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**11**



# **International Transport Workers' Journal**

*Monthly Publication of the International Transport Workers' Federation*

**International  
Transport Workers'  
Journal**

*Monthly Publication of the ITF*

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*Our cover picture:* Old side by side with the new. The landing or taking off of every plane to use Kano airport in Northern Nigeria is announced by the local Emir's representative. (A Shell photo)



CHARLES LINDLEY †



*A characteristic study of the ITF's Grand Old Man, taken during the speech which he made at the conclusion of the ITF Congress which was held in Stuttgart in 1950. Charles Lindley was a familiar figure at every ITF Congress organized since the Federation's establishment in 1896*

still greater effort and new activity. His strength of character and clear-sightedness was a source of inspiration to all who had the privilege of working with him.

But, in addition to all his other attributes, Charlie Lindley was an extremely lovable person, colourful but without a trace of eccentricity, and with a strong sense of fun. He was a highly original character, whose saying and doings have almost created a folk-lore of their own – particularly in his native Sweden, where he enjoyed the affection and respect of the whole nation. His vigour was something to marvel at. Right up until his last illness, he still continued to rise early in the morning and to work until late afternoon on his memoirs. He went for long walks, swam whenever he could, and enjoyed his weekly Finnish steam-bath followed by a strenuous session of physical jerks. He was still a familiar figure at meetings of the Swedish Transport Workers' Executive, of which he was appointed a life member on his retirement in 1947. He was a prolific writer on trade union history, which he penned in his own distinctively racy style, and had been a regular lecturer at his union's trade union school in Brunnsvik ever since it was first opened in 1938. His phenomenal memory of persons and events was as famous as his pawky sense of humour.

In any company, he always seemed to

*The last memory of Charlie at an ITF Congress. To the thunderous roar of 'For he's a jolly good fellow', Brother Lindley returns to his seat after addressing the closing session of the Vienna Congress*

be the most youthful and the one most full of zest. Age did not seem to touch him; he was not even conscious of his years. When he was besieged by national journalists on his ninetieth birthday he wanted to know 'what all the fuss was about', and instead of answering questions about himself insisted on talking about Ernest Bevin and the trade union movement which he so loved. For him that movement was everything, and it was characteristic of Lindley the man that the achievement of which he was most proud was that he had helped to organize the Swedish dockers and transform them into a socially-conscious group.

There were so many stories about him and told by him. There were the rather tall seamen's tales, like the one which ended like this: 'And when I stripped off for a dip and dived in over the side I landed on the back of a shark. I don't know who was most frightened, me or the shark, but we both made off as quick as we could in opposite directions.' Or there were the many which, again char-

acteristically, he told against himself, like his favourite story about his wife Ellin who, when Charlie once tried to talk himself out of a tight corner, replied: 'Now, Charles, no explanations. You're just making it worse and worse!' A story, incidentally, which Charlie once told to good effect in the Swedish Parliament when a member on the other side was attempting to explain away some action by his party. Charlie's story was greeted with understanding laughter by a House consisting mainly of married men, and the explanations came to an abrupt end.

Charles Lindley, in fact, was a man who loved life and enjoyed every second of it. But even more than life he loved his fellow men, with all their faults and weaknesses which he knew and understood so well. He expressed that love by his selfless devotion to the task of making the lot of ordinary men and women a happier one and achieving recognition for the dignity of their labour. All of us who knew him as a dear friend are richer for that experience, and deeply and humbly grateful for what we learned from him. Let us show our gratitude by remembering the words with which he ended his speech at our Vienna Congress last year:

'I hope, dear comrades, that after my death you will all maintain this ITF as a strong and virile organization capable of standing up to all the stresses and strains and of doing everything necessary for the welfare of the transport worker.'



## Charles Lindley and the early days

CHARLES LINDLEY LIVED A LONG AND FULL LIFE. Fortunately, he had a first-class memory and he was able some time ago to dictate some of his reminiscences of the 1880s and 1890s. A few of them are set out below.

### Havelock Wilson

I was a sailing ship sailor and my first recollection of Sunderland is sailing on coasters from there. Whilst in Sunderland, I was an interested listener to the meetings and discussions that were held on the moors and other places, where they were agitating for the starting of a national sailors' and firemen's union. There was a local union in Sunderland and at that time Havelock Wilson was advocating that this local union should extend and begin to organize seamen on a national basis, but the leaders of the local union would not agree, as they were afraid that they would lose the monopoly they had of the weekly boats which ran out of Sunderland to the south of England with coal.

Because I sailed in these small sailing coasters, mostly up to Scotland, I was often in Sunderland, which I came to regard as my home and was, therefore, often able to attend the meetings which were called. It was in this way that I met Havelock Wilson who very soon noted my interest. He had just started a temperance restaurant, or a cook-shop as it was generally called – large premises which I believe had previously been a draper's and which had been converted. The restaurant was in the front, a little sitting room at the back with a small room which could be used as an annexe to the restaurant, and at the very back was a large hall which Wilson now used for the meetings.

It must be said that Havelock Wilson was a poor scholar. He had only acquired the rudiments of an education before he went to sea. But although he had received a poor education, his memory was excellent. I remember that when the rules of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union were drafted, he had to obtain the assistance of a lawyer. In addition to his excellent memory, he was an exceedingly energetic man, and never spared himself. He could stop up until



*This happy picture was taken during the ITF's 1952 Congress held in Stockholm. With him is Miss Ella Becu, youngest daughter of the ITF's General Secretary*

three or four o'clock in the morning in order to travel to a given place and immediately on his arrival he would perhaps hold a meeting outside the Shipping Office.

### Gaelic – Yes; English – No

Sometimes I used to go round Scotland in coasters, up to the Isle of Raasay, which island was owned by a Lord and was used by him as a hunting ground. One day I went to the south part of the Island where there was a post office, to see if there was any post for the ship's crew, and there I met one of the yokels of the Island, on whom I aired my small knowledge of Gaelic, which consisted of such phrases as 'good day', comments on the weather, and to ask for a light for my pipe. I soon exhausted my small vocabulary, and lapsed into English. Imagine, then, my surprise when he took to

his heels. I called to him to come back, but still running, he replied to the effect that whilst I spoke Gaelic, everything was all right. He neither understood, nor trusted the language I spoke afterwards!

### Life aboard under sail

In the 1880s, an author wrote of life on board British sailing ships – 'Nobody ought to go to sea who had a hope of getting into gaol, because to go to sea was the same as going to gaol with the additional risk of being drowned'. The ships were floating coffins. In hard weather, to stand at the pumps was to risk being washed overboard and the same conditions existed with the ships of other countries. Accidents were so frequent that it could be reckoned that every second man would lose his life at sea.



*Charles Lindley during the 1890s. It was during this period that he not only helped to found the ITF but was also instrumental in organizing the dockers and seamen*

The food in long trading ships was terrible. Four days a week salt beef was issued at the rate of one lb. per man (which weight included bone). A soup was made of this salt beef, with the addition of barley. We had no potatoes. On the remaining three days we had about 1/3 kilo of pork from which soup was also made and served with doughboys – balls of flour with the addition of some suet. Sometimes, a mixture of dough was boiled in a canvas bag, and served to us with a little treacle or syrup. On Saturdays we had a little rice cooked with our beef. If any meat was left, this was mashed up with biscuits and baked in the oven as a cracker-hash. To counteract the effects of living on salt beef, we were issued with a little lime juice each day.

Accommodation was very bad. There was not sufficient space on the floor to dress when all hands had to rise – some had to dress in their bunks. Food was placed on the floor on wooden trays and we had to sit on sea chests, or in our bunks, to eat it.

### Organizing seamen

As I have said before, I used to go and listen to debates and discussions held in Sunderland – the union at that time was the North of England Sailors' and Firemen's Union. It was not surprising that Havelock Wilson's idea of organizing seamen on a national basis was met antagonistically, because at that time

the trade union movement was not much developed in England. The skilled labourers had trade unions, but even these were badly organized; at that time, however, it was considered almost impossible to organize non-skilled labour. It was like digging in quicksand.

However, my interest had been awakened at the meetings I had attended and I was in full agreement with the principles taught. I left one of these meetings in the company of Havelock Wilson and whilst we were talking together he asked me where I was living. I named the public house where I was staying, whereupon Havelock invited me to stay at his temperance restaurant, which I promptly accepted. It was a three-storeyed building, the front of which looked out on to the High Street, and the back onto the downs, towards the river.

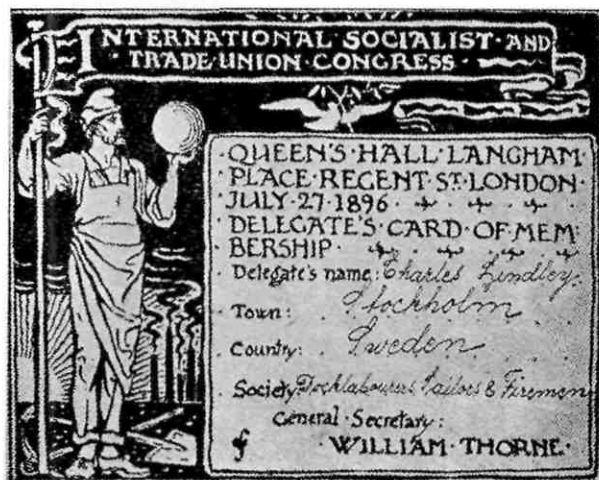
In those days, Sunderland could be compared with the East End of London. Small alleys adjoined the High Street – Fighting Cock Lane, Walton Lane, Golden Alley – and the people's way of life was very primitive. Bits of paper and

cardboard substituted windows in their houses, and the place was infested with prostitutes.

It is interesting to recall how new members to Havelock Wilson's union were enrolled. They first had to promise to be good and loyal members of the organization. After this promise had been given they were permitted to know the pass-word which was, 'The Oaks'. The reply was 'The Branches'. In this manner it was maintained that one union member could recognize another. Another sign the new member was taught was a certain grip in holding a glass when he visited a public house.

### Some success

From 1887 to the end of 1888, we had developed our organization as far as Cardiff. By 1889 we had enrolled 90,000 members. We had weekly income of over £2,000. Then we started branches in Copenhagen, Århus, Denmark; Gothenburg, Malmö, Sweden; and in Germany, Holland, Belgium and even Malta and Constantinople. Wages increased, in some cases to nearly double what they were previously. The principal demands of the moment were – better and larger fo'csles; representation on the local marine boards; a court to



*The delegate's card which was issued to Brother Lindley 'of Stockholm' when he attended the International Socialist and Trade Union Congress held in London in July 1896. It was in connection with this congress that the first full-scale international conference of seamen and dockers was convened and an International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers established*



*One of the earliest-known photographs taken at an ITF Congress, that held in London in 1898. It was at this Congress that Charles Lindley successfully proposed that the name 'International Transport Workers' Federation' should be adopted. Lindley himself can be seen in the second row (third from left) immediately behind Tom Mann, then Secretary of the International Federation*

examine accidents and their causes and prevention. The Government accepted this, and decided that a seaman should have a representative in every sea port. Then we asked for greater security for life and limb, and had a circular printed – 'Killed for bigger profit', and we distributed these everywhere, showing the proportionately higher rate of fatal accidents amongst seamen as compared with other trades. The statistics were taken for the period 1884 to 1893.

The result of this agitation was that Parliament considered itself compelled to accept more stringent regulations – amongst them the Plimsoll load line. We also fought for radical improvement of food regulations and insisted on the inspection of water and foodstuffs before a ship was allowed to go to sea, which was accepted. The question of a regulated manning scale was also presented to Parliament, but was not accepted, as it met with strong opposition from the shipowners and members of parliament. They agreed that undermanned vessels should be considered

un-seaworthy, and that if a ship was under-manned, it could not be allowed to go to sea. This was another reason which made the shipowners antagonistic to the union, and one of the reasons why they started the Shipping Federation.

#### **Learning the art of self-defence**

Often in those days, a speaker at a meeting was invited to settle his differences with a member of the audience by a fight. Just opposite Wilson's house was Jimmy Young's bar, over which was a boxing booth. I considered it necessary to learn a little of the art of self-defence, and so enlisted the aid of an Irishman named Paddy McCan to teach me. Wilson used to tell me that some day he would have to come and sweep up my remains. I had the gloves on one day, when a miner came in – a big fellow – who suggested a fight with me. I refused, saying that the difference in our respective weights would make it unfair. He asked if I was afraid, saying that it was only his intention that we should spar a little. It transpired, however, that

I was quicker than he was, which considerably annoyed him and he managed to get me up against the ropes. My countenance was vastly altered as a result. Some months afterwards, I again met this man in the boxing booth and again he suggested a fight. This time, I got him pinned against the ropes, and eventually he had to throw himself backwards and completely over the ropes to get away from me. I got across to Wilson's house double quick and after a while I saw Young and his assistant throwing this man out into the street.

#### **Federation ticket**

In 1889, a big dock strike was declared in London, which spread to Liverpool, Glasgow and Cardiff. This so scared the shipowners that they started the organization which is now known as the Shipping Federation. They issued a publication called *Fairplay*, which pointed out all the union's misdoings. Federation offices were instituted in all harbours, to register all seamen who



*Presiding over a meeting of the pre-war General Council held in Amsterdam. Flanking Brother Lindley at the head of the table were Edo Fimmen and Nathan Nathans, then General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary respectively*

were willing to go to sea, as well as dockers, who had to sign a Federation Ticket. These men then had the first choice of any vacancies. Even dock and railway companies worked in conjunction with the Shipping Federation, who stated that they represented a capital of £80,000,000.

In 1890 started the big battle to force the Federation Ticket. The strike, however, was chiefly concentrated in the Bristol Channel—especially Cardiff, and feeling was very bitter; but there were conflicts in other harbours where the Federation tried to compel seamen to sign the Federation Ticket. The employers got blacklegs to sign and the magistrate took the employers' side of the battle. Havelock Wilson was charged before the Court for leading a demonstration to certain boarding houses from where the blacklegs were obtained and for making dangerous speeches, for which he received a sentence of six weeks' imprisonment. The fight was lost because the union could not give its members sufficient financial support. As soon as any action was started, the shipowners mobilized their contacts, and sent them to kill the strike. The Federation Ticket did not forbid the joining of a union, but stated that a union must not influence conditions or wages.

**Manager of  
Conservative working men's club?**

I was at the docks one day with George Cowie (a union official) when we saw one of Lord Londonderry's boats *Mount*

*Stewart*. I told Cowie that I would like to get into the ship. His reply was to tell me to watch until a coffin was brought off and then quickly apply for the vacant job. I found the Mate and asked if he wanted any hands. He said he wanted one man to take the place of one who had been taken ill and had to go home. The first thing I did on board was to organize the crew and make them union members. That accomplished, I turned my attention to the crews of Lord Londonderry's other ships. It was difficult to maintain their enthusiasm, however, for most the men's homes were at Seaham Harbour, and when work was finished for the day the men wanted to get to their homes, not to attend meetings and listen to speeches. However, I conceived an idea, which was that I

should be first off the ship, climb the big harbour steps and get up onto the stone bench at the top. This I did, and began to make a speech regarding the organization. The site I had chosen was abreast of Lord Londonderry's local office. The men were annoyed and insisted that I should call a meeting at some other place, but I replied that if I did, they wouldn't attend. However, such is the British character that they would not be called cowards, and so they stayed. Lord Londonderry owned the Harbour, the railway, the mines and all the grounds of the town which had been built upon. As soon as I began my speech, the office windows opened and its occupants listened to what I had to say.

One day the Captain came on board and told me I had to go to the office and see a Mr. Ditchfield who was the shipping representative at Seaham Harbour and a very important personage. He was also a shipowner in his own right.

I duly presented myself to Mr. Ditchfield who waved me to a large and comfortable leather armchair and offered me a cigar. This, I thought, was a very



*This delightfully informal photograph was taken at a post-war ITF Congress. Jaques Leurs, President of the Luxembourg Railwaymen's Federation, is successfully appealing to Charlie's sweet tooth*



pleasant way of getting the sack! Mr. Ditchfield told me that he had made enquiries about me, said many complimentary things about my character and my popularity, and concluded by offering me the managership of the Conservative Working Men's Club which had recently been erected. I explained that I was a Socialist and not a Conservative and so could not be useful to him. He replied that this did not matter. Lord Londonderry had built this club, but working men would not frequent it and he was of the opinion that my popularity would encourage them to do so. I was given to understand that although I would not be expected to hold socialist meetings on the club's premises, I could preach socialism to my heart's content outside.

As can be imagined, I was bewildered by all this. However, matters were explained to me. It appeared that Conservative Lord Londonderry was annoyed that Seaham Harbour had elected a Liberal. In my speeches I had attacked the Liberals, and Lord Londonderry thought that although socialism could not harm the Conservatives, it might harm the Liberals and reduce their majority. Seeing that I was still not enthusiastic at his offer, he begged me to take my time in thinking over his proposition, asking if I hadn't a nice girl in Seaham Harbour with whom I would consider settling down and spending my life. I declined the position with thanks.

On the next return voyage of the *Mount Stewart* we ran into another ship and the *Mount Stewart* sank. I was in my bunk at the time of the accident, and by the time I got on deck there were only three of us left, the others having got away. There was one small boat left and a fireman carried this over his back in order to get it away. The poor fellow had no skin left on his back by the time we were safely in it. We eventually got to Folkestone.

#### 'Cat music' to the rescue

Men who had been union officials were taken in hand by the Shipping Federation and sent to various places in order to try and cause a split in the seamen's organizations. One such episode took place in Sunderland, where two officials named Darby and Abbott had hired the Co-operative Hall for a big meeting and sent out invitations to seamen to attend. We held a Branch Meeting to discuss

the reception we should give these representatives – my proposal was rotten eggs. The meeting accepted that proposal and a number of us set out to purchase them. However, another meeting was called and we were told that the Co-operative Society, who had got to know of our plan, had appealed to us not to make use of our projectiles which would surely damage the hall. The Co-operative was an innocent party, and so we agreed.

And so another suggestion was made, that we should supply 'cat music', by buying some tom och herries, an instrument into which you could sing or hum any melody agreed upon. When we arrived at the hall, there were a number of journalists and shipowners and their friends present, who quickly made way when we marched in, but stood at the back of the hall to see what would happen.

Darby began to speak – and our music started: 'We don't want to fight but by jingo if we do...' Amidst this turmoil, the chairman, who was appointed by the promoters of the meeting, declared himself unbiased and promised to give both sides an opportunity to state their case. The noise was so great, however, that no one could be heard – even the music gave way to half a dozen different tunes. In the early days, Darby had been convicted for stealing a seaman's bag and someone in the hall held up a seaman's bag bearing the inscription 'Was this the sack you stole?' During a few moments of comparative quiet, Darby shouted that any one who wanted to hear him should come a bit closer.

As if it had been previously agreed, the crowd jumped over the benches as one man. The police were called in and got Darby and Abbott out the back way. Then the sailors started their music again, and to this music we marched out of the hall. Thinking they were there for our protection, the police held the crowds back for us to march past. It would have been worth paying to see the expression on the policeman's face when he saw the 'band', which had been extended by the addition of trumpets, frying pans for cymbals, whistles etc.

#### Back to Sweden

In 1894, I left to return to Sweden, and was presented with a gold medal for my services. At the time I left England, Havelock Wilson asked me to contact the British seamen in the port of Stockholm and do what I could in the way of

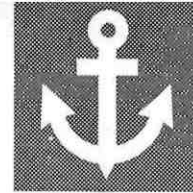


*A proud moment in 1952. Brother Lindley is congratulated by Sigurd Klinga of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union following the unveiling of the Charles Lindley monument in the port of Gothenburg. The monument was erected as a tribute to Charlie's life-long activity on behalf of Sweden's seamen and dockers*

collecting contributions there and remitting them to him. This, however, was not an easy matter, as at that time the Union was not held in very high esteem. Nevertheless, I did my poor best in this respect.

I next turned my attention to organizing Swedish sailors. I was not, however, allowed to give this matter my full attention, for it was at that time the dock strike broke out, and I was asked to give assistance there. I am proud to say that I helped to obtain a settlement which resulted in the dockers obtaining a slight increase in wages. That being over, I again turned my attention to the Swedish sailors, taking, as it were, the dockers under my wing at the same time. It was a hard task, for the trade union movement in Sweden was very small at that time – there were not more than about 25,000 organized workers in the whole of the country and there wasn't a single organization that had a paid official, all work in this connection being voluntary; in fact, many of the expenses came out of my own pocket.

## Flags of convenience - a new ITF approach



THIS MONTH WILL SEE A NEW MOVE in the ITF's campaign against the menace of Panlibhonco shipping. During the course of the month, every member of Parliament in the free world will receive a copy of a new ITF pamphlet entitled 'Panlibhonco - the modern shipping problem'. In it, the facts of the present situation are placed squarely before them and they are informed of ways in which they can stir their respective governments into action on the issue.

Written in terse, direct style, the pamphlet draws attention to the fact that, from a mere 75,000 tons gross in 1939, the shipping registered in the four small non-maritime countries of Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica had, by the end of 1956, reached the enormous total of more than eleven million tons, i.e. eleven and a half per cent of world tonnage. It points out that by the end of this year there is likely to be a further increase of more than two million tons, and explains the reasons why ships are being registered under these flags - reasons which are too well-known to our readers to need repetition here.

The pamphlet stresses that the national economies and merchant fleets are being adversely affected by this artificial growth in a number of ways. Crude oil needed for their refineries is being increasingly carried by Panlibhonco shipping, as is also a substantial proportion of the raw materials needed for their electricity, gas, coal and steel industries. The percentage of goods and commodities - in the form of both raw materials and finished products - carried as tramp cargoes by Panlibhonco vessels is also continually growing, with a consequent reduction in net shipping earnings by the maritime countries.

Governments, it is pointed out, have on many occasions been urged by both sides of the shipping industry to seek international agreement designed to curb or eliminate this menace, but so far no action has been taken by them. And yet, if national merchant fleets are to be preserved, let alone enlarged, it is vitally necessary that the matter should be dealt with urgently on both diplomatic and legislative levels.

Ways in which this can be done are explained to the parliamentarians in the ITF's pamphlet. Early next year, for example, a meeting of the International

Law Commission is due to be held in Geneva. Members of Parliament are urged to see that their country's delegates to this meeting support international measures to ensure that 'the country of registration should have greater and more intimate jurisdiction over the shipping companies and the ships which fly its flag by requiring that:

a) ships shall be owned by companies or individuals having their principal place of business in the country of registration;

b) each company shall have at least fifty per cent nationals of the registering country on its board of directors;

c) effective control of the company's operations shall be exercised from the territory of the registering country;

d) meetings of the boards of directors of the companies shall be held within the territory of the registering country; and

e) the companies shall come within all the normal fiscal arrangements operated in that country.'

In addition, it is recommended that the delegations should insist on the acceptance, and general adoption, of all the items included in the ILO draft resolution concerning flags of convenience which was adopted at the Preparatory Maritime Technical Conference held in London in September 1956.

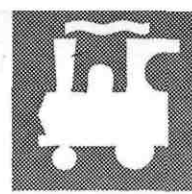
Also on the diplomatic level, governments which are members of NATO should be urged to give support to the calling of a conference of the representatives of NATO countries with the object of convincing the governments that their present negative attitude towards, or their open encouragement of, Panlibhonco registrations, is both unfair and harmful to all.

Finally, in the national legislative field, members of Parliament are invited to press for the introduction of a scheme which should provide safeguards against

the sale for transfer abroad of ships discarded by the fleets of genuine maritime countries.

This direct approach by the ITF to the free world's parliamentary representatives is a unique venture for a trade union organization. It is also a very timely one, for during the past three of four years it has become increasingly obvious that there is no longer any fundamental disagreement between the seafarers and the shipowners on the very real danger which the Panlibhonco fleets pose to the maritime industry. Only last month, for example, we had an extremely forthright statement from the President of the British Chamber of Shipping, who asked his colleagues whether it was not time that shipowners did something about the problem. He suggested, in fact, that 'those nations who suffer from the competition of these bogus flags . . . should band themselves into a club, the principal rule of which should be that no nation in the club will allow ships built in or owned in that country to be registered in or sold to any country outside the club'.

Statements such as this are an indication that the shipowners are gravely concerned at the menace of Panlibhonco and have finally realized that concrete action must be taken if the drift is to be stopped in time. The fact that this is now the case can only be welcomed by the ITF, for it is the best possible justification of the correctness of the policy which we have followed so consistently - often under great handicaps - ever since the end of the war. We would do well to remember that, when the basis of the present threat was being laid, it was left to the seafarers organized in the ITF not only to recognize the dangers inherent in the situation, but to take practical steps to remedy it. Nevertheless, the important thing now is to ensure that governments act upon the warnings which have been given by both sides of the shipping industry. The ITF's latest approach is designed to do just that: it is to be hoped that maritime affiliates will see to it that the legislatures of their countries institute action along the lines suggested in the ITF's pamphlet.



## A new pay structure for Germany's railway officials

A NEW LAW, THE *BUNDESBESOLDUNGSGESETZ*, governing the pay of Germany's government officials, judges and soldiers was passed by the Federal German *Bundestag* in June. Well over 200,000 of the state-owned Federal Railways' employees are classified as permanent government officials and are therefore directly affected by the new salary structure which the law embodies.

The law is the result of representations made over the last six years by the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) and the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED, an ITF affiliate) and whilst it is not all that the unions would like it to be it nevertheless marks an improvement on the previous position where

government officials (*Beamten*) had been subject, as far as their remuneration was concerned, to a law passed in 1927 and subsequently altered by no fewer than thirty-nine amending acts.

The fact that the original law was amended piecemeal to the point where it was hopelessly complicated was one

good reason why a thorough clarification of the position was unavoidable but the economic development of the Federal Republic made an improvement of the pay scales laid down in 1927 an urgent necessity; the increases made in these scales, two of twenty per cent and one of fifteen per cent, had failed to keep them abreast of the country's general wages and prices movement.

### The basic salary

The former principle of remuneration based on a fixed basic salary plus several variable elements has been retained. The variable elements are made up of a 'locality' allowance, a children's allowance and allowances for certain duties and qualifications. The basic salaries are fixed at 165 per cent of those laid down in 1927 and are thus 10 per cent higher than those in force immediately before the new law was passed. However, the total effect of the new law will mean far more than this for many of the officials for reasons, such as a quicker progression to the maximum in a salary scale, explained in some detail below.

Unestablished officials are brought under the new law and the pay provisions are to apply from the moment an official is appointed on probation; not, as hitherto, from the moment he is assigned an established post.

Two types of basic salary have been laid down: one, the one which involves railway staff - consists of a minimum salary for each salary grade, which rises by equal increments every two years until a maximum is reached; the other is a basic salary without any increments. The Federal Railways staff formerly constituted a specific salary class but under the new system they fall into a class which includes other federal government officials.

This class is divided into sixteen salary grades which form four groups: general, middle, higher and senior. The general group comprises grades 1 to 4 and includes, for example, skilled workmen and office assistants. The middle group, grades five to eight, includes foremen and locomotive engineers; the higher group, grades nine to twelve,

railway inspectors and office supervisors; and the senior group, grades thirteen to sixteen, railway directors.

### The increments

The provisions for the payment of service increments represent, in the union's view, the most important and valuable improvement in the new salary structure.

Under the old system, if a man were to enter, say, grade one at the age of thirty-six he would begin at the starting rate, since the payment of increments depended entirely on length of service and took no account of the worker's age. This has now been changed so as to enable the older official entering the railways to start at a point in the salary grade higher than the starting rate.

The basic salary grades in the general group allow for ten increments; for the middle, higher and senior groups there are twelve. The minimum age for officials is twenty-one years for the general, middle and higher groups and twenty-

three years for the senior. Thus the earliest age at which a worker in the general group can reach the maximum and higher groups, is forty-five, and in the senior group, forty-seven.

If someone joins the service at an age higher than the minimum age (that is twenty-three for the senior group and twenty-one for the others) he may, for the purpose of determining his starting salary, 'deduct' from his actual age half the difference between this and the minimum age.

For example, an official in the general group who joins the service at the age of twenty-nine years will not, as hitherto, have to start at the lowest point in the grade, earning his first increment at thirty-one and not reaching his maximum salary until the age of forty-nine. Instead, under the new arrangement, he can deduct half the difference between twenty-nine and twenty-one (the minimum age), that is four years. He thus arrives at a 'salary age' of twenty-five years which brings him a starting rate of

the lowest point in the scale plus two increments. He now has a further eight increments to which he is entitled and reaches the top point in his grade at forty-five.

This standard age 'deduction' procedure is supplemented by further 'deductions' which can be made for, among other things, technical training, previous service with another public concern, technical education, military service, and periods spent as a prisoner of war. Yet further deductions can be made in certain cases of promotion.

The effect of this new arrangement will be far-reaching. The departure from a system where length of service was the sole consideration in the payment of increments and the introduction of some consideration for the age of the official are factors which will radically alter the salaries and prospects of almost half the Federal Railways' employees.

### The 'locality' and children's allowances

The 'locality' and children's allowances have also been improved under the new law. The former is an allowance which is assessed both on the basis of the area in which the official works and the number of children in the family. The country is divided into classes for this purpose on the basis of the cost of living. Changes in the number of classes made in the new law will benefit officials in the general and middle groups especially and those with larger families will also be better placed.

The children's allowance is to be paid monthly on the basis of DM 30 (there are DM 11.76 to £1 and DM 4.19 to US \$1) for every child up to the age of six; DM 35 up to fourteen; and DM 40 up to 25. As far as the last is concerned, the allowance will only be paid up to the maximum age (twenty-five) if the child is undergoing academic or professional training required for his work. If this is not so, the allowance ends at the age of eighteen. (The limit was formerly sixteen, a marked improvement.)

The provision in the former law which stipulated that no allowance was to be



*Locomotive staff on the German Federal Railways come within the category of 'Beamte', permanent government officials. The new law on the pay of Beamte has brought some far-reaching and long overdue changes in a pay structure which had been in existence for thirty years*

paid for any child earning more than DM 75 a month does not find a place in the new law, where no limit is imposed. The removal of this earnings barrier had been a long-standing demand of the BGD.

Other allowances are paid for specific functions or in recognition of certain abilities. One example of the latter is the new 'technician's' allowance which for locomotive engineers can mean DM 20 a month. The DGB had asked for all technical officials in the higher and middle groups to receive allowances of DM 60 and DM 30 respectively. The introduction of the 'technician's' allowance is based on a resolution of the *Bundestag* in July 1952 which laid down that any new salary structure should recognize the value of the technical services following the technical advances of the post-war years.

### A step in the right direction

The law will, of course, apply to all officials joining the service after the date on which it took effect, 1 April 1957. It also applies to those already in the service on that date, but some transitional arrangements have to be made for these. The new arrangements for the payment of increments cannot be implemented without a great deal of administrative work and as a safeguard for officials in office at the time of the law's implementation it has been established that (a) they will be paid a basic salary at least sixty-five per cent higher than that


laid down in 1927 and that (b) they will not reach the maximum point in their salary grade any later than was provided for in the 1927 law. Appropriate improvements, expressed in percentages of 1927 basic salaries have also been made for pensioned officials.

It is too early to give details of precisely how much better paid the officials will be under the new provisions but the Federal Finance Ministry has estimated that the average salary increase will be about twelve and a half per cent. Some officials in the general and middle groups (these groups account for eighty-two per cent of the total) might get as much as forty per cent more – they have been very poorly paid compared to skilled workers outside the civil service. In other cases the increases will be no more than five to eight per cent.

Increases of this order are much higher than those usually negotiated in Germany industry but to a large extent they represent belated compensation for several years of low pay. The unions are satisfied that the new measures are a first step in the direction towards a just salary structure and parity with the salaries paid over the country as a whole.

Some of their demands have not been met and they are resolved to pursue them until they are. It has taken six years' hard work and unrelenting pressure to get the partial satisfaction that the *Bundesbesoldungsgesetz* brings them and they have not finished yet.

### More about Hungary

 TWO BOOKS ON HUNGARY have recently appeared. One, *Four Days of Freedom*, has been issued by the ICFTU and the other, *Tragödie eines Volkes*, has been published by the Europa-Verlag of Vienna.

*Four Days of Freedom* has been described by the ICFTU as 'the story of the heroic struggle of the Hungarian people against the overwhelming odds of Russian military might in October and November 1956... it also gives a broad picture of the international solidarity action of the trade unions of the free world, their efforts on behalf of the Hungarian refugees and the relief organization on Hungarian soil'. In the main it must be said at once that *Four Days of Freedom* is what it claims to be. The record of the Hungarian uprising is presented in a clear and orderly way and there are some good chapters on the

evils of the Hungarian Communist rule against which the revolution was directed.

It is a pity, however, that a book so carefully prepared as a whole should have failed to maintain its high standard in its account of the reaction of the ITF to the Hungarian events. Two main pronouncements on the Hungarian events were made by the ITF: the first was early in the uprising when it was by no means certain that the industrial unrest would flare into a revolution; the second took the form of a resolution passed by the joint conference of Executive Committee members, and dockers' and seafarers' sections, in which the Russian suppression of the revolution was condemned and the ICFTU asked to organize a world boycott of Russian goods and services. Now, of the two statements there can be little doubt which was the more important, for the resolution of the joint conference contained a concrete pro-

posal for support of the Hungarian people – about the only one to be made in trade union circles.


It is, therefore, surprising to find in *Four Days of Freedom* that the first statement is quoted at length and the second summarized in three lines, and summarized so inaccurately as to omit any mention whatsoever of the whole point of the resolution – the boycott proposal.

This lapse of the authors is all the more difficult to understand, since a few pages later there is reported the spontaneous boycott actions undertaken by dockers in various parts of the world; one would have thought that in reporting these, they would have been reminded of the world-wide action of this kind proposed by a not inconsiderable body of trade union opinion, a proposal which attracted a great deal of publicity at the time in the world's press.

At the time of writing, *Four Days of Freedom* has been published in English and in German, and is available from the ICFTU headquarters in Brussels.

*Tragödie eines Volkes* has been written by three Hungarian refugee writers. It is sub-titled 'Hungary's Fight for Freedom through the Centuries', and that is exactly what it describes. It ranges from the country's beginnings to the end of the 1956 revolution, and is written with great vigour and feeling. The photographs are numerous and well-chosen, and there is in addition a number of line drawings and reproductions of old prints and paintings. The printing is first-class, and altogether it is a publication of which the authors and the publisher have every reason to be proud.

### Marriage as a membership turnover factor

 THE US AIR LINE STEWARDS' AND STEWARDESSES' ASSOCIATION, which recently became an affiliate of the ITF, doesn't know whether to deplore or boast of the fact that it probably has the highest membership turnover of any US union.

The problem is that virtually all airline stewardesses are glamour girls and are constantly besieged with marriage proposals. On Delta Air Lines alone, for example, twenty union stewardesses gave up flying for matrimony in one month this year. The average stewardess pays union dues for only twenty-three months before exchanging her union card for a marriage licence.

# Workers' Councils in Hungary

by GABOR HAVAS



THE FEUDAL CONDITIONS EXISTING IN HUNGARY under Horthy and during the ensuing fascist regime, the trade unions' extremely limited possibilities for action, the absence of even fundamental social services and the miserable conditions of the working class were crying out with a loud, insistent voice, when the second world war came to an end, for something better. The bitterness and disappointment of the working masses was all the greater when, dashing all their hopes and expectations to the ground, the communists seized power. They were soon to learn from bitter experience that what had been hailed as socialism turned out to be nothing but red-tinted fascism, and the expropriation and socialization of the means of production, carried out ostensibly in the name of the working class, merely gave rise to a form of state-capitalism which killed all private initiative and debased the standard of living.

It was therefore to be expected that in the last days of October, when the whole bitterness and hatred they felt for their oppressors drove the Hungarian workers to take up arms, they should have wanted to create institutions which would safeguard their interests and the inviolability of their democratically elected representatives.

The Executive Committee of the trade union federation, with Gaspar, an inveterate Stalinist, at its head, disappeared beneath the revolutionary flood. It was he and his predecessors who had reduced the trade unions to a tool of the state machine, a tool which, by compulsory and unrealistic norms, productivity contests and Stakhanovite working, drew the last ounce of effort from the workers. Theirs was more than a modest contribution to the fact that even the few who were sympathetically disposed towards the regime soon learnt better.

Vas-Witteg, Kishazy and Bölczföldy, three old social-democrat trade unionists who had just been released from prison, were then called upon to head the trade union federation, and simultaneously other trade unionists who enjoyed the confidence of the workers were put at the head of the various individual unions. It was in this way that the trade unions at last came under democratic leadership, which for the most part consisted of people who, because they were known for their opposition to communism, had many years in jail behind them.

The new Executive Committee of the trade union federation which was elected in October 1956 demonstrated that it could now truthfully be called 'free' and

THE LATEST STEP of the Hungarian Communist puppet-Government towards the extinction of what little industrial democracy was established during the 1956 revolution came recently with the announcement that the Workers' Councils are to be disbanded and replaced by 'factory councils'.

The Minister who made the announcement explained that this move had been promoted by the former Workers' Councils' 'political structure'. (The fault in their political structure was presumably the absence of Communist domination.)

The Minister did not explain in detail what the new factory councils were expected to do. What is certain, however, is that they will not have the popular support which the Workers' Councils enjoyed when they were established. How the Workers' Councils were born and the part they played in the October revolution are described in the accompanying article by Gabor Havas.

fulfilled the long-cherished desire of the workers by issuing the following appeal to workers throughout the country:

'The Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party (Hungarian Communist Party) has welcomed the setting up of Workers' Councils and declared itself in agreement with the resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the trade union federation. The Executive Committee calls on workers in factory, field and mine to build up the workers' power by electing Workers' Councils.

1 - The Executive Committee pro-

poses that the members of Workers' Councils should be elected by all those employed at the place of work in question. A special session would decide on the technical aspects of organizing the election. Nominations to the elections to Workers' Councils would as a rule be made by the Factory Councils or by a trusted worker. The Workers' Councils should have from twenty-one to seventy-one members, depending on the size of the place of work, and be representative of all the trades and crafts practised there.

2 - The Workers' Councils shall decide on all matters affecting the management and operation of the business concerned:

a) The Workers' Council shall elect, from its own ranks, a management committee consisting of a permanent Director and from five to fifteen members which, on the basis of the Council's instructions, shall make decisions on all the questions concerning the running of the business. The Worker's Council shall appoint and dismiss the factory managers and the economic and technical chiefs.

b) The Workers' Council shall work out the factory's economic plan and establish the programme of technical development.

c) The Workers' Council shall work out and introduce a wages system suited to the particular needs of the place of work, and shall also be responsible for workers' welfare schemes.

d) The Workers' Council shall decide how investments are to be used and how profits are to be shared.

e) The Workers' Council shall lay down the working regulations of the place of work.

f) The Workers' Council is responsible both to the workers and to the State.

The most important immediate task of the Workers' Council is to see that work is resumed and order and discipline restored.'

When this appeal had been sent out, preparations were quickly under way for the election of the Councils, and at the very moment when bloody battles were going on in the streets of Budapest

the workers were choosing their representatives in a free and democratic vote. The men they chose had never had anything to do with the hated regime and had resolutely refused to compromise themselves. The power now in the workers' hands was indeed impressive, and in order that they might extend it beyond the economic and technical spheres they also acquired a key political position.

When we look back on the formation and development of the workers' councils we are inclined to ask why it was thought necessary to endow them with so much power, particularly as this made superfluous all the functions of the trade unions. There were two reasons for this: the first was the workers' mistrust of the trade unions after so many years of deception – it was the second, however, which was decisive. This was, briefly, that the workers wished to make a reality of the gains they had made in the last ten years – but which so far existed only on paper. They wanted to be ready for every eventuality and to have a really reliable system of democratic representation. This system, and the efforts made by the workers to uphold it, prove the falsity of the Kadar regime's assertion that the revolution was a fascist coup.

As a result of the trade unions' appeal, workers' councils were elected first in the Beloianis factory, the Hungarian Optical Works, the United Light-bulb factory and then in all the other big factories.

They immediately took over the running of the works and took as their most important tasks the repair of the damage which had been caused in the battles of 23 to 30 October and the re-starting of production. Everywhere the hated spy organizations were wound up and their files distributed among those they concerned.

These notorious files contained conduct sheets and employers' reports which followed the worker from job to job. Wherever he went he could never rid himself of an unfavourable report or criticism of his political reliability. His wage, the place of work to which he was directed and often even his private life were determined by these files.

During the revolution purges were carried out everywhere to rid the country of all the informers, Stakhanovite leaders and others who had won the hatred of the workers in the last few years.

After the brutal intervention of the

Soviet tanks and the suppression of the armed rebellion there grew up among the representatives of the workers' councils in Ujpest (a large industrial district of Budapest) a Central Revolutionary Workers' Council of Budapest, which held its meetings in the United Light-bulb factories. A general strike it called in protest against the Soviet aggression was supported solidly throughout the country. It then called delegates from all over Budapest to a meeting which was held on 13 November 1956 to elect the Central Workers' Council of Budapest.

This historic meeting was held in the tram company's offices. Sandor Racz, who is now in prison, was elected President. The Central Workers' Council addressed the following demands to the Kadar government:

1 – The setting up of a sovereign, independent, democratic and socialist state;

2 – The holding of free elections with a secret ballot;

3 – The immediate withdrawal of Russian troops;

4 – The drawing up of a new constitution;

5 – The dissolution of the AVO (secret police). Only the army and the police should carry arms;

6 – A general amnesty for the freedom fighters and the punishment of Rakosi, Gerö and their accomplices; and

7 – The general elections should take place within two months and with the participation of all democratic political parties.

When the uprising had been suppressed, the country found itself in a catastrophic position. The army was dispersed, the AVO was broken, and the police had taken the side of the freedom fighters during the revolution. Traffic was at a standstill and Budapest was a prey to starvation. Corpses lay around unburied and there were no refuse collections; the danger of epidemic was

rising day by day. In order to avoid a complete breakdown the Government was compelled to act in such a way as to persuade the workers to resume work. As subsequent events made clear, however, not for one moment did the Government intend to make genuine concessions; their only aim was to gain time in which they could re-organize the AVO and build up a new, reliable police force. Again and again Kadar called the leaders of the Central Workers' Council to the parliament building, made wild promises and succeeded in getting the strike called off and work partially resumed.

When the Workers' Council saw that the promises remained mere promises, however, it repeatedly resorted to the only weapon it possessed – the strike. The workers themselves were now seeing through the Governments' tactics so clearly that even when the Workers' Council recommended a return to work it was obeyed only reluctantly or even not at all.

The workers' councils decided on a last trial of strength after their mass meeting on 21 November in the Palace of Sports in Budapest had been dispersed by Russian troops. On the morning of Friday, 7 December rumours of a general strike were circulating in the streets of Budapest. The Wednesday and Thursday had been restless, with demonstrations, incidents and some shooting, and the general situation seemed to be growing more critical. On the Friday, however, there appeared to be a relaxation of tension. On the one hand there was a deep calm, on the other, hints of an imminent general strike. I was in the Central Workers' Council on that sunny Friday morning – 'What was going on?' was the question everyone was asking. The last conversation I had with a thoughtful young mechanical engineer who in 1945, at the age of twenty, had thrown in his lot with the communists and was now in the ranks of the revolu-

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#### Correction:

An error occurred in the article 'The pensions of Rotterdam and Amsterdam dock workers' which appeared in our October issue. On page 203, the first paragraph of the first column should read 'In terms of his average wage of 3,000 guilders, this represents seventy-nine (not ninety-seven as printed) per cent, and fifty-seven per cent on the basis of the present minimum wage of a docker'.

tionaries, removed the last shred of doubt in my mind that the Friday in question was the lull before the storm. (This conversation had taken place in the building of the Workers' Council but in a back room, because even here, as in the subsidiary councils in the factories, distrust and fear of spies had undermined the sense of unity which had originally existed among the revolutionary leaders.)

It was 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, 8 December, when I entered the headquarters of the Central Workers' Council for the last time. The modern six-storey offices opposite the ruined Stalin memorial were still free from police guards.

Weary, excited men hurried past. The agitated buzz of conversation emerged from many rooms. I eventually found the workers' councillors from various Budapest factories assembled in a smoke-filled conference room. S. was saying with a wave of his hand, 'We have got to risk a general strike again on Monday. Twenty of our best people have just been arrested. We have got to act while we still can.' He had a handwritten document in front of him, and he went on: 'The draft of our resolution calling for a general strike: it begins: "The Kadar government being incapable of resolving the tragic situation which it is facing . . ."

Five hours later the young man was arrested and dragged away. With the threat of a general strike hanging over the country the Russians, through their puppets, let Kadar strike back. On Saturday afternoon the building of the Central Workers' Council was occupied by Hungarian secret police, while Soviet tanks and infantry offered covering support. The strike call had reached the workers just in time and was obeyed solidly throughout the country. That, however, was the end of the Central Workers' Council. On 10 December, the Government dissolved it, and proceeded to the mass-arrest of leaders of this and other worker's councils, including Sandor Racz. With the dissolution of the Central Workers' Council and the arrest of leading councillors, the workers' councils were deprived of their ablest men.

The Government now had to address itself to the task of turning the workers and the workers' councils into a pliable and tractable tool of the regime - it adopted the well-tried methods of brute force and intimidation.

As all the councils had only been elected provisionally during the revolution, new elections were held in which, under the watchful eyes of the Russian tank-crews, 'loyal' elements were steered into the councils. Anti-Kadar council members who were elected in spite of everything were simply arrested. The workers' councils were deprived of their influence in personnel and social matters. Personnel questions were handed over to the factory director, while social questions (wages, etc.) became the responsibility of the trade unions. Factory directors were nominated by the ministries, and the trade unions were saddled with Stalinists like Somogyi and Gaspar for leaders. In future the workers' councils had to concern themselves with production, productivity, work contests and ways of increasing profits. In other words they were to play a Stakhanovite role.

In 'Nepszabadsag', the official communist party organ, of 17 March, Hary Bela declares that: 'They (the trade unions) thought it right that the Government should be quite merciless in dealing with anyone who, by means of false

slogans, tried to overthrow the power of the people building socialism.'

Statements of this kind can now be found every day in the press of the Hungarian puppet regime. What is more serious, however, is that the Government's campaign of terror, far surpassing in sheer brutality anything known before, has succeeded in destroying the power of the workers' councils and converting them into mere instruments of Government policy; they are no longer intended to tackle the problems of the working class: like the trade unions they are designed to play a Stakhanovite role.

The spark of revolution has been extinguished, but the longing for freedom lives on in the Hungarian workers. Workers' councils can be deprived of all influence, their capacity for action destroyed, their leaders thrown into jail and murdered, but passive resistance can never be overthrown and the Hungarian workers' demand for freedom, justice and a life worthy of human dignity can never be suppressed so long as it remains unsatisfied.

(With acknowledgements to 'Free Labour World' of the ICFTU)

### East German rail workshop staff strike



AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELAY, the local Communist (party in Niesky (Easterr Germany) has inadvertently released the news of a strike by more than 1,000 workers at the Niesky railway waggon plant on 5 July. The workers struck in protest against the introduction of the forty-five-hour working week which failed to bring with it the normal compensation paid in the non-Communist world to make up their wages to their former earnings. The strikers complained that as a result their wages had been cut by twenty per cent. The Communist Party statement blames the maanger of the plant 'for failing to explain to the workers that their demands were unjustified!'

### Sickness among seafarers



SICKNESS AMONG SEAFARERS appears to be due more to a mental than a physiological condition according to a Norwegian doctor. Serious cases of mental disturbances are rare, he stated, but there is a marked incidence of nervous disorders and mental depression. This he attributed to the loneliness in a seafarer's way of life,

adding that it was particularly noticeable in men serving on tankers.

This medical opinion was expressed by Doctor Erling Refsum on his return to Norway from a two-year stay at the Norwegian seafarers' medical centre in New York.

The best way to combat this mental state, according to the doctor, is to grant all seafarers a free passage home at least once a year. Many ship's boys sign on for a trip lasting 18 months - much too long for the majority at that age. It can easily have the result of scaring them off a calling for which they might otherwise be suited, the doctor added.

The Norwegian seafarers' medical centre in New York is the largest of its kind in the world. Seafarers are medically examined once a year while they are under the age of eighteen and once every other year after that. Of the more common physical ailments digestive disorders are the most frequent owing to the somewhat plentiful nature of the food and too many hot meals. Tuberculosis is of rare occurrence whilst there has been a marked decrease in mental disorders, thanks to energetic treatment and better health conditions among the seafarers themselves.





## ITF International Fishermen's Conference

EIGHT COUNTRIES WITH MAJOR FISHING INDUSTRIES – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, the Netherlands and Norway – were represented at a conference of the ITF Fishermen's Section which met in Bergen, Norway, from 19 to 21 September. Fraternal greetings were received from the affiliated fishermen's unions in Japan and the United States which were unable to be represented owing to important developments at home.



One of the matters discussed at the Fishermen's Conference was the large difference between the price fetched for fish at port and the price paid by the consumer. In some cases the price increases tenfold (Photo: F. Huntly Woodcock)

The delegates were welcomed by I. Haugen, President of the Norwegian Seaman's Union (which also organizes fishermen), and C. Sunnanå, Director of Fisheries at Bergen. During the conference, the delegates were officially received by the municipal authorities and the Fishery Directorate at Bergen and visits were paid to the fishing installations and research plants in the port.

The items tabled for discussion at the conference were: 1) the conditions of employment of fishermen; 2) a report on the realization of the International Fishermen's Programme adopted by the ITF in 1948; 3) the formulation of a new

International Programme; 4) fishermen's questions at the ILO; 5) the trade union position in the fishing industry; and 6) the limitation of shipowners' liability. In addition the conference dealt with the question of territorial waters, one of the major problems on the agenda of a Conference of Plenipotentiaries which is to meet in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations in February next year.

### The International Programme

After a comprehensive survey of the conditions of employment of fishermen in different countries, the conference re-

viewed the extent to which the International Fishermen's Programme, which was adopted by the ITF Oslo Congress in 1948, had been realized in countries with affiliated unions. The reports from the unions showed that the programme had been largely attained in the economically-advanced countries, but that there remained much to be done, especially in the less-developed areas of the world. The conference therefore decided not only to re-affirm the programme, but also to add a number of new points to it in the light of the latter-day developments in the fishing industry.

Several new points were formulated by the Bergen conference and a number of others were referred to another conference of the Section to be held in conjunction with next year's Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva.

One of the new points calls for the introduction of *decasualization schemes* for fishermen similar to those existing for port and maritime workers in many countries and providing for the registration of employers and workers in the industry and the payment of adequate allowances during periods of voluntary unemployment. The objective of the point in the programme regarding *annual leave* – one day's paid leave for every month a man is at the disposal of the industry – was extended to include payment of an allowance over and above wages to enable fishermen to meet the extra expense of vacations away from home for themselves and their families. The principle of annual leave with double pay was reported to be already the recognized practice for fishermen and other categories of workers in several countries.

With regard to *safety at sea*, the conference called for the equipment of fishing vessels with up-to-date life-saving devices, such as inflatable life-rafts, together with adequate inspection of these devices and instruction in their use.

It is also proposed to include in the new programme demands relating to *manning standards*, crew accommodation, medicine chests and medical aid.

With regard to *manning* it was observed that two certificated deck officers to a vessel are insufficient, since the mate is preoccupied at the fishing grounds with catching operations, leaving the skipper as the only certificated officer available for navigation duties. This was felt to be prejudicial to the safety of the fishing vessel and to other shipping.

As for *accommodation*, it was thought necessary to have laid down for fishing vessels standards similar to those provided for merchant ships in the appropriate ILO Convention.

In the field of *medical aid* it was decided to formulate standards for medicine chests and first-aid training, and to give attention to the possibilities of services such as hospital-ships, the use of helicopters for transporting casualties and medical advice by radio.

Those points which have not yet been definitely decided will be further considered at the next Section conference.

#### Prices and representation

During a discussion on guaranteed earnings and maximum prices, the delegates referred to the wide difference which often exists between prices fetched by fish at landing points and those for which it was finally sold to consumers. Prices are sometimes multiplied several times, in extreme cases tenfold, before reaching the consumer, and the need for action to avoid excessive increases in the price of fish was strongly urged. The conference also advocated measures to promote the consumption of fish, such as deep-freezing and efficient transport.

The problem of self-employed fishermen was considered during the debate on trade union organization. It was felt that small-scale or family enterprises were not conducive to satisfactory economic or social conditions and the conference agreed that organizations of self-employed fishermen should only be eligible for membership of the ITF if their application for affiliation were supported by fishermen's unions which were already affiliated. On the national level, where self-employed fishermen took up a constructive and co-operative

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*Crew accommodation was considered at the Bergen Conference in connection with proposals for a revised International Programme. It was felt that standards similar to those for merchant vessels should be laid down (Central Office of Information)*

attitude, the organizations of wage-earning fishermen would be willing to work with them for common aims.

#### Territorial waters

On the question of territorial waters the conference re-affirmed the statement made by the Fishermen's Section at the last biennial Congress of the ITF in 1956 and once more endorsed the declaration addressed jointly by the ITF and the ICFTU to the United Nations General Assembly in November 1955, advocating adherence to the traditional three-mile limit to territorial seas.

In making this statement the Section added that a certain amount of flexibility should be observed in the case of those countries whose national economies were particularly affected by considerations such as the need for fish conservation, always provided that any changes in existing demarcations should not be made unilaterally, but by international agreement.

Fishermen's unions are to endeavour to influence their respective governments to this end and to seek representation in an advisory capacity on national delegations to the United Nations Conference which will meet in Geneva next year to try to draw up a new international code on the law of the sea.

#### Shipowners' liability

On the question of shipowners' liability, attention was drawn to the anomalous position which exists in some countries regarding the treatment of fishermen, seafarers and dock workers employed by shipowners, in respect of common

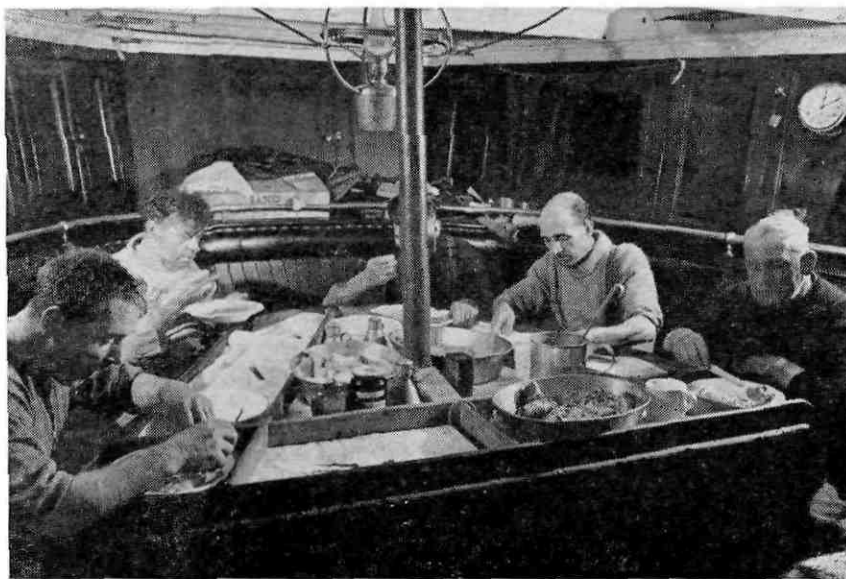
law claims arising out of injury or death attributable to employers' negligence. The conference agreed that to limit employers' liability towards employed persons was wrong in principle, that it was particularly unjust to discriminate against any group in this respect, and that it was undesirable for such limitation or discrimination to exist in some countries and not in others.

It was decided to address a letter expressing this view to the President of the Inter-Governmental Conference on Maritime Law which was held in Brussels from 30 September. Unions were asked to make representations on similar lines to their respective governments and to seek advisory representation on the national delegations to the Brussels Conference.


#### Fishermen's questions at the ILO

Finally consideration was given to the fishermen's questions which are being dealt with through the International Labour Organization. Next year's Session of the International Labour Conference has an item on the agenda covering three draft international instruments relating to fishermen's conditions: minimum age for admission to the fishing industry, medical examination of fishermen, and articles of agreement for fishing vessels.

These matters together with a proposal for the establishment of permanent machinery to deal with fishermen's affairs in the ILO will be further pursued at the meeting of the Fishermen's Section to be held in conjunction with the ILO 1958 Conference.



## Nuclear-powered ships - or not?

 NO ONE WHO SAILS OR HAS SAILED IN SHIPS, or is concerned with the fortunes of those whose livelihood is bound up with life at sea can remain entirely indifferent to recent developments in the direction of nuclear propulsion of merchant vessels. Not so very long ago, such a development could be discussed - or brushed aside - as a sort of Jules Verne dream of the future. In the present-day world, however, experience has taught us that in matters of technological development the future has now acquired the disconcerting habit of catching up on us at a rate which some might find almost alarming - especially those of us who are concerned at the time lag between man's inventions and the institutions devised or developed to meet the challenge to the welfare of the majority which they frequently represent.

It is not three years since the first nuclear-powered vessel, the US submarine 'Nautilus' took to the water on its trial trip during which the vessel covered some 50,000 nautical miles without 'refuelling'. The 'Nautilus' started on its trial trip on 7 January 1955. By the beginning of 1957, governments, scientists and shipbuilders were already announcing projects and plans for the construction of nuclear-powered merchant vessels. The latest statement on this subject comes from the United States with an announcement from the Government that it plans to construct the world's first nuclear-propelled passenger-cargo vessel to go into service in 1960. The machinery is expected to cost ten million dollars, and the vessel will be able to go for 350,000 nautical miles without 'recharging' - the equivalent of three years' continuous service.

Interest in the development of atomic-powered ships is world-wide. Early this year a working committee was set up in Holland by a number of shipbuilding and engineering firms and shipowners to study the possibilities of atomic propulsion. Similar committees or consortia of parties interested in the development of nuclear-powered merchant vessels are also in existence in a number of countries, among which may be mentioned Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, France and Germany. Emphasis of attention would appear to be on the possibilities of developing a nuclear reactor

suitable for propelling heavier vessels - particularly tankers. Sweden is reported as working on plans for two atom-powered 45,000 tdw tankers developing 20,000 h.p. Another source makes mention of joint Norwegian-Swedish plans for a 65,000-ton tanker. More recently, Great Britain announced plans for the construction of giant 65,000-ton atom-powered tankers. These would be less expensive to build and operate than the mixed passenger and cargo vessels which the United States proposes to put into service, but would nevertheless still be more costly than vessels propelled by conventional methods. The cost of the 12,000-ton US passenger-cargo vessel has been estimated at \$42 million.


The cost of building and operating an atom-powered merchant vessel is not the only factor having a bearing on the problem. There is also the safety factor, and doubts have been expressed as to the advantages of having such vessels when balanced against the very grave dangers associated with nuclear reaction. The view has been expressed that it is very unlikely that major ports will consider offering them berthing facilities, at least until the entire question has been thoroughly gone into - preferably at international level.

One American maritime publication, quoted by the 'Seafarers' Log', the official organ of the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' International Union of North America, has called for the discarding of plans for atom-powered dry cargo ships as prohibitively expensive and offering no commercial advantages. One thing appears certain from the reported pronouncements of experts on the subject: if an atomic-powered cargo vessel is to become a commercial proposition, much work has still to be done to develop a more economic reactor for ship propulsion than that used in the 'Nautilus'. Propulsion costs of this US atomic-powered submarine are estimated at about six times the present costs for commercial shipping. An estimate in connection with a proposed Norwegian atom-powered 30,000-ton tanker indicated that the vessel would cost fifty per cent more to build than a conventional tanker and that running costs would be doubled.

In spite of what would appear to be prohibitive costs, the United States has gone ahead with plans for the construction of an atomic-powered dry cargo

vessel, and, as already mentioned, 1960 has been indicated as the year in which it is likely to be put into service. In the case of other maritime countries, the years 1964-65 have been mentioned as likely to see their vessels ready for the sea. In most cases it seems probable that government assistance will have to be sought and given before these ships are constructed and that when - or if - they take the water, they will do so, in the initial stages at least, on an uneconomical basis and will serve primarily as a kind of floating test-bed for governments, scientists, and engineers.


## Defenders of the workers?

 A REPORT FROM THE ITALIAN UNION OF PORTERS, published in the Rome daily *Il Popolo*, describes a typical example of Communist interference with unions which have broken away from Party domination. The National Union of Porters withdrew from the Communist CGIL on 30 April because it said that the CGIL was so bound by outside political interests that it failed to represent the workers.

The report said that a number of local Communist leaders had entered the Porters' Union headquarters at Olevano Romano and interrupted a meeting of members. The Communists stated that they had an important trade union announcement to make. Union leaders therefore gave them permission to address the meeting. Whereupon, reports *Il Popolo*, the Communists proceeded to make insulting remarks about the leaders of the autonomous union. The workers, disgusted by this, drove them out of the union headquarters. As they left, the Communists shouted threats at the workers, even threatening to see that their social welfare benefits and family allowances were suspended.

'Yet these are the people who profess to be the ardent defenders of the poor and oppressed', the union's report concluded.

## The world's biggest?

 WHAT IS CLAIMED to be the largest diesel tanker in the world has been recently delivered to its new owners in Stavanger, Norway. The tanker is the 'Berge Sigval' and its tonnage is 35,750 deadweight. The tankers' builders - a firm in Gothenburg - also claims a further record for it: that it was built in 119 days, faster than any other ship of that size.

## Joint consultation on the Swiss Federal Railways



THE FOLLOWING BRIEF DESCRIPTION of the system of joint consultation in force on the Swiss Federal Railways is based on an article on the subject which appeared in *Das Signal* under the signature of Brother Hans Düby, who is President of the ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Federation.

Brother Düby writes that, in contrast to the situation in Germany and certain other countries, employees of Swiss Federal undertakings enjoy only the right to joint consultation, not – as in Germany, for example – the right to co-determination. So far as legislation which affects all Federal employees is concerned, there exist special joint committees, further details of which will be given below. In addition, individual undertakings have also established both general and departmental committees.

The joint committees just mentioned are advisory organs of the Federal Department of Finance and Customs. The joint committee on staff matters, for instance, consists of a chairman and twenty members, each of the latter having a substitute. Of these, the chairman plus ten members and their substitutes are appointed by management the remainder being chosen by the workers. Period of office is three years, and representatives are eligible for re-election at the end of that period.

The joint committee on staff matters is responsible for advising on the following:

a) the draft texts of orders in council based on the Law on Federal Employees (Beamtengesetz), emanating from the Federal Council (Cabinet);

b) proposals for the amendment of, or supplementing, this Law, as well as enabling Acts drawn up by the Federal Council;

c) matters of substance concerning staff and wage questions;

Decisions taken by the committee are transmitted to the Federal Council in the form of recommendations.

In addition, there is also a joint committee dealing with legislation on working hours. This consists of a chairman and fourteen members plus substitutes, who are elected in the same way as in the case of the committee on staff matters. The period of office is again three

years, and at present our affiliate has three full representatives and three substitutes serving on the committee.

Joint committees also exist for dealing with disciplinary matters affecting either permanent civil servants (Beamten) or regular employees of the Federal Government who do not enjoy permanent status. The Federal Council is responsible for determining the competency and scope of the disciplinary committees.

Each such committee consists of a chairman and two members, elected for a definite period. The chairman and one member is appointed by the Federal Council; the remaining member by the staff. The chairman may not belong to the Federal administration. The committees have only advisory powers.

The above organs, as already pointed out, deal with matters concerning all Federal employees. On the Federal Railways, joint consultation is additionally practised in a number of fields, the form which it takes varying.

Staff representation in the form of direct participation in management is found only in the field of welfare (e.g. pension, provident and sickness fund committees). On the other hand, staff representation in an advisory capacity exists on all kinds of administrative, technical, managerial and service matters (e.g. staff committees, workplace or workshop committees, the committee for the crews of steamships operated by the railways on Lake Constance). Staff representation in an advisory capacity also exists on matters of a social or legal nature which concern salaries and working conditions as a whole. Examples of this have already been given by the joint committees on staff matters and working hour legislation. Then there is also advisory participation by staff representatives on matters concerning grading and promotion, and finally direct participation in the work of the disciplinary committees.

In the case of the Committees on Federal Railway Pension and Provident Funds the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation appoints forty-three of the staff representatives. The remaining four members, Brother Düby states, are representatives of the so-called Trade Union of Christian Transport Workers'. The number of members belonging to this organization on the railways is not definitely known, but Brother Düby points out that they are in any case very few.

There are three types of staff committee on the railways:

1) a central committee for the staff as a whole;

2) five trade committees covering the main branches of railway service;

3) (a) a staff committee for every work-place; and

(b) the committee for Lake Constance steamship personnel.

Whenever the trade committees are called upon to take decisions on questions of fundamental importance, their members are invited to take part in preliminary discussions on the subject by the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation.

As already mentioned, a shop committee is set up by employees at every place of work. Proposals and suggestions on the organization of work or conditions of work can be handed into these committees for discussion with management.

The staff committee for Lake Constance steamship personnel consists of five members. In appointing them due regard is had to the need for proper presentation of the various categories of employee affected by the work of the committee. The committee functions in an advisory capacity on matters concerning the operation of lake steamer services. Its chairman is the manager of the steamship undertaking, acting *ex officio*.

The committee on gradings and promotion is made up of a chairman and four members, each of whom has two substitutes. The staff have the right to appoint two members and their substitutes. It should be pointed out that persons who are not actually in the service of the Federal Railways may sit on the committee. Since committee members have to be familiar with the regulations on grading and promotion, both staff representatives are full-time officials of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation.

There are four disciplinary committees on the Federal Railways, one for the head office plus one each for the three railway regions. Each committee consists of a chairman, who may not be an employee of the railways, and one representative of both staff management. In this case, too, staff representatives are usually full-time officials of our affiliate.

At the end of September there were about 41,000 Federal Railways employees, almost 3,500 being temporary staff.



## Organizing the transport workers of Ghana

by DAVID OFORI, *Secretary and Recorder, Ghana Transport Workers' Conference*  
*Co-ordinating Secretariat*

A MARKED DEVELOPMENT IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN GHANA since the country acquired national independence has meant a growth in its road transport services and at the same time brought home to the transport workers of Ghana the significance of the role they will have to play in the development of democratic trade unionism in the country. The advent of Ghana's independence, politically very largely the work of one man – Dr. Kwame Nkrumah – has not however meant any great advance in the country's economic position. Thus, although the individual transport worker has gained political freedom, the impact on his economic conditions has been largely negligible. Progress in every industrial country, however, is dependent on a healthy transport industry.

Today the transport worker in Ghana, as indeed all workers in the country, is faced with the problems associated with low economic standards. Many of his difficulties are, however, a heritage from previous colonial exploitation. Furthermore, interference by the colonial administration in the economic field has not contributed to his material advantage to the extent which he would have been justified in hoping. A number of unprogressive labour ordinances bear witness to former colonial tutelage and are suggestive more of economic slavery than of conditions in the more highly industrialized countries on which they could have been patterned. Thus, as laid down by ordinance, workmen's compensation in the case of accident is ridiculously low – ten per cent of gross annual wages, these being in the region of £120. Furthermore, arbitrary rules are laid down regarding membership of a trade union, whilst the activities of certain labour officials in the past have acted as a brake on the development of democratic trade unionism.

### A fair rate for the job

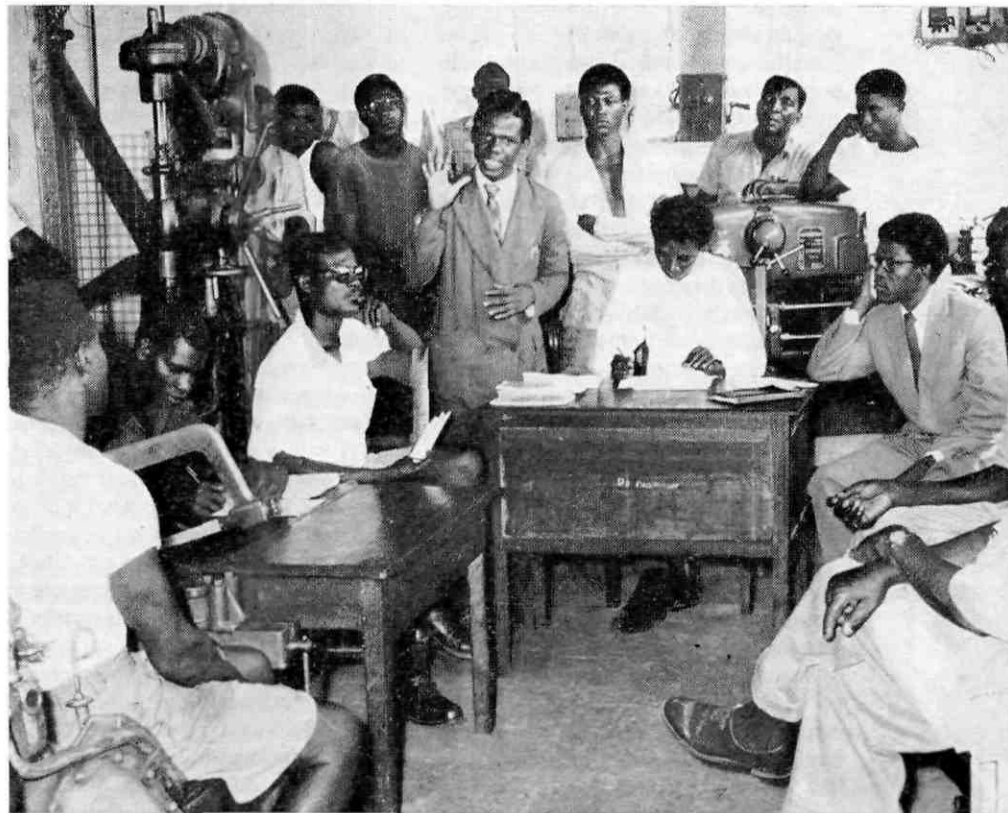
A typical case of the manner in which interference by a colonial administration in the wage structure of Ghana workers redounded to the disadvantage of the workers may be cited from the writer's own experience as an employee

*Brother Charles Heymann, the General Secretary of the Government Transport Workers' Union, addressing transport workers at Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana 400 miles from Accra, Ghana's capital, during a recent tour*

of Pan American Airways and the United States Army Air Corps during the Second World War. These were established at both Accra and Takoradi. The former were paying wages to their African staff higher than the prevailing (colonial) rates. The result was that the administration stepped in to put an end to that state of affairs, contending that the American company had no right to pay higher rates than the Government was paying its own employees –

by colonial standards. The transport workers of Ghana regard it as one of their main objectives to secure a readjustment of their wages as well as those of associated industries in such fashion that this disparity between wage standards shall not be perpetuated. We realize, of course, that this readjustment will take time. Nevertheless we are determined to put an end to the exploitation which results from foreign investors insisting on continuing to pay 'existing local rates' rather than an economically fair rate for the job.

Wage rates and working standards in Ghana today are deplorably low. Conversely, the cost of living is extraordinarily high. Thus dock workers work from six in the morning to six at night at a rate of 5s.2d. a day. Wages are at a low standard generally and cannot be justifiably related to the real value of the services performed. The transport



worker in Ghana, in company with the rest of the country's labour force, is only too frequently unable to clothe himself properly, is burdened with unpaid debts, and unable to feed his children as he would like or pay for their school books.

### **Social pattern is different**

Over and above this, owing to the social pattern in Ghana, a wage-earner is frequently responsible for the housing, feeding and general well-being of a much larger circle of blood relatives than is the case with breadwinners in countries with a Western culture. This 'head of the family' responsibility extends to nephews, nieces and cousins, and involves obligations which are not felt or assumed elsewhere. This extended family pattern, however, is part and parcel of the country's social make-up and cannot be ignored when considering a Ghana worker's wage structure. The Colonial Governor who some three decades ago when writing about the African worker on the Gold Coast referred to his penchant for expensive weddings and spoke of 'several hangers-on in his family life' was betraying a lack of understanding of social patterns in the country he was called upon to administer which would have been remarkable were it not so common.

In this connection, it is perhaps worth pointing out that, as a result of the responsibilities devolving on the 'head of family' in Ghana, he inevitably assumes the duty of caring for the welfare of a number of relatives who in many other countries would be looked after under national state insurance schemes. In this sense, therefore, he fills a gap in the country's social welfare structure. Nevertheless, the transport workers of Ghana, in addition to striving for an adequate pay packet in return for honest labour and in line with improved standards of living, aim at the State's assuming social insurance obligations – obligations which are common-place for example in European countries.

### **Potentially a rich land**

Territorially, Ghana consists of wide stretches of fertile land, potentially a rich source of food supply for the country's increasing population, provided it can be cultivated economically – preferably on a large-scale co-operative basis. The possibilities of future economic development are particularly

noticeable in the extensive uncultivated regions running from the coast into the western territories and in the Ashanti territory and the northern and trans-Volta regions.

As the well-built road to the northern regions runs for mile upon mile through these uncultivated lands, one cannot help asking why there should be poverty in this land of plenty. Is the worker of Ghana lazy? Or can it be that the right means and incentives for increased food production are lacking? These are disturbing questions to which the transport workers of Ghana as the pivotal element of a future labour movement in Ghana, must find an answer.

Winding its way from the north to the southern region of Ghana, runs the River Volta, the 'river of fear and fortune' of the nation's economy. The prospect of river navigation, as an ancillary to the Volta River Project, represents a problem to the country's transport experts, the solution of which would mean the opening up of a further source of national prosperity. Hand in hand with the proposed extension of transport facilities on the River Volta could go an improvement of the road transport conditions on the road between Kumasi and Tamale. At the moment there are no mobile restaurants or relaxation facilities along this 237-mile stretch between the country's northernmost railhead in the southern Ashanti territory and the capital of the Northern Territories.

### **Sauce for the gander**

We have seen in the case of Ghana's near neighbour, Nigeria, the extent to which the River Niger has contributed to that country's economy. Its natural potentialities have been wisely exploited for the benefit of that nation's teeming millions and its future economy. The success with which Nigeria – a great nation with a great future – has developed river navigation should serve to remind us of the proverb: what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. In drawing the attention of the Ghana Government and industrial interests to the potentialities of this great waterway in the nation's economy, the transport workers of Ghana stress their preference for national industrialization by peaceful democratic evolution. They do not want national independence at the price of economic upheaval and all the dangers it brings. Implementation of a

Volta River navigation project is one of the many ways in which development schemes in the northern region of Ghana could be rapidly realized and would be of great assistance in the transportation of food, goods and passengers between the south and other parts of the Northern Territories.

### **A dynamic labour force**

The transport workers of Ghana have given evidence of an awareness of the important part they have to play in the country's developing economy and of the need for national and international trade union solidarity. It is true that there is still a large amount of apathy in the country and only too many workers who divorce their everyday realities from the labour organizations who are fighting for their economic freedom and progress. Trade union education and its practical application to further the needs of the workers have still a long way to go. Unions suffer from a lack of funds, and, owing to the unprogressive labour policies of earlier days, there is a dearth of enlightened leadership. Nevertheless, there are welcome signs that these conditions are changing, helped by recent progressive legislation and the subsidizing of workers' education.

Proof that the transport workers of Ghana are a dynamic labour force and no longer mutely acquiescent in existing conditions is supplied by the response to the efforts made to establish a national body uniting all kinds of transport workers. When, at the beginning of his African tour in January and February, Brother Omer Becu visited Accra, he was able to attend a Ghana Transport Workers' Conference. This conference and what it stands for – the unity of transport workers in Ghana – was made possible by the efforts of Brother Charles Heymann, General Secretary of the Ghana Government Transport Workers' Union (affiliated with the ITF) and the writer, culminating in a ten-day tour of the country during which we covered some 1,000 miles. Our efforts to co-ordinate the transport workers of Ghana met with success with the establishment of the Ghana Transport Workers' Conference, of whose Co-ordinating Secretariat the writer is Secretary and Recorder.

### **Affiliating with the ITF**

Object of this body is to work for the creation of a national union of trans-

*Brother David Ofori, Secretary and Recorder of the Ghana Transport Workers' Conference Co-ordinating Secretariat, and author of our article, in the company of Brother Heymann addressing transport workers in their workshop at Tamale*

port workers. One of its first acts was to recommend constituent unions to affiliate with the ITF. As a result of this recommendation, eight of the country's transport workers' unions have applied for affiliation. They are (with paid-up membership): the Ghana Railway Employees' Union (5,000), the Ghana Maritime and Dock Workers' Union (4,000), the Accra Municipal Employees' Union (1,000), the Sekondi-Takoradi Municipal Transport Workers' Union (300), the Ghana UAC Lighterage Employees' Union (350), the Adra Brothers Transport Workers' Union (100), the Kumasi Municipal Workers' Union (2,000) and the Ghana Public Works Employees' Union (15,000).

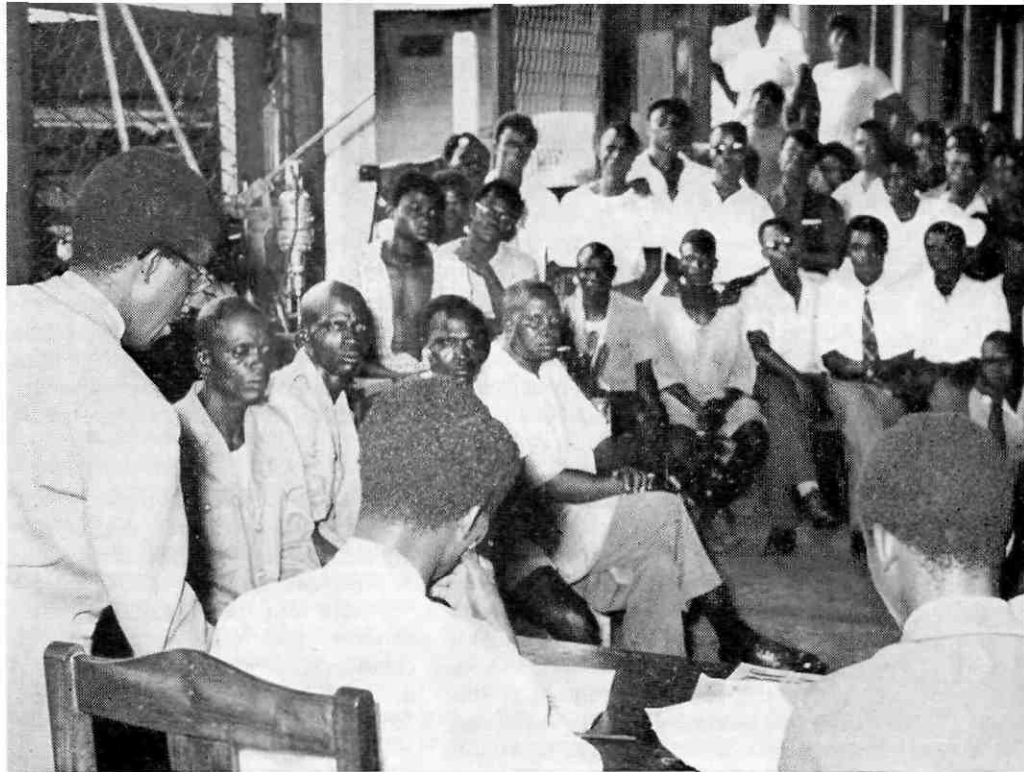
In addition, a number of other unions are expected to apply for affiliation in the near future. Among these may be mentioned the Ghana Motor Drivers' Union with a potential membership of 10,000, the Accra Taxi Drivers' Union, the Airways Workers' Union and the Cape Coast Municipal Workers' Union.

Organized transport workers and employees in allied trades in Ghana have a potential membership of over 60,000 (including the ITF-affiliated Government Transport Workers' Union with a membership of 1,000). Unorganized transport workers are estimated to be in the region of 20,000. Thus the ratio of organized transport workers to unorganized is 3 : 1.

### **A lasting national movement**

With the creation of the Ghana Transport Workers' Conference there has been set in motion a dynamic national trade union movement among the country's transport workers, by means of which it is hoped to embrace all those engaged in transport and kindred trades. In time, we hope to disprove the argument that it is impossible to establish a national trade union movement on a lasting basis. Those of us engaged in this task are fully aware of the great responsibility which devolves on us and of the manifold difficulties which lie ahead. The achievement of our object will demand great fortitude on our part.

In the past we have frequently had




to pay the price of lack of experience and ignorance of the law. Thus the writer recalls the time during the last world war when he was an employee of the Pan American Airways and the United States Army Air Corps.

During the course of a trade dispute we demonstrated our solidarity as organized workers and won most of the demands we had put forward on behalf of our fellow workers. But our union was not registered as required by law and the result was further exploitation and arbitrary treatment.

From my experience as a worker in the transport industry, it is my conviction that Ghana's future economic progress depends in a large measure on the increased productivity of its transport workers. It is with this conviction that Brother Charles Heymann, General Secretary of the Government Transport Workers' Union, and the writer have dedicated their lives and careers to the service of the transport workers not only of Ghana but of Africa south of the Sahara and beyond. We have fought and shall continue to fight for the rights of the indigenous African workers wherever we may be. The Ghana Transport Workers' Conference, representative of a body of responsible citizens of an independent Ghana, will endeavour to improve economic standards by hard work and by national and international organization. It is that which decides everything and shapes all human destiny in this industrial age.

### **Temporary membership of Norwegian Seamen's Union**

 IN ITS SEPTEMBER ISSUE, the official journal published by the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union comments on a decision by the union's national executive earlier this year to introduce temporary membership cards for foreign seamen serving on Norwegian ships. The cards cost kr. 30 (30s. or \$4.20) and are valid for a period of three months. The cards can be issued to all foreign nationals serving on Norwegian ships who are not members of the Norwegian union or who wish to be transferred to it from other unions affiliated with the ITF.

The article in our affiliate's magazine points out that there are now about 9,000 nationals on board Norwegian ships and that many of them only serve for short periods. Nevertheless, while on board they enjoy the same rights as Norwegian seamen, and the union therefore considers it reasonable to expect them to pay the same contributions.

It is explained that two years' temporary membership will be accepted as proof that a foreign national is a bona fide seaman who has chosen to serve on Norwegian vessels, and thus qualifies for full membership of the union. The temporary membership cards will be issued mainly by union branches, both at home and abroad, but where this is not possible it will be the responsibility of the ship's delegate.

# Swedish merchant marine officers' pensions



A NUMBER OF CHANGES have recently been introduced in the Swedish Merchant Marine Officers' Pensions Scheme to take effect in 1958 and the following is a description of how they will work. Prominent features of the scheme as it will be operated are the establishment of a collective fund to cover supplementary pensions, and a guaranteed minimum pension equal to 60% of average salary over the ten years preceding retirement.

The salary for the purpose of calculation of pension is that laid down in the collective agreement in force up to a limit of 2,000 kronor a month. (The Swedish krona is quoted at about 14.5 to the £1 and 5.17 to us \$1.) Amounts by which the monthly salary exceeds 2,000 kr. give rise to pension entitlement on a decreasing scale as follows: from 2,000 kr. to 2,917 kr., two-thirds is credited for pension purposes; from 2,918 kr. to 3,333 kr., one-third.

The other element in the calculation of pensions, length of service, is computed on the basis of the number of months an officer has been contributing to the pension fund. In the event of the life and health insurance side of the scheme becoming operative (in cases of death or disability) the contributory period is assumed to be that credited if the contributor had reached normal retiring age. In the event of continuous service with the same shipowner or shipping company since before 1938 (1941 in the case of radio officers), the officer concerned will be credited with that number of years up to a maximum of ten.

If the period of service calculated on this basis amounts to not less than 360 months (thirty years), full pension entitlement (based on the maximum pensionable salary) accrues before the normal retiring age. In the case of a shorter period of service, this maximum entitlement is reduced proportionately.

The two elements deciding the amount of pension on reaching retirement age are: the average of the maximum pensionable salary over the ten years (120 months) preceding retirement, and length of service.

The disablement pension amounts to 60% of the pension entitlement accrued in the month immediately preceding disablement, i.e. before the commencement of the waiting period which is three months.

Dependents' (widow's) benefits am-

ount to 30% of pension entitlement. Widow's and dependent children's or orphans' pensions are paid on the basis of a percentage of this as follows:

Widow with one child, 130; with two children, 150; with more than two children, an additional 10 for each child in excess of two; orphans: one child, 75; two children, 110; three children, 135; four children, 150; and an additional 10 for each child in excess of four. These benefits are payable up to the age of 21 under the new regulations compared with 18 under the old rules.

The old age pension is payable at sixty-five and is equivalent to 60% of the pension entitlement at retirement. On pensionable age being reached, dependents' pension amounts to half the old age pension. Premature retirement before the age of sixty gives entitlement to a reduced pension calculated on an actuarial basis.

Pension rights are not affected by a change-over to another shipping company. In the event of an officer leaving the service before the age of sixty, his pension rights remain unaffected provided his contributions to the scheme would entitle him to not less than a 15% pension.

As an example of the manner in which the scheme operates, we may take the case of an officer born on 30 June 1895, who has been in the employ of the same shipping company since 1925, became a member of the pension scheme in November 1937, and in 1958 has an annual pensionable salary of 30,000 kr.

Service giving rise to pension entitlement is composed of ten years credited for the period of service prior to 1938, the number of monthly contributions to the scheme, and the number of years remaining until pensionable age is reached. It is assumed that there was a short break in contributions during the war years but that the total number of


years service is not less than thirty.

The maximum pensionable monthly salary is 2,000 kr. plus two-thirds of 500 kr., equalling 2,333 kr. If the contributor becomes 100% disabled during 1958, his monthly disablement pension will be 60% of 2,333 kr., i.e. 1,400 kr. From this pension 300 kr. a month will be deducted as he will be in receipt of national health insurance benefit.

Should the contributor die during the year 1958, dependents' benefit will amount to 30% of 2,333 kr., i.e. 700 kr. a month. If he should leave a widow and two children under 21 years of age, dependents' benefits amount to 150% of 700 kr., i.e., 1,050 kr. a month.

To calculate retirement pension on reaching retiring age, it will be necessary to establish the monthly pensionable salary over the preceding ten years, taking into account the limit of salary on which the pension is based. Assuming an annual salary progression of Swedish crowns 21,000, 24,000, 3 × 25,000, 27,000, 29,000 and 3 × 30,000, the pensionable salary for the ten-year period would be 256,167 kr. Dividing this sum by 120, we get 2,135 kr. as the basic monthly pension. The old age pension would thus be 60% of this sum, i.e. 1,281 kr. a month.

## The 'tea and sugar' train

 THERE IS SOMETHING OF A MAHOMET-AND-THE-MOUNTAIN touch about the people who live along the railway line that ploughs a fantastically straight furrow across the base of the Australian continent – the desert wastes of the Nullarbor Plain. These hardy folk – railway employees and their families – live so far from anywhere that they cannot go for their provisions. So their provisions come to them – in the 'Tea and Sugar' train.

Actually, the 'Tea and Sugar' train is a lot more than that. To the hungry inhabitants of this 'Never-Never' country it also brings meat, groceries, vegetables, even furniture, in fact everything that they may require if they are not to exist in the primitive manner of the aborigines, who roam the enormous limestone plain, which, for the



greater part, is a waterless, arid desert.

The 'Tea and Sugar' train, like some other characteristics of the Commonwealth-operated Trans-Australian Railway is unique in the world. Nowhere else is there a railway that is so completely self-contained. This section of the rail link between western Australia and the eastern states stretches 1,108 miles, from Port Pirie, in South Australia, to Kalgoorlie, in Western Australia. There are tremendous stretches of monotonous, unchanging country, devoid of a single distinguishing mark; not a hill or valley, a house or even a tree. And across the Great Nullarbor Plain, the Trans-Australian line runs at one stage for more than 300 miles without a single curve – the longest stretch of straight railway track in the world.

Through this primitive country, the most modern diesel-electric locomotives hurtle at 90 m.p.h., covering the long journey in little more than half the time formerly taken by steam trains. Efficient running and maintenance of the 'Trans' is dependent upon the army of employees who live with their families at isolated stations and depots along the line, and for the supply of all their requirements the railway administration maintains its own provision stores. This


self-contained section of the Commonwealth Railways operates its own bakeries, butchery, ice supply, laundry, and electricity generating plant. The 'Tea and Sugar' train is the supply train.

A complete modern store on wheels, it has its own refrigeration cars and carries continually fresh supplies to families scattered along the railway. Drinking and domestic water and firewood have also to be transported to many sections where supplies are not obtainable locally. Bakeries at the railway's branch stores supply fresh bread to the staff along the line, and also provide the fresh bread and cake for the dining cars on the express trains.

The 'Tea and Sugar' train calls at all stations, sidings, and camps and waits while employees buy their requirements at current Adelaide prices. Some depots have recreation halls, tennis courts, and libraries, and for entertainment and relaxation people living at these places are not much worse off than the inhabitants of the big cities. But for the families anchored in the lonely camps along the route of the 'Trans' their way of living would be much more austere if it were not for the train's visits.

*(From Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine)*

### Standard signalling system recommended for inland waterways

 THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON INLAND WATER TRANSPORT of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has recently held its first session in Geneva. It urged governments to adopt as rapidly as possible a European standardized system of signs and signals on their unisolated waterways. The aim is to reduce accidents and avoid confusion on Europe's water transport arteries.

No uniform system of signalling comparable to that which exists for road traffic is in force for inland navigation in Europe at present. Although signalling within a certain basin, such as the Rhine or Danube basins, is uniform, there are several differences between the signs and signals used by various countries on their national waterways systems or on certain international riverways. In the view of the ECE Sub-Committee the development of international inland waterway traffic makes it im-

portant, from the point of view of navigational safety, to unify inland waterway signalling at a European level.


The Sub-Committee therefore discussed a report drawn up by a group of experts which began its work in 1954 under the auspices of the International Association of Navigation Congresses and the ECE Inland Transport Committee. The first part of the task entrusted to this group of experts – signalling on the waterways themselves – was completed at the end of 1956. The six parts of the report cover General Provisions; Buoyage of Waterways; Signalization of Works; Dams; Special Signals, including *inter alia* Mandatory Signs, Prohibitory Signs and Informative Signs, and Other Provisions.

The Sub-Committee adopted the recommendations included in the experts' report, modifying them on some minor points. In view of the lengthy procedure for bringing conventions into force and also the difficulty of amending them subsequently, the Sub-Committee decided to bring the recommendations into force by means of a resolution. This

urges governments to introduce on those waterways within their territories which do not constitute a completely isolated network the signalling system agreed upon by the Sub-Committee, and to abolish as quickly as possible the use of signals which do not conform to the system laid down by it.

The Sub-Committee will examine annually how far the resolution has been complied with by each country concerned. It has also set up machinery to deal with questions which may arise in the implementation of this resolution.

### It pays to know

 'THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS has learned to substitute informed negotiations for the picket line'. This statement was made recently by IAM Vice President F. Coonley addressing a study group of fifty-eight IAM members who had just completed a one-week course at the Machinists Leadership Training School held at Rutgers University, New Jersey.

The speaker went on to affirm that this was true despite all propaganda to the contrary, and that the Union had found it could bargain more intelligently when armed with facts prepared for it by the Research Department. 'And we have learned to use those facts effectively', he added.

Referring to the training of negotiators, the IAM Vice President declared that without it negotiators were handicapped when dealing with highly trained management personnel. This was true of grievance procedures as well as contract negotiations.

'Many a good arbitration case has been lost and many a valid collective bargaining demand blunted because of inexperience and lack of training of union representatives,' he declared.

### Trawler comfort

 THE NEW 800-TON BRITISH TRAWLER, CAPE TRAFALGAR, sets a high standard in crew comforts. The crew's quarters are panelled and the bunks, which have spring mattresses, are equipped with reading lamps and curtains. Boys have separate quarters and the skipper's cabin has an electric fire and central heating.

She is fitted with two sets of underwater television apparatus for spotting shoals. The second diesel-electric trawler to be based at Hull, the *Cape Trafalgar* cost in the region of £300,000.

if necessary the freight car number, train number, movement details and the code group indicating the station of departure and the station or section which received the car.

Local freight movement offices and individual stations are naturally only concerned with freight despatched from or destined for their own particular district. The cards are therefore mechanically sorted into various batches according to district of despatch or reception and the information transmitted by teleprinter three times a day to the various district offices who in turn advise the customer.

Although the US railroad companies can keep an eye on their freight traffic by means of this system, it is clear that this form of recording and advising freight movements to customers has certain limitations. Thus it would be pointless to 'run through the drill' in the case of freight cars loaded during the afternoon of any given day, travelling during the night, and unloaded at an early hour the following morning. Damaged freight cars tend to find their way into the workshops and disappear from the lists.

In the US, freight cars are not labelled and it is essential that goods are accompanied by the relevant waybills. If the two become separated, freight offices are faced with quite a problem 'marrying' them up again, and it is in this connection that the central teleprinter and recording service proves its value. Every day round six o'clock in the evening head office teleprinters are busy receiving details of freight cars without waybills and waybills without freight cars from a number of stations throughout the network. The details are then transferred into a perforated tape which in turn is run through a machine producing a punch card for each car and every waybill. These cards are then put through another machine which sorts them out in such fashion that the right waybill is associated with the right freight car. Stations are informed and the freight can proceed to its correct destination.

This short description of the freight movement control and customer advice service in extensive use on the US railroads raises the question as to its practicability on the European national networks. Obviously one prerequisite to a system of this kind is an exclusive teleprinter service such as the US railroads have at their command. It can well be

that these conditions do not or could not obtain in Europe. Nevertheless Europe is moving in the direction of a common market which will doubtless present the railway networks of the various countries with new tasks in connection with the transport of goods by rail, the satisfactory fulfilment of which may well call for the introduction of a European railways telecommunications system along lines similar to those employed by US railroads.

### **Election apathy in North Korea?**



ONLY 99.99 (recurring?) of the electorate 'voted' in the recent elections for the North Korean 'People's Congress'. This was admitted by the Communist Pyongyang Radio who also confessed that the 'approved' candidates' share of the poll was only 99.92 per cent.

This result must have been a sad disappointment to the authorities, for the voters have clearly failed to over-fulfil their norm. It might not be explicitly stated but surely everyone is aware that everything should be doubled under the Five Year Plan. A 200 per cent turn-out with, preferably, 201 per cent of the votes cast for the approved candidates would have made a better impression on those still sceptical about Communist 'democracy'.

### **Training for the Japanese merchant service**



THE TRAINING OF OFFICERS for the rapidly expanding Japanese merchant marine service is controlled by the Ministry of Transport through the Kokai Kunrensho - 'Institute for Sea Training'. This institute controls two marine academies with university status, five maritime technical schools and a number of training ships.

Prospective deck and engineer officers enter one of the two marine academies at the age of eighteen and spend four and a half years there. One month in each of the first three years is spent on board one of the training ships on short voyages. The first nine months of the fourth year are spent ashore. The last three months in that year and the six months of the fifth year are spent by deck officer trainees at sea on a training vessel, at first on short voyages and then finally, as a climax to their long training, on a three or four months' cruise to ports in the South Pacific or North America.

Engineer cadets take part in this long cruise, but spend the first part of their last nine months in a shipyard.

Both kinds of cadet take their examinations as second mate or second engineer in the middle of their fifth year, when they are twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

The alternative and less expensive method of acquiring a certificate involves entering a merchant marine technical school at the age of thirteen or fourteen. Here a somewhat simplified form of the marine academy course is given in conjunction with a general education. Boys from these schools also spend one month at sea every year so that the training ships carry mixed batches of academy (university) students and boys from the technical schools.

At the age of eighteen the technical school boys also make the long training voyage with the academy cadets. They do not take their examinations at the end of the voyage, however, but study ashore again and then serve as cadets in merchant ships for a period. Even so, they become officers a year or so earlier than those who have done their training at one of the academies.

Cadets for the Japanese merchant service tend to be drawn from middle-class families on Honshu, the main island of Japan. A surprisingly large number of them come from towns and villages inland, especially in the mountainous areas. There is a scholarship system and a number of State grants, but the majority of cadets pay for their own training.

### **Self-defence for seamen?**



Scandinavian seafarers' organizations have long been worried by the large number of cases in which seamen in certain ports - Santos, Chile, is one - have been attacked and robbed while on shore leave. The Education Committee of the Danish Seamen's Union has recently been discussing this problem and one conclusion they have come to is that a knowledge of the gentle art of ju-jitsu would go a long way towards helping the individual seafarer to protect himself against such attacks. Following up this conclusion, the Danish Seamen's Union is now not only providing correspondence courses in ju-jitsu for its members, but can also supply instructors to give practical demonstrations on board vessels visiting the Port of Copenhagen.

# International Transport Workers' Federation

President: H. JAHN

General Secretary: O. BECU

**7** industrial sections catering for

RAILWAYMEN  
ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS  
INLAND WATERWAY WORKERS  
PORT WORKERS  
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
- 174 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;

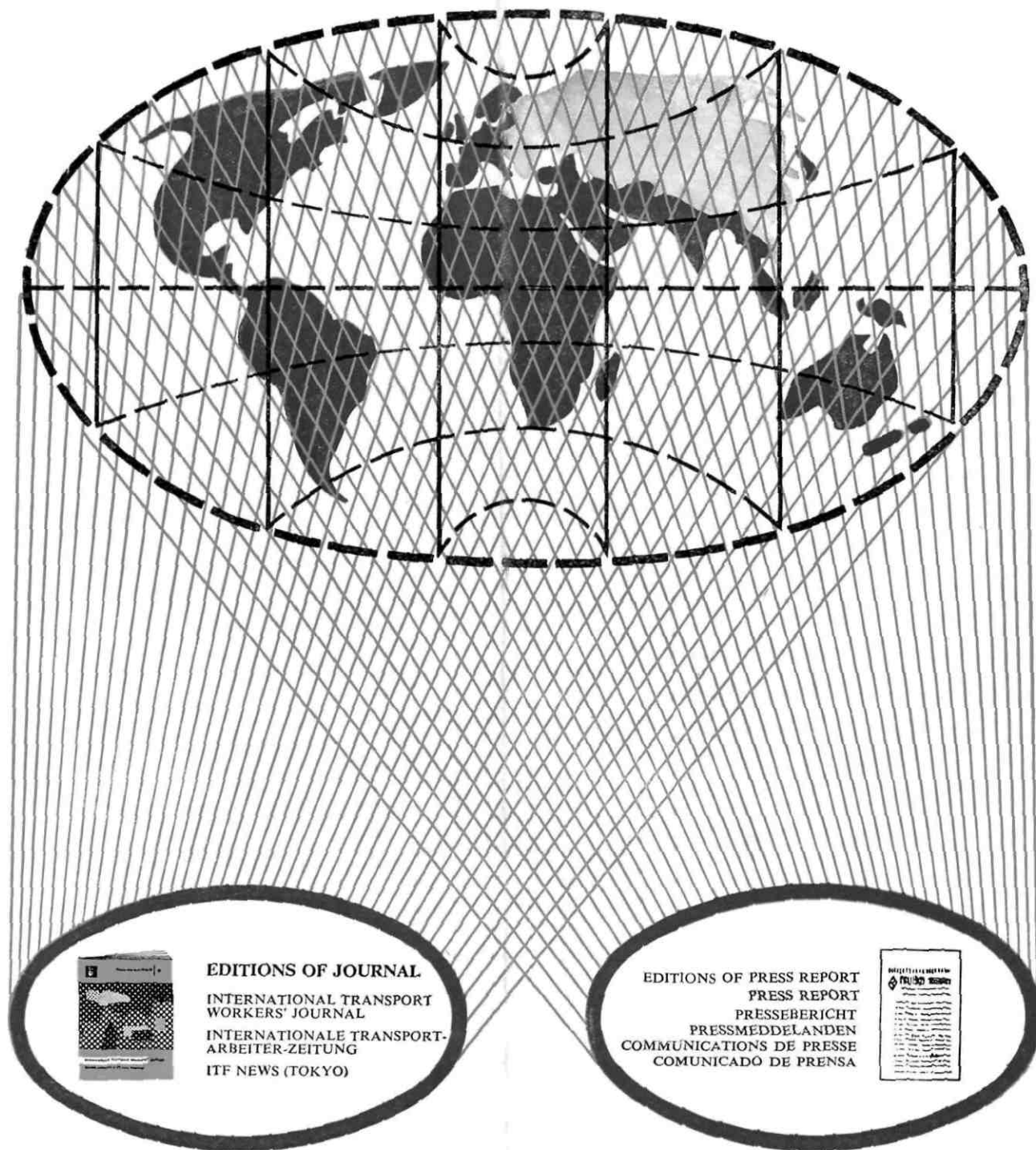
to defend and promote, on the international plane, the economic, social and occupational interests of all transport workers;

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

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

#### *Affiliated unions in*

Argentina • 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 • Indonesia  
Israel • Italy • Jamaica • Japan • Kenya  
Luxembourg • Malaya • Mauritius • Mexico  
The Netherlands • New Zealand • Nigeria  
Norway • Nyasaland • Pakistan  
Panama • Paraguay • Philippines  
Poland (Exile) • Republic of Ireland • Rhodesia  
St. Lucia • South Africa • South Korea  
Spain (Illegal Underground Movement)  
Sweden • Switzerland • Tanganyika  
Trinidad • Tunisia • Uganda • Uruguay  
United States of America



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