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WORLD INTERNATIONAL

THE King is dead : Long live the King ! As a result of the World Trade Union Conference and Congress held in Paris at the end of September, 1945, the old International Federation of Trade Unions has disappeared, like its former rival the Profintern, or Red International of Labour Unions, to make way for their lineal descendant, the new and all-embracing World Federation of Trade Unions. Though a measure of continuity has been preserved by the appointment of Sir Walter Citrine and Walter Schevenels—respectively President and General Secretary of the I.F.T.U.—as President and Assistant Secretary of the new International, no official recognition of this continuity will be found in any of the documents or decisions of the Congress. This is no doubt a solatium to the Soviet trade unions, whose own Profintern faded out some time ago. Now its rival has gone too. It is perhaps as well that this should have been done, as it will avoid any rancour within the new International, while still enabling the composition of the new Executive Committee and Executive Bureau to be substantially what it would have been had the I.F.T.U. remained in being and the Soviet unions and the Congress of Industrial Organizations of the United States had joined it. For that is unquestionably what it is. Many familiar names are to be found in the list of members, and if some are missing, well, six years of war and general upheaval have necessarily left their mark on the trade union movement, as in other realms of human activity. And the Constitution of the new International does not differ materially from the proposals for the reconstruction of the I.F.T.U. drafted during the war by a committee of that body.

It is perhaps a matter for regret that the scrapping of the I.F.T.U. has meant much loss of time. Had the World Trade Union Conference held in London in February, 1945, decided to keep the I.F.T.U. in being, and to include in it the C.I.O., the Soviet unions and the many—mostly small, or at least uninfluential—organizations that were represented there, but which had hitherto remained outside the international trade union movement, the I.F.T.U. could have got to work immediately ; whereas the W.F.T.U., though constituted, is still in its birth-throes, and hardly yet in a position to settle down to the practical work which is so urgently needed at the present time, and for which there are magnificent opportunities only waiting to be seized. But there is one great achievement. The trade union movement of the world has at long last an International that is really world wide in its scope, and fundamentally all-embracing. It is true that the American Federation of Labor is standing aside—and it is a force to be counted with—but the C.I.O. has stepped into the gap, and there is a distinct understanding that there is a place waiting for the A.F. of L. as soon as it is prepared to take it. This may be delayed for some time, but if the new International justifies itself the A.F. of L. may one day do so. There is also, of course, the Christian (mainly Roman Catholic) trade

union movement, whose attitude towards the new W.F.T.U. has still to be defined, but its influence is small and its scope limited. Finally there is the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement, but it has long ceased to be a force in international trade union affairs.

Will the new trade union International be able to do more than the old ? It is clearly the intention of its founders that it should do so, and to the outside observer it must seem that there can be no doubt about the answer. The W.F.T.U. is much wider in its scope than either the I.F.T.U. or the R.I.L.U. ever were ; it will have no substantial rivals for the support of the trade union world ; in the trade union movement generally, that is to say in the national organizations, there is much greater unity than ever before ; there is a general swing to the left the world over ; trade union membership has increased enormously in all countries, and the W.F.T.U. will have far more members than either the R.I.L.U. or I.F.T.U. had in their palmiest days—far more, indeed, than their combined membership ; the trade union movement has become a power in every land that counts ; and finally the new International will be a good deal wealthier than the old, and money is an essential element in effective trade union work. The I.F.T.U. was notoriously starved in this respect, and perhaps could hardly have been expected to do much more than it did with the funds at its disposal.

But if the new International will be unable to plead lack of money for its failures, and will have all the external elements of success, it will have other difficulties to contend with, mostly of an internal and subjective nature. It is far more heterogeneous in its composition than the old I.F.T.U. This, of course, is inseparable from its all-embracing character. The I.F.T.U. was composed of trade union organizations which all had a substantially similar political and social outlook, and substantially the same conception of the purpose, functions and tasks of the trade unions. Those holding other views were in the R.I.L.U., Christian International or Syndicalist International, or in some cases in no international at all. In major matters all member organizations in the I.F.T.U. could be expected to be in agreement as to any action to be taken, or if they were not in agreement, at least to understand and respect each other's point of view.

It is idle to deny that this is not the case with the new W.F.T.U. Within it a common home has been found for two groups representing differing political conceptions which, if not fundamentally opposed in so far as their ultimate aims are concerned, have behind them a period of over twenty years of bitter strife which has left scars that have not yet healed. In so far as methods are concerned the representatives of these two conceptions are still less in agreement ; and as regards their view of the function and purposes of the trade unions the differences are perhaps even greater.

Let us consider briefly these diverse elements. We have on the one hand the Soviet trade unions, with 27,000,000 members. Though this is by far the strongest single group numerically, and that with the most revolutionary background of all—the background of the Russian Revolution—it is, paradoxically enough, the one which has least of the characteristics commonly attributed to the trade unions in the rest of the world ; so much so that some would deny the Soviet organizations the right to the description " trade union " (wrongly, we think, at least if the term is given the very wide interpretation it commonly has in English-speaking countries, meaning an association of workers in a given trade for the purpose of furthering their own interests). Certain it is that the methods and functions of the Soviet trade unions are very different from those in other countries. There are, of course, good historical reasons for this. Born of the Russian Revolution, they have not the experience of the long and arduous struggle for the improvement of the workers' lot which is the heritage of the trade unions in other countries. And growing up in a socialist state, their outlook is also a different one. No doubt, as other countries become socialized, the trade unions belonging to them will gradually take on some, at any rate, of the characteristics of the Soviet trade unions ; but that time is still to come. And though, in their own country, the Soviet unions engage in practically no political action as understood elsewhere, they tend in international trade union affairs, strangely enough, to lay the emphasis on political matters.

More or less closely associated with the Soviet unions, in their international relations within the W.F.T.U., are the unions of a number of other countries which have come under Soviet influence of one kind or another as a result of the war—mainly the border states : Finland, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia—and some others where communist influence in the trade unions is strong, such, for instance, as France and Italy. The line-up at the World Trade Union Congress showed that the group also had the support of a large part of the unions of Latin America and some of the British colonies. In some cases these unions are not of very long standing, and others had only been reconstituted a few months before the Congress, so that it is still early to estimate what their future tendencies will be. The aggregate membership claimed at the World Trade Union Congress by these somewhat diverse elements was about 19,000,000*.

The other main group is composed essentially of those countries with the trade union movements of the longest standing—the veterans of the trade union movement—roughly speaking the movements associated hitherto with the International Federation of Trade Unions : Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. One would include in this group those countries whose trade union movements have been inspired by the British movement—Australia, New Zealand, Canada, etc. Before the war it would have included the trade union movements of Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and such smaller groups as existed in the Baltic and Balkan states ; also France, at present more closely allied with the Soviet group. Al-

*The classification is somewhat subjective, and the extent of the communist influence variable. The figure includes many organizations that are by no means wholly communist, and that on some issues might cast their votes in the other camp.

though all the leaders of these movements—and the overwhelming majority of their members, in so far as they belong to any political party at all—are members of the Social Democratic parties, and in many cases leaders of the Social Democratic parties, their general tendency is to limit the activities of their trade union movements to trade-union matters proper, except for such political activities as are directly connected with the promotion of trade-union aims. Other political matters have been generally regarded as lying more properly within the scope of activities of the Labour and Socialist parties, and internationally within that of the Labour and Socialist International. The division has been by no means a rigid one, however, and it has been quite common for trade union organizations in this group to adopt resolutions against fascism, war, etc.; while as examples of political action it is possible to quote the memorable boycott of Horthy's Hungary, and of the transport of munitions of war to Poland in 1920, when that country attacked Soviet Russia. In both of these actions the International Transport Workers' Federation played a leading part. It remains true, however, that the trade unions of the I.F.T.U. group have generally regarded such activities as supererogatory rather than peremptory. The total membership of this group is approximately 13,000,000.

Considerations of space preclude reference to a number of lesser organizations, but no survey would be complete without mention of the American trade unions. Here there are two large central organizations, the long-established American Federation of Labour, consisting mainly of craft organisations, and the much younger Congress of Industrial Organizations which, as its name indicates, mainly represents industrial trade-unionism. The former is the more conservative in outlook, and most of the little communist trade-unionism which exists in America tends to concentrate in the C.I.O., but neither of the two can be considered to be politically socialistic in the sense that trade unions in other parts of the world mostly are. The two organizations may be regarded, for our purposes, as of approximately equal strength, say about 6,000,000 each. The A.F. of L. was a member of the I.F.T.U., which has disappeared, but refused to take any part in the World Trade Union Conference, and as a result its place in the international trade union movement has been taken by the C.I.O. For purposes of ideological classification both these organizations may be regarded as more closely akin to the group which formerly centered round the I.F.T.U. The same applies to about 1,000,000 American trade-unionists—largely railwaymen—who belong to neither organization.

And now we have both tendencies united in one organization—united, but not reconciled, for it is clear that neither group has abandoned its fundamental outlook, and to some extent—let us hope to a lesser extent—the struggle between them is bound to continue within the new International, in so far as any real endeavour is made to get it to do anything in particular. Herein lies a very great danger to the success of the new organization, that it will take very careful steering to avoid. With two powerful tendencies within it pulling in opposite directions, it is to be feared that major matters, upon which there is disagreement, will be shelved, and that the activities of the International will therefore be severely circumscribed. Something of this kind has already occurred. Outwardly, to the world at large, the decisions of the World Trade Union Conference have been unanimous, but it is an open secret that the unanimity has only been achieved by leaving to be settled later any matter upon which there was difference of opinion.

To put the matter more concretely, if any attempt is made to utilize the International for the pursuit of political ends other than those which the ex-I.F.T.U. group regards as lying within the legitimate field of activity of the trade union movement, this group will have none of it. If this group, however, tries to secure the universal application—that is to say also to the U.S.S.R.—of the trade union standards, conditions and methods generally accepted in Western Europe and the U.S.A., the other group will come forward with its veto. Although outwardly united, there still exists in the world trade union movement the line of cleavage which was the reason for its division into two camps in the past—the division between those who believe in politics for trade union ends and those who believe in trade-unionism—at any rate internationally—for political ends.

But the great fact remains that both parties have come together. The aching desire for organic unity which has troubled the movement for a quarter of a century—though perhaps generally keener among the rank and file of the workers than among their leaders, who had a clearer appreciation of the difficulties—has been appeased if not fully satisfied. The full satisfaction is still to come, and it will mean hard work, and above all a good deal of that spirit of compromise which is the essence of true democracy. Majority democracy may work in some places, but if an attempt is made to impose it on the international trade union movement it will only break up the measure of unity so far achieved.

G. R. C.

U.N.O. and the W.F.T.U.

The W.F.T.U. Congress at Paris adopted a resolution demanding the " right to participate in the work of the United Nations Organisation." " All necessary steps " were to be taken " to ensure the participation of the W.F.T.U. in the work of the Social and Economic Council, in an advisory position." The Congress also demanded " representation in the General Assembly, in a consultative capacity." After prolonged debates in Committee, scarcely reported in the daily press, the General Assembly decided against admitting the W.F.T.U. to the Social and Economic Council in an advisory position. Instead it decided, on a motion of the U.S.A., that the Social and Economic Council should as soon as possible make arrangements for calling into consultation the W.F.T.U., the International Co-operative Alliance and other " international non-governmental organisations," and make similar arrangements with the American Federation of Labor. The alternative motion, put forward by the U.S.S.R., that the W.F.T.U. should be invited to participate in an advisory capacity was defeated by 26 votes to 12, with nine abstentions. The delegate of the U.S.S.R. argued that the W.F.T.U., which united in its ranks over 60 million workers from 50 different countries, and which was deeply concerned with the

(*Continued at foot of page 53.*)

THE MARITIME CONFERENCE IN COPENHAGEN

The International Seafarers' Charter launched in Liverpool on 3rd October, 1944, went through its first real battle at the Preparatory tripartite technical maritime conference of the I.L.O., held in Copenhagen from 15th to 30th November, 1945. In spite of the dogged resistance of the ship-owners and the obdurate "neutrality" of the governments, from whom the seafarers had expected more understanding, the Charter did not fare too badly.

No immediate results were, of course, expected of the conference, since it was only a preparatory one, paving the way for a full maritime session of the Labour Conference in May, 1946, but it was highly important, not perhaps so much for the further world-wide publicity it gave to the Charter, as for the fact that the whole of the discussions were based on that document, as representing the views of the seafarers themselves. It has never been expected that all the claims embodied in the Charter would be achieved at once, nor that all could be suitably dealt with in an international instrument. In this latter respect the conference has enabled a preliminary sorting out to be made.

Of the many committees set up to deal with the various subjects before the conference—wages, hours and manning; holidays; accommodation; food and catering; entry, training and promotion; continuous employment; social insurance; and recognition of seafarers' organizations—the first one, on wages, hours and manning, commanded the greatest interest, especially as a new and fundamental question was involved, viz., the fixing of an international minimum wage rate for seafarers. The cleavage of opinion between the owners and the seamen on many questions dealt with by this committee was so marked that compromise was out of the question. Most of the detailed proposals under this heading had to be put to the vote, and they were seldom carried by a large margin. The government representatives largely abstained from voting. In questions that involved national economic and currency problems the disinclination of the government delegates to commit themselves can easily be understood, but it is to be hoped that they will be in a position to take a more definite line at the next conference.

Let it be admitted at once that the draft convention which finally emerged and was adopted by the conference is not so much a measure of agreement as the result of the struggle between the owners' and the seafarers' representatives, and to what extent it may be revised before it is adopted at the 1946 conference remains to be seen.

One of the greatest of the controversies was naturally over the fixing of the minimum wage rate for an able seaman, and how the final figure of £18 was arrived at deserves some explanation. All three groups agreed on the desirability of fixing a generally acceptable minimum wage for seafarers, that should be regarded strictly as a minimum and not as a standard or maximum rate of pay. The difficulty was to decide on the figure. The governments tried at first to keep outside the whole affair by suggesting the appointment of a sub-committee consisting of shipowners' and seafarers' representatives only; arguing that the fixing of wages was a matter in which the governments never wished to intervene. This suggestion was rejected as the workers' group, in particular, wanted the governments to come in and take their share of the responsibility, since it was not a question of fixing wage rates, but of laying down an international minimum.

The owners were only willing to consider a minimum rate of pay for an A.B., arguing that the rates for officers could be settled by collective agreement in relation to the wage of the A.B. They suggested the figure of £12 a month, which was immediately put to the vote and defeated. After a couple of days' postponement, to give the governments time to consider their attitude, the Swedish and Danish government representatives suggested £16, on the understanding that it should be clearly laid down that it was a minimum. This proposal was also defeated, after which the seafarers' proposal of £18 was put to the vote and carried by 17 votes to 15. Although there was a strong feeling within the seafarers' group that they ought to stand or fall by the £18 laid down in the Seafarers' Charter, many thought that £16—for which all the governments had voted—was a figure more likely to secure acceptance in the final convention, and one which the various governments would be able to ratify. But since the owners were solidly opposed even to the £16, it was considered better to press for the £18, in spite of the fear of some seafarers' delegates that this might deter too many governments from ratifying. Whether the figure that has been decided for inclusion in the preliminary text will be adopted at the next conference will depend on many still uncertain circumstances.

The choice of a particular currency—in this case the pound sterling—and its conversion into other currencies, with the problems of international exchange rates that are involved, will be considered by the Labour Office in conjunction with all authorities concerned, and the government representatives undertook to give all possible assistance in this matter in time for the next conference.

The system for the regulation of working hours that was discussed and adopted at the conference was also based on the Seafarers' Charter, and differs entirely from the Convention on Hours and Manning of 1936. Briefly it provides for a standard working day with overtime payment for all time worked in addition, and a standard working week with the possibility of making up all time worked over and above it with time off in port, in so far as it is not already compensated by a money payment. The owners were uncompromisingly opposed to this new system and put forward a series of amendments which in some cases provided for certain improvements on the 1936 Convention, but which in the main left it unaltered.

In spite of the opposition, the principle of the eight-hour day was adopted as a basis for the regulation of working hours at sea and in part. In the draft convention adopted by the conference, working hours in the coasting trade have been limited to 96 a fortnight, and in the deep

sea trade to 48 a week. Hours of work in excess of 48 but under 56 will be compensated by time off in port, and all hours worked in addition to 56 will be regarded as overtime. An important decision is the regulation of hours for the catering personnel on the same basis as in other departments.

The Swedish government representative suggested that the I.L.O. should prepare a report, in consultation with the governments, for the Maritime Session in 1946, on the probable economic, financial and other consequences of the regulations proposed in the draft convention, especially the proposed maximum of 96 hours a fortnight or 48 hours a week. This proposal was accepted by the seafarers because to them economic and financial consequences means what the price will be to the consumer for an article transported by sea, as a result of improved conditions for the seamen. They are convinced that any investigation into this would reveal that the effect on prices would not be such as to make them unacceptable to the governments or the public. And by other consequences they understand social consequences, which could only be that seafarers would get more equality with other workers, in other words shorter working hours and more time off in port.

For lack of time the question of manning was not dealt with as thoroughly as desired. It was agreed, however, that ships " should be sufficiently and efficiently manned for the purpose of safety of life at sea, and making possible the application of the foregoing rules relating to hours of work for the purpose of minimizing overtime work." It was understood that the acceptance of this principle should not commit any party to the actual text, nor prevent a full and detailed discussion at the maritime session.

The drafting of the preliminary text of a convention on wages, hours and manning has proved very difficult, but still more difficult will be agreement on the final text, and its subsequent ratification. The conditions to be fulfilled before it comes into force have been put fairly high : it must first be ratified by nine out of the twenty countries represented at the Conference, including at least five countries having each at least one million gross register tons of shipping. But—as the Chairman of the Seafarers' Group put it—if " once an international instrument were adopted, the governments concerned would consult each other in order to bring about an immediate and simultaneous decision on ratification, preliminary discussions might well start at the next conference." In this connection a great deal will depend on the steps taken by the seafarers and their organizations to win over their respective governments.

What are the lessons to be learnt from the preparatory conference and what should be done before the final one takes place ? The shipowners were not satisfied with the results of the conference and said they regarded it as a poor job and a disservice to seafarers everywhere. Their references to paper victories, shadow chasing and performances for the gallery were obviously aimed at the seafarers' side, and they show which way the wind is blowing. Their expressed hope that the 1946 maritime session might establish a " real minimum convention " must, of course, be interpreted in the light of these remarks.

But the seafarers are not satisfied either. Much of what has been laid down falls short of their expectations, but they have accepted the work of the Conference as a step towards the full achievement of their Charter. They may have been a little disappointed by the attitude of the owners, but their disappointment will only increase their determination to get what they have set out to get.

And what about the governments ? Some of their representatives did, no doubt, cause more surprise than disappointment, and it is very clear that the seafarers will have plenty to do to bring them to realize their responsibility. When representatives of labour governments abstain from voting on the principle of the eight-hour day, there must be something wrong, and something to be done. In spite of the undiminished service of the merchant seamen, and the equally undiminished need for them, the moment the U-boats disappeared from the high seas, the seamen sailed out of the spot-light as far as the public and the governments are concerned. And it seems that they will have quite a job getting themselves remembered again.

They are entitled to somewhat more appreciation from their governments than was displayed at Copenhagen, and they are entitled to expect that some of the pledges given them during the war will be fulfilled. And it is also the duty of the seafarers organizations in countries with progressive governments to give a lead to the others. The Maritime Session is not so far off and it must not be forgotten that the working and living conditions of the seamen during the next twenty-five years may to a great extent depend on what is done in the various countries before May, 1946.

The creation of a new order is a much more difficult matter than most men imagine. It has in it the same difficulties as face the individual who seeks to change his habits. And these difficulties do not lie in man's endowment but in his habitation. For human nature is almost unbelievably malleable. The differences between individuals of the same culture, or of different cultures, are due in large measure to differences of conditioning, and the form of that conditioning is socially determined.

J. A. Bowie in *The Basis of Reconstruction.*

(*Continued from page* 51.)

* questions coming before the Social and Economic Council, was in a different category from other " non-governmental organisations " and from the A.F. of L., which is a purely national organisation. The British delegation opposed the claim of the W.F.T.U. on the grounds that if it was admitted other international non-governmental organisations could not be excluded.

NORWEGIAN RAILWAYMEN'S RESISTANCE

By M. TRANA

President, Norwegian Railwaymen's Union

From the end of the last war up to the 9th of April, 1940, there was a flourishing organizational life in Norway, industrially and politically. The trade unions became strong and had influence and a voice in the life of the community. Practically all railway workers were members of their unions and we could rightly speak of 100 per cent organization.

The war soon put an end to all freedom of organizational life. We believed at first that it would be possible to keep our union more or less intact during the occupation, but we did not know the Germans. Towards the end of the summer and during the autumn of 1940 and the first half of 1941 there was one attack after another on our free organizations. The encroachments were of all kinds: meetings were prohibited, the accounts of the union had to be submitted for approval, special permission was required to make payments, etc. And we were soon to learn that the German conception of justice was a different one from ours. We read in the papers about the death sentence, passed on a solicitor named Santi, in Trondheim. The circumstances were such that we Norwegians, accustomed as we are to public scrutiny of all court cases, were extremely shocked, and the peoples' front against the Germans began little by little to take shape.

The attacks on our union became worse in the course of 1941, and the resistance of the people grew. All organizations which were of some importance for the life of the Norwegian people made united representations to the Reichskommissariat, protesting against the methods used to solve various problems. The reply was the proclamation of military law in September, followed by the death sentences on Hansteen, Wickström and Buland. Buland who, apart from being general secretary of the Railwaymen's Union, was assistant general secretary of the National Trade Union Federation, later had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment. He died in prison in Germany. On top of these terrible death sentences the leaders of the trade unions were arrested and replaced by commissioners chosen from the Norwegian nazi party. The reason given by the Germans for this attempt to undermine the trade unions was a small and insignificant strike in some workshops in Oslo. These sentences and decrees destroyed the remnants of free trade-unionism in Norway.

Later similar attacks were directed against the teachers and the clergy, and eventually against all forms of free organization. The brutality of the occupying power became more overt. We soon learnt something of the famous German conception of justice, based on vengeance. Svolvaer, Televåg and the increasing number of death sentences provides us with object lessons. Many of these sentences were passed for the flimsiest reasons. After the attempt against the railway at Mjöndalen, when the bomb exploded after the engine and one carriage, reserved for civilian passengers, had passed, with the result that several Germans were killed, six hostages were taken and shot. These people had nothing to do with the attempt against the railway, but the shooting was excused with the assertion that the people concerned were guilty in thought, and sympathized with the "enemy".

But all these attacks against the trade unions and the people in general only had the effect of strengthening the front against the Norwegian nazis and the Germans.

On the railways we literally went down into the cellars with our trade union work. What remained above ground was only a skeleton of an organization, headed by a commissioner and an executive committee which had nothing to do. We continued to deal with the railway Management, as far as was possible, through the back door. If a question on which we had reached agreement with the Management required the approval of a higher authority, and that authority was a nazi one, we agreed with the Management to leave it until the end of the war.

For some time we had our two secretaries sitting as observers on the nazi-controlled executive committee of the union. We used them to a great extent to bring forward our problems, going to see them privately and agreeing with them how they should deal with our cases. Eventually, however, it became necessary to withdraw these "delegates" and they returned to their former occupations on the railways. The same applies to the treasurer of the Union. While he still was in the Union he did us good service by keeping the union funds under his control and by many a clever stratagem preventing the pooling of the funds of the different civil servants' unions. His work proved very useful when we reconstructed our union after the war.

Afterwards these three officials engaged in underground work together with the rest of the Executive, which remained intact right through the occupation. And contact with the central underground organization was never broken. On account of arrests from time to time it was necessary to make changes and find new channels, but touch was never lost, and it was the same in the branches and sub-branches of the Union.

The Executive held several meetings during the occupation. There were, of course, not many things that it could deal with, but the meetings served the purpose of holding the organization together ready to start its activities at the end of the war.

When the General Manager of the State railways introduced the "new order" in the administration of the railways, the nazis arranged for an election of the members of the executive of the pensions fund. In their list,

composed of party members, they also put several non-nazi names in order to cause confusion. A list of reliable Norwegian patriot candidates was printed and circulated illegally through the district organizations, and at the elections that followed the nazis received about 180 votes as against about 8,000 for the patriots. The elections thus turned out to be a thundering defeat for the nazi party and the new order plans were abandoned.

During the war all the railwaymen have in one way or other taken part in the underground work, and there is no reason to single out any names. They have helped refugees to escape, taken illegal mail all over the country, etc. The greatest service has been rendered by transporting and hiding people who were hunted by the Gestapo, as the gratitude expressed by all classes of people since the war ended shows.

The secret co-operation between the Management and the workers, between the highest and the lowest, was all that could be desired, and the action to be taken when the final struggle came had been agreed beforehand between the Management and the personnel in the various districts. Sabotage groups were organized. It had been decided how machines should be made unserviceable, in such a manner that they could be put in order again at short notice for the Allies. Fortunately the war ended in a different way than we had expected. We thought that Norway would have to be liberated in stages, like other countries.

All through the war the railwaymen worked in accordance with the simple plan that all work that served the Germans and their special interests was to be sabotaged. Every particular case had to be considered on its merits.

Since the liberation the Union has resumed its full activities, as before the war. Members who left the organization during the war, and others who got employment on the railways without being members, are coming into the Union little by little, and in several branches are already 100 per cent organized again.

PLANS FOR A CO-OPERATIVE SHIPPING COMPANY IN PALESTINE

By J. H. B. WINDMULLER

Chairman, Haifa Labour Council

Up to 1933 Palestine had no other shipping than a few small sailing vessels, but in that year *Fairplay*, a Jewish shipping in Hamburg, transferred its offices to Haifa to escape Nazi oppression. Its example was followed by others, and by the time the war began vessels totalling 35,400 tons were trading from Haifa. Most of them, however, were sunk by enemy action during the war. A number of Jewish officers and seamen who emigrated to Palestine from many European countries, and found employment on the first ships registered in Palestine, formed the vanguard of the country's merchant seamen, and their lead was eagerly followed by young men born and bred in Palestine, who saw a new field for pioneer work.

Up to the beginning of the war it was hard going for most of the Palestinian companies, whose ships engaged in the Eastern Mediterranean coasting trade, cargo and passenger trade to the Black Sea countries, and passenger trade to Trieste. A few vessels went in for tramping. The Trieste line had to be discontinued, as it could not compete with the Italian companies, which were subsidized by their Government. The severe competition from shipping employing cheap labour, in neighbouring countries, such as Egypt, Syria and Greece, also prevented the Palestinian coasting trade from flourishing, but thanks to regular cargo and passenger traffic, and the support of Jewish exporters in the Black Sea countries, the tramp ships, and those engaged in the Black Sea trade, were more successful.

Although no real success economically, the young industry appealed to the pioneering spirit of Jewish youth—one of the greatest assets in Palestine, a country not richly endowed with natural wealth. Sea-mindedness developed, stimulated by the country's National Institutions and by the General Federation of Jewish Labour (Histadruth). The balance of a decade of effort includes some hundreds of Jewish deep-sea fishermen ; 1,100 Palestinian Royal Navy volunteers ; hundreds of Jewish dockers, amongst whom are some of the heroes of Tobruk, Greece and Crete ; an all-Jewish port at Tel-Aviv ; about 300 organized masters, merchant officers and seamen, in a trade union of their own ; several ship-building yards, which have already built minesweepers for the British Navy ; some ship-repairing undertakings and dock operators, which have already repaired many vessels, employing Jewish labour ; and last, but not least, hundreds of youngsters in training at the Nautical School at Haifa, and in clubs organized for the purpose. In their hands is the maritime future of Palestine.

All these institutions agree that the future of Palestinian shipping cannot possibly depend entirely on private initiative, which will always regard it as a risky investment in the long run. As in the case of agriculture and manufacturing industry, the other main pillars of Palestine's economic future, the National Institutions, including Histadruth, propose to accelerate Palestinian maritime development by the direct approach, i.e. by taking things into their own hands, without waiting for the shipowners to consider the prospects. So a National Shipping Company has been set up, with a capital of £P.1,000,000 to start with. As in the case of agricultural and industrial undertakings of a similar character which already exist—in various forms, as co-operatives,

collectives and Histadruth establishments—this Shipping Company will absorb considerable numbers of the organized seamen, and will act, in co-operation with the Jewish Masters', Officers and Seamen's Union, as a regulator of wages and working conditions in the shipping industry. It is expected to establish, or revive, several shipping lines—in some cases even where private initiative will not venture.

The Jewish Masters', Officers' and Seamen's Union proposes to start a co-operative shipping line in conjunction with this National Company. Actively supported by the Histadruth and the National Institutions, the co-operative form of organization has shown great capacity to overcome difficulties otherwise insoluble. As examples one can point to the existing communal settlements and co-operative factories, workshops, transport companies covering the whole country, bakeries, hairdressing establishments, labour kitchens, fishing undertakings, etc. The co-operative form of organization is now familiar and attractive to the progressive elements in the Jewish population of Palestine, which are in a large majority, having been brought up in a democratic spirit supported by the country's institutions.

To begin with the co-operative shipping line will confine itself to the coasting trade, but as in pre-war days, it will be necessary to compete with several neighbouring countries in which the standard of living is lower than in Palestine. Private undertakings in these countries will be the more eager to trade since the competition will not be so keen. To do this they will cut expenses down to the bare minimum, and the seamen will once more be the first to suffer. This will not be confined to the coasting trade, since if wages and other conditions deteriorate in this trade, the wages of other seamen will also be unfavourably affected.

This gloomy prospect can only be avoided if coastal shipping is run on a co-operative basis, since the necessary economies can then be effected by saving on dividends to shareholders, directors' fees, overhead costs, etc. At the same time the seamen will strive to achieve the maximum of efficiency and take the greatest care of what is after all their own property. This should keep the coasting trade going and make for proper conditions for the seamen.

The co-operative coastal line proposes to make a start with motor vessels of 600 to 1,000 tons, of an efficient type, very seaworthy and economic, having low fuel consumption and a speed of 10 to 14 miles an hour. The vessels are of low draught, can enter the smallest harbours, and can take cargo to and from the Danubian countries and the interior of Russia.

As planned, the Company will call for an investment of £P.120,000, which the Union expects to finance with the help of the above-mentioned National Shipping Company. Part of the money will be paid up by the seamen at the time of establishment : the rest of their investment will be taken up as a long-term loan at low interest, with their shares as security. The National Company is relied upon to participate in the capital and to take a mortgage on the vessels. The financial position will then be as follows :

Investment by 55 seamen, 55 x £P.200	£P. 11,000
Loan to seamen, 55 x £P.400	£P. 22,000
Investment by National Company	£P 33,000
Mortgage of vessels	£P. 54,000
	£P.120,000

This allows for an amount of £P.30,000 as initial working capital.

The proposed undertaking is no innovation in the Jewish effort to establish a new economic basis in Palestine. The Histadruth and the National Institutions have on many other occasions promoted and financed important national efforts which aim to give a strong economic foundation to modern Jewish Palestine.

In the proposed co-operative shipping undertaking the seamen will receive normal wages, that is to say wages in accordance with those paid in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The annual profits will be used to repay the loans, to form reserves of capital, to extend the undertaking, etc., so that the value of the shares, one half of which will belong to the seamen themselves, will increase as time passes. In a co-operative shipping undertaking the seamen will harvest the fruits of their own toil. In good and bad times they will be masters of their fate, and serve their Nation as free men. The Union expects that they will be able to adopt for themselves the provisions of the International Seafarers' Charter.

In conclusion just one word on the question of the employment of Arab seamen. Up to 1933, when Palestine had no other shipping than a few small sailing vessels, there were hardly any Palestinian Arab merchant seamen. Their maritime activities were confined mainly to work at the docks, or at sea as fishermen. No problem is expected to arise, as the set-up in Palestine enables the trade union to deal without difficulty with the employment of Arabs and Jews alike. Any seaman, Arab or Jew, may join the Seamen's Union, which actually has some Arab members already.

As for Arab seamen from neighbouring countries, when employed on Palestinian vessels they enjoy the same conditions as the Jewish seamen, in spite of the fact that their living standards are considerably lower. They are, therefore, eager to sail on these ships. Mostly these Arab seamen are not organized either in their own country (most of them are Egyptians) or in Palestine, but the Union looks after their interests just the same, so long as they are employed in Palestinian ships. It is, therefore, to every workers' interest that the co-operative effort of the Jewish merchant seamen should succeed.

Hitler may be dead, but he has left a legacy—Fascism. Fascism will not die until the economic and political forces which helped it to power are destroyed.

Lombardo Toledano.

FINANCING A STRIKE UNDER NAZI OCCUPATION

The great strike on the Dutch railways during the nazi occupation was declared at a most unfavourable moment, on a Sunday evening (17th September, 1944), at 7 p.m. Most of the railway offices were then closed, and in these cases there was no chance to get away any money, wage sheets or lists of addresses of the employees. Nobody worried much about this in the beginning, as they were convinced that liberation was in sight, and that the strike would be a short one, but when the offensive came to a standstill at Arnhem, and it became clear that the strike might last a good deal longer than had been anticipated, it was necessary to do something about it.

What was needed was money and the names and addresses of the personnel. The latter were not so easy to get. Many of the railwaymen had gone underground, some pretty deeply, but even in the case of those who were staying at home it was often very difficult to make out the complete list of names, with the correct addresses, particularly in a town like Utrecht, where 6,000 railwaymen live. However, enquiries were made of church councils, football clubs, building societies, etc., from the addresses thus obtained clues to others were secured, and within a few weeks' time the whereabouts of the great majority of the personnel had been ascertained. The list was further completed as time went on : railwaymen who had been driven from house and home were bobbing up all the time and at all sorts of places. They were immediately registered, and in so far as they had not had their money the arrears were paid up.

One of the difficulties was that in the absence of wage sheets there was no record of what each of them had been earning, for it was decided on principle not to give relief but to continue to pay wages. The difficulty was overcome by asking each man how much he had received on the last pay-day, and this amount, rounded off to the next highest multiple of five guilders, was paid from that time onwards.

Wages for the first month had already been set aside, and were lying waiting either at the stations or at the bank. Head office wages were in a strong-room in one of the buildings. The money at the banks was easy enough to get, but in spite of the fact that the station buildings were occupied by Germans, the money was also taken out of the safes there, by men who were prepared to take the risk and wait until the coast was clear. A sum of something like 2,000,000 guilders was quietly taken away from the Head Office in a car supposedly belonging to the German army.

We were thus fixed all right until the end of the first month, and we imagined that by then it would be all over. Things turned out otherwise, however, and we soon realized that it might be as well to see about money for the second month. The Management instructed the banks to pay us the money, over 5,000,000 guilders, and it was made immediately available, but before we reached the third round all the Dutch Railway bank accounts had been blocked, and the banks were forbidden to pay out any more money. It then became necessary to bring into the picture the National Assistance Fund, an underground organization that was already maintaining several thousands of people—underground workers, people of other industries who had had to make themselves scarce, families of Dutchmen who had been arrested by the nazis, etc.

The National Assistance Fund was immediately ready to place its Nation-wide organization at the service of the strikers. In spite of all German prohibitions, the banks and wealthy Dutchmen raised the necessary money, month after month with the regularity of clockwork.

The central point of assembly for the money was at Amsterdam, from where it was sent to the different provincial centres where the payments were made. Utrecht needed the largest amount—something like 1,200,000 guilders a month. At intervals during the month the money was taken, in lots of 100,000 guilders, by girls on bicycles, from Amsterdam to Utrecht. This was dangerous work, because the Germans were in the habit of inspecting suitcases and bags, so the girls often concealed the money in their clothing. It was necessary to use girls for this risky work, as any man between the ages of 16 and 60 seen on the street was liable to be taken up and sent off to work in Germany. Regular press-gang raids were organized for this purpose by the Germans. When it reached Utrecht the money was deposited for safety in the strong-room of a friendly bank.

The great day was the one before pay-day. It was necessary to take risks. The whole amount was packed into a suitcase and handed to a girl who carried it on a bicycle, preceded and followed by outriders, to an address given to her, which was changed every month. At the address given a Union official and seven branch leaders were waiting : each branch leader received his share, and within an hour all had disappeared, the necessary precautions being taken in case of a raid. The same afternoon the branch leaders divided their part out among some thirty local leaders, who in their turn handed it the same evening to some 200 pay-girls, who swarmed out the next day, and by the afternoon every railwayman had his month's wages paid out in his own home.

It was naturally not possible to make all these payments without all sorts of problems and difficulties arising, and to deal with these there was a meeting every week, and sometimes oftener, between the General Manager of the Railways, a representative of the National Assistance Fund, and the Chairman of the Staff Council, who was the leader of the strike. As a humorous note it may be mentioned that at one time towards the end of the strike the villa residence in which the General Manager had gone underground—disguised as the house-doctor at a neighbouring sanatorium—was occupied by

the Germans. The only room they left for the use of the General Manager was the bathroom, which had to serve him at the same time as bedroom and office. And while the Germans kept house above, below and on all sides, discussions about the strike were being held in the bathroom. The Germans never got to know who the doctor and his patients were.

Naturally things did not always go so smoothly. Here and there one of the representatives of the National Assistant Fund, a railwayman, one of the leaders responsible for distributing the money, or a pay-girl, were caught. It was then necessary to take immediate steps to replace them, which often meant a journey of several hundred kilometres on an old bicycle—there was no other means of transport available—along almost impassable roads in the heart of winter.

The Huns were naturally very keen to know where the money came from, but they never found out. They were convinced that it was sent in some secret way or other from England. Since they had forbidden the banks to pay out any money to the Dutch Railways, they clearly did not think it possible to collect such large amounts every month in Holland.

The occasional arrest of people connected with the making of the payments never hindered to any appreciable extent the regular payment of the wages. For every man who became a casualty there were many others ready to take over the work, heedless of the danger. The Germans had little success with their prosecutions and investigations. Of the 8,000,000 guilders paid out in Utrecht they only managed to lay hands on some 15,000 guilders, or about one-fifth of 1 per cent. A few railwaymen, including the Chairman of the Staff Council, fell into their hands and spent a longer or shorter period in prison; but the number was small considering how many were engaged in the work. With the exception of one man who was carried off to Germany and never returned, which probably means that he is dead, all these people came through their ordeal alive.

It was a wonderful fight. It need hardly be said that this uninterrupted care for the strikers very much strengthened their morale, so that even during the period of cold and hunger not one of them failed, in spite of enticing bribes offered by the Germans in the form of money, food and fuel, to say nothing of threats. The strike ended in the same glory and unity with which it began.

AUSTRALIAN DOCKERS TAKE POLITICAL ACTION

By STAN MORAN

Treasurer, Waterside Workers' Federation (Sydney Branch).

No Pig Iron for the Japs !
No Arms for the Dutch !

When we refused to load pig-iron and tin clippings for the Japs, we wharf labourers made international history, we were the subject of praise in all parts of the freedom-loving world. This was in 1938 when China, with her back to the wall, was fighting the battle for democracy against the Fascist invaders.

We came to the aid of our Chinese friends and aimed a blow not only at the Japs but their appeasers in this country, led by " Pig Iron " Bob Menzies. We not only made history internationally, but the wharfies' campaign against the then Menzies Government played a big part in bringing down that Government and placing a Labour Government in office.

In 1945 we are again in the forefront of the International Labour Movement—we have refused to load Dutch ships that may be used against the Indonesian people in their struggle for the provisions of the Atlantic Charter : the right to set up their own form of Government.

We were not the first wharfies, however, to take action against foreign interventionists. That honour belongs to our wharfies in London, who, in 1919, refused to load the " Jolly George " with munitions bound for Russia to smash the young Socialist republic. That action played a big part in thwarting the plans of the imperialists.

There are fourteen " Jolly Georges " held up in Australia, a complete tie-up of Dutch shipping. This leaves them powerless as far as this country is concerned, in getting any supplies to assist them in their attempts to overthrow the Indonesian Republic Government, which has the full support of 72 million people, whose only demand is to live in their own way, without outside interference.

The Dutch have lorded it over these friendly people for 350 years, they have taken forcibly from their land 51 per cent of exports, paid them 1/- per day wages, and banished thousands to Dutch New Guinea concentration camp of Tana Merah.

Trade Unions Banned. Wharf labourers will be interested to know that trade unions are banned by the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies.

We print here one or two of the laws of the Dutch Government as they operate in the Indies :

Act 161.—Act of Prevention of Labour Strike : Those, directly or indirectly, inciting a strike by means of speech, writing, or drawing, will be fined for a maximum amount of £50 or five years' imprisonment.

Act 161.—Those who can be considered by the Government to have roused the cause of a labour strike by means of speech, writing, or drawing, will be fined a maximum amount of £50 or five years' imprisonment.

Act 111.—Act of Prevention of Public Meeting : Those holding a meeting attended by more than three persons should have obtained, within 24 hours preceding, the permission of the Government without which a fine can be imposed of a maximum amount of £8 6*s*. 8*d*. or nine months' imprisonment.

Acts 37 *and* 38, I.S.—Those who can be considered by the Government to disturb or to have disturbed the public peace and order will be, without any legal proceedings, exiled for an indefinite time at a specially appointed place.

In reading this legislation it must be clearly understood that as far as political offences are concerned in Indonesia under former Dutch rule, there is no such thing as trial by jury, or for that matter any kind of trial whatever, for Indonesian people charged with political offences.

The statement contained in these Acts: Those who can be considered by the Government, means those who, in the opinion of the secret police, have committed offences against this Act.

There is a secret police organization run by the Dutch, so one doesn't need any imagination to understand what happens to a worker who is prepared to band with his mates to form a trade union.

At the present rate of wages in Java a worker with a family who was fined £50 would have to work all his life to pay the fine.

In answer to the question : " What have the struggles of the Indonesians got to do with us ? " we would answer that we fought the war to liberate all peoples from Fascism, and what the Dutch are doing in that country is Imperialism, which leads to Fascism if unchecked.

It is just as necessary for the future peace of Australia to have a friendly Indonesia as it is to have a friendly China, and the objective of every trade union movement must be international unity in support of the colonial people's struggle for independence.

Karl Marx said that it was necessary for workers of all lands to unite so that the international employers would not be able to use labour from foreign countries to break strikes. Already foreign labour (Dutch soldiers) has been used to break the strike of Brisbane wharfies on the Van Huest, a " mercy " ship carrying munitions.

Our fourteen " Jolly Georges " on the Australian waterfront have, according to the Batavia radio, earned the undying gratitude of 72 millions in Indonesia—they will be a bulwark for peace in the Pacific.

Every waterside worker must understand that he can never be free to enjoy the fruits of his labour while colonial peoples of India, Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia are suppressed by Imperialism. That's why this is a question for us as Australians.

Letter from Army. The following letter has been received from a corporal in the A.I.F., and is eloquent of the manner in which the action of our members appeals to our soldier comrades :

" General Secretary,
Waterside Workers' Federation.

" Dear Sir.—During the past few weeks we have read of the action taken by the waterside workers in connection with the loading of Dutch ships intended to convey war materials to Netherlands East Indies for the suppression of the newly proclaimed Indonesian Republic.

" I have been urged to write applauding the action taken by your organization supporting the principles laid down by the Atlantic Charter.

" We, of the services, are proud of the stand taken by your union, and we here on Labuan Island, possessing some first-hand knowledge of the people and their conditions, are sure that their claims are reasonable and yours completely justifiable. Almost to a man the Australians have found the Indonesian people eager and intelligent and determined to continue their demand for democratic government.

" This is their right, and, furthermore, a democratic government in Indonesia means a friendly neighbour—a vital asset strategically to Australia—plus the mutual economic benefits to be gained with the promotion of trade, which ensures further development of our own industries.

The working class of Australia, the working class of Indonesia—there is a bond between them, and such co-operation must be extended to further that bond. Too well we realize that the fight against Fascism could not have been won without the backing of the home front. We know their efforts were as sincere as ours, and now, since the location of the struggle has shifted, we in turn extend our backing.

" Therefore, I wish to convey to your members, on behalf of a large number of servicemen, a support, though only moral at the moment, none the less tangible and just as steadfast as is necessary to quickly defeat the Imperialist oppressors and at the same time unite the working class throughout the world."

—Corporal S. M.

FULL EMPLOYMENT AND NATIONAL ECONOMIES

The concluding part of last year's League of Nations' Report on Economic Depressions, entitled Economic Stability in the Post-war World, *ends with the following warning :*

" Nothing could be more dangerous nor more untrue to assume that the maintenance of the fullest possible measure of employment can be left to each government acting in isolated independence. All will be affected by the success or failure of all others—all must co-operate in their attempts to attain the end on which we believe all agree. Even granted such co-operation, success will not be achieved lightly or rapidly."

NEWSLETTER FROM FRANCE

Rail Repairs. A few weeks ago—ten days ahead of schedule—the Paris-Lille train crossed the viaduct at Chantilly, just outside Paris. It was the first to travel across the wrecked bridge since the Liberation. The bridge had been badly bombed by the Allies, and the Germans finally destroyed it with dynamite charges, as they were retreating from Normandy.

Les hommes du rail—the French railway workers—have made a gigantic effort to help to get France's trains running again. For instance, at the beginning of this year, the journey from Dieppe to Paris, which normally takes about four hours, took from twelve to seventeen hours. Now it is nearly normal again. The Paris-Marseilles journey, which the P.L.M. express used to do in eleven hours, still takes about eighteen hours. Last year, it was taking up to twenty-four hours.

The task with which the French railways were faced on the morrow of liberation was a huge one. The following figures will give a rough idea of the position : 2,000 miles of track were destroyed, 71 out of 130 of the major dépôts were wrecked, 19 out of 31 repair yards were destroyed, 115 out of 322 of the major junctions were out of use, and 24 out of 40 important marshalling yards were destroyed. In September, 1944, the French railways had 3,000 locomotives left out of 17,800, 4,300 passenger carriages out of 29,100, and 26,500 trucks out of 457,000. All this was the result of German plundering, Allied bombing, sabotage and destruction caused by the fighting. In addition, 2,300 railway bridges and viaducts were completely destroyed. Paris was cut off from the outside world, and in Lyons, 22 out of the 24 bridges round the city, which stands on a kind of island between the Rhône and Saône rivers, were down. Even to-day, travellers from London to Paris have to cross a narrow temporary, and not very reassuring, bridge at the Argenteuil junction.

Despite their privations, and the difficulty of working in primitive conditions—most of the elementary tools, basic raw materials and machinery are unobtainable—the devotion of the *cheminots* has been without limit. On one occasion, for instance, when repairing the bridge at Neuilly-sur-Marne, an engineer spent three days and three nights in the water, whilst the work of testing the strength of the temporary structure went on.

Railways' Own Resistance Movement. The railwaymen have not only done their duty, and more, since the Liberation, they also bore their share of work and of sacrifice in the Resistance, passive as well as active. On two points of great importance, the information they passed on to London could not have been excelled. It was of the greatest usefulness in the preparation of the various commando raids which preceded D-Day and on D-Day itself. They affected the movements of German troops and supplies, and the results of Allied bombing of the railways, military objectives of the utmost importance.

As for information regarding the working of the railways themselves, this became increasingly important as D-Day approached. The men of the railways sent secret messages to the Allied command concerning the results of sabotage, the repair work being carried out, demolished bridges, stocks of coal and oil, and the state of the rolling stock.

The men of *Resistance-Fer*—the railwaymen's own resistance movement—also played an important part in sabotaging German transports before the landings, during the fighting in Normandy, and in disorganizing the Wehrmacht's retreat across France. An idea of the scope of their activities can be obtained from the following information : in and around the town of Dijon alone, from January to August, 1944, the railway resistance groups were responsible for 565 separate incidents, of which 269 involved a complete standstill of traffic. In July, the rate increased to 7 incidents a day. Although such things as the unscrewing of rails are not taken into account in these figures, on the 22nd May, 1944—very close to D-Day—an incident of this kind was responsible for the derailment of 23 German wagons, causing 20 deaths and 50 other casualties amongst the German personnel. This is but one isolated instance.

Few will have forgotten the heroism of the Paris area railway workers, who when the insurrection of August, 1944, began, lay down on the tracks, to prevent the German troop trains from passing.

Travelling on Laval's Train. Another aspect of the work done by *Resistance-Fer* was that of conveying messages between the different zones into which France was divided at the beginning of the occupation—the forbidden zone, the occupied zone and the unoccupied zone. Then came the secret conveyance and protection of escaped prisoners-of-war, British, Belgian and French, of members of the underground movements, and, most dangerous of all, of agents working between the Continent and London. This was perilous work, indeed, on account of the constant inspections of travellers, their papers, and their luggage by the German railway police and Gestapo, who had their offices in every station, and who were constantly " raiding " trains. On one occasion, one of General de Gaulle's emissaries was placed by the engine driver and the fireman in a specially arranged cavity in the tender, and crossed the demarcation line at Moulins in Laval's special train.

One Cwt. of Coal last Winter. With the coldest days of winter approaching, coal is one of the main topics of conversation. The French people, especially those living in the large towns, are haunted by memories of last winter, when the lucky ones received one cwt. of coal for the whole winter ; the rest had to manage as best they could. Many died in Paris and the provinces, especially amongst the very young and the very old, in hospitals that could not be heated, even in the coldest weather.

However, from the North of France comes news that the miners have done, and are doing their utmost to help.

The great difficulty last winter was one of transport. The coal was being extracted, but could not be moved from the pitheads. This year, the situation is a little more hopeful, although so far many people have failed to receive the promised 4 cwt, to start the winter with. The price of wood, when it can be found, is accordingly very high.

Effects of Nationalization of the Mines. France's mines were nationalized recently, and production has gone up, although the most optimistic estimates do not go beyond 50 per cent of France's normal needs, without of course, taking into account the extra hundred million tons which are required for the gigantic task of industrial reconstruction which lies ahead.

The miners are fighting a desperate battle against severe odds. Undernourished for five years, they are straining their strength to the utmost, and although they were recently granted a slight increase in rations, the latter are still far from sufficient for them. This is indeed a serious matter ; even during the German occupation, back in 1941, when the occupation authorities were making a deliberate attempt to starve the French, the miners in the Pas-de-Calais area went on strike for extra rations. This meant death for many of them. The Germans shot them as reprisals. One of their greatest hardships is the total absence of milk. This is essential to fight the deadly disease known as silicosis which threatens miners. Before the war, every French miner received 2 *litres* of milk per day, now they get not a single drop. Soap is another problem. All the miners are suffering from skin diseases, on account of the bad quality and the smallness of their soap allocation.

Next comes the problem of tools and machinery. Every kind of tool, from picks and shovels to pit-props, is practically unobtainable.

France's coal position is still very serious despite the efforts made by the miners and the help which has been given by the Allies (some two million tons of coal have been received from various Allied sources since December 1944). The problem is : sixty million tons of coal per year are needed, and the estimated production for this year is some thirty million tons. . . .

The Situation in France's Ports. Cherbourg, France's third naval base, was recently handed back to the French authorities by the American army. At the time of the D-Day landings, the Germans, realizing the importance of Cherbourg, destroyed the greater part of its magnificent equipment. However, thanks to the American army, Cherbourg soon became the most important military port supplying the Allied forces in Europe. Five million tons of military supplies were discharged there, and all the Allied wounded were repatriated via Cherbourg. It was on the 17th May of this year that the first " Liberty " ship, bringing goods for the civilian population, docked at Cherbourg.

Boulogne-sur-Mer was badly damaged during the 1944 campaign. In all, it suffered 417 bombings, and half its houses were destroyed. Of the half that are left, only one-tenth are fit for habitation. It is estimated that it will take nearly two years to clear away the debris and start rebuilding.

Plans are going to be studied for the rebuilding of St. Nazaire, one of France's biggest shipbuilding areas, and which was nearly completely destroyed during the war. The people of St. Nazaire certainly had their share of suffering during the four years of German occupation, and many of them were deported for helping the British, at the time of the commando raids in 1942. It was at St. Nazaire that France's transatlantic liner *Normandie* and her battleship the *Jean-Bart* were built.

Reprinted from *Tricolore*.

PENSION, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND PLACEMENT SCHEMES ON U.S. RAILWAYS

On August 29th, less than two months after certifying the one-billionth dollar in benefit payments, the Railroad Retirement Board marked the tenth anniversary of its existence. The social insurance programme which it administers has, in the years since the enactment of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1935, undergone considerable change in the direction of providing greater security for railroad workers and their families.

Although ten years ago there was only a retirement system, there are now three distinct, but integrated, programmes of economic security—explains the *Monthly Review* of the Railroad Retirement Board—a retirement system for aged and disabled workers, including death benefits for the survivors of deceased employees ; an unemployment insurance system for those who become unemployed through no fault of their own, except in the case of sickness ; and an employment service, which in peace-time helps to find a job for the man and in war-time a man for the job.

Retirement. The Railroad Retirement Act of 1935 was preceded by an earlier law enacted the year before, which at that time culminated a strong movement among railway employees and their unions to obtain greater assurance of security than was afforded by the private carrier pension plans which had been in effect for many years. The coverage of these plans was limited to a single company or to a few closely related companies, and most of them included eligibility requirements of long periods of continuous service. The result was that many employees were disqualified for benefits if their records showed breaks in service or if they worked successively for different employers, even though they may have been connected with the industry practically all of their working lives. The plans carried no legal safeguards protecting employees' rights to pensions and there was no guarantee that pensions would not be reduced or discontinued

during economic crises. Benefits varied from road to road. Some carriers did not have pension plans at all. Some of the systems set up by several brotherhoods and maintained by voluntary contributions of the members did not overcome the failings of the carrier programmes.

There was finally enacted, after several attempts, the law which became known as the Railroad Retirement Act of 1934. Aside from the United States Civil Service and other retirement systems for federal employees, the new law set up the first federally administered compulsory retirement plan in the country. Before the law could begin operation, however, the Supreme Court, on May 6th, 1935, declared it unconstitutional, chiefly on the grounds that it deprived the railways of property without due process of law and that it was not a legitimate exercise of the commerce power within the meaning of the Constitution.

Almost immediately a new plan was brought forward which was intended to answer this and other objections of the Supreme Court. The new approach was to provide two acts under the spending and taxing powers of Congress, one for the payment of benefits and the other for the levying of taxes. The plan was adopted by Congress as the Railroad Retirement Act of 1935 and the Carriers' Taxing Act, 1935. To administer the retirement act, the present Railroad Retirement Board was established.

Constitutionality Again Challenged. The new board, like the first one, was hampered by litigation. The railroads challenged the constitutionality of the 1935 Act and on June 26th, 1936, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia enjoined the Commissioner of Internal Revenue from collecting the taxes authorized by the Carriers' Taxing Act. In addition, the court prohibited the Railroad Retirement Board from compelling the railroads to furnish, at their own expense, the information necessary for determination of the eligibility of employees and the amounts of the annuities to be paid. The board, however, was not prohibited from paying annuities.

Before the Supreme Court had decided on the appeal taken to it by the board and the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, President Roosevelt suggested that representatives of the railway labour organizations and of the railroads meet jointly and formulate a plan which would be acceptable to both. The joint committee began meetings in January, 1937, and its recommendations were accepted by Congress in large part and resulted in the enactment on June 24th of that year of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 and, a few days later, of the Carriers' Taxing Act of 1937. The agreement to this day represents the only instance in the United States in which both labour and management co-operated in arriving at a specific plan of social insurance to be made compulsory for an industry through legislation.

The most important features of the agreement were the promise of the railroads to drop their lawsuits, the abatement of taxes which the railroads and employees owed under the 1935 Act, and the principle that taxes under the Act, or under future amendments, would be shared equally by employers and employees. The new proposal expanded somewhat the coverage of the system, introduced minimum annuities to improve the position of many low-paid employees, made eligible a large number of disabled employees who were not covered by the 1935 Act, revised the survivor benefit provisions, and provided for the assumption by the retirement account of the pensions being paid by the railroads under the existing private pension plans, up to a maximum of $120 per month. The tax rate applicable to each group was to begin at 2¾ per cent of the compensation (i.e. wages) (up to $300 in any one month) in 1937 and to increase gradually to 3¾ per cent in 1949 and thereafter.

The retirement law underwent several revisions after 1937, the most important of which were the amendments providing credit for periods of military service towards retirement and survivor benefits. More extensive amendments introduced in the present Congress are currently under consideration by the appropriate congressional committees. These amendments contemplate primarily the establishment of a survivor benefit system, liberalization of the disability annuity provisions, increase of the minimum annuity, a change in the definition of employment relation, and an increase in the tax rates.

The Railroad Retirement Act of 1935 set June 1st, 1936, as the effective date for the beginning of annuity payments but, because of the uncertainty surrounding its constitutionality, relatively few workers took advantage of the new law to retire. On that date, there were approximately 70,000 employees in active service, as well as about 20,000 who had ceased work but still had an employment relation to their employer, all of whom had passed their 65th birthday and were, therefore, eligible to retire immediately. More than 15,000 reached age 65 within the following twelve-month period.

Virtually all of these individuals were entitled, upon application, to substantial monthly benefits since they qualified for prior-service credits on the basis of the employment relation provisions of the Act. In spite of these large numbers of potential retirements, the great majority of the employees preferred to continue in employment (or to retain their rights to employment) at least until the constitutionality of railroad retirement legislation was no longer in question. Only about 22,000 annuities based on the attainment of age 65 began to accrue in the period June 1st, 1936—June 23rd, 1937, including those certified to individuals who had been out of the industry for some time before the enactment date but still had an employment relation. In that period, there were in addition 4,000 retirements at ages under 65, which with the exception of a few hundred priorage retirements involved workers who became physically disqualified for their jobs after the enactment date.

Permanence Assured. The passage of the 1937 Act on June 24th of that year provided the necessary assurance of the permanence of the retirement system that the majority of the aged railroad employees needed. Also, the less restrictive employment relation provisions and the new disability provisions enabled many hitherto ineligible workers, employed or unemployed, to qualify for annuities for the first time. These factors, together with the beginning of the recession in employment which

coincided approximately with the enactment of the 1937 Act, were the forces which set off a mass retirement from the industry. In the first twelve months of the operation of the new law, about 60,000 annuities began to accrue, all but 14,000 of which were to individuals past age 65. By the end of 1938, the number of employees at age 65 and over remaining in active service was brought down to about 32,000, while those who had ceased work but had not yet retired numbered 13,000.

With the improvement in business conditions towards the end of 1938, an improvement later carried to unprecedented levels by the initiation of the defence and war programmes, retirements began to fall off, reaching their lowest point in the period shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbour. The drop in retirements, and especially the accompanying expansion in employment which extended even to the older workers, brought about an increase in the number of aged workers in the industry.

The increase continued even though the number of retirements began to rise again towards the end of 1942, so that by the end of 1944 there were as many as 63,000 employees in active service past age 65—somewhat less than at the time the retirement system went into operation but almost double the number at the end of 1939. There were also about 26,000 individuals past retirement age who were no longer in active service but not yet retired. Many of these were working in other industries and could become eligible for retirement annuities only when they quit work entirely. The number of retirements in the first half of 1945 reached the highest level in five years. This increase is likely to continue but the peak of post-war retirements may not be reached for some time.

Unemployment Insurance. While protection for aged workers was becoming a reality, the movement to protect those workers who become unemployed was developing. The railroad unemployment insurance movement was part of the general movement during the great depression to provide benefits as a right, rather than relief, to workers unemployed through no fault of their own.

Among the first activities the federal government undertook in this direction was the study of unemployment among railroad workers initiated by the Federal Co-ordinator of Transportation in 1933. At the conclusion of the study in 1936, the co-ordinator recommended the establishment of a nationally administered unemployment insurance system for transportation workers.

As a partner to the retirement programme in providing economic security, the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act was finally passed on June 25th, 1938, and became effective on July 1st, 1939. The Act was amended in 1940 to provide a shorter waiting period, payment for more days of unemployment in subsequent unemployment registration periods, and higher benefit rates.

Payment of railroad unemployment insurance benefits began in a year which was adversely affected by the depression of 1937–38. Large numbers of workers were laid off in the last half of 1937 and in the first half of 1938, after which employment gradually rose, but because of little or no earnings in the base year, 1938, many unemployed railwaymen were not eligible for benefits in 1939–40. The first year was, nevertheless, the year of the severest unemployment in the period in which the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act has been in effect. Workers registered for unemployment in 1,441,213 individual fifteen-day registration periods ; benefits were paid to 160,735 workers for unemployment in 1,000,682 fifteen-day registration periods.

In each succeeding year, as war activities were intensified, the amount of unemployment decreased steadily until the 1943–44 level of unemployment was below what was previously considered to be the minimum. In that year, unemployment was recorded in only 27,495 two-week registration periods. During 1944–45, unemployment insurance activities, though still at an extremely low level, were somewhat larger. The number of two-week unemployment registration periods was 34,874 ; the amount of benefits paid was $727,697.

Congress is now considering amendments to the Act which will, if enacted, provide benefits for a longer period of time and also two additional benefit classes at higher daily benefit rates. Congress is also considering a proposal to establish, as part of the unemployment insurance programme, a system of benefits for unemployment due to sickness.

Employment Service for Railwaymen. The Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act also required the board to " take appropriate steps to reduce and prevent unemployment and loss of earnings . . . (and) to promote the re-employment of unemployed employees." Accordingly, the board was empowered to " establish, maintain, and operate free employment offices." As these provisions were incorporated in the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, the cost of this service has been charged to the railroad unemployment insurance administration fund. It is supported wholly out of the contributions paid by employers to finance the railroad unemployment insurance system.

Chicago Made Proving Ground. On October 16th, 1939, an experimental employment office serving the Chicago metropolitan area was set up. Guided by the experience gained there, the placement service was inaugurated on a nation-wide basis a year later. Its operations were aimed primarily at finding jobs for railroad workers who were claiming unemployment insurance benefits. Each registrant was required to complete and file an application for employment before any benefits could be paid. If any openings were available for which he seemed qualified, he was immediately referred. His interest in job offers and acceptance of referrals were factors in determining his readiness and willingness to accept suitable work and consequently his right to benefits.

With the advent of the war and the increase in employment, emphasis shifted from finding jobs for railwaymen to finding workers to fill jobs on the railways. Under War Man-power Commission directives, the board's employment service was assigned the responsibility of recruiting workers and for carrying out War Man-power Commission stabilization plans with respect to employment within the railroad industry. As labour shortages developed and turnover became increasingly high, the

railways called upon the employment service more and more for aid in solving their man-power problems. To handle the heavier work load, additional offices were established and the scope of operations broadened. By June 30th, 1945, 139 full-time field offices, exclusive of the nine regional offices, were maintained at principal rail centres throughout the country and 745 employees were engaged in placement activities.

In each year since the first of the 4¾ years of its existence as a national service, the number of placements has ranged from two to five times as many as in the preceding year. A total of 3,120,016 referrals have been made, 2,352,460 placements have been reported, and 152,409 orders for personnel have been received. The great increase in activities during the war may be indicated by the fact that 1,438,532 placements, 61 per cent of all placements made by the employment service since the beginning of operations, were recorded in the year just ended. The performance of the employment service in supplying the railroad with additional personnel to "keep 'em rolling" may be regarded as an important contribution to the nation's war effort.

Since victory has been achieved and man-power controls are being relaxed due to cutbacks in war production, it is believed that the placement record of 1944–45 may prove to be the peak. The level of operations is expected to fall as labour reserves enlarge. As this develops the function of the employment service in finding jobs for unemployed railroad workers and in testing their availability for work is expected more and more to resume its pre-war position.

The Board and its Members. The Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts are administered by a board composed of three members appointed by the President. One member is appointed from recommendations made by the railways, another from recommendations of railroad labour, and the third, who is the chairman, to represent the public.

The headquarters offices of the board were in Washington until May, 1942. At that time, because of the serious shortage of office space, many government agencies were being moved to other cities. By order of the President, the board moved its headquarters to Chicago where it is presently located. The field operations of the board are handled through nine regional offices located in the following cities: Atlanta, New York, Cleveland, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Denver and San Francisco.

From *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine.*

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 quotation is a contribution from John M. Baer, Congressman-Cartoonist to "Federation News," the weekly of the Chicago Federation of Labor, entitled "Freedom of the Air, Another False Front."

Recently a noted scientist discovered the reason why he could not examine a deadly germ. It was because it was invisible. It was invisible because it was transparent. However, when he added dye to the tiny critter and focused a bright light upon it, he could examine it with ease.

One of the most vital issues now before the American people is what is called "freedom of the air." For the United States, this slogan is not as empty as it sounds. We all believe in "Freedom of the Press" and "Freedom of Speech," but the so-called "Freedom of the Air" is a slogan which has a much more sinister meaning. The American people have now been putting "dye" into this transparent catch phrase, and are learning, upon examination, that the "freedom of air" germ is likely to poison and destroy American post-war aviation.

Just after the first World War, the uncontrolled shipping lines of foreign countries entered our ports under the slogan of "Freedom of the Seas" and drove the merchant marine of the United States off the sea. Now, using the battle cry of "Freedom of the Air," foreign aviation companies are planning to drive American aviation out of the skies—even the skies above the United States.

This "Freedom of the Air" theory is based on several administrative agreements thought up by some of the "experts" in our Department of State. These agreements do not require ratification by two-thirds of the United States Senate, but are merely "executive orders" issued by bureaucrats who are willing to surrender America's control of her own airfields, if need be, and permit foreigners to keep us out of the air.

This wild freedom-of-the-air proposal forces the United States to permit airlines from 54 foreign countries to come into this country and carry our air traffic-passengers and goods—to every port on the globe.

The Axis countries are not parties to the "Freedom of the Air Theory," but this does not mean that our airlines would not compete with those from the Axis countries. All they would need to do would be to register their planes under the flag of some other nation; then they would be free to enter the United States at will and deprive our own planes of the business which rightly belongs to our own countrymen.

At the present time a German airline is flying the flag of Switzerland, and could compete for this air traffic. After Japan is finally beaten by our armed forces, the Japs may register their planes under the flag of some other nation and also compete for this trans-oceanic air traffic.

Because planes are not compelled to stop at the water's edge, these foreign air liners may fly into the interior of the country with their cargoes and thus deprive our railroads, bus lines, as well as our own airlines, of untold dollars in revenue freight and passenger business.

The farmers will suffer. Farm produce—even the fruits which are most perishable—may be flown into our country in a day from other countries by these foreign planes, and thus force upon American agriculture the competition from the lands where farm workers are paid but a pittance.

All workers will suffer. From the lands where labour is paid but a fraction of what is paid in the United States, will be flown all kinds of manufactured articles to compete with, and drive down the wage standards of the American working man and woman.

These foreign planes will be built in foreign lands, and thus the American workers in plane factories will be deprived of the labour necessary to construct these vast air armadas which will shuttle back and forth across the U.S.A.

It was the sons of Americans who made possible the victory in Europe; and these same sons will soon bring Japan to her knees. It was the money loaned in the purchase of War Bonds which paid for the munitions, the supplies and the other engines of destruction which brought victory in Europe.

Thousands and thousands of American planes have been given to other nations to help win the war. It is now possible that these war planes may be converted into cargo planes and used to compete with American-owned, American-controlled, and American-manned airplanes in the commerce of the future.

Is America, which has paid such a high price for freedom, to be deprived of her freedom by some catch-phrase such as "Freedom of the Air?" The swarms of post-war planes which will be permitted to come into this country under such a programme will cram our airfields with craft from every nation on earth, and thus there will be no place for American planes to land.

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