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## **International Transport Workers' Journal**

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**International  
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Journal**

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|--------|---|
| Paris  | 31 May - 3 June 1957<br>Expert Committee  |
| Paris  | 17-19 June 1957<br>Executive Committee  |
| London | 17 July 1957<br>Expert Committee  |
| London | 18-19 July 1957<br>Railwaymen's and Road Transport<br>Workers' Section Committees |

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| <i>Our cover-picture:</i> One of the many thousands of bus workers employed by London's Transport Executive. In an article in this issue of the ITF Journal we discuss the results of an investigation carried out among London bus drivers and conductors to discover how advancing age affects them in their work. |      |



# The Sixth Session of the ILO Inland Transport Committee (1)

by OMER BECU, General Secretary of the ITF

THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF THE ILO HELD ITS SIXTH SESSION in Hamburg from 11 to 23 March. Twenty-seven countries were represented by tripartite delegations. In addition observers were present from several governments who were not participating directly in the Committee on this occasion, as well as from various inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the ITF.

As one of the eight Industrial Committees set up by the ILO since the war, the Inland Transport Committee performs an exceptionally important function. With the exception of maritime shipping, the whole of transport comes within its scope: railways, road transport, inland navigation, docks and civil aviation. It deals with the social problems of all these industries on an international scale, and its decisions, which mainly take the shape of resolutions, to which often detailed conclusions or memoranda are attached, are circulated to governments and employers' and workers' organizations for guidance and without doubt have had a very great influence upon social conditions in the transport industries throughout the world, in the more and the less advanced countries alike.

The first session of the Committee took place in December 1945, the second eighteen months later, in May 1947. Since then the intervals between sessions have gradually lengthened, and more than three years had elapsed since the previous session of February 1954. In view of the continued expansion of all branches of transport, there is a growing need for the discussion of social problems of the transport industries on the international plane by bodies like the Inland Transport Committee. Ac-

cordingly one of the opening speakers on the workers' side in Hamburg stressed the importance of more frequent sessions of the Committee. The Vienna Congress of the ITF, in July last year, expressed itself in the same strain in a resolution which was duly brought to the notice of the Director-General and Governing Body of the ILO.

### The General Report

The wide range of the Committee's work is always especially apparent in the General Report which is prepared for its sessions. The report presented in Hamburg reviewed in considerable detail the effect which has been given by governments in the different countries to the decisions taken by the Committee at its previous sessions. These decisions were many in number and affected all branches of inland transport. The report showed an impressive amount of progress made in achieving the social standards set up by the Committee in the twelve years of its existence. This is particularly true of the countries which are most advanced in the social and economic spheres. On the other hand, the report likewise showed that there are extensive areas of the world where the conditions of transport workers are still far below these ILO standards. The decisions and discussions of the Inland Transport Committee are a spur to the countries concerned to employ every possible effort to make up the leeway.

All this was underlined again in the detailed discussion which took place on

*The present-day dock worker combines alertness with an efficiency which comes from long experience. Dockers' representatives at Hamburg stressed that productivity problems in the port industry arise from inadequacies connected with organization and the use of equipment rather than from factors related to labour*

the General Report and in which speakers from all three groups – Governments, Employers and Workers – and from many countries related both what had been achieved and what remained to be achieved in carrying out the programmes and objectives adopted by the Inland Transport Committee over the years.

Though, as stated, the General Report ranged over the whole field of inland transport, the Hamburg session was dedicated more particularly to two aspects of it: the dock industry and the road transport industry. In the remainder of this article, therefore, we devote special attention to these two industries.

### Organization of work and output in the dock industry

This was the title of the second item on the Committee's agenda. The problem to which it alludes, the loss suffered by the community as a result of undue delays in the turnround of shipping in ports, is a familiar one. Advances made in respect of the size and speed of ships are to a large extent offset by the longer periods spent by ships in ports. The report presented, based on the ILO's own studies and those of many other experts on the subject, showed that ships spend forty to sixty per cent of their time in port. This represents an economic loss not only to the shipping industry, but also to trade and industry in general, in terms of retarded production and delayed delivery dates.

In the discussions which took place on the subject, first in a special subcommittee and then in the plenary proceedings, the workers' representatives joined with those of the governments and employers in expressing deep concern at the problem. The first point stressed was that the productivity of the dock industry is primarily an economic problem and that the difficulties experienced by the industry in this respect arise from inadequacies connected with the organization and equipment rather than from factors related to labour.

On the other hand, labour can make a contribution in finding solutions by



*Rotterdam is one of three North Sea ports (the others are Hamburg and Antwerp) which compete for traffic to and from a common hinterland. The social problems arising from this interport competition were the subject of renewed discussion at the Inland Transport Committee meeting held recently in Hamburg*

adopting a flexible attitude when new methods and modern equipment and installations require co-operation on the part of the workers in respect of working hours, working practices and similar matters. The workers' representatives expressed their wholehearted willingness to co-operate in attempts to improve efficiency and productivity and to participate in joint or tripartite machinery which, according to circumstances, is created for the purpose. Two things were noted, however: first that any machinery of this kind should fit in with existing labour-management arrangements, and secondly, that productivity measures should not have any adverse effects on workers' conditions, but should, on the contrary, be reflected in an improvement of social standards, in which the dockers should have a fair share.

#### **A lone voice**

The conclusions of the Committee on the question of dock productivity were adopted unanimously except for one vote. This voice tried to suggest that by entering the field of productivity the ILO was betraying its real purpose of promoting social justice. By ignoring the fact that productivity is as essential to the well-being of the workers as to any other section of the community, and the fact that the whole emphasis was upon the workers' participation in productivity measures being conditional upon their sharing in the social benefits, that voice revealed that social justice was not its real motive.

The conclusions of the Committee, worked out in detailed and careful tripartite discussions, went into virtually every phase and aspect of port working – labour-management relations and the settlement of disputes, organization of work, including the methods of engaging and allocating labour, training of dockers, introduction of new equipment, port organization, technical assistance, etc. The recommendation of the Committee was that the conclusions should be circulated by the ILO for the guidance



of governments and employers' and workers' organizations. Interpreted and applied in the spirit in which they were drawn up, they represent a very constructive contribution to the solution of a particularly important and urgent problem.

#### **Competition between ports of North-West Europe**

The competition between the continental North Sea ports, more particularly between Antwerp, Rotterdam and Hamburg, for the traffic to and from their common hinterland is a problem of very long standing. It has been before the Inland Transport Committee since its first session of 1945, which called for study of the problem. More recent sessions have urged a tripartite regional conference of the ILO to set minimum labour standards for the ports concerned and thus to protect dockers against adverse effects of economic competition.

The Hamburg session once again

adopted a resolution to the effect that the time was ripe for holding a tripartite regional conference of the continental North Sea ports, with the aim of formulating minimum conditions of employment for the dockers of the ports concerned. The resolution stressed 'the continued need for action on a regional scale to deal with the social problems of these ports' and referred to the special bearing of the 'developments which have taken place in the situation in this region, notably the holding of conferences and discussions at ministerial level and the plans for forming a common European market.'

The Committee's earlier resolutions on this question were adopted against the votes of the government and employers' representatives of the countries directly concerned. This time, however, a step forward was made in that two government representatives, those of Belgium and France, voted with the sponsors of the resolution.

## Regularization of dock employment

This was one of the questions extensively dealt with in the General Report, in relation to the comprehensive resolution adopted by the Committee at its third session in Brussels in 1949. Known as Resolution No. 25, it contains detailed recommendations concerning the methods to be adopted for decasualizing dock labour by the introduction of schemes providing for labour registration and guaranteed payments. Again, from the report presented to the Committee it was apparent how great has been the progress in many countries with the introduction of schemes of this kind.


However, voices were also raised, notably by the Japanese workers' representatives, complaining about the continuance of malpractices in connection with the engagement of dock labour. In particular there were complaints about the contractor and other systems, under which men have to hand over a substantial part of their earnings to middlemen in order to get employment.

For obvious reasons, the Committee has to use appropriately general language in such matters. Thus, in the resolution adopted by the Committee in this connection, the Governing Body of the ILO was invited 'to note the importance which the Inland Transport Committee attaches to the need for maximizing regularity of employment for dock workers and to express the hope that programmes to that end may be developed by governments, management and labour consistent with the extent of the problem and circumstances and practices in each country.' Governments will be expected to report again at the next session of the Committee on the position with regard to the carrying out of past decisions, including the Brussels and Hamburg resolutions on the decasualization of dock labour. This gives dockers' unions in the countries especially concerned a valuable opportunity for putting appropriate pressure upon their Governments in this field.

*(to be continued)*

*Whilst expressing their willingness to cooperate in attempts to improve efficiency by the introduction of modern machinery and methods, the dockers' representatives stated that productivity measures should be reflected in an improvement of social standards, in which the dockers should have their fair share*

## Nation-wide industrial sick pay scheme in Norway

 THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT introducing sick pay in industry is regarded by the Norwegian Federation of Labour as its greatest achievement in last year's collective bargaining. The payment of wages during compulsory periods of absence owing to illness was a basic claim put forward by the Norwegian Federation of Labour when negotiations were opened for new agreements in 1956. The claim was originally rejected by the employers' association but agreement was later reached in principle on the establishment at plant level of a contributory sick benefits fund supplementary to the national health insurance scheme.

Following prolonged negotiations the final agreement on sickness and industrial accidents benefits was signed by the Federation of Labour and Employers' Confederation on 7 January 1957. The agreement, which came into force on 15 February 1957, provides a daily allowance payable for a maximum period of 26 weeks in respect of the same illness and beginning on the seventh day. The amount varies according to the income of the recipient but for the majority works out at about 10

crowns (10s.) a day. This taken with the national health insurance scheme benefit means a daily sick pay rate of 20 crowns. The agreement provides however that in no case shall sick pay exceed 90% of the wages of the person concerned. Additional allowances are paid to workers with families. All adult workers to whom the scheme applies are covered. These number about 200,000 employees of firms affiliated with the Norwegian Employers' Confederation but unions are taking up the question of making it applicable to workers employed by firms not members of the Confederation, so that eventually some 300,000 may be covered.

The scheme is financed by weekly contributions from employees and employers varying from 0.50 crowns to 1.40 crowns in the case of employers and 0.30 to 0.80 crowns for employees. Firms adopting the scheme may choose between two systems: they may either join a general insurance scheme to be administered by the National Social Insurance Institution through the local health insurance office, or establish a works sick fund insurance scheme of their own. Standard rules for such sick fund schemes have been agreed on by the Federation of Labour and the Employers' Confederation already in joint negotiations.



# Focus on ageing busmen



THE BRITISH NUFFIELD CENTRE STUDY 'BUS WORKERS IN THEIR LATER LIVES' is one of the most interesting pieces of social research to appear for some time. One of a series of studies with the general title 'Ageing within the Conditions of Modern Industry', it has been based on an examination of the records of the industrial life of 300 London busmen (150 drivers and 150 conductors) from the age of 60 onwards. Its interest lies in the light thrown on the demands made by this type of passenger transport on the men who run it and on the degree to which the men manage in their later lives to meet those demands.

The author of the study, Mr. F. Le Gros Clark, asks at the outset that his report should be regarded as 'a preliminary study of a large subject'. He admits, too, that 300 records constitute a small sample but believes, nevertheless, that a small sample need not necessarily be less revealing than a larger one. In fact by resorting to partial records of a larger number of men he has been able to make slight adjustments to his results from the three hundred.

The bus driver and conductor work in a field where it is not possible for the older worker to adjust the pace or intensity of his work to any lessening in his physical or mental vigour: the bus has to be driven in the same way as in his younger days and tickets dispensed at the same rate. In this sense it would be fair to say that the busman's work is more demanding than in many industries where the older hand can take things a little more easily.

## Between 60 and 66

The sample 300 are traced from the point where they are approaching sixty years of age. All had been medically examined on appointment and were subject to periodical routine examinations, that for drivers being rather the more rigorous. Of the *drivers*, thirty-eight had already left the buses before reaching the age of sixty-five: eleven had died while still employed, twenty had been discharged or transferred for medical reasons and the remaining seven had left on their own initiative. The figure for the *conductors* was higher: *fifty-three*. This is analysed as six having died, one resigned for domestic reasons, six dismissed for disciplinary reasons and no fewer than 40 discharged or transferred for medical reasons. (This last figure is one case where the author feels that his sample is rather unrepresentative; however, he believes that it would still be fair to estimate the per-

centage of medical 'rejects' in this age group as high as twenty per cent.)

Sixty-five years of age is a significant point for the British worker generally: it is the age at which he becomes entitled to an old age pension, at which retirement begins for many and serious thoughts of retirement for the great majority of the remainder. The London Transport Executive has not for many years retired *all* its employees at sixty-five as a matter of policy but it does do so with men who have been transferred to lighter or alternative work from driving or conducting.

Fifty-five *drivers* left the service at sixty-five. One of them died, twenty-five were discharged either for specific medical reasons or through age, whilst twenty-nine left on their own initiative. The study points out that the latter twenty-nine probably include a good number of men who while not seriously or chronically ill felt themselves that they were 'getting a bit beyond it'. Others left the buses with the intention of finding different work elsewhere. Of the twenty-five who were discharged, nine were definitely rejected as medically unfit for further driving, six through age alone, and the remaining ten were in poor health, some of them being away sick and never returning to duty. Thus, by the time they reached (or would have reached) the age of sixty-six, ninety-three of the original drivers had left the wheel.

The *conductors* fared worse at sixty-five. Sixty-one of them left at that age. Two of them died and one was dismissed for disciplinary reasons. Twenty-eight left through age or sickness: old age is specifically mentioned in twelve of these cases. The others who left did so on their own initiative and here as in the case of the drivers some of them were looking for less exacting work.



*This cheerful elderly bus driver is typical of the courteous men and women who ensure that Londoners travel about their city both safely and quickly. Despite their cheerfulness, however, London bus drivers told Mr Le Gros Clark that advancing age brings with it increased mental tiredness at the end of a day's work*



*Some idea of the strain involved in piloting a double-decker bus through the traffic-congested streets of Britain's capital is given by this photograph of Oxford Street. It should be noted that, appearances to the contrary, this was not taken during the rush-hour*

### From 66 onwards

Fifty-seven drivers and thirty-six conductors of the original three hundred were left working on the buses at the age of sixty-six. During the period from that age to the age of seventy, six of the drivers died in employment (one from an accident), thirty-three were discharged for medical reasons and the remainder left on their own account. The numbers of these older drivers declined steadily until only thirteen were still working at the age of 69; seven of these passed seventy and then retired. About half of those retiring of their own volition had been ill some two or three months before leaving notably with bouts of bronchitis, fibrositis, dyspepsia and conjunctivitis. Others in this group had complained of strain, occasional

vertigo and working hours; only four or five of them apparently left for reasons unconnected with health or age.

The author of the study calculates that no more than thirty-five per cent of the drivers working at the age of sixty could possibly remain on the job at sixty-seven; the remaining sixty-five per cent would be past driving at that age but by no means all of them would be incapable of any work.

Only thirty-six conductors were left to be traced between the age of sixty-six and seventy. During this time none of them died, twenty-six were discharged through age or sickness, thirteen left at sixty-nine or seventy. Only one of the group, a man of seventy, seemed to have symptoms of senility. Two left with myocardiac degeneration; others were sick with acute bronchitis, debility after

hypertension, and 'industrial fatigue'.

The overall picture for the conductors, after some adjustment to allow for what might have been an unrepresentative sample, is much the same as that for the drivers, namely no more than about thirty-five per cent of conductors who were fit at sixty could be physically capable of continuing their work after sixty-seven.

### Some general comments on ageing in the bus service

The study makes some general comments on 'ageing' among busmen where this is not accompanied by sickness. The men themselves suggested that as far as drivers were concerned this normally took the form of increased mental tiredness at the end of the day. This could, says the study, originate in the



eye muscles and gradually spread to affect the man's whole sense of well being, involving an unconscious tension in other parts of his muscular system.

The strain with the conductors, on the other hand, appears in the lower limbs. The author observes that 'full control over the trunk and lower limbs under hazard tends with age to grow less assured than control over skilled manipulative work. Elderly men are often observed to plant their feet with circumspection, though at a bench or desk their hands still move unhesitatingly. The changes of acceleration on buses require adjustments to which conductors have long been accustomed. But a man's powers of adjustment break down at last. When symptoms of fatigue or strain assert themselves among older conductors they are likely to be the authentic symptoms of old age, not the mere sensations of acute discomfort that might be experienced by a man of fifty or sixty years if he ventured for the first time to try his hand at the job.'

**A medical analysis**

One of the most interesting parts of the study is headed 'Medical Annotation' where some of the details on the medical records of the sample three hundred are examined. The author has prepared a

*Mr Le Gros Clark's investigations suggested that conductors had fared rather worse than drivers by the time they reached 65. Old age was specifically mentioned as a reason for leaving the service in twelve cases as compared with six for drivers*

table showing the extent to which various disorders played a significant part in departure from the bus service between the ages of sixty and seventy. He has, however, had to rely to some degree on 'doubtful interpretations' of the records and asks that the figures be accepted with caution. 'The disorders were either recorded as the medical grounds for retirement or transfer, or were of so persistent a nature as to warrant the suspicion... that they must have influenced the decision to retire'.

**Percentage of Retirements or Transfers Conditioned by Certain Complaints at Ages 60-70**

| Nature of complaint                                  | Percentage of men apparently quitting their jobs for this cause |                |
|--|---|----------------|
|  | 150 Drivers   | 150 Conductors |
| Bronchitis (chronic or series of recent bouts)       | 18.0  | 22.0           |
| Hernia   | 2.7   | 2.0            |
| Gastric (peptic ulcers or recent bouts of gastritis) | 6.0   | 10.0           |
| Hypertension or vertigo                              | 8.0   | 8.0            |
| Cardiac degeneration, thrombosis, etc.               | 7.3   | 6.0            |
| Rheumatic (fibrositis, arthritis, etc.)              | 10.0  | 12.0           |

To obtain a more complete picture the author also compiled a table showing the extent to which various disorders had interrupted the men's work for any significant period prior to their leaving the buses. Minor interruptions were ignored.

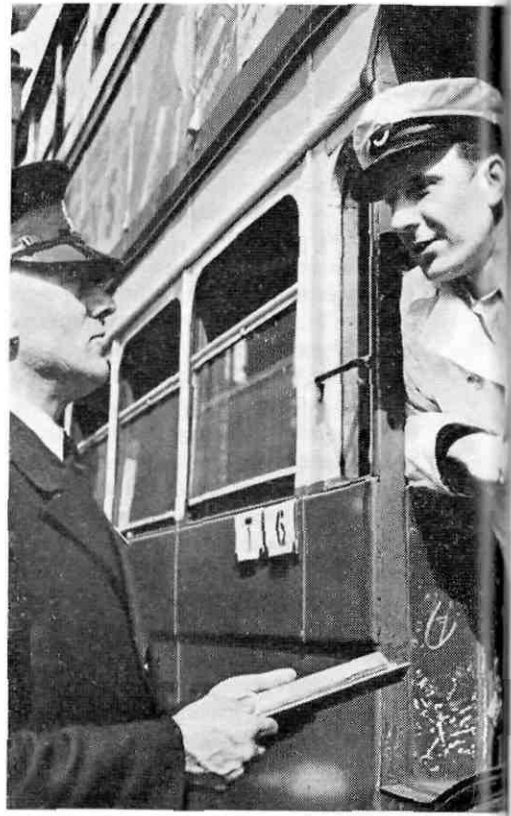
*Some bus drivers may graduate to posts as inspectors but here again a high standard of physical fitness and mental alertness is demanded and it is not the practice to reserve such jobs for those who are no longer capable of work on board buses as drivers or conductors*

**Percentage of Older Men Absent with Moderate or Severe Attacks**

| Nature of complaint                | Percentage of men absent for varying periods |                |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------|
|                                    | 150 Drivers                                  | 150 Conductors |
| Bronchitis                         | 20.0   | 27.0           |
| Gastric complaints                 | 15.3   | 14.0           |
| Arthritic and rheumatic complaints | 16.6   | 13.6           |
| Nervous debility and neurosis      | 3.3  | 8.0            |
| Varicose veins                     | 1.3  | 2.0            |

In reading both the tables it should be borne in mind that some ailments would more readily incapacitate one category than the other and to a different degree. For example, rheumatic complaints would be more likely to handicap a conductor seriously than a driver; similarly, a conductor is more likely, by virtue of his greater exposure both to the weather and any infected passengers, to contract respiratory complaints.

Among the men recorded as having left the service of their own accord were some who having been sick returned to work only to retire shortly afterwards,





finding that their health was not sufficiently restored for them to cope comfortably with their job. Fifteen drivers (all but three of them over sixty-five) were such cases and seven conductors. Here again the fact that bus work cannot be adapted to the physical failings of older men comes into play and the ailments of the older bus workers are more likely to show themselves than in some other professions. Older drivers are examined medically in connection with the renewal of their driving licences at the ages of fifty, fifty-six, sixty-two and sixty-five, and annually thereafter. Eye-sight tests are at the ages of fifty, fifty-five, fifty-eight, sixty, sixty-two, sixty-four and annually thereafter. Older conductors are examined annually after the age of sixty-five. All are examined on returning to work after more than four weeks' sickness, after an accident involving three days' absence, after having to stop work during a shift, after absence due to heart disease, tuberculosis, epilepsy, fainting or vertigo, and at the management's request.

#### Transferring to alternative work

It will be remembered that no fewer than sixty of the original three hundred busmen had been discharged or transferred on medical grounds before they reached the age of sixty-five (when they became entitled to a state pension), that is twenty per cent. Of these sixty, eighteen were discharged as chronically unfit, twelve sought lighter work outside the LTE service and thirty were transferred to lighter work within it. Of this last thirty, four were later discharged as permanently unfit after their transfer and before they reached sixty-five.

The problem of finding alternative work for conductors and drivers unable any longer to work as such is obviously a serious one. The medical standards required of drivers in particular are such that to fail to reach them is far from denoting invalidity: many men taken off service on the buses do not necessarily need 'light' work. On the other hand the number of jobs suitable for ex-drivers and conductors within the London Transport Executive is not un-

*The conductor's job on buses servicing London's main-line rail termini, such as Waterloo Station, is a particularly hard one, especially during the morning and afternoon peaks when many thousands of passengers enter and leave the city*

limited whilst the number of men qualifying for them is considerable. For these reasons the LTE has, in fairness to all, adopted the policy of not offering alternative work to drivers and conductors over sixty-five years of age and of compulsorily retiring at sixty-five those who have been transferred. The author of the study thinks that possibly thirteen per cent of the applicants for transfer to lighter work in the LTE fail to get it but this figure does not necessarily include only the older busmen.

#### A valuable piece of work

A study of the sort undertaken by the Nuffield Foundation can be of great value to the appropriate trade unions in the planning of their policies in matters such as pensions and working conditions. The author is at some pains to point to the provisional nature of his study and to possible weaknesses in his findings. There is, however, sufficient 'meat' in the study to make anyone connected with the bus industry extremely grateful for its publication and this article, for reasons of space, has had to describe parts of it sketchily. It will certainly be a good thing if Mr. Le Gros Clark or someone equally well qualified can later take up the even more detailed analysis of the working lives of older busmen for which he has prepared the ground so well.

#### Gratuity for Ceylon's fishermen



MORE THAN 50,000 REGISTERED FISHERMEN in Ceylon will be covered by a special gratuity plan the Ministry of Fisheries is to bring into operation this year. Dependents will receive Government financial aid on the death of the breadwinner or when he quits his trade.

The scheme will be largely financed by Government contributions. Fishermen will be asked to contribute themselves on the same basis on which Government employees contribute to the provident fund scheme. The fishermen's contribution will not, however, be compulsory.

The Ministry will also operate a scheme to tackle seasonal unemployment. It plans to aid fishermen and arrange to employ them in special small industries on housing and land reclamation schemes.

The Ministry's plan to protect fishermen against deep-sea fishing risks, old age and seasonal unemployment, may not be extended to several thousand persons who work on shore repairing nets and maintaining boats. Unlike fishermen proper who are registered, the Department of Fisheries has no check on the number who actually work on shore.





## The Ecuadorian railwaymen fight for freedom

by L. MARTINEZ, Director, ITF Latin American Office

IT IS SAD TO RECORD that despite the recent world-wide publicity given to the atrocities committed by the Soviet armies in Hungary and other Communist-dominated countries there are still workers in some parts of the world, particularly in Latin America, who have not yet realized the complete fallacy of the totalitarian propaganda, mainly Communist, now being profusely disseminated throughout that continent.

It is no secret that both the Communists and the stubborn followers of deposed or actual dictators have ample means and that they use them liberally in trying to convince workers of the need to attend Communist masquerades – everything paid of course – and then releasing them to further mismanage their trade unions. At least a couple of instances are known where democratic Latin

American workers, with previous experience of Communist subversion inside their unions, have nevertheless been blind, deaf or weak enough to allow this to occur more than once.

Nobody who knows the real strength of the totalitarian forces inside the Latin American trade union movement as a whole will deny that, apart from the countries ruled by dictators (and even in

some of these there are underground movements), the Communists have no real unions of their own. They derive their so-called strength from weak or ill-advised unions. Therefore these should be our primary concern, lending them the necessary strength and providing them with sound advice as to how they should face the totalitarian attack. Examples of this, even in democratic countries, are plentiful and the free trade union movement knows how to deal with it.

### A look at the past

The general situation we have tried to describe now applies to the Ecuadorian



A street scene in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. In the accompanying article by L. Martinez of the ITF Latin American Office, an account is given of the struggle by Ecuadorian railwaymen to re-establish a free trade union. (Photograph by courtesy of Shell)

*Ecuador is a poor country by Western standards. Some two-thirds of the population work in agriculture and many of them are Indians. This scene is a typical one on market day in many of the towns. (Photo reproduced by courtesy of Shell)*

railwaymen, who, entirely on their own, are striving to put things where they rightly belong. A clear example of this is at the moment being given by a group of the leaders of the former union catering for the workers of the Guayaquil-Quito-Austral Railway, which in the 'forties used to be the backbone of the National Railwaymen's Federation of Ecuador. It was at that time that the Federation established official and fraternal relations with the transport workers of the free world, both to put an end to its own isolation and to co-operate in the common task.

Unfortunately, at the same time that the Ecuadorian trade union movement acquired a strength and a vitality it had never had before, the 1944 revolution was used as a springboard by unscrupulous men and bodies of dubious repute, frequently alien, to jump to the head of the trade union movement, regardless of the malpractices they had to perform to reach their ends.

### **The role of the CTE**

The fanatical pertinacity of the Communist agents led the Ecuadorian Confederation of Labour (CTE) to join the ranks of the WFTU. But it did not necessarily mean that from then on the workers' interests were to be better cared for, although, certainly, the 'activists' collected thousands of signatures on this or that occasion and the minor Communist bosses could ostensibly count the CTE as their own.

Next to follow was the general attack against the trade federations, and the railwaymen's was no exception. The new 'leaders', blind followers of Moscow's slogans, immediately severed the Federation's relations with the international free trade union movement. As in the case of the general trade union movement, the railwaymen had from then on to fight a lone and losing battle. That was the near-fatal result of their 'liberation'.

Nevertheless, what was to follow a few years later taught the CTE a well-deserved lesson, since many of the unions abandoned its ranks when they saw that it could not serve them any useful



purpose. Later years have shown that the Confederation is no more than a mere name on the WFTU's files.

### **The 1955 railway strike**

This was called by the Guayaquil-Quito-Austral Railway Union, then the strongest and best organized in the country, catering for 4,500 workers. It should be noted here that all the Ecuadorian railways are owned by the State and at that time Dr. J. Velasco Ibarra was in the last year of his presidential term. Undoubtedly, the railway workers joined in wishing him a one-way journey, and to this day they remember his dictatorial rule as a disgusting nightmare.

The reasons for the strike may quickly be ascertained if one realizes that the management owed the staff its wages for from ten to twelve weeks. Obviously enough, before the stoppage the Union leaders had continually pleaded with the management but had obtained nothing at all. The Union thereupon agreed to recommend the men to stop all work on the spot. The truth was that their meagre savings – if any at all – were exhausted and so too was their physical strength and that of their dependents.

No sooner had President Velasco Ibarra learnt of the strike than he flew from Quito to Duran, the country's main railway junction and the most important trade union centre, and personally took every imaginable measure to

smash the strike movement. The army threw the workers out of their homes and hundreds of them filled up the prisons, where they were tortured with sub-human refinements. The Union had earlier been outlawed and a State of Siege declared all along the railway. Needless to say, Dr. Velasco Ibarra was in no mood to think about so trivial a matter as unpaid wages.

### **The same old methods**

Time passed by, the repression eased and the Union's former leaders tried once more to explain to the President of the Republic the powerful reasons the men had had to stop work. But it was useless. Meanwhile bad political elements, under Communist leadership, took over the remnants of the Union which they completely destroyed instead of reorganizing. Soon there was not a single democratic leader to be found in a position to claim his former rights. The Union and its case were irretrievably lost.

### **A new era begins**

Finally, in September 1956, Dr. Velasco Ibarra handed over power to the newly elected President, Dr. Camillo Ponce Enriquez, whom Ibarra's followers lost no time in qualifying as belonging to 'the extreme right'. This attitude was no surprise to the democratic workers in view of the fact that all those who are

not prepared to bow to 'the extreme left' are considered by the latter as serving reaction.

The inauguration of the new régime induced the democratic railwaymen to try to reconstruct their old union. They got together and decided to convene a conference of representatives of the former local committees which met by the end of September, the following decisions being adopted:

1) to establish a reorganizing committee;

2) to entrust a working party with the task of drafting a new set of rules;

3) to try to create a new union in view of the difficulties in reorganizing the old one; and

4) to invite the new President of the Republic to a general meeting.

The meeting took place on 8 October 1956. In his address the President promised full guarantees for the unions already in existence and for those which might be created in the future, as well as the strict implementation of the Labour Code.

The initial success thus achieved brought a new stimulus to the leaders and to the membership. More and more members offered their wholehearted cooperation to the reorganizing committee. The new Draft Rules were presented a month later to the Minister of Labour for his approval.

Several months have now gone by and the Minister's approval is still pending. Not because there is any legal hitch preventing it, but because - we are assured - of the red and blue factions' continuous manoeuvring at the official level. On the other hand, the workers' enemies are persistently deploying all their means and skill to convince the railwaymen of the futility of creating a new union, which from the very start they deem would be lost to them.


### **They need us**

The reorganizing committee, however, is fully determined to proceed with its work at the spur of the membership's enthusiasm because its members have no reason whatsoever to doubt the President's promise. So far, since the union does not exist for any practical purpose, the reorganizing committee lacks the means to press its claim at the right level and have the rules approved. Despite their extremely weak financial position, the membership is contributing voluntarily so as to allow the committee to

send a delegation to Quito, where the influence of the Communists and their allies may still be deeply rooted.

Besides having asked for the moral solidarity of the ITF Latin American affiliates, the ITF Regional Office has addressed the Ecuadorian President respectfully requesting him to keep his promise. Let us hope that in the end justice will prevail against totalitarian intrigue, and in the meantime let us give the democratic railwaymen of Ecuador a real token of international solidarity. They should not be left alone in their unequal struggle.

### **Trans-Atlantic 'fishy-back' begins**

 'PIGGY-BACK' - the modern transport process whereby laden road trailers are driven on to special rail cars, transported by rail to an appropriate centre and then hitched to a tractor and driven to their destination - has become almost a commonplace in the United States and much of Europe. 'Fishy-back', a similar process with ships doing the work of the railways, is a rather more recent development but the extent to which it has advanced was shown recently when the first trailer-ship crossed the Atlantic to begin a regular service.

The vessel in question was the 'Carib Queen', manned by members of the Seafarers' International Union and owned by the American TMT Trailer Ferry company, which has been operating a similar service successfully between the United States and islands such as Puerto Rico in the West Indies for some time. The company owns twelve ships at the moment, with 600 trailers.


She has a displacement of 9,040 tons and in addition to modern navigational aids (she was completed as recently as December last year) installations developed and patented by the company make simultaneous loading and unloading possible in four hours. She can take 92 trailers between 30 and 32 feet in length, 97 average-sized cars, 500 tons of bulk cargo and 12 passengers.

Her first trip across the Atlantic was from New York to St. Nazaire in France, carrying American military equipment as well as commercial goods. The president and founder of the company said that the new service would in effect link the roads of Europe and the United States together and would reduce

both costs and the amount of handling and travelling time of the goods.


Some quarters in the transport industry have yet to be convinced that 'fishy-back' methods can be applied quickly on a large scale. They point to the amount of space needed for a comparatively small quantity of goods and to the lack of facilities at many large ports for this sort of operation.

### **Home truths from a Polish railwayman**

 'THE MAJORITY OF RAILWAYMEN do not enjoy the advantages laid down in the labour protection laws. Thousands of staff in the transport services work not 200 hours a month, but 240, 300 and even 360 hours. They receive no overtime payments. Unpaid overtime was made possible by a law of 1919 which has not to this day been repealed... It is no secret that there are many unemployed. The railwaymen are asking that they be recruited to the railways.'

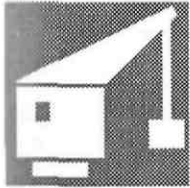
The speaker was a railwaymen's delegate at the last meeting of the Polish Federation of Trade Unions.

### **Indian seafarers' training**

 THERE ARE NOW SIX TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS for Indian seafarers - three for officers and three for ratings - as against one prior to the country's independence. This was reported by the Indian Director-General at the recent 'annual day' of the Bombay Nautical and Engineering College. However, there was still a shortage of navigating and engineer officers and the assistance of foreign personnel in manning Indian tonnage on order would be required for some time.

The College's annual report for 1955-56 showed that 2,696 officers had taken advanced technical training since the College opened in October, 1948. Of these, 1,691 were navigating officers and 1,005 engineers. During the year under review there were 534 officers on the roll, of whom 324 had obtained their certificates of competency. Seventy-two officers had taken the radar observer course and it was claimed that India had a higher percentage of officers with this qualification than Great Britain. The Indian Government was said to be planning the construction of a more spacious building to house the College. The new accommodation would include residential quarters.

The following account of this historic strike is taken for the most part from an article in a recent issue of the German Trades Union Federation's paper 'Welt der Arbeit'. The strike was not without importance in the history of the ITF, then known as the International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers. Tom Mann arrived in Harburg shortly after the strike started (it was, incidentally, begun without the Federation's agreement) and toured the port encouraging the strikers and persuading British seamen to help them. His activities must have met with some success since he was arrested and deported shortly afterwards. Even in its infancy the Federation was not taken lightly by the employers. When the employers' association rejected arbitration they are reported in the press as having said that 'the slightest concession . . . would be represented by Tom Mann and his associates . . . as a victory for the International Federation.'



## The Hamburg dock strike of 1896

IT WAS SIXTY YEARS AGO that one of the most bitter wage disputes in German history took place, the Hamburg dock strike of 1896-7. Its cause lay in the scandalous wages which compelled wives and children to work as well. The treasury office of that time gave the average wage for a stevedore as 1,050 marks (about £52 10s. 0d.) a year. Fares, rent, clothing, footwear and doctor's bills swallowed so much of this, even reckoned very modestly, that a family of five were left with 568 marks (about £28 8s. 0d.) for food and contingencies, or approximately 4d. per head a day.

Work began at six in the morning and because of the long distance from home to work many dockers had to get up at four o'clock. Those who were late were dismissed. Only a fraction of the workers could get home during the hour-and-a-half midday break and the greater part of them had their wives or children bring them a hot meal at the docks or on board. Those for whom this could not be done had to spend far too much for a meal in the canteen. Work ended at six in the evening if overtime or night-work did not follow.

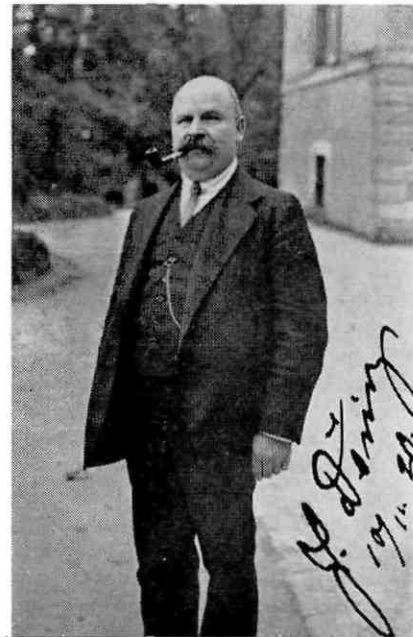
The daily wage amounted to 4.20 marks (about 4s. 3d.) and as often as not holidays were worked. In 1896 there were 6,000 stevedores in the port, taking freight into the ships or discharging. For the most part it was hard work and all the men had sea experience for they had to move quickly and safely on the ships.

On 20 November thousands of stevedores decided at a meeting to stop work from six the next morning as the shipowners had abruptly refused a small wage increase. There was no union behind them at the start; almost all of them were unorganized and the dock workers' union had only a few members over the whole country. Now, however, 4,000 new members joined. A central strike committee posted pickets. There were no disturbances and at the beginning the police showed indulgence, although they became harsher in the course of the dispute.

On 25 November 1896, 1,200 lightermen joined the strike. They were followed by the grain-handling, silo and quayside workers, the ship painters and cleaners, the boiler cleaners, and, finally, the seamen, thereby bringing the port to a standstill. The Hamburg workers' colleagues in Altona, Wilhelmsburg, Harburg, Glückstadt, and Flensburg, too, joined in.

Ships which could not be handled jammed the harbour basin - only a few hundred workers took no part in the strike. Merchants could not keep to their delivery dates and lost heavily. Many firms ran into financial difficulties, bank business sank and retailers were in distress. The normally lively and noisy port and the River Elbe were deserted.

This was the position when a written offer to arbitrate was directed to the chairman of the Hamburg Shipowners' Association by the senator in charge of



*Johann Döring, a leader of the Hamburg dock strike and one of the great names in the history of German trade unionism. He played an extremely active part in the early history of the ITF and was a member of the Executive Committee from 1919 until he retired in 1932. He was, in addition, Vice President for some years*

the police, the president of the Hamburg local authority and the chairman of the industrial court. This suggestion was accepted by the strikers at mass meetings held the following day and local members of the German Parliament together with the strike leader, Johann Döring, were decided on as spokesmen.

The employers, however, unanimously rejected any mediation. They demanded unconditional surrender and had no thought of sitting down at a table with organized workers. The workers now announced a general strike.

Most of the Hamburg people took the strikers' side. Collection sheets circulated in workplaces and lodging houses and considerable sums came from the middle-class areas, too, as well as from the rest of Germany and abroad. Every striker received an identity card and some relief.

One would have expected the Hamburg City Council, as a local legislative body, to concern itself with the strike but throughout the several months that the strike lasted they made no move. This provoked resentment among a part of the population and led an

ever increasing number of workers to acquire civic rights in the years which immediately followed and to take part in the local elections. The result was that the first workers' representative won his place in the Hamburg Town Hall in 1901 and twelve more in 1904.

An animated debate on the strike took place in the German Parliament. The Government representatives laid the blame at the door of the Social Democrats. In this – the Social Democrats had nothing to do with the strike – and in other ways the Government displayed a complete ignorance of the workers' affairs.

Mass meetings of the strikers took place daily. The employers, too, were holding consultations and in one such meeting a certain disunity was already appearing. The big industrialists, the shipyard and factory owners, however, overrode those who were not happy at the position. Associations of small businessmen asked the provincial Senate to intervene but the latter lacked the power, a fact at which it expressed its regret. On 12 December the strikers declared, at eleven large meetings, that they were willing to conclude a peace settlement if their opponents were ready to give way to at least some of their demands. Again the employers refused. On 19 December the Senate proposed to the workers that they should resume work at once under their former conditions and that an inquiry into their position should then be undertaken. The proposal was rejected by a two-thirds majority at five meetings attended by 11,000 workers. For years past the seamen's union had been lobbying the authorities in Hamburg and Berlin without the slightest success and the workers had come to expect nothing from inquiries.

The employers were seeking strike-breakers in every corner of the world. These were not many in number and they were hardly the salt of the earth. They were quartered in the large luxury vessels and often did a great deal of damage there. Their output was very low, about a fifth of that demanded of a

Hamburg worker. The owners' losses were heavy and the strike-breakers cost them a pretty penny.

No one believed that the employers were unable to meet the justified claims of their workers. Since the founding of the German Empire in 1871 business in Hamburg port had risen rapidly. In the period between 1872 and 1895 the value of goods shipped out from the port increased from 516 million marks to 1,337 millions and the inward flow from 953 millions to 1,571 millions. Freight rates rose in quite a short period from ten to twenty marks a ton. The number of millionaires grew year by year, the golden harvest being reaped by the owners whilst their workers lived on the edge of starvation.


Attempts at conciliation were repeated in the following months but the port rulers would not give way. The children became thinner and paler, the strikers more ragged. A local charitable organization, groups of academic dignitaries and retailers' associations tried to persuade the owners to make some concessions, but in vain.

Deprivation drove more and more strikers to give in and early in the year the strike had to be called off. Many firms quietly conceded the workers' demands and in the employers' camp even some of the most hard-boiled had realized that this sort of wage battle did not pay.

From the standpoint of immediate financial advantage the strike had been lost but it had served to spotlight their grievances. Ironically enough – the

strikers having earlier placed little faith in inquiries – a Hamburg Senate Commission set up after the strike confirmed that the grievances were justified. This, the subsequent improvements which followed, and the lesson that trade union organization was vital for their progress, were aspects which in the light of history show that the strike was not as 'lost' as it first appeared.

### Seamen live longer

 SEAMEN – or at least Norwegian seamen – are living longer, if figures published by the Norwegian Seamen's Pension Fund are anything to go by. In December of last year, the number of seamen drawing a pension was 13,100, an increase of 900 during the course of the year.

Of the total number on pension, fifty were over ninety years of age; some 2,850 over seventy and 4,200 under seventy. There were 444 between eighty and eighty-four, whilst 172 were between eighty-five and eighty-nine.

Owing to the difficult manning situation, Norwegian seafarers are encouraged to continue service at sea beyond normal retiring age by the offer of increased pension for additional service. Apparently, however, not many avail themselves of this facility. Quite a number on the other hand take advantages of the pension provision which enables them to serve three months a year in a 'stand-in' capacity without forfeiting any of their pension.

*A cartoon which appeared during the strike in the German Social-Democratic humorous paper 'Der Wahre Jacob'. The police are shown escorting strike-breakers. One of the police carries a notice advertising the 'scabs' as 'voluntary workers'*

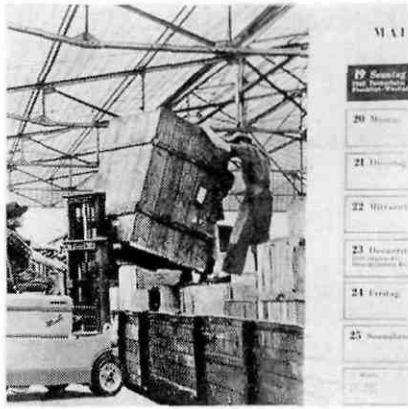


Bild aus dem Hamburger Hafen während der Streikzeit.



utscher Reichsbahnkalender 1957

*This fine streamlined passenger train would be a credit to the East Germans – if only they had one. In fact they possess nothing at all like it. The initials on the front (DR) are East German but the train is of a type which is definitely and exclusively used in West Germany (by courtesy of International News Photos)*



*These men working in what is alleged to be an East German railway freight yard could tell you that the glass roof is not all it appears to be. Truth to tell, it does not exist – except as an example of what a good artist can do with a photograph and a paint brush: a good example of how Communist propaganda goes to work*



*There was a fine show of weeds between the lines on which this man is working until the re-touch artist removed them more quickly than any weed-killer. There were none on the left-hand track. The 'lines' there have been painted in to represent a track dismantled by the Russians in 1945 (International News Photos)*

### The railway that never was

**OF ALL THE CRUDE PROPAGANDA** to have gushed from the Communist world, the 1957 Calendar issued by the East German Railways is supreme. The actual dates appear to be genuine but that is about all. Certainly the illustrations (see above) are an example of outright photographic fraud. They are designed to give an impression of technical efficiency where it does not exist and were exposed for what they are by one of the men responsible for the calendar's production who later fled to the West. Presumably the whole elaborate exercise was intended for foreign consumption; it can hardly have fooled those who have to travel or work on the railways and thus know their shortcomings only too well.

### Action against 'flags of convenience'?

**THE SCANDINAVIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION**, representing 190,000 workers in sea and land transport in the Nordic countries, adopted at a recent Conference in Oslo a resolution addressed to the Nordic Council, asking the Council to take up the question of taking measures against the present extensive registration of ships flying flags of convenience. This applies first and foremost to ships

registered in Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica, which today constitute ten per cent of total world tonnage. The Conference was told that from 1 January 1957 to the end of June 1961, contracts had been placed for a total tanker-tonnage of 50 million tons of which thirty-five per cent had been contracted under 'flags of convenience'.

In the resolution the Conference expressed its deep concern at the fact that in the course of a few years the sea would to a great extent be dominated by ships flying flags of convenience, and this would lead to a decrease in freights. The Conference was of the opinion that the Nordic governments should lead the way by taking measures to counteract this development.

In the resolution, the Conference further pointed to the necessity of establishing an international advisory body for questions concerning seafaring and shipping, which could also consider the problem of flags of convenience, referring in this connection to the International Convention adopted in 1948, which provides for the creation of such a body. None of the Nordic countries has ratified this convention and the necessity for ratification was stressed in the resolution.

The Conference of the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation comprised twenty-five delegates from sea-

farers' and dockers' organizations in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The International Transport Workers' Federation was represented by Lawrence White, officer in charge of the ITF Special Seafarers' Section.

Subsequently, a delegation from the Conference, consisting of Johan Christensen, General Secretary of the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation, and Niilo Wälläri, President of the Finnish Seamen's Union, was received by the Council and given an opportunity of making known the Conference's views on this subject.

### Dieselization on the Finnish State Railways

**THE FINNISH STATE RAILWAYS** are considering plans for going over to diesel and electric traction over the entire network. The first line to be electrified will be between Helsinki and Tampere, but no date has been fixed for work to start. Meanwhile, as in Norway, an 'away-with-steam' programme will be carried out with the progressive introduction of diesel locomotives. At present forty-two diesels are being built in the country and orders for the construction of another fifty are expected to be given when financial means are available. The Finnish Railways are operating on a considerable deficit; diesels could mean a profit.

# The shore-based whaling industry in Iceland

text and pictures by F. HUNTLY WOODCOCK, M. B. E., *Fisheries Attaché, British Icelandic Legation*



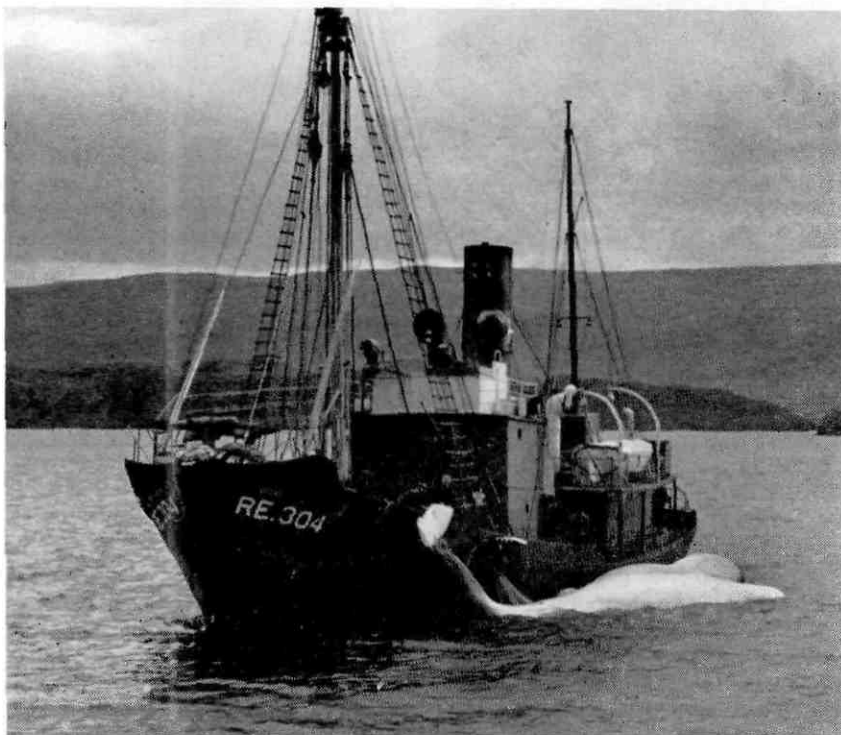
PERHAPS LESSER KNOWN among Iceland's many fishing activities than some is the relatively new shore-based whaling industry. This pictorial feature comes about as a result of my visit to the Whaling Station, which lies appropriately at the head of the Hvalfjord, just north of Reykjavik.

The processing factory, a heavy concrete building with ramp giving access to the roof upon which the dismembering of the whale takes place, was built in 1948. The whales are hauled up by a heavy trawler type of winch, and the dismembered whale fed through large funnel apertures into the processing boilers below, with the exception of the red whale-meat which is handled separately.

The Station is limited to four boats, which fish between 100 and 200 miles north of Reykjavik. Three boats are of 265 gross tonnage, with the latest 400, carrying a crew of fourteen and fifteen respectively. The season is for four months, from May to September, during which there is a shore staff of seventy, fully engaged in shifts.


The first year's catch was 265 whales; the last season was almost double that. The varieties caught are fin and blue whales, the largest caught so far measuring eighty-six feet in length and weighing 100 tons. The output of oil is in excess of 3,000 tons per season, with the frozen whale-meat next in importance; but naturally there is a substantial production of meal. The whole of the staff, from skippers and harpooners downwards, are Icelandic.

I am indebted to Mr. Loftur Bjarnason, managing director of this enterprise, for these details.



An Icelandic whaler returning to its base with two fin whales lashed to the bulwarks

## Modern canteens for Belgian dockers

 THE PROBLEM OF MEAL FACILITIES for dockers has long engaged the attention of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union. Before the war dockers could find shelter against the weather and get a cup of coffee, plate of soup, etc. at a number of privately-run coffee-stalls in the dock district. But during the war, most of these suffered damage and those remaining were pretty bad.

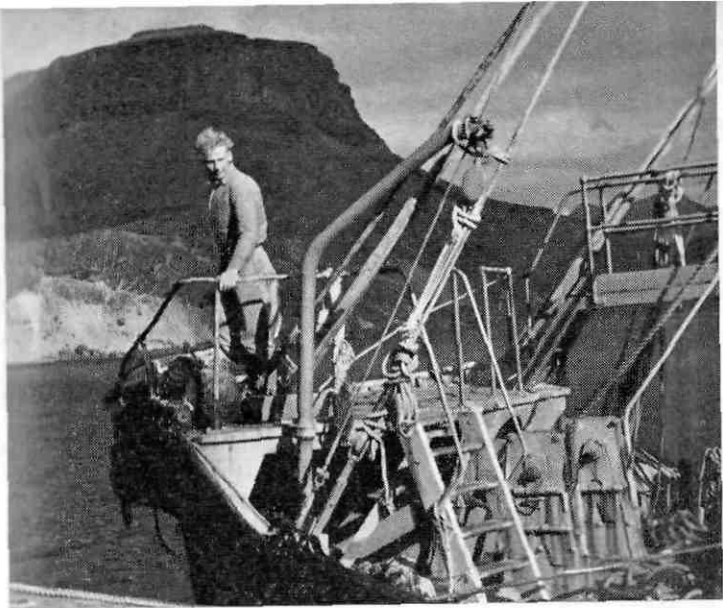
The union had repeatedly made

representations to obtain improved facilities but it needed the particularly bad winter of 1956 to get the employers to see the justice of this claim. Agreement was reached on the erecting of a trial number of canteens. These will be well-built establishments of about 150 square metres with seating accommodation for 100 persons. Washing facilities and bicycle racks will also be provided.

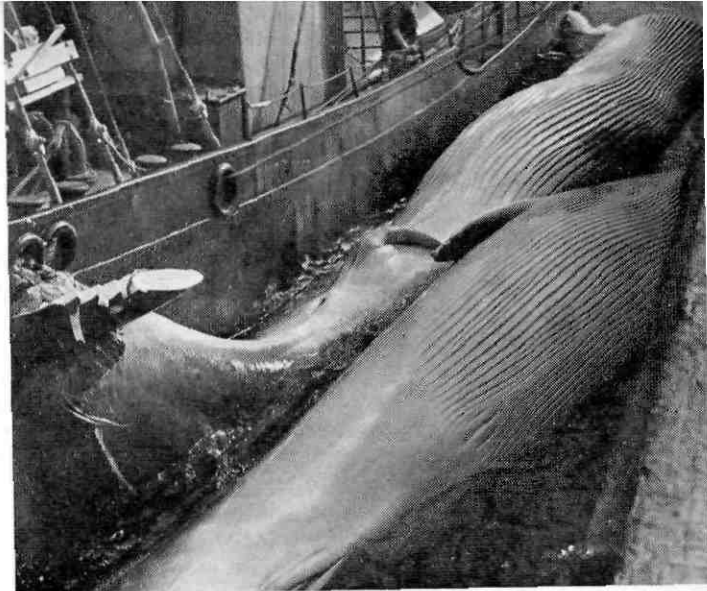
Construction work on the first series was due to begin in the port of Antwerp during the month of March, and dockers in the port are looking forward to the day when it will no longer be necessary for them to take their meals in the conditions they have had to put up with hitherto. At the same time, the Belgian Transport Workers' Union (Dockers' Industrial Group) will not remain content until it is assured of a big say in the running of these canteens.

On page 99: 1) A whaler returns to Hvalfjord. The harpooner is about to come ashore 2) Tails of fin whales are notched to ensure a steady tow as whale has a tendency to revolve 3) Stripping flesh from side of upper jaw (whale is upside down) 4) Whale being hauled by trawler type winch up to dismembering platform 5) General view of butchering platform. Circular band and reciprocating saws are used by the lemmers 6) Strips of blubber show below red flesh (which appears as high dark mass on left of picture). More than three thousand tons of whale oil is produced in one season





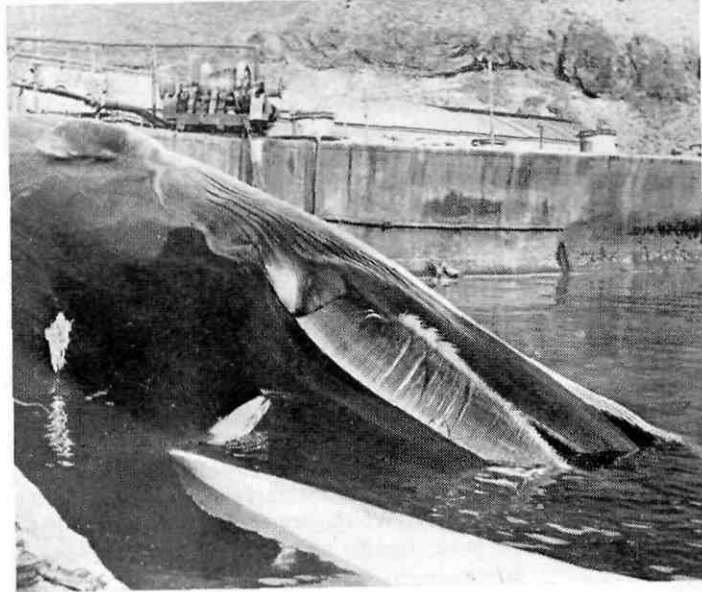
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## The Spanish people strike back at Franco

FRANCO IS THE ONLY SURVIVING REPRESENTATIVE of the nightmarish string of European fascist – as distinct from Communist – dictators thrown up between the two world wars. His odious régime has benefited from a relative obscurity afforded by the more spectacular excesses of his political bedfellows, Hitler and Mussolini, which claimed the attention of the democracies and enabled Falangist Spain to withdraw thankfully to a backseat in world affairs. True, immediately following the end of the Second World War the United Nations and various other international gatherings passed resolutions deploring the existence of a totalitarian order in Spain and in 1946 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution urging its member nations to withdraw their diplomatic representatives from Spain for as long as Franco held power there. But it was not long before the free nations were once more preoccupied with bigger and more immediate dangers, this time from Eastern Europe, and Franco has since been able to oppress almost with impunity because the spotlight was focussed elsewhere.

The international free trade union movement is in some respects a much less inhibited opponent of dictatorships than even the most well-intentioned and active democratic government. It is able to make moral judgments without having to pay regard to complicated strategic and diplomatic considerations, considerations which sometimes force a democratic state to maintain outwardly friendly relations with another state whose system of government is diametrically opposed to democracy. It is able to speak out without diluting its condemnation in cautious diplomatic jargon. It is able to denounce the malpractices of a dictatorial régime of any hue, Black, White, Brown or Red, all the more roundly and it has a duty to do so.

And so it is fitting that at a time when Franco tends either to be forgotten, or, even worse, to be wooed as a recruit to the anti-Communist front, the ICFTU should remind the free world of the evil practised in Spain by its self-appointed tyrant. The rights of man are violated no less in Spain than in Hungary or Russia. In Spain, too, the workers are exploited, their 'interests' 'protected' by puppet unions; in Spain, too, there is no right to strike, no right to vote freely, no right to speak freely, no right to live decently – indeed, no right to live, a

*Franco's 'social revolution' in an appropriate setting as a dog scavenges for food. The Franco régime has made Spain Western Europe's poor relation, her workers' standard of living being lower now than in 1936 when the Falangist attack on the Spanish Republic commenced in earnest*

tragic fact many brave trade unionists have discovered.

The ICFTU's booklet, 'The Spanish people strike back at Franco', is a simple and telling indictment of the Franco tyranny. It aims both to expose the dictatorship and to publicize the fight of the Spanish workers against it. For fight back the Spanish workers have, against odds which would have daunted any with less spirit and – by virtue of their wretched living and working conditions – less incentive.

The Spanish workers' wages and conditions are poor by any standards; compared with those in the remainder of Western Europe they are scandalous. What is more they are not improving. More than one dictatorship has sought to excuse its negation of democracy by pointing to apparent social advances. The Spanish dictator cannot draw even on this excuse for, as the booklet reveals, the cost of living has increased by 955.4 per cent since 1936 (the year the

Spanish fascists commenced their campaign against the Spanish Republic) and take-home pay by only 483 per cent in the same period. And at the same time the working week has increased from forty-four to forty-eight hours!

The 'unions' are a mockery, subordinated to the Falange and thus to the régime. Their structure is 'vertical', that is all authority proceeds from above. A Franco law specifies that trade union officials are to be appointed by the Falange leadership; the part played by the 'union' members in the conduct of 'union' business could not be smaller if the 'unions' were Russian. Governmental control of workers' organizations is not applied subtly or indirectly; it is spelled out unequivocally in various statutes, a fact which the ICFTU has exposed time out of number. Free trade unionism in Spain died with the advent of Franco. Two of the organizations which decided to carry on the fight in exile, the general workers' federation and the Basque workers' federation, have joined with the ICFTU (to which they are affiliated) in the struggle to keep the Spanish tragedy before world opinion.

In this they have been helped by the Spanish workers themselves. In 1947, 1951 and 1956 spontaneous strikes against repression, both political and economic, erupted in Northern Spain. They were put down ruthlessly by the civil authorities but not without embarrassing publicity and great difficulty. The most recent of the strikes, in April 1956, involved thousands of workers and compelled many employers to agree




to pay wage increases higher than that decreed by the government, an increase whose inadequacy in the face of rising prices sparked the strike. All Franco's bombast could not hide the deep discontent rife in the country, a discontent which found its expression not only in strikes but in serious student demonstrations and anxious warnings from church leaders that all was not well.

All was not well and never will be while the tubby Caudillo rules Spain. Not only are her people denied basic rights and common justice but also the prosperity which the rest of Western Europe has enjoyed in recent years. This is something to be hammered home until the free world grasps that fascism still lives in Europe and must be called to account. The ICFTU in 'The Spanish people strike back at Franco' has done freedom a service.

(The booklet is available from the ICFTU at 2s.0d. or 30 US cents)

### A fast growing union


 IT IS NOW OVER A YEAR SINCE, as the result of trade union reorganization, the Netherlands Central Union of Merchant Seafarers and Fishermen (CKV) was formed embracing all seafarers serving in both merchant marine and fishing vessels. It might therefore be regarded as a good time at which to 'take stock', particularly as this bringing together of masters and officers on the one hand and ratings (unlicensed personnel) on the other hand under one single trade union banner must be regarded as an experiment in the Dutch trade union movement. Nor does this all-embracing organization of Dutch seafarers lose any of its experimental character when it is stressed that it is based on full recognition of the individual groups composing the whole in such fashion that the special interests of each group are fully catered for and no group feels in any way overshadowed.

To form an idea of how well this merger of interests has worked out it would be best to go back to before 1956 to the two groups mainly responsible for the creation of the CKV in January 1956. These were the Masters' and Officers' Union - the CKO - and the Seamen's Union - the Unie van Zeevlieden. The first-named, the Centrale van Kapiteins en Officieren ter Koopvaardij, had a membership of 7,412 on

31 December 1955. By January 1957 this number had risen to 7,810 (intake amounting to 1,883 and losses to 1,485). The increase in the membership of the industrial group catering for seamen has been even more significant. Membership of this group grew from 4,347 on 1 January 1956 to 5,632 on 1 January 1957, an overall increase of 1,285. A less favourable situation in the fishermen's group detracts very little from the impressiveness of the gains made in the other two groups. The membership figures for the fishermen's group are: 1,902 on 1 January 1956; 1,440 on 1 January 1957. Here an increase in membership of 203 during 1956 was more than counterbalanced by a loss of 665 members. Of these, however, 350 were a 'book' loss only inasmuch as they represent a transfer within the Central Union itself.

The CKV has good reason to be proud of its efforts to increase its membership during 1956 - efforts which one may be assured will be continued during the present and coming years.

### The role of a satellite union

 AFTER THE BRIEF PERIOD OF freedom which the Hungarian trade unions won during the October revolution they are now again firmly under the control of the Communist Party. Most of the non-Communists who took over the leadership at that time have been dismissed and their places taken by trustworthy hirelings of Moscow. The General Secretary is now Sandor Gaspar, who held a leading position in the Communist hierarchy during the Stalin period.

It fell to this case-hardened Stalinist to explain the part which the trade unions are expected to play under the regime of dictatorship which has again been imposed on the Hungarian people. He did so at a conference of the Hungarian TUC which was reported in the Communist newspaper, 'Nepszabadsag'. He could hardly be expected to admit what the real situation is, but for deliberate mis-statement of facts the following would be hard to beat:

'By freedom we mean independent action. The trade unions are voluntary, non-Party organizations of the working-class that have their own independent organizational life, their democracy and statutes. They wish to look after their own affairs independently in a democratic way.'

The fact is that only four days before

Gaspar made this speech, the trade unions had been placed by a Government decree under the direct control of the Minister of Armed Forces. Naturally, a Communist dictator need not worry about truth or logic. In the very next sentence he contradicted himself on the 'non-Party' claim he had made by declaring baldly that 'the trade unions stand indisputably on the basis of the proletarian dictatorship and this determines their relations to the Party of the proletarian dictatorship and the State.'

Sandor Gaspar also contradicted himself on the question of the holding of trade union elections in Hungary. (Obviously Mr. Gaspar has never been elected to his present position; he has simply been placed there by the Communist Party). Elections, he said, are necessary on all levels, yet it would not be correct to hold them now. What he did not say - and perhaps it was not necessary since everyone in Hungary knows it perfectly well - was that any free elections in the Hungarian trade union movement would put an end to the career of Sandor Gaspar and his cronies.

There was just as little logic or conviction in his reference to international relations. He had to admit that events in Hungary have 'undoubtedly caused much moral and political damage to the cause of socialism and to the progressive trade union movement almost all over the world'. (By 'socialism' he meant, of course, communism, and by 'progressive', controlled by the Communist Party.) 'The damage', he added, 'was only increased by the statement published at the end of October about the withdrawal of the Hungarian trade unions from the World Federation of Trade Unions.' This statement, he said, had been made by the provisional executive committee formed in October, which was not entitled to adopt such a resolution. The present executive, including the General Secretary, Sandor Gaspar, is also provisional. That did not prevent him, however, from making the categorical statement that the 'Hungarian trade union movement resolutely declares and regards itself as belonging to the World Federation of Trade Unions.'

Mr. Gaspar, of course, does not need to be logical, nor answer awkward questions. He can safely leave the latter job, at least, to the secret police and the firing squads.



Members of the Seafarers' Union of Turkey are seen here at a parade during a maritime festival held in Istanbul. The union has its national headquarters in Istanbul and also runs seven branches



## The Seafarers' Union of Turkey

SINCE EARLY IN 1956 the ITF has been exchanging correspondence and publications with the Seafarers' Union of Turkey. The ITF would welcome the Union's application for affiliation but there could be something of a difficulty in this connection in that the international affiliations of Turkish trade unions must have the consent of the Turkish authorities.

The Seafarers' Union of Turkey was first founded in 1951 but after a promising beginning – its membership at one time touched 20,000 – a variety of reasons led to its collapse. The Union was reconstituted in 1953 at a meeting held in an old coffee-house and started its new life with 350 members. Among those who brought about the union's revival were Rüstü Güneri, the Union's current President, and Mustafa Colakoglu, its Vice-President.

The union, whose present membership is claimed to be over 30,000, has its headquarters in Istanbul and also operates from seven branches, in Izmir, Samsun, Zonguldak, Trabzon, Van, Dz. Bankasi Sehir Hatlari and Eregli. It is affiliated, together with two other unions, to a Federation of Turkish Maritime Workers' Unions but retains its complete autonomy.

*A group of Turkish trade union leaders. The trade union movement in Turkey has developed real strength only in very recent years but is nevertheless showing most promising progress. It is estimated that well over a quarter of the Turkish workers are organized, a proportion exceeded only by Israel in the Middle East*

Rüstü Güneri, the President, and his Executive Committee are working hard to establish the union and are seeking to base its organization on Western lines. The union is, of course, comparatively young and trade unionism itself in Turkey is very little older. The principal act governing Turkish labour organizations is the Trades Union Act, 1947, and it was only after this became law that industrial organization could make headway. The act sanctioned the establishment of unions (of employers as well as

workers) and set out some conditions regulating their conduct, notably that they should not, as such, engage in politics or political propaganda nor act as an instrument for the activities of any political party.

It is estimated that there are now some 190,000 Turkish trade unionists in over 360 unions, representing well over a quarter of the total Turkish work force. This proportion is second only to that of Israel among the Middle Eastern countries.

The right of seafarers to form trade unions within the provisions of the Trades Union Act is specifically laid down in the Seafarers' Act of 1954. This Act is a comprehensive measure covering the working conditions of Turkish seafarers




(excepting Masters, Chief Engineers etc.) and its clauses on matters such as the repatriation of seafarers and the payment of wages seem sound. A month's leave with pay each year for those with a year or more service with the same employer or on the same ship is allowed. Working hours are prescribed as seventy per week 'as a rule', but provision is made for this standard to be exceeded up to a maximum of eighty-four per week for certain categories of work.

*Rüstü Güneri, President of the Seafarers' Union of Turkey seen addressing the general congress of the union's Ismir branch. Rüstü Güneri played a leading part in the revival of the union after it appeared to have collapsed after its founding in 1951*



### ICFTU accuses Hungarian Government of suppressing trade union freedom

 THE ICFTU HAS SUBMITTED A COMPLAINT to the International Labour Organization on the suppression of trade union rights by the Hungarian government and has called on the ILO to take all measures within its power for the restoration of trade union freedom in that country.

The following are some of the principal facts with which the ICFTU builds up an unanswerable case against the Hungarian puppet government:

- the dissolution of the provisional executive committee of the National Confederation of Hungarian Free Trade Unions, set up on 31 October last year. This committee had pledged itself to re-establish freedom of association and the independence of the trade unions from the Government, as well as to withdraw the Hungarian movement from the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions.

- the statement of the head of the Government, Kadar, that 'it is inconceivable that the trade unions should be independent of the Party' - which in Hungary means the Government.

- the dissolution of Workers' Councils set up during the October revolution and the arrest of many of their leaders.

- the anti-strike decree of 12 January and introduction of trial by court martial for strikers as a result of which mass arrests have been made and death sentences imposed.

- the subjection of the trade unions to the control of Minister of Armed Forces and Internal Security and the creation of an armed 'factory militia' responsible for 'defending the regime' among the workers.

The ICFTU asks the ILO Governing Body to rule that the policy in trade union matters adopted by the Kadar Government since it usurped power constitutes a continual violation of the undertakings which each member Government of the ILO is bound to observe. The ICFTU also appeals to the ILO to publicize the facts denounced in the present complaint and to take all measures within its power to secure the restoration of trade union freedom in Hungary.

### Helicopter services for Schleswig Holstein?


 ACCORDING TO THE German Federation of Trades Unions' paper, 'Welt der Arbeit', the Schleswig Holstein Ministry of Transport is considering plans for the introduction of helicopter services in the province. It seems that Schleswig Holstein is poorly served internally by ordinary airline routes - some of which cross the area - both because there are no landing places for large aircraft (the nearest airport of any size is in Hamburg) and because the services would be uneconomical. At the same time there is considerable need for quick transport to the numerous Baltic resorts and for reliable services to the many islands lying off the coast.

In these circumstances the helicopter has obvious attractions and landing

places have been incorporated in the local architects' plans for the large towns. In addition to services within the province, the Ministry is said to have plans for routes to South Denmark, with a connection to Copenhagen, and also for a further line to South Sweden.

The economic possibilities of the helicopter for distances of about 200 miles are promising and a range of that extent would be appropriate to Schleswig Holstein's requirements both for a quick inter-city link and connections to the main airline centres.

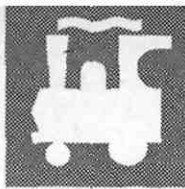
### Employee-employer bargaining rules in Denmark

 THE DANISH FEDERATION OF LABOUR (De samvirkende Fagforbund) and the Danish Employers' Association have recently concluded an agreement on the rules governing negotiation procedure between employees' and employers' representatives in private industry.

The new rules, which took effect at the beginning of 1957, will remain in force until the conclusion of the collective bargaining agreements for 1958. The main point in the new arrangements is that the national centres will be called in at a much earlier stage than hitherto, a negotiating committee consisting of six representatives from each side being set up some ten weeks before the expiration of the current contract to consider proposals in respect of a new contract to be put before the members of the bodies concerned. (Under the standard rules for collective bargaining procedure, the negotiating machinery is set in motion three months before the uniform contract-expiry date of 1 March, i.e. on 1 December of the previous year. By that date the union and employers' association are expected to have formulated and informed each other of the contract changes they desire to effectuate. The joint preliminary negotiating committee will henceforth meet on 15 October.)

When agreement has been reached between the two national centres on the amendments it is proposed to submit to their respective members for eventual approval, the bodies affiliated with the two national centres split up into eight groups, of which transport workers form one group. These groups then discuss the proposals in detail and voting takes place separately within each of the eight groups.

## Structural changes in the Swedish Railwaymen's Union



THE MAY CONGRESS OF THE ITF-AFFILIATED SWEDISH RAILWAYMEN'S UNION is due to consider a number of far-reaching changes in the organizational structure of the union. This question was broached at the union's 1953 Congress which charged the executive with the task of studying the advisability of structural changes bearing in mind the desirability of retaining the so-called general branches and the creation of special branches only if there was 'a natural foundation' at a given place or within a defined region.

The committee set up to study this question has prepared its report which has been sent out to the various branches for study before a final decision is taken at the Congress due to be held from 19 to 25 May.

As at present constituted, the Swedish Railwaymen's Union is divided into six regions and one section for the private railways together with three trade or craft sections catering for workshop, footplate (locomotive) and office personnel. The present structure is therefore one in which the union is divided both along regional and craft lines, and the committee charged with the task of considering the advisability of structural reorganization was of the opinion that these two forms of organization should complement each other. At the same time, it appreciated that it could not for practical reasons organize the entire membership along craft lines. It therefore recommends that this should be done in the case of those trades where the need for the creation of a craft unit could be justified.

The committee's recommendations, as seen by the union executive and approved with minor amendments, are as follows:

a) retention of the present regional structure with a regional office embracing *all* union branches within each of the Swedish State Railways' corresponding administrative regions, with the exception of the branches catering for workshop personnel, which will thus be separate from the regional set-up; the branches catering for private railways personnel will constitute a separate section as is the case at present;

b) a cut in the number of branch delegates to section meetings, and ordinary meetings to be held only every second year;

c) the creation of craft or trade units to be approved by the General Council subject to at least two-thirds of the members affected balloting in favour;

d) compulsory membership of the trade or craft body for all union members belonging to the appropriate trade or craft embraced by the section, the members of which being also required to pay the subscriptions laid down by the section;

e) compulsory membership of the appropriate craft section even in the case of existing membership of a general branch within which a special branch catering for a specific craft or trade (yrkesklubb) may have been formed;

f) the structure of the branch in future to be on the basis of a general branch with club activities, due regard being taken to the rules restricting the formation of special branches adopted at the 1953 Congress;

g) club activities to be encouraged and extended, whilst the number of ordinary meetings is to be reduced from once a month to once a quarter.

The Committee expressed the view that, apart from the workshop personnel, who after all were not classified as operating staff, there were so many common interests of a local, sectional or regional character among membership groups within a railways region that all union branches should be attached to a corresponding regional body. To the extent that any group of members felt the need to set up in addition a nation-wide trade or craft unit it was open to them to do so provided the necessary two-thirds balloted in favour. Where such bodies catering for a special craft or trade interest had already been set up, the name was to be altered from 'section organization' (distriktsorganisation) to 'craft organization' (yrkesorganisation).

The function of the craft unit will be to co-ordinate and carry out the preliminary study of matters affecting their members' particular interests with reference to their craft, and arrange for joint group nominations and elections. The executive committee shall consist

of seven members exclusive of any member of the General Council who, by virtue of his office, shall be a member of the committee.

On the basis of these recommendations, the future structural organization of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union is envisaged as follows: the supreme governing body will be the Congress consisting of 300 delegates elected by the various branches. This will elect a General Council (Förbundsrådet) of 30 members from nominations made by both the regional and the trade branches.

The Executive Committee of the union will have ten members. Forming the structural foundation there will be the regional branches (one corresponding to each administrative region of the Swedish State Railways, plus one for the private railways); the general branches, which numbered 285 in 1956; and the trade or craft branches. The latter numbered only three in 1956 (workshop, locomotive and office personnel), but it is here that provision is made for expansion. As a subdivision of or a link between the activities of the general and craft branches, craft or trade clubs may be formed catering for a particular service activity or place of work. Any associations of members, insofar as their purpose is covered by the proposed structural reorganization of the union, will be discouraged. In other words, to the extent they promote trade union interests, the new set-up provides for their being absorbed, so that there is no need for the union to make special provision for their inclusion.

The Committee saw advantages in the formation of the so-called clubs at local branch level catering for a particular trade or those working at one particular place. It is thought that the smaller unit can discuss and promote sectional interests much more profitably this way and relieve the larger unit of much work and time spent on matters of less general import. These clubs could be formed either to cater for all union members working at any place of work or in any particular area, or for all members of the same trade or craft covered by or subject to the same conditions of service, collective agreements, etc. Such a club could include members from a number of different branches, would hold ordinary meetings and an annual meeting before that convened by the branch.

# 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 58 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 Guiana • British Honduras  
Canada • Chile • Colombia • Cuba • Denmark  
Ecuador • Egypt • Estonia (Exile) • Finland  
France • Germany • Ghana  
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  
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