



INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS JOURNAL

Vol. VII. No. 2.

JAN.-APRIL, 1947

Published by the
International Transport
Workers' Federation,
Maritime House,
Clapham Common,
London, S.W.4.

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 INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS AND THE W.F.T.U.

REPRESENTATIVES of the several international trade secretariats met representatives of the World Federation of Trade Unions, in Paris in mid-December, to consider proposals for their integration in that Federation. The meeting failed to reach agreement, but decided to appoint a committee—composed of eight representatives of the international trade secretariats and one each of the Congress of Industrial Organizations of the U.S.A. and the Russian Central Council of Trade Unions—to go further into the matter and report. The reason for the inclusion of the two latter was that practically none of the trade unions affiliated to either of these two national trade union federations belong to any of the international trade secretariats.

The committee having been appointed, the question of the integration is still *sub judice*, and we should have preferred to say nothing about it for the time being were it not for the fact that articles have appeared in the Communist and capitalist press (the London *Daily Worker* and the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* in particular) purporting to give an inside story of the negotiations and commenting upon the attitude taken up, or supposed to have been taken up, by certain of the participants in the meeting. Inspired reports of this kind are apt to be misleading, and the present case is no exception. The executive committees and the rank and file of our affiliated unions are entitled to a full and unbiassed statement of the facts. We are therefore devoting this article to an explanation of what we believe to be the general feeling of the overwhelming majority of the international trade secretariats about this question of integration, and a reply to some of the question-begging assumptions of the Communist paper.

As at present constituted the international trade union movement consists of a World Federation of Trade Unions, (successor to the International Federation of Trade Unions) composed of the national federations of trade unions (e.g. the *British Trades Union Congress*, *French C.G.T.*, etc.), commonly known as "national centres," and about twenty international trade secretariats, each composed of trade unions of a particular industry in different countries of the world, of which the International Transport Workers' Federation (I.T.F.) is a typical example. In practice, therefore, many individual trade unions are doubly represented in the international sphere, once indirectly, through their national centre and the W.F.T.U., and once directly, through the international trade secretariat of their own particular industry.

The question at issue, negotiations about which were the reason for the meeting to which we referred at the beginning of this article, is whether this shall continue to be the method of international organization, or whether the international trade secretariats shall be wound up and integrated in the W.F.T.U. as departments; the issue, in other words, between rigid centralization and functional decentralization.

The international trade secretariats have a long and honourable record of service to the workers in the industries they represent. They were first in the international field, that is to say that most of them were born before the International Federation of Trade Unions, which was the first of the *general* international trade union bodies. The I.T.F. celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation only last year.

Their functions in the past have been entirely separate. While the I.F.T.U. dealt with the general aspects of trade-unionism—questions such as the eight-hour day, holidays with pay, social insurance, etc.—the international trade secretariats busied themselves with the special problems of the workers in the particular industries they represented, their interest in the general problems being confined to the modes of application of the general claims—such as the eight-hour day—to their industries, though they naturally lent their support to the I.F.T.U. in its advocacy of these general claims. To take the I.T.F. as an example, among the questions it has dealt with are those of automatic couplings on the railways, safety of dock labour, application of the eight-hour day to the railways and road transport, international minimum rates of wages for seamen, the danger of exhaust gases in garages, etc., etc.

Each in their own field—the I.F.T.U. in the general and the international trade secretariats in the particular—the two types of organization can point to many achievements during the inter-war period, and many of them have been the result of co-operation between them, though hardly any clearly-defined organic link has existed in the past.

The question of forging such an organic link came once more to the fore—for it was by no means a new one—when the W.F.T.U. was founded, as the direct successor of the I.F.T.U., in Paris in October 1945. The representatives of some 65 national trade union centres attended the constituent congress. Representatives of 16 international trade secretariats were also there, but only as observers, and without a vote.

The Congress adopted a constitution which would mean, in effect, the dissolution of the international trade secretariats and their integration in the W.F.T.U. as "trade departments". The proposals—for owing to the energetic opposition of the overwhelming majority of the secretariats they are in practice, though embodied in the constitution, still no more than proposals—would subordinate the secretariats completely to the central governing bodies of the W.F.T.U. and, in the last resort, to a Congress in which only the national trade union centres would have the power, since though each trade department would have one representative at the Congress and on the General Council, by a most peculiar constitutional provision he would only have a vote in the case of a decision by show of hands, and *none* in the event of a card vote, quite apart from the fact that the trade department delegates would always be outnumbered by three or four to one.

In the circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that the international trade secretariats, being completely independent bodies, should have challenged the right of

the national trade union centres to meet in congress and legislate them out of existence. Because—and readers should get this quite clear—an international trade secretariat, as the international representative of the workers in a particular trade, has just as much right to an independent existence as has a trade union centre, which is the national representative of all the workers, of all industries, in a particular country. Each has its own function, and an important one at that.

The fact of the matter is that the national trade union centres have no jurisdiction whatsoever in the case of the international trade secretariats. The centres and secretariats are parallel and complementary forms of organization, representing two different aspects of the trade union movement. If working class organization were 100 per cent in every respect the aggregate membership of all the international trade secretariats would be identical with that of all the national centres. If the W.F.T.U. decisions were to be taken at their face value it would mean that the national centres had met and decided on the disposal of property which is not theirs to dispose of. Suppose that the trades councils in all the towns in Britain—or any other country, for that matter—were to call a conference, set up a Federation of Trades Councils, and decide that the National Union of Railwaymen, Amalgamated Engineering Union, Transport and General Workers' Union, and all other unions in the country, were to sink their identity and enter the Federation as trade departments; what would be the unions' reply? They would say, in no uncertain terms, that the British are a democratic people, and don't do it that way. Yet the case is an exact parallel.

And because the international trade secretariats make a similar reply they are accused in the Communist press of opposition to international unity. The Communists, of all people, as the champions of unity! International unity, of course, has nothing to do with the case. In so far as that unity is possible of achievement it has already been attained by the inclusion of national trade union centres of divergent views in one International. The question at issue is a purely practical one, whether all international trade union activities, including those of exclusive interest to particular trades, shall be administered by one supreme central body composed almost exclusively of members of councils of national trade union centres, or whether it is better for the trade unions of particular industries—e.g. the transport workers—to have international organizations of their own, run by their own people, to deal with their own particular problems. In many countries the latter system is generally preferred in so far as the national movement is concerned, in some the former.

It is perhaps significant that most of the trade unions that are most anxious to integrate the trade secretariats in the W.F.T.U., and to deprive them of any effective power, are those which have never previously taken sufficient interest in them to join them. Those who *are* interested often feel that the aim is to do away with them altogether. The representatives of the Russian unions came to Paris with a proposal to set up for the time being only *four* trade departments, for the Transport Workers,

Metal and Engineering Workers, Miners, and Clothing and Textile Workers. The others (there are something like twenty international trade secretariats altogether) were to be left out.

There is an uneasy feeling among many of the international trade secretariats that an attempt is being made to hustle them into the W.F.T.U. The W.F.T.U. is a newly-established organization, comprising very many elements who are without a great deal of experience in international trade union affairs. They are inclined to impose their national conceptions of trade-unionism upon the International which they govern, and national conceptions as to the task of the trade unions differ widely within the W.F.T.U. Added to this, the majority seems to have rather a political conception of trade-unionism. It is not without significance that the London *Daily Worker* writes: "Why was the World Federation created? It was created to destroy the last remnants of Fascism and Nazism, to wage a political fight against an attempted resurgence of these forces, and to lay the basis of future peace." We agree with all these objects, of course, and are prepared to use the trade union movement to help to achieve them, but in our view the primary purpose of the W.F.T.U. is to co-ordinate internationally the trade union work of the trade unions. The political work for the working class is the primary function of the political International. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that the Communist element in the W.F.T.U. is hoping that if it succeeds in making the organization preponderantly political it may be possible to prevent the reconstitution of the Socialist International.

Some of the international trade secretariats make the by no means unimportant point that their integration in the W.F.T.U. would in present circumstances hinder rather than promote the unity of the international trade union movement, because there are organizations that, for reasons of their own, do not wish to belong to the W.F.T.U., but have joined or might be prepared to join one or other of the international trade secretariats. In case of a merger of the two they would be lost to the international trade union movement altogether. Let us take as an example a very important specific case, the American Federation of Labor, claiming over seven million members, which belonged to the former International Federation of Trade Unions. For reasons which cannot be gone into here the American representative in the W.F.T.U. is not the American Federation of Labor, but the Congress of Industrial Organizations, claiming six million members. The A.F. of L. refuses to join the W.F.T.U., partly because of its political tendencies, but some of its member-organizations belong to international trade secretariats, while others have no objection of principle to joining them. If the trade secretariats were merged with the W.F.T.U., however, most of the A.F. of L. unions would leave the international movement, and the prospects of others joining would be very remote. And the A.F. of L. is only one example out of many. If the dual form of organization is preserved the aggregate number of members of the international trade union movement will for many years

to come be substantially greater than it will if the merger takes place.

Many of the delegates to the W.F.T.U. Congress seem to have sensed that there was something anomalous in the proposals, for while the Congress unanimously adopted article 13 of its constitution, which provides for the setting up of trade departments (though the unanimity was more formal than real), it was on the distinct understanding that there should be negotiations with the international trade secretariats with the object of making them the basis of the trade departments, and that the Executive Committee would even have the right to amend the constitution (subject to later ratification by the Congress) for the purpose of facilitating this object. And when a delegate asked "whether the negotiations proposed with the international trade secretariats included the possibility of maintaining the existence of the existing international trade secretariats," the late Mr. Sidney Hillman, reporting for the Committee on the Constitution, replied that while he wished to make no statement that would prejudice the case from either side, "all matters could be taken up in the conversations which would take place with the representatives of the W.F.T.U. and the secretariats."

This statement leaves no grounds whatsoever for the suggestion, by the London *Daily Worker*, that the international trade secretariats have no right to their own point of view. Briefly, the *Daily Worker's* thesis is that Article 13 of the Constitution of the W.F.T.U. provides for the establishment of trade departments within that body; that this article "was agreed to unanimously by every national centre of the World Federation"; that under the pretence of "practical difficulties" the I.T.F. and other international trade secretariats are "carrying on a struggle against the principle contained in Article 13"; that it is clear that "vested interests" are at stake; that the "petty interests of bureaucrats, part-time and full-time, in the existing trade internationals cannot be allowed to stand in the way of world trade union unity"; that the trade union movement (France is specifically mentioned, but the implication is that it is universal) "cannot observe two allegiances nor help to maintain two sorts of apparatus to achieve the same purpose"; and that "the present trade internationals are wholly European" and "there is no way by which the workers of the U.S., Soviet Union, China, Africa, South America and the liberated countries of Europe can be drawn into international activity with the workers of Britain and other more or less stable capitalist countries, except through the World Federation."

A cursory examination will show that there is extraordinarily little substance in any of these charges—they hardly merit the name of arguments. With the "unanimity" of the adoption of Article 13 we have already dealt, as well as with the propriety of national centres deciding to do away with other bodies over which they have no jurisdiction. As for "the principle contained in Article 13," there is, of course, no principle at stake except the right of self-determination for any freely constituted trade union organization, and that is not what the *Daily Worker* means. For the rest the whole

question is the essentially practical one of whether rigid centralization (with the consequent danger of bureaucracy) is the most useful form of organization for the international trade union movement, or whether functional organization (with some risk of organizations occasionally finding themselves at cross purposes with one another) is to be preferred. The references to "vested interests" and the "petty interests of bureaucrats" are hardly the kind of argument to which it is necessary to reply. The international trade secretariats exist to defend the interests of their members, that is all. As for the "two allegiances" and "two sorts of apparatus to achieve the same purpose," they do not, of course, exist. The two different forms of organization exist for different purposes, and there should rarely be any conflict of allegiance, since their ultimate aims lie in the same direction. That "the present trade internationals are wholly European" is definitely not true. It is not irrelevant in this connection to point out that many extra-European trade union centres are of recent birth and have still to prove their stability, and that others would have joined the I.F.T.U. had that organization not been replaced by the W.F.T.U. In so far as the I.T.F. is concerned, however, it has for many years had affiliated organizations in North and South America, Africa, Australasia, Indonesia, Japan, China and India. In short, the *Daily Worker* brazenly begs the question that the form of organization which it advocates is the best, *without advancing one single argument to prove its contention*, and insinuates that its opponents are inspired entirely by motives of self-interest.

The same article quotes a declaration by Mr. Arthur Horner, the Communist representative of the Miners' trade secretariat, that "the choice was clear: either the movement returned to 1939 or went forward from 1946." The whole point at issue is whether or not the proposals for 1946 are better than what existed in 1939. The functional approach to international understanding is, if anything, the newer one, and it has many advocates nowadays. The International Labour Office, as an autonomous functional international organization, has great achievements to its credit, and it is not without significance that other similar organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Trade Organization, all autonomous in their structure, have recently been established. Nobody suggests that they should be constituted as "departments" of the United Nations Organization, and under its tutelage. Change for the sake of change is certainly not a good thing, quite apart from the fact that many of the representatives of the international trade secretariats, as well as of national trade union centres, are somewhat uneasy as to where the proposed change would eventually lead us. Too rigid centralization in the national field can be the first step towards control of the trade union movement by the State, and some at least of its advocates would definitely be in favour of such State control—if they controlled the State. Here lies one of the fundamental problems of our time: are trade unions to be instruments for raising the standard of life and carry-

ing out the will of their members, or are they and their members to be used as the unwilling instruments of a political idea?

On the merits of the question, many of the international trade secretariats, and many trade unionists, consider that no satisfactory case has yet been made out for integration of the secretariats in the W.F.T.U., and still more are convinced that if there is to be integration it can only be on the basis of the fullest autonomy. Some, like the Metal Workers' International, are definitely opposed to integration in any form. The I.T.F. Congress, when it met at Zurich last year, was not so uncompromising, and was prepared to consider integration provided acceptable conditions could be obtained, but it is little likely that it would consider acceptable the proposals put forward by the W.F.T.U., which involve complete subordination of the trade departments to the Executive Committee of that body, denying them the right to ask of their members—except with its permission—a special contribution for specific trade purposes; and giving them no voting power worth speaking of. And to cap all, the proposed constitution is such that nothing could prevent the Congress of national centres, if they so wished, later deciding to do away with the trade departments altogether, thus destroying the fruits of half a century of devoted and useful work. This is not so far-fetched as it seems. At the W.F.T.U. Congress the Soviet trade unions and those who follow them were able to muster a majority of the votes.

The question of integration, involving as it does the dissolution of the I.T.F., is one which will be decided in a democratic manner, that is to say by a properly convened I.T.F. Congress.

AMERICAN OPPOSITION TO SOCIALIZATION IN GERMANY.

A note in the Journal of Commerce of January 29th is revealing. The United States, it pointed out, cannot oppose socialization abroad but has a legitimate interest in safeguarding American investors from confiscation. Since Germany could not indemnify American owners of property in a satisfactory way, that is, in dollars, nationalization would become in fact confiscation. Therefore, it is argued, the State Department should officially discourage nationalization in any case where American investors are involved, which means the whole of heavy industry.

The American people, however, did not fight the war to rescue American business from ill-advised investments. It fought to overthrow Nazism and German militarism once and for all. This aim will not be achieved if the monopolists who financed Hitler's rise to power and collaborated in all his plans for world conquest are allowed to keep their economic, and hence their political, power. It is idle to talk of democracy in Germany unless the German people are allowed to eliminate the industrial oligarchy and gain control of their own economy. And it is futile to hope for economic revival on a scale sufficient to relieve American taxpayers from their present German burden until this question, which is basic to reorganization, is settled. American liberals must wake up to this situation and insist that alleged American interests are not permitted to camouflage the resurrection of the Thyssens, the Krupps, and the Stinneses.

From *The Nation*, New York, 8th February, 1947.

BEFORE THE FIRST POST-WAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RAILWAYMEN

By PAUL TOFAHRN

Secretary, Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F.

On 25th March, 1947, the first post-war Conference of the Railwaymen's Section of the I.T.F. is due to be opened. It is also the first fully-fledged Conference to be held without N. Nathans, who was the Section's Secretary from 1922 until his untimely death in 1937. Old timers will miss him. It was Nathans who established the tradition of periodical International Railwaymen's Conferences. Quite a number of these were held between the two wars and but for the airplane crash in which he was killed, one would have been held in 1938 or 1939, before war broke out.

Nathans lost his life near Brussels. It is fitting, though unintentional, that the Conference which is to resume the work he so ably led should be held in Brussels, *picking up the threads, as it were, where he left off.*

The work of railway trade unions lends itself much less to spectacular international "combined operations" in the struggle of the organized workers against economic exploitation and political oppression than does that of seamen's and dockers' trade unions. About 90 per cent of the railway traffic in most countries is internal and the railways are essentially instruments for the implementation of national policies. The railway systems are largely independent of one another. Consequently the railwaymen's battles are national and their course and conclusion can be influenced from outside the country only in a small measure and never in a decisive manner.

All this notwithstanding, the railwaymen are internationalists. They have an intense interest in all that concerns the technical and economic progress of their industry in all countries and a still more vivid interest in the fate of their fellow workers in other countries, in their conditions of life and work. And the day when the peoples give up the vain struggle against the hard facts and consequences of interdependence and take the logical steps demanded by their common needs—and often their common distress—that is to say when they increase the volume of goods interchanged and break down the barriers to close social and cultural intercourse between national communities, the railwaymen will enthusiastically convert their industry into an instrument for welding the scattered national communities into great multi-national fraternities.

Meanwhile the 10 per cent of railway traffic that is international is a useful lever for preparing the railway industry to cope with the bigger task it will have if and when the life of the continents is integrated. That relatively small measure of international traffic compels all railway undertakings to accept a minimum of technical unity and far-seeing railway technicians work doggedly towards the aim of making it complete. A host of international railway organizations work out technical and administrative conventions and operate institutions that make possible the use of railway rolling stock over

whole continents. The railwaymen's trade unions are pushing as hard as they can toward technical unification. Were it not for their drive there would probably never have been set up international committees to explore ways and means of equipping all European railway vehicles with automatic couplings. In the view of the railwaymen's trade unions they are engaged too much in exploring and too little in acting. The Brussels Conference will probably tell them so once more.

The war has saddled us with the problem of reconstructing the railway industry. It is a task which could be the point of departure toward something new, in Europe at any rate, where it could be the beginning of a collective effort by the different nations to overcome economic and technical difficulties by carrying out an agreed international plan, thus initiating their organized co-operation for the raising of the standard of life of all. The task of reconstruction is not essentially different from that of rehabilitation. In the later stage of the war, the experts on industrial rehabilitation, working as a committee of the U.N.R.A.A., made the following recommendation: "The problem of industrial rehabilitation should normally be treated as one large problem of the combined liberated territories rather than as a number of separate problems, each pertaining to the particular country concerned. Certain exceptions to this may be desirable if decentralization offers advantages, but the interests of the family of the United Nations should always over-ride the national interest." That holds good for reconstruction, too. The "combined liberated territories," the "family of the United Nations"—these extend from the Volga to the Atlantic. A combined operation for the reconstruction of the railways of this whole area, with a pooling of resources, intelligence and effort, would probably contribute as much, if not more, to making the peace securer than it appears to be, than half a dozen diplomatic conferences. The Railwaymen's Conference will consider the problem of reconstruction and my hope is that it will call for the application of that method for solving this "one large problem."

Safety of railway operation is one of the constant preoccupations of railwaymen. It is this preoccupation which led them to discuss at all their international conferences in the last twenty years the problems which arise out of the practice of entrusting main line trains to one man working alone in the cab of his locomotive or motor vehicle. Their apprehensions have not been calmed and they intend to compare notes of their experiences once more.

An electrified railway is in many respects radically different from a steam railway. Different too, though less so, is a railway drawing its motive power from oil rather than coal. Electricity and oil are likely to play an increasingly important role in railway traction, as the

coal supplies of the world are diminishing. Coal requirements grow while less and less workers are willing to go down the mines to get it. Coal-burning locomotives will be retained, but are likely to undergo revolutionary changes in design. What are the probable social and economic consequences of these impending changes? If the railway trade unions are not to fight in the dark they must endeavour to foresee what is coming, and how it will effect the life and work of the railwaymen and the efficiency and finances of the railways. This question is on the Brussels agenda for a preliminary exchange of views.

Last, but not least, the participants in the Conference will compare notes on the social policy of railway undertakings. Foremost is the question of hours of work per day and days of work per year. Railwaymen feel that, broadly speaking, they should be on a footing of equality, as all workers throughout the industrialized parts of the world should be. There should be a certain minimum of uncurtailed leisure in the day, and of paid holidays in the year, that every railwaymen should enjoy, no matter in what country he may live. If there were a foolproof method of action by which this result could be secured, they would resort to it. In the absence of perfect means of action they are prepared to use the imperfect ones at their command, namely, international conventions to be framed and adopted through the I.L.O. and, may be, pressure for their application through the Transport and Communications Commission of the United Nations.

One of the many consequences of war is a severe shortage of houses practically everywhere, and catastrophic housing conditions in ravaged areas. This affects railways and railwaymen in a manner that had repercussions for the whole of each community concerned. The good functioning of railways is an essential factor in economic and social life, and it is imperative that they should have the necessary man-power at their disposal where it is wanted. But what if there are no houses there for the railwaymen? What have railway undertakings done in the past when they were confronted with this problem? What are they doing at present? How does their action fit in with the short-term and long-term interests of the railwaymen? This subject, too, is due to be discussed in Brussels.

The agenda is heavy, far too heavy for a four-day conference whose useful working time is reduced by over one-half by the unavoidable interpretations in different languages. Heavy though it is, it does not contain all that railway trade unionists wish to discuss. Some railwaymen have witnessed the application of psycho-technical methods of selecting men and women for certain functions. They are not favourably impressed and want to know about the experiences of their fellows elsewhere. There is a widespread interest in pension schemes. The Italians want to raise the question whether railway undertakings would not be well advised to entrust to contractors the operation of certain ancillary services. A railway expert suggested to the writer that a question well worth studying was the method and policy applied in determining the size of the labour force of a railway undertaking, and the search for a scientific

method. Still others ask for an enquiry into the methods and policy underlying the grading of railway jobs and the determination of the ratio of the wages of one grade of railway workers to another.

The examination of all these these problems by international railwaymen's conferences must wait. Rome was not built in a day, and 1947 is not the only year in which an international conference can be held. Even some of the questions on the Brussels agenda are likely to be deferred to later conferences.

The International Railwaymen's Conference meets for the purpose of exchanging information on matters of common concern. Its participants should return home wiser than when they left. On suitable subjects the Conference will endeavour to hammer out common policies and decide on common action. Since good railway administration affects the interests of the peoples at large, it is to be hoped that the discussions will help to enlighten public opinion and make it take sides with the railway trade unions in trying to secure the application to the railway industry of measures calculated to further technical, economic and social progress.

All delegates will go to this conference in a spirit of anticipation. Old friends will meet and new bonds of comradeship will be forged after a world-wide tragedy, and this is an occasion for rejoicing. They will come to work together and thus make a contribution to the growth of the international good will of which our poor world is in so dire need.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE LEBANON

By LOUIS ABOU-SAMRA

Legal adviser of the Chauffeurs' Association of Beirut

Up to the first world war the social order in the Arabian Orient was stagnant, but the repercussions of the war caused a stirring and opened the way to the trade union idea, which has now penetrated several countries of the Near and Middle East.

The first trade unions in the Lebanon were founded in 1925. Small as they were, the employers were not slow in realizing their significance, and they reacted vigorously, threatening some of the workers, while by favouring others endeavouring to sow division and discord in the ranks of the workers. The organizers of the workers had no easy task, therefore, and it is still a difficult one, though it can be said that the ice is broken and the first steps have been taken.

The Government did not believe, or did not know, that it had a social task to perform. It was content to play the spectator and applaud the stronger of the two parties, which was nearly always the employer. Then came the slump of 1930 and subsequent years. Unemployment became intense, and with it the misery of the working class. But at the same time a number of workers took stock of their situation and began inquiring, with a growing sense of urgency, what they could do by means of a collective effort. Anger and despair were growing

among the masses, so that the danger of disturbances became ever more imminent.

The situation forced the Government to do a bit of thinking, but the only positive step it could agree upon was the passing of an Act granting compensation to workers dismissed without plausible reason. This measure strengthened the worker in his relations with his employer. It was something entirely new, not only for the Lebanon, but for the whole of the Arabian Orient, and imperfect though it was, it was helpful to the trade union movement.

The economic and social situation continued, nevertheless, to be tense and difficult, and it caused anxiety to people interested in maintaining law and order. Then came the second world war to "save" the situation. The Allies engaged both male and female workers in large numbers. The cost of living rose, it is true, but for a time the increase in the aggregate of wages, as a result of full employment, tempered the effect of the rise on the standard of living. But the rise in the cost of living went on, as did also the increase in the employers' wealth. Gradually the position of the workers became worse, but this time conditions were more favourable for labour action. The Government felt the necessity of forestalling the agitators, and issued a decree providing for a minimum wage, an increase in wages, and the setting up of a body to mediate in conflicts between employers and workers. It also instituted family allowances. Finally it set up a "Social Office." This institution has still to show what it can do: the workers still do not know what use it is.

Set going by the war, the trade union movement asked for and obtained a Workmen's Compensation Act. In

the past a worker suffering an accident in the course of his work was at the mercy of the charity of his employer, which meant in practice that he was nearly always left to his fate. Now the law guarantees him medical treatment and means of subsistence during the period of his incapacitation.

The first trade union claim was for the regulation of the legal relations between employers and workers. Hitherto the employer has been master, with arbitrary powers, but trade union pressure was accentuated during the war, and a Labour Code is now before Parliament. The workers are closely following the drafting of this Code, and on three occasions they have tried to influence the discussions with petitions and deputations to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Republic, and they have succeeded thereby in securing the adoption of amendments. This irritated the employers and led to a proposal to postpone the drafting and adoption of the Code—to enable fuller investigations to be made, so it was said. The reply of the workers was prompt and energetic—a general strike for 24 hours—and the drafting of the Code still goes on.

This success for the trade union movement of the Lebanon has been a great encouragement to both members and leaders. There is still very much to be done to make the movement a solid and well-organized force, and to secure the social advances which will provide the workers with decent living and working conditions, but these first successes, the crown of twenty years of effort and sacrifice, are the proof that progress is possible, and a stimulus to persevere.

GERMAN RAILWAYS AND GERMAN RAILWAYMEN

By a Special Correspondent.

The German Trade Union Revival. The most encouraging sign in the otherwise grim and depressing picture of life in Germany to-day, the development that offers the most hopeful prospect of that devastated and distressed country's emergence into a new and really democratic way of work and life, is the rapid revival of German trade-unionism. Starting from scratch, without any accumulated funds at disposal, lacking the most elementary equipment for organisational activity, and with only a few survivors from among the trade-union activists of Weimar days ready and able to lead the way in reorganization, the new unions have in the short period of little more than eighteen months brought into membership a total of nearly 7 million German workers. In the British zone the membership has reached the figure of 1½ million; in the American and French zones there are now about 1½ million trade unionists; while the figures for the Russian zone and for Berlin are 3 million and over ½ million respectively. Thousands of new members are being recruited throughout the country weekly. At the present rate of progress it

seems that when the month of June is reached and two years of organizational activity completed, trade union membership in Germany will have surpassed the peak membership figure of 8.2 million reached in 1927.

These new German trade-unions differ from their Weimar predecessors in two very important respects. In the years before Hitler violently suppressed them, the trade unions were split by political party and creedal cleavages. While a little more than 50 per cent of the workers were organized in the Free Trade Unions, some of the others were members of the Christian Trade Unions, others again belonged to the Hirsch Duncker Unions, while the rest were dispersed into many small and mostly insignificant organizations. To-day, these differences have been overcome by eliminating from the sphere of trade union policy and discussion all controversy about party, creed and race. There are now only free trade unions in Germany.

The second difference bears upon the structural form of the unions. In the Weimar Republic, the trade unions were for the most part organized along horizontal or

vocational lines. The new German unions are vertical organizations, industrial unions (*Industrieverbaende*). This rules out the competition and overlapping of unions in any one industry. There cannot now be more than one union covering any one works, factory or other industrial unit. This organizational form has been adopted because it is the best adapted for the economy of resources and the concentration of effort. It has been recognized also as the most suitable form of union for exercising the functions involved in the participation of the organized workers in the administration of industry, which is now one of the aims of the German industrial unions.

There are still no national industrial unions in Germany. The quadripartite character of the occupation and the barriers presented by the different and often conflicting forms and policies of the controlling powers, have not only led to the setting up of separate zonal unions covering the same industries, but have also so far prevented their amalgamation. The recent economic merger of the British and American zones, however, has now cleared the way for the fusion of the unions in these two zones.

Even within each zone, a number of geographically separated unions organizing in the same industrial sphere, came into existence. The economic collapse of Germany was so complete, transport and communications so dislocated, that whole districts and regions were cut off from one another. Trade-union organization consequently had to begin in more or less isolated spots. From being more or less local unions they gradually merged into regional unions, centred in the larger cities. In the British zone, where the miners first reached the stage of a single zonal union, the railway workers have been organized in regional unions, with their centres at Hamburg, Hanover, Bielefeld, and other cities.

The Progress and Limitations of German Railway Recovery. These regional railway unions have played an important part in the recovery of the German railway system. When one considers the state in which the railways were in the spring of 1945, what has been accomplished with so little equipment and with so few men, is really astounding. When the end of the war came, the German railways were completely disorganized. Nearly all the bridges, 1,300 out of 1,600, had been destroyed or badly damaged. The tracks were torn up and rails twisted in tens of thousands of places. Out of the 8,000 odd route miles in the British zone, little more than 600 odd route miles of track could at first be operated, and this only in isolated stretches. An immense quantity of equipment was rendered unusable. Only half the normal supply of locomotives and other power units were serviceable, and much of this stock was badly in need of repair. Now, the railways in the British zone have been so far restored that they can be said to "pay their way."

Very much, of course, still remains to be done before recovery is complete. The demands made upon this branch of transport have been steadily increasing. Owing largely to the almost complete absence of private

road-transport, the volume of passenger traffic increased far beyond the pre-war figures, which showed an average of 30 to 35,000,000 journeys per month, while the figures for October last were 57,000,000. On the other hand, the volume of goods traffic carried has declined considerably in comparison with that carried before the war, a reversal of the pre-war relationship. In 1937, the monthly average for the volume of freight traffic was 2,425,703,870 ton-kilometres, while in August last it was 1,359,158,604 ton-kilometres.

Although many more passenger journeys have been made, they have been made in very much fewer trains. There are not anything like enough engines and other forms of traction, nor enough carriages, to provide a passenger service equal to the demand and without the dangerous overcrowding and intolerable discomfort which characterizes travelling by train for the Germans to-day.

A large number of these passenger trains have recently been suspended to provide more locomotives for goods traffic. But the recovery of this side of the German railways is retarded by a whole series of shortages. There is a very substantial shortage of wagons.¹ In common with other rolling stock, wagons suffered from excessive use and lack of repair during the war, while thousands of them were damaged or destroyed by the Allied armies in the course of bombing and shelling. Another cause of shortage is the failure of other countries to return German wagons despatched to them with goods. The Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* reported the other day on this "consistent "milking" of goods trucks from the German railways." Between June 1945 and September 1946, no less than 30,000 German wagons disappeared. Since then, another 10,000 have gone the same way "to France, the Russian zone, Czechoslovakia and Belgium, etc.", and have not returned.

The lack of adequate supplies of coal is also holding up the restoration of the German railway system. Instead of having a stock of coal sufficient for the needs of sixteen days, as planned, the average stock has actually only been enough to meet the needs of two or three days, and in some cases even less than that.

Another limiting factor to recovery is the lack of properly covered workshops, repair materials and equipment. And, above all, man-power.

Against all these handicaps and the hardships which these and other deficiencies have involved for those employed in running the railways, the regionally organ-

¹ The information of our correspondent is at variance with the data given by E.C.I.T.O. According to this source the position in Germany was on 17th March 1946 as follows:

	1941	17th March 1946	
	Number of	Number of	Damaged
	wagons	wagons	
British zone	248,000	220,200	28.3%
U.S. zone	86,000	150,500	26.0%
French zone	57,000	51,500	32.0%
Russian zone		No information available	

It is estimated that normally 8 per cent of the wagons are in repair. That means that the three Western zones had in 1941 about 354,200 serviceable wagons, while the figure for 1946 is about 304,500. Related to the volume of traffic, the number of serviceable wagons is greater than in 1941. The "shortage" is actually caused by the slow turn-round of wagons.—Editor.

ized, railway unions have battled bravely. But they are conscious that their power for progress to better times, both for their members and the railways, would be much greater if it were concentrated in a single organization covering the whole zone.

The Progress of the German Railway Unions. Restrictions imposed by the military government on the freedom of movement and expansion, hampered for a time development in the direction of fusion between the regional railway unions. Since these barriers have been removed, thanks to the intervention of the Minister responsible for the administration of the British zone—himself a former railwayman—contact and consultation between these railway unions has been greatly facilitated, many conferences have been held by them, and they are now amalgamated in a single zonal union.

Considering the immense difficulties with which organizational activity has been beset, remarkable progress has been made in organizing railway employees in the British zone. At the beginning of December, the combined membership had reached the total of 183,000—about 78 per cent of the entire railway personnel in the zone.

The form which the amalgamated union takes is that of a transport industrial union (*Industrieverband Verkehr*). This is the form of organization set up in Bielefeld, the headquarters of the German Railway Administration.

The economic merger of the British and American zones, although it has not yet resulted in a merging of the railway and other transport unions in the two zones, has led to a very close and active co-operation between them. It takes effect through an Interzonal Secretariat and an Interzonal Committee, respectively directed and presided over by Hans Jahn of Bielefeld.

Although the French and Russian zones as well as the Berlin sectors, are still outside the economic merger, their railway and other transport unions have taken part in conferences with those of the British and American zones, where their delegates expressed agreement with the structural policy of organizing railway workers together with all inland transport workers in a single industrial transport union.

An Industrial Union of Transport Workers. This transport form of organization has been dictated by the reorganization in the economic structure necessitated by the economic fusion of the two zones. As part of this reorganization, the whole transport system has, on the German side, been placed under the unitary administration of a Transport Council (*Verwaltungs-Ausschuss fuer den Verkehr*).

Within this administration falls the following branches: rail transport, road transport, inland water transport, coastal shipping, ports and docks. Corresponding to this unit, the Transport Industrial Union embraces all those employed, in whatever capacity, in all of these branches, throughout the British Zone.

For each of the groups of workers in the transport industry, by far the largest of which is that of the railway employees, autonomy is provided for dealing with all questions which specifically concern the group, while for

the subdivisions in each group, for example, in the case of the railway employees, the locomotive grades, the traffic grades, the engineering grades, the office staffs, etc., facilities are also provided for acting and negotiating on all matters which are peculiar to their occupation.

But the general interests are paramount.

Railwaymen's Wages. Among those general interests, the wages question is the first priority. Generally speaking, wages are below the subsistence level in Germany to-day. Only those Germans are able to live just above this level, who are in a position to supplement their wages out of their savings. And they are a diminishing quantity. Although there is on paper a price stop as well as a wages stop, in practice the prices of unrationed and necessary goods have been steadily rising and consequently real wages have been falling. The wages of railwaymen are incredibly low. In many cases they represent only about a half of the wages paid to corresponding grades in Britain. Underfed, as well as badly clothed, badly housed, and badly fuelled, it is little wonder that the capacity of so many railway operatives has decreased and the man-power problem on the railways rendered still more acute. The attempt to mitigate, if not to solve this problem, by drawing reinforcements from outside the industry, has, for the foregoing reasons and because of lack of training, met with little success.

It has now been made possible for the organized railway workers to press a claim for increased wages. The formulation of a wages programme has been entrusted to a committee of six railwaymen's representatives, three from the British and three from the American zone.

* * *

Space does not allow us to refer in detail to the many other aims and activities of the organized railway workers. Among other things, special attention is given to the development of education; to the technical training of the younger generation of railway workers with the object of fitting them for responsible positions both in the operations and administration of the railway service, which it is the aim of the organisation to democratize; and to the social education of both the older and younger members of the organization for the purpose of fitting them to act as able organizers and functionaries. There is not only a shortage of man-power on the railways. There is also a very serious shortage of man-power in trade-union leadership. The few who are at present bearing the burden and responsibility are very overworked men. Of home life they have little, and of leisure they have none.

The activities of the industrial transport union—and this is true for other unions—are also seriously crippled and restricted through the lack of equipment. They have organized many educational classes but are short of paper and printed matter for this work. Text-books have been written, but they have to remain unprinted. Office equipment is hopelessly inadequate. Such things as typewriting machines, writing paper and even such an elementary requirement as envelopes are very badly needed. Hans Jahn told us recently that if they could obtain these things, they would even forget that they were hungry!

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BRITISH TRANSPORTWORKERS' ORGANISATION

An Epic of Struggle and Triumph

by **ARTHUR DEAKIN** *General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union.*

On the first of January 1922, the Transport and General Workers' Union marched into the arena of social and economic struggle as an amalgamation of fourteen unions catering for workers in transport and connected trades. Under the patient and wise leadership of Ernest Bevin, the members of the pioneer unions had achieved what had often been declared impossible.

Looking back to that first of January, I recall the pride, the emotional joy and sense of drama I felt when I realised the historical and social significance of the unity that had at last been achieved.

At least, in the case of fourteen unions, a number of serious obstacles to the progress of the workers towards higher standards of living had been cleared away. The competition for membership, the bickering over lines of demarcation, the bitterness we had often felt towards one another were at last ended. No longer would it be possible for employers to profit by conflicting policies and divided counsels. The foundation had been firmly laid of an organization which, by its trade group structure and democratic methods of government and administration, could become not only a formidable force in the hard struggle of poor people for reasonable standards of living, but, by the very process of its development, a powerful factor in the wider struggle of the workers for a decent world.

It was with such thoughts that I welcomed, as I am sure did many of my old comrades, the birth of our great Union. What the amalgamation meant to the workers twenty-five years ago only those of us who were in at the beginning can fully realise.

A Terrific Problem. At that time the unions were up against a terrific problem. The failure of the Lloyd George Coalition Government to grasp the economic importance of continuing in peace, but with improved methods of management, the paper currency system for domestic use and related to the nation's productive capacity (instead of to its gold holdings) which had been forced upon the country at the beginning of the 1914-18 war, and that Government's haste to restore the pre-war gold content of the pound led them to a policy of restriction and deflation which upset the whole of our industrial economy.

The consequences of that failure to realize that a monetary revolution had taken place during the first world war had to be borne by the trades and industries of the country. With unemployment increasing in all parts of the country the unions and the employers were hurled into a terrific struggle over wages and conditions. The industrial relationships which had improved during the 1914-18 war, and which in 1919 showed promise of further improvement as a result of the recommendations

of the Whitley Committee, once again became embittered, and in many trades it was only with great difficulty that the joint industrial councils which had been set up were saved from collapse.

It was in such conditions that the Transport and General Workers' Union was born. In trades where the unions were fighting a grim struggle to maintain wages and conditions the arrival of the Union was as a relief force to a besieged army.

Wages Attacked for Five Years. The new Union went immediately into battle, and, as Ernest Bevin says in his message, for five years it had to meet attack after attack on the wages and conditions of its members. In addition, it threw all it had into the general strike of 1926 in support of the locked-out miners, and at the end of that dramatic episode in working-class history we found ourselves almost financially broke and with the tremendous problem of securing at pre-strike conditions the reinstatement of our members.

Union came through the Test. It was a severe test. No union less firmly built and with less loyalty in all sections could have weathered the storm and stress of those early years. Tired, but indomitable in spirit, we came through, but only to find ourselves a few years later defending in another terrific struggle the wages and conditions of members in practically all trades, which were being attacked as a result of the 1931 "economy" campaign, which followed the world trade slump.

With unemployment reaching nearly three millions and productive industries working less than 50 per cent capacity, we fought a powerful rearguard action, holding on to those sections of our agreements relating to hours and conditions, and only giving way on wages when economic conditions made further resistance impossible. This policy, as later events proved, was sound. When trade picked up, the wage cuts were won back; while the hours and conditions which the Union had maintained during the crisis were used as the basis of further improvements.

From that time the story of the Union is one of continuous achievement for the workers in the wide range of trades it represents on the joint wage-negotiating machinery that has been built up.

I have given a picture of how we met the problems of our earlier years and of those which followed the 1931 slump, because it illustrates better than words can describe the strength of the Union's structure, the wisdom of its policy, its courageous leadership and the deep-rooted trade union tradition of its members. The Union stood up to all the brutal and inhuman conditions of those terrible years. Our members took hard blows, but

never for a moment did their faith in the Union weaken or their spirit fail to respond to the calls we made.

Many thousands of them, whose youthful years had been spent in the heroic struggles which followed the birth of the "New Unionism," were deeply conscious by the facts of history and working-class philosophy that, however bitter the economic storm which raged about them, they simply had to hold on to their Union. The value of such class loyalty and devotion to principles can never be assessed. I can only ask our younger members to emulate the spirit of those who came with us through the fire, and to apply that spirit in grappling with the problems which await solution.

Young People's Opportunity. The young people have a splendid opportunity. There has been built for their use a trade union of formidable strength in membership and financial resources. It is concerned with every phase of industrial and political activity, playing an influential part not only in the building up of good wage structures but in the development of society as a whole towards higher levels of material and spiritual well-being.

In the international field, the work of the Union, in association with the organizations to which it is affiliated, has brought it recognition as a powerful force for human betterment. This Union saw the world as a single economic unit and vigorously advocated international co-operation for the purpose of raising the living standards of economically backward countries long before it was fashionable, as it is to-day, to preach such a doctrine.

At conferences of the I.L.O. and of other international bodies, our voice has been heard pleading for humanity everywhere, and for an end of the brutal system under which the standards of living of the well-developed countries depend upon terribly long hours of toil and starvation wages in the backward countries. In all that has been done in this field, the Union has played an important part, and its name is recorded in connection with many notable achievements.

Tradition of Service. Internationally, as well as nationally, we have built a great tradition of service for the younger people to uphold in the struggles of to-day and in those of the future. The end of the road has not been reached. There are many difficult problems to solve before humanity reaches that stage when planned national economies linked up with a planned world economy will enable the peoples to enjoy the high standard of living they can earn by the skill of their hands and brains and by their capacity for co-operation.

Well-informed Membership. But however long and difficult the struggles which lie ahead this Union will continue to play its part with the same courage, understanding and breadth of outlook as in the past. One of the great functions of this Union from its inception has been to provide educational facilities for the members, and we have built up an alert and well-informed membership from which the leaders of the future will come. The spirit of service is as much in evidence to-day as in the past. It is not expressed in the heroic or spectacular because conditions have changed; but it is there all the same and making a valuable contribution to the wide

range of activities undertaken by the Union. It is seen in the branch rooms; on the job; in the limited but useful field of local government; in the wider field of national politics, wage negotiations, advisory committees, and in the much broader international field. I am, therefore, quite confident about the future.

Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Plans have been made, to celebrate our Silver Jubilee in a manner that will illustrate all that we stand for in this organization. In a great pageant of transport, to be produced in May, a great deal of our story will be told. It will be both instructive and entertaining, and I hope it will be seen by as many members as possible. I have no doubt, too, that during the year many of the branches will organize celebrations of their own.

Officers, Staff and Active Lay Members. During the twenty-five years of its existence, the Union has had a very loyal body of officers, staff and active lay members. Without their devoted service the work of this Union and its administration, which calls for specialized knowledge and technique, could not have been carried on. Some of them have been with us from the beginning, others have taken the place of those who have retired under the age limit, or who, alas, have passed away. To those no longer living we pay our tribute. The spirit with which they served lives on in Union, and by the work they did they will always be remembered. To those still with us, in whatever capacity they are serving, and also to those in retirement, I wish to say on behalf of the General Executive Council, "Thank you for all you have done to build up and administer the work of this Union. With its membership of nearly 1,250,000, funds of more than £4,000,000, and world-wide reputation for service in all fields of human endeavour for social and economic betterment, it stands to-day as a great testimony to your loyal and devoted service."

Beginning of a New Era. And now to conclude. The part played by the Union in the wider Labour Movement during the past twenty-five years has made a great contribution towards changing the political outlook of the people. Since July 1945, we have had a Labour Government and the foundation is being laid for the great economic changes we demanded in our propaganda days. We stand to-day at the beginning of a new era. But only at the beginning. The task now is to apply the social theories of the Labour Movement and make them work. It will not be an easy job to do. It will call for hard work, knowledge, courage, patience, and a greater sense of responsibility from everyone.

Our Duty as Trade Unionists. When things do not go so smoothly as we should like, our enemies will, we may be sure, blame the Labour Government. It will be our duty as trade unionists to keep the people steady and see that they do not fall for the attempts that will be made as opportunity arises to discredit the Government. With all that is being done by the Government to make proper provision for the housing, clothing and feeding of the people, and building up the social services, we must always keep in mind that our economy is linked with world economy. Events abroad over which we have no

NORWEGIAN TRANSPORTWORKERS' UNION, 1896-1946

By B. MARTHINSEN

It was between the eighties and the turn of the century that the Norwegian trade union movement had its great period of awakening. The first trade union was founded as early as 1870, but it was not until ten years later that the trade union work really got going. From then onwards one union after another was started, and after some groping for the correct form of organization, the local unions for the various trades were little by little gathered together into national unions.

The skilled workers were naturally the first to organize. They had their traditions from the time of the guilds to build on. But it did not take long before they were followed by the unskilled, and some groups, like the harbour workers, started as early as the skilled groups with their organizational activities. The oldest branch of the Transport Workers' Union is the Oslo Harbour Workers' Union, which was founded in 1882.

When the Transport Workers' Union was founded, on 2nd April, 1896, there already existed a number of harbour workers' unions up and down the country. But the land transport workers had also started to organize, some in unions of their own and some in other unions. But it was the harbour workers who started the Trans-

port Workers' Union, and until 1916 the membership consisted entirely of dockers. The rapid development of the Union between 1880 and 1890 was the result of a boom in labour activity which was followed by a general slump in 1899. A number of undertakings went bankrupt and many were closed down, so that it was an extremely difficult time for the newly started unions. The largest branch of the Union, the Christiania (now Oslo) Dockers' Union, had in the same year a serious strike which ended in defeat, and many members left the Union. In the course of two years the membership fell from 1,429 to 292.

But the leaders did not give up, and slowly but surely the Union was built up again. At the congress in 1907 it was clear that not only had it won its way through the crisis, but it stood on solid foundations.

From this time onwards the Norwegian trade union movement went steadily forward. Through hard struggles—some of them resulting in bitter defeats it went forward to win one position after another. National agreements were secured, the right of negotiation, negotiating machinery and machinery for the settlement of disputes were won, and working hours were regulated. Later holidays and improved sanitary conditions at the places of work and safety regulations were secured. Through pressure on legislative authorities social improvements were won, such as sickness, accident and unemployment insurance, etc. New organizations were started and the membership rose.

On 8th September, 1912, the Norwegian Carters' and Warehouse Workers' Union was started. Its oldest branch, the Carters Union of Christiania, was founded in 1893. Up to 1916 the two transport workers' unions worked separately, and did great work to improve the conditions of the transport workers, but it was obvious to their leaders that an amalgamation was necessary to get the required fighting strength, and in 1917 the step was taken. The Norwegian Transport Workers' Union was now the only organization for all transport workers and could go forward to greater tasks, to bring order and planning into the transport workers' activities and to improve the conditions of its members.

Since 1897 the Union has been internationally organized through the I.T.F. and the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation, and since 1907 it has been affiliated to the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions.

As capitalism developed and the industrialization of the country progressed, transport became a factor of ever-growing importance in the economic life of the community. At the same time the struggle intensified between capitalism and the State, on the one side, and the workers and their organizations on the other.

During the first world war, from 1914 to 1918, the workers pressed hard to follow with their wages the

Twenty-Five Years of British Transportworkers' Organisation—continued

control will from time to time throw up problems which will have repercussions on our own economy and will create great difficulties for the Government. There have been many instances in recent months, and the opponents of Labour have taken full advantage of the opportunity they offered to attack the Government. So far they have not had any success, but that will not deter them from further attacks.

Be Vigilant, Keep Faith and Work Hard. We must, therefore, be vigilant. The fundamental social and economic changes for which our forefathers struggled and sacrificed, and for which we in our time have fought, are in sight. But the struggle for their achievement will be hard. Let there be no mistake about that. In laying the basis of the New Social Order we have at the same time to repair the damage done to our economy by six years of devastating war. But if we apply ourselves to the task with the same faith, hard work, loyalty, spirit of service, and will to win as we and others did in building up our great Labour Movement, the final victory which will set history on a higher and nobler course will be assured. I repeat, therefore, that we must work with tenacity and determination. Only by the greatest possible production of wealth, which can only come by the application of the skill of our hands and brains to industry, can we have the New Social Order we all desire.

increasing prices of all commodities. During this period the workers succeeded in winning the eight-hour day—which was given legislative sanction in 1919—and the annual holiday.

Then a decline set in, and time and again the employers endeavoured to break the trade unions. Legislative power was used to an increasing extent, and a number of oppressive laws and regulations were directed against the workers and their organizations, and they remained in force until the labour movement took over the power of government.

The Transport Workers' Union, like the rest of the trade union movement, passed at this time through the most difficult period of its history. In the years from 1920 to 1935 the immense importance of the transport workers' organization for the success of the struggle was obvious, and high demands, both nationally and internationally, were made on the solidarity of its members.

Apart from its own battles, it was drawn into sympathetic action in all the big settlements, and the fact that the Norwegian trade union movement succeeded in fighting its way through the storm was due not least to the part played by the transport workers. Particularly worth mentioning, of this period, is the seamen's strike, and the general strike in 1920–21 when practically the whole of the Union was out in sympathy—a strike which for the transport workers lasted eight weeks, while all the others only were out for two weeks. In 1924 the Union had a strike of its own which affected 4,000 of its 5,000 members. The struggle lasted for twenty-four weeks, but it ended in a victory for the workers. During this period the trade unions became a recognized and deciding factor in the community.

What has particularly characterized the Norwegian trade union movement is its intimate co-operation with the political labour movement, which has existed from the very beginning and has steadily increased. It has always been clear to the trade union movement that without advances in the political field it would never reach its goal.

From 1930, after the capitalist system had proved during a period of ten years that it lacked the means to bring the country out of the difficulties into which it had brought it, the trade union and the political movements together adopted a programme for a planned economy with a view to bringing order and security to the economic life of the country by means of an active policy. This programme received increasing support from the people, and after 1935, when the country got its first Labour Government, it was possible to start carrying it out. The Transport Workers' Union naturally found its place and its task within the framework of this programme, and in spite of the fact that the Union has had to fight many hard battles, it is now growing steadily. When it was founded it had four branches and about 1,100 members, and in 1924, during the most difficult period, 5,000, of which 4,000 were on strike, as already mentioned. By 1933 it had grown to seventy-six branches with 10,000 members, and when the war came in 1940 it had 200 branches with 21,000 members.

The war and the resulting occupation of the country

was a great strain for the Union and its members, perhaps more than for any other group of workers. The decrease in the normal industrial activity meant great economic difficulties for its members, while the forced requisitioning of vehicles and workers became ever greater in extent. But the transport workers did not let themselves be cowed so easily. They took up the fight, refusing to work and engaging in active and passive sabotage which caused serious difficulties to the occupation authorities. Members also took an active part in the underground movement. During the occupation the membership of the Union dropped to 9,000 as a result of the appeal, from the leaders of the Norwegian Federation of Trade Union in London, that members should leave the trade unions when the nazis took over control of them. The remaining members stayed passively in the union without paying contributions. When the war was over the re-organizing of the Union was started at once. It has at present 200 branches with 22,000 members, and the membership is still growing.

To-day all its members are covered by agreements, and it caters for all branches of transport and a number of allied trades. It includes dockers, carters, warehouse workers, lorry drivers and helpers, messengers, personnel at petrol filling stations, taxi-drivers, long-distance haulage drivers, washers, greasers and mechanics, lorry owners, horse drivers, fish canning workers, whale oil workers, barge and ferry personnel and a number of other smaller groups.

Since the liberation all agreements have been concluded without conflicts. The Union, like the rest of the trade union movement, takes an active part in the reconstruction of the country, for which a quick and effective transport service is of the utmost importance.

Norway has made big steps forward since the end of the war. The new programme adopted by the political and trade union movement in 1935, which even then went considerably beyond the framework of the capitalist system, has been further expanded and developed and is well on the way to realization. The workers have the political power, and the trade unions which are the foundation of this power are in a different position than formerly. They have become a fundamental factor in the life of the community. They are no longer in a position of opposition to the State, but carry, together with the political labour movement, the responsibility for the future of the whole people.

An important part of the general development is the co-ordination of the transport services of the country to make an effective transport system. This is one of the most important problems in the solution of which the Union has an important role to play. The last Congress of the Union, the Jubilee Congress of 1946, began a new era in its history when important decisions were taken with regard to the co-ordination of transport.

Although the Union is busily engaged with the national reconstruction work in Norway, it is still very much alive to the problems of the workers in other countries, and regards as one of its great tasks its participation in the international struggle for peace, freedom and security for all the workers of the world.

THE BRITISH TRANSPORT BILL

By A. J. CHAMPION, *Member of Parliament*

Perhaps the most difficult of the measures of nationalization to be tackled by the Labour Government of Great Britain is that of inland transport. This the Government is doing in the second year of its Parliamentary life, and Alfred Barnes, the Minister of Transport, introduced the Transport Bill in December, 1946, the purpose of which is, broadly speaking, to provide for the setting up of a publicly owned system of inland transport (other than by air, which was covered by another Act of Parliament) and of port facilities.

The Bill is a lengthy one, having some 136 pages, with 127 clauses and 13 schedules, and in his introductory remarks the Minister said: "The Bill I am presenting and commending to the House is, I should think, the largest and most extensive Measure ever to be presented to a free and democratic Parliament." The following is a summary of the Bill, which, it will be seen, is not a detailed plan for the running of inland transport, but is a measure which establishes the main planning and managerial body and arranges for it to have the powers, the equipment and capital it will require for its purpose.

PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The instrument selected for the task of running the nationally owned transport is that of a public corporation, called the British Transport Commission, which will be responsible to the Minister of Transport, who, in turn, will be responsible to Parliament. It is not intended that the Minister should be involved in the framing of policy or of the day to day management of the industry, but he is empowered to give directions to the Commission, after consultation with the Commission itself, on matters which appear to him to be in the national interest and the Commission is charged with the duty of consulting him on matters of a major character, such as reorganization involving substantial capital outlay. The Minister will receive from the Commission an annual report of its work and a copy of this will be laid before each House of Parliament.

The British Transport Commission. The Commission will be a small body, consisting of a chairman and four members, who will be appointed by the Minister from persons having a wide experience and capacity in transport, industrial, commercial or financial matters, in administration or in the organization of workers. This Commission will have transferred to it the railways, the canals, most of the long distance road haulage undertakings and road passenger transport, and such other undertakings as is provided for in the Bill; together with certain rights, obligations and liabilities. The Commission will be given powers to carry goods and passengers by rail, road and inland waterway, to provide port facilities and facilities for traffic by inland waterway; to provide hotels and hostels and such other amenities and

facilities for passengers as it deems it expedient so to do. It will have the duty of ensuring the provision of an adequate and properly integrated system of public transport and port facilities in such a manner as to provide most efficiently and conveniently for the needs of the public, agriculture, commerce and industry. Its main job will be planning and co-ordination rather than detailed management and administration.

The Executives. To assist the Commission in its work bodies called Executives will be set up to carry out the task of management of each section of the industry. At the outset there will be four Executives appointed, namely Railway, Docks and Inland Waterways, Road Transport, and London Transport, with provision made for the appointment later of an Hotels Executive.

Each Executive will consist of a chairman and from four to eight other members appointed by the Minister, after consultation with the Commission, from persons having the same qualifications as are required for membership of the Commission. The Bill leaves it open to the Minister to appoint members to the Executive in either a full or a part time capacity; so that it would be possible for the Minister to appoint the chairman to give his whole time to the work of the Executive, whilst the other members might be employed only part of their time, or there might even be some members full time and some part time.

The Consultative Committees. To advise the Minister and the Commission on national aspects of transport there will be constituted a committee to be called the Central Transport Consultative Committee, which will be composed of at least one member of the Commission, an independent chairman, and members appointed by the Minister after consultation with the interests concerned to represent agriculture, commerce, industry, labour and the local authorities.

To ensure that the Commission is kept in touch with transport needs of a more local character, there will be appointed Transport Users Consultative Committees on an area basis for such areas as the Minister may direct. These Committees may be so constituted as either to have separate Committees for passenger traffic and goods traffic or they may have to combine the consideration of both goods and passenger traffic matters. The personnel of these Committees will be similar to that of the Central Committee, excepting that there need not be a member of the Commission on them.

Recommendations of the Central Committee will be presented to the Commission and to the Minister, and those of the area Transport Users Committees will go to the Commission and the Central Transport Consultative Committee. The members of these Committees will act in a part time capacity and provision is made for payment of their out-of-pocket and travelling expenses.

RAILWAYS AND CANALS

The Date of Transfer. On the 1st of January, 1948, the Commission will take over the main railway and inland waterway undertakings of Great Britain, including the auxiliary undertakings owned by the railways, which includes railway owned road passenger transport, road haulage, docks and harbours and hotels.

Compensation to Owners. The owners of these undertakings will be paid in a specially created stock to be called the British Transport Stock, which will be guaranteed by the Government and is expected to bear the interest rate of 2½ per cent, but that is not stated in the Bill. The amounts of stock to be given to owners is based on the Stock Exchange prices of the stocks for given dates in November 1946, or for given dates in 1945, prior to the general election of that year, the owners being given the advantage of getting paid on the basis of which ever of the two periods will give them the best price.

Railway Wagons. The system of permitting the running of privately owned wagons on the railways is to come to an end, with very limited exceptions, and the wagons are to be taken over by the Commission; the owners being paid in British Transport Stock, excepting that compensation of less amounts than £2,000 may be paid in cash, on a basis of a calculation by reference to the age, condition and original cost of the wagon.

TRANSPORT OF GOODS BY ROAD

Long Distance Haulage for Hire or Reward. The Commission is to acquire all road haulage undertakings which were during 1946 predominantly engaged in ordinary long distance carriage for hire or reward. Long distance carriage is defined as "the carriage of goods by the person carrying on the undertaking for a distance of 40 miles or upwards in one goods vehicles or a succession of goods vehicles, in such circumstances that the vehicle, or one or more vehicles, is at some time during the carriage more than 25 miles from its operating point." The carriage of liquids in tanks, meat, livestock, heavy indivisible loads and ordinary furniture removals are not to be treated as ordinary long distance carriages.

Compensation is to be paid to the owners in British Transport Stock, excepting that less amounts than £2,000 may be paid in cash, and this is to be based on the net value of the assets, plus in certain cases, sums in respect of compensation for cessation of business and severance. The owner has the right of appeal to the Transport Arbitration Tribunal against the amount fixed by the Commission. The owner must, after he has received the notice that the Commission is to acquire the undertaking, carry on the undertaking and maintain it in an efficient manner until it is actually taken over.

Short Distance Haulage for Hire or Reward. It is not the intention of the Government to take over short distance haulage undertakings that operate for hire or reward, and it will be possible for those engaged in what really is local haulage to carry on as before, excepting that they will not be permitted to carry goods outside a distance of 25 miles from the haulier's operating centre unless in possession of a permit from the Commission or

unless they are carrying liquids in tanks, meat, livestock, heavy indivisible loads and ordinary long distance furniture removals.

Provision is made for owners of haulage undertakings to require the Commission to buy the undertaking if the refusal of a permit to operate outside the 25 mile limit seriously interferes with their businesses.

The Carriage of Goods not for Hire or Reward. After a day to be named by the Minister it will not be permissible for firms or individuals to carry goods used or delivered in the course of their businesses outside a distance of "40 miles from the operating centre of the vehicle except with a permit from the Licensing Authorities, who in determining an application for such a permit are to have regard to the effect on the applicant's business of their decision, the extent to which it is necessary for him to employ his own vehicles for connecting two or more sets of premises so as to maintain a continuous process of production, and the extent to which additional costs in handling, packing or additional risk of damage is likely to be incurred if he is unable to use his own vehicles." The Commission will be empowered to make representations to the Licensing Authorities on such applications. Persons aggrieved by the decision of the Licensing Authority may appeal to a body known as the Transport Tribunal.

PASSENGER ROAD TRANSPORT

There is no provision in the Bill for the immediate taking over of road passenger undertakings, but the Commission is charged with the task of preparing area schemes for the purpose of the co-ordination of passenger transport serving the area to be covered by the scheme, whether by road or rail, and the provision of adequate, suitable and efficient passenger road transport services to meet the needs of the area. Area schemes have to be presented to the Minister, who will be responsible for embodying them in an order and for making provision for the hearing of objections to schemes.

Among other things the schemes may provide for setting up the body, which may be the Commission itself, which is to provide the passenger road transport services; for the transfer to such body of the whole or any part of any undertaking necessary for the purpose; for the payment of compensation in respect of the undertakings to be acquired; and for regulating the relations of persons providing the services and in particular for the pooling of the receipts or expenses.

HARBOURS

The Commission is instructed to keep trade harbours under continuous review, and if it deems it desirable it may prepare and submit a scheme to the Minister for any trade harbour or group of trade harbours, designed to secure the co-ordination of the provision of port facilities. Such schemes may provide for the designation of the body to be responsible for the port; the transfer of the undertakings; payment of compensation, etc., on similar lines to those to be embodied in the area passenger road transport schemes.

COASTAL SHIPPING

The Commission is vested with power to enter into agreements with coastal shipping undertakings for co-ordinating the activities of such undertakings with those of the Commission and for, in particular, facilitating the through carriage of goods, the quoting of through rates and the pooling of receipts and expenses.

For the purpose of advising the Minister on matters affecting coastal shipping the Minister is instructed to set up a Shipping Advisory Committee.

THE TRANSPORT TRIBUNAL AND TRANSPORT CHARGES

The existent Railway Rates Tribunal will be renamed the Transport Tribunal, which will have jurisdiction over certain transport matters, will act as an appeal tribunal in certain instances and will confirm transport charges. The Commission is required to submit from time to time charges schemes to the Transport Tribunal for confirmation. Such schemes must be published and interested parties given the opportunity to make representations about the schemes to the Tribunal, which is empowered to vary the schemes.

THE TRANSPORT ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL

The Bill also provides for the creation of a Transport Arbitration Tribunal to consider and determine disputes arising out of the terms of compensation for the acquisition of undertakings and railway wagons by the Commission. All agreements for compensation exceeding £20,000 must be submitted to the Tribunal for confirmation.

FINANCE

The Commission may, with the consent of the Minister, borrow up to £25 million for temporary purposes, and, with the consent of the Minister and the approval of the Treasury, borrow money by the issue of British Transport Stock up to £250 million for such items as capital expenditure, the provision of working capital, etc., but that sum may be exceeded if the money is required for the redemption of stock or the provision of money for compensation.

The Bill provides for the items that are to be chargeable to revenue in every year; for the keeping and auditing of the accounts and for their inclusion in the annual report of the Commission.

THE EMPLOYEES

Conditions of Employment and the Machinery of Negotiation. The Commission must, if no satisfactory machinery exists, consult with the appropriate trade unions with a view to establishing machinery of negotiation for the settlement of terms and conditions of employment, with provision for reference to arbitration, and for the discussion of matters affecting the safety, health and welfare of employees, and other matters, including the efficiency in the operation of the Commission's services.

Any agreement under this section to which the three railway trade unions are parties may amend or supersede the arrangements made under the Railways Act, 1921, or under the London Passenger Transport Act, 1933, but until such agreement is made, the provisions of those Acts will continue to apply.

Pensions. The Minister is empowered to make regulations for providing for pensions for persons who are or have been employed by the Commission and for persons who have been employed in any undertaking taken over by the Commission, and for the winding up of any scheme made unnecessary by the regulations.

Compensation to Officers and Servants. The Bill instructs the Minister to make regulations requiring the Commission to pay compensation to officers or servants taken over by the Commission who suffer loss of employment or loss or diminution of emoluments or pensions rights as a result of being transferred to the employment of the Commission from undertakings acquired by that body.

* * *

The Bill does not make provision for any element of workers' control, although there is provision made for the appointment of persons "having experience and capacity in the organization of workers" on the Commission and the various Executives, but such persons appointed from the trade union officers would, it is thought, cease to be responsible to their trade unions and would have a responsibility only to the Minister in the case of the Commission and the Commission in the case of the Executives. There is, however, the provision in the machinery of negotiation to be established by regulation which will permit of the joint discussion of the efficiency in operation of the Commission's services.

The Bill does, generally speaking, closely follow the various Labour Party pronouncements on the subject of the nationalization of transport, and it has been welcomed by the Trade Union and Labour movements.

The principal unsolved questions in inland transport other than the administration of international waterways, which will be a test case for indicating whether there has been any advance in international outlook in Europe, relate to commercial competition between national transport systems. This is closely bound up with the hitherto unsolved problem of co-ordination of the different means of transport.

From "Frontiers, Peace Treaties, and International Organization," by Brig.-Gen. Sir Osborne Mance.