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THE WORLD TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

By J. H. OLDENBROEK

Acting General Secretary of the I.T.F.

THE World Trade Union Conference, which originally was to have taken place in June, 1944, met in London from 6th to 17th February last. Convened by the British Trades Union Congress, this world gathering exceeded the expectations which were placed in it, both as regards the range of countries represented and the unanimity and fruitfulness of its discussions.

It embodied its conclusions in a series of Declarations which touched on many aspects of the world situation and showed that the workers of the free countries are alive to their opportunity and their responsibility. " This World Conference," says a passage in the Declaration on Labour's attitude towards the social and economic problems of the peace, " deems it essential that responsible and qualified representatives of the Trade Union Movement shall be associated with the Peace Settlement in all its phases," and it goes on to call for effective trade union representation in the Security Council, the Social and Economic Council and the other machinery of world organization to be created for the realization of the United Nations' peace aims.

The same Declaration recognizes the justice of enlisting German resources in men and materials for repairing the destruction caused by Germany in the countries she attacked, provided this is done without injury to standards of labour in the world at large and without reducing the German workers themselves to slavery. In this connection the complete and final liquidation of the German Labour Front is demanded and the importance stressed of encouraging a new democratic trade union movement in Germany which for some time to come should function under international trade union supervision.

In a Declaration which placed on record the role Labour has played in the Allied war effort and affirmed its determination to play that role until final victory is won, the World Conference formulated a number of principles and demands held to be conducive to that end. " Full mobilization of the workers," says the Declaration, " is inseparable from the defence of their vital economic needs. The Trade Unions must, therefore, fight to establish and maintain wage levels consistent with adequate living standards ; equal pay for equal work without discrimination because of nationality, race or sex, or against minority groups ; better housing and social insurance, the proper rationing of food supplies, and the strict enforcement of all collective agreements and Government orders and decrees for the protection of workers."

Realizing the need of succouring the starving populations of Europe and concerned to see that this need should not be used as a political weapon and that there should be no repetition of the political errors which have been committed in liberated territory, the Conference declared that the policies in the

countries concerned must include "(*a*) the immediate establishment of the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, religion, political association, and the right to organize Labour Unions; (*b*) the formation of Governments which have the support of the people; (*c*) the provision of foodstuffs, supplies and raw materials to meet the needs of the people and thus enable the full utilization of the man-power and productive facilities in these areas."

The Allied Governments were powerfully urged to pursue a stricter policy towards Spain, Argentina and other Fascist countries which, under the guise of neutrality, are aiding the Axis, and also to see that neutral countries, such as Sweden and Switzerland, should not be used for sending supplies to Hitler's Germany or for harbouring war criminals.

The World Conference spoke of the great principles which have been discussed at the various meetings between the leading Allied statesmen. What eventuated at these meetings is at present but vaguely known. When the official decisions become more precisely known, organized labour will have to give them the closest attention from both the national and the international point of view. Meanwhile the World Conference called for the creation of world machinery by the peace-loving nations and the denial of recognition to countries whose political and economic systems are opposed to the great principles. Among the essentials to be realized the Conference named removal of the economic causes of war, elimination of international cartels and monopolies harmful to the public interest, and abolition of the system of colonies, dependencies and subject countries as spheres of economic exploitation.

The work of the Conference culminated in a Declaration on post-war reconstruction, to which the Trade Union Movement is prepared to make a full contribution. The concrete proposals made for the handling of the problems of the post-war period include: an adequate measure of public control and direction, with trade union participation, to carry out the process of industrial reconversion and avoid inflation and a speculative profit boom such as occurred at the end of the last war; planned utilization of the community's productive resources, ensuring on the one hand living standards rising with increasing productivity and on the other suitable jobs at adequate rates of pay and the possibility of a speedy introduction of a maximum working week of forty hours, without prejudice to more favourable standards; action to safeguard the public against monopoly exploitation; effective international co-operation both in the political and economic fields.

Among the high hopes raised by the Conference is that of the formation of a World Trade Union Federation, in which trade union organizations all over the world will play a part in safeguarding the interests of the workers they represent and in finding solutions for the grave problems of the post-war period.

Similar hopes existed on the morrow of the last war. Then two of the principal countries of the world, the United States and Soviet Russia, stood aside. Had these two shared in the tasks which now were undertaken on a narrower basis, there might have arisen an International Trade Union Movement so powerful in numbers and enlightened in outlook, that it could have been a decisive factor in world affairs, capable of making a solid contribution to the solution of the world's difficulties and of checking the rise of Fascism and National Socialism and the nations' drift to war.

Into the circumstances which made world unity increasingly impossible of achievement once the post-war opportunity had been missed, we will not enter here; they represent a chapter in the labour history of the inter-war period which is only too well known. At the same time it is a chapter which must not be forgotten, if we are to avoid a repetition of history now that opportunity presents itself once again.

The opportunity may be said to be greater than the last one. The war which is now in its final phase has inflicted upon mankind horrors which beggar description. But the struggle against those horrors has united the peoples to an unprecedented degree and has brought about a measure of co-operation which has never been witnessed before. If this spirit of world co-operation can be further developed and prolonged into the post-war period, there are justified grounds for hoping for the emergence of a world-wide organization which will abolish the sources of rivalries between nations.

Within the system of world co-operation, an indispensable feature is a Trade Union International freely representing those who produce the world's wealth and qualified to co-operate on a partnership basis with other sections of society in the promotion of the common good. The plans for the creation of such a Trade Union International will materialize given a realistic appreciation that the common programme must be based on the highest common factor and that no section must force its own political conceptions on the others.

The World Conference in the nature of things bore a preliminary character. The fact that it was conceived as an open conference limited the amount of preparatory work which could be done, with the result that there was inevitably a certain amount of overlapping and incoherence in the work at the committee stage. The Conference was, so to speak, a prelude, and the conferences which will follow it will have the task of codifying the results reached in the first approach. Meanwhile there was adopted a Charter of Basic Trade Union and Workers' Rights which will command the assent of workers everywhere and which proclaims principles which should find universal application irrespective of nationality, race or creed:

"(*a*) Workpeople shall be free to organize themselves in Trade Unions and to engage freely in all normal Trade Union activities, including that of collective bargaining; (*b*) Workpeople shall be free to establish co-operatives and any other mutual aid organizations; (*c*) There shall be freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion and political association; (*d*) Every form of political, economic or social discrimination based on race, creed, colour or sex shall be eliminated, and in this sense equal pay for equal work shall be established; (*e*) There shall be equality of educational and vocational opportunities for all people; (*f*) There shall be suitable employment

available at adequate protection in all the circumstances of life where this is required to guarantee social and economic security to every citizen."

After the conclusions of the London World Conference have been referred to the participating countries for consideration and endorsement, there will be a further World Conference, which will frame the definitive international post-war policy of Labour and at the same time determine the organic structure of the International Trade Union Movement of the future.

It is essential that this International Movement shall be world-wide in scope in the real and full meaning of the term. This presupposes first, as between different countries, a willingness to co-operate in a spirit of understanding and compromise, and secondly, within countries where the trade union movement has not yet succeeded in achieving national unity, a willingness to sink differences at the national level to the extent needed to attain unity at the international level.

On the practical side a warning may be uttered against the dangers of too ambitious a World Federation. Apart from the dangers inherent in an over-centralization of power and over-concentration of functions, it will in the most favourable circumstances take time for the new organization to get into its stride. It would be premature, therefore, to scrap or neglect the machinery already in existence for the handling of workers' international interests and thus create a vacuum at a time when it is more important than ever that the voice of Labour should be heard in world affairs.

So the position of the I.T.F. towards the World Conference and its outcome is clear. It sympathizes wholeheartedly with all plans for creating the most effective possible structure for the Trade Union International. At the present stage it conceives of this as a World Federation of National Trade Union Movements. The existence of such an aggregation of national movements does not dispense with the need for international organizations, such as the I.T.F. and other International Trade Secretariats, which are specialized and experienced in safeguarding particular interests which cannot be adequately served by the general machinery. If these specialized and autonomous bodies are, by active and organized co-operation, linked with a World Federation, there can emerge the form of international working class organization which will make Labour a powerful and constructive force in the world after the war.

SESSION OF THE JOINT MARITIME COMMISSION

The thirteenth session of the Joint Maritime Commission which met in London from the 8th to the 12th January last was the first test case of the shipowners' determination or otherwise to see that the promises and praise which have been lavished on seafarers during the years of the war are translated into something more tangible.

Although little change seems to have come over the attitude of shipowning circles since the Joint Maritime Commission was set up in 1920 within the framework of the I.L.O. ; although on this occasion again they showed extreme circumspection towards all proposals to improve the seafarers' lot and were at pains to be non-committal rather than constructive, the meeting in London was not devoid of results. Its unanimous conclusion that every effort should be made to secure the widest possible effective agreement among maritime countries to ensure the best practicable conditions of employment for seafarers is without doubt a notable achievement.

The Joint Maritime Commission was welcomed to its session, the second in London and also the second to be held during the war, by Mr. Ernest Bevin, the British Minister of Labour, and Mr. Philip Noel-Baker, Parliamentary Secretary to the British Ministry of War Transport. "Throughout the war," said Mr. Bevin, "the merchant seamen rendered inestimable service. Their courage, enterprise and resourcefulness must never be forgotten," and he thought that "the intention of the British Government and of all concerned with seafarers was to ensure that advances made in war-time in the field of welfare would not be lost when the war is over." When Mr. Noel-Baker spoke he recalled his recent statement in the House of Commons that the Seafarers' Charter which the Commission was about to discuss was regarded by the British Government as a document of great importance.

This Charter, indeed, embodying proposals drawn up jointly by the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, and adopted by an International Seafarers' Conference in London in July, 1944, was the only item down for discussion at the session, besides the Director's Report, which always figures on the agenda of the Commission.

During the discussion on the latter item, the Seafarers' Group put forward a resolution deprecating the action of the Allied Governments who, ignoring the solemn undertakings given at the New York and Philadelphia Labour Conferences, had held an international conference on shipping affairs without consulting either shipowners or seafarers.

On this resolution, however, the owners were not prepared to vote, declaring that there was nothing from which owners or men could deduce the right to participate in discussions of the kind that had taken place. Alive as they are to the important bearing of these discussions on their own interests, seafarers find it difficult to believe that modesty is the explanation of the owners' reluctance to tackle the governments on this issue. Rather would it appear to lend colour to the suspicion of some that if the

owners are willing to forgo direct representation in these conferences it is only because, for all their claim of being, as their main spokesman put it, " the forgotten men " of the industry, they are no doubt represented in the capacity of government officials.

The willingness of the shipowners to reaffirm instead the resolution adopted by the J.M.C. in 1942, which demanded representation of both categories of shipping interests at the Peace Conference, did not satisfy the Seafarers' Group. Events since 1942 have shown that the Peace Conference may not be the most important of those which are held after the war. It is indeed likely that the peace settlement takes the shape of a whole series of specialized conferences, in relation to which the resolution in question might well prove to be of little value.

The divergence between the men's and the shipowners' representatives regarding the necessity of direct relations with the governments also found expression in the attitude adopted towards the composition of the Joint Maritime Commission itself. Considering that labour conditions are becoming increasingly the responsibility of governments as well as the business of the employers and workers concerned, the Seafarers' Group felt that the time had come to include government representatives in the Joint Maritime Commission. Although direct international negotiations between labour and employers might be the most effective method in handling some questions, the tripartite structure, they held, should operate as the general principle.

When the Commission met in 1942, it invited the I.L.O. to study, and if practicable, prepare an International Maritime Charter setting out guiding principles for an international minimum standard applicable to seafarers of all nationalities. A sub-committee consisting of four representatives of either side was appointed to advise the I.L.O. in this and other questions. It was arising out of the meetings of this sub-committee that the I.T.F. and the I.M.M.O.A., with the assent of the I.L.O. and the owners, undertook to prepare the document which has since become known as the International Seafarers' Charter.

In presenting the case for this Charter, the Seafarers' Group made it clear that they did not suggest that all the proposals it contained were suitable for embodiment in International Conventions. Some, indeed, could be considered with a view to such embodiment in a Convention or Recommendation, others could be made the subject of International Agreements, while others again would require such an amount of preparatory work that it would be some years before something workable could be attained. Consequently there were various ways in which the Charter could be dealt with, but whatever the procedure adopted, the Seafarers' Group insisted on immediate acceptance of the principles of the Charter and a general discussion on the various chapters.

The owners admitted, at the meeting of the Commission, that the Charter was a good basis for further discussion, but they did not think that its proposals could be usefully discussed in detail at the present stage. Firstly, they pleaded that they would have to consult their experts before the various questions could be discussed with profit. Further, they urged that several of the members on the Shipowners' Group were out of touch with their constituents owing to the occupation of their home country by the Germans, and were unauthorized to enter into commitments until contact had been restored.

The Seafarers' Group replied that many of the questions raised in the Charter had received all the expert attention they required, inasmuch as they had been under consideration ever since 1920, and as the I.L.O. had declared that it would be possible to hold a full maritime session of the Conference in 1945 already, this was merely another of the owners' delaying tactics.

After an exhaustive discussion in plenary session, the Commission unanimously adopted the following resolution :

" The Joint Maritime Commission has had before it the proposals for an International Seafarers' Charter framed by the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association. The Commission is unanimous in its view that every effort should be made to secure the widest possible effective agreement among maritime countries to ensure the best practical conditions of employment for seafarers, and regards the proposals in the Charter as a valuable contribution to this end.

" The Joint Maritime Commission, therefore, makes the following recommendations to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office :

(1) That a preparatory Tripartite Technical Conference of Maritime countries be held in October, 1945, to prepare drafts on the following subjects : (*a*) Wages, Hours, Manning ; (*b*) Leave ; (*c*) Accommodation ; (*d*) Food and Catering ; (*e*) Recognition of Seafarers' Organizations.

(2) That these drafts of the Technical Conference should be submitted to a special Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference to be convened as soon as practicable thereafter—such Maritime Session to be separated by a substantial interval from any general session of the Conference.

(3) That meanwhile the Governing Body authorize special committees of the Joint Maritime Commission with the addition of Government representatives to examine and report upon the following subjects : (*a*) Continuous Employment ; (*b*) Social Insurance ; (*c*) Entry, Training and Promotion."

Anticipating that the Governing Body would accept the Commission's recommendations, the two sides nominated four members each for the two committees set up to deal, one with Continuous Employment, Entry, Training and Promotion, and the other with Social Insurance. On the former Committee the representatives appointed by the seafarers are Messrs. Coombs (Great Britain), Haugen (Norway), Jarman (Great Britain), and Lundeberg (U.S.A.), and on the latter Messrs. Becu (Belgium), Coombs (Great Britain), Ehlers (France), and Oldenbroek (Netherlands).

The Shipowners' Group further put forward the following resolution on Safety at Sea, with which the Seafarers' Group fully associated itself :

"The Joint Maritime Commission welcomes the proposal that the 1929 International Convention on Safety at Sea should be revised by a Technical Diplomatic Conference in the light of recent experience and developments.

"It urges that at that Conference (*a*) shipowners' and seafarers' organizations should be represented in the national delegation; and (*b*) the International Labour Organization should be represented by a small delegation from the Joint Maritime Commission."

In anticipation also of this proposal being accepted, the two Groups each nominated two representatives to attend at the Conference mentioned. The seafarers' representatives on this Committee are Messrs. Perkins (Great Britain) and Möller (Denmark).

An interesting proposal submitted by the Seafarers' Group, and one favourably received by the Acting Director of the I.L.O., who was present while it was discussed, recommended that the Joint Maritime Commission should be authorized "to complete whenever possible international collective agreements between shipowners and seafarers." The obvious advantage of this in by-passing the slow and cumbrous procedure of passing conventions was also conceded by the shipowners, who agreed with the proposal in principle, but were unable to vote on it with the present composition of their Group.

The thirteenth session of the Joint Maritime Commission may not have given the seafarers all they hoped for, but it nevertheless was for them an opportunity to impress on the owners that this time they mean business. The organizations of the officers and seamen are firmly resolved to secure the minimum demands which have been formulated in their Charter. They are most willing, as was emphasized at one of the conferences where the Charter was elaborated, to utilize the machinery of the I.L.O. for their purpose, but other ways must be sought if that does not give satisfaction. Without any wish to resort to threats, the seafarers, who have rendered such loyal service during the war and will go on rendering it until peace has returned, feel that once the war is over they will be entitled to stand up for their demands with all the means at their disposal in a struggle in which they have the conviction that their claims are as practicable as they are reasonable and in which they know they can count on the support and sympathy of all classes of transport workers.

T. L.

CO-OPERATIVE TRANSPORT IN PALESTINE

By P. GOROCHOVSKY

The General Federation of Jewish Labour in Palestine (commonly known as *Histadruth*) has been engaged in the organisation of passenger transport in Palestine for fully fifteen years. When it entered the field it found it in possession of individual owner-drivers operating a system of cut-throat competition with primitive equipment and entirely without organisation. As a result the public was not receiving the service it required. What happened after the last war was that men who had formerly been plying for hire with horse-driven cabs, bought up second-hand automobiles. During the immigration of 1925–27 a number of small capitalists came to the country from Poland and some of them invested in second-hand omnibuses, took a quick course in driving, and took their places in a queue, waiting for passengers.

When the *Histadruth* entered on this sphere it was clear that the future of transport depended on co-operation, but it was not easy to make this idea popular among the drivers. I remember meetings of owner-drivers, whom we brought together for the purpose of trying to establish a transport co-operative, where we were asked questions such as these: "Where are you going to get a man who can be relied on not to abscond with the daily takings?" That was the kind of attitude that we came across at the time. But the co-operatives were started, and to-day, in place of a few competing owner-drivers, we have in operation a country-wide system of co-operative passenger transport working in organised fashion and at a high level of technical development.

In the Jewish sector 98 per cent of all buses are organised in eleven co-operative societies, varying in size and importance from *Egged*, which employs 600 workers, to the Huleh Transport Service, with only five buses at its disposal. There are only five or six Jewish owner-drivers in the whole of Palestine who are outside the framework of the bus co-operatives.

Sixty-eight per cent of all the buses in Palestine are in Jewish possession, though so far as seating capacity is concerned, the figure is as much as 80 per cent. The average Jewish-owned bus has a seating capacity of twenty-seven and upwards, while the average Arab-owned bus has a seating capacity of seventeen to twenty-seven.

During the war the Jewish passenger transport industry, owing to the shortage of vehicles, tyres and spare parts, has had to use existing equipment to its utmost capacity. Fully 90 per cent of all vehicles are on the road, which contrasts with the normal state of affairs in which 20–25 per cent of vehicles are out of commission undergoing repair and overhaul. This could only be done by exercising the utmost care in the treatment of vehicles.

In the eleven transport co-operatives there are upwards of 1,000 members, who employ a further 700 hired workers. Most of the hired workers are employed in garages, and only 10 per cent of them as drivers.

In 1942, the gross income of the transport co-operatives was nearly £P2,000,000. This was the result of long development, accompanied by numerous difficulties,

both social and economic. To-day most of the co-operatives have succeeded in repaying all their debts, and some even have cash balances to their credit. During the period of growth the members of the co-operatives were for the most part imbued with a spirit of responsibility for the welfare of their concerns. For years they contented themselves with a minimum payment in order to make it possible for their co-operatives to consolidate economically.

Economic progress was, however, accompanied by the emergence of serious social problems. The statutory regulations of the various co-operatives in most cases give the *Histadruth* certain rights of supervision, but these rights are rather limited. When the *Histadruth* turned its attention to transport problems it found it necessary to negotiate even with such people who were not members of the *Histadruth*, for in no other way could the transport question be solved on an all-inclusive basis. Thus there were some co-operatives which joined the *Histadruth* only four years ago. In others one finds that though by a large majority of 85 per cent decisions were taken compelling all members to belong to the *Histadruth*, there are dissident members who refuse to accept the trade union membership card even though their dues are paid by the co-operative thus enabling them to enjoy the services of the Workers' Sick Fund (*Kupath Holim*).

Consequently the *Histadruth*, in the present state of affairs, is not always in a position to prevent the growth of practices which are not in accordance with co-operative principles. For example, in all the co-operatives the custom has grown up of accepting new members only on the payment of an agreed sum for membership rights. Before the war, this sum varied from £600 to £800. Clearly there are very few workers who are in a position to provide that sum, and as a result a good many of the new members were drawn from middle-class circles. The *Histadruth* did succeed in getting a certain number of workers accepted as members of transport co-operatives, even though they did not have the money required, but in general the problem has not been solved.

The development of the transport co-operatives has also made the problem of hired labour more acute. In the early years this problem existed only in very small proportions. The co-operatives were making use of private garages and were thus able to make do almost entirely with the services of their own members. As they grew in size, however, it became necessary for the co-operatives to establish garages of their own, and as a result hired labour began to be used in increasing numbers. The skilled mechanics employed by the co-operatives were normally not in a position to obtain membership rights ; at one time they were quite content with the position, for their wages were higher than those received by full members.

The size of the undertaking is an important factor in the efficiency of co-operative organisation. It is hardly possible for a member to be fully acquainted with every aspect of the co-operative's activities, and to have a feeling of responsibility for its existence and development, if its proportions exceed a certain limit. In a co-operative with as many as 250 members there are probably not even 10 per cent who feel themselves to be in a position of controlling the welfare of their concerns. The natural tendency is for responsibility to be left in the hands of a small number of people who are interested in every detail, and from amongst whom the management is invariably elected. That does not mean that the management can do as it pleases. It always remains under the influence of the body of the membership.

Finally, there are purely economic and organisational problems. The eleven existing co-operative transport societies have grown to such an extent that there is a certain amount of overlapping. The natural trend of development is towards the creation of a single country-wide transport organisation. This is essential first of all for economic reasons. There are some vehicles which can only be used on short runs, so that if there were full centralisation it would be possible to use vehicles rationally. The same applies to garages, both local and central. Yet the establishment of a single transport company would raise serious problems connected with the need for public control of what is a vital factor in the economic life of the country.

These social, organisational and economic problems are being widely discussed in relation to the future of Palestine's transport system both within the *Histadruth* and within the various transport co-operatives.

FRENCH TRANSPORT SINCE LIBERATION

The data which follow have been extracted from a memorandum on the situation in France which was presented to the recent World Trade Union Conference by the delegation of the Confédération Générale du Travail.

Railways. More than 570 control posts and signal stations and boxes were destroyed or damaged ; between 1,900 and 2,000 workshops were destroyed, 20 out of 66 sub-electric stations were destroyed. More than 1,300,000 square metres of station premises, about one-fifth of the total, were destroyed, and 15 out of 19 marshalling yards were demolished. Approximately 2,350 kilometres of railway lines were destroyed, that is to say, about 10 per cent of the total.

The proportion of rolling stock destroyed was even greater. At the beginning of September it was estimated that out of 11,000 railway engines (both steam and electric) less than 3,000 steam engines were usable. More than 7,500 were gravely damaged. At the same date there remained only 253,000 trucks out of 530,000 in 1939. Of the remaining trucks at least 5,000 were badly damaged and another 25,000 beyond repair.

The passenger rolling stock position was little better. The September 1st inventory showed that some 5,800 carriages were in reasonable condition, 5,300 badly

damaged and 900 destroyed. A comparison with the pre-war figure of 27,000 carriages shows that approximately 15,000 carriages were transferred to Germany.

This gives a picture of the catastrophic state of the French railways in September, 1944. The *Fédération Nationale des Cheminots* (the French railwaymen's union) realised this situation, and immediately after liberation, at the beginning of September, called on the General Confederation of Labour to help them make effective their programme for the reconstruction of the whole railway system, in order that the French railways would be able to contribute their proper share to the country's war effort, provide the necessary transport facilities for the Allied armies and the French army and play their proper part in the economic reconstruction of France, and the feeding of her population, especially that of the great cities.

The following figures will give some indication of what has already been achieved in this field. By November 20th all the railway lines had been repaired, so far as actual breaches in the line were concerned. On November 21st, the Orleans viaduct was in use ; on November 23rd the Maintenon viaduct ; on December 1st the bridge at Verberie. Since then, nearly all the other important bridges have been repaired. By October 31st, 30 kilometres of railway line had been fully repaired and to-day practically the whole system is usable. As far as rolling stock is concerned, the work was put in hand at great speed from September onwards, and in September itself 680 engines were put into order. In October, another 1,300 engines were repaired in the workshops, at a rate of about 50 a working day. By January 1st, 1945, 6,000 steam engines and 913 electric engines were in use. 35,000 trucks were repaired in September, 37,000 in October, and 65,000 in November. The latter figure is pretty well a ceiling figure, since repairs being done now are to the most badly damaged trucks. But there are already 170,000 available.

The above figures give an indication of the efforts that have been made by the railwaymen to put the French railway system back into proper working condition. In spite of all this, however, it is clear that the total number of engines and trucks that remain to us is far too small to be able to cope effectively with the transport of the Allied and the French armies, the economic rebuilding of France, and the feeding of the civilian population. The following are the reasons for this position :

(1) 30 to 40 per cent of all the engines now available are out of action for considerable periods while being overhauled, since they have already been used to the limit of their capacity.

(2) About two-thirds of the Allied military needs are covered with our rolling stock. This means at least 50 per cent of all the available rolling stock in the country.

It is clear that Allied assistance to increase our rolling stock would be extremely useful, for a greater number of vehicles enables more consistent overhauls to be effected, with consequent increase of efficiency. But it is equally clear that the position cannot be changed unless the Allies contribute an increasing number of engines and vehicles for their own military needs : this would diminish the number we are asked for, and thus increase the number available for the rehabilitation of the country. The Americans already use some American engines which are fed by fuel oil. It would be helpful if the army were to provide a sufficiency of the necessary fuel oil and increase the number of these engines, which are relatively few at the moment. It would also be necessary to increase the number of trucks, for our total of 75,000 is completely insufficient.

(3) The degree of collaboration between ourselves and our Allies so far achieved is not sufficient to ensure the maximum output from the railway system, such as it is, for our methods and theirs are different. This collaboration must be strengthened.

In order to increase the rate of repairs, we need still greater help from the Allies in the way of raw materials, especially non-ferrous and anti-friction metals. We also need about 3,000 machine tools to bring our repair shops up to a reasonable level of equipment, even though we have recently obtained a few consignments from laden trucks seized from the Germans.

The National Federation of Railway Workers is putting every effort into the reconstruction of the railways so that they can play an effective part in the war effort of France and her Allies in the reconstruction of our country and in the feeding of our armies and civilian population. Their role at the present time is a decisive one. This is why we feel that the suggestions that we have made in this memorandum should be carefully examined and put into effect ; for we are confident that they would make an important contribution to the common cause for which all the United Nations are fighting.

Road Transport. The position of road transport is at least as bad. In 1939 there were 115,000 public transport vehicles. In 1944, at the time of liberation, there were only 65,000. On top of this most of the tyres are worn out and the condition of the stock is very bad. Factories that could help have been badly hit by the bombing, yet they would be able to produce an appreciable amount if the Americans would provide us with the raw materials to make tyres. Such a measure would help us to bridge the gap to some extent.

In order to get over immediate difficulties, however, it will be necessary to import lorries and tyres. According to the plan worked out in consultation with the Allies, France ought to receive some 12,500 lorries. So far 1,500 have been sent. The imports of rubber should have reached 25,000 tons. None has arrived.

Inland Navigation. River transport has also suffered to a very great extent. The Germans requisitioned or sank a considerable number of barges. Others have been bombed, while others, again, were sunk through sabotage on our part. Finally, most of the tugs were sunk by the Germans. We must add to these losses all the others that have affected the canals, such as bridges and locks that have been blown up.

Shipping and Ports. In 1939 the tonnage amounted to 2,962,975. We now have only 849,110 tons of shipping, and of this some 255,076 are still sailing with non-French crews.

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POST-WAR ORGANIZATION OF EUROPEAN INLAND TRANSPORT

Report of the European Transport Committee of the I.T.F.

The Report on the organization of post-war European inland transport, prepared by the European Transport Committee of the I.T.F. at the request of the Management Committee, is the result of eight meetings of the E.T.C., spread over a period of almost ten months. The first meeting was held on 30th November, 1943, the last on 19th September, 1944. The Management Committee subsequently accepted the report as it stands.

Introduction. At the first meeting of the E.T.C. its Chairman, Mr. J. Marchbank, made the following statement as to the inception and tasks of the Committee :

" The International Railwaymen's Conference, held in London on 28th and 29th September last, requested the I.T.F. to set up a committee to deal with the European transport problem ; for it was felt that whatever the economic and political situation which might emerge after the war, the trade unions would have to demand—as many of them are demanding already—a say in the re-organization and the operation of transport, and that the trade unions should prepare themselves for the task of subjecting the problem to preliminary study. It is in accordance with the request of the International Railwaymen's Conference that this committee has been constituted with the terms of reference as laid down by the Management Committee of the I.T.F."

The terms of reference to which the Chairman referred were the following :

(1) Is it necessary, desirable and possible to facilitate, to improve and to promote international traffic in Europe and to secure that the several means of transport occupy the place due to them within the system as a whole and to prevent the natural flow of traffic from being hampered by national measures ?

(2) What measures need to be taken and what authorities need to be directed or newly created to bring about collaboration between the countries of Europe in order to secure that those sectors of the transport networks in European countries, including ancillary, natural and constructed works, which are or may be calculated to play a role in the international transport of goods and passengers by airway, railway or highway, or by water, shall contribute to raising the welfare of the whole European community of nations ?

(3) What part should the trade unions of transport workers take in the international or regional management boards to be constituted and how can the greatest possible uniformity in the conditions of work and service and the social provisions of the personnel be realized ?

On the same occasion the Chairman of the E.T.C. made the following remarks with regard to the difficulties war circumstances placed in the way of a really representative composition of the Committee :

" Although we all feel that on a committee like this many more countries and organizations should be represented than is the case, we are in the unhappy position that the number of Continental representatives in this country is very limited. I think, however, that we are all agreed that it is the duty of the I.T.F. to apply itself to the matter in spite of this handicap, in spite of the absence of comrades who in the past have shown themselves of such great value in the councils of the I.T.F."

In its report the E.T.C. wishes first of all to say that the task set it by the terms of reference and the opening address of its Chairman has proved to be a many-sided and complicated question, open to many different interpretations and of the highest importance for the future of Europe. The Committee has given the fullest consideration to the several aspects of the problem, economic and political as well as social and technical, and has come to the conclusion that it is impossible to foresee and appreciate at their true value the social circumstances that will present themselves in Europe after the war, and which in the beginning will certainly be subject to very great changes. It has appeared to the Committee, as a result of its discussions, that it is possible to interpret in very divergent ways the data already available and the tendencies of development associated with them.

The E.T.C. has had to admit, therefore, that there may be some sense, according to the interpretation given to facts and tendencies, in cherishing more or less speculative hopes with regard to the future of Europe and the European transport system. It has decided, however, to give no place to such speculative considerations in its report. Whereas the Committee would welcome the creation of a unified system of transport for Europe and wishes all efforts to be directed to that goal, it confines itself to evolving a scheme fitted to present conditions. The consensus of opinion was that it could best fulfil the

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French Transport since Liberation—*Continued from page 7*

More than 339,004 tons of shipping have been lost in Allied service. Effective French share in the war effort depends, in the first place, on placing French crews aboard all ships flying the French flag. Further, since it is obviously impossible to rehabilitate our merchant navy straight away, it is only fair that we ask our Allies to replace the tonnage sunk ; and finally it ought to be possible to negotiate with them for leasing about 2,000,000 tons of shipping for a period of two to five years.

The rehabilitation of our ports and harbour facilities is closely linked with the building up of our merchant navy ; and we should add to this the raising of the many wrecks that hinder access to our ports and harbours.

task set it by framing its report in terms of a practical proposition. As a basis for its proposals it has chosen what it deems to be, at the present moment, the most likely course of development. At the same time the Committee recognizes that it is not yet possible to foresee any considerable number of particular circumstances as the future concrete result of this course of development, and for this reason is of the opinion that it would be unwise to give any detailed content to its proposals. It has considered that by formulating its proposals in terms as general as possible it would be offering the greatest possible scope for the later accurate insertion of the details which the unforeseeable particular circumstances will render necessary. In this way it will be easier to meet the requirements of unforeseen circumstances without violating the general principles upon which these proposals are based.

General Observations. The general picture which the E.T.C. has formed of post-war Europe is based upon its present political structure, that is to say the existence of a number of nation-states enjoying national sovereignty. The Committee regards it as obvious that these states will demand for themselves the right to run their own transport systems, and it is within this framework that its proposals of the organization of European transport are placed.

The Committee believes, however, that it can assume that the European states will have learnt, as a result of the present war, that whatever the degree of independence they may enjoy, mutual co-operation is absolutely necessary if chaos is not to be the ultimate result. It will, therefore, be necessary to create the machinery of such co-operation immediately after the overthrow of Nazi Germany. But since it is still uncertain what the basis of this co-operation is to be, and how it is to function, any proposal for future co-operation in Europe is necessarily tentative. The efficacy of such co-operation will naturally be determined by the general co-operative framework that is still to be created. As with any kind of co-operation between sovereign states, the measure of its realization in the field of transport will depend upon their willingness to co-operate. The E.T.C., however, regards it as imperative that there shall be a :

European Transport Authority (E.T.A.) endowed with the power necessary for the control and regulation and the determination of policy in relation to European transport.

In so far as the internal transport of the European states is concerned, the Committee assumes that they will operate and control it with a view to advancing the economic and social conditions of their populations. This will be the more effective according as the states concerned co-operate, in European transport affairs, in the interest of the economic and social advancement of all the peoples of the Continent. If this war has brought anything home to the peoples of Europe it is the fact that the economic and social development of the separate countries will be determined by the degree in which they recognize, in the form of practical measures directed at real co-operation, the mutual interdependence of their economic and social life.

The Committee, therefore, holds that the several states, in determining their own transport policy, shall conscientiously meet the requirements of Europe as a whole, and its transport in particular. For the success of such a policy of reciprocal service to the transport interests of the several countries and Europe as a whole, it is a prime condition that national transport systems shall be brought under public ownership or control.

It is not likely, however, that such an E.T.A., which the Committee regards as necessary in the interests of a peaceful Europe, will come into existence on the very morrow of the war, but the Committee thinks it has reason to believe that if a strong case is made out, at the Peace Conference, for the setting up of an E.T.A., the period of peace-making at the end of the war will be favourable to acquiescence with such a step.

What the Committee does consider likely is that a super-national transport organization may come into existence towards the end of the war, or after, in connection with and consequence of military operations, and that such an organization may be maintained temporarily in existence for relief and rehabilitation purposes.

In such circumstances the lodging of a claim, at the Peace Conference, for a permanent peace-time organization, such as the Committee has in mind, should be made at the earliest possible moment.

With these general observations as a background, the E.T.C. recommends to the Management Committee of the I.T.F. the adoption of the following principles for a peace-time E.T.A. :

PRINCIPLES FOR A PEACE-TIME EUROPEAN TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

endowed with the power necessary for the control and regulation and the determination of policy in relation to European transport.

(1) It should be one of the tasks of the E.T.A. to make a maximum contribution towards ensuring the smooth operation of European transport in the interests of the European community. The services which the E.T.A. should render above all to the European community consist in being helpful in the establishment and safeguarding of peaceful relations, the advancement of civic and cultural contacts between the peoples, and the raising of the general standard of living.

(2) The ultimate aim of the E.T.A. should be to ensure that transport will contribute to the achievement of a greater measure of unity of European life than was attained in the past. This should be associated with the removal of hindrances to trade and the integration of economically coherent regions.

(4) The E.T.A. should cover all forms of transport used for satisfying Europe's requirements, including coastal shipping, cross-Channel shipping and Mediterranean shipping (including North Africa and the Middle East), and aviation. It should be regarded as the appropriate authority to provide the super-national machinery for the internationalized European waterways (the great rivers and canals).

(4) The E.T.A. should consist of representatives of the countries whose territories come within the scope of its

activities. In addition representatives should be appointed by countries with which important links exist, and which are contiguous to that territory.

(5) The organized transport workers should be duly represented on the E.T.A. Provision should be made for the right of free association of workers in trade unions and for the full representation of their organizations on the E.T.A.

(6) Rates for European traffic should be submitted to the E.T.A. for approval, as one of the objects of the E.T.A. should be the establishment of standards for the freight rates on a ton/km or passenger/km basis, paying due regard to the requirements of the various countries as well as to long distance transport of certain commodities.

(7) The E.T.A. should encourage adjustments in national and regional transport facilities to meet the needs of the European countries and help to provide the means for extending or improving those facilities.

(8) The normal financial needs of the E.T.A. should be covered by contributions from the constituent states.
LONDON, 19th September, 1944.

MEXICAN TRAMWAYMEN

A Report from the Mexican Union

The *Alianza de Tranviarios de México* (Mexican Tramwaymen's Alliance, or union) was founded in 1924. There had previously been, starting with 1911, other unions with different names. One of them, known as "The Federation," paid its quota of blood to the Revolution in 1915 and 1916, when its members joined the "Red Battalions."

One of the first struggles of the Alliance gave its members, in addition to a wage increase, what is known as "service insurance." This is a supplement to the wage which is retained on deposit by the Company, and increases in proportion to the years of service. It is paid out to the worker on his dismissal or resignation from the service, or to his family on his decease.

As a result of twenty years of struggle against the most stubborn opposition on the part of the Company, the lowest rates of wages, those of the labourers, have been increased from $1.50 Mexican a day in 1934 to $4.02 at present; while those of the operating personnel have risen from $4.75 to $6 a day; an amount which is inadequate considering the high cost of living.

We are on the eve of a revision of our collective agreement, in connection with which we are asking for an increase for all grades, as the conditions under which we are living are distressing, and our needs very great.

A member of the operating staff on a daily wage of $6 Mexican, and with a family of say a wife and three children, which is the average, lives under conditions which are little better than pauperism. For the most modest type of house he has to pay $40 or $50 a month, and with the $130 a month which still remain to him of his wages he can barely feed his family, to say nothing of clothing and educating it, or affording those little diversions to which all human beings are entitled.

We are asking for increases of about 50 per cent, as we consider that a smaller amount would hardly suffice to solve even a part of our economic problems.

Throughout the life of our Union the Tramway Company has always followed a discreditable policy in its opposition to the fair demands of its workers, with the object of destroying them as an organized force. The pursuance of this policy has led to the almost complete neglect of the tramway system, to an extent that will mean in time the elimination of this means of transport. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the Company owning the trams also owns the electric light and power supply undertaking. The latter supplies power for the trams at a much lower rate than is paid by other consumers, so that the Company running the two undertakings has an interest in doing away with the trams so that it may sell the power they consume to other consumers, at a price five to six times higher.

This makes our trade union work much more difficult, since while—unlike its owners—we are interested in maintaining the tramway system, which is the source of our livelihood, we are also impelled by the penury in which we are living—compare our wages with those earned by other transport workers, who are much better paid, though their trade union struggle has been much less active than ours—to demand a higher reward for our work.

The number of tramwaymen is about 3,700; their average wage is about $5 Mexican a day, and they work eight hours on the day shift, seven and a half on the mixed shift (partly day and partly night), and seven on the night shift. They have an annual holiday of ten days—this applies only to those with the longest service, the others have less.

Illness arising out of the work is covered entirely by the Company, which pays the whole cost of medical attention, as well as the wages of the men concerned. Where the illness does not arise out of the work the Company continues to pay wages for up to 45 days in any year. In case of death in the service the Company pays three years' wages as compensation.

The tramway workers maintain at their own cost a sanatorium which provides them with free medical attention and part of the cost of medicines. It also provides similar benefits for two of the members of employees' families, though on somewhat less favourable conditions, as it cannot afford to provide the medicines free of cost.

GLORIOUS IS THE LABOUR OF SOVIET RAILWAYMEN

Under the above headline, *Pravda* editorial, of February 12th, broadcast by Moscow Radio, reads :

In the annal of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against the Hitlerite invaders an honourable place will be reserved for the heroic deeds of our war railwaymen. For the fourth year they are working with self-sacrifice to restore the lines along which the fronts are being continuously supplied with everything needed to strike devastating blows at the enemy.

One of the most important problems of war—that of communications—is being successfully solved by our railway workers. In most difficult conditions the railway troops and special formations of the People's Commissariat for Railways have restored during the war tens of thousands of kilometres of railway line, about 2,000 large and medium bridges, more than 500,000 kilometres of cable.

These figures speak not only of the unprecedented scope of creative work, but also of the unexampled heroism of Soviet people. Our railwaymen-warriors restored within the shortest possible periods all lines on Soviet territory liberated from the enemy. Now they are laying the roads to victory far beyond our frontiers, helping the Red Army to smash the enemy in his own lair.

In the new situation they have been confronted with new difficulties ; but their experience, their great skill, their inexhaustible courage enable them to overcome all obstacles. Bridges over the Vistula and other water barriers are being restored at an exceptionally high tempo, which helps the victorious offensive of our troops.

The Hitlerite marauders barbarously destroyed the railways in the Carpathians. Where there were previously huge viaducts and bridges there are now deep abysses and obstructions. The Germans reckoned on stopping movement of trains in this area for a long time. These reckonings, however, were thwarted. In the heat of battle special formations of railway workers covered up shell-holes on the railway lines, laid sleepers and tracks, cleared the mountain rivers, made frames for supports and viaducts.

The work had to be done in difficult conditions, without roads, in mountains and forests. Our men carried logs over hills. Bit by bit they lifted to the mountain ranges diesel hoods and mobile electric power stations. Work went on day and night full swing. People knew neither sleep nor rest. After a short time the mountain railway line was put into action. Troop trains moved smoothly toward the front line.

Even at the most difficult sectors of the railway communications system, restoration work proceeds several times as fast as in the first years of the war. The great skill of our gallant railway workers is constantly enriched by innovations introduced by the best of them, by creative inventions and rationalisation.

The invention of Sergeant Zhukov, Hero of Socialist Labour, is widely known. He constructed a machine to produce rail-couplings. On this machine it is easy to fulfil the quota by 2,000 per cent. Another inventor, Capt. Comrade Andriyevsky, constructed an original mechanism to bore holes in rails. This mechanism not only saves millions of roubles and raises labour productivity several times, but also facilitates the heavy labour of railway workers in their difficult work in war conditions. Ten quotas per shift in cutting rails, ten in boring holes, three quotas in shifting of lines and hammering in clasp-nails—these are not isolated examples but mass phenomena.

Overfulfilment of quotas of production has become the rule for every war-railwayman. Restoration of lines starts from technical reconnaissance. The reconnaissance specialists usually proceed in the fighting formations of the infantry detachments. Frequently they enter engagements with the enemy or strike mine-fields before they reach the destroyed bridges or stations. And their job cannot be expressed in any quotas of production.

Technical reconnaissance is done by the bravest of the brave, the most experienced men and commanders. They quickly find their feet in the situation, in the chaos of destruction they are the first to start working.

The self-sacrificing work of the railway workers who clear mines is magnificent. During last year alone they cleared more than one and a half million mines. Some 4,000 fell to the share of Private Tikhov, and more than 2,500 to Private Peshnov. At the approaches to a bridge across the Vistula 15,000 mines were cleared. This self-sacrificing work is truly glorious.

Much has been done by our war-time railway workers, and much is still ahead of them. As long as the enemy has not been completely destroyed, the main task is still the securing of front line communications and organisation of normal traffic along the railway lines on territory captured by the Red Army.

At the same time, work on capital restoration of railway economy must be developed on a broad front ; particularly in locomotive depots, water supply and bridges. The solution of this responsible task demands, not only high speed in work, but also high quality, to ensure durability of the erections.

New cadres of builders are required. They must be trained right now. It is necessary to develop still more creative initiative, introduce the best experience still more widely, create all conditions for further growth of inventiveness, use still better the rich equipment with which our Motherland has provided railway workers. Everywhere co-ordinated work is required, expressed in discipline in transport.

One of the current and most important tasks lies in timely production of good installations to divert the spring waters. Ice-floes and high waters can break down bridges unless the river is cleared in good time from the ruins of blown-up girders and supports, unless the ice-cutters and approaches of the bridges are strengthened.

In front-line conditions, the war situation has not always and everywhere permitted durable buildings. Now the enemy has been driven from our sacred soil. The

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Read, Reflect and Write to Us

The purpose of this column is to provoke thought on world problems and those of our own movement, and it will contain matter from all parts of the world. This matter will be presented as it was served up, whether you or we like it or not. We are not responsible for the views expressed and for the present pass no comment thereon. Matter will be selected because it shows evidence of perceiving a problem, because it is calculated to provoke thought, and because it may contribute towards a clarification of thought.

Our first quotation is from a New Year Message of the President of the Canadian Congress of Labour, A. R. Mosher, who is also President of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees and other Transport Workers, affiliated to the I.T.F. He sees the position of Labour in Canada as follows:

Both industry and government are recognizing that Labour must be treated as a partner in the operation of the industrial system.

Opponents of Labour claim to see in the expansion of the Labour movement a menace to the national welfare. They depict Labour as a bogey, determined to disrupt the economic system and throw its orderly processes into chaos. Their assumptions with regard to both Labour and the economic system are unfounded. What organized Labour wants to do, in co-operation with all other forward-looking elements in the nation, is to make the economic system function in such a way as to provide employment and incomes for all, and the highest standard of living which can be attained. Whatever stands in the way of this is contrary to the national well-being, and should be eliminated as quickly as possible.

Labour represents the largest and most important body of Canadian citizens who have a fairly definite idea of what is wrong with the present competitive system, and what has to be done to make it work properly. They know also that the objectives of Labour in the past were far too limited in their scope. Efforts must still be made to obtain adequate wages and improved working conditions, but the broad general policies upon which the industrial structure is founded, and upon which the very existence of an industry depends, are matters which fall more and more within the purview of governments. Labour in the past dealt primarily with employers, but it must now deal with governments as well.

Instead of regarding Labour as a threat to economic security, the people of Canada may properly look to Labour to give leadership toward a social order under which it will be possible to obtain economic security. The danger is not that Labour will become too strong, but that the reactionary forces of the nation will be able to maintain their dominance over both government and industry. It is much more unlikely that change will take place too quickly than than it will be delayed so long that another economic depression will overwhelm the nation.

We take our next quotation from an article in "The Labor Call," the weekly of the Australian Labor Party, written by the Minister of Aircraft Production, Senator Don Cameron. The article is entitled "People versus Monopolies. After the War—What Then?" We quote the beginning and the summing up.

When the war has been ended and the allied forces have been victorious, what then?

Will there be the beginning of a new and better order of things socially, or will the older order be continued progressively towards practically unlimited control by the leading representatives of the private monopolies in each of the allied countries?

It can be taken for granted that so far as the representatives are concerned the latter, if possible, is to be the case.

There will be no new or better order socially if they can prevent it. Instead there will be the old order, more rigidly and widely enforced, if it can be done.

This attitude which will be taken up, and which is to be expected, will be in conformity with that which has always been adopted in similar circumstances in every country since the beginning of time. It was adopted also after the Great War of 1914-18.

Those who have profited and prospered most under the old order have always been uncompromisingly opposed to any change for the better being made which was considered by them likely to be prejudicial to their established interests.

And within the limitations—limitations which have reached down to the breadline before the war—tolerated by the people, leading representatives of the monopolies have been able to control most of the means of production, and in the Axis countries, in consequence, have become the real rulers of the people.

Ever-increasing mass production and ever-increasing control thereof since the war have enabled the monopolies to be established as never before in practically every country throughout the world.

Their representatives in Allied countries are now demanding that extensive and valuable Government war-time workshops and machinery of all kinds, which have been paid for by the people during the war, be handed over to them after the war practically on their own terms.

In countries overseas this demand is likely to be granted. There does not seem to be any opposition to it worth mentioning, even, in some instances, from the organized Trade Union Movements....

The position summed up is one where extending and strengthening private monopoly control of the means of production is having the effect, not only of increasing poverty in times of peace and the destruction of human life in times of war, but also of increasing the power of the representatives of the monopolies over the lives of the people socially, independently of whether democratically elected Parliaments are in existence or not.

And arising from this position more and more challengingly as time goes on is the issue, yet to be decided, of the people versus the monopolies.

Most close and critical students of the process socially through which the people have passed up to date are agreed that eventually it will be decided in their favour.

But the period of time which must elapse between then and now will depend upon the extent to which the people will be prepared to be as tolerant in the future as they have been in the past.

Glorious is the labour of Soviet Railwaymen

—Continued from page 11

Soviet people are on the eve of completing the rout of the most vicious enemy of our Motherland. Now we can restore our transport thoroughly, strongly, fundamentally, so that it shall emerge from the war fully prepared to solve the new tasks which will confront it in the post-war period.

International anarchy, permitting the growth and operation of cartels, making war the instrument of national survival or aggrandizement, requiring armaments and the deceptions of diplomacy, dividing policy into watertight compartments of domestic and foreign affairs — international anarchy works against the existence of a healthy civil order within each community, be it large or small.

Mortimer J. Adler.

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