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## Affiliated Unions :

ALGERIA  
ARGENTINA  
AUSTRALIA  
AUSTRIA  
BELGIUM  
CANADA  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
CHILE  
CHINA  
DENMARK  
DUTCH EAST INDIES  
DUTCH GUIANA  
EGYPT  
FINLAND  
FRANCE  
GREAT BRITAIN  
GREECE  
HOLLAND  
HUNGARY  
ICELAND  
INDIA  
INDO-CHINA  
IRELAND  
ITALY  
KENYA  
LEBANON  
LUXEMBURG  
MADAGASCAR  
MEXICO  
MOROCCO  
NEW ZEALAND  
NORWAY  
PALESTINE  
POLAND  
RHODESIA  
RUMANIA  
SOUTH AFRICA  
SWEDEN  
SWITZERLAND  
SYRIA  
TRINIDAD  
TUNISIA  
UNITED STATES  
YUGOSLAVIA

## Relations with unions in:

CUBA  
ECUADOR

## Other relations in :

BRAZIL  
BULGARIA  
GERMANY  
JAPAN  
PORTUGAL  
SPAIN  
and other countries

## THE ZÜRICH CONGRESS OF THE I.T.F.

THE second world war, like the first, was a turning point in the history of the international trade union movement in general, and of the International Transport Workers' Federation in particular. In 1919 the International Federation of Trade Unions emerged from the obscurity in which it had hitherto lived, claimed the attention of the world, and forced a hearing from those who had the responsibility of making peace. At the same time the I.T.F. ended what might be called its period of adolescence and threw itself into the fray with such impetuosity, and on so wide a front, that its name is to be found on every page of the history of the trade union movement between the two wars.

In 1945 the International Federation of Trade Unions made way for the World Federation of Trade Unions. The event was a considerable one because it was the fruit of an effort to unite the trade union movement on a world scale, to re-establish the unity which was broken during the first world war. But before it can harness itself fully to a task which differs chiefly in amplitude from that which the I.F.T.U. undertook in 1919 and the years which followed, the W.F.T.U. must first forge its tools, and this job is harder and more complicated than in 1919. The I.F.T.U. was composed of organizations which all professed similar ideas, and followed trade union methods which were identical, or nearly so. The W.F.T.U. is composed of organizations belonging to two large groups which have lived for more than a quarter of a century in two different ideological worlds. To bring together and fuse the differing conceptions will necessarily take time.

The process inevitably has its effects upon the I.T.F., whose affiliated organizations are sharing the life of the W.F.T.U. by virtue of their connection with the national federations of trade unions of which the latter is composed. But the setting up of the W.F.T.U. effects the I.T.F. also in another and a more direct manner. The W.F.T.U. is not only to take the place of the I.F.T.U., it also claims the functions, or at least the direction, of the international industrial federations by trade or industry, commonly known as the international trade secretariats, of which the I.T.F. is the most important. A decision to integrate these industrial federations in the W.F.T.U. has already been come to, and the only question still to be decided is how to do it. So that 1945 has virtually marked the end of the period of independent existence and activity of the I.T.F.

At the opening session of the Congress I could not shake off the feeling that this fact was symbolized by two things. In the first place Edo Fimmen, who was the incarnation of the I.T.F. between the two wars, was not there. He died in December, 1942, at the moment when the transformation of the international trade union movement was being first adumbrated—a transformation which, unless something unforeseen happens, will put an end to the I.T.F.'s

independence. Those who knew Fimmen as a man and as a leader will find it difficult to imagine him leading an I.T.F. in the form envisaged in the Constitution of the W.F.T.U. In the second place, Charles Lindley, the last survivor of the little group which founded the I.T.F., who attended the constituent congress in 1896 and all those which have followed it, was presiding for the last time over the International Transport Workers' Congress. With him goes a distinguished representative of a period which was often heroic, and even glorious, but which has now closed. He himself indicated, in his closing speech, that he was not sorry no longer to be the President of the I.T.F. if it was to give up its independence and become a mere cog in the wheels of the W.F.T.U., which in any case he views with some suspicion.

Discussions about the method and details of the integration of the I.T.F.—and other international federations—into the W.F.T.U., which started after the World Trade Union Congress of September and October, 1945, are proving complicated, and they had not ended when the I.T.F. Congress met in May, 1946. Delegates therefore had before them no complete and coherent plan which they could adopt—with or without amendment—or reject. Consequently they could only decide on the question of principle, a matter which all concerned, or nearly all, regard as already settled, and which the Congress therefore hardly discussed. For the rest they had before them the draft which even those who are negotiating on behalf of the W.F.T.U., and still more the representatives of the I.T.F., regard as little more than a rudimentary basis for discussion.

The I.T.F. was founded fifty years ago. If the Congress proved anything it was that those fifty years have seen the building up of traditions and bonds of solidarity that nobody wishes to see destroyed as a result of the loss of independence and integration in the W.F.T.U. The fear that this danger is a real one is very lively, and an echo of it was to be heard in nearly all the speeches made at Zurich. The Congress was almost unanimous in insisting that the I.T.F. should not, in the process of integration, lose either its identity or its autonomy. The concessions already made by the W.F.T.U. are welcomed, but more are wanted, as well as guarantees of their permanence.

Autonomy is not asked for political reasons. It would not mean living and working outside the great international trade union movement represented and guided by the W.F.T.U., still less freedom to ignore the general policy or special decisions of that organization. Nor would it mean deciding and acting unknown to the W.F.T.U. in matters or circumstances likely to affect trade unions of other than the transport industry, or even those of the transport industry itself. Autonomy is not the antonym of co-ordination and interlocking.

Autonomy is insisted on for practical reasons. The I.T.F. has formed within itself a number of trade sections, for railwaymen, seamen, dockers, road transport workers, tramwaymen and workers on the inland waterways. To these there will soon be added one for civil aviation workers. There are technical problems, such as those of

health and safety, which have special and differing aspects for each one of these sections. Even social questions, such as that of working hours or holidays, cannot be solved in the same manner in every transport industry. There are problems which are common to the workers of all these branches, such as that of the co-ordination of transport, but in each one they present a different aspect. And even questions of a general character—those, that is to say, which are not confined to the transport industry but affect industry as a whole—such as the international organization of transport and the ownership and control of transport undertakings, which need to be seen through the glasses of each one of these transport sections before any definite decision can be come to. Even within the I.T.F. it has been found necessary to give each section a considerable measure of autonomy in determining the methods to be adopted and the action to be taken. It is precisely this autonomy which has maintained harmony between the sections and unity of thought and action.

And what has been found to be necessary within the I.T.F. will be found to be doubly so within the W.F.T.U. if it proposes to bring the whole of international trade union activity under its supreme authority. Unless there is specialization and decentralization it will find itself condemned to paralysis in the particular fields of activity which have hitherto been the special domain of the international industrial federations. It would run the risk of becoming a massive bureaucratic machine, heavy and inert, instead of the great but lively and efficient organization it ought to be.

From the point of view of the I.T.F. integration ought to mean that its activities, while developing freely in its own particular field of organization, should contribute to the realization of the aims of the W.F.T.U.; and that on the other hand the W.F.T.U. should support I.T.F. action in all circumstances in which such support might be useful or necessary. And it should further mean that the I.T.F. should share in the life and work of the W.F.T.U. while the latter takes an active interest in the work of the I.T.F. and endeavours to contribute to its success.

Autonomy would mean that after integration, as before, it would be the mission of the I.T.F. to unite all the transport workers of the world, whether or not their trade unions were connected with the W.F.T.U.; that after integration, as before, the I.T.F. would be the instrument by means of which the transport workers' trade unions would formulate their common policy, undertake joint action and organize mutual assistance in the struggle to improve living and working conditions in the transport industries in all countries; that after integration, as before, the I.T.F. would represent the transport workers within or in relations with the international bodies—such as the International Labour Office—whose activities concern them. And autonomy would mean that the transport workers' unions would run their own international organization.

It was this conception of integration and autonomy that led the Congress to agree to a general revision of the rules of the I.T.F., embodying the teachings of experience



*General view of the Congress in session*

obtained during the period between the two wars. For the time being the new rules have not been co-ordinated with those of the W.F.T.U. Before this can be done it will be necessary to conclude the negotiations with the latter, and that their results be ratified by the higher governing bodies of the two organizations. Once this has been done there should be no particular difficulty about adapting the new rules of the I.T.F. to those of the W.F.T.U.

The question of the future shape of the I.T.F. dominated the discussions at Zurich, largely to the detriment of other important questions such as the reconstruction and organization of European transport, and the problems raised by living and working conditions in the transport industries in a world ravaged by war. The only such question discussed was that of the physical reconstruction of transport in the devastated countries, raised by the Italian Railwaymen's Union. The Congress did not even have an opportunity to react to the following passage in the address of its President, Charles Lindley: "It was because the holders of power . . . rejected the counsels of the workers' organizations that the world had to

suffer a second catastrophe in our century. It is up to us therefore, and to all the international trade unions organizations, to say, in such a manner as to be better understood this time, what will have to be done to avoid a third war." If it had had time to consider as a whole the problem of the liquidation of fascism, the Congress would certainly not have been satisfied to discuss in isolation the limited question of the survival of Franco in Spain; and it would at least have gone a little deeper into the question of the economic organization of the world with a view to social security and full employment, raised by the Belgian Tramwaymen's Union. As it was it could do little more than touch on this problem.

The Congress was held in a period and an atmosphere of transition. It was above all a joyful occasion. Delegates were visibly happy to renew the old links of comradeship that had been broken by the war which followed the gloomy Congress held in November, 1938, in Luxembourg. They were no less happy to know that the I.T.F. had been able to continue its work during the war and make its contribution to the war effort, and that all its affiliated organizations, including those in the neutral



countries, had supported this effort, each in the way that its circumstances indicated. The Congress was also a manifestation of the will to ensure the continuity of the action and traditions of the I.T.F., while accepting a change in the form or organization to the extent that might be necessary to complete the task of re-establishing international unity.

The Swiss Railwaymen's Federation and Swiss Transport Workers' Federation have at all times held an important position in the I.T.F., on account of the many services which their strategical geographic position has enabled them to lend. Those who do not know the I.T.F. nor its two affiliated Swiss member-organizations might think that Swiss neutrality during the war would have affected unfavourably their position in the I.T.F. The Congress has proved that it has not. Their brilliant effort to make the Congress an unforgettable event for those who attended it has even increased the sympathy they enjoy. Delegates have had an opportunity of appreciating the trade union qualities of these two organizations, and they gave expression to their judgment by unanimously electing Robert Bratschi, in a secret ballot, as a member of the Executive Committee—the highest distinction the Congress can confer.

The Swiss authorities added to the moral credit their

country already has by helping the two unions to give the Congress a worthy setting, by facilitating delegates' journey to Switzerland, and by contributing to the cost of welcoming them. All this, added to the warmth of the reception which the people of Zurich and the Swiss press gave to the Congress, very much strengthened the sympathy which delegates already felt for the country, whose high degree of material and cultural civilization, and natural beauties, they had an opportunity of admiring.

A moving ceremony marked the final day of the proceedings. The Congress was attended by three Austrian delegates who in 1935, at the Copenhagen Congress of the I.T.F., handed over to its keeping the banner of their Union, asking that it should be preserved, as a symbol of their ideals, until Austria should be once more free. On this occasion J. H. Oldenbroek, the new General Secretary of the I.T.F., returned it to them. They thanked the I.T.F., not only for having kept their banner safe for them, but also for the ideal it represents. It was the clear wish of the Congress that the I.T.F. should continue to be the guardian of the ideals of the organizations that belong to it, and to defend them, if possible, even better than during the first half-century of its existence.

PAUL TOFAHRN.

## RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY I.T.F. CONGRESS

### Relations between I.T.F. and W.F.T.U.

The Congress accepts the principle of incorporation of the I.T.F. in the W.F.T.U. and instructs the Executive Committee to continue negotiations with the Executive Bureau of the W.F.T.U. with a view to securing acceptable terms. The terms finally negotiated to be submitted to a further Congress for ratification.

### Spain

This Congress, meeting in Zürich on the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the I.T.F., and having heard a report on conditions in Spain, views with pain and indignation the continuation in that country of the Franco régime.

Seven years have passed since General Franco marched to power over the dead bodies of the valiant defenders of democracy, and still the Spanish people is in bondage to a régime of terror which was born of and is a continuation of, those of Mussolini and Hitler, a régime which has been responsible for the imprisonment, torture and murder of millions of victims whose only crime was their love of freedom and democracy.

The Spanish railwaymen's, transport workers' and seamen's trade unions were always staunch and loyal supporters of the I.T.F., and always ready to do their duty and meet their obligations, and the Congress, therefore, feels a special responsibility towards them, and appreciates the moral and material help afforded by the I.T.F. to the Spanish refugees during their captivity in concentration camps in 1939.

The Congress believes that the persistence of the Franco régime in Spain at present is a threat to world security and a hindrance to the reconstruction of Europe and the restoration of normal peace-time conditions, as well as a danger to democracy and an affront to humanity.

It therefore welcomes the decision of the W.F.T.U. to ask national trade union centres to urge their governments to break off diplomatic relations with Spain, and asks all organizations affiliated to the I.T.F. to assist their national centres in bringing pressure to bear on governments in support of this initiative, urging them to break off economic as well as diplomatic relations.

The Congress hopes that the Security Council, after hearing the report of the Committee appointed to consider the Spanish problem, will take drastic steps to put an end to the Franco régime, and it assures that Committee of the unqualified co-operation of the transport workers of the world in the implementation of any action they might recommend.

Meanwhile the Congress approves the prompt action of the Management Committee of the I.T.F. in taking steps to ascertain the volume of trade with Spain, and the practical effects likely to flow from a decision to declare an international boycott of that country, and authorizes the Executive Committee to enter into contact with the organizations directly concerned, consider with them the action which might be taken to achieve the desired end, and in agreement with them come to such decisions as the circumstances may require.



### Rehabilitation of Transport Industry

The Congress of the I.T.F., having considered the problem of the rehabilitation of the transport industry :

(1) Whereas the industry must function and evolve in step with the economic and social requirements of each country, as essential factor in the production and distribution of wealth and as instrument of co-operation between peoples.

(2) Whereas the transport industries of a number of countries have suffered serious damage which it is imperative to repair with the least possible delay.

(3) Whereas the resources of raw materials, equipment and goods exchangeable for raw materials and equipment are in almost all these countries insufficient for an adequate and speedy rehabilitation of their transport industries.

(4) Whereas the transport workers of all these countries are consequently deprived of the necessary means of reconstructing an essential industry.

Declares :

(a) That there is an urgent need to establish a reconstruction plan for the whole of the ravaged countries in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee of Industrial Rehabilitation Experts of UNRRA and the Inland Transport Committee of the International Labour Organization.

(b) That there is an imperative need for all organizations affiliated with the I.T.F. to undertake concerted action to convince all governments of the United Nations of the need of framing and executing a plan allocating raw materials and equipment according to the requirements of ravaged countries and of granting all these countries long and even very long-term credits for reconstruction purposes.

Invites the organizations concerned to inform the I.T.F. within two months as to the extent and the nature of these requirements ; and

Instructs the Secretariat of the I.T.F. to make forthwith urgent representations to U.N.O. with a view to the framing and execution of a reconstruction plan for all the war-ravaged countries.

### Full Employment and Social Security

Whereas the period between the two world wars was one of recurring economic crises, attended by mass unemployment and misery for large sections of the world's population ;

Whereas the demoralization resulting therefrom was a major factor in the rise of reactionary movements such as fascism and national socialism ; and

Whereas a lasting peace cannot be expected unless the economic needs of the peoples are satisfied and their freedoms guaranteed ;

The Congress of the I.T.F., meeting in Zurich from 6th to 11th May, 1946, considers that it is a paramount duty of the trade union movement everywhere to fight for full employment and social security, and emphasises the need for international co-ordination of efforts and mutual assistance if these objects are to be realized.

In planning the action to be undertaken the following points, in particular, should be given due weight :

(1) That the increase of rationalization and technical progress will necessitate a general shortening of working hours, and that the forty-hour week is therefore an immediate aim to be pursued in countries in which it has not yet been generalized.

(2) That as production increases and more man-power becomes available, the school-leaving age should be raised, and that of retirement from industry lowered, with provision for an adequate pension.

(3) That the planning of full employment cannot be left to private enterprise, but must be a subject of public action and control.

(4) That the workers' trade unions should be consulted in all that relates to these matters, and given representation on all official and semi-official bodies concerned with them.

The Congress pledges its full support to the trade unions in countries which are in an early stage of trade union and industrial development, and promises them its assistance to enable them to achieve far-reaching improvements in the working conditions of their members, for the double purpose of giving them a decent standard of living and preventing their being used as a lever to reduce the standards of the workers in the more industrially developed countries.

Finally the Congress emphasizes the need for constant co-operation between all countries in the world, pointing out that trade relations can no longer be regarded as fundamentally a means of making private profits, but also, and primarily, as means for satisfying the growing needs of the population and achieving full employment.

The Congress consequently urges the Social and Economic Council of the U.N.O., and the International Labour Office, each in their several spheres, to give the earliest possible attention to these matters in the light of the above considerations.

### Mexican Tramways.

The International Transport Workers' Congress, meeting in Zürich from 6th to 11th May, having heard a report from Comrade De Jager, delegate of the Mexican Tramwaymen's Union, assures the Mexican tramwaymen, and all other transport workers in that country, of its warmest feelings of brotherhood and solidarity.

Together with the Mexican tramwaymen, it denounces the international tramway trust "Sofina" which, in all parts of the world, exploits the tramway workers, the travelling public, and the workers engaged in the building of rolling stock and the production of electric power.

To such governments and communities as have already reduced the power of "Sofina" by taking over the undertakings it operated, the Congress offers its congratulations, and urges them to keep to and advance further along this path, and to resist all pressure that may be brought to bear on them in favour of this trust.

The Congress also urges the governments to show themselves to be better employers than the trust, by improving the conditions of employment of the workers transferred to their service.

### Conditions of Employment in the Dock Industry

This International Dockers' Conference, meeting on 8th May, 1946, in conjunction with the Zürich Congress of the I.T.F., after considering the question of conditions of employment in the dock industry.

Realizes the imperative need of eliminating international competition as a factor making for impairment of dockers' standards; and

Considers that the purpose can be most effectively achieved by holding Regional Conferences covering countries affected.

As the question is of particular urgency in the ports of Western Europe, it requests the I.T.F. Congress to convene, as the first of such regional discussions, a Dockers' Conference for Belgium, Holland, France and Great Britain not later than August, 1946, in Antwerp; and

Urges dockers' unions in the different countries to supply the I.T.F. Secretariat without delay with concise information covering wages, hours, maintenance schemes and safety legislation in the docks industry, so that a four-country comparative survey of dockers' conditions may be prepared for that Conference."

### International Docks Conventions

This International Dockers' Conference, meeting on 8th May, 1946, in conjunction with the Zürich Congress of the I.T.F.:

Whereas the International Docks Convention of 1932 has still not been ratified by a number of countries, while in others though ratified the Convention is not fully enforced;

Whereas port conditions and practices have evolved in certain directions since the adoption of the Convention;

Urges dockers' unions in all countries: (1) to ensure

that the 1932 Convention is duly ratified and properly enforced in their respective countries, and (2) to consider whether the Convention is in need of revision under some heads and to inform the I.T.F. Secretariat accordingly in order that the appropriate steps may be taken.

### Maximum Weight of Loads

This International Dockers' Conference, meeting on 8th May, 1946, in conjunction with the Zürich Congress of the I.T.F.:

Having considered the question of the weight of loads in dock work:

Considers that 75 kilogrammes is the maximum weight which one man can carry without eventual detriment to health;

Urges dockers' unions to ensure that this maximum is not exceeded in their respective countries; and

Requests the International Labour Office to take steps with a view to the adoption of an International Convention on the subject.

### Dockers' International Programme

This International Dockers' Conference, meeting on 8th May, 1946, in conjunction with the Zürich Congress of the I.T.F.,

Considers that a Programme of International Minimum Demands is a useful instrument

for co-ordinating the industrial action of dockers in the different countries, and congratulates the Secretariat on its report.

Decides to appoint a committee including one representative from each affiliated country, which shall draft an International Dockers' Charter.

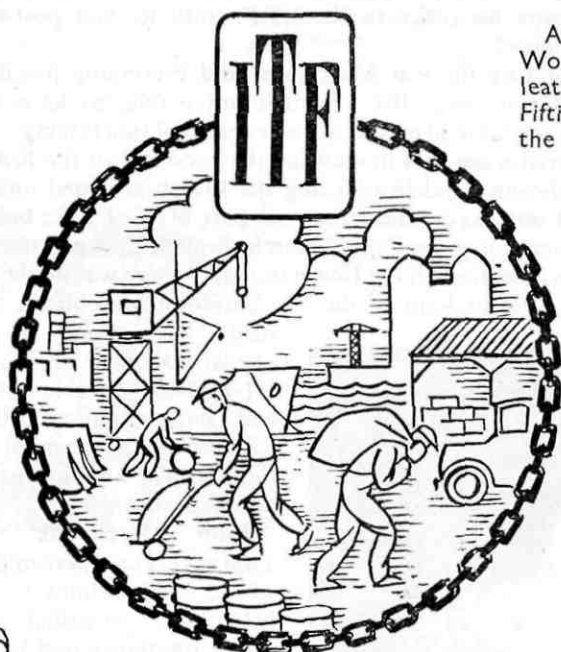
Requests the Secretariat to collect the necessary material for the purpose from the countries and to call a meeting of the committee immediately before or after the conference in Antwerp in August, 1946.

## THE STALWARTS OF THE CONGRESS



From left to right: Ch. LINDLEY, retiring President; J. H. OLDENBROEK, newly elected General Secretary; R. BRATSCHI, host of the Congress, member of the Executive Committee.

# NORWEGIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' TRIBUTE TO I.T.F. ON FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY



1896 ~ 30. JULI ~ 1946

1896 **I.T.F.** 1946

INTERNASJONAL  
TRANSPORTARBEIDER  
FEDERASJON

...

PÅ VEGNE AV NORSK TRANSPORT-  
ARBEIDERFORBUND FREMBARER  
VI VÅR HILSEN OG HYLLEST TIL INTER-  
NASJONAL TRANSPORTARBEIDER-  
FEDERASJON I ANLEDNING ORGANI-  
SASJONENS 50 ÅRS JUBILEUM.

TRANSPORTARBEIDERNE INNTAR EN  
NØKKELSTILLING I SAMEFUNNSMA-  
SKINERIE OG TRANSPORTARBEIDERNE  
OVER HELE VERDEN VIL ALLTID MÅTE  
STÅ I FORRESTE LINJE I DEN INTER-  
NASJONALE ARBEIDERBEVEGELSE  
KAMP I.T.F.s VIRKSOMHET HAR  
DERFOR VÆRT AV AVGJØRENDE BE-  
TYDNING FOR ARBEIDERNES FREM-  
MARSJ VERDEN OVER.

At the Zurich Congress the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union presented the I.T.F. with a splendid leather-bound illuminated address on the occasion of its Fiftieth Anniversary. Here is an English translation of the Norwegian text:

ON BEHALF OF THE NORWEGIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION, WE PRESENT OUR GREETINGS AND HOMAGE TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION ON THE OCCASION OF ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

TRANSPORT WORKERS OCCUPY A KEY POSITION IN SOCIETY AND ARE DESTINED ALWAYS TO BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE WORK OF THE I.T.F. HAS CONSEQUENTLY BEEN OF DECISIVE IMPORTANCE TO THE PROGRESS OF THE WORKERS IN ALL COUNTRIES.

WE EXPRESS THE HOPE AND CONVICTION THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL AND IMPORTANT WORK ACCOMPLISHED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE I.T.F. WILL BE CONTINUED IN THE FUTURE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS IN PARTICULAR AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE.

IN THANKING THE I.T.F. FOR THE SPLENDID CO-OPERATION OF ALL THESE YEARS, WE REQUEST IT TO CONVEY OUR GREETINGS TO OUR COMRADES AND FELLOW FIGHTERS ALL OVER THE WORLD AND OUR WISHES FOR THEIR CONTINUED PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE COMMON CAUSE.

FOR THE NORWEGIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION

H. Fladeby  
Leif S. Olsen  
Edv. Paulsen

M. G. Kjøniksen  
Olaf Askeland  
Harry Klausen

DI • UTTALER VÅR HÅP OG VÅR  
FORVISSNING OM AT DET GRUNN-  
LEGGENDE OG BETYDNINGSFULLE  
ARBEIDE SOM I.T.F. HAR STÅTT I  
SPISSEN FOR GJENNOM DISSE ÅR MÅ  
FØRES VIDERE OGSÅ I FREMTIDEN  
TIL GAVN FOR TRANSPORTARBEIDERNE  
SELV OG FOR HELE DEN INTERNASJONA-  
LE ARBEIDERBEVEGELSE.

DET VI TAKKER FOR DET GODE  
SAMARBEIDE GJENNOM ALLE ÅR  
BER VI I.T.F. OVERBRINGE VÅR HILSEN  
TIL VÅRE KAMERATER OG KAMPFELLER  
OVER HELE VERDEN MED ØNSKE OM  
FORTSATT FREMGANG OG HELL I  
KAMPEN FOR FELLES SAK.

FOR NORSK TRANSPORTARBEIDERFORBUND



H. Fladeby, M. G. Kjøniksen, Leif S. Olsen  
Olaf Askeland, Edv. Paulsen, Harry Klausen



## IN MEMORIAM JOHN MARCHBANK

John Marchbank died on 23rd March, 1946, many years too early. He died suddenly, without a warning illness, in the rush and turmoil, as it were, of his work. For though retired from the general secretaryship of the National Union of Railwaymen of Great Britain, John Marchbank still had many interests and was active in many fields.

Born at Lambfoot, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, on 19th January, 1883, as the son of a shepherd, he began his working days as a shepherd's boy. At the age of eighteen he joined the old Caledonian Railway Company as a porter. He left the railway for a time to serve with the Dumfriesshire County Police, but rejoined the company as a shunter at Glasgow.

He showed a keen interest in trade unionism and became a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in 1906. After the amalgamation of the railway unions in 1912, he served on the Executive Committee, was president from 1922 to 1924, became assistant general secretary, under C. T. Cramp, and general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen of Great Britain upon the latter's death in 1933. In recent years he was a director of British Overseas Airways Corporation.

In the I.T.F. John Marchbank played an active part for many years. His first attendance was at the Vienna Congress in 1922. In 1935 he was elected a member of the Executive Committee and Vice-President. Among the many offices he held, the Vice-Presidency of the I.T.F. was the one he considered the most important, and to which he devoted much of his time and energy. He served the I.T.F. indeed at all times with the utmost devotion. It was he who obtained permission for the I.T.F. to move its headquarters to Great Britain on the eve of the second world war, and in the difficult period which followed assisted it through his widespread relations with the Trade Union Movements of Great Britain and the United States, with political circles and with the world of transport. For a long time he was the only member of the Executive Committee able to deal with I.T.F. affairs, as effective contacts with all the others had been broken owing to the circumstances of war. His services to the I.T.F. were so valuable, that when he retired at the beginning of 1943 from the general secretary-

ship of the N.U.R., he was requested to continue to occupy his office in the I.T.F. until its first post-war congress.

During the war Marchbank did everything possible, and sometimes the well-nigh impossible, to keep the organization in existence and capable of functioning. He played a big part in securing the good will of the British authorities and in inducing the British affiliated unions not only to continue their support of the I.T.F., but to increase it as the Nazis' march through Europe inflicted loss after loss on the International. There was no day of the year or hour of the day but John Marchbank was

ready to respond to an appeal for help from the I.T.F. Secretariat in major and minor matters alike. Even when in hospital he found ways and means of giving assistance.

John Marchbank was a amiability personified. There was no limit to his helpfulness. Cordial and jovial, optimistic and enterprising, patient and eager to reconcile divergent views, he always conducted the meetings he presided to a successful conclusion. And the I.T.F. meetings he presided were many, especially during the war, when the Executive Committee could not meet and Marchbank had to deputize for the President. The Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F. will long remember him as an excellent chairman. The railwaymen who took part in the I.L.O. Conference of March, 1939, will not forget the skill with which he steered



in a debate which others were striving to render sterile.

Marchbank was due to take his leave of the I.T.F. at the Zürich Congress. For all the delegates who had known and had worked with him it was a matter of very deep regret that his untimely death deprived them of this opportunity of rewarding him for his great services to the cause of the I.T.F. by a special manifestation of their affection and esteem. He will live in the memories of his I.T.F. colleagues and be remembered by trade union leaders and rank and filers in the many countries which he visited and revisited in the inter-war years and even during the war, as an Internationalist who proved the strength and depth of his convictions not only by words but by deeds of the highest order. The secretaries of the I.T.F. will remember John Marchbank as a great helper and a great pal. In the history of the I.T.F. he will be remembered as one of its best servants and leaders in the decade that ended with the second world war. P.T.

## THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The members of the Executive Committee of the I.T.F. chosen by our Zürich Congress are naturally no newcomers to the ranks of the I.T.F. Some of them are even veterans of our governing bodies. Robert Bratschi, who has attended all our congresses since 1920, has since 1924 alternated with the representatives of the Austrian unions as a member both of the General Council and the Executive Committee. Charles Garcias has also taken part in the work of both bodies, since 1944, as a substitute member; while Trifón Gómez tops the list with uninterrupted membership of the General Council since 1921 and of the Executive Committee since 1935.

We give below short biographies, accompanied by photographs, of all members of the new Executive appointed by our Zürich Congress.



**Omer Becu** is National Secretary of the Seamen's and Dockers' Section of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union and President of the Union itself. He was a radiotelegraphist in the Belgian mercantile marine from 1920 until 1929, when he became Secretary of the Radiotelegraphists' Section of the Belgian

Union of Officers in the Mercantile Marine and Assistant Secretary of the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association. In 1932 he was chosen as Secretary of his Union and General Secretary of the I.M.M.O.A. He filled both these offices until 1944, and was appointed to those he now holds the following year. He is a member of the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Office and of the Superior Council of the Belgian Mercantile Marine.



**John Benstead**, General Secretary of the British National Union of Railwaymen. He was chosen as President of the I.T.F. at our Zürich Congress. Born in 1897, he entered the service of the former Great Northern Railway in 1911. From 1922 onwards he held several local offices in his Union, and was elected to its National

Executive in 1930. In 1935 he was chosen as an Organizer, a position he held until 1939, when he was elected as Assistant General Secretary of the Union. He was appointed General Secretary on the retirement of the late John Marchbank in 1943. He is a member of several Government committees, and also of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and the National Council of Labour. He took a great interest in the municipal government of Peterborough, and served as a member of the City Council for seven years. He was its Deputy Mayor in 1932, and was also a Justice of the Peace.



**Robert Bratschi** is both General Secretary and President of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation. He was an employee of the Swiss Federal Railways from 1908 to 1918, when he entered the service of his Federation, becoming its Secretary in 1920. He is very prominent in the trade union movement of his country.

Since 1934 he has been President of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, and since 1922 President of Swiss Civil Servants' Federation. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Swiss Federal Railways, a prominent member of the Swiss Parliament, and a leading figure in local and cantonal politics.



**Sture Christiansson** is National Organizer of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union. He was in the service of the Swedish State Railways from 1907 until he was appointed to his present position in 1937. He is a member of the Governing Body of the Swedish Federation of Trade Unions and President of the Scandinavian Federation of Railwaymen's Unions.



**Charles Garcias** is General Secretary of the French National Transport Federation. Tried many jobs before becoming motor car driver, lorry driver and Paris taxi-driver. Shop steward in 1924, Secretary of Paris Taxi-Drivers' Union in 1929, and Secretary of the National Transport Federation in 1934. Im-

prisoned in 1939, then successively in seven different concentration camps: twice deported. On his liberation in North Africa he reorganized the transport workers there, later resuming his position in the National Transport Federation. Has been since 1936 a member of the General Council of the French General Confederation of Labour.



**Trifón Gómez** started work on the Spanish Northern Railway at the age of 14 years. Fourteen years later he was dismissed for participation in the general strike of 1917. Had to take refuge in Paris until an amnesty was proclaimed in 1918. Chosen as General Secretary of the Spanish National Union of Railwaymen in 1919, a position he held until shortly before the Franco rebellion. Was a member of the Executive Committee of the Spanish General Federation of Trade Unions from 1920 onwards, and was appointed Assistant Secretary in 1932. Is now President of the group of that Federation at present in exile in France. Has held high position in the Spanish Socialist Party. Was a member of the City Council of Madrid from 1931, and also Member of Parliament for Madrid. During the Civil War he was Director General of Supplies. Is at present Minister of Labour and Emigration in the

Spanish Republican Government in exile (the Giral Government). He has been a member of the General Council of the I.T.F. without interruption since 1921, and a member of the Executive Committee since 1935.



**G. Joustra** is President of the Dutch Union of Railwaymen and Tramwaymen. He entered the railway service as a fireman in 1906, and became General Secretary of the Dutch Locomotivemen's Union. When this Union amalgamated with the Dutch Railwaymen's and Tramwaymen's Union in 1918, he was elected

Vice-President. When the late president, P. Moltmaker, retired in 1940, Joustra was chosen to replace him, and also became President of the Railway Staff Council. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions.

## CHARLES LINDLEY LEAVES THE I.T.F.



I am fully conscious of the incorrectness of this title, for if Lindley were to leave the I.T.F., either he would no longer be Lindley, or the I.T.F. would no longer be the I.T.F.

What happened at the Zürich Congress was that Charles Lindley, one of the founders of the I.T.F.,

relinquished the Presidency which he had held since 1935. He gave no reasons for his refusal to accept any nomination for the General Council or Executive Committee, but the reasons for his decision, which must have been a very hard one for him to make, were obvious. Though still full of vigour and still keenly interested in the International Movement, Lindley felt that the time had come for him to vacate the chair and to devote the years still left to him, which we hope and expect will be many indeed, to enriching the Swedish and the International Trade Union Movements with his historical studies of their achievements.

As one who has known Charlie for the past quarter of a century, I want to say how we shall miss him in our counsels, and that without him things will just be different. When I first met him and listened to him at meetings, he made upon me the impression of something of a formalist, of a man cautious, attached to rules and conventions and reluctant to commit himself.

These meetings took place in the years following the first world war, when the International Movement had just been resurrected and was being invaded by many largely or wholly ignorant of its history. I soon realized

that beneath Lindley's manner of mild criticism was a mind of great experience striving to steer the International on a correct course and an ardent interest for the affairs of the International he had helped to found which was as great or perhaps even greater than his interest for the affairs of his homeland Sweden.

Lindley was no believer in fine words or eloquent phrases unless there was action behind them. During the inter-war period his organization, the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, made many notable contributions in the international field. Didn't Lindley at one time block all trade with Finland for several months because the Finnish employers refused to recognize the Finnish Seamen's and Transport Workers' Unions? For Charlie did not believe in threats either unless they were to be carried out if necessary.

In the I.T.F. Charles Lindley and his Union have been at all times a tower of strength. On serious occasions the soundest of counsellors, and on social occasions the most charming of companions, he will be sadly missed in our circles. We shall miss his stories, told in his inimitable fashion, of how he came to England as a sailor lad—he still sings the songs of the Gay Nineties learnt at that period of his life—and of how in his early twenties he joined Havelock Wilson in establishing the Sailors and Firemen's Union in Great Britain. Yes, Charlie was, and still is, a fighter, and a stubborn fighter at that, as well as a good comrade and a staunch friend.

It is perhaps a little queer for me to answer a question which might be put to Lindley. But if he were to be asked for what in life he felt most grateful, I feel his reply would be: "For the chance I have had of helping to bring a sense of culture into the lives of those who fifty or sixty years ago were stamped the scum of the earth."

J.H.O.



## ECHOES OF OUR ZÜRICH CONGRESS

We have probably not yet received all the papers that have given attention, in some way or other, to our Congress. In so far as the journals of our affiliated organizations have mentioned it, it has been for the most part in the form of a more or less extensive and impartial report of the discussions. This has been based in some cases on our own Press Report, while in others the union has preferred to make use of the report of its own delegation. Independent professional reports we have found only in the Swiss press.

The extracts which we reproduce below consist mainly of those passages in which the writer has aimed to point out a characteristic or important feature or aspect of the Congress. Only in very rare cases has there been any attempt to appreciate the significance of this, our first post-war congress. In times like these, pregnant with confusion and uncertainty as to the future, even in so far as the I.T.F. itself is concerned, little else could be expected.

We cannot do better than start our series of quotations with the considerations, given with characteristic breadth of purpose by Robert Bratschi, in a report to the congress of his own Swiss Railwaymen's Federation, which was held shortly after that of the I.T.F. He said :

*"It is in the nature of trade unions to be international. In the long run they cannot live in national isolation. We are glad, therefore, that the barriers which fascism and war raised between the peoples have been broken down.*

*"Since our last congress something important has happened : a World Federation of Trade Unions has been set up. It is still struggling against difficulties. We hope they will be overcome. The Swiss Federation of Trade Unions has unanimously decided to join the W.F.T.U., and thus to get out of the isolation into which war-time conditions forced us. The W.F.T.U. has a great problem to solve, that of its co-operation with the International Trade Secretariats ; a problem whose solution is of particular importance for small countries such as ours. It is quite clear to us that we must exercise our international activities mainly through these International Trade Secretariats, since as a small country our views can carry little weight in the mighty organization of the W.F.T.U. Nevertheless we are in favour of the W.F.T.U., but we cannot do without our International Trade Secretariat.*

*"Our International Transport Workers' Federation is the oldest, greatest and proudest of the International Trade Secretariats. During two world wars it has fulfilled its task in exceedingly difficult circumstances. It has just held in Zürich its first post-war Congress, on the occasion of which it celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. We are very happy to have had the opportunity of helping to make this gathering a successful one. We thank the leaders of the I.T.F. for the trust they showed in confiding to us the organization of the Congress. And while we give our support to the W.F.T.U., we remain faithful to our old and tried I.T.F., and demand for it the possibility of continuing to fulfil its tasks. And herein lies perhaps the great test of the W.F.T.U., which can be of decisive importance for its future—the test of genuine democracy, of tolerance and of the spirit of conciliation, without which no fruitful trade union activity is possible, either nationally or, above all, internationally. The W.F.T.U. must be a great international federation of free men and free*

organizations. Only thus will it have stability and be able to fulfil its mission. We believe in a World Federation of Trade Unions built according to this pattern, because we believe in humanity. And belief in humanity does not exclude faithfulness to one's own people. The international is complementary to the national idea."

The reception accorded to the Congress in Zürich was a very warm one. *Volksrecht*, the daily paper of the Swiss trade union movement, printed a special supplement to welcome the Congress. It described the I.T.F. as :

*"... the trade secretariat which even in Europe's darkest days remained at its post, with the greatest determination and tenacity leading the fight against the Nazis and the Fascists both in the free countries and in the occupied territories... it is the world-wide organization of all those whose duty it is to act as intermediaries between one country and another across frontiers, and so in the true sense of the word to promote the fellowship of nations, the unity of the whole of mankind. This explains the fact that men like Edo Fimmen, Charles Lindley, Ernest Bevin and others gained their experience in this organization."*

It went on to say that "for Zürich it is a great honour, and also deeply gratifying, to have the Congress here." After expressing its best wishes for the success of the Congress, the article concludes : "May it carry on the good tradition of its predecessors, and work for the international solidarity of the working classes of the world."

The welcome of our Swiss affiliated organizations, who acted as hosts to the Congress, was no less warm than that of *Volksrecht*. *Der Eisenbahner*, one of the weekly papers of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union, printed the following appreciation, in an article entitled "The First Post-War Congress of the I.T.F." :

*"The I.T.F. is not only numerically the most important, but also the liveliest and most active of the trade internationals of the working class. In spite of all difficulties it continued its work, as far as that was possible, during the war. In view of the threatened invasion of Holland by Hitler's Nazi army, the headquarters of the I.T.F. were transferred from Amsterdam to London at the beginning of the second world war, and thanks are chiefly due to the unions affiliated to the I.T.F. in England that the Secretariat was able to continue its work successfully. It is hardly necessary*

to say that during the war the I.T.F. gave the Allies full support in their fight against Fascism and National Socialism. It also helped, to the best of its powers, to build up the resistance movements in the occupied countries. Towards the end of the war it gave prompt help in the reorganization of the workers in all branches of transport in the countries that had been freed from the yoke of Fascism.

"... The I.T.F. has suffered severe personal losses during the last few years. In 1936 Nathans, the Secretary of the Railwaymen's Section, was killed in an accident, and on 14th December, 1942, the I.T.F. lost its General Secretary, the incomparable Edo Fimmen."

"A few weeks ago the former General Secretary of the British National Union of Railwaymen, Comrade John Marchbank, died suddenly. The former General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union and present Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Ernest Bevin, has also resigned from the leadership of the I.T.F."

"In the Secretariat younger men have taken the tiller in hand. Comrade J. Oldenbroek is acting as General Secretary, and Comrade Tofahrn has taken over the management of the Railwaymen's Section."

"At the Zürich Congress account will be given of the activity of the I.T.F. during the war, and work for the future will have to be decided upon. There is no doubt that attention will be given to all aspects of the problem of the integration of the International Trade Secretariats in the World Federation of Trade Unions. The I.T.F. will celebrate, at the same time as its first post-war Congress, the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation."

Another paper, *Der V.H.T.L.*, of the Swiss Federation of Commercial, Transport and Food Workers, welcomed the I.T.F. in a tastefully got up and illustrated issue, in which it wrote: "Our Federation is a small and modest link in the chain of the world-wide I.T.F. We are very proud of being a member of this organization." On our part we may say that the I.T.F. is no less proud to have the Federation in its ranks.

An issue devoted to considerations connected with the Congress opens with a memorial notice of our late General Secretary, Edo Fimmen, which we reproduce in full:

"Edo Fimmen, for 23 years the soul of the Transport Workers' International, was missing from the Zürich Congress. His loss was severely felt. He was called the Secretary, but he was more than that. He was one of the die-hards who in 1919 started to rebuild the International that went to the ground on the outbreak of the first world war. He was its organizer; the man of the Peace Congress at The Hague in 1922; the man who managed in a very short time to inspire once more in the transport workers of all countries the will to demonstrate the international solidarity of the working class. But it is not only that he was there at the start. He gave the edifice foundations that enabled it to withstand the heaviest of the storms that the reactionaries of all countries let loose over the world with the help of the Fascist and Nazi hordes. The

I.T.F. always managed to be extraordinarily well informed about internal conditions in the Nazi Reich, and supplied the labour press in all countries with early and detailed information about the activities of the underground movement." It was the soul of that movement, for hindrance to the proper operation of transport and communications strikes at the very root of modern economy. The I.T.F. organized resistance in the Fascist countries in a masterly way. And as the dragon's teeth sprouted throughout Europe, in other continents and in the Far East, and as the murder brigades schooled in concentration camps and poison gas institutions in the technique of mass murder, were let loose upon humanity,

it was Edo Fimmen who pointed out to the transport workers by land, sea and air, through the I.T.F., the way to fight barbarism successfully.

"But Edo Fimmen did not live to see the victory of Humanity over the evil spirit of totalitarian destruction. In December, 1942, he had to hand the reins of office over to others, after being for several years physically disabled by illness."

"Edo Fimmen not only served the transport workers of all countries, faithfully and devotedly, to the day of his death, but he held high the banner of the international solidarity of the working class in most difficult times. He is the legendary figure, the symbol, of resistance against Fascist terrorism, of the fight for justice and freedom for the working man. And he will



**EDO FIMMEN**



live long in the memory of the workers of all countries."

The absence for the first time of its great leader, Edo Fimmen, cast a shadow over the first post-war Congress of the I.T.F., which was also the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. This fact was reflected in a number of other commemorative articles in the labour press. The following appreciation was printed in *A.B.V.V.*, the weekly journal of the Belgian General Federation of Trade Unions:

"The greatness of Fimmen, his manifold activities and splendid achievements, cannot be dealt with adequately within the compass of a single article. For this a whole book would be necessary, the book that the whole Congress hoped would one day be written.

"Edo Fimmen was, in the I.T.F., the inspirer of international action, and it was in the same spirit that he inspired and directed those with whom he collaborated. During the occupation of our country it was chiefly the example of Fimmen, the guiding lines that he had laid down, and the action we had already taken before the war, that inspired us, and which led us from the very first hour to fight the Nazi beast with all the means at our disposal, and to organize the underground work effectively. This fact is, we believe, the greatest tribute we can pay to Fimmen. . . .

"To strengthen the I.T.F. is the best way in which we can pay homage to his memory. The giant figure whom we have seen so often at our congresses, or at moments of struggle or difficulty, was not to see the ending of the war; and during the war we had no opportunity, except in the clandestine press, to pay him the respects he had more than earned.

"We do it now, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the I.T.F., to whose development he devoted all his bodily powers, his heart and his beautiful working class spirit."

*Le Signal*, the journal of the National Federation of Railwaymen of Luxemburg, pays a tribute to Fimmen's memory, in its own characteristic way, on the occasion of the anniversary of his birthday, 18th June, 1881. Fimmen had a peculiar predilection for this beautiful little country, and its lovable and warm-hearted inhabitants. One of his most intimate personal friends writes about Fimmen, under the title "In Memory of a Deceased Friend," an article from which we quote the following:

"It would be unforgivable if we did not remember, on the 65th anniversary of his birth, the man who did such great things for the international labour movement, and who was, incidentally, such a true friend of our little country and its trade unions. . . .

"To-day we wish to speak with gratitude and recognition of the great friend and fighter whose death was a heavy blow not only for the transport workers of the world, but for the whole of the working class, which owes him many an inspiration and encouragement, and many an important benefit, and also for his personal friends, who will never be consoled for his loss. . . .

"His advice, his untiring creative spirit, his initiative and, above all, his selfless idealism, are needed more than ever to-day.

"It is left to his friends to carry on his work and represent his ideas. It is no light task, for personalities like his are extremely rare. His ability as a speaker—supported by a knowledge of at least five languages—his versatility, his knowledge and capability in things economic, social and political, made of him the trade union leader par excellence. And on top of this was the winning and extremely sympathetic personality, which captured all hearts; though he shared the fate of all great men in that his uprightness and fixity of principle also brought him enemies.

"We have all lost a great deal in Fimmen. Our trade unions in Luxemburg, especially the railwaymen, found in him a friend and comrade who was always ready to help, and always glad to come to Vianden, where he had hoped to spend his old age. Fate has decreed otherwise, and Fimmen died in exile, suffering under the double burden of his bodily illness and the war he had worked so long and so hard to prevent. It was Fimmen who inspired and carried into effect the international "War against War" movement that he started in 1922. And clearly comprehending that Fascism meant war, he was one of the first to put up an active and energetic fight against it. . . .

"It would need a whole book to picture in anything like completeness the activities, life and character of our great friend. We hope that the I.T.F. will soon publish his biography, so that our comrades may not only learn to know more intimately a man to whom, as trade-unionists, they owe so much, but also be able to study one of the liveliest chapters of the history of the international labour movement.

"All of us will carry a memory of the great working class and trade union leader that is not only honourable and appreciative, but also affectionate, as he deserved. (L. K.-B.)"

In the journal of the Belgian General Federation of Trade Unions to which we have already referred, Louis Major does not confine himself to memories of the past. He writes:

"The death of Fimmen has been a severe blow for the I.T.F., but he had formed and trained a strong body of assistants, and Oldenbroek, one of his most trustworthy collaborators, has now taken over the General Secretaryship, and is carrying on Fimmen's work in the same spirit and with the same energy."

Another great change in the leadership of the I.T.F., which took place at the Zürich Congress, was the passing of the office of President from the old and trusty hands of Charles Lindley to those of John Benstead. About this *Der V.H.T.L.* writes:

"Charles Lindley was tired of office; which is easy to understand considering that he is 81 years of age. His services to the movement, both in his own country and for the International, have been great. He has been active in leading positions for several decades. But that even to-day he is still physically and mentally



strong and active was proved by the way in which he managed the Congress, which he kept in control right up to the closing day. He showed it also in his presidential address, whose words were not only those proper to a ripened age, but testified to a fighting spirit that would serve as an example to many a young trade-unionist. And in spite of all the horrors we have gone through, Lindley looked into the future with unshaken confidence."

Characteristically, in view of the long period of oppression through which many of the unions affiliated to the I.T.F. have passed, most of the reports on the Congress signalize, as its dramatic culminating point, the return of their I.T.F. flag to the Austrians. For a description of this occasion we turn to A. Boussier, himself a representative of one of the organizations that suffered oppression during the war, the National Federation of Railwaymen of Luxemburg. He says:

"It was a solemn moment for all participants in the Congress when the General Secretary of the I.T.F. once more handed their flag to the Austrian comrades. In consideration of the circumstances then reigning, the Railwaymen of Austria entrusted the care of their flag to the I.T.F. in the year 1935, when the Seipel-Dollfuss Fascists, the forerunners of Hitler, destroyed the free trade unions. Now that Austria has been liberated, the Railwaymen can allow their flag to fly freely; and all delegates rose to their feet and applauded when Oldenbroek, the General Secretary of the I.T.F., ceremoniously returned to them the flag which they had entrusted to it in Copenhagen in 1935. Justice and democracy have triumphed over might and dictatorship. Visibly moved, the Austrians tendered their thanks, and renewed their pledge once more to take up the struggle, nationally and within the I.T.F., for the improvement of the lot of the workers."

But other delegates, who have not suffered years of oppression, were impressed by the symbolic occasion, as appears from the description given to it in *The Record*, of the British Transport and General Workers' Union, as "a moving scene," in an otherwise matter of fact report on the Congress. In a short article in the *Railway Review*, John Benstead, the new President of the I.T.F., calls the ceremony "one of the most poignant scenes of the Conference." Referring to his own election as President, he recalled a predecessor who is very deeply mourned by the I.T.F.: "I had the honour of being elected President of the Federation, thus following in the Chair, so far as our Union is concerned, my esteemed friend Charles Cramp."

"One of the most important questions," writes John Benstead, "was the future of the I.T.F. itself." On this subject *Der Oeffentliche Dienst* makes the following remarks:

"At the Congress of the International Transport Workers' Federation in Zürich there was full discussion in which the importance was recognized of maintaining the occupational element in the world trade union movement. While the Congress pronounced in favour of integration in the World Federation of Trade

Unions, it insisted on the necessity of providing for an ample degree of autonomy, in respect of organization, finance, trade matters and social and political questions, for the I.T.F."

The same point is emphasized by *Der Eisenbahner*, of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation, which writes, under the title "The Fateful Paragraph 13":

"It is to the efforts and importance of the I.T.F. that we must ascribe the fact that the notorious Paragraph 13 of the Constitution of the World Federation of Trade Unions, which has not even yet reached its final form, has already undergone modifications which lead away from the idea of the complete elimination of the International Trade Secretariats, and in the direction of their organic integration in such a manner as to maintain a high degree of autonomy and effectiveness. . . . The I.T.F. will continue its negotiations with the W.F.T.U. over the final formulation of Paragraph 13 of the Constitution of the W.F.T.U.—which can well be called the fateful paragraph—in the spirit of the general interests of the movement and the safeguarding of the trade interests of the unions."

"Nationally the trade unions do not hand over all their work, nor the defence of their interests, entirely to their national trade federations, nor can they agree to complete centralization. Nor can the International Trade Secretariats do so in so far as the World Federation of Trade Unions is concerned! Forms and formulas must be worked out that will give each International Trade Secretariat an opportunity to join the W.F.T.U. in its own way, and in a manner suited to the nature of its trade and trade interests, so that it shall not itself lose in power and importance, and so that the W.F.T.U. shall gain in power and importance."

"Democracy cannot mean that everything and everybody must be dealt with in exactly the same way; on the contrary, it should mean that each individual should have opportunity of full development within the whole and in the interests of the whole."

An international trade union congress, the first to be held after a long and terrible war, must necessarily make a deep impression on delegates from many countries, and this finds expression in reports which have found room for personal impressions. F. B. Burnley writes in the *Railway Service Journal*, of the British Railway Clerks' Association: "One felt a thrill attending a Congress with many of those who had played prominent and dangerous parts in the underground resistance movements." And in *De Belgische Tram*, journal of the Belgian Tramwaymen's Union, John Lauwereins writes:

"As a young trade unionist one cannot but feel strengthened by the contact with trade unions of other countries. The practical work of the Swiss trade unions, the sound democratic spirit of those in Scandinavia, and the progressive breeze one feels coming from the British unions, are all things from which there is something to be learnt."

*De Transportarbeider*, of the Dutch Central Transport Workers' Union, writes that in Zürich "the delegates from 19 countries met again after a period of terror and horror. Many of them were deeply moved. Many old

and trusted congress delegates who have fallen in the struggle for freedom were remembered with emotion."

It is quite understandable that practically every report, however short, should speak with admiration of the beautiful town and magnificent hall in which the Congress met, and with gratitude of the splendid manner in which it was organized by our Swiss affiliated unions. There is delight, also, for the trip to Lugano and the splendid dinner and entertainment to which delegates were invited.

It will be appropriate to close this review with the impressions of our Swiss friends. The daily papers of the Swiss labour movement printed extensive and interesting reports of the Congress, and the journals of our Swiss affiliated organizations also devoted much attention to it, but for a lively impression of the gathering we cannot do better than quote what a Swiss woman journalist, Emmy Moor, has written about a number of some of the leading figures at the Congress, in a series of excellent articles, entitled "Experiences at the I.T.F. Congress," in *Der Eisenbahner*, the journal of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation. This is how she inspects the ranks:



**THE AUSTRIAN RAILWAYMEN'S FLAG** is ceremoniously being returned by the General Secretary of the I.T.F., J. H. Oldenbroek to the Austrian Delegation. From left to right: Uebeleis, R. Freund and B. Koenig.

"There is Tennant, spare and tall, the prototype of the British ship's officer. . . . Joustra, the leader of the Dutch railwaymen, obviously, at first glance, the hard-headed Dutchman, whom, like his comrade Kievit, of the Transport Workers, also a quinquagenarian, Nazi terrorism failed to break. . . . There at the tribune, which the Spaniard Gomez, a labour leader of high standing in the international labour movement, has just left, is the small but thick-set sailor Olssen, from Sweden, the very antithesis of that fascinating orator Gomez. . . . De Bruyn, the Fleming, a sexagenarian of magnificent vitality and loyalty. . . . Richard Freund, leader of the Austrian railwaymen, still young and erect, and yet bearing permanent marks of the fearful years of privation and over-exertion. . . . Garcias, a man of great vital power, the "General" of the French delegation, all of whose members have covered themselves with glory in the ranks of the maquis. Fardeau, one of the secretaries of the French Transport Workers' Federation, a typical Breton, taciturn and of stern and unbending character. . . . Sardelli, once more manager of the I.T.F. office in Rome, a socialist who during all these years has had to suffer and fight on account of his active opposition to Fascism, is one of the guests of honour. . . . The British delegation, a fine group of personalities, whom one can perhaps best characterize by saying that it is only necessary to have seen and heard Deakin or Jarman or Benstead, and indeed the whole team, to realize that the Labour Party would have no difficulty in presenting us at any moment with a few more Bevins."

We close our review with words with which *Der Eisenbahner*, the journal of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation, whose excellent organization of our Congress contributed so much to its success, ends its extensive report of the proceedings:

"The first post-war Congress of the International Transport Workers' Federation belongs to the past. It is satisfactory to be able to say that it was a success in every respect. We feel convinced that the I.T.F. will march erect and proudly towards the goal it has set itself."

## AUSTRIAN RAILWAYMEN'S DELEGATION RETURNS HOME

*A letter addressed to the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation gives the following vivid picture of the reception given to the Austrian delegation to our Zürich Congress by the railwaymen of Vienna.*

Our arrival in Vienna was an event that none of us will forget. Well over a thousand railwaymen turned up, with their branch banners and bands, to give a ceremonious reception to their I.T.F. flag on its return to the country.

Thousands of spectators lined the great square before the destroyed Western railway station. After brief speeches of welcome from our comrades, we gave the

assembled crowd a description of the way in which our delegation was received by the Congress, the kind way in which we were treated, particularly by the Swiss comrades, and the impression the handing over of the flag, on 7th May, made on all delegates. We informed our comrades of the noble-minded measures taken by the Swiss railwaymen to help our children, measures which we should appreciate all the more since the

children of other countries besides our own are in great distress.

When we conveyed to our audience the greetings from our trusty old champion Berthold Koenig, and from other delegates to the Congress, there seemed no end to the acclamations. We reported also about the tremendous efforts put forward by the I.T.F., and its General Council and Executive Committee, in the fight against fascism, and about the great tasks the Congress entrusted to them for the purpose of facilitating the reconstruction of a new and happier world. This was also received with stormy applause. And when we explained that the Austrian railwaymen and other transport workers were expected to play their part, rally round the flag that had been returned to them, and justify the trust that was reposed in them, thousands of fists were raised in a pledge of loyalty.

The flag, accompanied by railwaymen from all branches of the service in Vienna and its surroundings, was then carried to the partly destroyed and not yet fully restored Railwaymen's Home, where Comrade Uebeleis, as representative of the new General Council of the I.T.F.,

once more emphasized the importance for us of this memorable occasion.

The Song of Labour and the Internationale closed this magnificent demonstration, in which young and old participated with an enthusiasm the like of which we have not seen in Vienna for many years.

We are convinced that this ceremonious taking over of our flag will be of great moral importance for the building up of our Union. We therefore ask you, Comrade Bratschi, to take note of this report, and if possible pass it on to the Executive Committee of the I.T.F.

We take advantage of the opportunity once more to offer to the I.T.F., and particularly to the Swiss railwaymen, our heartiest thanks for the solidarity shown to us, and the promise to do what they can for the Austrian Railwaymen's Union in the future.

With trade union greetings for the Austrian Railwaymen's Union.

*For the General Secretary,*  
Andreas Thaler.

*The President,*  
Richard Freund.

## ✓ EUROPEAN CENTRAL INLAND TRANSPORT ORGANISATION

*By E. R. HONDELINK ✓*

*Director General of E.C.I.T.O.*

The story of the European Central Inland Transport Organisation begins in the summer of 1942, when the Allied Governments then established in London, came together and set up an Inter-Allied Committee to plan for the relief and restoration of the liberated countries of Continental Europe after the end of the war. An Allied Post-war Requirements Bureau was also set up. The Committee included the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and of the eight Allied Continental Countries; and the new Committee set up a number of planning committees on food, agriculture, live-stock, medical problems and others. One of these, the Inter-Allied Technical Advisory Committee on Inland Transport (T.A.C.I.T.) was the forerunner of this Organisation: all the other Committees were, in November, 1943, embodied in the U.N.R.R.A. Organisation.

The Inland Transport Committee recommended the setting up of a European Transport Organisation, and in October, 1944, a conference was called to discuss this plan. This Conference went on for almost a full year, until it decided in the Spring of 1945, when western countries had been liberated, that for this part of the Continent action was called for at once. A provisional Organisation was set up, covering the countries in western Europe. The members of the Provisional Organisation were the Government of the United Kingdom, the Government of the United States, and the Governments

of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway. Discussions were continued with the other Allied Governments, and finally, in September, 1945, the European Central Inland Transport Organisation—E.C.I.T.O.—was established by the Governments already mentioned, with the addition of those of the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland and Yugoslavia. Since then Denmark has also joined the Organisation, which now covers the whole of Continental Europe, excepting only the neutral countries, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and Portugal. E.C.I.T.O. deals direct with the Governments of the Allied Nations; in the ex-enemy countries Germany, Austria, Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary the contacts are with the occupation authorities.

The Organisation at present consists of a Council, an Executive Board, and a Director-General with the necessary headquarters and regional staffs. Each member Government is represented on the Council, which elects one of its members to preside at each session. The Council is responsible for laying down the broad policies of the Organisation. The Council also appoints the Executive of seven, of whom four are nominated by the French, U.S.S.R., U.K. and U.S.A. Governments. The Executive is the policy-making body within the broad policies determined by the Council. The day-to-day technical and administrative work is the responsibility of the Director General.

The Organisation's functions are to assist the member



Governments in the restoration of the inland transport systems on the continent of Europe, to increase their carrying capacity and to organise common action and co-ordination to bring this rehabilitation about in the shortest possible time. The work can be divided into two main fields, one covering transport equipment, the other covering the movement of traffic.

**Equipment Problems.** As there is a general shortage of many classes of transport equipment in all the countries of Continental Europe; and the requirements of all the Governments and all the authorities in restoring the economy of their territories are far in excess of the equipment available, the principal function of the Organisation is to arrange, by common action between the authorities concerned, to make the best use of what there is.

The Member Governments and their transport authorities will solve their own internal transport problems; the Organisation's function is to co-ordinate national efforts in all problems of transport in the international field. Instances of this are found in the establishment of common use of railway rolling stock in international through working, and in the use of barges on international rivers. The Organisation assists Governments and their transport authorities to increase the transport equipment and the carrying capacity of their system in many ways. One of these is the restoration to each transport system of its own equipment now widely dispersed all over Europe. If this task were left to individual efforts, only chaos could result. The restoration must be systematic. It must be achieved in such a way that all the equipment remains continually in use and that its restoration to the owner system does not interfere in any way with essential transport anywhere.

A second means of assistance is the allocation of any new equipment imported into Europe, and of any surplus equipment made available by the military authorities, to those authorities who are most in need of it.

All this could only be achieved after a clear picture is obtained of what is available and after facts and figures of essential requirements are collected. An example of this is the census of rolling stock on the Continent of Europe organised by E.C.I.T.O. This census will show how much of the pre-war rolling stock is still available and where it is located, also how much of that rolling stock is actually in running condition, how much can be repaired, and finally how much is beyond repair and must be written off as a total loss. Once a complete picture is obtained, arrangements are to be made with all administrations concerned for an equitable re-distribution and most efficient use and operation of the total stock. The eighteen principal European railway systems will take part in the procedure, and the census is scheduled to be taken on February 24th for locomotives, on March 3rd for passenger stock, and on March 17th for wagons. One each of these Sundays at noon, when movements are few, every siding, marshalling yard, workshop and station on every railway line in Europe will be surveyed by the railways' agents to record details of the rolling stock available; special arrangements will be made to count the rolling stock which is running at

the time. The results of the census will be analysed by the Organisation and a further international conference will decide on the final measures to allocate and move the stock to the owner systems. Most technical work of identification is, of course, involved in this task.

A serious problem facing the European transport systems is that of repairs. All equipment has been used to its capacity and often in excess of that during the war, and replacements have fallen into arrears. On the other hand, maintenance and repair facilities have suffered by war action. Some countries have repair facilities available, others are short, or even completely void of these. Arrangements are in operation whereby countries which have surplus repair capacities undertake repairs for other countries in addition to their own. Another effort in the same direction has been to direct mobile workshops to dumps of immobilised stock waiting for first-aid repairs regardless of the nationalities of the stock.

**Traffic Problems.** Here the main task of E.C.I.T.O. is to ensure that in the international field as much of the traffic offering is carried as the present restricted means permit, due regard being paid to the relative priorities of different traffics. It is not the responsibility of E.C.I.T.O. to fix priorities, but once these are laid down by the appropriate authorities it is the duty of E.C.I.T.O. to see that they are observed when programmes of movement are drawn up. This is, in fact, becoming one of the more important tasks of the Organization. The procedure has been evolved out of special steps which were found necessary in connection with the movement of relief goods and other important supplies to Czechoslovakia, which country, having no direct access to the sea, was obliged to rely upon the transport systems of other countries for the carriage of its imports.

What now happens is that meetings are held under E.C.I.T.O. auspices, usually once a month, attended by representatives of the importing Governments, of U.N.R.R.A., and of the authorities responsible for shipping to and from European ports. On the basis of import requirements of the countries concerned, and of the shipping tonnage available, bids are made for so much transport capacity between one country and another. The representatives of E.C.I.T.O. then advise, thanks to their contacts with the transport authorities in the various countries, including the military in the case of Germany and Austria, as to the possibility or otherwise of accepting the bids, and a movement programme for the following month is drawn up. When difficulties occur in the execution of the programme, it is the role of E.C.I.T.O. to bring together the authorities involved and, if necessary, arrange for some modification of the programme or for the transfer of rolling stock or other transport equipment from one country or zone to another.

This last-mentioned function is often specially important, and E.C.I.T.O. has in the past four months done much to assist in organising railway wagon distribution in Western Europe. Although military demands are steadily falling the gradual revival of trade and industry in the liberated countries is creating an increased demand for transport so that there is still a shortage of wagons in

many countries. By utilising wagons in different countries regardless of ownership, it has been possible to make the best use of the available stock, and by treating all the wagons in Western Europe, including the Western zones of Germany, as if they were in a pool, the most has been made of the insufficient numbers of serviceable wagons, and demands arising in any one country or zone for additional wagons, as, for example, in the Ruhr, to deal with an increase in coal output, are met partially if not wholly by the transfer of wagons from other countries or zones. To bring this about an office was set up in Paris to act as an international wagon control for Western Europe. Its decisions are accepted by the countries with which it deals, and transfers of wagons between countries are made under its orders. It is hoped to establish similar offices covering parts of Europe further East, and it is expected that one such office will soon be operating in Prague.

Assistance has also been given towards the restoration of through international passenger train services, particularly when these are needed for persons travelling

on urgent official business. A recent example of this is the restoration early in January of the Simplon Orient Express between Paris and Venice with a connection to Rome. Action is being taken in regard to other services, notably between London and Warsaw.

A somewhat different problem is the restoration or revival of the various international conventions and associations relating to international traffic by rail, road or water, or the making of such agreements where they are now needed and had not been reached in the past.

Finally, there is a problem which is not itself a transport problem, but whose solution is essential to the satisfactory working of international traffic. That is the making available to individual countries of adequate amounts of foreign exchange. The multitude of currency restrictions at present existing makes the payment of freight charges on international traffic extremely complicated and sometimes almost impossible. The simplification of the means of payment of such charges is one of the more urgent problems facing the Organisation.

## EUROPEAN TRANSPORT—THE WAY TO UNITY

### REVIEW OF A FABIAN PAMPHLET

By C. N. GALLIE

*General Secretary of the Railway Clerks' Association of Great Britain and Ireland*

To what extent in the economic sense are we prepared to abandon our pre-war conceptions of geographical boundaries and national sovereignties? Are we ready to give practical effect, even in a limited way, to what we acknowledge within ourselves, namely that scientific processes in production and distribution have completely altered the relationships between peoples in neighbouring countries? These are the questions posed by M. Zwalf in his pamphlet *European Transport—The Way to Unity*, published by Fabian Publications Limited, 11, Dartmouth Street, London, S.W.1, and by Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 14, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2.

It is said that transport is the main artery of commerce. It is more. It makes an essential contribution to civilisation and to the social development of all countries. The backward countries of the world are those which do not possess an extensive transport system. Zwalf would have Europe move forward more rapidly towards social and economic integration. His is a great conception. But as is too often the case when new and dynamic ideas conflict with tradition and, as in the present instance, are launched in an atmosphere of international suspicion and in a world which is disposed to revert to pre-war competitive ideology, they do not receive the detailed consideration which they deserve. Zwalf sees this and in consequence does not hesitate to be forthright in his expressions and conclusive in his arguments. His pamphlet is much more than a technical treatise. It contains a philosophy. But above all it is practical, and brings light to bear on many matters which are even now the source of dissension between nations.

Recent diplomatic exchanges regarding Trieste, which received much publicity, showed a serious divergence of opinion in the tripartite negotiations. The impression could not be avoided that there was something more involved than appeared on the surface. Therefore, it is not without significance that, as quoted by Zwalf from a report by the League of Nations Union (1929) "It is understood that Czechoslovakia and Italy acting in conjunction with other States interested in a railway from Czechoslovakia to Trieste, have put into effect extremely low rates calculated to encourage the movement of traffic via Trieste." Consequently, it is not surprising that we should have an example of power-politics in economic matters demonstrating themselves in a post-war settlement. And it is well to remind ourselves that after the 1914-18 war the net-work of inland European Transport was devised not so much to meet economic or social requirements, but as a defensive plan for the conduct of war. Therefore, if we believe that war has its roots in economic causes—and the last hundred years' history seems to prove that contention—the necessity is now paramount for the greatest possible integration of these factors which constitute the economic life of nations. If further evidence is needed that some international authority should control European Transport, Zwalf gives it in his reference to *France at war with Germany, using the railway systems of neutral Belgium and Luxemburg for the delivery of iron ore to Germany*. This appears almost incredible, but it was taking place almost daily as late as March, 1940.

"Modern history can be looked upon as a chain of



lost opportunities." That poignant sentence summarizes the supreme purpose of the author. He asks us to seize an opportunity now, otherwise it may be too late. But the question arises, by whom were the opportunities lost? Are Governments or the people to blame? It would be wrong to dogmatize on that issue. The people have the power but Governments have the initiative, and Governments are not likely—unless under pressure of their own people—to promote policies which would have the effect of limiting what they would claim as their sovereign rights. Yet in the interests of human progress we have had to proceed by way of limitations on States and on individuals when existing conditions conflict with the common good. U.N.O., in order to create conditions which will secure permanent peace, is in the process of devising limitations. Is it not, therefore, appropriate and necessary that consideration should be given to methods of promoting peaceful development? If we agree, then a first essential is to seek to establish a new attitude of mind to matters which are of common interest to the people of all European countries. And as a contribution to such an end, economic standards will have to be improved and thereby add to the riches of mankind. But economic advancement would be inadequate unless opportunities are made for greater social intercourse between peoples, and there is no factor which could contribute to a greater extent in that connection, than a co-ordinated European Transport System.

In September, 1945, hopes of some great European Transport plan were encouraged by the creation of the European Central Inland Transport Organisation, on which the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, the U.S.A. and France were given permanent seats. One of the main purposes of that body was to make provision, in the interests of social and economic progress, for co-ordination both in movement of traffic and the allocation of transport equipment. So far so good, suggests Zwalf. But in the absence of a more detailed definition of such functions, or the extent to which the organisation has power to outline a long-term policy, there is every likelihood

that it will become simply an expedient to re-establish pre-war transport systems. In this connection it has to be remembered that considerable parts of the transport system in Western Europe no longer exist. Rails and equipment were moved by invaders to meet their own war requirements. Consequently, both money and material would be necessary for reconstruction purposes. By whom will these be provided? If by the victorious countries, as seems inevitable if a speedy recovery is required (and delay would appear to be disastrous), then the Governments of these countries ought to insist on a re-organisation which will make for social and economic integration. But will Governments act in this matter? All the evidence up to the moment goes to show that the E.C.I.T.O. is moving within the narrowest possible limits of its terms of reference, whereas the situation demands imaginative planning and bold action.

The author of *European Transport* faces the realities of the position and makes a valuable contribution to a solution of the problem. He is a man possessing an intimate knowledge of his subject, and one who has done much to develop a greater understanding between transport workers in Europe. It is for them he writes primarily, and it is to them he makes an urgent appeal for action. I commend his injunction to readers not to allow themselves to be dismayed by the immensity of the problem, nor yet allow themselves to become submerged in matters of technical detail. The question is rather one of principle and policy, and it cannot be gainsaid that if our nation could produce and transport a floating dock to enable troops to land on the beaches of Normandy then civilised nations with goodwill and sincerity and purpose could create a new Europe. Difference in language or customs is not a barrier, as we have found within the Commonwealth of British nations, provided people are given to understand that they are neighbours and are expected to act accordingly. My feeling after reading the pamphlet is one of regret that it did not appear at least twelve months earlier and thereby make its contribution when public opinion was probably more receptive to ideas than it is at the present time. I hope it is not now too late.

## FRONTIERS IN THE AIR

By IAN MIKARDO

Member of the British House of Commons

In the Civil Aviation debate in the House of Commons of Great Britain on 24th January, the Parliamentary Secretary in opening the debate, and the Lord President in winding up, asserted that though the British Government is in favour of an international or regional air authority they could not expect support for such a plan from other governments. Both Ministers differed from Labour back-bench speakers, not on the desirability of internationalism in the air, but on its immediate practicability.

This is a question of fact, and to resolve it one needs to survey the whole background of international relationships in the field of aviation. In particular, it is necessary

to examine the claim which has been so consistently made over the last year or two by some interested parties, including members of the present Opposition, that the attitude of the United States of America, and the findings of the Chicago Conference which were so largely based on that attitude, rule out entirely the possibility of international ownership of air services. Such an examination will show firstly that Chicago might have reached markedly different conclusions if the British Government of the time and the British delegation at the Conference had shown a more enlightened attitude; secondly that Chicago is not, and cannot be, the last word on the subject; and thirdly that the time is now ripe for a new



approach.

In any consideration of the present situation, one cannot ignore the historical background of the problem. Few people nowadays seem to realise how near the world was as long ago as 1933 (when conditions for international agreement were much less favourable than at present) to the adoption at the Disarmament Conference of proposals for both the full internationalisation of civil aviation and for air disarmament. On the first of these proposals, definite plans were put forward by France, Spain and Sweden for full internationalisation, and Holland and Germany gave conditional assent: this country carries a terrible responsibility for the fact that, it was Italy and ourselves alone who opposed these proposals. The French Government's proposals were presented on 23rd February, 1933, as a comprehensive and detailed plan, the practicability of which has not been invalidated by all that has passed in the intervening thirteen years. It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if this scheme had not been assiduously kept back from public opinion throughout the world, and particularly from public opinion in this country.

Between 1933 and 1939 world public opinion continued to think in the direction of international ownership, at least of the main trunk routes, largely because it saw the futility of the uneconomic and even politically dangerous competition which went on in the air. Everyone was anxious that air traffic should not become (as shipping traffic and cable landing rights had become before it) a source of international friction. Everyone was equally anxious that the benefits of air travel should not be stultified by nationalist restrictions on the free flow of traffic, and everyone compared unfavourably the underdevelopment of civil flying in Europe, as a result of nationalist restriction, with the active and efficient development of civil flying in the North American continent. It is clearly this feeling which motivated the calling of the Chicago Conference and the partial agreements which were in fact reached at that Conference, but it is quite clear from the marked divergencies of opinion shown by some of the national delegations at that Conference, and the extent to which these divergencies were still unreconciled after weeks of discussion, that the arrangements there reached, if put into effect in their present form, will leave sufficient unsatisfactory features about the organisation of the airlines of the world to precipitate once again public demand for a new deal in aviation. That new deal can only take the form of an international authority with powers of ownership as well as of control, at least of the main trunk routes, which will involve far fewer aircraft and airports than the layman imagines.

There is a great deal of confusion about the reasons for the defeat at Chicago of the Australia-New Zealand proposals for internationalisation. In the last Parliament, some Labour members criticised the then Government on the grounds that that Government had sabotaged the Canberra plan for internationalisation. To this some members of the Opposition retorted (and one has repeated the point in the present Parliament) that the

Australia-New Zealand plan was defeated by free vote at Chicago and that the British Government, therefore, have no responsibility for this defeat. It cannot be pretended that the Australia-New Zealand plan would have been carried at Chicago even with the most uncompromising support from Great Britain, but it is clear that by implication this country made the defeat of the Antipodes proposals absolutely certain. The White Paper on International Air Transport which was published by the then British Government a few days before the opening of the Chicago Conference made it abundantly clear that the Antipodes Dominions could expect at Chicago no support from us for their proposal. Its opening paragraph indicated differences of viewpoint between ourselves and the Dominions, and thus provided an obvious debating point for those who were opposed to the New Zealand resolution. Moreover, the failure of the British Government to speak in support of that resolution when it was moved on 8th November, 1944, made possible the carrying of the Brazilian amendment, which negated the resolution, without even a vote being taken.

But the rejection of the New Zealand resolution at Chicago was by no means unanimous. The delegates of two countries spoke in support of the resolution, and whilst one of these—Afghanistan—is insignificant as an air power, the other—France—is and always has been one of the major air powers. Even after the defeat of the New Zealand resolution, the leader of the French delegation reserved the right to reopen the matter in the future. France, indeed, always has been internationalist in its approach to civil aviation, and there is no reason to suppose that the country which brought forward the Pierre Cot plan in 1933 would now turn its back on internationally owned aviation, or that those countries like Sweden and Holland which then supported that plan would now take a different view. Nor can we overlook the fact that the political composition of most of the European governments has changed since the Chicago Conference. Most of these governments are controlled by parties which include internationalism in general in their programmes—and it must be emphasised that, for a number of reasons, no specialised field is so obviously a medium for the practical application of an international approach as is civil aviation.

There was, in fact, at Chicago sufficient feeling in favour of genuine internationalisation to compel a reflection of that feeling in the interim agreement signed at that Conference. Article III (the Interim Council), section 6 (Function of the Council) provides that "... the functions of the Council shall be to ...

Supervise and co-ordinate the work of (a) The Committee on Air Transport, whose functions shall be to : ...

Study any matters affecting the organisation and operation of international air services, including the international ownership and operation of international trunk lines ; ..."

This is repeated in Article 55 (d) of the Convention on International Civil Aviation with respect to the (permanent) International Civil Aviation Organisation. It is clear that the matter is by no means beyond the possi-

bility of being reopened—indeed, a ruling given at Chicago on 9th November, 1944, in reply to a request from the Polish delegation, clearly envisages the holding of another conference.

The opponents of an international airline system seem to assume that such a system is neither desirable nor possible unless it includes all the countries of the world. This is, of course, far from the case. In point of fact there have been, and are, many cases of successful international authorities from participation in which some countries in the world have abstained. The international conventions on patents, posts and cables, to mention only a few, were not subscribed to by every country in the world, and the two conventions signed between the two wars (Paris, 1919, and Havana, 1928) covering technical control of airlines embrace only a comparatively small number of countries. Certainly it is not to be assumed that the abstention of the United States, or even of the whole American continent, would make impossible the operation of a large-scale international air system. Even allowing for the fact that the United States of America is easily the premier power in the world of air transport, there is no doubt that the Old World is a sufficient field to maintain an effective international system. The Europe-Africa-Asia-Australasia landblock includes five-sixths of the world's land, and seven-eighths of its population, and in 1938 accounted for over 76 per cent of the world's air route miles and over 57 per cent of the aircraft miles flown.

If one accepts as a fact that an international air system can function without the Americas, the next question which falls to be considered is the possibility of participation by Russia. What would have been the attitude taken by the Russian delegation if there had been one at Chicago can only be a matter of hypothesis. It is quite clear that the reasons given by U.S.S.R. for not taking part in the Conferences were not their real reasons. It is at least possible that Russia's absence from the Conference was largely due to her unwillingness to sit at the Conference table with other powers (particularly U.S.A.), to whom she was greatly inferior in strength in this specialised field. If this is, as it may well be, the reason for Russia's absence, the implication is that the Russian Government had a point of view on this matter in some way sharply different from that of U.S.A. This may be speculative—but at least it is clear that the Russian attitude does not provide any support for the argument so often advanced that the U.S.S.R. would not take part in an international aviation system. It is anyhow possible that the Russians might be willing to take part in such a system from the outset, but even if they are not, it is quite probable that they may be willing to join such a system after it has had a period of successful and politically blameless operation.

So much for Great Britain's two major allies. But we must not make the mistake of thinking of civil aviation purely in terms of the Great Powers, for "Great Powers" and "Great Air Powers" are not synonymous terms. In 1938 Australia, Canada, France and the Netherlands had air services comparable in size with (and in some cases superior in efficiency to) our own; and the greatest

weight of air freight was transported not in U.S.A. or U.S.S.R. but in New Guinea.

At the worst, it would seem that British initiative might well result in getting agreement for an international authority with powers of ownership to cover:

Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, the dependent British Empire, France, the French Empire, Belgium, Holland, the Dutch Empire, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Afghanistan.

Other countries which cannot be considered "probables" to the same extent, but which might also be willing to be included, or which might certainly be expected to join it at some later date, include:

Union of South Africa, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia.

It will be seen, then, that at the worst we might expect to cover with such a system the greater part of Europe and Africa, a large part of Asia, and the whole of Australasia.

It may be argued that the United States could oppose the formation of such an international authority by withholding the supply of aircraft, but it must be remembered that it will be only a short time before the countries forming this combination can supply the aircraft required by the Authority themselves. In any event, it is doubtful whether the aircraft manufacturers of the United States, whose capacity even when some of them are reconverted greatly exceeds the demand of the airline operators of the Americas, would refuse to supply aircraft to a great International Corporation. That Corporation might be, from the American point of view, bad politics, but it would be good business—so good, in fact, that the business-like Americans might not want to remain out of it for very long, especially if one or two of the South American republics knocked at the door first.

Moreover, the attitude of the United States on this point, and on the general question of their participation in a world aviation scheme, must be considered in relation to the fact that Chicago has been outdated by San Francisco. The aircraft manufacturers and airline operators of the United States have long been one of the spearheads of isolationism in that country, and it may well be that the edge of the argument which formed the basis of U.S.A.'s attitude at Chicago may become blunted by the urge of the United States towards participation in an international political system. In this respect, civil aviation is an acid test: because it is relatively new, and because it naturally transcends frontiers, it may represent, to the man in the street, the key to the question of whether we can get real international co-operation in more fundamental fields. It is obviously much easier to internationalise the ownership of air routes than the ownership of the atom bomb factories; and if we can't do the first, the world may despair of our ever being able to do the second.



## GOOD WORKING AGREEMENT IS NOT ENOUGH

*From the Address delivered by President A. R. Mosher to the Twentieth Convention of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees and Other Transport Workers, Hamilton, April 15th, 1946.*

Our brotherhood, as the largest national union in Canada, with local Divisions in almost every industrial centre from coast to coast, must accept its full share of responsibility for the arousing of public opinion and the stimulation of effort among the workers and the public generally to go forward toward a better economic and social order in which the utmost security may be obtained, consistent with the utmost measure of human freedom. I think we all realize that the freedom enjoyed by a few individuals to exploit the masses of the people and pile up huge fortunes, while untold millions suffered from undernourishment, lived in slums, and were thrown on the scrap-heap when they could not earn profits for their masters, must no longer be permitted. We realize also that the vaunted freedom of the so-called capitalist system has been freedom to accept the terms of the employing class or starve to death. We know also that the history of the competitive economic system has been one of booms and depressions, with depressions becoming longer and more frequent, and that if civilization is to survive, some more intelligent way of solving our economic affairs must be adopted.

When we remember that the basic cause of war is almost invariably economic, and not merely the result of conflicting political viewpoints, the necessity of changing the economic system to one in which the keynote will be co-operation rather than competition, and in which the resources of the earth, human and natural, will be intelligently utilized for the general welfare of mankind, becomes obvious to everyone.

Fear of want is one of the most powerful human motives, since self-preservation is the first law of nature, and when the economic structure of a nation breaks down, the resultant chaos and anarchy cause war to lose its horrible aspect, and appear as a means whereby national pride may be re-established and economic security attained. The political dictatorships which have so far appeared have developed out of unsettled economic conditions. Some of these have been overthrown, but others still remain, and constitute the chief menace of the peace of the world.

**Action on the Political Field.** We must, therefore, as members of the Brotherhood, always keep in the forefront of our attention the long-range objective of bringing about such changes in the economic order as will make it function in the public interest and benefit all classes of society, instead of only one, the owning class, by means of education, the spreading of information, the encouragement of discussion, and the awakening of public opinion. There must be a constant and steady effort to promote the adoption of better methods of handling the problems of production and distribution, involving, as they do, not only questions of industrial technique but of finance, transportation and the opera-

tion of controls. It is primarily for this reason that the members of the Brotherhood and the workers generally must become far more deeply interested in politics than they have been previously. This is one of the most neglected aspects of human affairs, so far as the workers are concerned. They have permitted themselves to be treated like pawns on the political chessboard, and matters upon which their very lives depend have been left in the hands of politicians who were largely satellites of the owners of industry.

Instead of functioning for the general well-being of society, governments have to a considerable extent become the instruments of controllers of wealth, who dominate not only industry in all its ramifications, but also exercise control over public affairs, both domestic and foreign. For many years organized Labour believed that a good working agreement was all that was necessary to protect the interests of the workers, and while the primary function of Labour organizations is still to obtain collective agreements covering wages and working conditions, and to bring about improvements through negotiation, experience has shown that employers are not free agents, as is generally assumed, but that industry in all its aspects is subject to conditions and circumstances which are beyond its control and which can be remedied only by political action.

**Labour Must Be Represented.** It may be true that no single nation can solve the economic problem for itself alone, and establish a system of society in which economic security will be guaranteed, but it is nevertheless necessary for the workers to use political action to obtain a government which will represent their views rather than the views of the owners of industry, and will make whatever changes are necessary to bring about the operation of industry on a basis of service rather than profit. Governments are exerting greater influence and control upon industry, and they are becoming more democratic in spite of the opposition of those who have in the past controlled both industry and government.

In my opinion, the efforts to keep Labour out of politics are sponsored and encouraged by the same economic interests which try to keep Labour out of industry, through their opposition to Labour organization. Workers who accept the theory that organized Labour should keep out of politics are like those who support company unions in opposition to *bona fide* unions. In fact, the consequences of keeping out of politics might be far more serious than could be achieved by company unions.

**The Power of Organized Labour.** I should like to say further in this connection that any Labour union which turns its back on politics and thinks that it can protect and promote the interests of the workers by collective bargaining alone will inevitably



fail. We all recognize without argument that, as individuals, the workers are helpless in shaping the course of events. If it is to the interest of industry to employ them they will be employed, otherwise they will find themselves in the breadline or living on charity. When they are organized, however, they create a power which may become so great as to be irresistible. They can determine their own destiny on earth, and take advantage of the vast resources still available to make life on earth far happier than it has ever been in the past, but unless organized Labour realizes fully the extent of its task and the means which must be employed, it will be unable to accomplish that task.

I have no hesitation, therefore, in urging members of the Brotherhood to give greater consideration to the role which economic and political factors must play in the shaping of a new world, and to their own responsibility as members of the Brotherhood and of the Labour movement for their personal participation in every effort which is made toward attaining the ultimate objective of economic security and human happiness.

**Much Work to be Done.** In looking ahead toward that distant goal, however, we are often inclined to assume that the task of organization has been completed. This is far from being true; as a matter of fact, there is a great deal of organization still to be undertaken in Canada, and even in the railway industry, where the workers are perhaps more fully organized than in any other, there are many groups which have been neglected or only partially organized. We also face the difficulty of keeping in the ranks of the Brotherhood and other unions, members who, for one reason or another, tend to fall behind, and the necessity of organizing new workers who replace those who leave the industry on account of death, retirement or other causes. It goes without saying that the objectives which we have been discussing can be reached only when the workers of Canada are much better organized than they are at the present time. Obviously, unless there is a considerable body of public opinion which is convinced of the necessity of the economic and political changes to which I have referred, the measures which must be taken will not be supported, and the workers and their families make up a large proportion of the population of Canada.

We have always with us workers who refuse to become members of unions and accept the obligations which membership entails, so long as they are able to obtain benefits through the efforts of others. We have recently noted with interest the formula devised by Mr. Justice I. C. Rand in the Ford dispute, under which all workers will have the amount of union dues deducted by a compulsory check-off, whether or not they are members of the union. If this formula were applied to the transport and railway industry it would almost be revolutionary in its effects. On the other hand, it is safe to assume that the workers who refuse to play their proper part in the maintenance of the organizations by which wages and working conditions have been improved are not likely to become factors in the building of a new social order.

**The Promotion of Labour Unity.** One of the great obstacles to the effectiveness of the Canadian Labour movement has been the lack of unity within its ranks. The Brotherhood has always, both in policy and practice, promoted the idea of the closest organic unity, as well as complete co-operation between all groups of workers, irrespective of their form of organization. The Brotherhood is itself based upon the principle of industrial organization, believing that, however useful craft unionism may have been in the earlier stages of industry, it is now essential not only in the mass-production industries, but also throughout industry in general, that industrial unionism should prevail. There has been a growing tendency among craft unions to form joint committees and in other ways to endeavour to offset the disadvantages of the craft form of organization, but at the very least every worker in a specific industry, irrespective of class or craft, should be a member of an industrial union, and there must be a basis of association between industrial unions, so that the whole force of the Labour movement may be effectively mobilized in support of objectives which are of benefit to the workers and the people.

The Brotherhood has therefore strongly urged closer relations between unions in the transport industry, and has also through its affiliation with the Canadian Congress of Labour made considerable progress toward the unification of the Labour movement. We have encouraged every effort to establish unity on a wider basis, and may properly look forward with confidence to the time when one central Labour body will be able to speak for all the organized workers in the Dominion.

**The Canadian Congress of Labour.** On the international field, the Brotherhood is affiliated with the International Transportworkers Federation, and also through the Canadian Congress of Labour with the World Federation of Trade Unions. Both at home and abroad, therefore, the Brotherhood is playing a very important part in the establishment of Labour policies, covering every matter of interest to the workers, and I should like to emphasize at this time the desirability of continuing and extending the participation of Brotherhood officers and the officers of Local Divisions in the work of the Congress.

**Post-War Wage and Hour Policies.** Among the current questions in which the Brotherhood and the Congress are especially interested is the matter of wage and hour policies. There is a great deal of agitation amongst the organized workers in favour of increased wage-rates, and a shortening of hours of work. The demands of organized Labour for increased wages are justified on the ground that many industries are now paying sub-standard wage-rates, and the productive capacity of a nation is such as to provide a much higher standard of living for the workers than they now enjoy. Furthermore, a shortening of the number of hours per week is essential to a proper distribution of the work available and the prevention of widespread unemployment.

However, it would be unwise to believe that higher wage-rates or shorter hours will of themselves alone

improve living standards or solve the unemployment problem if price-ceilings are removed, and the cost of living increases to any marked extent. In such circumstances, the real wages of the workers would be lowered and we should be faced again as we were after the last war with a situation in which wages would be chasing an increased cost of living without any hope of ever catching up with it. While, in my opinion, no remedy for present economic evils will be found until the competitive economic system is replaced by a system of public ownership, co-operation and planning on a national scale, the workers must watch with the greatest care the tendency towards increased prices, and I believe that we should, directly and through the Canadian Congress of Labour, continue to protest against any lifting of price control or the removal of government subsidies, particularly on the necessities of life.

**Extension of Brotherhood Membership.** The extension of the Brotherhood into branches of the transport industry outside the steam railways is one of the notable features of Brotherhood activities since our last Convention. Special mention must be made of the organization of the employees of the Montreal Tramways Company as members of the Brotherhood. The addition of this large group of approximately four thousand workers to our membership, and the work involved in securing recognition of the Brotherhood as the bargaining agency of the employees, and obtaining a collective agreement for them, laid a heavy burden upon officers and staff.

More recently, the Brotherhood has extended its ranks to embrace employees in hotels operated by the

Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific Railways. Remarkable progress has been made in this respect, and the representatives of the Brotherhood as well as all others who have been associated with this work are to be warmly commended on the success they have achieved. I am sure that the services already rendered to these workers indicate that they have found in the Brotherhood a champion which may be depended upon to fight for their rights and bring them many improvements in wages and working conditions.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, I should like to express my earnest hope that the Brotherhood will continue to increase in strength, prestige and usefulness. I hope further that, with expansion in membership, we shall succeed in developing competent personnel to furnish leadership and service of a character worthy of the confidence placed in the Brotherhood by its membership. As one of the original group of railway workers who organized the Brotherhood over thirty-seven years ago, and as its chief executive officer throughout this entire period, it is only human for me to be proud of its achievements, and take a great deal of satisfaction in the knowledge that it has weathered the storms of adversity, of opposition and of economic stress and strain. It has reached a stage in its development which ensures not only its stability but its capacity to render effective service in the future. Many of those who were associated with me in the organization of the Brotherhood in 1908 have passed from the scene, but their spirit, loyalty and devotion will continue to inspire us in our efforts to serve our membership, the Labour movement and our country to the utmost of our ability.

## THE FIRST POST-WAR CONGRESS OF ITALIAN RAILWAYMEN'S UNION

By E. ZELI

*Secretary of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union.*

It was not without some doubts that we undertook the task of representing the I.T.F., and the Swiss Railwaymen's Union at the first post-war national congress of the Italian railwaymen, but these doubts were promptly removed by the kindness shown us by the Italian railway authorities, who placed at our disposal first class free passes. Our Italian comrades, especially those at Milan and Florence, also left nothing undone to make our journey and stay as pleasant as possible. As soon as we arrived at Chiasso we were welcomed by the Secretary of the Como branch of the Italian Railwaymen's Union, comrade Giovanni Doddis, accompanied by the Mayor of Como, as well as a delegation from the Chiasso Trades Council. This friendliness was shown to us not only as trade union representatives, but also as persons coming from Switzerland, which is very highly regarded nowadays.

At Milan we were also very well received and accommodated. When we left again for Florence on the 2nd of March, a special carriage was placed at our disposal, in which the Milan delegation also travelled. It was a first class carriage, though it bore both inside and out many signs of the war that Italy had been through.

In place of upholstered seats there were temporary wooden benches. There was no lighting nor heating whatsoever, and wooden boards replaced the many missing windowpanes. And yet it was probably one of the best carriages. We mention this not by way of complaint, but to give some idea of the present state of transport in Italy.

There is electric traction as far as Piacenza, and it is in fairly good condition, but it is at this point that the almost unimaginable destruction begins that has put a great part of the Italian railway system out of action. Great heaps of rubble of every kind are to be seen the whole of the way alongside the track. The railway station at Bologna, as well as the yard and the secondary lines leading into it, have also been destroyed, and every kind of makeshift has had to be resorted to to keep trains running to some extent. That this has been possible is largely due to the very great efforts put forth by the Italian railwaymen.

After a journey of something like eleven hours we reached Florence, where we were surprised to find the fine Santa Maria Novella station, as well as the rest of the city, intact.



We were heartily welcomed by our Florentine comrades, particularly by their Chairman, Comrade Montelli. They had organized this historical congress splendidly. It was no light task to accommodate such a large number of delegates, especially when it is considered that the town is still housing close on 100,000 refugees from the devastated areas. Meals were taken in common, at a reasonable price, in the railwaymen's canteens.

As branches are mixed, the question of grade or occupation does not enter into the choice of delegates, but that of political party affiliations does, and election is on the basis of proportional representation. In our Swiss trade unions political affiliation carries no weight, so that we find this method of choosing delegates somewhat unusual. The consequence is that the main political tendencies are reflected at the Congress.

The explanation of this extraordinary fact lies in the circumstance that the political situation in Italy is still very confused, and reactionary circles are trying to take advantage of it. The trade union movement is still in the stage of reconstruction, and members are still flowing in, of all grades, but mainly the younger element, with a good proportion of the academically educated. Among them there are naturally many whose political and trade union position is not very clear, as they have grown up in completely fascist surroundings. Consequently, the Central Committee dare not leave the choice of delegates to the Congress entirely to chance.

It was the task of the Congress to decide on trade union policy, choose its leaders, and draft the new Rules. The lists put forward by the six "national liberation parties" afforded at any rate a guarantee that the candidates come from trustworthy organizations, so that surprises can be ruled out.

The officials of the Union are railwaymen still in the service, paid by the Railway Administration at the rate for their grade, but working entirely for the Union. They are therefore largely dependent on the Administration, a situation which naturally has many drawbacks.

The Congress started on 3rd March, in a local theatre, which has been partly destroyed. It was opened by Comrade Montelli, Chairman of the Florence branch of the Union, and was attended by 478 delegates, representing 141,852 members. The usual honours were paid to the former leaders of the Union who fell victims to Fascism. The following guests were on the platform, together with the Swiss delegates: Lombardi, Minister of Transport and Assistant to the Under-Secretary of State; Priolo, General Manager of the Italian State Railways; Tarquanti, representative of the Municipality of Florence; Rissone, Chief Engineer of the Florence Division of the State Railways; De Vittorio, Secretary of the Federation of Labour, and many other prominent persons. Giovanni Borghesi, the General Secretary of the Italian Railwaymen's Union, proved himself to be an extremely capable trade-unionist, fully qualified to lead a big union which will soon have some 200,000 members. Beside him sat Comrade Augusto Castrucci, the veteran of the Italian Railwaymen's Union, who played the greatest part in the foundation of the Union in 1906.

All guests addressed the Congress, and were full of praise for the great contribution the Italian railwaymen had made to the national liberation and the reconstruction that is now in progress. Many promises were made with regard to the urgently necessary improvement of the railwaymen's conditions. One had the impression that in Italy, as in many other countries, the Railwaymen's Union is generally recognized as the best organization of its class. We had an opportunity, while the Congress lasted, to shake hands with many comrades who suffered in prisons and concentration camps, during the war and the Fascist dictatorship, on account of their trade union and libertarian convictions. Certain it is that these comrades will have a great deal to say in the new Italy which will arise after the eagerly awaited formation of the Constituent Assembly.

The Italian Railwaymen's Union is a united organization, embracing railwaymen belonging to all grades and political parties. As a matter of fact even the Christian Democrats are strongly represented now that the Pope has expressed the wish that the trade union movement in Italy should be united. The maintenance of this unity at all costs was the chief endeavour of the Congress.

The first day of the Congress was devoted entirely to the opening ceremonies, and the speeches associated with them, and the chief guests were invited to a banquet.

On the second day the atmosphere was somewhat tense, and there was a great deal of noisy conflict over differences of both material and formal character. The elections, and the appointment of the Credentials Committee, and the Committee for the Revision of the Rules, were carried out with great difficulty and amidst tumultuous scenes.

The Congress then passed on to consider the reports of the General Council and the Central Committee on the activities of the Union during the year 1945. It should be borne in mind that these two authorities have only been in existence for a short time, and that inadequate means of communication have made regular co-operation very difficult. At the same time there were extremely difficult problems to solve. The General Secretary, Giovanni Borghesi, for instance, was only appointed in October, 1945. In spite of all these difficulties much good work had been accomplished. The delegates, however, were often by no means backwards in criticizing their governing bodies, and their bitter and aggressive attitude, which constantly led to new scenes of tumult, were sometimes difficult to understand. An excessive attention to matters of procedure was a feature of these discussions. The constant raising of points of order made it difficult for discussions to develop normally and smoothly. A part of the delegates were clearly aiming at obstruction which came very near to sabotaging the work of the Congress.

All this was the consequence of a state of tension caused by completely unsatisfactory social conditions: wages are far too low, and hunger and misery are driving people to suspicion and extremities. We do not know whether participants in our own congresses would do much better if they were forced to live for a long time under



such conditions. Every day of delay increases the tensions and counts for close on a year. In these circumstances explosions such as we witnessed at the Florence Congress are inevitable. Fraternal delegates had certainly no reason to envy the officials of the Italian Railwaymen's Union, who are constantly exposed to such attacks and unpleasantnesses.

Among the more important problems which preoccupy the railway personnel, that of food supply takes the first place. Others are the restoration of the rights of the established personnel; regulation of the conditions of employment of close on 20,000 men who had been placed on a temporary basis for the purpose of depriving them of their legal rights, the settlement of the question of the 40,000 temporary workers who have been waiting far too long to be placed on the establishment; the regulation of conditions of promotion, with particular reference to those men whose promotion has been held back by the Fascists; the problem of social insurances, and a whole host of other important matters which are keeping the railwaymen and their trade union busy.

And over all this looms the great problem of reconstruction. According to the critics, all these problems should have been solved in the very short time the leaders have been on the job.

The third day of the Congress was also taken up with discussions on the reports and the general situation, and it was marked by the same tension as the previous day, until it was finally necessary to suspend the meeting.

On the fourth day comrade Borghesi, the General Secretary, had an opportunity to reply to the many questions asked, and criticisms uttered, on the previous days. This day was also marked by the presence of the Mayor of Florence, Professor Pieraccini, a grey-headed and highly cultured man who has for many long years devoted his great scholarly abilities to the service of the health, welfare and enlightenment of the people, and whose democratic views made him a special target of the terrorists under the Fascist regime.

A delegation of former inmates of German concentration camps afforded a depressing picture of the moral and material misery in which these more or less uprooted people are still living.

After further discussions on the reports a resolution was finally adopted, by a large majority, which simply took cognizance of them, and after a short further discussion the Financial Report to 30th November, 1945, and the Budget for 1946, were adopted.

For the next subject on the agenda, The Trade Union Situation, dozens of speakers had put their names down, and we had an opportunity of listening to many good speeches, though they were often of a somewhat theoretical character and based on what were for us very out-of-date ideas. Stress was generally laid on the necessity of the unity of all workers.

In the course of the general discussion the writer was asked to speak. His greetings on behalf of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation and the I.T.F. were received with stormy applause. Proceeding, he referred first

of all to the effects which Fascism has had on his own neutral land, Switzerland. He said that it was mainly due to the organized workers that Fascism had not become deeply rooted in his country. The war started by the dictator states had made it necessary for Switzerland to expend 10,000,000,000 francs on defence measures and this enormous sum of money had had to be paid by the Swiss people in the form of taxes. He pointed out that the relatively good conditions prevailing in Switzerland were the consequence of close on a thousand years of democracy and one hundred and thirty years of peace. He then referred to the great importance of the I.T.F., which had from the beginning fought Fascism in all countries and tried to dam its progress. The I.T.F. had taken a very active part in rebuilding the Italian trade union movement, and the Italian Railwaymen's Union would at all times and on all occasion be able to count on the full support of our great international federation. With reference to the Congress itself, he spoke of the tremendous problems which his Italian comrades have to solve, but he expressed his conviction that provided they were inspired by the spirit of co-operation, mutual trust and trade union solidarity they would overcome all difficulties.

Turning to the satisfactory progress which the labour movement was making, the speaker emphasized that the mobilisation of all our forces was more than ever necessary, and that old and young must put forward their best efforts. The great influence which the trade union movement was winning in all countries had led to its recognition by the U.N.O. It was important that Italy and its working class movement should join the great international organisations as soon as possible.

He emphasized that party politics should not be the cause of any differences in trade union ranks. On the contrary, the trade union movement must be like a big family, in which all work for each other, and therefore for the common weal. Everything that divides it must be overcome, and nothing supported that does not make for unity in the trade unions. The rights of man must be respected, and there may be no longer any suppression of the individual. In closing, the speaker expressed the hope that men of goodwill would succeed in forging a real peace based on the principles of humanity. In this spirit he wished the Italian Railwaymen's Union every success in its future activities.

After the writer had spoken the delegates stood and sang the Workers' Hymn, and he was overwhelmed with expressions of sympathy as the representative of the small but obviously highly esteemed Swiss people.

The discussion on the general trade union situation also took up the whole of the following day, and at the request of the General Secretary, comrade Borghesi, the writer was asked to speak again to explain to his Italian comrades the structure of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation, which was regarded as important in view of the approaching discussion of the new Rules of the Union.

To sum up, and in connection with the Italian railways and the settlement of the most important questions

affecting the personnel, we should like to make the following points :

- (a) A great deal of confusion still prevails.
- (b) Italy has not yet secured full freedom of action : the Allies are still in the country, peace has not yet been signed with them, and there is not yet any *modus vivendi* that would facilitate a return to peace-time conditions.
- (c) The Government has not yet been stabilized, and the consequent crises of all kinds make it impossible to secure the minimum of order and stability which is necessary to bring things back to normal.
- (d) Life in general is dominated by a feverish interest in political affairs connected with the elections and other questions of importance for the development of the State, with the consequence that important practical problems, such as that of reconstruction and the

regulation of the working conditions of public employees, are unfortunately driven into the background.

- (e) Great hopes are being set in connection with the Constituent Assembly which is expected to be the first step towards bringing political life back to normal. How long will it be, however, before the State will be in a position to tackle concretely and successfully its most important tasks, to assure the feeding of the population, to get the millions of unemployed back to work, etc. ? All these are very important matters and they will have to be solved if great mass movements are to be avoided. On the whole, it must be admitted that the present situation in Italy is catastrophic. And those who are bearing the consequences are in the first place the employees of the State, including the railwaymen.

## RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN THE U.S.S.R.

By NIKOLAI ASANOV

Imbued with one dream, that of happiness for our people, we are setting out to plan our future. We are the only entity of peoples who knows its own fate, and therefore we are highly confident of success in this ambitious plan. Nearly thirty railways destroyed by the German invaders stretch from the central areas of the country towards the west. Some 2,000 blown-up bridges obstruct our beautiful rivers. The temporary bridges are often poor substitutes. Thousands of enormous structures—locomotive depots, railway stations, stores and marshalling yards present a sorry picture of twisted iron and metal. People live in barracks and trucks. This is the picture of our railway transport in the west after the Fatherland War. But new structures are springing up on the railways, temporary bridges are being constructed, beautiful new buildings are replacing old destroyed ones.

But this is only a beginning. How will the map look in 1950 ? Enormous areas of Siberia and Central Asia will be covered by new railways. Along those lines new settlements, factories and industrial combines will spring up. Here we can see the crucial importance of railway transport for our entire national economy. The industry of the Urals and Siberia grew so rapidly during the war that the Trans-Siberian trunk line considerably surpassed in freight capacity the other main railways of the world. Neither in the U.S.A. nor in France or Britain was there so much traffic on the railways. Coal and iron ore, metal and grain, and other important freight are transported by rail from Siberia through the Urals. The Kuznetsk Basin, Karaganda, the Urals, the Orsk Combine are the freight supplies for our entire country, and we can imagine the task of the railways linking Siberia and the Urals with the Central areas.

That is why the new Five-Year Plan maps out a new ambitious railway building programme. There will be

new branches of the Stalinsk-Magnitogorsk trunk line ; secondary lines linking Tomsk with Sverdlovsk and Karaganda with Kartala ; and finally the electrification of an enormous length of line from Novosibirsk to Ufa and in the Karaganda direction. Such will be our railway development from east to west. But our country is developing in all directions, and we need to amplify our north to south railways. The natural resources of the North, the coal of Vorkuta and Kizel and the oil of Kama, are indispensable for our national economy. So our map of the future contains the second railways of Northern Pechora and the electrified lines of the Northern Urals.

The elements in that part of the world are indeed grim. Neither Alaska nor Canada can compare with the conditions in our country for exploiting railways. It is precisely this constant struggle with the forces of nature which has helped to mould the Russian character. It is doubtful whether any other people are so fond of their country as the Russian people, surrounded and brought up in hard climatic conditions. Let us recall those who, under conditions of the unbearable frost of the 1941-42 winter, assembled new ordnance factories in Siberia and the Urals. Even then they were exploring new possibilities for railway construction. Some of them perished while executing their duties. During the 1941 winter an expedition led by Engineer Koshurnikov, exploring the possibilities of reconstructing the new Abakan-Tayshet line, perished in carrying out this duty. Equipped with new technique, our work conditions during winter will become easier.

At one time the building of three bridges and the laying of two railway lines simultaneously was regarded as a feat of valour. Now this exploit is being surpassed a hundred times. The scope of bridge building in the com-

ing years is enormous. Not for nothing do we recall the grim years of war when talking of our peaceful reconstruction. We had restored thousands of kilometres of destroyed railway lines under artillery fire. Our target in the coming Five-Year Plan is to reconstruct 1,500 railway stations and hundreds of schools, clubs, hospitals, maternity homes, and clinics. Nearly 150,000 people will become engine drivers and their assistants.

Thousands of new highly skilled workers will swell the ranks of our railway personnel. By the end of 1950 we shall have over 7,000 km. of electrified lines. Our country will occupy the first place in this respect. It is only in our country that such rapid reconversion of the traffic system is possible. The U.S. railway companies, which began partial electrification of railways before we did, failed to progress any further because the introduction of electrified transport would have meant that the capital invested in locomotives would no longer have been profitable. The owners of railways feared they would become dependent on the owners of electric power

stations. The very thing happened which always retards the development of technique in a capitalist society. The innovations turned out to be unprofitable for the owners of obsolete technique.

When we talk of the near future we are not indulging in make believe. Yet this near future of ours will have something of a dream about it. The passenger train will consist of metal carriages, comfortable, equipped with air conditioning plant. There will be new means to ensure the timely regulation of brakes and alarm signals. The engine driver will be able to receive instruction by telephone while the train is in motion; and without moving from the foot-plate, he will be able to see on a screen the signals marked with multiple colours. The locomotive will stop automatically when a signal is against it. All this is not a dream. It is indeed a real achievement of technique which we have already begun to introduce. While engaged in an ambitious railway construction programme, we shall also take into account the beauty of various railway structures and buildings.

## WORKING CONDITIONS OF SOVIET BUSMEN

By **BORIS ALTSHULLER**

*Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Motor Transport Workers' Union of the U.S.S.R.*

In the U.S.S.R. bus drivers are graded in three categories, according to their knowledge and experience. Only those listed in the two top categories are allowed to drive motor-buses, and they get the highest pay, because their work is the hardest and most highly skilled. Each man's category is decided by a State Qualification Commission—there is one in every Soviet city. Rates of pay in the first category are 20 per cent higher than in the second.

The bus drivers in their turn are divided into three groups according to the carrying capacity of their buses—20-seaters, 32-seaters, and those seating over 32.

**Piecework and Bonuses.** They are paid on a piecework system—that is, so much per journey. The route of each bus is exactly measured. Running speed, stops and time for rest after each journey are fixed to a schedule, which determines the number of journeys to be made in the seven-hour shift.

At each terminus the despatcher on duty records the time of the arrival and departure of every bus, and marks it on the waybill which the driver receives at the garage on starting his shift. This waybill is the basis on which his earnings are calculated.

At the end of the month the office counts up the number of journeys made by the driver and pays him accordingly. But this does not constitute the driver's only earnings. Besides this basic wage, he has every opportunity of earning several monthly bonuses. One bonus is paid for running exactly to time-table. Petrol economy earns another.

Before he drives out of the garage at the beginning of the shift, the driver fills his tank with petrol. A norm of

petrol consumption is fixed for each type of bus. When the bus pulls into the garage at the end of the shift, the amount of petrol remaining in the tank is measured. For each litre saved as compared with the norm, the driver receives 65 per cent of its cost. There are quite a number of men who save from 15 to 20 per cent of the norm allowed. They achieve this because they know their buses, understand their "capers," and can therefore get the maximum out of them.

A definite running mileage is fixed, too, for tyres. If the driver is able to run his tyres for a longer distance than is laid down in the regulations, he receives a bonus of 65 per cent of the value of his savings.

Another bonus is paid to busmen who succeed in running their machines for a month without any stoppages due to technical defects. Before the start of the shift, a brigade of mechanics gives the bus its daily washing and oiling, and does any current repairs. Before he takes over the bus, the driver examines the controls, and if he notices any defects, demands that the mechanics deal with them. Slight defects he corrects himself.

The trade union takes an active part in elaborating the wage system. In every garage the trade union wages commission is on the job, taking care that the drivers get everything they are entitled to. It also runs an attractive wall newspaper with photographs of the month's best drivers, giving the size of their pay packets.

**Extra Mileage Money.** There is one other form of bonus which is paid not monthly, but at the end of certain periods. This is earned by men who exceed the mileage norm without having to dock their buses for



repairs. This is quite a common achievement. The men who exceed the mileage norm are not only excellent drivers, but good mechanics. They eliminate slight defects before overhauling becomes necessary.

The seven-hour day (established for Moscow bus drivers sixteen years ago), the weekly rest-day and one month's annual holiday leaves the drivers plenty of time and energy to perfect their skill. The trade union helps

to organize technical schools, exhibitions and consultation centres for them. All these services are free of charge to the men.

Among Soviet bus-drivers, as in other spheres of Soviet life, the veterans are always eager to help the novices. The trade union arranges for the old hands to take the less experienced drivers under their wing and give them comradely advice about their trade.

## HOW SOVIET RAILWAYMEN ARE PAID

By V. CHABAN

Various systems of payment of labour operate on Soviet railways: time pay, time and bonus pay, payment by job and piecework.

Time applies to book-keeping and clerical employees, the administrative personnel, and workers on whose jobs output cannot be fixed. To stimulate the work of employees paid on a time basis, bonuses are fixed for particularly good work, for saving time and materials.

Payment by job has been introduced chiefly in the repair of tracks and on rehabilitation work. The value of each job is fixed by the administration.

But the most widespread system is that of piecework rates; it applies to more than 80 per cent of the railway workers employed in depots, workshops, repair of tracks and telegraph and telephone lines, workers connected with the movement of trains, signalmen, engine drivers and their assistants, firemen, conductors and others.

Piecework may be ordinary or progressive. Under progressive piecework the worker is paid the fixed piecework rate for the amount of work done according to fixed norms, anything above that being paid at a higher rate which, as a rule, goes up according to the increased amount of work performed. For instance, when the norm exceeded up to 10 per cent the rate is doubled; any excess of the 10 per cent is paid for at treble the rate.

Progressive piecework was first applied on Soviet railways in 1932, and has entirely justified itself insofar as it has stimulated labour productivity and the workers' earnings.

The trade unions take part in fixing the rates. Besides this, the wages commissions (consisting of volunteers taking an active part in trade union work) of the local trade union committees exercise control over the proper application by the administration of the system of wages, rates of pay and norms of output. Particular attention is paid to the correct and timely filling in of the documents which serve as the basis for calculating the workers' earnings. These documents are filled in by the heads of brigades or crews, or foremen.

These documents are handed to the workers when they start work. The document states definitely what each worker or group (crew or brigade) has to do. Besides stating the total number of parts to be made or repaired, the time fixed for making or repairing each part and the price are also given. The piece-worker is thus in a position to determine at the beginning of his job the amount he can earn in a day, and this acts as a stimulus on production. On the completion of the work the document is signed both by the shop foreman and the worker. The counterfoil of the document is kept by the worker.

The rates fixed by the administration are discussed at meetings of workers and are subject to the approval of the local trade union committees. If the workers declare that a certain rate has not been properly fixed, the union committee can demand that the administration investigate the matter.

## THE CASUAL DOCK LABOUR EVIL IN GREAT BRITAIN TO BE ABOLISHED

By STAN AWBERY

Chairman of the Transport and General Workers' Union's Parliamentary Group

The Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, one of the first measures passed by the Labour Government, brings port transport workers within sight of the goal for which the unions concerned, social reformers, economists, and commissions, have been striving for nearly sixty years.

There is still a great deal to be done. The scheme to give full effect to the provisions of the Act has yet to be agreed by the employers and the unions concerned and approved by the Minister of Labour.

The long struggle for decasualisation is an epic in our social history, and the recording of a few outstanding

events will be of interest to the young trade unionist.

**Ben Tillett's Union.** While there were references to the evil of casual labour so far back as 1834, it was not until 1887, when Ben Tillett formed the Tea Coopers and General Labourers' Association, after he had held a meeting of dockers in a public house in Hackney, that the first serious move was made to improve the conditions of port transport workers.

Ben did not have an easy task. The men he was trying to organize had been brutalised by years of bitter struggle for existence under frightful conditions; but in some vague way they sensed they were victims of grave in-

justice, and Ben and his brave pioneers realized—none better—that they were handling social dynamite.

With untiring energy and endless patience Ben gave their anger and discontent intelligent direction and set up the machinery for organization.

But in August, 1889, the explosion came. With an angry roar which shook the complacency of the Victorian era to its foundations, the London dockers poured forth from their slums, dens and doss-houses and declared war on their employers from London Bridge to Tilbury. Bravely their little Union, with only 7s. 6d. in the treasury, led them, and work on fifty miles of water front was rendered idle. But money soon poured in from all parts of the country and from other lands. In demonstrations and marches and other means of publicity the dockers focused attention on their horrible conditions of employment and humanity was shocked as never before.

The strike had a revolutionary effect on the Trade Union Movement, but that is another story.

The employers granted a small increase in wages, which raised the rate to 6d. an hour, but obstinately refused to consider any fundamental change in conditions. Their excuse was that dependence of the industry upon tides, weather, seasonal trades and other factors made casual labour an absolute necessity.

But a few years later Mr. Chas. Booth initiated an inquiry into conditions at Liverpool docks and some slight reform was secured. In 1894 some of the London docks adopted a preference scheme, but the hard core of the casual labour problem remained untouched.

**Poor Law Commission.** In 1909 we had the Report of the Poor Law Commission. This described casual labour as "chronic underemployment," and declared it was detrimental to the moral and material well-being of the community. It should be reduced, it said, by legislation, if necessary, to the smallest possible limits.

The Report recommended that the Board of Trade should send investigators to all ports and should endeavour, through conferences of employers and workmen, to arrange schemes for the progressive decasualization of dock workers.

But it was in 1908 that we have the first intimation that the Government of the day was concerned about the casual labour problem. In the Charter of the Port of London Authority it was urged that the new Authority should endeavour to regularize the employment of its workpeople. Little was done, however, and during the strike of 1912, the Authority was charged by the men's leaders with having done nothing to implement that part of its Charter.

**Registration Schemes during World War I.** In 1914 the world went to war, and then, as proved to be the case when the second world war broke out, the organizing of man-power at the ports was of first-class importance. Mainly on the initiative of the trade unions schemes of registration were adopted in the various ports, which were a considerable improvement on the pre-war scramble for work. Registration was a step in the right direction. It protected the dockers from the competition of unemployed men from other industries and they were anxious to preserve in peace what they had won during the war.

**Norman Hill Committee.** As a result of the demand for protection for *bona-fide* dockers, the Government in 1919, set up a committee under Sir Norman Hill to inquire into the position in the ports and this committee recommended that Joint Committees should be set up in every port for the registration of *bona-fide* dockers, who should be employed before any outsiders were admitted.

A model scheme was submitted as a basis of discussion. It could be varied to meet local requirements, and it was felt that if it were adopted further improvements closely connected with decasualization would follow. Little progress, however, was made.

**The Roche Committee.** But as demobilization speeded up and the danger of a rush of unemployed to the ports developed, it became clear that something must be done. The Minister of Labour set up another committee, this time under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Roche, to inquire into what action could be taken to reduce, if necessary, the number of casual workers in the Port of London, and to report on the methods of applying the principle of out-of-work donation to port workers, and to prevent an influx of men from other trades to the docks.

This Committee recommended registration of employers and workmen. A provisional register should be made of all dock workers and the Ministry of Labour should entrust the formation and control of the registers to a committee of employers and workmen.

The Minister accepted the report, and during the summer of 1920 a scheme was put into operation for the Port of London, and 61,000 men applied for registration. In ten years this figure was reduced to 37,000. The scheme was regarded as highly satisfactory, and it is interesting to note that among those who signed the report were Ernest Bevin and the late officers—Harry Gosling, William Devenay and Ben Tillett.

**Shaw Inquiry.** In the same year we had the historic Shaw Inquiry, where Bro. Bevin became famous as "The Dockers' K.C." It is of importance to note that although the Court was not asked specifically to report on the casual labour problem, it felt it to be so vital that it embodied recommendations on the matter in its report. The Court stated that if it had treated the subject as irrelevant it would have shirked a difficulty which had wide ramifications and without a settlement of which the prospects of peace and contentment at the docks would be nil.

In his case to the Court, Bro. Bevin stated that he did not confine his claim to that of an increase of wages. He asked the Court to consider a scheme of decasualization by means of registration, with the provision of maintenance during unemployment. He elaborated a method by which this could be done, and showed the loss to the industry as a result of having men idle and physical deterioration setting in.

The Court expressed the opinion that the industry should carry the charge in respect of its unemployed casuals, and declared that labour constantly underemployed was injurious to the workers, the ports and the



public, and was discreditable to society. It was wrong. It must be torn up by the roots.

**The Maclean Committee.** But from 1920 to 1923 little was done by the employers or the Government of the day to tear up casual labour by the roots. Then, after a strike in 1923 for a wage increase and a guaranteed weekly wage (which was settled by the men being granted an increase of 2s. a day in two instalments), the Government set up a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Donald Maclean to inquire further into the question of decasualization and maintenance and to consider what steps should be taken to implement the objects set out in the Shaw Report.

This committee issued two reports, the first of which emphasised the importance of setting up registration committees in the ports, and the second dealt mainly with the cost of establishing a guaranteed week. In 1928 the committee again called attention to the need of registration and suggested a reduction in the number of call places would be a factor in the achievement of decasualisation. Following this, the Ministry of Labour considered requests from the ports for assistance in co-ordinating the engagement of labour.

**Ben Smith's Bill.** A further stage in the struggle for decasualization was marked by Bro. Ben Smith in February, 1924, when he introduced a Bill for the provision of regular work for dockers. But as the Maclean Committee was at that time dealing with the problem, the Bill was not proceeded with. It did, however, serve a useful purpose in that it called the country's attention to the evils of casual labour, and it also had a propaganda value for those of us who wanted the industry organized on the basis of public service.

**Port Labour Inquiry.** The Maclean Committee met again in 1930 as the "Port Labour Inquiry." Its purpose was to inquire into employment and unemployment in the ports and to make recommendations with special reference to decasualization and the administration of Unemployment Insurance and its application to dockers. Most of the ports sent details of their registration schemes, and they were unanimous that registration had improved the position of labour engagement and distribution. They recommended development wherever possible.

**Union Submits Scheme.** The Transport and General Workers' Union submitted to the Inquiry a well-prepared and comprehensive scheme for decasualization and maintenance, and showed how it could be operated. The Union's representatives expressed their conviction that the industry could be so organized as to make casual labour as unnecessary as it was undesirable, and at the same time provide the necessary labour without cruel and unsocial conditions. The adjustments could be made without injury to the industry. The scheme provided for maintenance allowances for men who reported for work but who could not be engaged, and also for retirement pensions. The cost would be met by a national pool set up by the industry.

Despite the effort of the Union, however, all that the Port Labour Inquiry recommended was a tightening up

of registration schemes. The chairman was of the opinion that statutory powers should be sought to set up schemes in five years, if at the end of that time there were any ports without them.

The dockers were disappointed. Commissions, committees, inquiries had all in turn condemned the casual labour system, but had hesitated at making such recommendations which, if implemented, would accomplish its destruction.

**Second World War.** Then, in 1939, came the second world war, and in 1940 Ernest Bevin became Minister of Labour. The world knows to-day how he immediately set to work to organize the ports on the basis of service and the fundamental changes he introduced. In 1941, following consultations with the employers and the unions concerned, the Ministry of War Transport and the Ministry of Labour, set up a scheme for the Merseyside, Manchester and Preston areas and also for the ports of Glasgow and Greenock, which, among other things, provided for payment to registered men who had not been allocated for work. In September of the same year the National Dock Labour Corporation was set up to carry out at other ports functions similar to those carried out under the Ministry of War Transport scheme.

Under both schemes the principle of work or maintenance was established. The reform for which the Union had long fought had been won, but, and this is important, the Merseyside and Clydeside schemes and the schemes administered by the N.D.L.C. were war-time schemes and were due to be ended when the war was over. Unless, therefore, something was done to provide for their continuation or to provide for something to take their place, the dockers would be thrust back to the pre-war position.

**Labour Government's Speedy Action.** It was for the purpose of safeguarding the position of the dockers that the Labour Government put through Parliament with all possible speed the Bill for the regulation of dock labour. The Act provides for the continuation of the present schemes until such time as a scheme is prepared (or schemes, if necessary) to cover all ports in the country. At the time of writing, representatives of the unions have submitted principles of a scheme to the employers and a reply is awaited. In the event of the unions and the employers failing to produce a voluntarily negotiated and agreed scheme for the approval of the Minister of Labour, the Minister is empowered by the Act to produce his own scheme and embody it in an Order to be laid before Parliament. When it has been approved by Parliament it becomes law and the long, arduous struggle of the dockers and their leaders to end the evil of casual labour will have been won.

As the hour of victory approaches, let us pay tribute to all those who played their part in the fight. The list is a long one—too long to give here—for it includes not only trade union leaders and active lay members, but many brave souls in all walks of life. They have written a memorable page in our social history. On behalf of the dockers we say: "Thank you."



# THE ORGANISATION OF ENGINEERS IN FRANCE

By J. GASTON

*Engineer, General Secretary of the French National Union of Engineers and Supervisory Workers in the Transport Industry.*

Before the second world war French engineers took practically no part in the trade union struggle, by means of which the wage-earners try to improve their standard of living. In many undertakings the engineer was completely under the thumb of his employer. His promotion, and therefore his salary, depended only too often, not on his capacity, but on his support of the reactionary ideas of the employer class. The engineer with a feeling for social reform had to keep it to himself: he could not express it openly without risking his position. It was therefore difficult for him to take the side of the workers when they put forward claims.

In 1936 there was a spate of big strikes in France, which extended considerably as a result of the occupation of the factories by the workers, but the engineers mostly remained passive in the face of this movement—which was not of a revolutionary character—and very few indeed entered into the struggle on the side of the trade unions. The employers, who had been very much alarmed, took advantage of this fact to carry on propaganda aiming to make the engineers believe that they were a class apart, the link between capital and labour, and endeavours were made to set up engineers' trade unions that would follow the employers' lead. A few bold spirits who were working actively, under assumed names, within the General Confederation of Labour, fought this movement in the meetings called to set up such unions—which were not much of a success anyway.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to one of these early engineer trade unionists, my comrade Firminhac, who joined the International Brigade when the war started in Spain in 1936, and fell on the field of honour, as a captain of artillery, at Tarancón, in front of Madrid.

The second world war arrived without the engineers' trade union movement having made any appreciable progress, but during the occupation engineers and manual workers came together. There were many factors making for unity—common sufferings, hatred of the enemy, and the need for concerted action to slow down production. In many cases this alliance was directed against servile employers, who had placed themselves at the service of Vichy and the enemy.

These four years of joint struggle, and the contacts on an equal footing within the resistance movement, changed the mentality of the engineers and gave more courage to the wavering, so that there was an entirely new atmosphere when the country was liberated in August, 1944.

In a number of cases manual and supervisory workers joined forces to get rid of managers and boards of directors who had co-operated with the enemy. The final victory, and the reconstruction of the country, called for a patriotic effort from all. Factories, work-

shops and the public services resumed their activities thanks only to the co-operation between engineers and manual workers. The management committees that were set up as soon as the enemy had gone, succeeded in overcoming all difficulties, and in maintaining themselves in being in spite of all the traps which the capitalists and reactionaries set for them.

The publicity given to these experiences soon attracted the attention of the engineers and supervisory workers, and many of them began to realize that their old role of intermediary between capital and labour was something that belonged to the past; that they had a part of primary importance to play in the reconstruction of France; and that that part would not be a creative one unless there were deeply rooted agreement between the engineers and the manual workers. A very large number of them therefore joined the workers' trade unions affiliated to the General Confederation of Labour.

Two organizations of reactionary tendencies—the Confederation of Christian Workers and the General Confederation of Supervisory Workers—tried to put a spoke in the wheel and win the support of the engineers and supervisory workers. The first of these divided the movement by trying to segregate the men on religious lines which had nothing to do with the matter at issue: the other, which resembles in many respects the old craft unions, is an organization that follows the employers' dictates, organizing supervisory workers who support capitalism and show little understanding of the solutions of economic and social problems advocated by the trade unions.

With a view to encouraging the organization of engineers and supervisory workers, the General Confederation of Labour, which fully understands the importance of this matter, has set up a special organization for them. The engineers and supervisory workers in each undertaking form a branch, and all branches in a given industry constitute a national union of engineers and supervisory workers which is attached to the particular industrial federation to which the unions of manual workers in that industry belong. The national engineers' unions of the several industrial federations are united in a Cartel of Engineers and Supervisory Workers which sits, in an advisory capacity, with the Bureau of the General Confederation of Labour.

The union of engineers and manual workers in industrial federations makes possible regular contacts between these two necessary elements to production, while the further separate organization of the engineers on a national basis gives them a place apart. Sure of making their voice heard, it is only natural that they will join the trade union organization to which the great majority of the French workers belong. On the other hand, the workers will think more highly of engineers who are prepared to discuss with them in a fraternal

# THE LIFE OF THE FISHERMAN

By LOUIS MAJOR

*Assistant General Secretary of the Belgian Federation of Trade Unions.*

In these days of difficulty in food supply and serious fat shortage the considerable quantities of fish which are available in Belgium are extremely welcome, as they were during the last two years of the German occupation. We now see displayed at the fishmongers' many varieties of fish which are obtainable at comparatively reasonable prices, though they are still too high compared with what the fisherman earns. The middlemen make more out of it than the fisherman himself, who risks his life every day. So let us first of all pay homage to the many victims among the fishermen: during and since the war one in every ten of them has given his life for his country.

And this brings us to the life of the fisherman. In general far too little is known about it. Now and then holiday-makers see the ships lying in one of our harbours on the coast, sometimes they even see shrimps brought in or the fish auctioned, but that is probably as far as their knowledge of our fisheries mostly goes.

Fishing is one of those trades that run in families, that are passed on from grandfather to father and son. It is very rarely that an outsider comes into it. These fishing families have been settled, in our coastal ports, divided into different groups, for generations. Some of them only engage in off-coast fishing, others confine themselves to middle or deep-sea fishing, and each group keeps to itself.

The fisherman has a hard life of it. Inland folk are generally quite unaware that, in so far as sea-fishing is concerned, there is no question of an eight-hour day, but that fishing is kept up as long as possible to increase the catch. In most cases this means very many hours on deck. Once a catch is hauled on board, and the net is cast again for the next and following ones, the first

manner their claims, the improvement of their working conditions and the increase of production.

The engineers, who after all only owe their positions to their technical knowledge, can be sure that they will lose no authority by exchanging views in this way, and that, on the contrary, they will only gain in the esteem of their workers. The union between the two will give greater weight to the claims of the engineers: the workers, recognizing the value and usefulness of their chiefs, will be the first to insist that their salaries should be adequate.

In this way a close alliance will be gradually built up, in France, between the only two elements which are absolutely necessary to production, the engineers and manual workers. The constructive position of the General Confederation of Labour will thereby be strengthened, and it will be enabled to claim, with greater authority, all those economic social responsibilities which it is able to assume.

must be sorted, gutted, washed and stowed in the ice tanks. If the catch is a big one this will often last until the next lot comes in, and that means that the men must keep working ten, twenty and more hours at a stretch, often in the coldest of winter weather, when all they take hold of is covered with ice.

But even when all this is done the job is not at an end, because the ship does not sail by itself: watch must be kept, and that means that one or two of the men who have been doing this hard work for hours at an end must stay on deck, alone, for another one or two hours. For them there is no question of sleeping, or even of dozing, for the life of their comrades, who are taking a few hours rest below, depends on their watchfulness. The men on watch whistle, sing and shout—anything to keep awake, for this requires a great effort. And remember that this is not always in a calm sea, but often in half a gale, while the ship rolls and pitches, so that every care must be taken lest a wave should carry a man overboard.

And the work itself is dangerous enough. The fishermen must be constantly on the lookout for the spines of some kinds of fish, and for the steel cables with which the nets are dragged. The accident risk is very great. Apart from fatal accidents there are an unusually large number of lesser importance. And in spite of this our fishermen have been dealt with in such a niggardly manner that until the year 1929 there was no Act of Parliament that provided them with compensation in such cases.

Since then things have much improved as a result of the setting-up of their trade union. They now come under the national social legislation. But this is still not enough. Fishermen have no fixed wages, they always work on a kind of piece-rate basis, that is to say a certain percentage of the yield of the catch, plus in some cases, a fixed allowance.

This is said to be because the shipowner is unable to exercise control while the ship is at sea, but in reality it is to get as much as possible out of the men, just as in the case of piece-work in other industries.

In earlier days, and in the period between the two wars, some lawyers, and even judges, have regarded the fishermen as partners, and therefore not subject to social legislation except when they were specifically mentioned. The Union had to bring hundreds of cases before the courts against unwilling shipowners who refused to pay compensation and allowances. There is urgent need for a special code of social legislation applicable to fishermen, such as we already have for the miners. But it is difficult to compare the fisherman with the worker on land. Fishermen are always at sea, and those who engage in deep-sea fishing are often twenty days or more away from home, and on returning get only one-and-a-

half or two days, rest before setting off again. This goes on until the ship is laid up—not to give the crew a chance to rest, but for the purpose of giving the ship itself an overhaul.

The work is so heavy that at an early age the fisherman is no longer able to keep it up. The industry cannot employ men who are stiff with rheumatism, which they often get from constantly standing on the wet deck. It is urgently necessary, therefore, that fishermen should be granted a decent pension at not later than 55 years of age, so that they may enjoy the rest of which they have had so little compared with the worker on land, during the early days of their life.

But while there is still very much to be done, things have certainly improved considerably. The fisherman is required to be on board before his ship sails. If he is not there the shipping police fetch him and he is fined or reprimanded. But it is not so many years since a fisherman who for any reason—sometimes a superstitious fear of a particular ship—dare not or would not go on

board, would be dragged there, sometimes in handcuffs, and a few weeks later would be brought before the court at Bruges and sentenced to one or more months' imprisonment.

A great deal has been done and is being done, but there is still much to do. The Seamen's Union has done a great deal to provide the fishermen with more relaxation at sea. Before the war it formed a library which put boxes of books on board the fishing vessels. Living accommodation on board has been considerably improved, not by legislation but by safety regulations. But in considering their position it should not be forgotten that only too often these men spend the greater part of their lives at sea, cut off from the world and their families, and with not much else to think about than the catch which they must make as big as possible. And on their return to port they often suffer the disappointment of seeing the fish sold at ridiculously low prices, so that costs are not covered and their earnings are next to nothing.

## WHAT THE I.L.O. HAS DONE FOR THE SEAMEN

By J. L. MOWAT

*Acting Chief of the Maritime Service of the International Labour Office.*

**Present Activities.** The Maritime Conference in Copenhagen in November was organised by the I.L.O. in preparation for the Seattle session. It brought together representatives of Governments, ship-owners and seamen from twenty leading maritime countries for a preliminary consideration of a wide range of questions: wages, hours and manning on board ship; social security and pensions for seamen; crew accommodation, food standards and certificates for ships' cooks; certificates for able seamen; medical examination to protect seamen's health; holidays with pay; continuous employment; and the recognition of seamen's unions and the right of collective bargaining between shipowners' and seamen's organizations. The question of wages, hours and manning was also considered, but on this problem it proved difficult to reach satisfactory results, because the views of the shipowners and the seamen differed so widely. However, the discussion cleared the air, and it may be hoped that it will prove possible to find a firmer basis for an accord. On all the other questions substantial agreement was reached, and there is every reason to believe that Conventions which many countries can ratify will be adopted at the Seattle session.

**Difficulties about Standards.** No international agreement is easy of achievement. What are the difficulties in reaching agreement on I.L.O. Conventions? The main one is that many delegates—whether Government, ship-owners or seamen—want the standards laid down in a Convention to be exactly the same as—or better than—those in their own country. But such an attitude is contrary to the whole idea of the I.L.O., which is to set up *international minimum* standards. A minimum standard which can be accepted by most of the maritime countries is bound to fall considerably short of what exists in the

most advanced countries. But does that make it useless? A delegate from a country with high standards in wages, accommodation, etc., may say: "What use is this Convention to me? You suggest a minimum wage of £15, £16 or perhaps £18 a month for an able seaman, but our seamen get more than that under their collective agreements. You say the minimum floor space for a man to sleep in should be 30 square feet in ships of 3,000 tons or over. But in the last ship I sailed in we had about 40 square feet. What interest can we have in these proposals or in making them into an International Convention?"

This is an old argument. An answer was recently given to it in a report on the Copenhagen Conference published in a French magazine. It said: "The international measures proposed at Copenhagen will not bring many advantages to French seamen, whose conditions are in general more favourable than those in other countries. But the proposals are of interest to French seamen, because they help to consolidate what we have already got. From the point of view of world social progress they will bring a definite and often considerable improvement in the standard of living of seamen, particularly in the countries where conditions are very bad."

**Value of Uniformity.** The value of international agreements was also emphasised by Admiral Land, Chairman of the United States Maritime Commission, in 1944, when he said: "Can there be agreement among the maritime nations as to size, location and character of crews' quarters? If our standards in this respect are maintained and are so much higher than others, we are placed at a decided disadvantage in original cost and maintenance. If our standards are correct, how can we bring the other maritime nations into line? What part



will the seamen's unions take in establishing uniformity? . . . The days when the dregs of the beach manned the ships are past, and we must have labour laws to meet present-day conditions at sea. In so far as possible, there should be uniformity among the maritime nations in this regard."

In the more than twenty-six years of its existence, the International Labour Organisation has done much to raise the international standards of employment of seamen throughout the world. That is part of its job, which is, in general, to help to maintain peace by guaranteeing fair conditions of employment for all workers and thereby reducing international competition based on unfair working conditions. Now that the war is over, the Organisation is again getting down to the task of making further improvements. The conference to be held in the United States, at Seattle, beginning on June 6th, will try to set up a number of new international rules to get better conditions on board ship and to promote the well-being of seamen in a variety of ways.

**How the I.L.O. Works.** Under the I.L.O.'s machinery international standards for conditions of work in various occupations are formulated by the International Labour Conference—a kind of world parliament for discussing labour and social questions. In normal times general sessions of the Conference are held every year. In addition, from time to time there are special maritime conferences which bring together as delegates experts on the shipping industry and on life at sea. Each conference has before it reports prepared by the International Labour Office, which is constantly collecting and distributing information on all aspects of labour problems. In its work in connection with seamen, the office is advised and guided by the Joint Maritime Commission—a standing Committee of nine representatives of shipowners and nine representatives of seamen chosen from different maritime countries.

When the Conference meets, whether to discuss general or maritime questions, every country which is a member of the Organisation—and there are more than fifty of them—is invited to send four delegates, two representing the Government, one representing organised employers and one representing organized workers. There is complete freedom of speech and voting for each of these groups of delegates, for the Organization is an entirely democratic institution.

A few months before a Maritime Conference there is usually a preparatory meeting on the same lines as the Conference but on a smaller scale. Such a preparatory conference was held in November, at Copenhagen. At these meetings experts from the chief maritime countries give their views on what improvements in standards are possible internationally at any given time.

**What is a Convention?** When the Conference decides on its international standards they are put in writing in what is known as a Convention, which is a kind of international treaty. The Convention is then sent to Governments, which are obliged to submit it, within a definite time limit, to their parliament or congress or whatever body draws up the laws of the country. The Conference decisions can also take the form of Recom-

mendations or resolutions, which are less formal and do not carry with them the same strict obligations for Governments.

**International Seamen's Code.** What has the I.L.O. done so far for seamen? It has collected and published a lot of information on conditions of employment, such as wages, hours, insurance and welfare in ports, in every country—information which is not usually available in collected form and which it is difficult for any one country or trade union to obtain for itself. This information is always at the disposal of Governments, shipowners' associations and seamen's unions.

In the second place, the Conventions so far adopted by the I.L.O. cover such questions as hours of work, manning, facilities for finding employment, seamen's articles, the employment of young persons, officers' competency certificates, annual holidays with pay, sickness and unemployment insurance, shipowners' liability, and the repatriation of seamen. Together, these Conventions make up what has been called an International Seamen's Code. There are still gaps in the Code, however, and it will be for the Seattle Conference to fill some of them. There are already fifteen Conventions on maritime employment and dock work, and on the average each of them has been accepted and applied by seventeen States, including practically all the important shipping countries.

To quote only one example, the Convention on unemployment indemnity in case of ship-wreck, which was passed in 1920 and has been accepted by nearly all the important maritime countries, provides for the payment of at least two months' wages to seamen when they lose their jobs because their ship is lost. This was agreed to at a time when no country had any laws granting such compensation—a striking instance of how the I.L.O. can do good work for seamen and get the backing of maritime countries for its efforts.

An International Labour Convention is not intended to lay down exactly the highest standards that already exist in one or two countries. If it did, only very few countries would agree to it, and that would be of little value. The idea is to set up an international minimum, which may fall short of the standard of the best countries but is well ahead of the standard in the more backward countries. When the pressure of the unions or of public opinion, based on the I.L.O. Convention, induces a majority of the maritime countries to accept that Convention, it means that the standards in the less advanced countries have to be brought up at least to the international minimum, and in many cases countries are willing to go a step or two further.

From a humanitarian point of view this benefits the seamen in those countries, but it also benefits those in the more advanced countries because it means that the less advanced countries are no longer able to offer as severe competition in world shipping. Take again, for instance, the suggestion of £15, £16 or £18 a month as a minimum wage for an A.B. It may not help the seamen in the advanced countries directly, but what of the countries which, according to official figures collected by the I.L.O., are paying their seamen £11 a month? Isn't

it worth while to bring them up to a higher international minimum?

**Groundless Fears.** It may be said from the seamen's side: "Yes, but if you fix a low international standard, then the shipowners of the advanced countries will try to deprive their seamen of their better conditions and pull them back to that lower minimum." This fear is groundless. In the first place, each Convention says that it is a minimum, and every country that accepts it solemnly promises that nothing in the Convention will be allowed to affect any higher standards that exist in any country. But there is a second and stronger argument against this fear of losing high standards. How were they obtained? Because collective bargaining was carried on

in a reasonable spirit, and because the unions were strong enough to win concessions from the owners. If that is so, aren't these unions still strong enough to hold what they have won? Of course they are!

If, therefore, nothing can be lost through I.L.O. Conventions and something can be gained by improved conditions in other countries, it obviously pays the workers in the advanced countries to back the Conventions even when they don't contain exactly what they would like to put into them. This is a point that people find difficult to grasp when they suddenly go to international meetings after fighting in their own collective negotiations for much higher standards. But it is the only sound basis for international progress in working conditions.

## CONDITIONS OF INDIAN SEAFARERS

By D. MUNGAT

General Secretary, Maritime Union of India

*The conditions of employment of Indian seafarers, in spite of improvements secured during the war years, are still inferior to those of their white colleagues. Basing themselves on the International Seafarers' Charter and the principle it lays down of "equal pay for equal work" regardless of race, creed or nationality, Indian seafarers are no longer prepared to be a pawn in the shipowners' struggle for profits, but are determined to get their fair share in the better standards which the seafarers of all countries are demanding. The General Secretary of the Maritime Union of India, D. Mungat, devotes a vigorous article to the question in the January-February 1946 number of the "Bulletin" of the Indian Federation of Labour, in the course of which he gives the following particulars of Indian seafarers' conditions of employment.*

**Indian Officers' Pay.** Indian merchant navy officers before the war enjoyed the doubtful distinction of being the lowest paid in the world. Since then they have succeeded in securing a marked improvement in their standards, the result no doubt of their having organized themselves in the Maritime Union of India.

Even to-day, however, gross inequalities persist between officers performing the same duties. In the B.I.S.N. Co., for instance, the European Purser starts his career on a salary of Rs. 255 a month, while his Indian colleague has a starting rate of only Rs. 87. Here racial discrimination is the decisive factor. But taking the case of an officer on a coastal ship, one finds that he fares not a whit better at the hands of the Indian shipowner. In the Bombay Steam Navigation Co., which is a purely Indian concern, the Third Officer gets a wage of Rs. 129. The National Maritime Board of the United Kingdom lays down for an officer on a ship of the same tonnage and trade a rate two-and-a-half times higher, Rs. 334. The International Seafarers' Charter proposes a minimum rate of Rs. 300, which is still very much more than the rate paid to the Indian Third Officer of an Indian-owned, Indian-manned vessel. Here it cannot be argued, as it often is in the case of the lower ratings, that more Indians have to be employed to do a certain job than white seamen, inasmuch as an Indian ship carries the same number of officers as does that of any other country.

**Indian Seamen's Wages.** The public may be ignorant of the plight of the Indian officer, but it has heard often of the miserable and degrading conditions under which Indian seamen have to live and work. An idea of how low Indian seamen's wages are can be got from the following table published by the International Labour

Office, in which the rates of pay of able seamen of different nationalities are expressed as percentages of the rate of a British able seaman:

COMPARISON OF PAY OF AN ABLE BODIED SEAMEN

	Britain	U.S.A.	Canada	Belgium	France	Chinese Crews	Indian Crews	Greece	Norway	Sweden
Prewar	100	142	103	81	90	22	26	60	85	72
Current Basic	100	177	145	89	97	65	32	79	102	95
Current Basic Plus War Bonus	100	172	126	104	98	80	28	117	118	165

In connection with the above figures it should be noted that Indian seamen enjoy no leave whatsoever, nor have they any provident fund or pension scheme.

**Hours of Work.** There is no overtime either for officers or for seamen. Hours of work sometimes range from 70 to 84 a week, sometimes they are longer. There are no holidays and no overtime rates for work on recognized holidays. For seamen, more over, continuity of employment is an unknown principle.

**Accommodation.** Ships built for the climates of the Baltic and the Atlantic provide no accommodation suitable for habitation in tropical waters. Many

# REFLECTIONS ON THE SEATTLE CONFERENCE

## JUNE 6th—29th, 1946

**The Outcome—from the Three Group Points of View.** To all three groups—Government, Shipowners and Seafarers—the results of the Seattle Conference must appear something of a mixed bag.

In Seafarers' circles it is appreciated that the Conventions and Recommendations which were adopted on a very wide range of questions represent a very substantial instalment of the post-war aims they have formulated in their International Seafarers' Charter. On the other hand, however, they cannot overlook that these measures still fall considerably short of their objectives and are indeed in some respects a step backward from the position which was gained at the preparatory Maritime Conference of Copenhagen.

Some of the Seafarers' dissatisfaction must no doubt be discounted. As Mr. Mowat, the new chief of the Maritime Section of the I.L.O., rightly observes in another article in this *Journal*, we still tend to make the mistake of unconsciously using the standards we are

Indian ships are ex-Norwegian or British (running on the Atlantic trade). The cabins are terribly stuffy and cramped. Ventilation is bad. Recreation rooms are unheard of. On Indian coastal ships which are built for Indian waters four engineers are usually housed in a space 6ft. by 6ft. They have no lockers or wash basins. Lavatories and bathrooms in many cases have to be shared with deck passengers. Saloons for officers are a mere makeshift. A tarpaulin flung across the deck, to partition it off from the deck passengers, constitutes the mess-room.

If the standard of accommodation provided for Indian officers is very poor, there are no words to describe the subhuman conditions Indian ratings are required to live in. Of a messroom there is not even a pretence. Thirty or more are crowded into a dingy fo'c's'le or poop. Ventilation is in most ships very bad or non-existent.

**The International Maritime Labour Conference.** Indian seamen are taking a keen interest in the efforts of the I.L.O. in connection with conditions on board ships, and they hope they will be conducive to the improvements which are long overdue. The efficiency of the Indian mercantile marine will also improve as better men are attracted to sea by the prospects of a decent livelihood without indignity.

Indian seamen realize that their salvation lies in the implementation of the International Seafarers' Charter, and they are prepared to strive for it with all the means at their disposal. They are grateful to the comrades in other countries for the help they are receiving in their efforts to secure tolerable conditions and will appreciate all further support rendered in giving publicity to their plight and helping to remedy the situation.

accustomed to in national affairs, instead of applying to the appraisal of international affairs a yardstick appropriate to that sphere.

The Shipowners also cannot have gone home satisfied. With but few exceptions they went to Seattle with the intention of torpedoing a progressive international regulation of seafarers' conditions, but although they did succeed in undoing at some points the work which had been done for Seafarers at Copenhagen, they found no support for their position outside their own Group, and were outvoted on all major issues.

About the feelings of the Government Group it is more difficult to speculate, as they do not constitute a homogeneous element at an International Labour Conference. Few Governments were ready to go all the way with the Seafarers, while very few showed outright hostility to their aspirations. For the most part they were anxious to compromise at various levels, and on the whole it is probably correct to say that at Seattle they went further than they intended.

**Two Important Precedents.** The I.L.O. itself may be said to have cause for satisfaction with the Seattle decisions. The conference certainly did pioneering work in setting two important precedents: for the first time an International Labour Conference adopted an international minimum wage standard, and the second new concept was the recognition of the Collective Agreement, beside national legislation, as an instrument for giving effect to a ratified International Convention.

The importance of the concept of an international minimum wage can scarcely be over-estimated. So fundamental indeed is it that the actual figure specified almost seems of relatively secondary importance. In this sense a figure commanding such support that the international minimum wage becomes a living concept in the long run means a more solid gain than a higher figure which is accepted half-heartedly. It is perhaps too early to appraise the full significance of the Seattle decision, but I am confident that in time it will be looked upon as an important milestone in the history of social progress.

Recognition of the Collective Agreement as a method of carrying out the intentions of an International Convention makes ratification possible also for Federal States and for countries where it is not the practice to legislate on matters normally left to collective bargaining, and both Governments and trade unions are reluctant to change the practice.

There is another, more important side to this question. The new arrangement will be an added incentive to trade unions to strive after the minima prescribed by Convention or Recommendation. Experience teaches that conditions thus won after a struggle are more



firmly established than those obtained more easily, say through the liberality of the legislator.

If trade unionists nevertheless prefer legislation in certain cases it is because it affords a means of helping those who cannot help themselves, and have therefore fallen so far behind in social standards as to be a menace to the rest of the community. Minimum wage legislation, indeed, will in the main be found to concern occupations where trade unionism is weak, such as agriculture, and racial minorities which are especially exposed to exploitation. For the rest, there can of course be no question of applying collective agreement procedure to matters universally recognized as coming within the scope of legislation, such as social insurance. Wages and hours are examples of questions which certainly cannot be regarded as falling under this category.

The argument has been used that the temporary nature of a collective agreement renders it an unsuitable means of honouring a Convention, whereas the stable character of legislation binds a State for the whole period of a Convention's validity (usually ten years). Even from a legal point of view this argument is not very sound. The undertaking into which a Government enters by ratification, to ensure observance of a Convention, would have to be honoured regardless whether it relied on Collective Agreement or Legislative Enactment for doing so. Should the position arise that the terms of a Collective Agreement fell short of the standards of a Convention, it would simply mean that the Government concerned would be under an obligation to do something about it. Or if it did not, the power of the Trade Union Movement would have to be brought into play, with international backing if necessary.

**The Question of Power.** This very question of power raises another point. One of the weaknesses of the I.L.O. has been that apart from persuasion it had no means of inducing countries to ratify or enforce International Conventions. The task of exerting pressure upon Governments in this direction fell naturally to those who stood to benefit by those Conventions, *i.e.* the workers acting through their trade union organizations. Whether in the past the trade unions have shown themselves fully equal to this task is a question to which I fear many would not have a satisfactory answer.

There is still a great deal of misunderstanding, some of it wilful, about the function of the I.L.O. It is not the task of the I.L.O. to do the work of the trade unions. The task of the I.L.O. is to provide the machinery for formulating international minimum conditions. Another charge made against the I.L.O., that it acts as a delaying device at times when opportunity presents itself for international progress, is also ill-founded and amounts to an admission of failure on the part of the International Trade Union Movement, itself but the vehicle of the collective will of the National Movements. In the promotion of workers' aims and aspirations at the international level the I.L.O. is but an aid, be it a very powerful aid, and the ultimate responsibility for the power put behind those aims and aspirations falls upon the workers themselves and their organizations.

**The Seafarers' Opportunity.** There has been an earlier occasion, in Genoa in 1920, when opportunity presented itself to the International Seafarers' Movement. To blame the I.L.O. that it was lost is too easy. The real reason was that the International Movement of the period lacked cohesion or a clear-cut objective. Within a few years from the end of the last war, the various sections were acting, or failing to act, pretty much as they pleased. So even if the opportunity had not been lost at the Genoa Conference, it cannot be reasonably doubted that it would have been lost afterwards.

As far as the unity of the Seafarers' Movement is concerned, great progress has been made in the intervening years. Also they have equipped themselves with a well-defined post-war programme embodied in the International Seafarers' Charter. As I have said above, the Seattle Conference yielded a substantial instalment of that programme in the shape of a batch of Conventions and Recommendations. The next step is to convert these decisions into practical results. If the Seafarers fail at this stage they will have only themselves to blame.

Looking at the future, the immediate task of the I.T.F. and the seafarers' organizations, is to agitate for the early ratification of the Seattle Conventions and adoption of the Recommendations. As has been brought out above, this need not always entail the usually slow method of legislative enactment, now that provision has been made in several cases to accept collective bargaining as an instrument for applying the clauses of a Convention or Recommendation. In applying themselves to the task of accelerating ratifications, Seafarers' organizations will, without prejudice to those questions with which for their own reasons they are especially concerned, appreciate that the Seattle decisions, though all of the greatest importance, are not all of equal general urgency.

**The Immediate Programme.** It is on the most urgent questions, such as wages, hours and manning, holidays with pay, accommodation, social security, that international concerted action must be concentrated, whilst the decisions affecting medical examinations for seafarers, certification of certain ratings, and the like, can for the time being be left to the individual countries to pursue according to the urgency attached to these matters.

To achieve their aims the Seafarers and their organizations must spare no effort. Trade union journals have already written about the Seattle Conference and its results. This publicity must be developed into a world-wide propaganda campaign, so that the legitimate desires of the Seafarers may become generally known and the sympathy of public opinion and the support of governments may be enlisted for their fulfilment. Parallel with a world-wide press drive, Seafarers plan to organize demonstrative meetings in the principal ports of the world.

In the principal maritime countries the first phase of the Seafarers' campaign can be carried through with comparatively little difficulty. But there are countries where owing to the weakness of trade unionism and the strength of reaction, Seafarers must expect to encounter obstacles. In these cases the organizations concerned

must be encouraged to make a special effort and given the assurance of the fullest possible backing of the Seafarers' organizations of other countries.

**Regional Activities.** Apart from action on a world-wide scale, there is a need for regional consultations and activities. Take, for example, the case of the international coasting trade, which is limited to a certain area, and the case of ships under 500 tons gross, confined to an even narrower radius of operation. For these trades also something must be done. This shipping is engaged in competitive trade, either country competing with country and/or different means of transport competing one with another within the same country. Life on board the ships of these trades is certainly no easier than in other trades or in larger ships, nor as a rule are the seafarers concerned in a favourable position as far as the strength of their trade unions is concerned. They are consequently an actual or potential menace, and wherever their conditions are inferior they tend adversely to affect the position in the larger ships. In 1936 a Recommendation was adopted which invited countries which had no regulated hours and manning standards in the national coasting trade, and in small vessels to take all necessary steps to prevent overwork and under-manning in such vessels. The position which obtained in 1936 still obtains in 1946. Regional co-

operation suggests itself here as the means of achieving the purpose of the 1936 Recommendation.

There is also the position of seamen who work in ships of a foreign country without the conditions of service of that country being applicable to them. These seamen received special attention at Seattle. The indicated course again is for the seafarers concerned to strengthen their trade union organizations and for these organizations to co-operate closely with a view to exerting concerted pressure on the governments and shipowners concerned and arriving at concerted decisions.

**The Future.** After the last war the Seafarers missed their opportunity. Let us be determined that we shall not miss the greater opportunity which presents itself on the morrow of the one just ended. The condition for success is that the Seafarers' action be broad in conception and bold in execution, and that they stand shoulder to shoulder in their world-wide struggle. If they act with promptitude and decision they can be confident of the results. Their position is still strong, and will remain so as long as the peoples remember the debt they owe the Seafarers. The Seafarers' opportunity must be exploited before the public memory fades and the economic outlook darkens.

J. H. OLDENBROEK.

## THE DECISIONS OF THE SEATTLE MARITIME CONFERENCE

The Conference adopted nine Conventions, four Recommendations and nine Resolutions. The Conventions cover Wages, Hours and Manning; Holidays with Pay; Crew Accommodation; Food and Catering; Certification of Ships' Cooks; Certification of Able Seamen; Medical Examinations; Social Security; Pensions. Here are a few of the main points:

Basic wage of £16 or \$64 for an Able Seaman, with adjusted equivalents where larger complements of crew are normally carried. Hours are limited, except for certain ratings not keeping watches, to 8 a day in the distant trade. In the near trade, hours at sea are limited to 24 in two consecutive days, in port to 8 a day, and the overall limit at sea and in port is 112 in two consecutive weeks. In the catering department the limit is 10 hours in 14 for passenger ships, and 9 hours in 13 for cargo ships. After 12 months continuous service, officers to have 18 working days holidays, others 12 days. Details regarding structural requirements, lighting, heating, ventilation, messrooms, etc., are laid down for ships over 500 tons. Blueprints of ships shall before building be submitted to a competent authority for approval as regards crew accommodation. The competent authority shall be responsible for framing and enforcing regulations concerning food and catering aboard ships. They shall organize training courses and prescribe penalties for failure to comply with the legal requirements. Ships' cooks are to hold a certificate of qualification. The provisions concerning certification of able seamen lay down a minimum age of 18 and a minimum period of sea service of 36 months. Medical examinations of

seafarers are to be repeated every two years and to cover sight, colour vision and general health. The social security provisions provide for medical benefits and cash benefits during incapacity and unemployment, as well as death benefits. The Convention on Pensions requires a pension to be paid to a seafarer having completed a prescribed period of sea service at the age of 55 or 60. The pension, together with any other social security pension which is payable, to amount to not less than 1½ per cent. of the wages for each year of service at the age of 55, or 2 per cent. of wages for each year of sea service at 60. Seafarers shall not contribute more than half the costs of the pensions payable under the scheme.

The Recommendations call for agreements between countries to ensure reciprocity of social security provisions, for medical service for seafarers' dependants pending the introduction of comprehensive social security schemes applicable to all, for adequate vocational training for the maritime industry, and for the provision by the shipowners of clean bed linen, blankets, bedspreads, mess utensils, towels, soap and toilet paper.

Revision of the composition of the Joint Maritime Commission is the subject of one of the Resolutions. The others aim to promote regularity of employment for seafarers, freedom of association for shipowners and seafarers, seamen's welfare in port, adoption of an International Fishermen's Charter, participation of shipowners' and seafarers' representatives in Safety of Life at Sea Conference, speedy ratification of I.L.O. Conventions, and special consideration of seafarers' compensation claims arising out of inhuman warfare at sea or detention as prisoners of war.

## Read, Reflect and Write to Us

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

*Our first quotation is an article from "Labor", the weekly of a number of Railwaymen's Unions of the U.S.A., entitled "If Freedom is to be Preserved."*

William Henry Chamberlain, noted as a writer on foreign affairs—he spent 12 years in Moscow as a representative of the "Christian Science Monitor"—contributes a column to the "Wall Street Journal." That's quite a conservative newspaper. Naturally, it doesn't print anything very "radical," but on a recent article by Mr. Chamberlain it placed this challenging head—"Speaking of Strikes—mutual consent and not coercion is only formula for settling them, if freedom is to be preserved."

Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that "the first instinctive public reaction to a wave of strikes is that 'something ought to be done about it'." Then he continued:

"But, when one has said all that can be said about the harmfulness of a strike wave, two stubborn facts remain as obstacles to the realization of any Utopian plan for eliminating labour stoppages:

"Under our free political system there is and can be no means of compelling men and women to work against their will.

"There also is and can be no means of compelling private enterprise to produce without a reasonable profit incentive.

"To give up either of these principles would be to abandon the fundamental American principle of government by consent, not coercion, and to move into some form of Fascism or Communism.

"There may be a few short-sighted labour leaders who look to Moscow for inspiration, but these are negligible minority voices.

"There may be a few short-sighted employers who think that labour could be handled in the fashion of Hitler or Mussolini.

"As a matter of factual record, the life of the employer under Fascism or National Socialism was no bed of roses.

"It was more difficult to comply with all the bureaucratic regulations of the totalitarian state, to take care of 'deserving' Fascists or National Socialists, than it would have been to deal with formal trade unions.

"As for the fate of labour under Communism, independent trade unions do not exist in the Soviet Union and strikes are forbidden. The real wage of the worker, in terms of food, clothing and shelter, was lower in Russia than in any other industrial country before the war.

"So the strike problem in this country must be approached from the standpoint of obtaining mutual agreement by consent, not of applying treat-'em-rough coercive methods.

"At times strikes may seem a high price to pay for the maintenance of our political and economic system.

"Yet if one takes a long survey of the world's troubled horizon, there is no other system in any large country which seems to yield even remotely comparable benefits."

I would be difficult to make a better presentation of an extremely controversial problem. Mr. Chamberlain has undoubtedly assisted in clarifying the thinking of an important segment of our population—the business men who read the "Wall Street Journal."

*Our second quotation is a very appropriate comment on contemporary development in the U.S.A.—that any attempt to introduce compulsion into the field of labour relations may imperil democracy.*

That strong warning came recently from Edgar L. Warren, the new chief of the U.S. Conciliation Service.

Actually, the vast majority of industrial disputes are being settled now by collective bargaining or conciliation, "without fuss or fanfare," Warren declared. A few big strikes have dragged on for months, but the press has overplayed them while ignoring "the hundreds of disputes being settled every week," he said.

Warren insisted that "in a democratic society, government should go no further" than use of voluntary methods. Quoting an authority on the subject, he asserted that "a strike may be less harmful to the state and to the industry than peace maintained by either statutory tyranny, legal usurpation or overwhelming economic domination."

"Not only is the right of wage earners to refuse to work a legal right; it is also a fundamental human right," Warren insisted. "This right is a necessary ingredient of a vigorous economy."

"To condemn voluntary methods of settling labour disputes merely because these methods do not always prevent strikes is to lack understanding of the fundamental problems involved.

"To urge coercive methods is to argue that we may not permit employers or employees to be free agents with respect to employment."

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