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MR. J. H. OLDENBROEK

An Appreciation

By O. BECU

President of the I.T.F.

OUR general secretary, J. H. Oldenbroek, has been unanimously elected to the general secretaryship of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions which held its constituent congress in London from 28 November to 9 December last. He has thus attained to the highest office in the trade union movement.

Born in 1897 at Amsterdam, he left the schoolroom behind him at the comparatively early age of 14 and began his working life in an office. From the start he was attracted by the trade union movement, in which he was following the footsteps of his father, and in 1915 became a member of the staff of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions. He did not stay there very long, however. When the late Edo Fimmen became general secretary of the I.T.F., in 1921, the young Oldenbroek went with him as his secretary, and it was in this organization that he was for 28 consecutive years to devote his best abilities to the service of the working class in general and to furthering the social interests of the transport workers in particular.

Possessed of an acute mind and a determined character, he soon distinguished himself and rose steadily in the esteem and confidence of the leading figures of the trade union movement. Quickly he became one of the closest and most devoted collaborators of his chief, the unforgettable Edo Fimmen. At every important gathering attended by the latter, in every action and undertaking of the I.T.F., Oldenbroek stood at the side of his chief and assisted him with his many gifts. The sum total of work which Oldenbroek thus performed in the fight against Capitalism, Fascism and Nazism and in the struggle for better social conditions for the transport workers, will only be fully assessed when the history of the I.T.F., in which he had merged his very being, is written. Those who were fortunate enough to be closely associated with him knew how complete was the devotion and often self-sacrifice with which he performed extremely difficult and hazardous missions.

In 1939, when the headquarters of the I.T.F., still under the leadership of Edo Fimmen, were transferred to Great Britain, he joined those who went into exile to carry on the fight for freedom, and in the years which followed was to develop into the responsible leader of our International. This was in 1941 when Edo Fimmen went to Mexico in the hope of restoring his broken health. In effect Oldenbroek then took over the reins and shortly afterwards, with the decease of Edo Fimmen in 1942, was made acting general secretary of the I.T.F. It was certainly no sinecure to succeed to the leadership, the responsibility and the legacy of a universally esteemed leader who had devoted his entire life to building and developing what has always been the most influential of the international trade secretariats, to say nothing of the fact that during the war

years the trade union movement passed through one of the most difficult periods of its history.

Largely thanks to the driving force, the keen insight and the militant spirit of Oldenbroek, ever fresh horizons were opened to I.T.F. activity. Despite formidable obstacles, he constantly explored new pathways and penetrated new spheres, at his post wherever the transport workers and particularly the seafarers had to play their vital part in the struggle to reconquer liberty. By his wise leadership and the growing authority of his voice he inspired confidence in all international circles, with governments and military chiefs, and increased to an important degree the role played by the I.T.F. in the war effort of the western powers, whilst working to improve the lot of transport labour. The task which he performed during the war on the Governing Body of the I.L.O., his contributions and achievements at the International Labour Conferences and on the Joint Maritime Commission of the I.L.O., were always very highly appreciated, even by opponents. Through admirable and inspiring messages sent out over the ether his voice penetrated to the workers of the countries groaning under Nazi and Fascist domination. Convinced as he was of the ultimate victory of justice, his chief concern was to see a lasting peace which would vindicate the principles of democracy and the social rights of labour.

However good-intentioned may have been the move which was made on the morrow of the war, in a mood of exaltation and passionate desire to bring about the unity of the working class, he did not share the hopes and expectations felt by many at the foundation of the World Federation of Trade Unions in 1945, in which for the first time in trade union history, at the command of Stalin, so-called Communist labour leaders sat down with other sections of the movement. With his great experience of international trade union affairs, his keen insight into problems and his conviction that the Communist trade unions were merely instruments of a political policy, he was able, together with his fellow executives and with the endorsement of two congresses of the I.T.F., to preserve his organization from absorption and paralysis. The fact that at the first post-war congress of the I.T.F. in 1946 he was unanimously

elected general secretary and was returned to office, again by a unanimous vote, at the next congress held in 1948, proved the implicit confidence placed in him by the millions of transport workers affiliated with the organization. The developments witnessed before the collapse of the W.F.T.U. and the foundation of the I.C.F.T.U. showed how correct was the stand taken up by the I.T.F., in conjunction with the other international trade secretariats, on this issue.

It goes without saying that the lost ground must be reconquered, that the free and democratic trade unions have a mission of the utmost importance to fulfil in the service of civilization and human rights. We are convinced that Oldenbroek, with his resolute nature, will not disappoint the expectations of the workers in his new world-wide assignment.

The I.T.F. loses in him a valued leader whom it will be difficult to replace, one who has, with all his sense of responsibility, devoted all his strength and abilities to the service of the transport workers of the world. The I.T.F. has relinquished him for the sake of the working class as a whole, but we are not bidding him farewell, convinced as we are that the close ties which have already been forged between the I.C.F.T.U. and the I.T.S. will lead to fruitful co-operation and mutual benefit.

It remains for us, on behalf of the I.T.F., to express our deep gratitude for all he has done for the transport workers, our justified pride that a self-made I.T.F. man, our friend and fellow fighter Oldenbroek has attained such high office, and last but not least to offer him our heart-felt congratulations, in the hope that he may achieve the success he merits and carry

the heavy task he has undertaken to the desired conclusion.



MR. J. H. OLDENBROEK
who served the I.T.F. 1921-1950.

"In order to accomplish our task in which we all believe let us work together and, with the wisdom of the East, the civilization of the West and the dynamics of the New World, establish an International that will be a great success and will realize the objects for which it has been founded."

J. H. Oldenbroek on the occasion of his appointment as General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, London, 7 December, 1949.

THE FREE TRADE UNIONS' INTERNATIONAL

By J. H. OLDENBROEK

December 6, 1949, will stand out in the history of the international trade union movement as the date of the official foundation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

"Self-governing territories" and "non-self-governing territories" are concepts much in vogue these days, and applying them to the trade union field one might describe the new development as the setting up of an international organization for the self-governing trade unions, as opposed to the World Federation of Trade Unions which embraces the trade unions of the non-self-governing type.

It was no doubt largely on the difference between bodies which are self-governing and those which are not that the W.F.T.U. experiment foundered.

Free trade unions are independent bodies deriving their authority from the membership and answerable to the membership for their activities. They are led, therefore, by responsible people who take decisions and carry out decisions without interference from governments, political parties or any other outside agencies.

This does not mean that the free trade unions are inaccessible to outside influence, but in shaping their policies and making their decisions, whilst prepared to consider all relevant circumstances, they themselves and not outside factors have the final say. Such freedom carries a great responsibility, meaning as it does that trade unions of this kind are concerned not only with the impact of their decisions and activities on their own followers, but also with the impact upon the general fabric of society.

In fact, the I.C.F.T.U. is a continuation of the old I.F.T.U. There is not much point in discussing whether the discontinuance of the I.F.T.U. in 1945 was a wise step. So much is certain, however, that the free trade unions have since been forced to recognize that the 1945 experiment was an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable and could not have worked without the destruction, or the liquidation as the totalitarians would put it, of precisely that which is most valuable to free trade unions.

With the schism the troubles of the W.F.T.U. are by no means over. Yugoslavia is the first but certainly not the last crisis which will assail what is left of that organization, in which the real position will be that what the U.S.S.R. says goes, and the U.S.S.R. will be guided by one aim only, to further the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. itself.

After more than four years of existence the W.F.T.U. has not a single action in the interests of trade union objectives to its credit. It is indeed difficult to see what international trade union job it could have undertaken apart from a series of incidents which it inspired with such adverse effects for its adherents in the non-Communist sectors of the world. Never yet has any trade union organization in a Communist country shown solidarity with workers in other countries, apart perhaps from supplying some funds and even then less with the

intention of assisting workers engaged in an industrial battle than of furthering designs of an ideological character.

But to return to the I.F.T.U. It was, as has already been said, the forerunner of the I.C.F.T.U. There are, however, important differences. Whereas the I.F.T.U. was in the main a European organization, the I.C.F.T.U. even at its inception is world wide in scope and proclaims the idea that it is the duty of the trade unions in the advanced countries to assist trade unionism in the under-developed countries, without, however, attaching any strings to such assistance. As a world organization its concern must be to devote constant attention to all parts of the world, and in that recognition it has been decided from the beginning that the necessary regional machinery must be developed to carry its idea into effect.

At the same time, the constituent congress of the I.C.F.T.U. recognized that in addition to its work of a general character, there is a need for specialized activities of the kind performed by international trade secretariats such as the I.T.F., and that it is by intimate co-operation and mutual support between the two sections of the international trade union movement that the best results can be achieved.

Practical achievements, that is what the affiliated unions and their members expect, not mere slogans, proclamations or ukases, and that is the yard-stick by which the success of the new International will be measured. In the formulation of its policies and the framing of its programmes the Confederation will therefore have to concentrate on providing practical solutions of the problems to be tackled and on inducing its affiliated unions to act together for carrying them into effect.

If the I.C.F.T.U. is so to succeed, it must assert itself as an influential factor in world affairs. It will have to fight its enemies, also it may have to cross swords with some of those who wish it well. Having determined its objectives, it must go all out to achieve them and to remove the obstacles which lie or are laid in its path. This may at times lead to difficult and unpleasant situations, but such situations will have to be faced and overcome.

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SWEDISH SEAFARERS' DIFFICULTIES IN POLISH PORTS

An editorial in "Maskinbefälet", organ of the Swedish Ships Engineers' Union

When the war ended Poland was a devastated country. Lawlessness reigned, and no one was sure of his life. With the resumption of Swedish shipping to Polish ports ships' crews straightway ran into trouble. Seamen who dared to go ashore were attacked and robbed by gangs of criminals. For these gangs a human life counted for nothing.

After the Polish State had achieved some measure of stability, energetic steps were taken to put an end to lawlessness, but it was incredibly difficult to restore order to this devastated country with its starving and tortured population.

Carl Lindberg, M.P., Elis Hästad, Harald Lindholm, Frithiof Lager, and the Inspector of Consulates at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in January, 1947, paid a visit to the ports of Gdansk and Gdynia at the invitation of the Seamen's Welfare Committee and made a study of the welfare work among Swedish seamen. The object was to consider what could be done from the Swedish side to improve the social conditions of seamen engaged in Baltic Sea trade. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed a welfare officer to work in Polish ports for a period of one year.

Gradually the security position in Polish ports improved. This improvement, however, was achieved by strong police action, which was anything but gentle in its methods.

Unfortunately, it seems that the Polish police used the same harsh methods employed against Poland's own law-breakers in dealing with peaceful Swedish seamen who, according to our conceptions, were not guilty of any breach of the law, and that these powers have even been exercised on board Swedish ships. We are not thinking of cases where men or officers of Swedish ships were arrested as a result of indulging in smuggling or otherwise breaking the laws of Poland. Our complaint is directed against the arbitrariness which there has been when Swedes have, in the opinion of the Polish police, committed a breach of more or less undefined regulations which are in force in Poland but whose existence cannot possibly be known to Swedish seamen. Swedish seamen are not accustomed to being arrested and severely punished for such "transgressions". It is therefore necessary that the Polish regulations, whether prohibiting entrance into certain areas or prescribing how to behave towards a policeman on duty, should be brought to the knowledge of those employed on board ship, so that they may know where they stand.

Concern has also been caused in Swedish seamen's circles by the fact that the Polish authorities raise difficulties when arrested persons have wanted to get into touch with the Swedish diplomatic representatives on the spot. In the meantime, sentence is passed by the court without the accused having an opportunity of obtaining legal assistance from someone conversant with Polish conditions.

These matters have on several occasions been discussed with officials of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this connection we would recall how a few years ago all officers on board the Swedish State railway ferry were prohibited from re-visiting Poland. The occasion was when a prominent politician made his departure from Poland without the requisite permit and the Polish authorities found that he had fled on board the Swedish railway ferry. The engineer officers of the ferry sought the intervention of the Union. The Union approached the then Polish Minister in Stockholm, who immediately informed the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The next day the Polish Minister informed us that the prohibition on the engineer officers re-visiting Poland had been cancelled. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also took a hand in the matter, and after a time the prohibition was also lifted in respect of the other officers concerned.

The recent arrest by the Polish police of the Swedish mate, Magne Larsson, on board the s.s. *Rolf* caused a considerable stir and was discussed in detail in the daily Press. Seen through Swedish eyes, the arrest of Larsson seemed an arbitrary act on the part of the Polish police, and when a few days later another Swedish subject was taken from a Swedish ship in which he worked as a cook, public opinion through the daily Press demanded energetic intervention. This led to strong representations being made with the Polish Minister in Stockholm and through the Swedish Minister in Warsaw.

The seafarers' trade unions also discussed these happenings and their causes. Among the fraternal delegates to the Swedish Seamen's Congress, held in August last, was the President of the Polish Seamen's Union, A. Kolodziej, who in his address to the Congress mentioned earlier incidents which had occurred in Polish ports and suggested that it would be desirable in such cases to get in touch with the Polish seamen's organization, which would then do what it could to bring about a prompt solution. The President of the Swedish Seamen's Union thereupon approached the Polish Minister in Stockholm and asked him to advise the Polish Seamen's Union that the Swedish Seamen's Union desired the Polish union's direct co-operation. The request was duly transmitted and a good deal of the merit for the mitigation of Larsson's sentence has certainly to be attributed, apart from our Ministry's intervention, to the interest taken in the matter by the Polish Seamen's Union.

The incidents in Poland were carefully considered at a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Swedish Seamen's Union, and a resolution then passed was handed to the Polish Minister. This resolution, among other things, stated that the incidents and the discussions which they had aroused in the Press were apt to impair the good relations—so desirable from both countries' point of view—between Sweden and Poland. It was therefore in the mutual interest, it went on, to

eliminate the causes of such incidents. The Marine Engineers' Union also dealt with the matter at the last meeting of its Executive Committee, when the following resolution was adopted :

" The Executive Committee has come to the conclusion that in the event of incidents in Polish ports there should be recourse to an appropriate procedure and consultation with the diplomatic representatives of our country before any precise position is taken up. The Union insists that officers and men of Swedish ships, who for some reason or other are arrested in a foreign port should be given an opportunity to get in touch with a representative of their country.

" It is also necessary that ship personnel be appropriately informed of the regulations in force in Polish ports in order to safeguard them from committing breaches of the law and incurring the risk of severe punishment through ignorance.

" Finally, the Union expresses its conviction that the diplomatic representatives of our country in co-operation with the Polish authorities will find a suitable way of preventing major issues from arising in the future from incidents which in their origins are trivial."

The Manager of the Swedish Masters' and Mates'

Union went to Poland for the purpose of attending the final phase of the proceedings against Larsson in the Court of Appeal. The Swedish Consul in Poland had entered an appeal against the original sentence passed on Larsson and also supplied him with counsel for the defence. The Court of Appeal found against the sentence of the Lower Court and reduced it from one month's imprisonment to fourteen days' arrest for "improper behaviour", and which was considered to have been served by the period of Larsson's detention.

It is still hoped to get something better than a mere reduction of the sentence on the arrested ship's officer, and the Polish Seamen's Union has promised to co-operate in securing greater safeguards for Swedish seafarers in Polish ports and the assurance that they will receive fair treatment in case of incidents. We understand also that the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will ask for a clear and unmistakable formulation of the rules and regulations applicable to ships and ships' crews in Polish ports, so that Swedes may know where they stand and can avoid incidents in the future. Swedish seafarers must in any case be safeguarded against the risk of being arrested on board their ships for more or less undefined "offences".

THE BRITISH FISHING INDUSTRY

By TOM BIRKETT

National Officer, Transport and General Workers' Union (Fishing Section)

Fishing is one of our oldest industries. Even before man started scratching the earth for a living he was catching fish. It is a far cry from the spear and coracle to the present-day super trawler, but one aspect of the industry has remained constant; the industry has by its very nature, fortunately for Britain, attracted the most intrepid of workpeople.

The importance of the harvest of the sea can be gathered from the following figures of fish landings in Great Britain :

1947	25,856,844 cwts.	Value £52,021,194
1948	27,253,251 cwts.	Value £57,026,459

These figures do not include shellfish—lobsters, crabs, mussels, etc.—but are some indication of the importance of the industry to a nation still short of foodstuffs.

Any person with a knowledge of the fishing industry will be aware of the depths of despondency reached between the wars, with the resultant suffering of the men engaged in this occupation. Since 1945 there has been a big improvement.

Fishermen are getting a better deal. Before the war it was possible for fishermen to return from several weeks at sea without remuneration, as they were paid a proportion of the catch after costs had been deducted. In 1946 the Government appointed a Court of Inquiry under Sir John Foster which recommended that the first charge

on a trawler's earnings should be the crew's pay, and in 1947 the Transport and General Workers' Union negotiated an agreement embodying this principle.

Labour Believes in Britain (a pamphlet setting forth Labour Party policy) says: "But there is much room for improvement in the efficiency of the industry and in the working conditions of fishermen. The cost of distribution often makes the price of fish too high to the housewife."

Distribution should certainly be looked into. There have been plenty of instances recently where fish at the port have failed to fetch the maximum controlled price. But where is the housewife who has paid less than the maximum over the fishmonger's slab? Somebody in between is pocketing the difference.

My own chief concern, however, is with the conditions of the fishermen. Of the fleet of 865 trawlers, 620 are over 30 years of age and some were built as long ago as 1881. It must be perfectly clear from this that a major rebuilding plan is long overdue. Closely related to the question of rebuilding is the provision of suitable accommodation for the crews. Many of the newer vessels built in the fishing industry have good standards of accommodation, but the standards in the older near and middle water vessels are deplorable.

The Government is already taking steps to remedy

these conditions. The Sea Fish Industry Bill, now before Parliament, provides three main objects: (1) to give some financial assistance for the replacement of obsolete trawlers, particularly in the near and middle water sections of the fishing fleet; (2) to secure improved accommodation for trawler crews; and (3) to confer power upon Ministers to make regulations to improve methods of handling fish with a view to safeguarding quality. This last clause gives the Ministers concerned power, after consulting representative organizations, to make regulations for safeguarding the quality of sea fish. These will have regard to stowage, handling, transport, processing, keeping, exposure for sale, and sale and delivery. Thus, the quality of fish will be safeguarded at all stages between the quayside and the housewife's larder.

What is needed in the next few years is an energetic application of these measures. Fishermen—and housewives—know that the only guarantee of real action is the

continuance in power of the Government that passed the Act.

There is nothing private about an industry which produces twice as much food as there is beef produced in the country; there is nothing private about an industry which has to work in close harmony with many other nations; there is certainly nothing private about the deplorably shocking conditions under which many men have to live; and in view of the trend in industry, so far as working hours are concerned, there can be nothing private about the fact that men in the trawler fishing industry work a minimum of 84 hours per week and in many instances considerably more. These are matters of public interest.

If in the future there is any risk of the industry sinking into the slough of despond, and the men engaged in it feeling the keen winds of adversity, as they have done in the past, Government action will be necessary.

(From *Tribune*, London.)

PROBLEMS OF THE GERMAN RAILWAYMEN'S UNION

By HANS JAHN

President of the German Railwaymen's Union

The Reichsbahn (German State Railways) had a hard task to take over when hostilities ceased in May, 1945. The many years of aerial bombardment had left hundreds of railway stations looking as though they had been ploughed over. A tangled confusion of twisted rails; overturned and damaged railway vehicles; bent and shattered steel girders, often telescoped into grotesque mountains of wreckage; bent and broken pylons; blackened remains of walls and a vast complex of bomb craters—that was the picture of a railway station at that time. In places where occupation by the Allied forces had been preceded by hard fighting, artillery fire and other military operations had, if possible, made things even worse. But the decisive blow to the railways was caused by the endeavours of the German Army to hinder the advance of the Allied Armies by blowing up on a large scale the means of communication. Hundreds of bridges and tunnels fell victim to this mad frenzy of destruction; among them all the big railway bridges over the Rhine, the Weser, the Main and the principal canals—to say nothing of the road bridges over the railways, the debris of which covered the track, crippling transport and precipitating the breakdown of the Reichsbahn. The blowing up of these bridges broke up the great railway system into a large number of separate lines, mostly short, cutting off locomotives and wagons on isolated dead-ends, breaking off connections between operating points and with local headquarters and so paralysing all movement over the lines.

When after some considerable time it was possible to make a more or less accurate summing up of the damage it was found that no less than 2,100 miles of track,

13,000 points and switches, 2,472 railway bridges, 30 tunnels, 1,500 signal-boxes with 31,000 levers, 4,000 miles of cables and 70,000 miles of overhead lines for telecommunication purposes and 4,700 engine bays had been destroyed or seriously damaged. And the many other installations and equipment, without which an orderly railway service adequate to the requirements of a large population is impossible, were in no better way. Water towers, water cranes, turntables, coaling plants, ash pits, goods sheds, trans-shipping depots, gas installations, stores, canteens, rest rooms and dormitories, houses for operating personnel and other indispensable buildings were destroyed and damaged to the same extent as the station buildings which the traveller saw only as hollow ruins and makeshift and patched-up bits of walls after the war had ended.

Rolling stock also suffered heavily during the war. The endless rows of battered, burnt-out and shattered locomotives and wagons that cluttered the sidings bore witness to the extent to which the stock of usable vehicles had shrunk. Even in 1947 something like 9,000 engines and more than 100,000 goods wagons were still stabled adjacent to main lines and through lines in stations. When hostilities ceased only 65 per cent of the locomotives, barely 40 per cent of the passenger carriages and some 75 per cent of the goods wagons that had existed in 1936 were still serviceable.

This was the second heavy burden which the Reichsbahn inherited from the war. A third and no less serious one was the great destruction and damage to the buildings and equipment of the railway repair shops. Its importance may be judged by the fact that in May, 1945, only

some 55 per cent of the buildings and 65 per cent of the machinery and equipment was available for use.

All this destruction was the more serious, since in the main it was concentrated in the larger and more important buildings and stations; the smaller and more easily repaired installations having come off a good deal better. Of the buildings belonging to the Reichsbahn in the three Western Zones no less than 32,000,000 cubic metres of cubic capacity were destroyed by bombing or burnt out—the equivalent of the total housing capacity of a city of several hundred thousand inhabitants.

But amid all the rubble and destruction the Reichsbahn was still left with one priceless asset—the unshakable will to reconstruction of its personnel. Hardly had the thunder of the cannon died away when the railwaymen, who had been scattered to all points of the compass by evacuation and transfer, thronged to all parts of the railways to clear and repair the tracks and restore communications with neighbouring towns. Lines required for military operations and for bringing up reinforcements had already been repaired by the Allies during their advance, sufficiently, at any rate, for emergency operations. Occupation troops, German prisoners of war and gangs of workers drawn from industry and mining joined forces with the railwaymen who were everywhere actively at work, for all sections of the population were agreed that the first need was to get the railways running again, to carry foodstuffs and the essential supplies that would make it possible to restart industrial activity. Railwaymen of all grades and branches of the service joined in heavy manual labour to lay the foundations for the systematic reconstruction of the permanent way, rolling stock and buildings that was to be undertaken in following months and years.

Of difficulties and obstacles to be overcome there were more than enough. The simplest implements, machinery, tools, components and other requirements were lacking; and similar shortages hindered the resumption of traffic on the different sections of the line as they were gradually made fit for service. Coal for the locomotives, lubricating oil, rags for cleaning, oilcans, and in some places even water for the locomotives, were in short supply. And on top of this there were all the cares and worries that weighed heavily on the majority of the railwaymen. Those who had been bombed out or driven away from their homes were wanting in almost everything that makes life bearable. The lack of sufficient food and clothing, the wretched housing conditions, and in many cases the uncertainty as to the fate of close relations, were a hindrance to output of work. Often, too, the ponderous procedure necessary to obtain building permits, and unwieldy quota restrictions, hampered progress with the work. But in spite of all this, by the end of 1945 the innumerable short and isolated stretches of line had once more become something closely approximating a coherent railway system equipped with at any rate the most necessary installations, even though they were only too often of a makeshift character.

In spite of the shortage of man-power and material, the rebuilding of the permanent way, bridges and other constructional installations had also made considerable

progress. The restoration of important buildings and installations necessary for the development of the service were naturally given priority, while "beautification work", such as the repair of station buildings and the roofing over of station halls, mostly had to wait. Thanks to this concentration on the most utilitarian work from the traffic point of view, by the time of the currency reform of 26 June, 1948, some 1,700 miles of track and 9,700 points and switches had been rebuilt—this being about 75 per cent of the total damage to the permanent way—and, in addition, 2,100 bridges had been repaired, though in the latter case two-thirds of the repairs were only of a temporary character. 1,350 signal-boxes had also been rebuilt—one-third only temporarily. Of the 4,800 engine bays required for operating purposes, something like 4,300, or 90 per cent, had been made winter-proof, and the same had been done for nearly the whole of the repair workshops. 90 per cent of the damage to cables and overhead lines had also been repaired.

This was the situation when the currency reform struck the Reichsbahn. Except for the interruption caused by the Siberian winter of 1946–47, its service and output had steadily kept pace with the reconstruction of installations and rolling stock. Where, for instance, the average daily passenger train-miles were only 160,000, the figure for June, 1948, was 271,000. The corresponding figures for goods train-miles were 144,000 and 204,000 respectively; while for all kinds of trains the rise in the daily train-miles was from 304,000 to 475,000. Figures of passengers and goods carried have risen correspondingly: the number of passengers carried in January, 1946, was 99,188,000, the corresponding figures for June, 1948, was over 140,000,000. The monthly average of goods carried for the same months was 10,263,750 metric tons and 13,757,000 metric tons respectively, while the number of goods wagons available for loading per working day rose from 29,700 to 37,450. A convincing indication of the consolidation of railway operating can be found in the reduction of the average turn-round period of goods wagons, from 11.2 days in January, 1946, to 6.2 days in June, 1948.

Further development of the Reichsbahn in the combined Western Zones in 1949 has been hampered by two unfavourable factors: the slowing down of industrial reconstruction and, still more important, the great expansion of road motor transport. Thanks to the peculiar advantages of the latter, and still more to the fact that it has not to bear certain obligations and financial burdens which the Reichsbahn has accepted in the general interest, it has been able to make serious inroads into what has hitherto been the special province of rail transport, both in respect of passenger and goods traffic. The result has been a heavy fall in the Reichsbahn's receipts, which led in turn to great difficulty in maintaining a liquid financial position and to a consequent considerable cutting down of orders. The critical situation which has arisen in this connection has forced upon the authorities, and the public at large, recognition of the fact that relations between the two forms of transport urgently call for legal regulation that will

equitably share public burdens between them and impose equality of working conditions on all forms of transport. There is, further, unanimous agreement that in present circumstances the Reichsbahn is no longer in a position to finance out of current receipts the restoration of its installations and rolling stock and the arrears of maintenance and renewal work. This will require considerable long-term credits: the six per cent Reichsbahn Reconstruction Loan of 1949 can only be the first step in this direction.

If I have gone so fully into the general situation of the Reichsbahn, it has not been with the object of uttering a complaint but simply to point out how heavy our burdens are, for the course and extent of the economic and social reconstruction of Germany largely depends on the proper functioning of her largest carrier. Our railwaymen fully realized this in 1945, and essentially it is thanks to them alone that transport was set going again and a start given to the German economic machine. Without any immediate prospect of receiving wages, without regular working hours and without any social protection, these good people, while at the same time undertaking the reconstruction of their trade union, set

about doing their duty—and to-day they must tremble for their jobs.

The Reichsbahn is running up a deficit of between a million and a million and a half marks a day. Social reaction in Germany sees its opportunity and is calling for the dismissal of thousands of railwaymen and the introduction of a nine-hour day. Free enterprise is calling for its victims, and the army of unemployed is growing: there are already a million and a half burdening the labour market. There is plenty of work to be done, but the finance is lacking that would make it possible to carry it out. Demagogues are finding it easy to mislead the unfortunate with the suggestion that while money can always be found to make war it is always lacking for work which serves a peaceful purpose.

German trade-unionists are fearing that keeping his employment may soon be the worker's chief problem, and that that may weaken a force that is endeavouring to build up democracy in Germany, the force of trade-unionism. If this dangerous situation is not fundamentally changed the work of the German Railwaymen's Union, and of all other German trade unions, is likely to be in vain.

RAILWAYS AND RAILWAYMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

By *LOUIS VAN NIEKERK*

President, Locomotive Engineers' Mutual Aid Society

Most European countries already had their first railways when South Africa made a start by opening the line connecting Cape Town with Wellington. That was in 1859, when ideas about speed were very different from what they are to-day, so the first South African trains were preceded by a man with a red flag, to warn people that a train was coming through at the alarming speed of seven miles an hour.

But even at this speed, railway traffic ninety years ago meant a revolution of the South African transport system, which had, until then, mainly relied on ox wagons for the longer distances and heavier loads. The first railway engine* to be used in South Africa still stands, as a historical monument, on a platform in Cape Town Station. An engraved brass plate tells its story, which has already become history; and a photo in a brass frame shows its driver, Mr. William Dabbs, a sturdy man with the heavy beard usual at that time. He went to South Africa with his engine, erected it at Salt River, and drove it to the end of his life.

Development and Present Traffic

Railway development was slow at first, mainly owing to the mountainous nature of the country to be traversed, but later the discovery of the diamond fields at Kimberley and gold in the Johannesburg district gave it a new impulse and the difficulties were overcome. The desire

*A six-wheeled engine with wooden buffers and a hand brake, built by Hawthorn's, of Leith.

to hasten development, however, led to the adoption of the 3ft. 6in. gauge, in spite of the fact that the first line had been built to the standard gauge of 4ft. 8½in., and as a result South Africa now has the world's largest narrow-gauge railway system, though it is deprived of the smoother running and greater speeds which the broader gauge permits.

On the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the existing railways (Cape Government Railways, Natal Government Railways, Orange Free State Government Railways and Central South African Railways) were amalgamated to form the State-owned South African Railways and Harbours (S.A.R. & H.) which, as its name suggests, also runs the main harbours at Table Bay (Cape Town), Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Mossel Bay and Walvis Bay.

The S.A.R. & H. Administration also operates a fleet of road motor vehicles, for both passenger and goods traffic, which act as feeders for main and branch lines as well as having an extensive tourist connection.

The railway mileage operated by the S.A.R. & H. totals 13,331 miles, and the motor coach services 23,000 miles. There are also 622 miles of railway owned by private companies† but operated by the S.A.R. & H. Electrified mileage already totals 582 miles. Since 1946

†The Vryburg-Bulawayo line of the Rhodesia Railways (589 miles), the Utrecht Railway (26 miles) and the Milnerton Railway (7 miles).

the undertaking has also been running an air service, which is developing satisfactorily.

The following are the revenue-earning goods traffic figures for the 1947-48 financial year :

	Tons	Ton-miles
Goods ..	29,330,686	6,779,002,820
Coal	15,000,522	3,639,071,045
Livestock ..	716,369	226,950,908
	45,047,577	10,645,024,773

During the same period 243,694,986 passengers were carried. Catering and sleeping facilities are provided on all long-distance passenger trains, and during the year a total of 3,271,226 meals were served in the dining cars and refreshment rooms and 1,325,501 beds were hired to passengers. The Administration's own health inspectors watch over the maintenance of hygienic conditions in all spheres of the catering, bedding and laundry services.

Railwaymen's Unions and Working Conditions

The personnel of the South African railways totalled on 31 March, 1948, 187,705 persons, of whom 17,407 were railworkers and 89,640 non-Europeans.

Prior to 1941 there were several staff organizations in the field, with considerable overlapping and keen rivalry for members. In that year the Minister of Transport tried to smooth matters over by dividing the railway personnel into six groups, which are catered for by six different organizations, as follows :

- Group A. Salaried Staff Association.
- „ B. Locomotive Engineers' Mutual Aid Society.
- „ C. Running and Operating Staff Trade Union.
- „ D. Artisans' Staff Association.
- „ E. Employees' Trade Union.
- „ F. Railworkers' Trade Union.

Our own organization, the Locomotive Engineers' Mutual Aid Society, covers drivers, passed firemen, firemen, probationer firemen, shedmen, road motor drivers, etc.

All these unions co-operate closely through a Federal Consultative Committee composed of the six presidents and two other members from each organization, with the six general secretaries in an advisory capacity. In matters of common interest to the six organizations representations to the Minister of Transport are made by this Committee. Should these representations be unfruitful, application can be made for a conference with the Prime Minister, a right which has already been made use of with successful results.

The railways and harbours are divided into nine Divisions, each with its own Appeal Board, Sick Fund Board and Housing Board. Each Staff Association has its representative on these boards, as also upon the Conciliation Board and the Superannuation Fund Board. Provision has also been made for setting up an Arbitration Board. There is further a Statutory Board of Inquiry instituted by the Minister of Justice to ascertain the cause of accidents involving loss of life. The Organ-

izing Secretary of the Locomotive Engineers' Mutual Aid Society is a member of this Statutory Board.

Working conditions have improved very substantially since the setting up of the Federal Consultative Committee. Space does not permit of detailing the various rates of pay, but it may be mentioned that in 1944 a general increase was granted which brought the maximum rate for a "special class" engine driver to 25s. 6d. a day. It has since been raised to 26s. 6d. plus a long-service increment of 9d. a day after fifteen years' good service. Payment for Sunday work has been increased from time and a half to double time, and the overtime rate from time and a quarter to time and a third. In case of absence from duty owing to sickness or injury full pay is allowed if covered by a Railway Medical Officer's certificate. Compensation is awarded under the Workmen's Compensation Act in case of permanent total disability, and to dependants in case of fatal injury.

Hours of duty were brought down from nine to eight hours a day in 1925, and to seven hours forty minutes in 1944.

Up to quite recently leave was officially regarded as a privilege, but to-day it is recognized as a right, and railway servants, with their wives and minor children, are allowed free rail travelling facilities for bona fide leave purposes. Annual leave for daily paid staff is on the following scale :

After completion of one year's service but less than five	12 days, non-cumulative
After completion of five years' service but less than ten	12 days, cumulative up to 36 days
After completion of ten years' service but less than fifteen	15 days, cumulative up to 52 days
After completion of fifteen years' service but less than twenty	18 days, cumulative up to 70 days
After completion of twenty years' service	21 days, cumulative up to 90 days.

Non-cumulative leave must be commenced within the calendar year in which it accrues. If owing to the exigencies of the service this is not possible, it may, on the authority of a head or sub-head of department, be carried forward to the next year, but no later. The maximum period of leave which may be accumulated is not held to include the leave due in respect of the year in which the computation is made.

Where breaks in service with the Administration or its predecessors have been condoned for pension or superannuation purposes, or where an annuitant has been re-employed, the continuous service immediately prior to the break is taken into account for the purpose of calculating leave.

The pension scheme is based on a Superannuation Fund to which equal contributions are paid by the Administration and the member. The pensionable age is 55 years for an engine driver and 60 years for all other grades.

Training Facilities

Two Railway Training Colleges have already been established, at Kroonstad, in the Orange Free State, and Esselin Park, between Johannesburg and Pretoria. The latter is now being transformed into one of the most up-to-date railway training institutes in the world, at a cost which will probably exceed £2,000,000. When completed it will be capable of turning out 1,200 students a year.

1,261 acres of land have been acquired for the purpose, and the Institute, when finished, will occupy a total frontage of 2,572 feet. The plans provide for two lateral structures crowned by a massive central block with a spacious forecourt. Lateral and interior forecourts will grace the flanking structures. In the central forecourt

there will be a clock tower 90 feet high, standing clear of the main structure.

The central block will provide an assembly hall capable of seating 1,500 persons, as well as a technical library, lecture rooms and staff studies. In other parts of the building there will be dormitories, dining-rooms, libraries and reading and recreation rooms, and an important and interesting feature will be a Museum of Transport.

To facilitate the practical training of enginemen, signalmen, station masters, station foremen, platelayers, gangers, shunters, etc., a circular standard-gauge track has been laid in a portion of the ground away from the main buildings. This railway in miniature will be equipped for all operational purposes, including passenger, goods and mixed train working.

Finally, the Institute will provide facilities for physical culture and gymnastics, including sporting grounds and a large swimming bath.

Once finished, the Institute will offer to young railwaymen in South Africa the best possible opportunity for their professional training.

SEAMEN'S AND DOCKERS' PROBLEMS IN TRINIDAD

By C. P. ALEXANDER

President of the Trinidad Seamen's and Waterfront Workers' Union

The Trinidad Seamen's and Waterfront Workers' Union celebrated the tenth anniversary of its foundation on 20 November, 1948. Celebrations opened with a thanksgiving service at Holy Trinity Cathedral conducted by his Lordship the Bishop of Trinidad, with the orphanage band in attendance. All branches of the Union were represented, with their banners displayed. Later in the day a *colourful and orderly procession* paraded the streets, and an open-air meeting was held, at which the Union President presented silver medals to six members in recognition of the services they had rendered to the Union. In the evening, members, friends and well-wishers gathered for a grand dance.

These details, extracted from the Executive Council's report to the Annual Delegate Conference held on 25 September, 1949, will give an idea of the spirit in which we celebrated the tenth anniversary of our Union. We were thankful indeed that the ten years were over, filled as they were with hard work and many a heart and head ache for the handful of manual workers who ten years before had made up their minds to start a trade union and thus bring some method and order into the struggle they and their fellow-workers were having to secure a fair deal at the hands of their employers and the authorities.

The organizers had little knowledge of trade-unionism, and their fellow-workers had none at all. The Union was built up by trial and error, and there was a good deal of error before the right road became visible and a substantial number of workers could be persuaded to follow it.

To-day we can say that we are through the worst. Our Union has now over 2,300 members—800 of them enrolled during the last twelve months. The stable kernel of the membership—those who stick to the Union through thick and thin, year in year out—is still small, but it is growing. We have a bank balance of 11,000 Trinidad dollars (about 6,400 U.S. dollars), but 90 per cent of it is not available for general trade union purposes as it must be kept in reserve to meet calls on our benefit funds. A branch of the Union has been established in Tobago, an island about eighteen miles away from Trinidad. We have a Women's Auxiliary that does good work in arousing the interest of the transport workers' wives and daughters in the aims and activities of the Union; and for our children we have founded a children's library.

We are proud of these achievements. None of us can complain that his education has been overdone: we can all read and most of us can write after a fashion, but to achieve what we have done we needed help, and we have been helped by intellectuals like Dr. Solomon and Mr. V. Bryan who frequently assist us with their advice.

The task of organization we have before us is still a big one. There are some 5,000 waterfront workers and seamen who do not belong to the Union. We cannot yet answer the call to organize the 5,000 road transport workers nor to come to the help of the Railwaymen's Union, which has only a few hundreds out of the 3,000 railway workers. With only one full-time official, the Secretary, the waterfront alone is more than we can now properly cope with. Our most urgent need is to train

organizers and administrators, but we hope to get on with the job and make a success of this too.

During the past year we have made significant progress with the improvement of working conditions. We have signed a comprehensive agreement regulating employment in Port of Spain. All port workers are registered and are engaged at a calling-up centre, and the Union is represented on the committee administering the registration scheme. Favouritism and victimization occur now to a far lesser extent than formerly. The number of persons allowed to work in the port is strictly limited and dockers can now earn, on an average, four days' wages a week, instead of two as before. To settle grievances and disputes a Joint Consultation Board has been set up in their relations with which the workers encounter more reasonableness than they did formerly, and a fair deal is the rule.

The decisive impetus to this progress was given by Mr. Fred Dally, the former Assistant General Secretary of the British Railway Clerks' Association, when he came to Trinidad a couple of years ago on an official mission, entrusted to him after the I.T.F. had made itself our advocate with the Colonial Office in London. Since then we have secured wider recognition. The President of our Union has been appointed by the Governor to the Sugar Workers' Welfare Committee and the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance Revision Committee, while our Secretary, Brother A. Mohammed, has been appointed to the Port Advisory Board.

Gratifying though this record is, we are not yet out of the wood. There is not work enough for our members, particularly our seamen. Trinidad is only a port of call, so seamen only find work when a ship is short of hands, and there is no order or method in the filling of the gaps which occur except the arbitrary decision of the agents

of the shipping companies. In addition the law requires the seamen to deposit two hundred dollars before he signs on, to cover costs of repatriation should he get stranded in a foreign port.

Then there is the problem of wages, which are quite inadequate for a reasonably decent standard of living. We need legislation or some other measure fixing a minimum rate of wages high enough to enable the wage-earner to take proper care of his family and himself, and we need a guaranteed minimum weekly wage. So far no provision has been made for persons of advanced age who are no longer able to work; and most workers have never earned enough, throughout their working lives, to save a few hundred dollars. At present they are dependent, in their old age, upon the charity of relations who rarely earn enough even for themselves.

These problems cry out for solution, and we believe we have earned the right to ask for a prompt and generous solution. During the war Trinidad suddenly became important. Our men could go to sea without any question being asked—and many of them lost their lives at sea. Trinidad dockers worked night and day, and turned the ships round as fast as the dockers in any port in the world. But the Union did not take advantage of the opportunity to blackmail authorities and employers into granting wage increases and other things. We knew that freedom was in danger, and we played our part in defending it, hoping that victory might also bring some of its fruits to us.

The Trinidad Trades Union Congress has refused to leave the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions, so we have left the T.U.C., and we took part in the foundation conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Our Union is also affiliated with the I.T.F., and looks to the I.T.F. for inspiration, help and advice in its struggle.

ROAD TRANSPORT IN INDIA

A hundred years ago, India and Pakistan had no other roads than the remains of those built under the Mogul Emperors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Road building began in 1854 when a Public Works Department was established. In the following 46 years, 170,000 miles of road, of which 37,000 metalled, were built, and since 1900 another 130,000 miles have been added, of which 40,000 were metalled. The metalled roads are good; a fair proportion of the remaining 223,000 miles are gravelled and can be described as passable; as to the tracks called "earthed roads", they are incredibly dusty in the summer and quagmires in the rainy season. They turn the life of drivers into a nightmare.

What are 300,000 miles of roads and tracks for India and Pakistan! France has 436,000 miles of roads, of which at least 80 per cent are hard surfaced, whilst the remaining 20 per cent are genuine roads, not tracks

through dust or mud. The area of the two countries is seven and a half times and its population nine and a half times that of France. Forty million people live in towns of from 3,000 to 4,000 to over 2,000,000 inhabitants, and, in addition, three hundred and fifty million live in more than 100,000 villages. Of these latter only a favoured few thousand are sited on or near roads, railways and waterways. So far as the others are concerned, distances from the nearest artery of communication of up to twenty miles are common.

It is no exaggeration to say that the appalling poverty of the Indian villager is due to the lack of roads. The village population is static and social intercourse, not to speak of trade and commerce, is reduced to its simplest expression. Only the dearest produce can be profitably marketed and periodic food crises are aggravated by the lack of road transport.

The dearth of roads has produced unequal and un-

balanced development of industry and trade ; congestion at railway, inland and coastal shipping centres, as well as along the few existing highways, whilst vast tracts of country have been deprived of the most primitive modern industries. And—final absurdity of the "free enterprise" system—in a country desperately short of roads there is road competition against the railways.

India's young government is endeavouring to equip the country with a network of roads built according to a well-considered plan. It is proposed to construct 400,000 miles of new roads within fifteen years, 100,000 more miles in India alone than have been built in ninety-six years in the whole of the Indian sub-continent. The ultimate target for the second half of this century is to bring every village within half a mile of a public road.

A mountain of difficulties faces the planners, a mountain which only faith can shift. Who, for instance, is to provide the capital, amounting to some 4,500 million rupees (£346,000,000)? The Central Government considers financing the construction of a few trunk roads traversing the sub-continent, whilst the provincial and state governments are to underwrite provincial highways, district and rural roads. The latter try, of course, to have classified as national highways many more roads than the Central Government is prepared to take for its own account, and, in addition, claim compensation for loss of transit and terminal taxes collected from road carriers, the abolition of which is insisted upon by the Central Government for the furtherance of economic intercourse between districts, provinces and states. The financial outlay involved is so heavy that consideration is being given to the raising of capital from non-governmental sources. In this connection the Government anticipates that the expanding road transport industry will provide, by way of vehicle, petrol and oil taxes, the revenue necessary for remunerating and redeeming the borrowed capital.

Once the financial problems are solved, technical problems will arise. The carrying through of the fifteen-year plan necessitates a colossal amount of road construction machinery, of which the largest possible proportion must be manufactured in the country, owing to the shortage of dollars and other foreign currency. In addition, the industries supplying the road construction materials must be equipped for a far larger volume of production than has hitherto been the case.

Whatever the difficulties, they must be overcome if the country is to achieve a measure of economic progress that will make a noticeable difference in the living conditions of the people. India has to-day 220,000 motor vehicles, of which 6,000 are buses. Wear and tear on these is inordinately heavy, owing to the bad state of the gravelled and earthed roads and more especially to the constant overloading involved.

But again: What are 220,000 motor vehicles for India? Belgium has an area equal to one per cent of that of India and a population which is a mere 2.8 per cent of that of India. Nevertheless, in 1939 she had no less than 225,000 motor vehicles. In order to achieve the standard of pre-war Poland—a very low standard by modern conceptions—India would need half a million motor vehicles.

For the orderly development of road transport which will follow the development of the road net, India does not rely upon free enterprise. The railways are nationalized and operated on the authority, and under the supervision of, the Central Government, whilst road transport is being nationalized on the basis of control by the provincial and state governments. The general pattern is that of provincial corporations responsible for planning and operating road transport and making their business pay, whilst at the same time giving due regard to the needs, both social and economic, of the community. In order to prevent duplication of the railways and to ensure that road transport will play a complementary rôle in relation to them, the national railway administration is to be a component of each provincial corporation. As a general rule it is provided that the railways are to supply 20 or 25 per cent of the capital of provincial or state road transport corporations.

In order to make headway, India will further need a new army of transport workers and motor vehicle maintenance workers. Many of them will have to be recruited in the villages. These transport workers-to-be cannot at present read or write and have not the faintest notion of what an internal combustion engine is. The development of road transport on the basis of existing plans will bring a great adventure into their lives and into the lives of the Indian people as a whole.

AN INDIAN TOWN'S TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

In Patna, a town of under 200,000 inhabitants (1941 census) there are at present approximately 4,000 cycles, 1,700 rickshaw owners, 2,735 registered rickshaw operators plus an army of unregistered rickshaw wallas, 300 first-class and 100 second-class ekkas, 55 first-class, 18 second-class and 12 third-class hackney carriages. No separate figures for motor cars are available as these are registered according to district. In addition there are some 1,000 bullock carts in the city area and 270 moving stalls, including hand-pushed carts for transshipping short-distance loads.

It appears from this that the indigenous ekka-wallas and hackney carriage drivers are being put out of business by the speedier and more manœuvrable motor car and light rickshaw.

Regular bus routes, with about 30 stops, are operated on barely 20 of the city's 154 miles of roads.