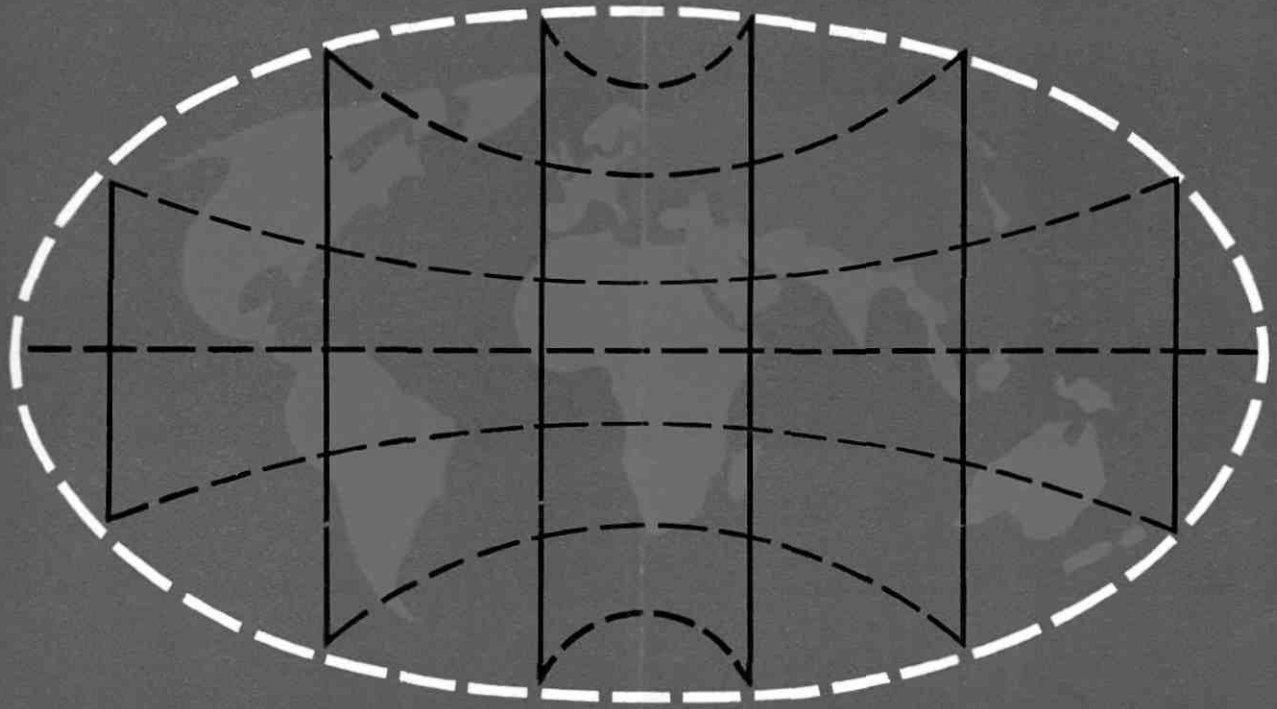


Vol XV No 3 March 1955



ITF

552

**INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION**

**International
Transport Workers'
Journal**

Monthly Publication of the ITF

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Forthcoming Meetings:

Paris	21-23 March Railwaymen's Section Committee
Tokyo	4-8 April Asian Transport Workers' Conference
Helsinki	14-15 June Executive Committee
Helsinki	16-18 June General Council
Berne	12-16 September International Railwaymen's Conference

Contents

	page
Railway finances and railwaymen's wages <i>by Paul Tofahrn</i>	37
The development of German air transport <i>by J. Steldinger</i>	42
Labour relations on Indian railways	45
Norwegian railwayman will assist Korean trade unions	45
Third largest 'merchant fleet' in the world	45
Discrimination against Great Lakes seafarers ...	46
Memorial to Danish seafarers ...	47
Fishermen's conditions in Belgium <i>by R. Dekeyzer</i>	48
Developments in Canadian fishing	51
Swiss merchant marine personnel	51
Progressive transport legislation from Australia	51
Trade unionism in the Near and Middle East <i>by J. A. Hallsworth</i>	52
World tanker tonnage	55
Scandinavian unions will seek shorter work week	56
Indian railways accident inquiry	56
Training scheme for British Railways clerical staff ...	56
Cuban shipping canal plan	56
Book review	56

Railway finances

and railwaymen's wages

by Paul Tofahrn, Assistant General Secretary of the ITF



ON 26 MARCH 1953, AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE OEEC, the experts in European transport diplomacy questioned me on the ITF's proposal to set up a European Transport Authority. I pointed out that economic warfare in transport, be it between the transport systems of competing States or between competing transport industries, led to uneconomic use of equipment and labour. Having to show a workers' interest in the abolition of international competition through the creation of a European Transport Authority, I stated that the rivalry between countries and industries adversely affected conditions of employment through its pernicious effects on the finances of transport undertakings. These adverse effects were not disputed, but their bearing upon conditions of employment was questioned. The case of the railwaymen's wages in undertakings making deficits was quoted as proof that wages and conditions of employment were fixed with reference to the national standard of living rather than the railways' ability to pay. Against that I put the experiences of trade union negotiators – quoting Germany, France and Italy as instances – who, indeed, take the national standard of living as a factor of reference but have to argue laboriously with managers plagued by deficits. These experiences show that deficits often prevent conditions of employment from being as good as they ought to be, that deficits always have an exasperating retarding effect and sometimes form an insuperable obstacle. A rational transport policy which ensures sound finances to efficient transport undertakings is one of the best guarantees for good conditions of employment.

In the setting of the OEEC, where the problem was one of arrangements and agreements to be made between governments, the argument on the relations between finances and conditions of employment was of necessity inconclusive. It is only where the real forces come to grips with each other, that is in the national field, that a conclusion can be reached. Two recent events, which occurred quite independently of each other, one in Canada and the other in Great Britain, are calculated to help railway trade unions in many countries to come nearer a conclusion.

Railways as instruments of national policy

In Canada, there was a dispute about 'fringe benefits', i.e. material conditions of employment other than wages; in the present case pay for statutory holidays, vacations with pay and paid sick leave.

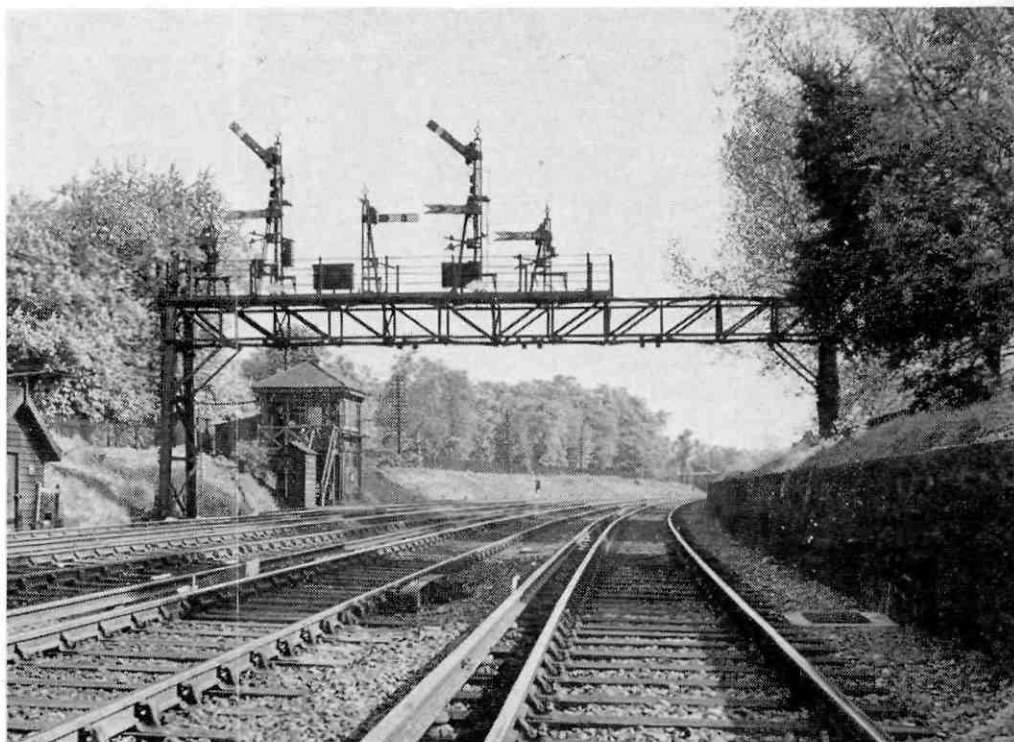
Out-of-date transport policies should not be allowed to hamper progress towards rational utilization of the railways and the payment of fair wages to railway men, writes Brother Tofahrn in this article

The four railway undertakings, chief among them the Canadian National

Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, opposed the trade unions' claims on the grounds of inability to pay. The dispute threatened to cause a strike and the Government intervened, compelling the parties to accept arbitration.

The arbitrator closely examined this problem of ability to pay and discovered that the railways' financial difficulties were real. Looking for the causes of these difficulties, this is what the arbitrator found:

'Upon the evidence before me it is my opinion that this present situation is the inevitable consequence of a National policy that compels the Railways to carry a heavy volume of bulk freight at a rate not now contributing to overhead. I use 'overhead' to mean the general constant cost of railway operation other than the out-of-pocket cost directly assignable to the cost of moving any particular commodity or group of com-





Modern equipment does not necessarily mean modern transport policies. On the German railways too, trade union negotiators have to argue laboriously with managers who are plagued with deficits

modities.

'The greatest single service performed by the Railways is the moving of grain and grain products...'

'In 1952 grain and grain products accounted for 44.3 per cent of revenue ton miles, i.e., the physical volume of traffic. This movement of the grain crop resulted in a loss to overhead of 6.8 per cent...'

'The Railways made a rough estimate that this distortion resulted in 1952 in a direct loss to overhead of \$65 million. The 1953 and 1954 direct and indirect losses, attributed to the same cause, may far exceed this figure if, as they must be, indirect consequences such as loss of high-rated freight to competitive forms of transportation and the loss of revenue from rates lowered to meet this challenge, are placed on the scale...'

Discussing the validity of this national policy, the arbitrator said:

'The value-of-service principle in rate-making still fulfils an essential function in the national economy. Grain and

forest products (for example) must move to world markets at competitive prices. Infant industries are assisted in their establishment and this value-of-service principle is operating in other economic fields. The Railways, including the Canadian Pacific, are thus not a truly private enterprise in any realistic sense. They have and will continue to play a most vital part in the development of our national economy. They are integrated with every form of our national life. The national necessity of uninterrupted continuance of rail operation of these great national projects was recognized by the Prime Minister in the present dispute...'

Workers to subsidize their employer or the State?

As to the merits of the trade unions' claim, the arbitrator put his opinion in a nutshell:

'The Railway employees represented in these proceedings are not enjoying, to

a degree, fringe benefits now in force for like employees of other comparable Canadian industries.

This disparity ought, within reason, to be removed...'

About the relationship between the railwaymen's rights and the railway undertakings' finances, the arbitrator said:

'Increased freight rates would, in all probability only tend to increase the present imbalance and expose greater areas of Railway traffic to outside competition.

'The Railways, in seeking means to retrench, are now, it seems to me, asking the working men and women... to accept working conditions less favourable than those now enjoyed in comparative industries (to say nothing of the 20,000 men whose employment was terminated during 1953-1954). In that sense employees of the Railways, represented before me, are being asked to subsidize the effects of a national policy...'

Apart from being morally wrong, such a labour policy is in Canada also not practicable. The arbitrator quoted the following words spoken by the General Manager of the Canadian National Railway on 4 November 1954:

'In its relatively large wage bill, the CNR faces the challenge of the highway society. We have no choice but to accept it. To maintain our power to compete for desirable employees in the labour market and to ensure harmony in our labour relations, the CNR must keep up with Canadian wage scales'.

The arbitrator added:

'I take it that in referring to "wage scales" he included "fringe benefits".'

Accordingly he made an award that went some way to meet the Unions' claims. Hourly rated employees are to receive pay on five statutory holidays not worked. Hourly and monthly rated employees are to receive two weeks vacation with pay after three years service and three weeks after fifteen years service. Sick leave with pay was denied.

Where the burden belongs

Where is the money to come from? Said the arbitrator:

'If I am right in my conclusion that the direct and indirect effects of the Crowsnest Pass rates (i.e. the grain rates causing loss - Ed.) are a major contributing factor to the present situation in which the Railways find themselves, and the evidence before me can lead me to no other rational conclusion, then it is my respectful opinion that some fair share at least of this burden should be shouldered by the people of Canada from the National Treasury - a suggestion not entirely bare of relevant precedent...'

On that point the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees and Other Transport Workers goes a step further. The Editor of its journal says:

'The money can only come from two sources: a realistic rate structure and direct subsidy for the transportation of certain commodities which require it in order to maintain their competitive position in Canadian and world markets.'

As to the next step the editor's thoughts run as follow:

'Managements are a canny crew and we suggest they now hope we will take up the cudgels to exert the necessary pressure on government to force a solution to the problem. If we are smart we will do just that, not because we are concerned about management's problems but because we aren't prepared to continue as economic second raters. How do we fight? By making it abundantly clear to all politicians that they are going to face up to their responsibilities or else. It is the trade union leadership's job to organize that fight.'

The British dilemma

In January, Great Britain had a narrow escape from a railway strike. The strike was avoided because the National Union of Railwaymen won its claim for wage increases in spite of the employer's inability to pay. The principle involved is largely the same as in Canada and, remarkably enough, also the immediate solution of the conflict. Here is the story:

In July 1953, the three British railway trade unions submitted a claim for a fifteen per cent increase of wages. The claim was based mainly upon the cost of living, comparison with the rates in outside industries, and recognition of increased efficiency and productivity. After negotiations and agreements, voluntary arbitration followed by further negotiations and agreements, a second settlement by voluntary arbitration for a part of the staff, and still further negotiations and agreements for the remainder, there was, in December 1954, between 4.9 and nine per cent of the original claim still unsatisfied. The state of mind of the members of the National Union of Railwaymen reached boiling point: they decided to strike on 9 January 1955.

No Government can remain inactive when a railway strike threatens. The Government of a democratic country may be unable to prevent a railway strike but it may not let it happen without supplying full and impartial information to the public. In compliance with that precept the British Government set up a 'Court of Enquiry'. This Court found that the stumbling block was not profound disagreement between the administration responsible for the railways and the railway trade union about the justification of the claim; the stumbling-block was finance.

The British Transport Commission is a single undertaking: it runs the railways, some road transport, inland waterways and some ancillary services. It must pay its way. It may make a deficit in one or even several years, but taking one year with another, it must make ends meet. It may make a deficit in one or even several years, but the whole undertaking must balance its budget. The main item of expenditure outside running costs is termed 'central charges', consisting principally of interest charges on capital and loans. The railways have to contribute £40 million to the central charges, i.e. about nine per cent of their receipts, or 3¼ per cent of net book assets. It was estimated that in 1954 the railways would contribute only £18 million, thus making a deficit of over £20 million. In 1955 the net surplus over working expenses may be only £10 million and the railways' deficit would, therefore, amount to £30 million.

This financial predicament made the Chairman of the British Transport Commission say to the chief trade union negotiator, in August 1954:

'When you say to us that people who work on the railways are not paid as well as those in other industries and are not paid enough, you will find a broad measure of agreement from our side. It is when it comes to finding the answer to that dilemma that we are unable to reach a settlement with you... It is a question of money. I said that our proposals are not regarded as being ideal or final. We regard that as being the



Canadian railwaymen, said a recent arbitration award, are in effect being asked to subsidize a national policy which results in the carrying of bulk freight at a loss to the railway undertakings (Canadian National Film Board photo)

limit of what is practical at this time.'

Fair and adequate wages a public responsibility

Where is a way out of such a dilemma? Wages as low as dictated by finance? To the latter question the Court said no. On the contrary, in its interim report, dated 3rd January 1955, the Court said:

'The nation has provided by statute that there shall be a nationalized system of railway transport, which must therefore be regarded as a public utility of the first importance. Having willed the end, the nation must will the means. This implies that employees of such a national service should receive a fair and adequate wage, and that, in broad terms, the railwayman should be in no worse case than his colleague in a comparable industry'.

Here, as in Canada, the right to a fair and adequate wage is upheld independently of the undertaking's finances. The authoritative value of this pronouncement is enhanced by the fact that the British Government has accepted it. In its final report, issued on 20th January 1955, the Court deals with the consequences of its judgment and says in effect that *when management and staff have done their duty, i.e. have done what they should to ensure efficiency, the responsibility for the undertaking's solvency falls upon the State.*

Willing the means

How is the State to discharge this responsibility? The Court of Enquiry confines itself to saying that 'the Nation must be prepared to make all necessary arrangements to see that it (the nationalized system of railway transport) is efficiently run'. In the lively controversy aroused by the Court's report and the Government's acceptance of it, it is widely assumed that 'the necessary arrangement' is for Britain to enter the league of nations that subsidize their railways. This prospect provokes a general outcry. Very few writers, however, expound the alternative to subsidy, namely a sound transport policy which, instead of nullifying the considerable technical advantages that railways have over other means of transport, ensures sound railway finances. Even the *Railway Gazette*, the mouthpiece of railway officialdom in a large part of the English-speaking world, has not seized the occasion for advocating once more a fair deal for the railways.

Some polemist dismiss the alternative of a rational transport policy and write off the railways themselves. Nothing is easier than to score a few minor debating points against the railways but reality ignores such tussles and claims its rights. An authoritative spokesman of railway users, Mr. M. F. Barnard,

Establishment and Transport Officer, British Iron and Steel Federation, in a lecture delivered on 1st October 1954, had this to say about railways:

'I want to emphasize one cardinal point, (all industrialists will do well to heed this warning) a bankrupt railway system, or one which is inefficient or uneconomical, means bankrupt or uneconomical basic industries, which will affect the whole economic life of the country.

'Not in the lifetime of any present today will this country be able to do without railways for peak holiday traffic, long distance business travel, dormitory travel, or the carriage of raw materials of the basic industries. If you save on the carriage of products by using other than rail transport you may pay for it in the price of the primary products - coal, gas, electric light, steel, etc. - dependent on the railways for transport, and probably suffer other consequences'.

The British Government is faced with this cardinal point. It must either solve the problem of ensuring the future and the solvency of the railways or subsidize them, thereby perpetuating and intensifying the chaos in transport.

Deficits and subsidies

No well-managed railways need be bankrupt. The British Railways certainly are not bankrupt and their deficit is a book fiction which, together with the deficits of all other railways, has been explained in a resolution adopted by the International Railwaymen's Conference of 1951 in the following terms:

'The deficits shown by railways are the result of mistaken transport policies of governments and parliaments (including excessive financial provisions for compensating former owners of nationalized railways), and no proof whatsoever of technical inferiority of the railways'.

That resolution puts the finger also on another sore spot:

'Any transport policy, if it is to be rational, should provide for close cooperation between road and rail and aim

An example of how not to plan transport. Highway U.S. 22 in the State of New Jersey parallels an important railway right-of-way and, as can be seen from this photograph, carries bulk freight traffic that could move with greater economy and safety over the adjacent rails





The morning business rush at Victoria Station, London. In January, Great Britain faced a railway strike because railway management claimed it was unable to pay long overdue wage increases. A Court of Enquiry into the dispute stated that the railways had an obligation to pay a fair and adequate wage to its employees (Photo by courtesy of British Railways)

at a perfect ordering of transport by the two methods'.

It is well known that few governments, if any, have tackled this task and that the present British Government is doing just the opposite. Given a rational transport policy, with political services paid by the authorities which impose them, railway finances will be sound and dilemmas such as those described here and which repeat themselves on many railways throughout the world will be rare if they occur at all. But when governments and parliaments fail to provide a sound policy framework for transport and thus deplete railway finances, instead of expecting railwaymen, in the words of the Canadian ar-

bitrator, to 'subsidize public policy by a contribution measured in terms of the prevailing disparity in conditions of their employment', they must pay themselves for the consequences of their mistaken policies.

A policy of subsidies has serious drawbacks in several fields and is no substitute for a sensible transport policy. The chief drawback for the railway trade unions has been stated by the editor of a trade union paper, the *New Zealand Railway Review*, in his issue of 22 November 1954:

'If the department cannot balance its budget, then the general taxpayer may have to foot the bill, and, in attempting to keep internal costs down, the depart-

ment naturally feels it must knock back the claims of its own employees, no matter how just they are'.

Triumph of a principle

By their successful fight, the Canadian and British railwaymen have helped all railwaymen plagued by deficits to oppose to these natural inclinations of departments the doctrine that one component of every official transport policy – no matter how rational, or irrational – must be 'a fair and adequate wage, and that, in broad terms, the railwayman should be in no worse case than his colleague in a comparable industry'. Their success is more than a national victory, it is the triumph of a principle.

Servicing a Lufthansa machine. The company now expects to start regular European services on 15 May - some six weeks later than originally planned. Trans-continental flights to the USA will follow from 1 June. Regular services will commence only after extensive trial flights have been carried out



The development of German air transport

by J. Steldinger, *German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union*

THE NEWLY-FORMED GERMAN CIVIL AIRLINE, DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA, hopes to commence scheduled operations early this year. The first Convair machines stand ready in the newly-constructed hangar at Hamburg; training flights on these aircraft are being carried out under the instruction and supervision of experienced British pilots. The training of flight and ground personnel was intensively initiated some time ago, and early in the year it is expected that Constellation aircraft will augment our fleet; with these machines too, we shall welcome the return of our flight engineers who have been undertaking final tests in the United States.

These brief facts are the culmination of a development which has been taking place since 1945 - a development which has been characterized by three phases:

- 1) the return of responsibility for airport operation to German hands;
- 2) the placing of air traffic control and allied safety services under German authority;
- 3) the restoration of air sovereignty

by the High Commissioners of the three Occupation Powers.

Airports

Ten commercial airports are maintained in the Federal Republic; they are joint stock undertakings, i.e. companies with limited liability. Airports are local property, the controlling authority being the municipality for the particular area.

The economic aspects of airport management are the responsibility of the "German Airports' Study Group", the task of which consists in advising on all questions of an economic and technical nature. It was this body which, at the Transport Ministers' Conference at Strasbourg, submitted important proposals for the standardization and simplification of airport traffic handling and dispatch services.

Airport design and layout are thoroughly modern, and in so far as further developments and modernization plans are being pushed through, these have been based on a comprehensive study of the position in foreign countries.

The following statistics illustrate the activity of German airports:

Airport traffic (Internal and Foreign services) for the ten airports of the Federal Republic and West Berlin; 1952/3

Commercial, scheduled and unscheduled traffic, charter and special flights

		1953	1952	% Increase
AIRCRAFT ¹⁾	Arrivals (total)	80,577	54,660	57
	Unscheduled	56,074	46,295	21
	Departures (total)	80,608	54,695	48
	Unscheduled	56,079	46,317	21
PASSENGERS	Arriving	1,142,319	714,557	59
	Departing	1,147,003	721,295	59
	Transit ²⁾	221,715	185,978	19
FREIGHT ³⁾ (tons)	Incoming	58,074	36,008	61
	Outgoing	58,409	36,177	62
	Transit ²⁾	6,601	5,452	21
MAIL (tons)	Incoming	4,421	3,824	16
	Outgoing	3,878	3,324	17
	Transit ²⁾	1,802	1,448	24

Traffic carried by unlicensed Air Transport Companies

(excluding Military traffic and test flights)

		1953	1952	% Increase
AIRCRAFT	Arrivals (total)	5,022	2,327	116
	Private transport	1,315	1,265	4
	Departures (total)	4,957	2,306	115
	Private transport	1,261	1,240	2

1) Difference in total aircraft arrivals and departures due to speedier turn-round of military charter traffic and commercial traffic.

2) Non-changing passengers and untranshipped freight and mail included in 'arrivals' and 'departures'.

3) Excluding personal baggage.

The salaried employees and weekly-paid staff of the airports are in the main organized in our union. Their salary conditions are contractually regulated through general agreements made with the local government employers' organizations, whilst working conditions are covered by the Federal agreement applying to local government employees. Special provisions applying to airport personnel are included in these agreements where necessary.

Air Traffic Control

Air Traffic Control and associated safety services were taken over by German authorities as a result of a Federal law which came into effect on 28 March 1953. Our organization assisted in the preparation of the draft bill, and was successful in securing the seating of two representatives of air traffic control personnel on the appropriate Federal

authority for control and safety services.

Although air traffic control personnel still come under Allied jurisdiction, considerable progress has already been made regarding trade union organization and representation. The larger part are members of our union and, as far back as 8 December 1952, a wages agreement was successfully concluded with the Federal Finance Ministry.

Air traffic personnel are anxious to maintain and increase their contact with similar personnel in other countries through the good offices of the ITF since they feel that the problems which are peculiar to their profession call for close collaboration with their colleagues in other countries.

The German National Airline

We made contacts with the former Luft-hansa flight personnel at an early date and, although they were not yet engaged in civil aviation, organized them in the ÖTV. We were anxious that these personnel should be given every assistance to enable them to play an active part in German civil aviation again. As a result of voluntary training, a number of them, i.e. those who were still fit for air service, were able to take refresher courses organized by the Deutsche Lufthansa Company in Cologne. However, flight personnel must now obtain professional licences which could not be issued in Germany - and it therefore became necessary for pilots and flight engineers to undergo continuation training in



other countries. Pilots were trained at Hamble in England and passed their examinations with distinction; on completion of training in England, the first four pilots were attached to Consolidated Vultee, San Diego, USA, which was also the centre for continuation training for our flight engineers.

The Lufthansa Operations Department has in the meantime been transferred from Cologne to Hamburg where intensive flying training takes place on Convair aircraft. A new hangar has been constructed for the housing, technical inspection, and overhaul of aircraft, and we hope that by the time this article appears in print the new German air transport company will have commenced operations.

The former Lufthansa flight personnel were favourably received by their colleagues in foreign countries. They were not responsible for the machinations of the Third Reich, as a result of which the Lufthansa was placed under the control of the German Air Ministry. They were merely flyers with an international outlook and, with few exceptions, resisted the blandishments of the Nazi Government. They have remained faithful to their ideals as pioneers of the former German civil airline, and it has been a grievous blow to them that, since 1945, every flying occupation has been closed to them. A large number have exhausted their personal savings and today are compelled to seek public assistance. These former pilots, by reason



of their advanced age, can no longer find employment in civil aviation, and are not unnaturally embittered that they who once were 'air millionaires' do not even have any legal claim to a pension. Our union is most concerned that the

Federal Government should take steps to alter this state of affairs, for it would be an ominous beginning for our new airline and its prestige in foreign countries if these conditions were allowed to continue.

At the moment we are negotiating with the company on wage rates for employees and wage-earners. These will be followed by negotiations on behalf of flight personnel. We naturally desire that the resultant social conditions should compare favourably with those of other European air transport companies. The success of our endeavours will depend in no small measure upon the readiness and willingness of aviation personnel to achieve trade union organization and unity.


Final considerations

At the ITF London Congress the proposal of the German delegation regarding the organization of all groups of civil aviation workers in a single union was unanimously adopted. Unfortunately in Germany we have a rival organization, catering for salaried employees, which is outside the German Federation of Trade Unions. In spite of this



rival organization, however, our union is able to speak for all grades within the civil aviation industry, the special interests of individual categories of civil aviation workers being safeguarded by means of separate committees. However, it is clear to us that much opposition to the social progress of all groups within the industry has still to be overcome, and that, in the task which we have set ourselves, we will often need the active support of the ITF. On the other hand, we deem it our primary duty to convince all German civil aviation personnel that organizational unity and close association, through the ITF, with their colleagues in other countries, is the surest way of providing for their social security against the risks and dangers inherent in the industry.

Labour relations on Indian railways

 CONSIDERABLE DISSATISFACTION is being expressed in Indian railwaymen's circles at the inadequacy of the government's railway labour relations machinery. Hundreds of grievance cases taken up by the unions during the last few years still remain unsettled and in many instances a deep sense of injustice has led Indian railwaymen to go on strike and demonstrate against wrongs which would never have occurred, or at least would have soon been put right, if the grievance machinery had been operating satisfactorily. Thus members of the National Railway Mazdoor Union observed 25 August as a 'Mourning Day' in protest against the 'callous attitude of the railway authorities to the repeated representations of the workers'. In Bombay, some 15,000 members of the same union staged a half-day strike on 27 August and demonstrated outside the offices of the railway administration in protest against delays in attending to their grievances. These acts on the part of Indian railway trade unionists are symptomatic of a general discontent felt by Indian railwaymen at the failure of the Indian Government and the railway administration to assure the adequate functioning of the machinery for the settlement of grievances.

The negotiating machinery when it was introduced was heralded as ushering in a new era in employee-employer relationship. Indian trade unionists today describe it as a failure. Charges levelled against it are that individual grievances


receive no hearing at all and that the function of the workers' representatives is regarded as limited merely to submitting requests for redress. A factor militating against smooth and rapid adjustment is the consideration of prestige, whereby higher officials tend to support one another when mistakes have been made and thus, in the interests of administrative convenience, serve to perpetuate grievances.

Serious charges of inadequacy are also levelled against the Welfare Department set up by the Railway Board. The factor which in this case would appear to militate against efficient functioning is the fact that the welfare inspectors are placed under the direct control of those very officers whose errors they are expected to correct in matters of personnel management.

The mounting dissatisfaction felt by Indian railwaymen with the present state of labour relations is indicative of an ever-growing desire on their part for a constructive role in the industry through the medium of their trade unions. Their chief opponent, as they see it, is the mental conservatism of the Railway Board whose efforts have invariably tended to curtail or nullify existing privileges of the railwaymen. The Board is accused of a lack of real desire to cooperate with railway labour. No amount of legislation by the Government will alter this situation, it is claimed, but only a change of heart on the part of the Railway Board.

Indian railwaymen's trade unions see it as a part of their task to bring about this change of heart and outlook. For them, the success of the Indian Government's labour policy will not be judged by the considerable profits made by the nationalized Indian Government Railways, but by the extent to which the Government accepts the implications of industrial democracy, one of the most important aspects of which, in their view, is the acceptance of railway labour as a partner with a voice in the formulation and execution of railway policy.


Norwegian railwayman will assist Korean trade unions

 THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS, in collaboration with its Asian Regional Organization, has sent a Norwegian trade unionist, Brother Sigurd Kvilekval, on a mission to advise the South Korean Federation of Trade Un-

ions. He is to stay in Korea for about six months.

Brother Kvilekval was chosen for this task by the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions, acting in consultation with the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Railwaymen's Union. He is a thirty-one-year-old working railwayman - a guard - who has been granted leave of absence to undertake his mission. He has been secretary of his union branch in Bergen for three years and has also taken an active part in the educational and other activities of his union. Brother Kvilekval has already visited Sweden, Denmark and Britain to study railwaymen's working conditions. In Korea, he will help with the reorganization of a trade union centre which already has 320,000 members - mainly among the textile, mining and railway industries.

Third largest 'merchant fleet' in the world

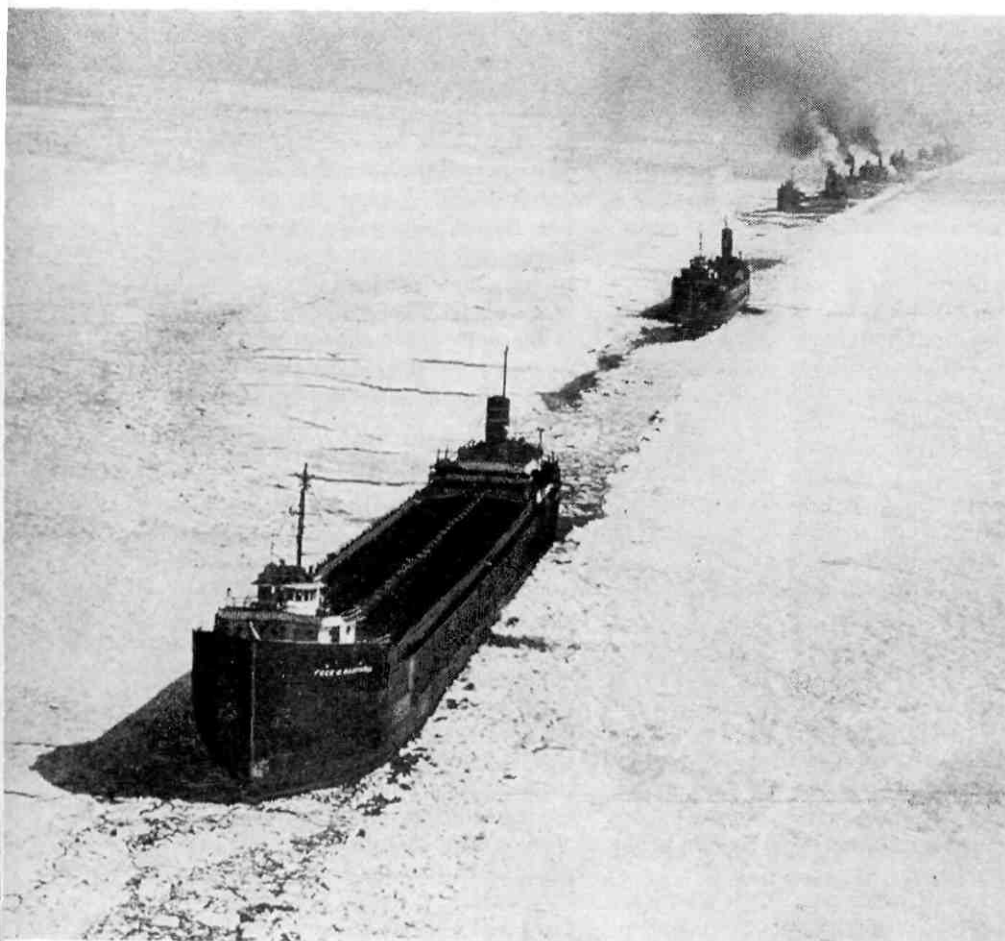
 ACCORDING TO FIGURES published by the Greek shipping review 'Naftika Chronika', Greek-owned merchant tonnage amounted to 9,303,321 tons gross as on 31 December 1954, and thus constituted the third largest merchant shipping fleet in the world owned by nationals of one country. Less than one-seventh of this tonnage (1,242,075 gr. tons) is actually registered under the Greek flag, however, the remainder flying the merchant flag of some other country. Of the total tonnage, more than half sails under the Panamanian, Liberian or Honduran flag. The tonnages concerned are: 1,756,413; 2,397,896; and 287,191.

In terms of actual vessels, which number 1,257, less than a quarter are under the Greek flag, whilst nearly a half fly a Panlibhon flag. The actual figures are: Greece 309; Panama 256; Liberia 254; Honduras 49; Great Britain 130; United States 114; and others 145.

During the years 1952-54, a total of 134 vessels (103 of them tankers) of 1,773,612 tons gross was built for Greek owners. At the present moment there are under construction for Greek owners thirty-five ships in Great Britain (483,850 tons); eleven ships in Germany (143,510 tons), five in Sweden (99,500 tons) and fourteen in Japan (253,000).

Of late the Greek government has been making efforts to attract Greek-owned tonnage back to the national flag. The figures quoted here give some idea of the magnitude of this task.

Discrimination against Great Lakes seafarers



After the great 'freeze-up' ships begin to move once more over the 1,800 mile waterway system of the Great Lakes. Ohio legislation denies unemployment compensation to seafarers whose vessels are ice-bound for some twelve weeks every year (Courtesy American Library in London)

ity arises out of two basic misconceptions as to the nature of an unemployment insurance programme. Both of these, in turn, relate to the method of financing the programme by a system of varying tax rates for individual employers. This is known as 'merit rating', or, more properly, 'employer experience rating'.

The first of these theories is that an individual employer can do something to prevent unemployment in his own plant or in connection with his own enterprise. This is a concept partly borrowed from workmen's compensation, where experience has shown that by the application of safety measures and protective devices employers can, if they wish, reduce the accident rate in their plants. Accordingly, the insurance rate is adjusted downward for employers who have a favourable experience with claims.

While this may look good in theory there are a number of things wrong with it in actual practice. The first is that there is actually very little that an individual employer can do to smooth out the peaks and valleys of employment in his industry or in his plant, since these in large measure reflect economic forces which are far beyond his control. For example, if sales of a retail store begin to fall off, this is probably due much more to the lack of purchasing power in the area served by the store than to any failure to plan for the maintenance of full employment on the part of the store owner.

The second thing wrong with this theory is the method of counting the unemployed persons who are charged to the employers' experience for tax rating purposes. The way it is done under most of our state unemployment compensation laws is to charge against each employer's account the benefits paid to

THE GREAT LAKES DISTRICT OF THE SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA (affiliated with the ITF) is campaigning to persuade the Ohio State Legislature that the State's unemployment law, which at present discriminates against the workers who man the Great Lakes fleets, should be amended. As it stands, the law does not cover Great Lakes seamen for the full year, even though they are unemployed through no fault of their own. For twelve weeks in the year - while their vessels are laid up owing to weather conditions - they are denied compensation. Shoreside workers, on the other hand, are covered throughout the year.

The SIU is therefore pressing for a change in the law which would give the seafarers the same coverage. Its efforts are part of a wider campaign to wipe out discriminatory disqualification provisions in the unemployment compensation laws of the States bordering the Great Lakes - a campaign which has already achieved one notable success, repeal of these sections of the Michigan Law having been secured largely through SIU action.

In view of our affiliate's stand, it may not be inappropriate to quote some comments on United States unemployment laws made recently by Brother Nelson H. Cruikshank, director of the

AFL's Social Insurance Activities. Writing in the *Great Lakes Seafarer*, Brother Cruikshank says:

The disqualification applicable to workers in a seasonal industry or activ-

any unemployed worker who is successful in establishing a claim for unemployment compensation benefits.

This matter of successfully establishing a claim is very important and is the key to understanding why the system has broken down the way it has. Suppose, for example, an employer has 1,000 employees. They have been rather steadily employed for several years with very little turnover and as a result the employer experiences a very low tax rate to support the funds in his state for the payment of unemployment compensation benefits.

Suddenly, however, through some change in market conditions or as a result of other causes, it is necessary for him to lay off a fourth of his employees. Two hundred and fifty persons are suddenly without employment. If they claim unemployment compensation benefits and are paid such benefits, the employer's tax rate goes up for the next period. (Incidentally, this is a hardship on the employer, too, as he finds his tax rate going up just at the time he is trying to struggle with a new set of conditions affecting the operation of his industry.)

However, if that employer, through his employer associations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers' Association, has been able to influence the state legislature to write into the state law disqualifying provisions that will prevent these workers from drawing their benefits while unemployed, then his tax rate remains the same as if he had kept them in steady employment.

The differences in the tax rates in most states range something over 2½ per cent of an employer's payroll — a sizeable amount of money in almost any enterprise. This is a powerful incentive to employers to develop those gimmicks in the state laws, under which employees can be denied their unemployment compensation benefits.

A great variety of such schemes has been developed, and the only admiration they inspire is admiration for the imagination and ingenuity of employers and their lawyers in dreaming up ingenious, self-cocking devices for denying the worker his weekly benefit checks while unable to find a job.

The third thing wrong with the theory of employer experience rating is the idea that all employers can successfully operate the 'coal and ice' theory. In the days before electric refrigerators and oil

burners, it was a common practice for retailers to sell ice in the summer and coal in the winter. The same labour force and equipment were used for both operations. However, only limited application of this theory has been found practical.

Not many employers could follow the example of the farm implement manufacturer who went into the manufacture of children's sleds, obviously serving one market in the summer and another in the winter. But under the theory of employer experience rating something like this was possible for all employers, and as a reward for developing off-season activities and thus maintaining a steady work force and keeping all hands employed throughout

the year they were to receive a reduction in their tax rate.

But what can the owner of a plant engaged in canning fruit and vegetables do when the orchards and truck gardens in his area lie under a foot of snow? Or, more to the point, has anyone discovered a use for a Great Lakes steamboat during the period that the waters of these great inland seaways lie under a foot of solid ice?

The Great Lakes carriers, however, are not to be daunted by the lack of inventiveness with respect to the use of their vessels during the winter season. They have gone into the various states bordering the Great Lakes and succeeded in getting the legislatures to declare

(continued on page 51)

Memorial to Danish seafarers



DEDICATED TO DANISH SEAFARERS who lost their lives in the two world wars, the Danish Seafarers' Memorial Hostel was ceremonially opened on 20 December last in the presence of numerous guests, including representatives of the Danish Seafarers' Union and the Danish Stokers' Union who had worked so hard to bring it into existence.

Made possible by funds supplied by Danish seafarers' organizations, together with generous contributions from the Danish Shipowners' Association and the Municipal Authorities of Copenhagen, the hostel has seventy-three

rooms with sleeping facilities for 102 guests. At a pinch, a further fifty could be accommodated. There is a restaurant on the ground floor supplying food at reasonable prices and guests may take all their meals in the hostel if they wish. Assembly rooms on the top floor can accommodate between 150 and 200 guests whilst a reading room with a television set is designed to make leisure hours pass agreeably.

Charges are 6 kroner (about 6s.) a day for a single room and forty kroner a week. No extra charge is made if two wish to bunk together, but a married couple taking one of the larger double rooms are charged ten or twelve kroner.

Our photographs show a front view of the hostel in the Peder Skramsgade together with a glimpse of one of the tastefully decorated bedrooms.



Fishermen's conditions in Belgium



by R. Dekeyzer, President, Belgian Transport Workers' Federation

HAVING FISH FOR DINNER OR FOR HIGH TEA, be it boiled or fried, seems to most of us a normal occurrence. We seldom give a thought as to how this fish got on our table (Oh yes, Mum bought it at the fishmonger and paid so much a pound for it. She probably told the neighbour that it was pretty expensive and that she could not afford the Dover sole or turbot).

The average person tends to assume that those who catch the fish on the high seas are earning high wages, forgetting that the one who is making a good living out of the fish isn't the fisherman nor even the small fishmonger, but usually the wholesale merchant – the one who buys the crates and crates of fish from the fish-market and sells them to shops all over the country.

How many fishing boats have never returned from the fishing grounds? Not a year goes by but in every country at least one vessel does not return to its home-port.

Conditions of life on board a fishing vessel are far from rosy. It took the Belgian Fishermen's Union years before a certain amount of social legislation was made applicable to fishermen. In many ways, the public authorities considered them a class apart and they were left to fend for themselves.

It is true that the interest of the International Labour Organization in the conditions of work of fishermen is of long standing. But although the First Session of the International Labour Conference, held in Washington in 1919, discussed the question of hours of work of fishermen and *decided* to refer it to a

special maritime conference for consideration, things are still far from perfect. Resolutions were adopted and recommendations were made, but again most countries replied that they were *contemplating* action in that respect. Thirty years have passed and most countries are *still contemplating action*. Nevertheless, the Belgian Union of Fishermen has managed to improve social conditions of fishermen through collective agreements concluded with the associations of trawler-owners.

Five types of boats

Let us take a look at conditions existing in Belgium – a small country, it is true, but with a fairly good trade-union tradition.

We have in our fishing fleet five categories of boats:

a) the 'shrimp-boats', usually not exceeding thirty-five tons gross. Range: along the Belgian coast. Fish: shrimps, and in Winter shotten herring and sprat;

b) 'coasting fishing-boats', up to seventy tons gross and working the North Sea up to thirty miles from the Belgian coast. Fish: deep-sea fish and in winter shotten herring and sprat;

c) 'medium sized vessels', forty tons gross. Range: Central North Sea, the Bristol Channel and English Channel;

d) 'deep-sea fishing vessels', 160 tons gross, operating South of Ireland and off the coast of Spain and Portugal, catching mostly cod, haddock and skate;

e) deep-sea fishing vessels (steam and motor) of at least 197 tons gross. Range: waters around Iceland, White Sea, Bear Island. Fish: chiefly cod, haddock, skate, etc.

The number of persons engaged in fishing varies around two thousand.

The Belgian Government assist owners or would-be owners of fishing vessels, either by advancing them money towards the purchase of equipment (e.g. more powerful engines) or towards buying a vessel. Applications for aid of this kind are reviewed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and passed on to a Committee consisting of Government, owners' and fishermen's representatives for a final decision. Subject



A pleasant and even romantic picture, but conditions on board a fishing vessel are usually very far from romantic and often the exact opposite of pleasant

to satisfactory guarantees, the applicant may be given credit up to a maximum of seventy per cent of the outlay. He has from fifteen to twenty years to repay the loan which carries an interest of only 2.5 or 2.25 per cent as against the usual 5.75 per cent. The owner of a vessel thus acquired starts to pay his debt off one year after the vessel has been put into service.

No fixed system of pay

In Belgium there is a great variety of systems of remuneration. In most cases, the men receive a percentage of the catch. Only ten per cent have a system of fixed wages, plus a percentage of the catch. No uniformity exists as regards the percentage share in the value of the catch, not even for each separate type of vessel. In principle, the percentage is calculated on gross proceeds.

Fish is sold freely at the auctions. General legislation pegging prices at a coefficient of 350 or 400 compared with an index of 100 for 1939 has not been applied because of the special nature of sea produce.

At certain periods of the year, earnings are not sufficient to constitute a bare living wage. The deficiencies are more or less made up by larger earnings in good fishing seasons or when the market ensures a fair price for the catch.

There is no guaranteed minimum wage for Belgian fishermen, nor, in general, any special rate for overtime, since there are no fixed hours of work. The only exception is where a certain amount of overtime must be worked in the port during unloading of the catch. Practice with regard to work on board by the crew for maintenance, etc. differs according to the type of vessel.

Liver proceeds are usually given entirely to the crew, unless there is oil-extracting equipment on board, in which case the crew shares 50% of the oil produced.

The ancient custom of granting a basket of fish for family consumption to each member of the crew exists in all cases.

No fixed hours

There is, as already stated above, no regulation of hours in the Belgian fishing



industry either by legislation or agreement. The hours of work on board may normally be estimated at fifteen per day, work not being interrupted on Sundays when at sea. Moreover, when on the fishing grounds there is hardly any rest taken whatsoever, except for food or a short nap.

The trips to sea vary according to the size of the vessel. Shrimp-boats are in every day. The largest are absent between three and four weeks. On returning to port the men get between three to four days' leave.

With regard to manning, legislation requires a sufficient crew so that work



On board a fishing trawler, baskets of fish are being washed down with a hose preparatory to being stored below

fishermen working at sea, a Royal Decree prescribes compensatory time-off. The average daily wage is paid on public holidays.

Ship's articles, signed by the crew before going to sea, constitute a contract and are binding on both sides. They comprise the general duration of the voyage, the number and description of the crew, the remuneration and the capacity in which each seaman is to serve. The skipper must ensure that each member of the crew signing the articles, understands them.

Fishermen are required to submit to medical examination at the time of entering the profession, in accordance with legislative provisions. For masters, mates and engineers, special aptitudes are required regarding the ability to distinguish colours, vision and hearing also being tested.

Belgian legislation requires the shipowner to provide seamen on board ship with properly equipped quarters proportional to the number of occupants and reserved exclusively for their use. Agreements contain stipulations on the furnishing of beds, bedding, lockers and messing utensils.

on board can be organized at sea in conformity with minimum standard rules (two ABs on deck, a certificated master, and, in the case of engines developing more than 500 h.p., at least one certificated engineer). When the crew numbers more than eight, at least two boys must be signed on. This manning scale naturally increases with the size of the vessel.

There is no continuity of employment: a man can sign off or be discharged on entering the home port.

All fishermen receive state benefits in the event of unemployment. In Belgium there is no interruption of work in the fishing industry, except for the period from fifteen to thirty days after Easter which is utilized for repairing the boats.

Social legislation

Due to the activity of the fishermen's union, the law lays down two weeks' holidays with an equivalent of three weeks' pay. Contributions to the National Fund for Annual Holidays are paid by employers through the National Security Office.

Furthermore, the law provides for ten paid public holidays, other than Sundays, as fixed by Royal Decree. For

On the fishing grounds there is hardly any rest for the fishermen. A short nap is often the best that they can hope for

Large vessels have a cook signed on as such. On the smaller vessels the cooking is done by one of the crew. In large ships, the food scales are laid down in the collective agreement. The crews of smaller vessels provide their own food.

Safety at sea

As regards medical care, all vessels must have a medicine chest or first-aid kit. The preliminary medical care is given to a sick or injured fisherman by the captain. The size of the medicine chest and its contents vary according to the number of days the vessel usually remains at sea.

Legislation also lays down rules on safety at sea in regard to lifeboats, wireless equipment, lifejackets, fire extinguishers, distress signal rockets, marine maps, etc. Periodic vessel and equipment inspection by the competent authorities are also required.

Certificates of competency are required of skippers, mates and engineers. A skipper's first-class certificate calls for knowledge similar to that required for an officer on coastwise vessels.

Fishermen are covered by a general scheme of unemployment insurance. The owner is also liable for sickness, accident, medical care, hospitalization and repatriation during the voyage.

These few remarks tend to show that



we have already obtained quite a few improvements for our fishermen. Their life is still hard and dangerous, much more than that of a seaman of the merchant navy. Conditions can still be improved (regulation of working hours, guaranteed wages, compensation for Sundays spent at sea, better living quarters, more welfare, more safety measures, etc.).

That is the task for tomorrow, and will largely depend on the strength of the Belgian Fishermen's Union.

(continued from page 47)

the operation of the vessels seasonal – which no one will deny it is.


At this point, however, they conveniently forget that the theory of employer experience rating is that it is to provide the employer with an incentive to discover some off-season employment. The imagination which fails them in finding off-season employment for the men who man the Great Lakes vessels during the summer comes quickly to their rescue, when the need is for the development of a device in the state law to protect their tax rate. The answer is simple: being seasonal, the men should be disqualified for unemployment compensation benefits during the time the industry is not in operation.

In other words, unemployment compensation benefits can be paid in the State of Ohio (and in certain other Great Lakes states) during the time when there is plenty of employment, but it cannot be paid during that season of the year when the men are most likely to be unemployed. Thus, the result of employer experience rating completes a 180-degree turn.

The law, with its seasonal disqualification, serves not to protect the workers against unemployment, and thus carry out the purpose for which the unemployment insurance law was originally adopted, but is now devoted to the purpose of protecting employers' tax rates.

This is why the effort of the SIU-GLD to change these seasonal provisions in Ohio and other Great Lakes states has significance far beyond that of protecting the right and interests of Great Lakes seamen. What the SIU is really attempting to do is to get the unemployment compensation laws back to their original purpose. The welfare of thousands of workers in industry who never set foot aboard a Great Lakes vessel is involved in this issue.

Developments in Canadian fishing

 SAILS HAVE GIVEN WAY TO ENGINES and small boats have been replaced by larger vessels in Canada's fishing fleet since the end of the war, says the Canadian Bureau of Statistics in a report issued in Ottawa.

The result is that the ranks of the men who fish on Canada's rivers, lakes and seas have been considerably thinned in the last few years, but excluding Newfoundland capital investment in vessels, and gear in the sea and inland fishing industries has been more than doubled since 1948 – from £18,000,000 to £38,000,000. The drop in the number of fishermen in that time was from more than 70,000 to fewer than 65,000.

Modernization of the fishing fleets has meant an increase of nearly 150 per cent in the average equipment investment per fisherman, from £215 in 1946 to £575 in 1952 and still more in the current year.

The changing nature of the Canadian fishing fleets, the report says, has been most marked in coastal waters. In 1946, there were thirty-six sailing vessels of between ten and forty tons fishing in the Atlantic and Pacific, but by 1952 none were left in service. All vessels of ten tons and more still operating were powered by petrol or diesel engines.

In the six years from 1946, the number of petrol-driven vessels of forty tons and over increased from two to twelve, the number of twenty to forty ton vessels from forty-five to seventy-five, and the number of vessels of from ten to twenty tons from 1,101 to 1,278.

The number of diesel vessels of ten to forty tons and over increased from 531 to 756, the number of trawlers from six to nineteen, the number of drifters from ninety-nine to 229, and the number of carrying vessels, small smacks and fish packers from 464 to 1,198.


Over the same period, there were decreases in all kinds of small fishing vessels – sailing and rowing boats from 12,600 to 9,278, petrol boats from 18,264 to 16,514, and diesel boats from 289 to 134. In the inland waters industry, the proportion of powered boats has increased from less than twenty eight per cent in 1946 to more than one third.

The decline in the number of fishermen since 1946 is also markedly confined to those men fishing from small boats and from the shore.

Men fishing from the larger fishing vessels have increased from 1,245 in 1946 – before the sea industry got really under way again after the war – to more than 10,000 at the latest estimate.


But the small boat fishermen decreased by 4,460 to about 45,000 this year, and men fishing from the shore by some 6,000 to under 10,000 this year. The number of people employed in the fish processing industry has also been cut – from 19,396 in 1946 to something under 15,000 in 1954.

Swiss merchant marine personnel

 ACCORDING TO DATA supplied by the Swiss Union of Transport Workers (VHTL), which has undertaken the task of organizing Swiss merchant marine personnel, there was a total of 702 seafarers serving in Swiss vessels at the end of 1954. This total was made up of 287 Swiss, 238 Italians, 102 Germans, 34 Danes, and 26 Dutchmen, together with fifteen from six other countries.

The new Swiss maritime law has not yet come into force. The so-called implementing ordinances required to put it into effect are still in preparation.

Progressive transport legislation from Australia

 THE 'TRANSPORT WORKER', official organ of the Victoria branch of the Australian Transport Workers' Union, contains details of amended legislation on the restriction of hours for carting goods which is well worth study by transport legislators and workers in other countries.

The Act now provides that:

No person shall in or on any vehicle or animal whatsoever carry or permit any other person in his employment to carry any goods whatsoever for hire or reward or in the course of trade:

a) on Sunday at any time;

b) on Saturday before half-past seven o'clock in the morning or after one o'clock in the afternoon;

c) on any other day of the week before seven o'clock in the morning or after half-past six o'clock in the evening.

These restrictions do not apply to the carrying of aerated waters, cordials or ice cream on any day other than a Sunday during the period from the first day of November in any year to the fifteenth day of April next following. They also do not apply to the carrying of livestock on any day other than a Sunday.



Referred
to 1/6/7

It is only recently, says Mr Hallworth, that the problem of industrial relations has assumed major importance in the countries of the Near and Middle East. With the rapid development of industry in these countries since the Second World War has come recognition of the vital importance of a sound industrial relations policy, and the ILO Regional Meeting for the Near and Middle East in 1947 revealed the keen interest of the countries concerned in such questions as freedom of association, collective bargaining, the settlement of labour disputes, and the collaboration of employers' and workers' organizations with the public authorities.

The following brief survey of trade union development in seven countries – Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey – forms part of a longer article in the International Labour Review by Mr Hallworth entitled Freedom of Association and Industrial Relations in the Countries of the Near and Middle East. We hope to publish further extracts from this in later issues of the ITF Journal.

Trade unionism in the Near and Middle East

by J. A. Hallsworth, International Labour Office



Many of the younger men in the Middle East are now learning new skills, particularly in the oil-producing countries. Typical of them is this young Kuwaiti, Ahmed Sayed, who is being trained as a welder at a new sea-water distillation plant

cent of the total population (about twenty-five per cent in Lebanon) is still engaged in agriculture, many in purely pastoral pursuits – even the industrial strides made in recent years have not materially affected this figure. Trade unionism has always developed most slowly in scattered, mainly agricultural communities, on account of the natural difficulties in the way of organization. Moreover, in some of these countries, the post-war trade union legislation has excluded agriculture from its field of application.

At the same time, while this means in certain cases that agricultural workers have not yet been formally accorded the right to organize in trade unions, the loss of potential union membership should not be exaggerated. A very substantial proportion of those who work on the land are independent or semi-independent tenant-farmers, and in many cases they can and do form associations, though not normally of the kind that enters into collective industrial relations. In several of the countries of the Near and Middle East, therefore, the wage-earning agricultural workers are actually a minority among those who gain their living from the land, and the fact that many even of these work only on a seasonal basis would add to the difficulty of organizing unions.

For all these reasons there exists no

IN THE SIX COUNTRIES OTHER THAN ISRAEL, there have been many similar features and considerations entering into the background against which workers' and employers' organizations have emerged. These organizations have in recent years developed to such a degree that their systems of industrial relations, though as yet in the formative stage, are beginning to become clearly defined.

There are a number of outstanding factors with which the establishment and development of the trade union move-

ments have had to contend. In the first place, taking these six countries together, between seventy and eighty per



The Old Town of Kirkuk, Iraq's fourth largest population centre. Iraq is a predominantly agricultural country, with some eighty per cent of its population deriving its living directly or indirectly from the soil (Photograph by courtesy of COI)

more than a handful of agricultural workers' unions in five of the six countries under review; in the sixth, Egypt, however, there has been considerable activity in the establishment of agricultural workers' unions since the right to organize was formally accorded to such workers at the end of 1952. In the main, however, the trade union movement has developed in industry, oil, mining and commerce.

A second element militating against trade union development is the fact that, despite the former influence of the old systems of guilds and corporations, it had become the practice in more recent years for employers and workers in industry to regulate their relationship by means of individual contracts. The idea of collective labour agreements has made rather less headway against the system of individual contracts than

might be expected from an appraisal of the figures of trade union membership and from the developments that have taken place in other fields of industrial relations.

Thirdly, the period of growth of the young trade union movements has coincided, in most of these countries, with periods of political change. There have been fundamental political changes in Egypt and Syria; legal recognition has been withdrawn from certain unions in Lebanon since the Second World War; two of the strongest unions existing in Iraq in the first years after the war have now disappeared; and the whole trade union movement in Iran disintegrated just before the war broke out. Trade unions have had to regroup and to reorganize, but they have survived.

Finally, although they have had contacts that have sometimes proved useful

with trade union movements in other countries, the workers are in many respects inexperienced in the art of establishing and operating trade unions and, despite the advice and encouragement given by the governments in certain cases, some time will be needed before actual practice in the conduct of industrial relations has fully compensated for this lack of initial experience.

It is against this background that the trade union movement in these Near and Middle Eastern countries has developed and, in Egypt and Turkey more especially, is now making comparatively steady progress.

It may be of interest to note briefly something of the present statistical strength and industrial distribution of the trade unions on which the future development of industrial relations in these countries will so largely depend.

In Iran the young trade union movement disintegrated before the war, and the present unions have developed almost entirely over the last seven or eight years. About 80,000 workers (twenty per cent of the total employed in industry and commerce) are organized in about thirty-six trade unions. Membership would appear to be strongest in the oil, spinning, weaving, tobacco and transport industries, but generally the unions are small, and there are several in each of these industries. The Central Council of Unified Trade Unions of Iran, which at one period claimed 2,000,000 members and exercised considerable influence, largely disintegrated in 1949 after the legal prohibition of the Tudeh Party, with which it was considered to be associated.

In Iraq there are approximately a dozen trade unions, with a total of about 7,000 members. Their total membership is considerably less than in 1945, when the movement (which began in 1944) was making appreciable headway, having regard to the small potential industrial membership in its early stages. Since then, however, the strongest unions, those of the railway workers and of the Basra port workers, have disintegrated.

The trade unions appear to be strongest among the cigarette workers and in textiles, but there is also some union activity in the transport, building and shoe manufacturing industries.

In Syria and Lebanon the trade unions have developed since the close of the Second World War. In November 1953 Syria had approximately 220 trade unions with 27,200 members (i.e., thirty-five per cent, of the workers in occupations authorized to form trade unions or seventeen per cent of the total employed in industry and commerce). About two-thirds of these unions are in Damascus or Aleppo. Organization is particularly strong among railroad and tobacco workers. Approximately forty-two unions exist in Lebanon, with 60,000 members: that is to say, some fifteen per cent of the workers employed in industry and some twenty per cent of those employed in commerce are organized. The strongest organizations are those of the tobacco workers, bank employees, office and commercial workers, railway employees, bakery trades, mechanics, hotel and restaurant trades, and the hairdressing trades.

At the end of September 1953 there were 910 registered trade unions in

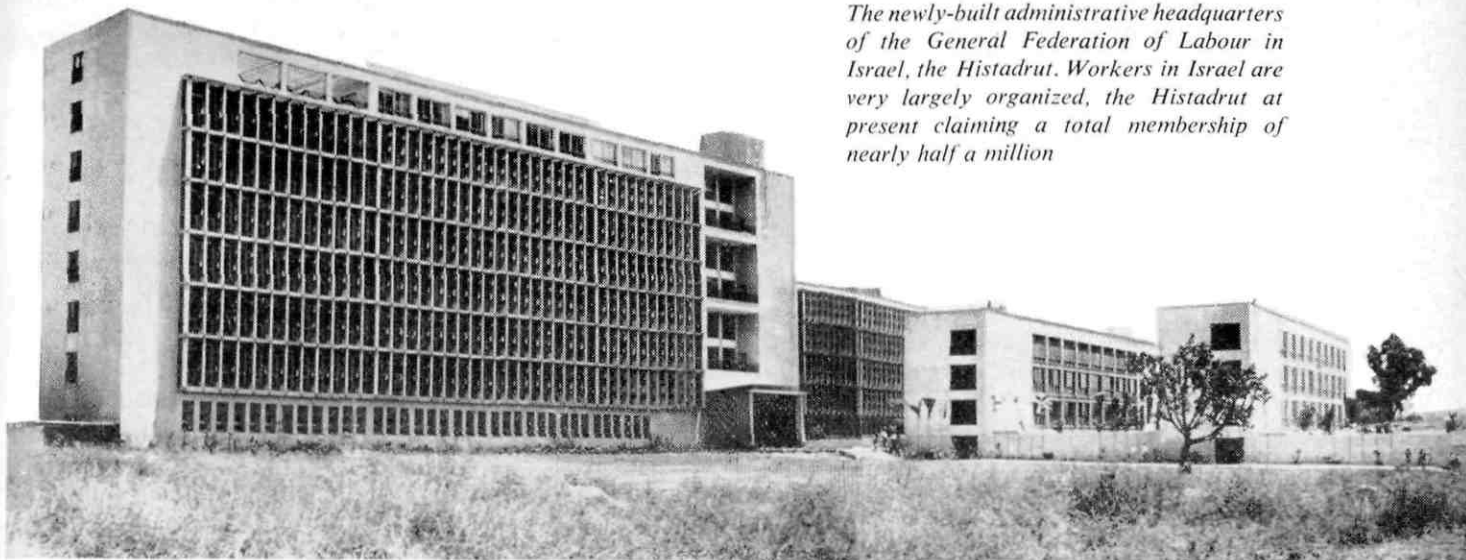
Egypt, 501 of them in Cairo and Alexandria alone, with 250,000 members. The highest degree of trade union organization is found in public undertakings, land, air, and sea transport, food processing, textiles and building; there are about forty unions of agricultural workers. This compares favourably with the 1945 figures of 189 unions and 89,560 members, although the average size of present-day unions is smaller. Most of them, in fact, are very small and are organized on a factory basis, but the Mehalla el Kebir spinners' and weavers' union claims 17,000 members. These unions include six national organizations – the Transport Workers' Union (16,000 members), the Union of Workers in the Oil Industry (7,000 members), the Tobacco Workers' Union (4,500 members), the Textile Workers' Union, the Musicians' Union and the Union of Cinema and Theatre Employees.

Finally, in Turkey the growth of trade unionism since the Trade Union Act of 1947 has been most marked. While there existed in March 1949, under that Act, some seventy unions with 75,000 members, the numbers had risen by August 1952 to some 211 unions with 173,000 members, i.e., thirty-three per cent. of the total workers covered by the Labour Code or just over twenty-five per cent. of all industrial workers – the highest percentage (Israel excepted) in any country of the Near and Middle East. The biggest trade unions are the Zonguldak Coal Miners' Union with 17,000 members, and the Izmir Tobacco Workers' Union with 11,000. Next come the Izmir Textile Workers' Union, with 3,300 members, and the State Railway Industry Workers' Union, the Istanbul Textile Industry Workers' Union and the Monopoly Tobacco-leaf Workers' Union, each with a little over 2,000 members.

Employers' associations, at least those formed for purposes of industrial relations, including collective bargaining, have not developed in these countries to the same extent as the trade unions. The emphasis has been placed rather on the development of chambers of commerce

One of the most modern vocational training centres in the Middle East has been established in Jordan by the ILO and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Designed to aid Arab refugees now living in Jordan, it provides training in a number of skilled trades (ILO photo)





The newly-built administrative headquarters of the General Federation of Labour in Israel, the Histadrut. Workers in Israel are very largely organized, the Histadrut at present claiming a total membership of nearly half a million

and industry devoted more to matters of economic and industrial planning than to industrial relations. Thus, in Turkey there are ninety-four chambers of commerce or industry or of commerce and industry, and 220 artisans' associations, but in August 1952 there were only five employers' associations active in the field of industrial relations – associations for the bakery and hotel and restaurant trades in Istanbul and Ankara, and an association of textile employers in Istanbul. Lebanon has sixty-one employers' associations with 517 members, and Syria has 184 employers' or craftsmen's associations with 13,254 members, but it is not known how many of these exist as a counterpart to the trade unions for the purpose of determining labour-management relations. In Egypt the principal employers' association is the Egyptian Federation of Industry with 1,200 members, which was recognized by the Government in 1947. Of the twelve Iranian employers' associations with 3,475 members, the biggest is the Tea Shop Owners' Association with 1,800 members, the Confectioners' and Cafe Owners' Association, and the Boot and Shoe Manufacturers' Association. There are no employers' associations in Iraq.


The factors mentioned above as having militated against trade union development in those countries have had less influence in Israel. Only fifteen per cent. of the population earns its living on the land, the rest being engaged mainly in industry, commerce and the professions. Even those engaged in agriculture are

highly organized from the trade union point of view – this has been facilitated by the growth of agricultural co-operatives and the concentration of agricultural workers in particular centres. The idea of collective action was established before the Second World War. The main trade union organization, the Histadrut, had been advancing steadily ever since its foundation in 1920, and the heavy immigration of the last ten years brought citizens from many countries that were already firm adherents to collective bargaining systems and experienced in collective industrial relations, both on the workers' and on the employers' sides. Moreover, the trade union movement was actively encouraged and supported by the Government of the new State; in fact, the Histadrut in particular was forced by economic circumstances – the need to absorb and provide for immigrants and at the same time to develop a rapidly expanding economy as part of the urgently required new national structure – to take the part of a pioneer, almost as a partner of the Government in the early stages at least, in building up the State.

In 1920 the Histadrut had 4,000 members; at the end of 1951, 215,000. It now claims over 472,000. This figure, however, includes 148,661 workers' wives occupied in their households.

There are two more workers' organizations in Israel, independent of the Histadrut: a 'National Labour Federation'; whose membership is not known but is comparatively small, and an 'Arab Workers' Congress'.

World tanker tonnage

 WORLD TANKER TONNAGE increased by a little over 3½ million tons deadweight in 1954. Of this tonnage, some 1½ million tons deadweight were added during the second half of the year. These figures emerge from a half-yearly analysis of tankers of 500 tons and over (excluding US-government-owned tonnage) published by Davies and Newman, Ltd. of Great Britain.

For the first time, tanker tonnage under the Liberian flag at 3,513,690 tdw has exceeded that registered in Panama which amounts to 3,405,255 tons deadweight. With an increase of more than 550,000 tons in the second half of last year, Liberian tonnage is now the fourth largest flag group.

Net increases of 117,000 and 346,000 tons deadweight are shown by Great Britain and Norway, while the US fleet has decreased by about 290,000 tdw. The major reason for the decrease in US tanker tonnage is stated to be the conversion of Liberty tankers to dry cargo vessels, plus the transfer of many vessels to other flags, mainly Liberian and Panamanian.

The total for the world's tanker tonnage on 1 January is given in the summary as 39,539,445 tons deadweight, exclusive of twenty-five whaling factory ships aggregating 451,977 tons. On that date, the British fleet amounted to 8,043,431 tons, with the USA in second place with 6,995,531, followed by Norway with 6,078,083 tons.

Scandinavian unions will seek shorter work week



ONE OF THE MAIN QUESTIONS discussed at the latest of the regular six-monthly meetings held by trade union and Labour Party representatives from the Scandinavian countries was that of a general reduction in the working week. The meeting, held in Oslo in December, was unanimous in its conclusion that both the industrial and political wings of the Scandinavian labour movement should seek an early reduction in working hours to 40 per week and that, so far as possible, the shorter work week should be introduced at approximately the same time in all the northern countries. It was, however, agreed that the implementation of the 40-hour week should not necessarily be asked for immediately, but that it could be introduced in stages.

Indian railways accident inquiry



DRASTIC CHANGES in the existing methods of railway inspection and inquiry into railway accidents, purchase of railway stores directly by the railways, and speedy and deterrent action to deal with staff offences endangering public safety have been recommended by the Indian Railway Accidents Inquiry Review Committee.

The Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Shah Nawaz Khan, was set up at the instance of the National Railway Users' Consultative Council to review the incidence of railway accidents in the country and the measures to deal with them.

The committee is understood to have expressed the opinion that there was no cause for alarm regarding the incidence of accidents on Indian railways and was satisfied that 'prompt and reasonably effective steps' were being taken by the authorities to deal with every aspect of the matter.

The following are some of the more important recommendations of the Committee:

a) The functions of the Government Railway Inspectorate, presently under the Communications Ministry, should be entrusted to a special section of the Railway Ministry.

b) Major railways accidents should be inquired into by judicial authorities assisted by competent technical assessors.

c) Owing to the increasing work-load imposed on them, the jurisdiction of signal supervisors, bridge, permanent-way and transportation inspectors should be reduced or alternately additional staff be made available to them.

d) The railway stores system should be decentralized.

e) The present practice of frequent but less thorough train examinations at interchange points, should give way to the highest and detailed standards of examinations at suitable intervals.

f) Swift and severe penalties, to serve as a deterrent, should be imposed on personnel guilty of offences against safety.

Training scheme for British Railway clerical staff



A NEW SCHOOL for junior railway clerks opened recently by the London Midland Region of British Railways at Derby represents a new development in the education of British railway staff and is expected to be followed by other schools of similar type.

All the students are new entrants who, before joining the railway service, have received a secondary school education. Booking, parcels and goods clerical work will be included in the curriculum, which will last four weeks. Eighteen students will attend each course. A prototype booking office has been erected in the school.

At present, students will be drawn from the Derby, Leicester, and Stoke districts, but the London Midland Region hopes shortly to extend the scheme to other centres, including Manchester and London.

The school is intended to give the junior a comprehensive impression of what constitutes railway clerical work instead of leaving him to find out as best he can by experience. Unlike most of the self-improvement schemes and study courses already in existence, this is done in working hours.

Cuban shipping canal plan



IN ORDER TO REDUCE sailing time between North and South America, the Cuban Government has recently granted a concession for the construction of a north-south ship canal, some 200 feet wide and fifty feet deep, extending from Cardenas Bay to Cochinos Bay and cutting the island in two, to the *Compania del Atlantico al Mar Caribe*.

Bookreview

SYSTEMS OF SOCIAL SECURITY - UNITED STATES

ILO - Geneva, pp 106; price 75 cents - 4s. 6d.



THIS DESCRIPTION of the social security programmes of the United States, prepared by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, follows the plan drafted by the ILO for its series of monographs on national systems of social security, the first of which was 'Systems of Social Security: New Zealand' - Geneva, ILO 1949.

The present monograph contains a complete description of the public programmes in the USA including the basic national system of old age and survivors' insurance, the federal-state and state-local programmes of public assistance, the state systems of unemployment insurance and temporary disability insurance, the federal and state workmen's compensation programme and the special social insurance programme for railroad workers.

The information contained in this study has been brought up to date by the inclusion of the principal provisions of the latest legislation in this field, given in the form of appendices, whilst appropriate footnotes are inserted in the text to draw attention to the main changes involved.

Reference is made to the various related public programmes which provide services rather than cash benefits, e.g. vocational rehabilitation and employment services, but no attempt has been made to include special systems covering government employees at the various government levels.

Following (in Chapter I) a brief outline of the historical development of social security in the US and the legislation in this field, data on the various aspects of social security in the US is assembled under four chapter headings - scope of protection, provision of benefits, organization and financing of social security. Thus, for example, information on unemployment benefits for railwaymen can be readily found under the different sectional headings in the relevant chapters.

This fully informative review should prove of considerable value to all those interested in the forms that social security has assumed in the United States.

International Transport Workers' Federation

President : A. DEAKIN

General Secretary : O. BECU

Asst. General Secretary : P. TOFAHRN

7 industrial sections catering for

RAILWAYMEN
ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS
INLAND WATERWAY WORKERS
DOCKERS
SEAFARERS
FISHERMEN
CIVIL AVIATION STAFF

- Founded in London in 1896
- Reconstituted at Amsterdam in 1919
- Headquarters in London since the outbreak of the Second World War
- 160 affiliated organizations in 54 countries
- Total membership: 6,000,000

The aims of the ITF are

to support national and international action in the struggle against economic exploitation and political oppression and to make international working class solidarity effective;

to cooperate in the establishment of a world order based on the association of all peoples in freedom and equality for the promotion of their welfare by the common use of the world's resources;

to seek universal recognition and enforcement of the right of trade union organization;

to defend and promote, on the international plane, the economic, social and occupational interests of all transport workers;

to represent the transport workers in international agencies performing functions which affect their social, economic and occupational conditions;

to furnish its affiliated organizations with information about the wages and working conditions of transport workers in different parts of the world, legislation affecting them, the development and activities of their trade unions, and other kindred matters.

Affiliated unions in

Argentina (Illegal) ● Australia ● Austria
Belgium ● British Guiana ● Canada
Chile ● Columbia ● Cuba ● Denmark
Ecuador ● Egypt ● Estonia (Exile) ● Finland
France ● Germany ● Great Britain
Greece ● Grenada ● Hong Kong ● Iceland
India ● Israel ● Italy ● Jamaica
Japan ● Kenya ● Lebanon ● Luxembourg
Mexico ● The Netherlands
New Zealand ● Nigeria ● Norway
Nyasaland ● Pakistan ● Poland (Exile)
Republic of Ireland ● Rhodesia
Saar ● St. Lucia ● South Africa
Spain (Illegal Underground Movement)
Surinam ● Sweden ● Switzerland
Syria ● Trieste ● Trinidad ● Tunisia ● Uruguay
United States of America



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