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2



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Contents

	page
A call to boycott by Omer Becu	21
The Canadian Express Motor- man - Jack of all trades.....	26
The Executive Committee meets in London.....	30
The story of the NMU	32
The development of Indian ports	37
The Philippine Transport Workers' Organization	38
Over sixty years of activity	39
ITF donation to International Seamen's Home.....	40
Book review - The Norwegian Trade Union Movement	40
Establishment of Argentine State Railways.....	40

Our cover-picture: A Hungarian refugee, fleeing from her native country to escape Communist tyranny, crosses a canal on an improvised bridge made from a slender tree-trunk and a rope handrail. Helping hands are stretched out to her from the Austrian side of the frontier. The bridge is one of several structures hastily built by the refugees to replace the regular bridge, destroyed by the Communists to prevent people escaping from the vast prison of Hungary.

*'When one per cent of the Hungarian people
asked the Russians for help they sent ten divisions;
when ninety-nine per cent of the Hungarian people
asked the West for help they sent – their sympathy.'*



A call to boycott

by OMER BECU, General Secretary of the ITF

THE BITTER LITTLE COMMENT QUOTED ABOVE was current in Budapest at the height of the Hungarian revolution and is probably still being repeated there, for although the Hungarian people now probably better understand why the West was unable to intervene materially in their support, it is clear that most of them feel that they were let down, and that they could have been helped in other ways which might have been equally effective in their one-sided struggle against a system which they themselves had totally rejected and which could only be maintained by alien military force.

In that feeling they are not alone. Many of us in the free world have uneasy consciences as a result of the events of the past months, consciences which we have tried to salve by adopting resolutions, writing condemnatory articles, by telling ourselves that nothing effective could have been done, or – perhaps the most popular way of all – by contributing to the Hungarian relief funds. Unfortunately, most of these devices are no more than what they purport to be – conscience-salves. They soothe, but they do not satisfy. We are still left with an uncomfortable feeling at the back of our minds that we should have *done* something, or at the very least tried to do something. An irrational, illogical feeling, no doubt, but one which is not easily stilled. One, in fact, which becomes stronger with the growing realization that the Hungarians themselves expected more tangible aid, and indeed were even inconsiderate enough to ask for it.

Post-mortems can be tedious affairs. Sometimes they are mere routine, formally establishing facts already widely known or confirming virtual certainties. On many occasions, however, they serve to bring new facts to light, to show where mistakes were made, to explain the circumstances which led up to a particular situation or the motives of those who were involved in it.

That is why we are proposing, in this article, to devote some attention to the reactions of the free trade union move-

ment to the events in Hungary, particularly with regard to the proposal for a trade union boycott of Russian goods and services and the part played in that proposal by the ITF. We feel that this may be useful because of certain misconceptions which have arisen and because some in our movement have thought it necessary to question the wisdom of the action suggested. The sequence of events which led up to the original proposal being made seems also to be the subject of some confusion. Since the latter point is a rather fundamental one, it may be advisable to deal with it at the outset and so clear up in advance any doubts which may exist.

The initial success achieved by the Hungarian people's revolution was followed, on 4 November, by a full-scale intervention on the part of the Russian occupying force, which had in the meantime been heavily strengthened by reinforcements brought in from outside the country. That intervention, and the brutal and arbitrary manner in which it was carried out, produced an immediate wave of anger and revulsion throughout the civilized world. I am proud to say that among the first to give practical expression to this feeling were dockers affiliated with the ITF who, true to our tradition of active hostility to totalitarian repression, spontaneously refused to handle Russian cargoes as a sign of protest. The initial action was taken by Dutch dockers in the port of Rotterdam on the morning of 5 No-

vember (i.e., on the first working day following the Russian attack). They were quickly joined by their colleagues in Amsterdam and later by dockers in the Belgian ports of Antwerp and Ostend.

As was only natural, an early move was made by the dockers' leaders, both in these ports and in others, to contact the ITF Secretariat and to establish not only how dockers elsewhere were reacting to the situation but also what the ITF as a body proposed to do. As a result of these talks it was decided to call an emergency conference of seafarers' and dockers' representatives at the earliest possible moment in order to discuss the feasibility of a full-scale boycott of Russian shipping by these two groups. This conference met in London on 8 and 9 November and will be dealt with in more detail at a later stage.

In the meantime, however, the ITF, realizing that the success of any such action would depend in large measure on the support given it by the trade union movement as a whole, took immediate steps to ascertain the attitude of the ICFTU. Both the General Secretary of the Confederation, Brother Oldenbroek, and the General Secretary of its European Regional Organization, Brother Schevenels, were contacted and both informed the ITF that as soon as a decision to implement a boycott was taken by the latter they would call upon their constituent national trade union centres to back it up with all the means at their disposal. It is also worth noting in this connection that the question of a boycott of Russian and satellite shipping had in fact already been discussed within the ICFTU itself. Reference to these discussions and to the spontaneous action taken by Dutch dockers was made at the meeting of the Executive

of the European Regional Organization held in Brussels on 6 November, when it was emphasized that no action of this kind could be taken without the ITF.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Emergency Joint Conference of the ITF Dockers' and Seafarers' Sections met in London on 8 and 9 November. It was attended by representatives of ITF-affiliated maritime workers' unions from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Norway, and Sweden. Delegates from the Polish and Estonian seafarers' organizations in exile were also present. Although it was obvious that the main burden of any boycott which might be decided on would fall on the dockers and, to a lesser degree, on the seafarers, it was also realized that it might well be necessary to call on other groups of transport workers for supporting action at a later stage.*) For that reason, it was considered that it would also be advisable to invite members of the Executive Committee to participate in the Conference and to play their part in any decision which might be taken involving other groups. Despite the very short notice which had of necessity to be given, the Conference included Executive Committee members from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The Conference gave extremely careful consideration to the possible implications of so grave a step as the calling of an international boycott of Russian shipping, the subject being discussed fully and frankly. A number of difficulties, of both a technical and a legal nature, were pointed out, as were also the problems facing individual unions as the result of specific policies adopted by their respective national centres, the presence of strong Communist factions in certain ports, and the fact that there had not been sufficient time for full prior consultation in some cases.

The General Secretary informed the Conference of the conversations which he had had with the principal officers of the ICFTU and its European Regional Organization, who had stated that if the ITF decided to take sympathetic action with the Hungarian workers, all European national centres and the ICFTU would rally behind the dockers

and seafarers and make the action effective.

The General Secretary also pointed out that spontaneous action had already been taken by dockers in some countries, and that the unions were awaiting a decision and a signal by the ITF to place it on an organized basis. The ITF, he said, had a great history of active solidarity with the victims of oppression. The need for such action had never been more urgent than in the tragedy which was being enacted in Hungary. If Soviet troops were allowed to crush the Hungarian fight for freedom in blood, the clock would be set back for many years, and faith in freedom and democracy would be stifled in the victims of repression behind the Iron Curtain.

The Conference ended on 9 November with the unanimous adoption of the following resolution:

'This emergency joint conference of the ITF Dockers' and Seafarers' Section, meeting with members of the Executive Committee in London on 8 and 9 November, has given careful and anxious consideration to the present international situation, with particular reference to the crisis in the Middle East and the Soviet campaign of repression in Hungary.

With regard to the position in the Middle East, the conference recalls that the ITF has already strongly condemned the military action by the Israeli, British, and French Governments and stated that there can be no justification for a unilateral decision to resort to armed intervention.

The conference expresses its satisfaction that a cease-fire has now been arranged in the Middle East area and calls upon the Israeli, British, and French Governments to withdraw their troops from Egyptian territory at the earliest possible moment in conformity with the resolution which has been adopted by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the opinion of the conference, such a withdrawal is essential to the restoration of peace in the area.

The conference expresses its horror and revulsion at the ruthless slaughter of freedom-loving Hungarians which is now being carried out by the armed forces of Soviet Russia. It recalls that the Hungarian people were trying to achieve by peaceful means the elementary human rights which are taken for

granted in all democratic countries: personal liberty of speech; freedom of religious belief; freedom of association in trade unions and political parties; the right to strike and to elect a government of their own choice. In reply to these demands the Soviet Government has treacherously intervened and is suppressing a nation-wide movement for liberty with a brutality which is a disgrace to the civilized world.

The conference joins with the rest of the free world in condemning this intervention and in voicing its indignation and anger at the barbarous methods employed against the people of Hungary. It considers that the International Labour Movement cannot fail to give practical expression to its support for the Hungarian people and its loathing for their oppressors. It calls upon the ICFTU to undertake an international boycott of all Russian goods and services, and declares that the dockers' and seafarers' sections of the ITF stand ready to take their full part in the action and calls upon all other categories of transport workers also to play their respective parts.

As a further token of solidarity with the people of Hungary, the Executive Committee has decided to make a grant of £5,000 to aid the victims of Communist oppression.'

By a strange quirk of fate, the ITF proposal for an international trade union boycott was made for the same reason that the first major action of this kind was taken a little over thirty-six years ago - to aid the workers of Hungary. That is indeed a coincidence, but it is no more than that. There was, however, nothing coincidental about the fact that the action taken against the White Terror in Hungary in 1920 should have had to be considered against the Red Terror in 1956. In doing so, the ITF was merely following the same consistent line that was adopted by its leaders in 1920: support for oppressed workers everywhere and bitter opposition to those who oppress them.

Let the Communists, who have been making such play with the name of Horthy in the past months, twist and turn in their attempts to convince their followers that a Red Terror was necessary in order to protect the workers of Hungary against what they, in a childish effort to evoke a past which is dead, have described as a White Terror. We of the free trade union movement, who

*) A resolution supporting the decision taken by the seafarers and dockers was in fact adopted at the Road Transport Workers' Conference held in Stuttgart from 13 to 16 November.



Despite all Communist attempts to cow them, passive resistance is still a powerful weapon in the hands of the Hungarian people. This was the scene in Budapest on 4 December when thousands of Hungarian women marched in silent demonstration to the tomb of the Unknown Warrior to honour those who died fighting for freedom; in the background, Russian troops and armoured cars

opposed Horthy as we now oppose Krushchev and Kadar, who have no shameful record of collaboration with dictator regimes, are not interested in the rival merits of the various brands of Fascism, whether they be White, Black, or Red. For us the essential thing is that they are all enemies of the working class and thus our enemies too.

The events following the adoption of the above-quoted resolution by the Dockers' and Seafarers' Conference were as follows:

On 15 November, an emergency conference of European trade union representatives was held in Hamburg for the purpose of considering measures to assist the Hungarian people's struggle for national independence and human freedom. The conference, which was called under the joint auspices of the ICFTU, the European Regional Organization of the ICFTU, and the ITF, adopted a statement saying *inter alia* that 'the

free Labour Movement should give further practical and organized expression to the indignation and horror of the workers at the barbarous methods employed against the people of Hungary.' The conference also decided to set up a twelve-man committee for the purpose of working out the details of the action to be taken.

At its first meeting, this committee decided to submit its proposals on the subject to the European national centres affiliated with the ICFTU for their comments. These proposals included the suggestion that a trade union boycott of Russian goods and services should be instituted for a limited period. At its second meeting, the committee was informed that only eight of the national centres thus approached had replied at all, and that of these replies only two were in favour of boycott action, with one conditionally in favour. In consequence of this, to say the least,

extremely disappointing response, the committee was obliged to abandon further consideration of the project.

That in brief is the chronology of the events which resulted in the proposal for the boycott and its subsequent rejection, almost by default. Let us now examine some of the reasons for the reluctance of some trade unionists to support the proposed action.

The first, of course, strikes at the very root of the whole problem. Could the trade union movement, it was asked, in fact have organized and carried out a successful boycott? Should it not be more concerned with keeping its feet on the ground and its head out of the clouds? Those are fair questions and they deserve a fair answer. One of our contemporaries has referred in this connection to the failure of the boycott against German goods called for by the old IFTU following the Nazis' seizure of power. That is, of course, a compar-

ison, but in our view a somewhat misleading one. One could, for instance, equally well quote the example of the successful embargo on the shipment of arms to Poland during the War of Intervention, or the action taken in support of the British miners' strike in 1926, which succeeded in stopping the export of all continental coal to Britain and to which the late Ernest Bevin paid so warm a tribute at the ITF Paris Congress.

The action in 1933 is, however, a bad example for another reason. After all, Hitler was already in power when the IFTU attempted to institute its boycott; it was already too late to change the situation. What might have happened if action had been taken earlier as some contemporary trade unionists, including the leaders of the ITF, wanted, is naturally a matter for conjecture. But then so is the facile assumption that the trade union movement of 1956 could not have organized a successful boycott in this case. It seems, unfortunately, that some people tend to adopt a similar attitude towards the international trade union movement to that which one hears expressed very often about the United Nations. They tend to dismiss

it as a world force, forgetting apparently that our international movement is only the sum of its component national unions, not an independent entity, and that consequently the impotence which they sometimes ascribe to it could only be a reflection of more deep-seated weakness in the movement as a whole.

However, we ourselves do not share this pessimistic view of the potentialities of the international movement. It has, after all, made a certain amount of progress and learned a few lessons since the 1930's. It is not that the movement lacks strength, but rather that some of us are fearful of using that strength, even in the best of causes. It is perfectly true that we should try to keep our feet on the ground, but not by the expedient of not moving them at all. One is entitled to ask oneself the following question: if it is not possible for our movement to act in support of workers who are fighting and dying for the right to be free men, then when is it going to be possible?

The second objection, namely that the boycott could not have upset the Soviet economy is a rather specious one, to say the least. No one would seriously suggest that it was possible to upset the

economy of any country by such means alone, any more than declaring a recalcitrant employer's goods 'black' is seriously intended to put him out of business. But then, nor was it suggested that this was to be the aim of the boycott. The ITF dockers' and seafarers' resolution in fact called upon the trade union movement 'to give practical expression to its support for the Hungarian people and its loathing for their oppressors.' The boycott, apart from any material inconvenience which it might have caused – and this could have been considerable – was also intended as a practical lesson in working-class solidarity to a regime which has some pretensions to represent the workers. Its moral repercussions might well have been more far-reaching than its material effect. It is, after all, a relatively easy matter for the Communists to explain away the antagonism of what they blandly refer to as 'capitalist' governments. It is not so easy, however, to convince ordinary men and women behind the Iron Curtain that the workers of the free world are also part of a 'capitalist plot'. That is one discovery which the Russians have already made the hard way in Hungary. It might not have been a bad idea to rub that lesson in. Nor might it have been a bad thing to let the workers of Hungary know that they were not alone in their fight.

A further argument, namely that trade union action should not be taken for political purposes, is, of course, true up to a point. In a democracy, no single group, however powerful, has the right to substitute itself for the normal machinery of government. But can that argument really be said to have applied to the Hungarian situation? Here we had a whole nation, led by its workers, in revolt against a political system which it had utterly rejected and which had deprived it of the most elementary human rights, including the right to freedom of association and to elect a government of its own choice. A nation, moreover, which was making use of the only real weapon left to it, the general strike, a weapon which our movement has made peculiarly its own.

We all understand why it was not possible for the governments of the free world to give material aid to the Hungarian people. The fear of a third world war was too real. But should we of the trade union movement have evaded our own special responsibility towards the



The General Secretary discusses the Hungarian situation with Anna Kethly during the ICFTU Executive Board meeting held in Brussels. Anna Kethly, the leader of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, suffered years of imprisonment and ill-treatment because of her stubborn refusal to accept Communist domination of her party and her country. She is the only Minister in the Nagy Government who is still free

Young boys and youths help to clear the rubble from the ravaged streets of Budapest, now covered by the snow of winter. As they do so, sad-faced women, who have been queuing to buy sorely needed supplies of food, trudge by. Food and fuel shortages will make this winter a grim one for the gallant population of the city

people of Hungary on the grounds that this was a purely political problem? In the past, our movement has shown that it has other standards and that it has not been afraid to intervene in such situations when that has seemed necessary. Was it perhaps wrong to support the underground fight against Hitler and Mussolini, the struggle of the Spanish workers against Franco, or the workers of the Argentine in their fight against Peron? More to the point, was it a mistake to aid the trade unionists of Hungary when they were suffering under almost identical circumstances in 1920?

The objection that the Hungarian workers would not have been helped by international trade union action is perhaps best dealt with by the Hungarians themselves. They obviously thought otherwise. During the first week following the Russian attack, for instance, posters appeared in the streets of Budapest appealing to the world's dockers and seafarers to refuse to handle goods for Russia. Again, during the forty-eight-hour general strike called by the workers' councils early in December, a further appeal was made to the world's trade unionists to take strike action in sympathy with them. The workers of Hungary were fighting for their freedom and believed that the world's trade unionists could and would help them. That they were grateful for the financial assistance which they received we do not doubt, but they realized, as we all knew in our hearts, that this alone could not help them to achieve the liberty for which they were fighting and for which they were so willing to die.

Subsequent events have also disproved the argument that there would be difficulties in applying the boycott where the Communists had any real strength. Spontaneous action against Russian ships was in fact taken in several ports in which there was a sizeable Communist or fellow-travelling element. It seems that they, too, were unable to stomach the Russian action in Hungary. Even where Communist dockers did try



to load a Russian ship, as was the case with the 'Viacheslav Molotov' in Copenhagen, they soon had second thoughts when they realized how out of touch they were with their fellow-workers.

It is, unfortunately, true that certain employers in some countries did in fact threaten to take legal action and claim damages against dockers' unions if their goods were not handled. That is to their lasting shame and it might perhaps have been a good idea if they had been told to go ahead with their threats in order that public opinion might see for itself to what extent their greed for money had overcome any other feeling. This is, incidentally, not the first time that employers have shown themselves willing to deal with the Communists under rather dubious circumstances rather than give up a temporary financial advantage. Fortunately, there are other employers in our own industry who have different standards – as exemplified recently by certain shipowners and shipping agents in Holland – and it is to be hoped that they will be able to teach their unprincipled colleagues better ways.

Finally, we come to a point which is by no means a new one, one in fact to which the late Edo Fimmen drew attention as long ago as 1923. It is this: many trade union organizations, when faced with a call to participate in international action, have to admit that they feel themselves prevented from answering it for a variety of reasons connected with

the obligations which they may have entered into with employers, their government, political parties, or, in the case of individual unions, with their national centres. There may, for instance, be clauses in collective agreements or legal stipulations which prevent a withdrawal of labour in such circumstances or provide that a lengthy period of notice must be given, thus precluding the possibility of action being taken in time. Unions may also feel it necessary to take into account commercial treaties entered into by their governments or the fact that their countries have adopted specific policies in the field of international relations. Again, they may consider it advisable to consult with other sections of the labour movement on such an issue.

It is, of course, obvious that, as the trade union movement gains greater influence in national affairs, certain obligations towards other groups may have to be assumed. It is, however, open to serious question whether they should be allowed to inhibit the freedom of trade union organizations to come to the aid of their fellow-workers in other countries when the need arises. The trade union movement should be chary of surrendering any of its independence in the management of its own affairs. The tradition of international solidarity, in particular, is not one which should be lightly discarded, if only for the selfish reason that all of us need the help of others at some time or other.

(continued on page 31)



The Canadian Express Motorman - Jack of all trades

THE JOB IS CLASSIFIED AS MOTORMAN IN THE CANADIAN BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES AND OTHER TRANSPORT WORKERS (CBRE & OTW) working agreement for the Canadian National Railways Express Department but manipulating a motor truck is only one of the many skills needed in the delivery and collection of goods to be transported Express to all parts of the continent and beyond. The motorman has to have a general knowledge of the complete department, from the shipper to the receiver. In smaller communities he may have to do all the work, from the Agent down, but in the large cities he specializes on one job that demands a dozen different special skills. He's a jack of many trades and master of most.

First of all he's a licensed chauffeur, but he is also a salesman selling a service, a part mechanic in the maintenance of his vehicle on the road; he's a cashier, a collection agent; he's sometimes a baby sitter, and always a public relations man for the department; he's a clerk in charge of a variety of forms, a bookkeeper, an authority on customs regulations; he has to know how to load a truck; has to know the geography of a city; has to know train schedules and air flights; has to know about the merchandise he is handling, where it is going and its value and classifica-

tion, and even if he knows all that, something different may demand his good judgment any moment of his working day.

A day in the life of a motorman may be as routine as any job, when the man knows his work, but it could change in the twinkling of an eye. Take, for example, the motormen who operate in and out of the big down-town Toronto Terminal, one of the busiest anywhere, serving an area as large as any and through the toughest of traffic. Just about everything can happen - and often does.

A baby sitter

Like the day a motorman on a route through a suburban district delivered a parcel and the housewife did not have enough cash to pay the bill. She asked the motorman to mind her five children while she went to a neighbour's to borrow some money. She must have got gossiping as she did not return for about an hour. The motorman was helpless. He could not leave the children, could not call for help, but just had to sit, that is baby sit, and wait. He had to do some fast moving the rest of the route to get collections to the downtown terminal about ten miles away in time to catch late afternoon trains. He did.

While the work of Express motormen is about the same in all large cities, the writer went on a few trips for first-hand experience. Nothing unusual happened, except on one downtown call the elevator in a tall building was out of order and the motorman had to climb twelve floors to get a package. 'Good job it wasn't the top floor', he remarked when he reached the street again and peered to the clouds where the twenty-one-story building was pointing.

Packages, parcels, boxes and bags, shipments of every size and weight, are all in a day's work. Some goods may not be worth much more than the Express charges, others may be valued at hundreds of thousands. The money-truck, a special, bullet-proof vehicle, with the motorman and his helper carrying shooting irons, collects and delivers valuables and they are escorted by armed police. Valuables are transferred by Express every day, such as bags of money from the Ottawa Mint to the



This photograph gives a good idea of the wide assortment of goods which the Express motorman is called on to handle - goods, as the article says, which may be 'smaller than a matchbox and larger than engines for planes' (Photograph by courtesy of the Canadian National Railways)



Express goods coming off a Canadian National Railways train. The trains arrive in the morning and the goods must be shipped – often over an area of hundreds of miles – as soon as possible (Photograph by courtesy of the Canadian National Railways)

Bank of Canada, narcotics, jewels, gold, bonds and other costly commodities.

Regular jig saw puzzle

In Toronto the trains arrive from all directions with Express loads in the morning that must be shipped out over an area of hundreds of miles as fast as possible. The goods under a certain weight are moved from the trains by a series of conveyor belts and sorters and checkers direct the articles onto other belts, like railway spurlines, to different doors where the motormen are waiting to load their trucks. A motorman gets the bills for the goods he has to deliver at his door and he matches them with the goods. Then he has to place shipments in his vehicle with care so they will not move and be damaged in transit and also so that they are in convenient places when he reaches a customer's address. Something like a jig saw puzzle, every piece, although of

various sizes and shapes, has to be specially placed to avoid damage and delay.

When his truck is loaded, the motorman has to find a supervisor to sign all his bills and that is when the receivers are under pressure with the drivers driving them to rush so that they can get away. Motormen usually cover the same routes every day, but they may have to take many different streets. Before leaving the terminal a motorman usually maps his course. Some of the drivers leave the terminal in the morning and do not return until late afternoon. Others, on the downtown routes, make four trips a day. When away from the terminal a motorman is on his own, except that he phones in every half-hour or so to see if there are any extra pick-ups he has to make and to report his whereabouts.

We weaved through a downtown Toronto route with motorman George

Corless. He did not have to drive many blocks, as far as mileage is concerned, but he covered about as much ground up and down stairs and elevators, with some of his calls in basements and the others on any floor of a skyscraper. He had to squeeze up narrow alleys, generally lined with well-filled garbage cans, or step into plush offices of marble walls, fancy furniture and inch-deep carpets.

On his route Brother Corless had a set number of calls to make for deliveries and a number of calls to get goods for shipments, while he had to keep his eye open for call-cards which customers hang as an indication that there is an Express order waiting. Most of the customers had their goods for pick-up in convenient places and at many, when parcels were heavy, the shippers helped. Always there was a round of teasing and often he had to lose valuable time listening to a customer's story, but it was all good relations.

'Took me five years to train my customers,' George quipped. Although he was only joking, the cooperation between motorman and shipper or receiver is one of the secrets of the business.

Snakes alive

Downtown routes, where the customers know the business, know what time calls are made and also how to prepare parcels for shipment, even to filling out forms, lack the variety of the suburban runs, although even the routine calls to an airport can supply the unusual; like the time motorman Doug Stewart, Vice-President of the Express Division No. 26, had to pick up a bag full of live snakes. It was late and the night was dark. He said they seemed lifeless, like blubber, apparently doped, but that did not ease his feelings on the trip to the terminal when he said he felt them crawling up his back. When he unloaded them they were just like so many lengths of thick hose pipe and just as limp, but he still has a creepy, crawling feeling when he thinks about them and he hopes they are more popular in a zoo than they were that night for the expressmen.

Snakes alive are only one of thousands of different shipments. It could be the wings of an airplane or the cut wings of a chicken packed in ice and, incidentally, tons of cut chicken, in cracked ice, go through the Toronto terminal every day. There are also regular shipments of chirping baby chicks, a day or so old, in cardboard boxes, and recently a big bull moose was sent Express. A pair of playful bear cubs were in crates the first day we visited but were not around when a cameraman arrived for pictures so we had to

settle for a lonely little puppy dog, who seemed to only want a friendly tap or stroke.

A motorman has to handle shipments smaller than a match box and larger than engines for planes, but it's all in a day's work. In fact every one of a hundred parcels on an average delivery, or pickup, may be different. To move heavy articles going to business concerns a motorman is usually assisted by the shippers with machinery for lifting weight, but on house calls a motorman has to depend on his own strength and knowledge of leverage, the know-how of moving big or heavy articles. He has a hand truck in his vehicle which makes moving loads easy but there is always the problem of hoisting heavy articles up stairs.

A weighty problem

The weight of an article determines the Express costs. That is not much of a problem on downtown routes where collections are made by an appointed collector after the charges are set at the terminal, but on the outlying calls, a motorman has to get the charges and return later to collect.

Often a motorman has to help wrap or pack a parcel in the continual campaign against damages. Sometimes he has to refuse an order when it is not properly prepared for shipment. If an order is packed in a used container — like a tea chest with jagged metal binding — it cannot be accepted. That is a regulation to protect the motorman as several have been seriously cut or had their clothes torn.

There are 225 motormen and helpers running in and out of the downtown

Toronto terminal, wheeling a fleet of 164 vehicles of various types and sizes. On the downtown runs walk-in trucks are used. Giant trailers carry big loads, while there are small panel trucks, vans, open trucks and, of course, the bullet-proof trucks for valuables. A motorman gets his truck at a nearby company garage after he reports at eight o'clock in the morning. He sees that it gets gas, and oil if needed, and drives to his assigned door. It may be two hours before he can get on his way as he has to wait for all trains. On his return, after the day's deliveries, the motorman reports on the condition of his vehicle and any repairs necessary.

Good safety record

With such a large fleet and so many drivers, in a business that specializes in speed, it is remarkable how few accidents are recorded. There has not been a fatal accident in more than ten years and many of the senior drivers have never had an accident of any type. The motormen are proud of their driving and of the Ontario Safety League Award they won last year. Care and courtesy are the secrets of the accident-free records, and the latter was noticed on the runs this writer enjoyed with the drivers in Toronto.

The motormen in Toronto must deal with every type of traffic. On the downtown runs they may have to back into a narrow alley-way with scarcely an inch to spare, while others have to travel the open highways. Motorman George Crane has an out-of-town run, calling at agencies between Toronto and Bowmanville, a distance of sixty miles, while Steve Boychuk travels to Fort Erie, which is almost eighty miles from the terminal. One of the biggest problems for the drivers of the crowded downtown routes is to avoid parking fines which they have to pay out of their own pockets. Sometimes they have to stop at a 'no parking' area to deliver or pick up a heavy shipment, but most of the drivers are on friendly terms with the police and when they do not abuse privileges they escape. 'Don't mind

Goods under a certain weight are moved from the trains by a series of conveyor belts and sorters and checkers direct the articles onto other belts to different doors where the motormen are ready waiting to load their trucks (Photograph by courtesy of the Canadian National Railways)



The motorman checking over his deliveries. Driving his truck is only one – and perhaps the simplest – of his duties. In every vehicle there is a small library of various forms with which the motorman has to be conversant (Photograph by courtesy of the Canadian National Railways)

being tagged for speeding or traffic violations, but it hurts to have to pay a parking fine,' one motorman remarked.

Express Agent William (Bill) Reilly, formerly of Montreal, has extra regard for his staff of motormen. He knows their work from experience as a motorman and he knows their importance in the operation of the department. 'I've only been in Toronto about two months,' he said in answer to a question of history. 'Better ask Peter Hobin about Toronto. He's been on the job so long he remembers when horses provided all the motive power, and now he's General Supervisor of Vehicles.' Agent Reilly did not escape the reference to age without a quick retort, but Mr. Hobin was ready to answer any questions, especially about the horses which he said were in service until six years ago when the last team retired. 'The horses were good on downtown routes,' he said. 'They knew the calls as good as the drivers and some of them could spot a calling card, the signal for a parcel to be picked up, as good as the drivers.'

Fastest growing city

Supervisor Hobin recalled not so many years ago that Express service was only in operation within eight miles of the downtown terminal and parcels beyond that point had to be delivered by a cartage service at an extra cost to the customers. Now Toronto, considered the fastest growing city in the world, is about forty miles east and west and about twelve miles north, which takes in a great deal of territory, while there are also extended runs to outside agents. The motormen cover the area every working day.

The greatest expansion in the Toronto department is the air Express and regular runs are made to airports day and night. It was not so long ago that a small room could contain all the shipments arriving by air but now there is not space enough in large hangars to accommodate the merchandise which travels through the clouds between customers all over the continent. Once the motorman had problems of clearing



customs with air-express but now customs officers are on duty at most of the major airports, but still the motormen have to make sure customs forms are filled.

While the horses have gone from the service, the motormen still have to handle them, with many horses shipped by Express for race tracks, shows and other purposes. Seldom a day passes that some animals, birds or reptiles – alive – have to be transported and attended to. On a long run they have to be watered or fed and a friendly motorman will often pat a puppy in a cage when it barks for attention. Although dogs may sometimes be pets, they are often a pest, especially when fierce looking ones block a doorway.

One motorman told of an experience with a vicious looking dog that trapped him inside a door and he had to phone for help to move it before he could continue on his rounds.

Library of forms

The livestock also demands the use of special forms, which brings us to the clerical work of the motormen. In every vehicle there is a small library of forms for different shipments and a motorman has to have them all and know what they are all about, even the small print. The forms include: merchandise receipt, pre-pay receipt, air-express receipt, daily settlements, collect forms and under collection forms, customs papers, invoices; and stickers such as 'fragile', 'glass', 'prepaid', 'perishable', 'narcotic'.

One of the major concerns of a motorman is to get parcels he has picked up, usually in the afternoon after his deliveries, back to the terminal in time for the trains and he also has the concern of being off his downtown route before the 4.30 curfew, a municipal regulation to clear traffic before the after-work rush. It is a thrilling sight to watch the motormen wheel their vehicles into perfect lines, coming in like soldiers on parade, after the day's travelling. There is no doubt they are tired, but one of their big jobs is only starting, that of unloading, checking valuables, reporting the day's deliveries and pick-ups, and settling for cash collected.

Thousands and thousands of shipments seemed to be piled everywhere, on the conveyor belts, on hand trucks and wagons. One wonders how it is ever possible to sort them out, but it is not long before they are loaded on trains and away in all directions. Soon the terminal is comparatively empty, nightmen are on duty, trucks are tucked away in garages until the next day and the motorman goes home, perhaps to travel twelve or more miles before he reaches his family and – yes, you guessed it, he probably has to take his children for a drive and deliver a few articles for his wife.

A day in the life of a motorman has many problems, but they are a happy group if the staff at the Toronto terminal is an example.

(With acknowledgements to 'Canadian Transport', organ of the CBRE & OTW)



The Executive Committee meets in London

A MEETING OF THE ITF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE was held at the ITF Secretariat in London from 7 to 9 January. Those attending were E. Borg (Denmark); F. Laurent (France); H. Jahn (Germany), who was in the chair; F. Cousins and T. Yates (Great Britain); H. Kanne (Netherlands); I. Haugen (Norway); H. Düby (Switzerland); A. E. Lyon and D. Beck (United States). Also present were the General Secretary, Omer Becu, and the Secretary of the Railwaymen's and Road Transport Workers' Sections, H. Imhof.

Election of additional Committee members

At its opening session, the Executive Committee decided to elect three additional members of the Committee in accordance with an amendment to the ITF Constitution which was adopted at the Vienna Congress in July 1956. This empowered the members of the Committee elected by Congress to enlarge the Committee by up to four members in order that it should be more representative of the world-wide character of the Federation's membership. The new members are: Brother J. D. Randeri, of India, representing the Asian region; Brother S. de A. Pequeno of Brazil, representing the Latin American region; and Brother D. Beck of the United States, representing the North American region. Brother Beck, who was passing through London on his way to Vienna, was able to be present for the latter part of the meeting. It was decided to defer the election of a member for the African region in order that the General Secretary could have personal discussions on this matter with the affiliated unions concerned during his forthcoming visit to Africa.

Report of activities - new affiliations

The Committee then went on to consider the Secretariat's Report on Activities for the period July–November 1956, which was unanimously approved. During the discussion on the report, attention was drawn by the General Secretary to the need for the ITF to send a representative to Singapore to assist the seamen's unions there. The Executive Committee decided to authorize Brother Becu to appoint a trade unionist who would be able to undertake this task. The General Secretary also announced

that a meeting of the Railwaymen's Sectional Committee was to be held in February in order to consider the agenda and venue of a Railwaymen's Sectional Conference, which is scheduled to take place in the autumn.

The Committee had before it a number of applications for affiliation with the ITF. The following unions were accepted into membership during the meeting: The American Radio Association; The Colombian River and Maritime Workers' Federation; The Railway African Union of Uganda; The Transport and Allied Workers' Union of Tanganyika; The Mauritius Bus Drivers' and Conductors' Union; The Dar-es-Salaam Dock Workers' Union; and the Malay Seamen's Union of Penang.

African office and regional activities

The Committee also considered the question of the establishment of an African ITF Regional Office. Following discussion of this question, it was decided that a decision on it should be deferred until the General Secretary had had an opportunity of visiting Africa and of reporting back on his findings.

Turning to the general problem of regional activities, the Committee expressed the opinion that it was vitally necessary to place the financing of this work on a regular basis. It therefore decided to take the following steps to achieve this aim:

a) to set up a small committee to work out a budget for regional activities and to submit a report on its findings for eventual transmission to ITF-affiliated unions;

b) to inform affiliated organizations that there is no alternative but to place the Regional Activities Fund on a permanent basis and that the Committee expects affiliates able to do so to make

regular contributions of at least £3 per 1,000 members to this fund.

Fair Practices Committee

The members of the Executive Committee also considered reports on the future activities of the Fair Practices Committee. They endorsed recommendations by the Welfare Sub-Committee that the following amounts should be allocated from monies accumulated in the International Seamen's Welfare Fund:

- a) £2,500 to the International Seamen's Home in Antwerp;
- b) £2,500 to be used for seamen's welfare in Holland;
- c) £2,500 to be used for seamen's welfare in Germany;
- d) £1,000 to the International Medical Radio Centre in Rome;
- e) £5,000 to the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, to provide four hoists for immobile patients.

Hungary

During its final session, the Executive Committee considered at some length the recent events in Hungary and the reactions of the international trade union movement to those events, with particular reference to the proposal made for an international boycott of Russian goods and services. The Committee was given a detailed account by the General Secretary of the action taken by the ITF in this connection and of the consultations which took place with other sections of the trade union movement. At the conclusion of its discussion on this agenda item, the Committee approved the report submitted by the Secretariat, adding that it expressly endorsed the steps taken by the General Secretary, who had not only done his duty but had maintained the reputation of the ITF as an active opponent of dictatorship. (An article on this subject by Brother Becu appears elsewhere in this issue of the ITF Journal.)

ILO Civil Aviation Meeting

Earlier, the Executive Committee had heard a report by the General Secretary



The ITF Executive Committee meeting, London, 7-9 January. Left to right: K. A. Golding (ITF Research Officer), R. Santley (ITF Secretariat), H. Kanne (Netherlands), I. Haugen (Norway), T. Yates (Great Britain), D. Beck (USA), A. E. Lyon (USA) Omer Becu (General Secretary), H. Jahn (Germany), G. Berger (ITF interpreter), H. Dübby (Switzerland), H. Imhof (ITF Secretariat), F. Laurent (France), Miss T. Asser (ITF Secretariat), I. Dahlbom (ITF interpreter) and E. Borg (Denmark); F. Cousins of Great Britain was not present when this photograph was taken. The meeting took place in the new Board Room at the London headquarters. The Committee specifically endorsed the General Secretary's action over the Hungarian revolt

on the failure of the ILO Ad Hoc Meeting on Civil Aviation as a result of its sabotage by the Employers' Group, which had consistently refused to discuss any of the proposals put forward by the workers' representatives. At the conclusion of its meetings, the Executive Committee therefore adopted the following resolution on this subject:

The Executive Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation;

Meeting in London from 7 to 9 January 1957;

Having heard a report on the ILO Ad Hoc Meeting on Civil Aviation held in Geneva from 26 November to 5 December 1956, and having learned of the negative nature of that meeting;

Protests emphatically against the attitude of the Employers' Group which, throughout the ten-day proceedings, systematically sabotaged all attempts by the workers' representatives to promote free and frank discussion of the many urgent problems affecting the social conditions of civil aviation employees;

Wholeheartedly condemns this policy adopted by the employers which, if allowed to pass unchallenged, would undermine the principles and nullify the purposes of the International Labour Organization;

Expresses astonishment that employers in the civil aviation industry could display so little comprehension of the need for permanent international standards to regulate the industry's social problems.

Realizing the futility of further ILO bi-partite civil aviation meetings, the Executive Committee of the ITF consequently requests the Governing Body of the ILO:

a) to convene at the earliest possible opportunity, a conference based on representation by workers, employers, and governments in order that real progress may be achieved;

b) to consider the urgent need for submitting the specific problem of flight crew complement to a Committee of Experts; and

c) to place the question of the hours of work of flight personnel on the agenda of an early International Labour Conference.

Next meeting and next Congress

Finally, it was decided that the next meeting of the Executive Committee should take place on 3, 4, and 5 June, and that the Twenty-Fifth Biennial Congress of the ITF would be held in Amsterdam from 23 July to 1 August (both dates inclusive).

(continued from page 25)

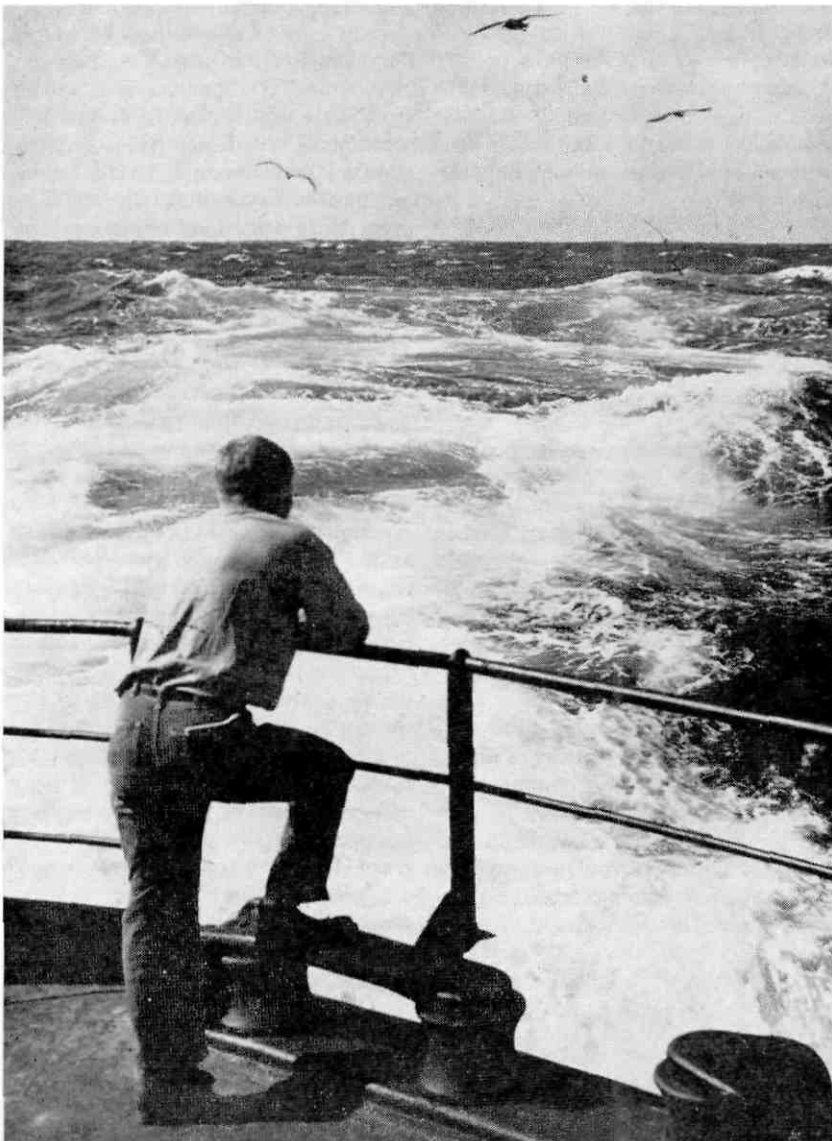
Most of us appreciate the need for trade union discipline at the national level, but we do not always appreciate that it is equally important at the international level if our movement is to function effectively in both spheres. Just as the national centre should be able to expect cooperation from its constituent unions, so should the international trade union movement be able to expect the same from its affiliates when the need arises. Only in that way can the possibility of real international action be safeguarded. That is why it is a matter for considerable regret that the action proposed by the dockers and seafarers of the ITF in support of the workers of Hungary was treated in so cavalier a fashion by some of our friends in the general trade union movement.



In 1957 the ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union of America celebrates its twentieth birthday, for it was on 3 May 1937 that a large number of seamen, dissatisfied with the failure of the old International Seamen's Union (ISU) to fight their battle, pulled out of the union to found the National Maritime Union of America. The ISU had been an association of several unions organized along craft lines: the Cooks and Stewards; the Sailors; and the Firemen, Oilers and Watertenders. The NMU on the other hand was set up along industrial lines – one union for all seamen – and, at its first Convention, decided to join the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO), now merged with the American Federation of Labor to form the AFL-CIO. An account of the events leading up to the breakaway from the ISU and the progress made by the union up to the present day is given below. The account is based on material supplied by the NMU as well as on an article by President Curran appearing in the AFL-CIO 'Federationist'.

The story of the NMU

UNITED STATES LABOUR BEGAN TO BUILD TRADE UNIONS SOON AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, but seamen were seriously hampered in their efforts as labour's strongest weapon, the strike, was denied to them. For seamen, a strike was considered tantamount to mutiny or desertion and punishable accordingly. It was not until 1874 that some measure of labour action became possible with the amendment of the Shipping Commissioners Act to the effect that seamen on vessels in coastal and Great Lakes trade could not be imprisoned for desertion. By 1878, the first important seamen's organization was formed – the Lakes Seamen's Union. Other unions followed on both coasts and in 1895 all these bodies united to form the International Seamen's Union (ISU).



Employer associations fought the union and all but succeeded in killing it. Under the leadership of that valiant champion of the seafarer's cause, Andrew Furuseth, the storm was weathered, however. He gained support in the United States legislature as a result of which the Seamen's Act of 1915 was passed limiting hours of work for most seamen to fifty-six, guaranteeing minimum living quarters, abolishing imprisonment for desertion, giving seamen the right to draw half their wages in ports of call and making it more difficult for owners to avoid payment of seamen's suits for damages. The minimum standards set by the Act serve to emphasize the deplorable conditions prevalent among seafarers at the time.

With seafarers freed from their servile role, union activity increased, and some gains were achieved during the period of the first World War. Thus by 1921 the ISU had 115,000 members. With the return to 'normal' conditions, however, with shipping dwindling and hiring in the hands of the owners, membership rapidly sunk to a mere 3,000 by 1929. When the blight of depression hit the nation in the thirties, the seamen had only the shadow of a union left. All standards – even the rockbottom ones – were thrown overboard whilst the 'kick-back', a notorious abuse under owner-controlled hiring, became worse than ever. Low standards continued for seamen long after the favourable climate of the New Deal had started a new tide of unionism surging through American industry.

ISU found wanting

Under the National Industrial Recovery Act (later – in 1935 – voided as un-

Joseph Curran, with a group of shipmates from the 'California' out on strike in sympathy with stranded seamen from a sister ship in 1936. The strikers were fired and blacklisted, but the fight was later resumed and successfully concluded

constitutional), the most vital provision of which gave the workers the right to organize, the ISU became the chosen representative of the East Coast seamen and soon grew to a membership of 35,000. The future seemed promising. Unfortunately, the conduct of the union's affairs was allowed to fall into the hands of corrupt officers. They seldom sought members' sanction for their acts, made deals with the shipowners whereby, in return for a 'payoff', they went easy on wage demands and strikes and made common cause with the owners in discouraging the union hiring hall and approving the issue of 'fink books' – a device by means of which active union members could be blacklisted.

Unable to reform the union machinery by ordinary procedures, the working seamen were compelled to take matters into their own hands. They began to by-pass the union bosses, staged job-action strikes and, when they could, made separate terms with the shipowners on the basis of a single ship at a time.

Things came to a head in 1936. West Coast maritime workers, following a long and bloody strike in 1934 that immobilized the port of San Francisco, had won union hiring halls, the eight-hour day, cash for overtime and a pay-scale \$5 a month higher than East Coast seamen. East Coast seafarers looked to their leaders to secure similar gains for them, but in March 1936, despite overwhelming rank-and-file opposition, union officials wound up months of negotiations by signing an agreement providing a \$5 rise – and nothing else. Demands which the members had set as key objectives, such as union control of hiring and payment for overtime, were completely ignored. As long as the farce of 'time off in port' was continued as compensation for overtime, seamen knew that they had not really achieved the eight-hour day. Even more important to them was the hiring hall, for as long as the owners controlled hiring there could be no security or effective organization. Nevertheless, this empty agreement was presented to the seamen



by the union officials as an accomplished fact. Members were not asked to vote on it, and thus the waterfront was ripe for the action which followed.

The 1936 strikes

Strike action was first taken on the 'California'. The strikers were soon joined by the crew of the 'American Trader'. A strike committee was formed, headed by Joseph Curran (now President of the NMU). Appeals to other vessels were sent out and met with an immediate response. The battle was on. Officials of the ISU voted money for strike-breaking activities and helped in the importing of scab screws from inland cities. By the end of two weeks the crews of some twenty vessels were out. In May 1936, after a bloody two-month duel, the strike was called off. The forces lined up against the strikers had proved too strong.

The advice of their leaders to call off the strike was accepted by the seamen with their eyes fixed on the next battle. To carry on the work already begun, a Seamen's Defence Committee was set up with Joseph Curran, who had been expelled from the ISU for his part in the strikes, as chairman. By the autumn of 1936, the seamen under the leadership of Curran were again ready to back their claims up by strike action. To their former grievances had been added that of the 'Copeland fink book' – a continuous discharge book for seamen

laid down in a legislative enactment – one of the main results of a governmental investigation which ostensibly, in fulfilment of a pledge to the strike leaders, had set out to examine the working conditions of seafarers resulting from owners' disregard of safety precautions in ship operation.

Unlike the Spring strike, the strike in the Autumn of 1936 was well organized and the seamen were joined by radio operators and other associations of licensed personnel. In January 1937, after eighty days, during which over twenty-five seamen were killed by strike-breaking squads and officers of the law 'acting in self-defence', the owners capitulated and negotiations began. Eventually, forty-one lines signed agreements granting wage increases averaging out at \$10 a month, plus straight overtime of seventy cents an hour. Above all, preferential hiring through hiring halls was won.

The NMU is founded

The victorious seamen still had hopes of remaining within the ISU but all attempts to replace the corrupt officials in charge of the union machinery failed with the result that, on 3 May 1937, the bulk of the union members pulled out to found the National Maritime Union of America, a body organized along industrial lines, with all unlicensed personnel under the one banner. At its first Convention, the NMU joined the

Committee (later 'Congress') for Industrial Organizations (CIO).

Progress was rapid and, before the year was over, sixty-seven National Labor Relations Board elections were held among the shipping companies to determine whether the seamen preferred the ISU or the NMU. Of these contests the NMU won fifty-six – usually by overwhelming majorities. By 1938 the one-year-old union had close to 50,000 members covered by contracts with most Atlantic and Gulf Coast companies. For all practical purposes the old ISU had ceased to exist. Efforts by the ISU 'old guard', the shipowners and other elements at war with democratically-organized trade unionism to break the newly-formed union did not cease, however, right up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Communists expelled

By the end of the war, the NMU was well established. Its most trying years, however, lay just ahead when it had to combat efforts by the Communist elements in the union to take over. At one time, following their usual tactics, the numerically small Communist element had managed to gain control of a number of key posts in the union to the extent that 'the tail began to wag the dog'. Their success was short-lived, however, and in the 1948 election they were defeated and expelled from the union following democratically conducted trials. The remnants were finally rendered powerless when, in 1949, a constitutional amendment was approved whereby anyone belonging to a Communist or any other totalitarian organization

was barred from the union. The Communists made violent attempts to regain power but in the 1950 election the anti-Communist amendment was approved by the membership and democratic-minded officers voted into office. The way was now clear for the union to concentrate on economic progress for its members. Not only has the NMU made its most significant gains since the expulsion of these disruptive elements, but it has also won them with a minimum of trouble. Furthermore, the shipowners, faced with a strong and unified NMU, have now come round to admitting that the union has come to stay and must be dealt with as an equal partner.

In 1951, the union went on strike to win the forty-hour week. That same year militant action secured its members a pension and welfare programme whilst again in 1955 strike action helped win an Employment Security Plan. In spite of the progress made, the NMU is constantly battling against threats to the jobs and standards of seamen. One of the main targets for such threats is the hiring hall.

The fight for the hiring hall

The union security provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act in themselves were a death sentence for the union's all-important hiring hall, and only by the most dedicated efforts has it been able to maintain it in effective form. Shortly after the passage of Taft-Hartley, the shipping operators sued against the NMU hiring hall. After the NLRB and the US Court of Appeals ruled against the union, it carried the fight to the Supreme Court. Here what seemed to be the final blow was struck in 1951. The high court ruled that the NMU could not operate a hiring hall which discriminated against non-members in providing jobs under NMU contracts. Until 1954, however, because of a series of constructive measures taken by the union and sound federal administrative policies, the union was able to operate with a minimum of government interference. The situation toughened, how-



National headquarters of the NMU in New York. The smaller building on the right is the New York Agency Office and hiring hall. The union also maintains offices at all major ports. Port agents and patrolmen are elected by the membership

ever, with the advent of a Republican administration and changes in the make-up of the National Labor Relations Board. The Taft-Hartley pressures against the union hiring hall then became relentless.

In August, 1954, the NLRB informed the union that it was going to get an order compelling it to comply with the letter of the 1951 decision of the Supreme Court. The effect of such action would be to destroy the hiring hall as built up by the union. The NMU National Council - made up of agents of all ports and national officers - was called together to draw up a programme to meet this emergency. It was agreed that, if the maritime hiring hall was to be preserved and with it the principle of rotary hiring, certain practical steps would have to be taken. The union would have to announce that its membership rolls were, and had been, open to qualified seamen who met the constitutional requirements; that the union would not discriminate against non-member applicants with the papers, experience and qualifications necessary to work aboard NMU-contract vessels; and the union would have to undertake to develop a programme for fixing the status of all job applicants - members and non-members - so as to protect the seniority of seamen who had demonstrated permanent attachment to the industry. This last is the 'group rating' system used in NMU halls today.

It was clear that unless the union adopted such a constructive programme, which met the problem, it would mean a fight with the government of the United States. This offered only one possible result - organizational suicide, with seamen driven back to where they were before the union was born. The soundness of this programme has been demonstrated in the year and a half that it has been in effect. The new programme did not overwhelm NMU membership rolls nor did non-members take over NMU-contracted ships. The union came through solidly, and its hiring hall is now more firmly established than ever.

The NMU seamen today

Today NMU seamen work a five-day, forty-hour week, with premium pay for all work on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays at sea or in port. Basic pay of qualified seamen is \$333 per month, with skilled ratings earning two and three hundred dollars above that. Since

ships at sea must be worked seven days a week, most ratings regularly earn well over a hundred dollars a month in overtime pay.

Under National Maritime Union contracts, seamen are entitled to a four-week vacation after a year's service with one company. For a year in which they have worked with more than one company, they are entitled to two weeks of vacation. All contract companies contribute a fixed percentage of their payrolls to a central fund from which seamen collect their earned vacation money.

Employment security plan

Welfare programmes constitute another area in which seamen were slow getting started. But today the NMU programme, in many respects, is among the paces-

in state programmes as they apply to seamen. Many seamen lose their entitlement to unemployment insurance benefits because some states have no reciprocal arrangements for crediting earning which seamen have accumulated with companies located in other states. Some states do not recognize a seaman's eligibility for unemployment insurance during the weeks he may have to wait to rejoin his ship after a vacation or after an illness.

The NMU plan provides benefits in such cases. It also covers the seaman who must leave his ship because of some personal emergency - the need to make arrangements for his family in case his wife becomes ill or the need to remain ashore to participate in legal proceedings.



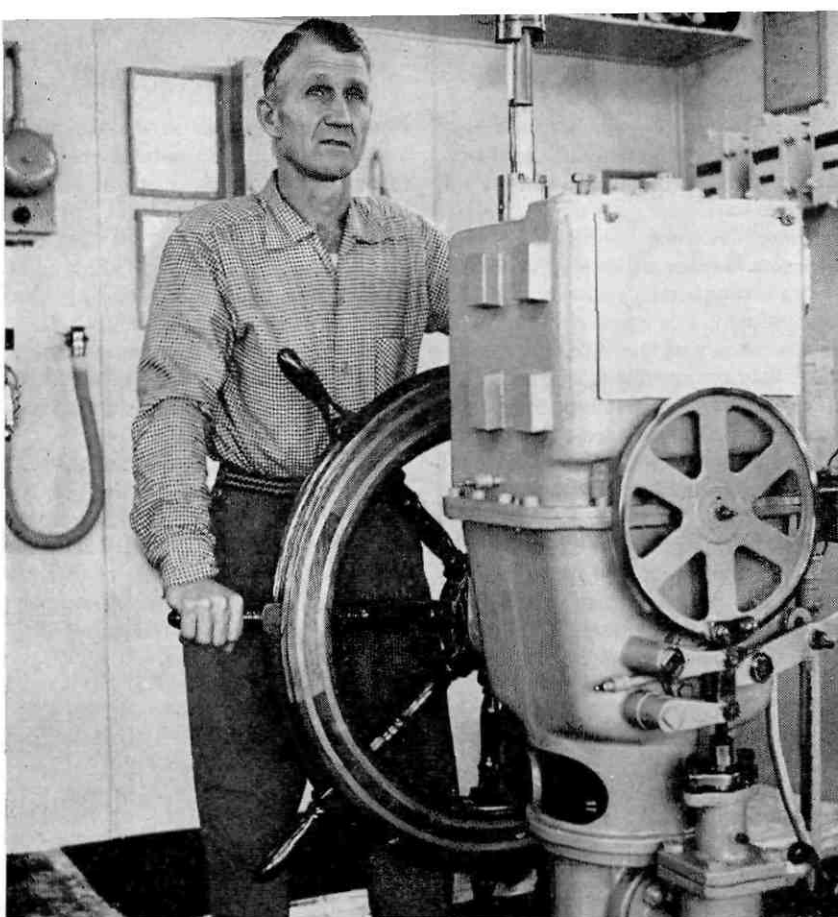
President Joseph Curran presiding over a meeting of the NMU National Council. This body, which is composed of national officers and branch agents, meets in New York and administers union policy between conventions of the organization. The election or expulsion of national officers, calling of general strikes, raising of dues - these and many important matters are subject to membership voting

setters in American industry. This year seamen began receiving benefits from the NMU employment security plan, the first industry-wide supplementary unemployment benefit programme in the nation. Through it, NMU members 'on the beach' through no fault of their own receive benefits of \$30 weekly if they are not entitled to state unemployment insurance benefits or \$15 weekly if they are so entitled.

The plan is designed to fill in gaps

The regulations contain safeguards against abuses. Benefits are limited to seamen with considerable sea service in the period preceding their claim and no benefits are payable except where unemployment is for reasons beyond the seaman's control.

These benefits are paid for by the employers at the rate of twenty-five cents per crew member per day contributed to a central fund. This is in addition to a dollar a man per day



The American seaman is skilled, loyal and ready to serve when needed. The history of the NMU epitomizes his struggle for recognition as a citizen worthy of respect by a union which could demand that respect confidently

contribution to the NMU's pension and welfare plan.

Pension plan

The NMU pension plan provides monthly benefits of \$55 in addition to federal social security payments to seamen who have reached age sixty-five with at least nineteen years of sea time. Retirement benefits, at reduced rates are also paid to oldtimers who retire with shorter service and down to age sixty. Lifetime disability pensions are paid to seamen with fifteen or more years of sea service, regardless of age. Welfare benefits include cash payments of \$21 per week to the hospitalized seaman. These are payable for thirteen weeks, after which he is eligible for extended benefits of \$15 weekly for thirty-five additional weeks and up to \$55 per month indefinitely after that.

Other welfare provisions are payments of \$8 per day to help cover costs for a hospitalized wife or children, maternity benefits of \$200 and up to \$150 for any one surgical operation of dependents (the seamen themselves are eligible for hospital and surgical services of US Public Health Service hospitals), and life insurance of \$3,500, with additional coverage of a like amount for accidental death or dismemberment. In addition to this, seamen who become sick or injured aboard ship but do not require hospitalization receive maintenance and cure benefits of \$8 per day from the companies by terms of the union contract.

The NMU today

Today the NMU has a membership of 40,000. It has members on passenger vessels, freighters, tankers, colliers, and on lake, river and harbour craft. It has contracts with over 125 companies operating some 600 ocean-going ships plus other vessels on the lakes, rivers and




In 1951, a walkout tied up the luxury liner 'Constitution'. This dispute went the forty-hour week for NMU members. Although the actual working week at sea is usually longer, all work after forty hours is paid at overtime rates



Crews' quarters today are clean, comfortable and uncluttered. Sufficient locker space is provided for storage of personal effects. Gone are the old-time 'glory-holes' that held twelve to fifty men. Today usually two to four men share a cabin

The development of Indian ports

 NEW SCHEMES for the development of Indian ports, prepared by authorities of each port for inclusion under the country's second five-year plan, will involve a total expenditure of £ 45 million, including the carry-over of the unspent portion from the first five-year plan. The first plan provided £ 46.5 million for the development of major ports, of which about £ 27 million would have been spent by the end of the plan period.

Schemes under the second plan are generally intended to make the existing capacity of the ports more effective through modernization and replacement of new equipment. The plan includes the provision of additional berthing capacity at Calcutta, Madras, and Cochin; river-training measures in the Hooghly; channel-dredging in Bombay; provision of mechanical-handling appliances at Calcutta; modernization of Bombay's Princess and Victoria Docks; improvement of ship repair facilities in Bombay; and the construction of more quarters for port employees.

harbours. Membership is open to any unlicensed (non-officer) seaman who is an American citizen (or has applied for citizenship) and who has had six months of seetime, subject to recommendations as to character and ability from the crews with which he has worked.

The union constitution provides membership voting on all major issues including the election or expulsion of national officers, the calling of general strikes, the raising of dues or salaries of union officers, and the acceptance of working agreements with the shipowners. Since 1944 these have included a clause to the effect that 'there shall be no discrimination because of race, creed, colour or national origin.' NMU Conventions are held every two years.

Looking ahead

Although the NMU has been moving fast, its rapid progress has been due more to the determination of its membership than to fair winds. The union has had some rough going. Shipping has fallen off drastically and with it, jobs. Meanwhile, the government has been trying to eliminate public medical care for seamen; and ill-advised Congressmen are asking for a ceiling on wage subsidies.

Seamen collecting vacation benefits at the NMU Vacation Plan's New York Office. Under the 1951 vacation plan holiday entitlement accrues irrespective of the company with which a seamen served. Since the year 1954, seamen serving with the same company for one year have had four weeks paid holiday

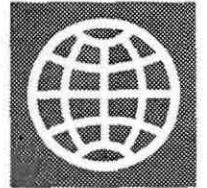
Other problems confronting seamen include the efforts by the Coast Guard to impose an unfair 'profiling' system; the threat of the Taft-Hartley Act to cripple the union hiring hall; and the willingness of the Maritime Administration to permit the transfer of American ships to foreign flags.

These and many other issues are serious obstacles in the way of future progress by seamen. There can be little doubt, however, that the union will show the same spirit of determination in overcoming these obstacles as it has shown in the battles it has fought in the past.



On his way home from the ITF Asian Transport Workers' Conference held in Tokyo in April 1955 the then Assistant General Secretary of the ITF called in at Manila, capital of the Philippines, and attended the First Convention of the Philippine Transport Workers' Organization. He was gratified to find that the Draft Constitution and Bye-laws of the PTWO included a stipulation that the Organization should seek affiliation with the ITF and the Assistant General Secretary left for London a few days later with a letter applying for affiliation in his pocket. The ITF accepted the application and the PTWO took its place in the growing ITF community. Some notes on the PTWO are given below, in the most place supplied by the PTWO itself.

The Philippine Transport Workers' Organization



THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES began its life as a completely free and sovereign State in 1946. Occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War, the Philippines had previously been a possession of the United States, under which it enjoyed a large measure of self-government. The immediate post-war years were a trying time for the twenty million inhabitants, the task of reconstruction being hampered for several years by the marauding Communist guerrillas who have only effectively been brought under control in the last two years or so. The conditions in those days were hardly conducive to labour organization and it would be fair to say that it was not until 1953 that events took a more encouraging turn for those anxious to see a healthy, vigorous labour movement in the islands.

In June 1953 the Philippines legislature passed the 'Magna Carta of Labour', a parliamentary Act 'to promote industrial peace'. The Act gave trade unions a legal status. It set out 'to eliminate the causes of industrial unrest by encouraging and protecting the exercise by employees of their right to self organization for the purpose of collective bargaining and for the promotion of their moral, social and economic well-being.' It put employer and employee under a duty to bargain collectively and laid down unequivocally a series of practices 'unfair' to labour; this section of the Act was designed to establish the worker's right to join a union and take part in its activities without fear of victimization.

The passing of this enlightened measure had an immediate effect on the country's trade union organization. In 1954 the number of registered trade unions almost doubled. In the nineteen years from 1934, when the Philippines legislature and the United States signed an agreement providing for a ten-year period of transition to full independence, some 830 unions were established. By December 1954 the figure exceeded 1400.

As an indication of a growing interest in trade unionism this increase in the

number of trade unions could be welcomed; but the fact that at that time the total trade union membership was estimated at no more than 200,000 pointed to a grave danger of dilution, of a multitude of small unions with a small membership in each and a correspondingly slight bargaining power. An effort to concentrate the membership into more 'economic' units was obviously desirable and the formation of the Philippine Transport Workers' Organization was greeted with relief by all who knew how easily a number of unions operating in a similar field of activity can develop different and often conflicting policies to the detriment of the workers as a whole.

The First Convention of the PTWO adopted a Constitution and Bye-laws which placed the Organization on a federal basis, that is leaving the constituent unions to manage their own affairs but placing them under an obligation to observe the PTWO Constitution. Membership of the Organization was open to 'all bona fide trade unions or their federations or associations or locals in the Philippines catering for persons engaged in any capacity in any transport industry, whether publicly or privately owned' who accepted the

PTWO Constitution. The objects of the Organization were set out clearly and boldly:

'a) To unite in this organization, regardless of race, creed, color or nationality, all workers in the Philippines eligible for membership, employed in and on all passenger and other transport facilities, public or private.

b) To establish through free and democratic collective bargaining adequate wage standards and improvements in the conditions of employment for workers in the transport industry.

c) To help organize the transport workers in the Islands where they are unorganized or partly organized.

d) To promote, establish and operate schemes of mutual assistance among transport workers' trade unions in the Islands and to advise, guide and support transport workers' unions engaged in disputes.

e) To furnish information to all affiliated organizations regarding working and living conditions of transport workers and matters affecting those conditions.

f) To coordinate and guide transport workers' unions on a national basis.

g) To endeavour to preserve our present democratic system of government, cooperate with its duly constituted authorities, and support and obey its laws.

h) Like any other component of a democratic society to combat Communism and Fascism and other forms of totalitarianism or any other way of life which is diametrically opposed to the great principles of democracy . . .'

In the first article of the Constitution was embodied the resolve to seek affiliation with the ITF and most of the

Roberto S. Oca addressing the First Convention of the Philippine Transport Workers' Organization held in Manila in April, 1955. Brother Oca was elected National President of the Organization at the Convention after which the PTWO affiliated its 35,000 members to the ITF

other provisions concerned the administration of the new body. In brief, these provided for the election of a National President, three National Vice-Presidents (of whom one was to be designated as Executive National Vice-President), a National Secretary, Assistant National Secretary and a National Treasurer. These officers were to be elected at the PTWO Conventions to be held every two years and, together with a further ten elected members, were to make up the Organization's National Executive Board. The functions of the Board and the officers were much the same as those in similar organizations the world over; in short, the responsibility for the implementation of policy decided at the Convention, the formulation of policy where necessary between Conventions and the detailed conduct of the Organization's business in an efficient manner.

The First Convention was attended by twenty organizations representing land, sea and air transport workers and the PTWO was shortly to affiliate with the ITF on a membership of 35,000. The PTWO is represented in most branches of transport activity and has had particular success in gaining membership in civil aviation and the railroads. Its membership in the docks is also strong and it was able in February 1956 to fight off an attempt by the ship-owners to withhold recognition from a PTWO affiliate, a dispute in which the Organization received financial support from the ITF, which arranged for other affiliates to render further practical assistance where possible.


The PTWO has come through the first year and more of its existence safe and sound under the energetic leadership of its National President, Roberto S. Oca. It is now planning the erection of a fine modern headquarters where, among other activities, it hopes to house workers' educational courses. Meanwhile the PTWO has encouraged its members to take part in local courses run by the University of the Philippines dealing with subjects such as collective bargaining, grievance procedure, the



role of the shop steward, labour economics, negotiation techniques and kindred topics.

There is every reason to foresee a successful future for the PTWO. It has taken an intelligent and active interest in ITF affairs and the ITF for its part will do all it can to foster and protect the interests of its Philippines affiliate. The PTWO stands as a heartening example of the progress of free trade unionism in Asia.

Over sixty years of activity


 THE DANISH TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION (Dansk Arbejdsmands Forbund) can look back on sixty years of activity with the passing of its sixtieth 'birthday' on 1 January, 1957. It was on this day in 1897 that the first national union of transport and general workers was formed in Denmark with a membership of 14,000. This merger at national level of a number of regional trade unions was brought about by that great fighter in the cause of labour, M. C. Lyngsie, whose death in 1931 at the age of sixty-eight was a great blow not only to the union he created but also to the cause of Scandinavian and international trade union solidarity. His work was ably carried on by his successors in office, however, and today, with a membership in the region of 250,000, of which transport workers account for 60,000, the union is one of the most

powerful in Denmark, forming well over one-third of the membership of the Danish TUC.

Today, under the leadership of Alfred Petersen, who succeeded to the office of president of the union on the retirement of Christian Larsen at the union's Congress in September 1956, the DAF can look back on a proud record of service to the four industrial groups whose interests it safeguards. They are: transport workers (60,000), factory workers (70,000), building operatives (86,000) and agricultural workers (40,000). This administration of the union along the lines of industrial groups was the result of reorganization undertaken in the year 1925 in order more adequately to meet the peculiar needs of the union's members. At that date there were three groups, the agricultural workers' group being added in 1934. The DAF affiliated with the ITF in the year 1921 and is associated with all international bodies contributing towards cooperation between the classes of workers it represents. At the Vienna Congress of the ITF, Ernst Borg, one of its leading officers, was elected to the Executive Committee of the ITF.

The Scandinavian region has always been widely regarded as one of the strongholds of the world's free trade union movement. It is good to know that one of the sturdiest Danish contributors to that strength is, and has been for a long time, a loyal and vigorous affiliate of the ITF.

ITF donation to International Seamen's Home

 AMONG THE DONATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS recommended by the Welfare Sub-Committee of the ITF Fair Practices Committee figures the allocation of £ 2,500 from the International Seamen's Welfare Fund for use in connection with the International Seamen's Home in Antwerp. This recommendation had its sequel on 17 December 1956 when General Secretary Omer Becu, on the occasion of a short ceremonial gathering at the Home, handed over a cheque for £2,500 to M. Detiège, President of the Home's Board of Management.

The International Seamen's Home, an eight-storey building of which the two top floors are leased to the Scandinavian Welfare Services and comprise the Scandinavian seafarers' home known as 'Scandia', was officially opened on 21 May 1955. It has 120 bedrooms and in addition to board and lodging for a large number of seafarers provides numerous other recreational and welfare facilities.

During 1956, the Home had provided overnight accommodation for 8,304 seafarers of forty-five nationalities. Some 35,000 bookings for overnight stays had been made.

In a short address, Omer Becu stressed the satisfaction he felt at being able to make this contribution from the ITF International Seamen's Welfare Fund to such a worthy international cause. Such a seamen's home – the best that could be provided – had long been a cherished wish of the Socialist members of the Antwerp City Council and what they had achieved could serve as a model of social service which other countries might be proud to follow.

Guests from seafarers' organizations who attended the ceremony included R. Dekeyzer, President of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union, W. Cassiers, national secretary of the maritime section of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union, together with a number of delegates from the union. The British Seamen's Union was represented by H. Tibbles, the union's Antwerp representative, whilst Brothers Gronberg and Hoie attended on behalf of the Norwegian seafarers' union and Brother Tornquist for the Swedish union.



General Secretary Omer Becu resumes his seat on completion of his speech at the International Seamen's Home, Antwerp, when he handed over a cheque for £ 2,500 from the ITF International Seamen's Welfare Fund to M. Detiège, President of the Home's Board of Management (seated on his left). The contribution will be used to improve the recreational facilities already offered by the Home which accommodated 8,304 seamen in 1956 (Photo by courtesy of the 'Volksgazet')

Book review

THE NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, by Edvard Bull; *ICFTU Monographs on National Trade Union Movements, No. 4; ICFTU, Brussels, 1956, 140 pp. Price 5s, 70 US cents, 35 B. frs.*


 THIS ICFTU MONOGRAPH is the fourth of a series on national trade union movements. The three already published deal with the trade union movement in France, Great Britain and Austria. The present monograph follows the same pattern, giving within a modest compass a full account of the growth, early struggles, achievements, and present structure and strength of the country's trade union movement.

The author, who has also written a number of books on the history of the Norwegian labour movement and other aspects of Norwegian social history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has kept well to the ICFTU's plan to provide a short account of national trade union movements suitable for international consumption and in which no undue knowledge of any one country's history and traditions is assumed of the reader. He divides his account into three parts: the first, gives a succinct explanation of the history of the movement, with special emphasis laid on events which are not usually met with in other countries; the second contains a description of the results of trade union activities in the country, with special emphasis on practical achievements; whilst the third part is devoted to the present-day position and aspirations

of this lively body for the morrow.

This monograph represents a valuable contribution to an international trade union library and is of considerable interest to the general reader as well as to tutors and students.

Establishment of Argentine State Railways

 UNDER THE TERMS OF RECENT LEGISLATION, an autonomous body 'The Argentine State Railways', has been established with the task of reorganizing and improving the structure and operation of the Argentine railway system. The new body is controlled by a board of management, consisting of six senior railway administrators and six officials appointed by the Argentine government on the recommendation of the Minister of Transport.

Comments on the establishment of the new undertaking published in the organ of the ITF-affiliated Argentine locomotivemen's organization 'La Fraternidad', have pointed out two omissions from the membership of the railway board – namely rail users and rail employees. The latter omission, as is pointed out, is particularly remarkable in view of the fact that earlier (in August 1956) agreement was reached between the Argentine Minister of Labour, representatives of the Ministry of Transport and of the railway trade unions on the setting up of a temporary Joint Advisory Commission, composed of railway management and union representatives, to advise on means of speeding up the improved operation of the Argentine railway services.

International Transport Workers' Federation

President: H. JAHN

General Secretary: O. BECU

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
- 163 affiliated organizations in 57 countries
- Total membership: 6,500,000

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 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 • Australia • Austria
Belgium • Brazil • British Honduras • Canada
Chile • Colombia • Cuba • Denmark
Ecuador • Egypt • Estonia (Exile) • Finland
France • Germany • Gold Coast
Great Britain • Greece • Grenada
Hong Kong • Iceland • India • Israel • Italy
Jamaica • Japan • Kenya • Lebanon
Luxembourg • Malaya • Mauritius • Mexico
The Netherlands • New Zealand • Nigeria
Norway • Nyasaland • Pakistan
Panama • Paraguay
Philippines • Poland (Exile) • Republic of Ireland
Rhodesia • Saar • St. Lucia • South Africa
Spain (Illegal Underground Movement)
Sweden • Switzerland • Tanganyika
Trieste • Trinidad • Tunisia • Uruguay
United States of America



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ARBEITER-ZEITUNG
ITF NEWS (TOKYO)

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