK WAS INSPIRED BY SINCERITY AND HUMANITY. HIS ENEMY WAS OUR COMMON ENEMY, THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL PARASITE: HIS FRIENDS THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD. THE VALUE OF THE WORK HE HAS DONE CAN NEVER BE MEASURED: IT IS STILL UNFULFILLED, BUT HE PAVED THE WAY TO BETTER THINGS. THE WORLD IS THE RICHER FOR HIS ADVENT, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE RHODESIA RAILWAY WORKERS' UNION AND MYSELF MOURN THE PASSING OF A GREAT TRADE UNION LEADER AND ONE OF GOD'S GOOD MEN.

J. W. KELLER,

General Secretary, Rhodesian Railway Workers' Union. Minister without Portfolio.

SWEDEN

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR HAS LOST ONE OF ITS MOST DEVOTED CHAMPIONS AND SPOKESMEN. EDO FIMMEN HAS RENDERED TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION SERVICES WHICH CANNOT BE TOO HIGHLY ESTEEMED, AND THE SWEDISH RAILWAYMEN LOOKED UPON HIM AS ONE OF THEIR FOREMOST REPRESENTATIVES. NOW THAT HE HAS PASSED FROM AMONGST US WE SHALL KEEP HIM IN THANKFUL MEMORY.

STURE CHRISTIANSSON,

General Secretary, Swedish Railwaymen's Union.

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EDO FIMMEN NEVER ALLOWED ANY OBSTACLE TO STAND IN HIS WAY. HIS ENERGY AND UNSELFISHNESS OVERSHADOWED EVERYTHING.

ALBERT FORSLUND,

Former General Secretary, Swedish Railwaymen's Union.

THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION IS EDO FIMMEN'S WORK. I MET HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1924. VITAL AND SPARKLING WITH IDEAS, HE HAD ALREADY SUCCEEDED IN REBUILDING MOST OF WHAT HAD BEEN DESTROYED OF THE I.T.F. IN THE MADNESS OF 1914-1918. EACH TIME I MET HIM SUBSEQUENTLY, IN CONNECTION WITH OUR CONSTANT WORK FOR THE I.T.F., MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF HIM WAS CONFIRMED: THAT THE TRANSPORT WORKERS OF THE WORLD HAD IN HIM THEIR BORN LEADER. I ALSO REMEMBER HIM AS A GOOD AND KIND MAN WITH MANY FRIENDS.

ANDERS BORGSTEDT,

General Secretary of the former Swedish Locomotivemen's Union. Former Vice-President of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union.

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EDO FIMMEN, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTWORKERS' FEDERATION HAS LEFT US. MILLIONS OF MEN BOW THEIR HEADS IN SORROW AND GRATITUDE IN REMEMBERING A MAN WHO DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY IN THE SERVICE OF THE GOOD. SELDOM HAVE WE KNOWN A MAN MORE CONSCIOUS OF HIS DUTY OR MORE FIT FOR HIS TASK. HE WAS AN UNYIELDING INTERNATIONALIST, AND THIS NO DOUBT EXPOSED HIM TO SOME CRITICISM FROM ULTRA-NATIONALIST CIRCLES, BUT HE KNEW HIS COURSE AND FOLLOWED IT, AND HIS MERITS WERE OUTSTANDING. EDO FIMMEN NEVER SPARED HIMSELF IN HIS FIGHT FOR THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT. HE WAS A KINDHEARTED AND FAITHFUL COMRADE. EDO FIMMEN BELONGED TO HUMANITY, AND HE HAD A DEEP FAITH IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT'S FINAL VICTORY. HE WAS A SOCIALIST AND INTERNATIONALIST IN LIFE AS WELL AS IN THEORY. A RARE MAN IN A SELFISH WORLD.

F. W. FRANZEN,

Former Chief Organizer of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union.

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EDO FIMMEN IS DEAD! HE WAS AN ARDENT SOUL. HE BELONGED TO A CIRCLE OF TRADE-UNIONISTS WHOSE BELIEF IN THE POWER FOR GOOD OF TRADE-UNIONISM WAS SO FIRM THAT IT COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS. THIS BELIEF FOUND EXPRESSION IN HIS PASSIONATE APPEALS TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD TO DO ALL IN THEIR POWER TO PREVENT THE MADNESS THAT HAS NOW MORE THAN EVER BECOME THE SCOURGE OF HUMANITY. HE CONSIDERED THIS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MISSIONS OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS OF THE WORLD. HE DID NOT LIVE TO WITNESS THE REALIZATION OF THIS GRAND HOPE AND BELIEF. NOW THAT HE IS DEAD WE MUST, LIKE HIM, CONTINUE TO HOPE AND BELIEVE THAT THE DAY WILL COME WHEN THE WORKING MASSES OF THE WHOLE WORLD WILL BE ABLE, BY THEIR SOLIDARITY, TO PREVENT THE DEMON OF WAR FROM GRIPPING THE HUMAN MIND IN DOING SO WE SHALL PAY HOMAGE TO THE MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN CHAMPION.

AXEL LOEFGREN,

Former General Secretary of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union.

SWITZERLAND

EDO FIMMEN IS NO MORE. TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THE FLAG OF THE SWISS RAILWAYMEN'S FEDERATION IS LOWERED BEFORE THE TOMB OF THE GREAT MAN WHO HAS GONE. HIS STEADFAST FAITHFULNESS AND LOYALTY HAVE EARNED FOR EDO FIMMEN A PERMANENT PLACE IN THE MEMORIES OF THE WORKERS IN OUR COUNTRY. THE SWISS RAILWAYMEN JOIN WITH THE I.T.F. IN MOURNING THE LOSS OF A FRIEND.

ROBERT BRATSCHI,

M.P., General Secretary, Swiss Railwaymen's Federation, President of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions.

Tributes to "a fine Fighter and a true Comrade"

Edo Fimmen stood in true succession to the pioneers of Trade Unionism who built up the international organization of the working class. He devoted his remarkable talents for administration and propaganda and his exceptional gifts as a linguist to a difficult task in the period between the two great wars. International interests of the workers can be said to have occupied his thoughts from the earliest days of his association with the Trade Union Movement. He became secretary of the International Federation of Commercial and Office Employees not long after he had helped to bring into existence the Dutch Union catering for commercial and office workers. In the administration of this International Trade Secretariat he gained experience which was of immense value when he joined Comrade Jan Oudegeest, in the task of keeping alive our International Federation of Trade Unions during the last war. Fimmen was an internationalist to the backbone and he proved the strength and sincerity of his purpose by the service he gave to both the I.F.T.U. and the I.T.F. through nearly two decades of struggle and conflict. He was moreover a genial and friendly personality and even those who did not always agree with his views felt for him a genuine affection and esteem. From British trade unionists he was always assured of a cordial welcome at our national conferences and we shall cherish the memory of a fine fighter and a true comrade.

SIR WALTER CITRINE,

General Secretary, British Trades Union Congress. President, International Federation of Trade Unions.

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The death of Edo Fimmen did not surprise me: it had been expected for quite a long time.

The last time I met him was over a year ago, immediately before his departure for Mexico. He had hardly changed: he was still the same man, strong in character, a fighter above all, and what is still more, a man with a mind of his own.

I have often been associated with him in the course of his political career. I use the word political in its real sense as relating to the generalization of economic problems, for Fimmen was impatient of matters of detail. Essentially he loved abstractions. He was even adventurous. It mattered little to him whether was in the majority or minority. He had his own ideas, and he was always true to his inner self.

He was one of the first to see clearly the dangers of Mussolinian Fascism, with its logical complement, Hitlerian Nazism. He connected all his activities, on land and sea, with the struggle against this double pest, and to-day it can be said of Edo Fimmen that he departed this life leaving behind him a long trail of light that has illuminated us on the road that we still follow painfully, though with assurance—the road that will lead us to victory and to freedom.

The miracle of the life of Edo Fimmen was the force and originality of his character. Even to those who were unable to follow him in his opinions he had something of the beauty of the gladiator fighting wild beasts in the Roman circus.

CAMILLE HUYSMANS,

Speaker of the House of People's Representatives of Belgium. President of the Labour and Socialist International.

□

I have known Fimmen for over 20 years. His name became known in the world immediately after the last war. I already knew Fimmen by name when I met him for the first time in 1926, at an International Trade Union Conference in London, where I was sent just as an additional representative of the Belgian

Trade Union delegation, but it was not until 1929, after becoming Secretary and later General Secretary of the I.F.T.U. that I got to know him more intimately. It was not very long before we became good and sincere friends. That does not mean that we were always in agreement on political and trade union actions, rather to the contrary, more often we were on the opposite sides of the fence in the controversies concerning Labour problems. These differences in views, methods and conceptions in various trade union questions did not, however, prevent the growth of close bonds of friendship and esteem between us.

It was these 10 years of constant collaboration which made me know Edo as a true comrade and a great example of unselfishness for the cause of democracy and workers' emancipation. On innumerable occasions I learned and understood how true his untiring militancy in the Trade Union Movement, since 1905 in his own country and since 1919 in the international field, was and how justly he had earned his world-wide reputation as a great trade union leader. I witnessed how Edo played a notable part in all the leading Labour problems which called the world's attention. I had, more particularly, opportunities to see the tremendous fight he pursued with his International Federation against all the enemies of human liberties and workers' rights and specially his daring and inspiring struggle against Italian Fascism and German Nazism.

Edo Fimmen's militancy, unselfishness and unwearying spirit of helpfulness made him a friend upon whom all could rely. His unrelenting activity and the unsparing exercise of all his strength unfortunately resulted in the end in undermining his health. In 1941 his health was so bad that his friends feared for a fatal development and he was sent to a milder climate in Mexico for recovery. But unfortunately the expectations of all his friends were not fulfilled. His innumerable friends will long mourn his loss and will never forget his memory.

W. SCHEVENELS,

General Secretary, International Federation of Trade Unions.

□

I cannot claim to have known Fimmen personally, only meeting him for the first time in Geneva, 1936, and thereafter only on two or three occasions, but I was deeply impressed by his personality and fervent desire to promote the interests of the working class. His record on behalf of the wider international movement, I think, hardly calls for comment, as his work was so well-known that any comment of mine might appear to be superfluous. The International Movement has indeed lost a champion, adviser and friend whose place will be difficult to fill.

D. S. TENNANT,

Secretary, International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association.

□

The sad death of Edo Fimmen is a loss not only to the International Transportworkers' Federation which he did so much to inspire and build up into a powerful body but also to the International Labour Organization. As an internationalist in his deepest convictions Fimmen had a very keen appreciation of the potentialities and responsibilities of the I.L.O., and the warmth of his personality, his experience, ability and vigour made him an outstanding figure at the many I.L.O. meetings he attended.

M. R. K. BURGE,

Chief, London Office of the I.L.O.

FROM GREAT BRITAIN, THE I.T.F.'s WARTIME HOME

So our great friend Edo has passed over and joined the great majority. We shall always keep his memory green. His passing creates a gap in the international sphere that it will be difficult to fill.

My first meeting with him was in Amsterdam in April, 1919, when we met for the purpose of establishing the International Transportworkers' Federation. It was an unforgettable day. A great effort was made to reunite the bonds that war had broken; to bring together the workers engaged in transport throughout the world. We were denounced from many sides but in addition to our own efforts we had the encouragement and support of both the Dutch and Scandinavian Unions and notwithstanding all the difficulties we went on and at the end of the Conference the constitution was adopted and the I.T.F. was launched. Edo Fimmen undertook the organization of the Bureau and the administrative responsibility. A very virile organization resulted. He was full of energy and it can be truly said that his one great purpose in life was to make secure effective international solidarity. With all the vicissitudes associated with international effort, the storms that arise and the disappointments that occur, it needed a strong character and one possessed of firm belief in his mission to steer the organization over the course as he did.

He must have felt a satisfaction, as he drew to the end, that that organization which had its beginning in Amsterdam in 1919 had survived all the revolutionary upheavals, faced the development of a second war and at the same time had established itself in the affections of so many millions throughout the world.

Seamen, dockers, railwaymen, road transport workers, fishermen and canal men and other transport workers throughout the world have benefited by Edo's efforts. He threw himself so wholeheartedly into the work of the organization that his example will always be an inspiration to his successors.

Though he sleeps his work still lives.

ERNEST BEVIN,

*M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
General Secretary (on leave) of the Transport
and General Workers' Union.*

□

Edo Fimmen was a great figure in European Socialism. When we read of his death, most of us who knew him personally pictured him as we saw him physically—that grand head and the mass of unruly silver hair. We also thought about his great humanity—his comradeship, his laughter and his anger against every social injustice. It is this memory of Edo which will remain to us.

But it is our duty to put on record a more permanent picture than that. During these last 30 years in Europe, he has stood out above all Trade Union Leaders in his loyalty to International Socialism, his passionate denunciation of every political course which departed from socialist principles and his courageous work in helping the underground movement wherever it was to be found.

He had the special quality of combining courage with practical achievement. I suppose there is no-one whose actual assistance has been greater to the heroic groups preparing for the day of Socialist Revolution in the countries of Europe.

We must remember too his valuable contribution to socialist thought and organization. His work on the Internationalization of Capital has not yet been recognized as the important service it was to all who are thinking about economic development and the policies which the working class must pursue in order to function effectively in a changing world.

FENNER BROCKWAY,

Political Secretary, Independent Labour Party.

Members of the Railway Clerks' Association have learned with the deepest emotion of the passing of Edo Fimmen, who was one of the outstanding figures in the International Trade Union Movement. As General Secretary of the International Transportworkers' Federation he was, prior to being overcome by ill-health, on many occasions fraternal delegate from the I.T.F. to the Annual Conference of the R.C.A., and it would be true to say that in the proceedings of these Conferences, notwithstanding the urgent national and domestic questions which delegates had to deal with, the message which Edo Fimmen conveyed to them, and the inspiration which he provided, was always an outstanding event. No man has done more to awaken and develop an international trade union outlook amongst railway salaried staff. His passing closes a chapter in the relationship of the R.C.A. to the I.T.F., and in mourning the loss of a great personality I acknowledge, on behalf of our members, his splendid efforts to consolidate working-class opinion throughout the world, and am confident that the message which he carried to us, and the work which he performed, will form a sure foundation for a better international trade union structure when we come to build the new world which is approaching. On behalf of the staff of the Railway Clerks' Association, the members generally, and in particular those delegates to our Conferences with whom he formed a lasting friendship, I salute his memory.

G. N. GALLIE,

General Secretary, Railway Clerks' Association.

□

The news of the death of Edo Fimmen came as a great shock. That he was a sick man when he left England I well knew, otherwise he would have remained here. He had, however, weathered many storms and his indomitable spirit had enabled him to surmount so many bodily trials that I had hoped his sojourn in Mexico would have fitted him to resume the work he loved so well.

It is difficult to think of the International Transportworkers' Federation without Edo Fimmen, and his death leaves a gap which it will not be easy to fill, but his life of selfless devotion to the I.T.F. and the worthwhile causes it served will give an example and a stimulus to those who follow.

Edo Fimmen, as I knew him, was a notable figure in any Conference in which he participated; a keen controversialist and a powerful debater, he could take and give hard knocks but he was a good colleague with all. Away from the Conference table, whether in private conversation or in the functions which were arranged, one saw more of the intimate and personal side and it was here that the strong human note predominated.

A keen internationalist, one whose life had been spent in breaking down the barriers which divided the workers, he was, nevertheless, a strong supporter of the Allied cause. That was natural for he realized that Fascism and Nazism were the negation of everything for which he had striven and these forces had to be overthrown or freedom and liberty, which he valued greatly, would perish.

In facing the problems ahead we shall miss the wise counsel and tremendous drive of Edo Fimmen but we shall be heartened by the knowledge of how he overcame the difficulties which beset him; we shall also have the organization which he laboured so strenuously to build.

We say Goodbye to a good colleague with whom it was a pleasure to work and an honour to be counted amongst his friends.

HAROLD E. CLAY,

*Acting Assistant General Secretary, Transport
and General Workers' Union.*

It came as a great shock to me to hear that Edo Fimmen has crossed the Great Divide.

As one who knew the I.T.F. in 1896, watched the break caused during the 1914-18 war, saw it brought together with Edo Fimmen as its Secretary, putting new life into it, devoting night and day to rebuilding it, and finally succeeding in making it a great international power to help the worker, I could recognize that his heart and soul was in the work, and that he was devoting the energy of ten men to it.

At I.L.O. conferences, executive meetings, etc., he was guide, philosopher and friend, especially to the new comrades.

J. HENSON,

Former Assistant General Secretary to the National Union of Seamen. Former Chairman of the Seamen's Section of the I.T.F.

□

Edo Fimmen has crossed the "Great Divide" and the International Trade Union Movement, particularly Transport Workers by land and sea, are infinitely the poorer for his passing.

Fimmen was an international figure, and his name a household word amongst the Transport Workers of Europe and for that matter of the World. He never spared himself in the service of others, his capacity for work was enormous and his organizing abilities supreme.

I came into close contact with Fimmen during my membership of the General Council and Management Committee of the I.T.F. when I learned to appreciate his many fine qualities and gained his sincere and valued friendship.

At the preparatory I.L.O. Maritime Conference at Geneva in 1935 and the full conference of the following year, Fimmen with his knowledge and experience proved a tower of strength in the workers' deliberations, especially at the latter conference where I had the honour to be Chairman of the Workers' Group. Although Fimmen was physically a giant, his constant and arduous work which entailed a tremendous amount of travelling was bound to take toll of his strength, and the tragic loss of his bosom friend and colleague, Nathans, in 1937 affected him very deeply.

The membership of the I.T.F. will I am sure long keep green their memories of Fimmen and his great work on their behalf: at the moment they will mourn the passing of a staunch fighter and a gallant and loyal comrade.

W. R. SPENCE,

Former General Secretary of the National Union of Seamen. Ex-Chairman of the Seamen's Section of the I.T.F.

□

A great novel could be written of the struggle of the European workers in this century with Edo Fimmen as its hero. For his whole attitude to life was heroic. His magnificent voice and physique, his great heart, and organizing genius were always at the service of the oppressed. He enthused dispirited men with his own superb courage. Yet how human he was. He never lost the individual in the mass. He took immense trouble over each sad case. Many times he evoked my help for refugees with an urgency that showed he felt the troubles of each unhappy soul as though they were the affairs of his own children. A great comrade has passed on, but he has left to us the inspiration that comes in our personal memories of him.

ELLEN WILKINSON,

M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security.

The loss of this great stalwart in the international movement of the Transportworkers of the world will be felt most especially after the war is over when the work of re-building begins.

I hope the memory of this great man will act as an incentive to every transport worker in the Federation to carry on the work which he has so well begun.

W. DOBBIE,

M.P., National Union of Railwaymen.

□

I met Edo Fimmen for the first time in October, 1920, or rather he, with a number of other friends, met me on my arrival in Amsterdam on the occasion of a conference of trade union representatives from various countries assembled to re-establish the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees. His strong and handsome personality and his fine grasp of international affairs made a big impression upon my mind. In subsequent years he travelled in many lands, preaching international unity and seeking to overcome the obstacles to that unity. His work in the service of the International Transportworkers' Federation was monumental.

Although never kindly disposed towards strict formalism or dogma, believing rather in the spirit of things, he was a very practical man who recognized the need for well-ordered trade union organization. His life of service to the Cause will long be remembered.

J. HALLSWORTH,

General Secretary, National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers.

□

Edo Fimmen's passing leaves a gap in the ranks of International Trades Unionism which it will be almost impossible to fill. Especially at this time do we feel the need of men of his ability, breadth of understanding and vision, and courage and enthusiasm.

During probably the most difficult and troubled years in the history of the working class he fought a valiant fight to unite the workers of the world; to remove the differences in their organized movement and to create the bonds to link the various national sections together; to overcome the barriers of nationality, race, creed and colour which stand in the path of solidarity; and to consolidate their forces to overcome the menace of Fascism. If only he had been listened to—if only his advice had been acted upon and the plans and policies he so strenuously advocated had been adopted—the world would have been a happier and kinder one than it is now, and humanity saved from frightful wretchedness and sorrow. We must profit to the utmost now from the inspiration and courage he gave us.

GEORGE HICKS,

M.P., General Secretary, Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Buildings.

□

I had known Edo since the Trades Union Congress in Cardiff in 1921, and had been on close terms of friendship with him ever since that time.

Whenever I was in Amsterdam he always went out of his way to entertain me, either at his home or in the town.

The Transport Workers of the world have lost a staunch friend and leader, whose place will be very hard to fill.

HARRY POLLITT,

General Secretary, Communist Party.

Edo Fimmen was a big man, physically and mentally, and what transport workers the world over owe to him can never be fully told. He was the spirit of internationalism incarnate.

I first met Fimmen soon after the 1914-18 war. My old chief Robert Williams was then Secretary of the National Transport Workers' Federation, and I was his assistant. Williams and Ben Tillett had taken the initiative in reviving the I.T.F., and when Fimmen was appointed Secretary he made our office virtually his London headquarters.

Fimmen's gifts of language were of immense value to the Movement. He had the rare faculty not merely of thinking, writing and speaking in several languages, but he was able to make effective public speeches in them. He had the gift of handling men of different nationalities and strong personality. He maintained the zest for fellowship always. After the day's work was done, Fimmen was a good companion in every sense of the word, and I recall many happy evenings spent with him and Robert Williams and others.

Fimmen's judgment of men and movements was sound. We ought not to forget that Fimmen sensed the dangers of Nazism at a time when others were treating Hitler as an object of ridicule. We can best honour his memory by working harder than ever to give the final blow to Nazidom in all its manifestations.

FRED MAYNARD,

Secretary to the former National Transport Workers' Federation.

Edo Fimmen was one of the greatest leaders the International Trade Union Movement has produced. A trade union general secretary is always surrounded by so many immediate problems that, in his efforts to keep up with them, he sometimes finds difficulty in keeping fully in touch with the larger and more fundamental issues. Comrade Fimmen not only managed to do both but he managed to deal with the fundamental issues in such a way as, time and again, to render extraordinarily fine service to the International Trades Union Movement and to International Socialism. He combined exceptional ability with a most attractive personality and great generosity of outlook. On several occasions he lectured at the Summer Schools of the National Council of Labour Colleges and on each occasion made a very deep impression upon the trade unionists who made up the students. We were particularly indebted to him for the great assistance he gave us in organizing the Summer School we held in Holland in 1938.

Edo Fimmen was a great trade unionist and a great Socialist, and his magnificent work in many spheres must be an inspiration to all who had the good fortune to know him. His passing is a heavy loss.

J. P. M. MILLAR,

General Secretary, National Council of Labour Colleges.

FROM FIMMEN'S FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN

The news of the decease, in Mexico, of your former General Secretary, Edo Fimmen, has deeply moved me. Although I have often differed from him in opinion, I also have always regarded Fimmen as one of the men most deeply consecrated to the labour movement and its ideals. The bitter disappointments that have fallen to his lot have undoubtedly contributed to his death, but the strong faith which inspired him will have lightened his last hours. He was worthy of continuing to live in the remembrance of many.

J. W. ALBARDA,

*Leader of the Dutch Social Democratic Party.
Minister of Public Works of the Netherlands.*

□

The sudden death of Edo Fimmen, General Secretary of the International Transportworkers' Federation, will stir up deep recollections in many people in all parts of the world. Of late years his activities had greatly diminished: his health was undermined, and he had lost his grip upon the great events of the times. Nevertheless, he was until recently a figure of international importance in the labour movement.

Beginning as organizer of the commercial and clerical employees in Holland, in 1916 he followed me as Secretary of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions.

Shortly after the end of the first world war he became one of the secretaries of the International Federation of Trade Unions, then representative of the whole of the world's trade union movement. The course of affairs there did not quite come up to expectations, and Fimmen finally found his vocation as Secretary of the International Transportworkers' Federation, in which function he was able fully to develop his great talents as a propagandist and organizer.

Fimmen has been the object of a great deal of affection and devotion, and also of some criticism. He had in some respects extremist tendencies, and his robust nature more than once prejudiced his powers of attraction, but he was attached by iron bands to the labour movement, and he served it with all his heart and soul and power. He had a fierce hatred of national socialism in all its forms, and to his very last days he was devoted to the cause of the Allies.

I, who knew him well, pay a hearty and comradely tribute to his memory. His life was consecrated to a great ideal. His name will live long in the history of the international labour movement.

J. VAN DEN TEMPEL,

Netherlands Minister of Social Affairs.

YUGOSLAVIA

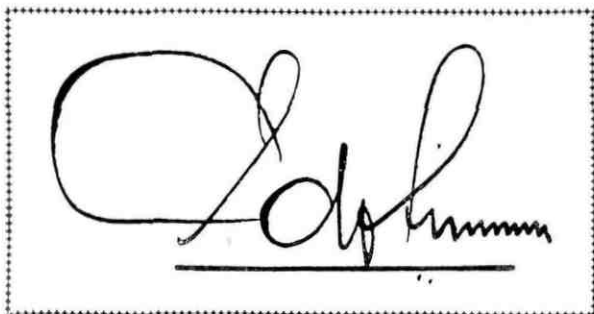
The members of the Yugoslavian Seamen's Union deeply mourn the death of Edo Fimmen; a great man, who always struggled for the emancipation of the workers of all nations.

He was always a real friend to us. When in 1932 a Yugoslavian ship was seized for debt in Rotterdam, and the owner tried to repatriate the crew without their pay, Fimmen came to their aid, treated them like a father, and made sure that they got their rights.

His name is deeply impressed in the hearts of all Yugoslavian seamen. We shall not easily forget this great democrat and defender of freedom and the rights of the working class.

VICKO SANTIC,

Secretary, Yugoslavian Seamen's Union.



AUSTRIA

With Edo Fimmen we have lost one of those striking and rare personalities that appear only from time to time on the scene of the social struggle, and who seem to personify the vigorous, class-conscious, upward-striving proletariat. Fimmen's stately figure, with its great bushy head of white hair, his sympathetic and playful smile and his eagerness to help, made him very popular among the Austrian workers. He was a singularly attractive personality. The uprightness of his character was reflected in the straightforwardness and wisdom of his ideas. Yet he was a realist, and took people to his heart for what they were, with all their virtues and failings. He succeeded in harmonizing critical judgment with an inexhaustible enthusiasm for and dedication to the struggle for the social emancipation of the working class. He was the ideal type of trade union leader. Equipped with the gift of burning oratory devoid of fire-works, he captured the hearts of the Vienna workers in his flight. The biggest halls in Vienna were too small to hold the crowds drawn in by his name.

In the winter of 1919, Anton Hueber, the Nestor of the Austrian trade union movement, sent Fimmen a telegram which read something to this effect: "The workers are hungry and freezing. How it will all end is unthinkable. Help urgently needed." Fimmen immediately mobilized the workers of the whole world in an exemplary relief action. And while the victorious powers were busily discussing and considering to what extent and under what conditions assistance could be given to the hungry masses in Central Europe, Fimmen in a few short weeks made the I.F.T.U.'s first train-loads of foodstuffs roll from Amsterdam to Austria, where they were taken over by Comrade

J. Wiedenhofer and myself. Fimmen also came to Vienna, together with W. A. Appleton, the representative of the British General Federation of Trade Unions. It was my privilege to guide the two visitors through the slums of Vienna. We saw children, and babes in arms, literally dying of hunger. Fimmen was deeply shocked. He immediately organized a relief action for the working class children, who were being sadly neglected by the bourgeois relief funds. Thousands of workers' children from Vienna and other industrial towns were placed with Dutch working class families, who took every care of them for several months. Fimmen further aroused the world's conscience with a book of pictures he had prepared by the well-known Dutch artist Albert Hahn. It was then that the idea of "War against War" ripened in his mind.

Fimmen organized and led the international struggle against the White Terror in Hungary. The trade-union weapon of the transport boycott was used so successfully that reactionary diplomats of Hungary had to meet representatives of the I.F.T.U. in the office of the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Renner. Von Graetz, the Hungarian Ambassador, had to negotiate with Edo Fimmen about the conditions for the raising of the boycott.

For us Edo Fimmen is not dead. The memory of his valiant spirit still lives, graven in the hearts of the Vienna workers. None of those who had the rare privilege of coming into personal contact with this good comrade could ever forget him: he was every inch a man.

J. SVITANICS,

Secretary, Austrian Trade Union Centre in Great Britain.

BELGIUM

The decease of Edo Fimmen, though not unexpected, moves one to the deepest sorrow. There was something tragically undeserved in the fact that Edo Fimmen was no longer able to give full expression to himself when one nation after another—some of their own accord, but mostly forced by circumstances—took its stand against nazism and fascism. It is sad and deeply tragic, also, that Fimmen should leave our midst just at the moment when the tide is on the turn, and that he will not be present when it will be necessary to hold down the forces who are prepared, because they cannot do

otherwise, to go part of the way with us at the moment, but which, when the time has come for settling accounts and planning for the future, will endeavour to act not only centrifugally, but probably also as an element of confusion.

But the belief that Edo Fimmen has left behind him a deep impression and a sound influence will not be falsified: of that I am sure.

IS. SMETS,

Secretary, Belgian Trade Union Centre in Great Britain.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Edo Fimmen belonged not only to the Dutch labour movement, but was beloved by the workers of all nations; and he was not only the representative of the International Transportworkers' Federation, but one of the greatest personalities in the world trade union movement. I many times had the privilege of meeting him, and always liked him.

When I was examined by the Gestapo in Prague on 21st July, 1939, I was surprised to find all the books and pamphlets I have ever written placed before me on the table. Among them was a book, written in 1927, about the "United States of Europe," in which I made several references to Fimmen. These remarks evidently excited the curiosity of the Gestapo, which was very well aware who were its enemies. When I visited the I.T.F. two years ago I unfortunately forgot to tell Fimmen about this. I therefore do so now, when our hearts are deeply touched by the sad news of his death.

JAROMIR NECAS,

Last Minister of Labour in Free Czechoslovakia.

□

How often I think of the youthful and fiery spirit that Fimmen never lost! He bore his thick white hair with dignity, but he could never master or restrain it, any

more than he could his temperament when there was a just cause to defend. He was one of the first to see the danger of Fascism, when the Hungarian counter-revolution raised its head and anticipated all the bestialities of the Nazis; he travelled around Europe as the apostle of his conviction that the freedom of the working class is inalienable and indivisible. We organized great meetings for him, and nobody who ever attended could avoid coming under the dominating impression of his idealistic personality. Unforgettable is the determination he showed not to allow the Russian revolution to be threatened: his boycott of transport to Poland was a warning also to stronger powers. He clearly realized that the working class of the world will only be equal to its task, and able to overcome the dangers that beset it, if it is united, and acts unitedly. How much sorrow might we, and all humanity, have been spared had he only had his will.

But if these were the culminating points of his abundant life, the occasions which brought him before the footlights of world history, his restless energy was equally apparent when there was less conspicuous work to do. He built up for the transport workers of the world the strongest and most closely-knitted of all the international trade federations. He knew that the defence of the international interests of the working class could not be undertaken as a side line, but that it

called for an extensive and efficient organization. He loved his transport workers, and they loved him. His work is imperishable, and will serve as an example when the scope and importance of the task of the trade unions is recognized after the present war is over.

The great international relief actions he started to help the victims of Italian, Austrian, German and Spanish fascism testify to the depths of his humanity. In this work he rendered silently the service of international solidarity which was to him a self-understood task and duty. As representative of the Metal Workers' International I had many opportunities of admiring the unpretentious and efficient way in which he did his duty. In times of need he did more than pay lip-service to international solidarity: he helped untiringly in word and deed. When the time comes to tell the story of the underground movement of the German working class up to the outbreak of war, and after, Edo Fimmen's name will occupy a place of honour.

JOSEF BELINA,

Leader of the Engineering Workers' Union of Czechoslovakia.

□

Few personalities in the International Trade-Union Movement were so closely connected with the Czechoslovak Trade-Unionists as Comrade Edo Fimmen. Few Socialist leaders were able to influence the workers of this country by their ideas like the late representative of the International Transportworkers' Federation.

Since the last war Fimmen was a frequent guest at the gatherings of the Czechoslovak railway and transport workers. During these whole twenty years all his speeches and all his actions were governed by one basic principle: a determined appeal for the unity of workers, which could have been the only weapon in the struggle against Fascism and the only rescue from a new disastrous war. In Czechoslovakia his appeal found fertile soil. Already before Munich the fusion of the free Trade Union of railwaymen with the Communist railway workers had taken place, of the transport workers and of the railwaymen which,

shortly before the outbreak of war, had nearly eighty thousand members.

This unity was not merely a mechanical one; its spiritual content was a fighting anti-Fascist ideology ready for the hard struggle with all reactionary forces. Unfortunately the betrayal of Munich made any use of this effective weapon impossible. The Czechoslovak transport workers have been temporarily paralysed by this betrayal, robbed of their international contacts, and finally delivered in chains to our common enemy. Already many of their leaders have fallen on our home front under the shots of the Nazi hordes. Moreover, a close federation was formed of the unions

Their death is clear evidence that the fighting tradition, symbolised especially by the name of Comrade Fimmen, has remained firm in the minds of the oppressed and enslaved Czechoslovak railwaymen. I trust that it will survive equally strong in the minds of those who succeed in overcoming all the storms of the present world, so that we might realize with them the great ideals of Comrade Fimmen: to build through the unity of the workers a new, just, Socialist society.

FRANTISEK NEMEC,

General Secretary, Czechoslovak Railwaymen's Union. Minister of Economic Reconstruction.

□

We feel the need to express our Party's deep sympathy with you on the decease of Edo Fimmen. Our fellow-fighters in our own country, to-day still condemned to silence, will also be conscious of the great services he has rendered to the international labour movement. Out of their and Edo Fimmen's spirits there will arise a new international community of fighting socialists. We are convinced that in the accomplishment of this task the International Transportworkers' Federation will fulfil the wishes of their dead standard-bearer.

W. JAKSCH,

On behalf of the Party Executive of the Sudeten-German Social Democrats.

LUXEMBURG

"And now he has finally left us, our best friend and comrade, Edo Fimmen. His dearest wish, to spend the evening of his days in beautiful Luxemburg, and enjoy a well-earned rest, has not been fulfilled. We shall miss him badly, and we shall never forget him."

I received this sad message, on the 18th of December, from my friend H. K., a member of the General Council of the I.T.F. The same day my friend P. T., Secretary of the I.T.F., wrote:

"Edo's way of tribulation has come to its end. For him this will have been a happy release, but it is a shock for us. We lose the one who was our symbol and our leading spirit, and that at the time when we most needed him."

These few sentences from my two friends tell much about Edo Fimmen, and about the sorrow we feel at his going.

His great heart, so full of the joy of battle, beats no longer. His lively brain, so receptive of new ideas, has ceased to work. But his spirit still lives. His idealism, his passionate endeavours on behalf of the international labour movement, will hold high in the world the great qualities which already distinguish and inspire his International Transportworkers' Federation. Edo Fimmen was a valiant fighter for freedom and justice. To the spirit of this noble man we promise to remain true.

No one who really knew Edo Fimmen could help loving him. For the trade unions of the smaller countries he was a symbol: his friendliness and readiness to help them were proverbial.

Ever since August, 1919, when the Congress was held in Amsterdam at which the International Federation of Trade Unions was reconstituted, he has been

in the bonds of closest friendship with Luxemburg, and since then hardly a year has passed but he has spent several days in this little country. The Luxemburgers loved and respected him as a great friend and counsellor. He highly appreciated their international spirit and activities, and did everything to encourage the fighting qualities of their trade unions.

The I.T.F. will allow me to mention a particular wish expressed by Edo Fimmen. On the occasion of the last Congress of the I.T.F., held in Luxemburg in the autumn of 1938, he stated that he hoped to be able to spend the evening of his days in our little country, in the romantic town of Vianden, in the house where Victor Hugo stayed during the period of his exile. The Executive of the I.T.F. will, I hope, support the Luxemburgers, if they fulfil as far as possible his wish by erecting a monument there.

When Luxemburg is free once more, it will also remember with love and respect the brave men who fell four months ago, on the occasion of the general strike in Luxemburg, fighting against the fascist invader, as Fimmen would have wished them to do. And with them will be associated in our memories Edo Fimmen, who was for the last twenty years a symbol for the workers of Luxemburg.

Edo Fimmen was a valiant fighter, and a symbolical leader of the international labour movement. He was also a good and noble man, always willing to lend a hand to those who needed it, and wishing above all to be regarded as a son of the people.

PIERRE KRIER,

President of the Luxemburg Federation of Trade Unions. Minister of Labour of Luxemburg.

GERMANY

In Edo Fimmen the international labour movement has lost one of its most outstanding and active personalities. He was not only, as General Secretary of the International Transportworkers' Federation, the recognized representative of the transport workers of the whole world, but also, for many years, one of the leading men in the whole international socialist labour movement.

Fimmen's death at this moment is doubly tragic. He has died at a critical stage of a bitter and bloody world struggle for the freedom and security of the peoples, face to face with the suffering and destruction of the Second World War, to prevent which he had devoted all the strength of his powerful personality.

December, 1922, just twenty years ago, saw the great Peace Congress at The Hague, which was largely Fimmen's work. It was a bold attempt to unite all sections of the organized workers, and all other genuine friends of peace, in a common peace policy and endeavours to arouse the peoples themselves to active measures against any threat to peace. After this second world war is over the peoples, and especially the organized working class, will have to take up the matter again, and they will succeed, but Edo Fimmen, like so many of his comrades and friends, will not have lived to see the fulfilment of the greatest aim of his life.

We German Social-Democrats will make our contribution to the completion of this work, and endeavour by our deeds to show a part at least of the gratitude our Labour Movement owes to Edo Fimmen for his unshakable trust in the German workers, and for the understanding and generous practical help he rendered them in their great difficulties, particularly during the underground period under the Nazi dictatorship.

Edo Fimmen will live forever in the history of the German labour movement.

HANS VOGEL,

President of the former Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

□

Edo Fimmen early realized that the Third Reich aimed to bring into subjection all the peoples of the world, just as it has done with the German working class, to the applause of the world's reactionaries; that Fascism meant war; and that it could only be fought with its own weapons.

Edo Fimmen hated war and warmongers. He was the soul of the workers' peace movement. For years he had called upon the working class to declare a general strike in case of war. But as soon as the situation changed he frankly admitted that peace could only be secured by defeating Fascism. The averting of the fascist danger became for him the all-compelling motive, and he called for a relentless fight against it

before it should be too late. But for long he was a voice crying in the wilderness.

Edo Fimmen also worked day and night to fulfil his duty as General Secretary of the I.T.F. He realized that unless the Federation were maintained and further developed the underground struggle would be rendered much more difficult. No work was too much for him, no way too long. He showed the underground workers the way from the lowlands of the daily struggle to the heights of political action. He was one of the centres around which the anti-fascist struggle revolved.

In the meantime Hitler progressed unhindered from triumph to triumph—the occupation of the Rhineland, general conscription, Spain, Austria, Munich, Czechoslovakia, the Stalin-Hitler Pact, and War! The brown flood rose ever higher. The underground workers fought desperately. Were all their sacrifices to be in vain? No! Edo Fimmen stood firm as a rock, and his voice sounded like the rumbling of distant thunder: "The greatest thing of all is to fight for freedom!" And when the long-threatened catastrophe broke over the unhappy world, he stepped to the side of the peoples that were fighting for their freedom, and once more did his duty to the last.

But the lode-star of his action was his unshakeable belief in the history-making power of the workers of the world, and the special task of the German working class, both during the war and in the building up of a socialist peace. With all the eloquence of his fiery spirit he stood up for this conviction, and helped to build the bridge that will lead to new shores. And thus, as man and fighter, he fulfilled his multiple task—a task that only a man of his calibre could have undertaken.

Reckless of himself, he was full of understanding for those engaged in the underground struggle, who always enjoyed his love and esteem. And how brightly his eyes shone when another of the nameless evaded the Gestapo and crossed the frontier to report to him how the battle was going; and after parting, how long he would stand, a massive figure, with tear-dampened eyes and hair waving in the wind, staring into the darkness that had swallowed up the worker as he set off on the long march back to the prison that is called the Third Reich. He knew that his orders would be carried out: a relentless struggle until victory is won. And in the interests of these valiant young and nameless underground workers he was prodigal of himself. They were to him both hope and fulfilment. And they have built up a shining monument to him in their hearts. There, I know, he still lives; and Edo Fimmen's legacy will be to them a shining star in the cruel darkness of the underground work, to guide them in the building of a new world.

H. KRAMER,

Organiser of the Clandestine Anti-Nazi Groups of Railwaymen in Germany.

PALESTINE

The Palestine Labour movement has particular reason to mourn the untimely passing of Edo Fimmen. Our first meeting with him dates back to the first World War, when the central office of the World Poale-Zion Movement was at The Hague. It was his open mind in regard to all social and political problems which made it possible for him, immediately upon our first contact, to grasp the specific problems of the Jewish people, and especially to appreciate the constructive ideas of the Jewish Labour Movement in Palestine, then still young and small in numbers. With Camille Huysmans and P. J. Troelstra, he was—though unobtrusively—instrumental in getting the Jewish problem dealt with, more or less on our lines,

by the conference of neutral Socialists at The Hague in 1916. Since the war, we admired his purposeful efforts to raise the Trade Union movement above the narrow confines of professional interests and to transform it into a force shaping the fate of the Continent through international Labour action. We had hoped to welcome him one day in Palestine and to show him the work and achievement of our Labour movement, now grown into a vast organization. We are grieved that this was not to be.

BERL LOCKER,

London Representative, General Federation of Jewish Labour in Palestine.

NORWAY

The news of Edo Fimmen's death will cause widespread sorrow, also among trade unionists in Norway. He was probably better known in our country than any other living person in the international trade union movement.

One of the reasons why Fimmen ranked so high among trade unionists in Norway was because of his continual activity and readiness to break a lance in order to defend the interests of the working classes.

His jovial personality and good humour made him

many friends at international conferences. He had the great advantage of being able to talk to us Scandinavians in our own language, which naturally increased his popularity.

One of the great champions of our cause has departed. Let us honour his memory by continuing the work he had to leave.

OLAV HINDAHL,

Ex-Chairman of the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions. Minister of Commerce.

POLAND

Edo Fimmen was probably the most popular figure among the leaders of the international trade union movement. There must hardly be a country in the world where his name is not known, and he was generally appreciated as a real leader of the working masses. Transport workers throughout the world looked to him as their only leader.

I had the opportunity of getting to know Comrade Fimmen personally, and I knew him as a man with a great heart and an unusually clear head. Three of my meetings with him stand out in my memory. At the Congress of the I.T.F. in Copenhagen in 1935 Edo Fimmen predicted the coming of the present war, and called for the mobilization of the workers throughout the world to fight against Nazism.

Later I saw him at Gdynia, where the workers went with bands and flags to meet him at the quay-side. At the mass meeting of members of the Transport Workers' Union that followed Fimmen addressed himself to the Polish workers in general. The meeting was in a very enthusiastic mood, and the workers of Gdynia remembered his speech for long after.

A third memorable meeting I had with Comrade Fimmen in England. That was in 1940, after the collapse of France. Fimmen was then very ill, but he took a keen interest in everything. He asked me about the fate of the Polish trade union officials, nearly all the most prominent of whom he knew personally, and especially about those of the transport workers' and railwaymen's unions. He was very happy when he learned of the resumption of trade union activity amongst the Polish seamen in Great Britain. He was loud in his praises of the social maturity and self-sacrificing spirit of the Polish workers, who in spite of the very difficult conditions refused to give up the struggle for the ideals for which their forefathers had fought.

Edo Fimmen will live long in the memory of the organized workers as a symbol of the unity of the labour movement throughout the world, and as a great champion of the common weal.

A. ADAMCZYK,

Polish Transport Workers' Union.

□

The death of Edo Fimmen is a grievous loss. I had known him for many years, and had had the privilege of his friendship. He was one of those great

leaders of the labour movement who have arisen as an expression of the desire of the working classes for the political, economic and social reconstruction of the world.

He had many great qualities. He was an excellent tactician, and as the leader of the International Transportworkers' Federation he was prominent in the international trade union movement. Free of doctrinaire prejudices, his views were based on penetrating observation of actual changes which are taking place in the economic activities and social conditions of the world. The worldly wisdom he had thus acquired assured to him an exceptional part in the labour movement as an international leader.

In mass meetings he moved the workers by the simplicity of his speech and by the clarity with which he expressed their faith and their longing for a better future. At international conferences he compelled admiration by the conciseness and acuteness of his deductions. He had a most winning simplicity, proceeding from a great and generous heart. Thus he won the respect of his adversaries and the love and the devotion of the workers of all lands. He visited Poland repeatedly where he made many friends, especially among the railway workers, who were devoted to him.

The last time I saw him in England. He was gravely ill. Moved by the exceptional circumstances in which we met, we were silent for some time. Then he said: "You see how miserable I am. The world is passing through the bloodiest period of its history, and I lie here like Lazarus, condemned to inactivity. And I want so much to go on working. There is so much to be done if a new world is to emerge from the terrible sacrifices and sufferings of so many peace-loving people."

We talked for a long time, and he spoke of what should be done, and how. But death has cut short his life before he could complete the work to which he devoted so many efforts. We shall remember him when we are trying to lay the foundations of the new world, drawing encouragement in our work and struggle from the life he dedicated to the service of the working classes.

JAN STANCZYK,

Polish Minister of Labour and Social Welfare. Vice-Chairman of the Polish Trades Union Congress. General Secretary of the Polish Miners' Federation.

SPAIN

We Spaniards who knew Edo Fimmen—and all of us knew him who have taken any part in the international labour movement—felt for him a kindly sympathy, which in so far as I personally am concerned amounted to real affection. He had won it by his cordiality and by the coincidence of our opinions at the Congresses of the International Federation of Trade Unions. Fimmen was further always very much interested in the affairs of the Spanish trade union and socialist movement, and this helped him to capture the sympathy of all of us.

The last time I saw him was at Bedford, sitting behind his desk in a room that was both office and bedroom. He was already dominated by the illness that

put an end to his life, and I had just arrived from Spain, fleeing from Phalangist totalitarianism. In spite of our unhappy situation, we were both full of optimism. He spoke to me of Spain with the assurance of a man who saw the approaching end of the regime which had just been set up in my country. Fimmen, my good friend Fimmen, will not now see the end we both longed for so much. Another good comrade has gone, at a time when we so badly need men of the temper and convictions of Edo Fimmen.

WENCESLAO CARRILLO,

President, Metal Workers' Federation. Vice-President, Socialist Labour Party.

In Memoriam—Edo Fimmen

It is with heavy heart that I set myself to the task of writing a biographical memoir of Edo Fimmen. I should have much preferred to leave the task until my thoughts have, to some extent, adjusted themselves to the realization that I shall never see him again, until the wound left by his departure from this life has healed, so that I could do better justice to the memoir of this noble man and staunch fighter for human happiness.

It has been my privilege to work under him, in organizations at whose head he stood, for more than twenty years; so I have good reason to know of his goodness and sincerity, his integrity, his noble indignation at any act of injustice, his fear of bringing unhappiness upon others, his complete devotion to his ideals, his concern for the workers and all who were oppressed, his inexhaustible energy, the clarity of his reasoning, and the swiftness with which he moved when the occasion called for action. Of him it can be truly said that he had the qualities that go to make a great leader of the people.

If I dwell firstly upon the qualities of his character, it is because it was primarily on account of his stimulating example, the confidence he inspired, and the influence exerted by his personality, that Edo Fimmen was able to raise to such heights the organizations he served. But to his sterling character he added great gifts as a thinker, writer, speaker and negotiator, and he had an unusually clear understanding of social and political affairs. Anything savouring of arrogance was quite foreign to his nature, and instead of complicating a problem he would always try to reduce it to its simplest proportions. He was above all a man of sound common sense.

Edo Fimmen was predestined to play a great part in the international trade union movement, after having already had, at a youthful age, an honourable career in the trade union movement of his own country. During the war of 1914-1918 the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions, of which he was the Secretary, was entrusted with the maintenance of international relations between the trade unions of the belligerent and neutral countries. This work—which he shared with his colleague Jan Oudegeest—was done on behalf of the I.T.F. as well as the I.F.T.U., and it put to good use his unusually extensive knowledge of languages. He was inspired by the determination that as soon as hostilities should end he would help to rebuild the international trade union movement on a truly magnificent scale, and make it take its proper place in world affairs. He laid no claim to any position. Edo Fimmen was never self-seeking. He rose to positions of responsibility because others placed confidence in him: he never elbowed his way through. He once remarked to me: "You know, I am always in luck."

Position in the international movement was forced upon him rather than sought by him. He would have liked nothing better than to continue his work in the Dutch labour movement. He was indeed a great internationalist, but he was the very exemplar of Jean Jaurès' aphorism that "a little internationalism takes you away from your country, much internationalism brings you back." Yes, he loved his country, and above all his native town of Amsterdam. He trekked all over the world, was to-day in London, to-morrow in Paris, the day after in Berlin—but it was never without emotion that he reached the Central Station and passed through his beloved and beautiful city of Amsterdam on the way back to his room at the office, which resembled an art collection as much as anything else.

But gladly as he would have gone back to his work for the Dutch trade union movement, when the task of reconstructing the international organizations failed to develop as smoothly as the organizers of the I.T.F. and I.F.T.U. Congresses in Amsterdam had hoped, and Edo Fimmen was asked to take over provisionally the secretaryship of the I.T.F., and permanently that of the I.F.T.U., he did not hesitate to put aside his own ambitions and throw himself with enthusiasm into the international work. This was no strange ground for him: in 1908 already, at the age of 27 years, he had

been appointed Honorary Secretary of the International Federation of Commercial Employees. He had also acted as interpreter at several international workers' meetings, and moreover, as we have already seen, he had tried during the war to maintain relations between the trade unions in the belligerent countries. But his main field of activity had been in the Dutch trade union movement, which was still entitled to expect much of him.

But although he threw himself heart and soul into the work, it must be said that Edo Fimmen did not always feel entirely happy in the international trade union movement. Although he found in it much friendship—and he was second to none in making friends—it often grieved him to discover that national organizations were not always prepared to make the sacrifices that were necessary to the success of international action. I do not mean financial sacrifices, but those that lay in subordinating national interests to the international cause. This is not the time and place, however, to enter into an analysis of the weaknesses which the international work revealed: I only mention the fact in passing, to make it clear that the work brought with it many disappointments. Fimmen, who was emotional by nature, was often downcast following some lack of success, but he would soon pick up again and be on the look out for some new international activity that would repair the damage which the spirit of international solidarity had suffered under the previous failure. And he could be exuberant in his joys as well as his sorrows. I recall that at the first meeting of the British Management Committee of the I.T.F., held in November, 1939, shortly after the headquarters had been transferred to England, he was unable to restrain his tears when Ernest Bevin, John Marchbank and W. R. Spence solemnly pledged all the support that might be needed to keep the International alive.

When Fimmen became secretary both of the I.T.F. and the I.F.T.U. the political International was in ruins. This fact placed Edo Fimmen before his first great international task—to build up an international trade union movement within which every shade of opinion could find a place, and within which all could co-operate to establish the greatest possible unity of the working classes. This broad principle he never abandoned. He always held that within the international trade union movement there must be room for variations of political ideology, but that the maximum degree of organizational unity was a sine qua non for the success of the work that was waiting to be done after the first world war ended.

He had made a careful comparison of ruling ideas and working methods in the different countries, and had come to the conclusion that co-operation on a broad basis was possible. As an internationalist with a respect for the individual, he would never hear of forcing any movement into a strait-jacket before it was allowed to take part in the international work. He anticipated that a large degree of national unity could be expected in the long run. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have tried to bring about the amalgamation of the "Modern" and Syndicalist trade unions in Holland, or that he urged co-operation between the Socialist and Syndicalist unions in Spain. For him the question was: "Is our aim the same? Are you honest? Well! let us try to find the synthesis which is necessary in the interests of the working class struggle." He placed himself, as he put it, above the interests of his own church. He had many visitors and there were some who came to him for help who had previously fought and denounced him, and had later been dropped by their own movements. By nature he was magnanimous and generous: he needed so little for himself, and was always prepared to help those in need.

Edo Fimmen was a hard worker for whom no task was too great, and he was little short of a slave to duty. If he could return from a journey by the night train, to be at his desk early in the morning, he would do so

in preference to enjoying a restful night at an hotel. After a meeting lasting a whole day he would finish off his ordinary routine work before retiring, and the next morning he would attend to current business before the meeting recommenced. He was an exacting chief who made high demands upon his staff, but he would never ask of others anything like his own contribution. There is no doubt that this vast expenditure of effort was a contributory cause, if not the primary one, of his death. When he was already seriously ill he could not and would not resign himself to taking the complete rest his doctors prescribed. Fimmen and rest were contradictions impossible to bridge.

With all this he was a modest man, to whom fame and glory counted for nothing. One deed of friendship and good comradeship meant more to him than a thousand praises. Although he could easily have done more spectacular things, he did not seek popularity, but stuck closely to his trade union work. Much of this work would necessarily be unknown but that did not concern him.

Many others will write in detail about Fimmen's work and achievements, so I will confine myself to enumerating a few of the most outstanding. He imbued the international trade union movement with a new spirit, raising it to heights hitherto unknown. He transformed international working class solidarity from a mere well-sounding phrase into deeds: when, in 1919, the workers of Vienna were literally starving he organized a great relief movement, to which the "enemies" of the day before also contributed, and sent food trains that had been paid for with money provided by the workers. For the Russians he did the same at the time of the famine in the Soviet Union, notwithstanding that the Communists had attacked him so fiercely as the leader of the "yellow" Amsterdam International. He organized a transport boycott against Hungary, the first Fascist-modelled state, and he stopped the transport of war material to Poland during the Russo-Polish war. He also organized the great Peace Congress held at The Hague in 1922.

When the occupation of the Ruhr by the French Army, in 1923, failed to lead to the counter-action by the international trade union movement that he had proposed, he resigned the secretaryship of the I.F.T.U., reproaching the workers and their leaders alike with insufficient international understanding. He pointed out the dangers of Fascism, and the inevitability of a new world war if the Labour movement could not produce a sufficient counterweight to jingoism and the power of big business.

From 1923 onwards he was free to devote all his energies to the I.T.F., though he continued his fight against the economic clauses of the Peace Treaties, which stood in the way of the workers in their struggle for greater prosperity.

After the rise of Fascism in Italy he tried to bring about a reconciliation with the Russian trade union movement, in the hope that this would end the intestine warfare which was being carried on within the labour movements of many countries, crippling the fighting power of many of them, and consequently also that of the International.

During the great miners' strike, followed by the General Strike, in Great Britain in the year 1926, he organized an international embargo on the handling of British coal.

In later years he dedicated himself more and more to organizing the transport workers, and supporting the movements in the colonial countries and those under imperialistic domination or control. He was more successful than anybody else has been in gaining the confidence of these workers, and as a result secured several affiliations for the I.T.F. of transport workers' unions in India, Indonesia, South Africa, the West Indies, and Central America. He also succeeded in bringing about the affiliation of the Japanese Seamen's Union, and the Chinese Railwaymen's and Seamen's Unions, and the great railwaymen's unions of the Argentine Republic; so that it can be as truly said of the realm of the I.T.F., as it is of the British Empire, that upon it the sun never sets.

This summary is by no means a complete list of

Edo Fimmen's many achievements. In the many conflicts that have occurred in the transport world during the past two decades he has always been on the look-out for some opportunity to give moral or financial support, or both, while in publishing activities no other trade union international has been able to approach the I.T.F.

The saddest period in the history of the international trade union movement, and of Fimmen's life, has been that which has seen the growth of Fascist influence and tendencies, and the persecution and suppression of the workers' movements in many countries. He was insistent in his warnings. He was keenly aware that the way of deliverance did not lie in seeking the line of least resistance, or following the policy of accepting the lesser evil, but in putting up a sturdy fight, engaging a life and death struggle if necessary. As late as the year 1932 he made renewed efforts to persuade the German Transport Workers to resist. When he found that none of the working class forces in Germany were prepared, or able, to take up the struggle against National Socialism, he started to prepare a group of faithful comrades for the building up of an underground movement. However, this is a chapter that will have to be written when the war is over.

Edo Fimmen, great apostle of peace as he was, was finally forced to admit that the international working class movement would be unable to prevent the war and he did not hesitate to associate himself with those who were prepared to resist National Socialism and Fascism by force of arms. When in the year 1936 Hitler's army marched into the Rhineland, and the democratic countries did not stir a hand, he still tried to organize an embargo on the transport of war material destined for Germany, but this time the support was inadequate. He also actively supported the loyalist side in the Spanish war, and lashed those who tried to escape their responsibilities, or who tried to make money out of it.

The last few years of Edo Fimmen's life were unhappy, because apart from his illness he suffered severely under the defeats the labour movement had sustained. But however great his own sufferings, he could never belie the nobility of his disposition, and his thoughts were always with those of his friends who were persecuted or in danger from Hitler's and Mussolini's hangmen. Up to the moment of his death he was constantly doing all he could to save their lives, or to help and encourage them. Edo Fimmen was always loyal to the cause, and loyal also to every one of his comrades.

The tragedy of Fimmen's life is that his work fell for the most part in the period between the two world wars; a period characterized by cowardice, treachery, confusion and broken promises; a period during which those who fought for progress were divided; a period of minor construction and major destruction, of heavy ebb and flow in national politics, with the consequence that the innovators in the international sphere of thought either did not get their chances or did not seize their opportunities. In these circumstances it is hardly fair to ask whether Fimmen achieved his aim to make the international labour movement the determining factor in the reconstruction of Europe, and in co-operation among the peoples—a role he assigned to it on account of its fundamental ideals. In fact he did not achieve it, though he gave of his best for that purpose, and in the light of the circumstances he accomplished great things.

When later generations study the history of the period between the two wars, and the part played in it by the international trade union movement, they will single out Edo Fimmen as one of the men who strove hardest, and did most, to avoid a second world war, and to establish the world commonwealth of peace, human liberty and a classless society which he wished above all to see, and which future generations will enjoy. Though he has not lived to see it, may his wishes come true, and may his memory have a place in the hearts of those for whom he struggled all his life.

J. H. OLDENBROEK,

Assistant General Secretary of the I.T.F.

The Last Days of Edo Fimmen

During the sixteen years I have known Edo Fimmen, he was never one to see only the rose-coloured side of life or action. If any occasion or event appeared promising he was ready to rejoice, but never to abandon himself to wishful thinking: reasons for hope were never allowed to hide reasons for being sceptical. Since the end of 1938, he did not comfort himself with the illusion that he would fully recover and preserve his forces. But every meeting he was allowed to attend gave such a stimulus to his body and mind that his colleagues were quite deceived as to the real state of his health. After 1939, however, each of these bursts of energy left his mental and physical forces a little weaker than they had been before.

For something like fifteen years Fimmen—when he was not on a journey—worked and slept in the same building; since 1939 he worked and slept in the same room. In the summer of 1940 physical incapacity and insistent pressure of his friends, forced him to put a distance of some ten miles between his office and his bed. But even in the tiny cottage to which he retired he still continued to dictate—and to sign, with every day more painful effort—many a letter, and to receive many a visit from his colleagues and friends, summoning what still remained of his rapidly diminishing energy to discuss the prospects and future tasks. He would set about his self-imposed duty of dictating letters, and studying the papers, in spite of the fact that it left him exhausted, and in spite of his oft-expressed conviction that his career was nearing its end. I suppose that Fimmen could hardly imagine himself going on living without fighting, and the feeling that in the comparatively near future he would be out of the fight destroyed his will to live.

It is true that he still made, in October, 1941, though terribly ill, the supreme effort of undertaking the trying and dangerous voyage, by steamer and plane, from England to Mexico via the United States. Why? His colleagues and collaborators set their vain hopes of keeping Fimmen alive for a few years more in a change of climate, surroundings and diet, and urged him to accept an invitation extended to him by the Mexican Confederation of Workers. He was somewhat indignant at the idea that he should, as he expressed it, put the greatest possible distance between his "carcase" and the bombs that Hitler was then raining on Great Britain. When his protests proved of no avail he talked of resigning his position. It was then suggested to him that it was his duty to the trade union movement to make a supreme effort to recover at least a part of his strength, and to this appeal to his sense of duty Fimmen bowed. Nevertheless, in speaking with John Marchbank and myself he imposed one condition on his acceptance. We were to promise to see that he was brought back to Europe at the earliest possible moment after the war ended, so that he could witness, and if possible, contribute to, the renaissance of the labour movement in Europe.

He took very seriously his orders to recover his health as far as possible. In a letter written to me barely five months before his death he said: "I am making pottery, like the natives do. The doctors say that it is good exercise for the fingers, and that in this way Pasteur and Forel recovered the ability to write after strokes similar to mine. It is my ambition to do the same."

At the beginning of his stay in Mexico he affected an air of detachment, saying on one occasion: "I am on holiday, and I don't give a damn for business." But the fighting spirit never left him, and his last thoughts were of the future, the prospects for the world labour movement, and the dangers that would beset it. His two daughters had to cut articles out of the papers and send them to me. His last acts were directed to the relief of victims of the fight against fascism. He drew money from wherever he could get it to help comrades stranded in Mexico and other corners of the globe. His last telegrams gave us instructions to try and get visas to provide some foothold for different comrades rolling about in no-man's-land, too near to the clutches of the Gestapo.

His last sorrows and concerns were for friends and comrades living, or dying, in some part of Hitler's Hell. I am happy to think that he had near him two of his daughters, and their mother, to share his last joys, and also that he had, in his house at Cuernavaca, a young Mexican Indian, who received the last proofs of the affection which Fimmen always felt for the native races of the world.

Edo Fimmen died on 14th December. A fortnight later Christmas parcels arrived which he had sent to members of the staff of the I.T.F., a last proof of the affection in which he always held them and their families. Personally I have not yet had the courage to tell my little daughter, and a little evacuee I have in my home, that "Uncle Fimmen" is dead.

PAUL TOFAHRN,
Secretary of the I.T.F.

Edo Fimmen—The Man

For years already Edo Fimmen had been known as "the grand old man." But although he turned grey at an early age, he could hardly be regarded as being old. Indeed, the reason that the epithet was applied to him is to be sought elsewhere. In my opinion, it was due to the patriarchal character of his relationship with every one of the many and varied people with whom he came into contact. This was most clearly revealed to me in a photograph which shows Edo Fimmen with some of his Asiatic friends. He towers above them, his arms around the shoulders of those nearest to him. The whole group is smiling which shows that they are obviously at ease in each other's company. It is this feeling of being safe, being protected and sheltered under the paternal wing which characterised personal relations with Edo Fimmen.

The real depth of his paternal feeling was made clear to me some years ago when he described a cherished dream of his. He was talking of how he would like to end his eventful life. He wished it to be somewhere on a remote and lonely island, with nature to take care of his material wants and with one child of each one of the human races for company. Edo wanted to see these children play together and so grow up in mutual understanding. The contemplation of this meant the greatest happiness to him. His heart was both big and simple enough. Thus in his dream-world he realized his life's ideal: the brotherhood of all men.

In our every day world of selfishness a man like Fimmen could not possibly feel at home. A profound hatred of that world was expressed in the words I once heard him utter: "I consider that the lending of money at interest is the most odious practice of all." This was no mere abstract reflection, for many people appealed to him for financial aid and he lent a great deal of money. That cold calculating slogan of our society "Time is money" must have been deeply distasteful to him. His religious and philosophical needs led from the contemplation of this world to that of one he thought more harmonious and romantic; the Middle Ages with its dominating religious art. He loved collecting relics of this age and gave them an important place in his surroundings.

In his struggle for a new and better society this romanticism also had its place. If he had been asked what he considered to be the most essential quality in that new society, to the furtherance of which he dedicated his life, I am sure his answer would have been: harmony.

Perhaps Edo Fimmen missed this quality of harmony most of all in his innermost self. He saw himself as a man torn two ways. In his introspective moods he would not only confess to possessing many faults but would pillory himself mercilessly, convinced of being a most miserable sinner. But, as a great psychologist once said: "What are the best of us—in the end—but repentant sinners?"

M. ZWALF,
Editor of the I.T.F. Journal.

THE FUNERAL

The I.T.F. already owed a debt of gratitude to the Mexican Confederation of Workers, for its invitation to Fimmen to go to Mexico to spend his leave of absence, and try to recover his health. This debt has been greatly increased by the way the Confederation has stepped into the gap left by the unavoidable absence in Mexico of any direct representative of the I.T.F., and given our late General Secretary a funeral worthy of the man.

As the laws of the State of Morelos do not allow of cremation, the Confederation arranged for the body to be brought to Mexico City, so that the last honours could be rendered in a fitting manner. It sent to Cuernavaca a delegation from its National Council, composed of Comrades Fidel Velazquez, the General Secretary, Justino Sanchez Madariaga, Francisco J. Macin, Mario Montenegro, and others, to accompany Fimmen on his last journey.

Prior to the incineration the body lay in state in Mexico City, so that the Mexican workers could pay their last respects. Guards around the bier were mounted by officials and members of the Committees of the Mexican Confederation of Workers, including the General Secretary, Fidel Velazquez, and Francisco J. Macin, Rosendo G. Castro and Justino Sanchez Madariaga, the Confederation of Workers of Latin America, including Alejandro Carrillo, the Trades Council of Mexico City, including J. Jesus Yuren, and the Spanish General Union of Workers, including the Secretary, Amaro Rosal, Vice-President Admundo Dominguez, Manuel Vidal Revora, Secretary of the Spanish Seamen's Federation, and Moix, Secretary of the Catalan Federation.

From half past eleven onwards on 15th December, the day following Fimmen's decease, Mexican and foreign delegations of working class and anti-fascist organizations filed past the bier, nearly all of them depositing a wreath. Among them were the Defence Committee of the "18th of March" Co-operative Society, the National Motor Transport Federation, Chauffeurs' United Front, Tramwaymen's Alliance,

Mexican Communist Party, River, Maritime and Lake Transport Workers' Union of the Mexican Republic, Spanish General Union of Workers, International Democratic Action, Anarchist Workers' Federation of the Spanish Republic, Spanish Seamen's Federation, Free Germany, Giuseppe Garibaldi Alliance, Labour University of Mexico, editorial staff of "El Popular," Mexican Railwaymen's Union, Mexican Confederation of Workers, Mexico City Trades Council, and many others. The Dutch colony in Mexico sent a large delegation headed by Dr. H. Ph. Kanter, Dutch Consul General in Mexico City.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the funeral cortege set out for the Civil Pantheon, the coffin being borne by Fidel Velazquez, General Secretary of the Mexican Confederation of Workers, J. Jesus Yuren, Secretary of the Mexico City Trades Council, Ramon Gonzalez Pena, President of the Spanish General Union of Workers and ex-minister of the Spanish Republic, Amaro Rosal, General Secretary of the Spanish General Union of Workers, and Enrique Torres Calderon. At the crematorium funeral orations were pronounced by Francisco J. Macin on behalf of the Mexican Confederation of Workers, Ramon Gonzalez Pena, on behalf of the Spanish General Union of Workers, Federico Bach, on behalf of the family and friends, Dr. H. Ph. Kanter, for the Dutch Colony, and an Italian worker, Leon Castelli.

Mexican workers, and their leaders, attended the funeral in large numbers, bearing the banners of their organizations and forming, with foreign workers exiled in Mexico, an imposing cortege, rendering to Edo Fimmen, so it is reported, honours such as no workers' leader has ever before received in Mexico.

The ashes will be deposited in the library of the Mexican Confederation of Workers, in a silver urn presented by that organization, but will be brought to Europe after the war.

Our thanks are due to the Mexican Confederation of Workers for making of the funeral of our late General Secretary a majestic and poignant international anti-fascist demonstration.



Leaders of the Mexican Confederation of Workers' mounting the Guard of Honour

FIMMEN'S CONVICTIONS AND LEADERSHIP

SOCIALISM

The functions of the trade unions are two-fold. First of all, they have to defend the workers' standards of life everywhere against the attacks of the capitalist forces, which have closed their ranks internationally, and are thus in a position to deliver smashing blows. This embodies an attempt to improve the condition of the working class "within the framework of capitalist society." But the trade unions' ultimate function is a greater one, and is therefore in a sense primary, namely to achieve the overthrow of the capitalist system, the deliverance of labour, the inauguration of socialism.

From "Labour's Alternative", 1924

In whatever light we may regard the struggle for peace, its aim coincides with that of the working-classes, namely, the establishment of a better social order, based on the social ownership of the means of production. This is the only guarantee for economic peace, and this is the unwritten charter which ensures "perpetual peace."

But to-day this fight against war is primarily a war of defence. The workers cannot wait until peace is guaranteed by the establishment of the socialist order. They must fight the military as well as the economic menace, throwing in all their resources, and even accepting outside aid from the forces already ranged on the side of peace.

From address to Peace Congress, 1922

WAR AGAINST WAR

Only one war is noble, and that is the war for peace. This war is to be fought by the workers only, not in concert with, but against bourgeois imperialism. For just as private ownership begets theft, so does it beget war. War will only become a thing of the past when its root-cause shall have been extirpated and when the egoistical interests of a small clique are no longer able to triumph over the interests of the common weal.

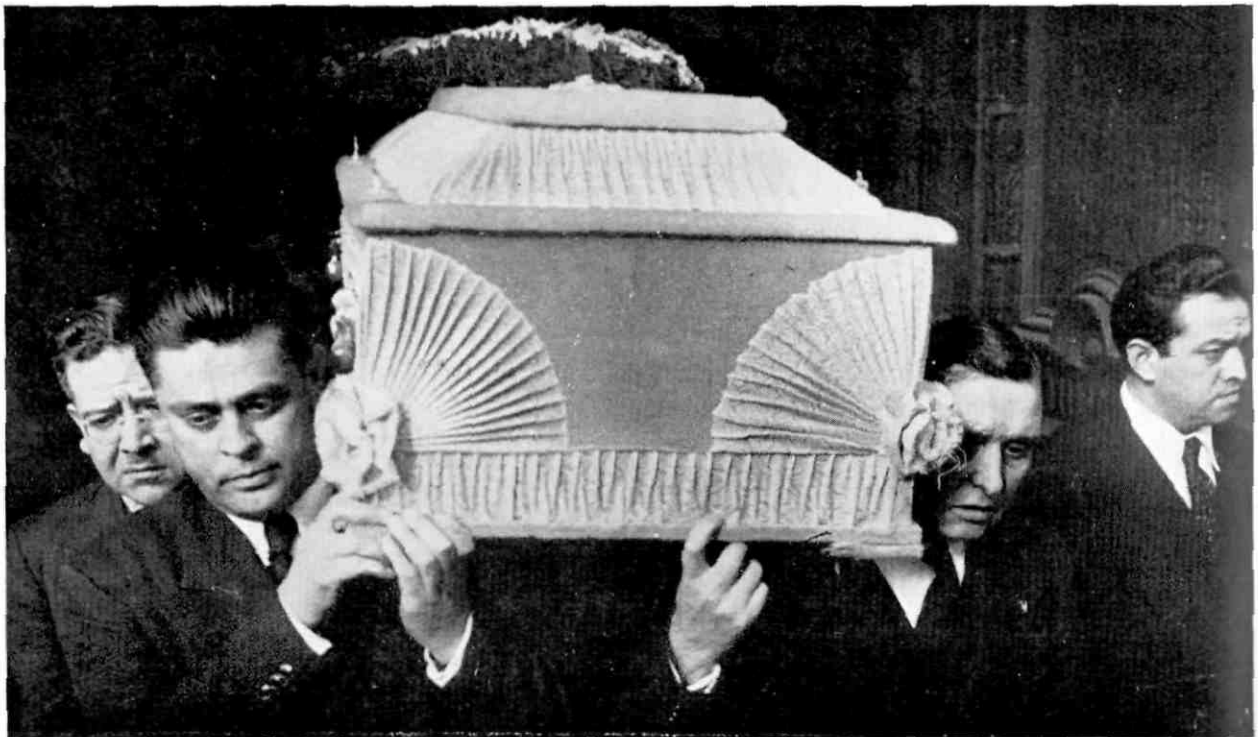
When this has been achieved, the State will no longer be a symbol of aggression, it will become the temple of civilisation. Only then will the workers of each country obtain what is now denied them: a "Fatherland" not a fatherland vying with other fatherlands

in acts of barbarism and leaving her honour in the hands of her generals, but a fatherland emulous of others only in respect of cultural achievement, and entrusting her honour to men whose intelligent rule will be a boon and blessing to mankind. In those days, the loss of a battle or a war will not be regarded as ignominious; those countries only will be held up to dishonour which have abandoned a single citizen to his fate.

No war but this war for peace is worthy of honour; for all other wars destroy civilisation and ruin mankind. Other wars condemn nations to decades of misery and degradation and foster a universal spirit of hatred.

From address to Peace Congress, 1922

BEARING EDO FIMMEN TO HIS LAST REST



FIDEL VELASQUEZ

General Secretary, Mexican Federation of Workers

GONZALEZ PEÑA

President, General Union of Workers of Spain

WORKERS OF ALL RACES, UNITE!

Only if it is possible to prevent the European exploiters, that common foe of white and coloured workers, from securing and ensuring in the colonial and semi-colonial countries the possibility of unlimited exploitation—a possibility which has been partially forfeited in Europe, and will be forfeited more and more as the workers become more class conscious and more powerful—will it be possible to prevent the coloured workers from being used as a permanent screw on the conditions of white workers. One of two things: either working conditions of the coloured workers will be brought to the level of those of the white workers, or the conditions of the latter will be forced down to the level of the coloured workers. Consequently it is of the highest interest to the white workers that the workers in colonial and semi-colonial countries should, in protection against the white and native exploiting class, join together class-conscious organizations similar to those of their fellow workers in Europe and fight with them shoulder to shoulder, if possible within one and the same international organization.

This means that the European unions should in the future and with the least possible delay set right what has so far been neglected, that is, should closely watch happenings in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and, above all, show by their actions their interest in the life and labour of their coloured class fellows.

I know that this is no light task. We must not only free ourselves from feelings of race superiority, we must try to understand a point of view, a state of mind, conditions, entirely different from our own. Above all, we must remove the comprehensible suspicion with

which the workers of colonial and semi-colonial countries regard all members of the white race.

I have just said that this suspiciousness is easy to understand. For centuries the coloured worker—Hindu, Chinaman, Arab, Negro—has only known the whites as oppressors or agents of oppressors. Whether they came as representatives of the government of the mother country, as planters, merchants or industrialists, as officials, employees, workers, soldiers or policemen, invariably they stood apart from the native population, to whom they were enemies, exploiters or agents of exploiters, though of the exploited class themselves. It is naturally difficult for coloured workers to believe that white men should come to them with other than selfish intentions. To persuade the workers of colonial and semi-colonial countries of this will be, at least at first, one of the hardest of tasks when, in the common interests of the workers of the colonies and of the mother country, attempts are made to encourage and support the setting up of trade-union organizations based on the principle of the class struggle. We must realize that for a number of years much time, much energy and much money will have to be expended without the assurance of immediate or tangible results. We shall have to give counsel, help and support when asked for it, without pressing ourselves upon those concerned. We shall have to recognize and carry out what has been laid down in our Constitution, namely, that every organization belonging to the I.T.F. shall retain independence in its own country.

Speech at I.T.F. Congress, Stockholm, 1928

A CRITIQUE OF LABOUR

In the I.T.F. "News Letter" of 1st February, 1923, there appeared a much discussed article by Fimmen entitled "Black January," which dealt with the situation caused by the military occupation of the Ruhr Basin by French and Belgian troops. We reproduce those parts that deal with the attitude of his colleagues in the movement. Fimmen claims no exception for himself.

"The working classes are asleep. They are much too indifferent, they are not prepared, they are incapable of energetic international action which transcends their own little personal interests. 'Are the leaders to blame?' 'The answer is both yes and no . . ."

"Labour leaders are the products of their environment; they come from the ranks of the working class itself. They are not very much better than the masses that produce them, nor can they do very much more than the masses wish them to do. Nevertheless, if the fault is not wholly theirs, they are not entirely free from blame. . . ."

"Other duties, and important ones at that, have taken up their time. Wage movements, attempts to shorten working hours, agitation for social legislation, election work, and many other things all these are useful, even important; but what in these days is necessary above all other things is the enlightenment of the working classes as to the necessity of international unity in thought and work, of the international struggle against capitalism and imperialism which is more important than all others, and finally of the international struggle against all wars and threats of wars. This, all this, has been neglected entirely or, at the best, has taken second or third place.

"This month of January, 1923, has shown clearly the consequences of the leaders' failings.

"And if events take their natural course, a course which must inevitably lead to a new imperialist war, the working classes will allow themselves to be driven again to the shambles, singing, praying, and cursing, to the greater glory of OIL, in spite of all the fine speeches and inspiring declarations and resolutions. 'Unless . . .!'

"Unless those who call themselves socialists and internationalists do their duty, and their whole duty, by telling the truth, and the whole truth, to the working classes, regardless of consequences; being ready the while to make all possible sacrifices themselves, and urging the workers on to battle, battle by every means, however extreme, and to the revolt, national and international, against the capitalist regime which is planning this new slaughter. If there is still time to do so! . . ."

"The I.T.F., its leaders, and its component organizations have perhaps less cause for self-reproach than many others. In every international action hitherto undertaken the transport workers, the seamen and the railwaymen have taken the lead.

"But the I.T.F. was also unready. Its affiliated organizations were not prepared for the fight. Its members thought, and still think, firstly and foremostly of their own interests. Or of what they deem to be their interests. . . ."

"Let us at least try to prevent the outbreak of a new war, and to open up to the working classes the road to their emancipation.

"Make ready for the revolutionary struggle!

FORESIGHT

At the Congress of the International Transport-workers' Federation at Prague in August, 1932, Fimmen gave the following forecast on the world situation and its consequences for the I.T.F.

"Comrades, do not let us underestimate the danger any longer. Our Congress is meeting at a grave, very grave time for the working class, both economically and politically. And I do not hesitate to state emphatically that if there are grounds for the statement of

Comrade Forstner (Austria) this morning that the present Congress is the least happy ever held by the I.T.F., one may go further and say that it is not impossible that this Congress will prove to have been the last held by the I.T.F. in its present constitution unless the workers in all countries realize the nearness of the menace and at the eleventh hour find the strength and the means to quell the growth of reaction. Only then will it be possible to get the better of Fascism. . . ."

COURAGE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Fimmen wrote in June, 1923: "It was the I.T.F., when another war against Soviet Russia seemed not unlikely in the early part of this year, that warned the working classes of Europe, and bound its own members to ceaseless vigilance, so that in case of necessity they could, as in 1920, prevent war by blocking the transport of munitions and war material.

"It was in consequence of this last effort that the Executive of the I.T.F. received from the All-Russian Unions of Transport Workers, Railway Workers and Seamen a proposal to convene a joint meeting to examine the possibility of common action between the I.T.F. and the Russian Unions in the fight against war and reaction.

"Anxious, as always, to further the unity of the world's transport workers that is more than ever necessary in these days, the Executive Committee of the I.T.F. not only raised no objections to the proposal of their Russian comrades, but seized the opportunity with both hands. After a certain amount of preliminary correspondence the meeting took place in Berlin on 23rd and 24th May. . . ."

This conference was a milestone in the history of the International Labour Movement in so far as it indicated a marked deviation from the road previously followed. Fimmen stood for his convictions and showed that he was quite prepared to take the consequences as is clearly stated in his own words in an article on the Conference at Berlin:

. . . "I must end with a few remarks of an entirely personal nature. It can hardly be a secret to anybody that I have been using all my influence and all my strength to bring about an understanding with the Russian workers. Nobody in the I.T.F. is more responsible than I am for what took place at Berlin, for the fact that the conference was held at all, and for the publication of the manifestoes and resolutions. In so far as it was still necessary to do so I made this point perfectly clear at the General Council Meeting. I must declare here that if the I.F.T. did anything wrong then I am to blame, and if a scapegoat is needed it can be none other than I. . . ."

. . . "I wish to repeat word for word what I said at the end of my statement at the General Council Meeting:

"I say it openly: whatever happens, and whatever decision you may come to, I shall continue my efforts to bring about the unity of the proletariat. I shall continue to strive, as I have done up to now, to arouse the working class to fight against war, militarism and capitalism. I consider that it is my duty wherever I may be, within the I.T.F. or outside of it; so long as I am a revolutionary socialist and so long as I am able to work for the proletariat; to sacrifice my whole strength, and my life if necessary, to the spirit and the convictions which have moved me in the last few years; because I am convinced that it is only by fighting the class war regardless of cost that the labour movement can reach the goal that lies before it."

ON A PREVIOUS VISIT TO MEXICO

Addressing the Latin-American Workers' Congress, 5th to 8th September, 1938



Front row (right to left): JOHN L. LEWIS (U.S.A.), LÉON JOUHAUX (France), EDO FIMMEN
CHARLES LINDLEY (President, I.T.F.), A. STAAL (I.L.O.)