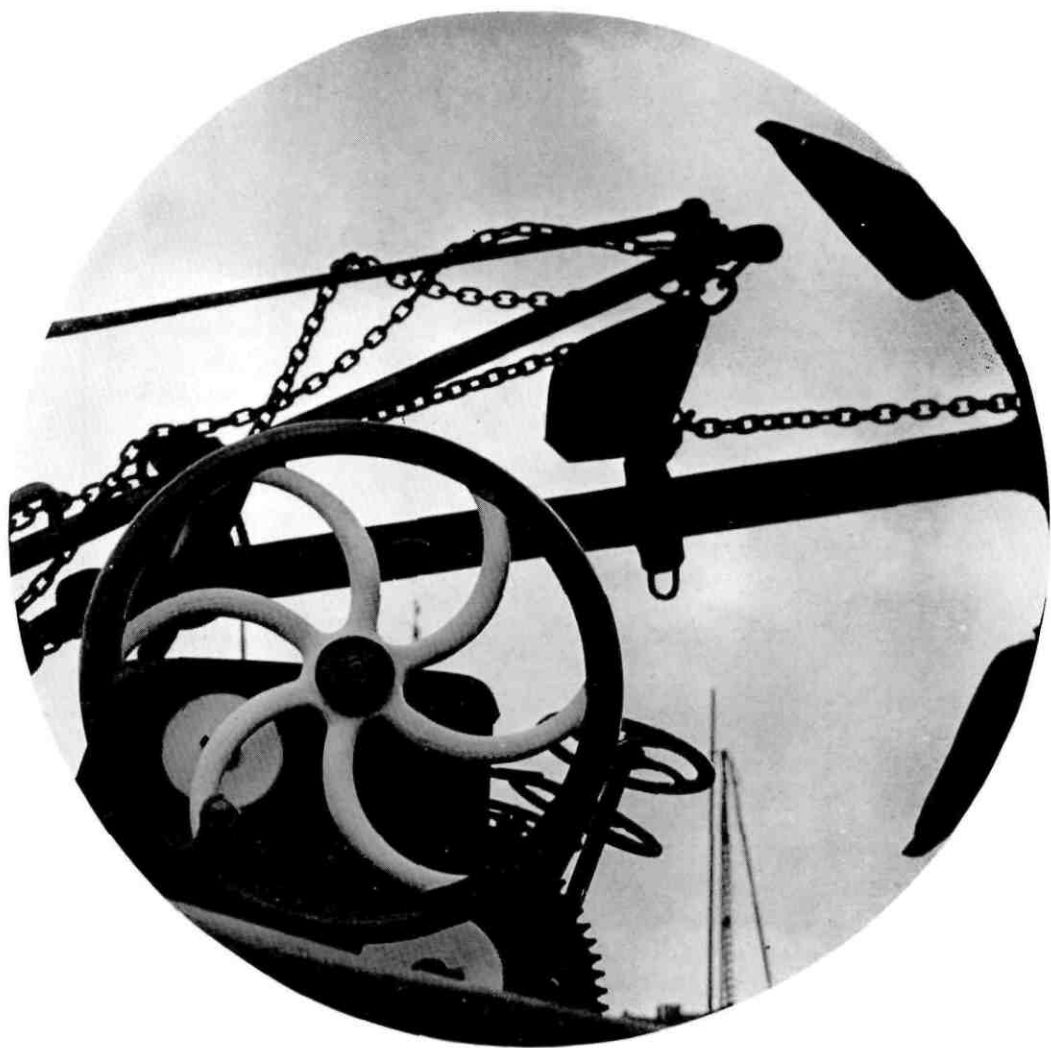


# International Transport Workers' Journal

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Volume XXV No. 1 January 1965

Operation on a near relative

Treatment or amputation?

The story of American labour

Room for movement

Kampala College *by* DON TAYLOR

## International Transport Workers' Journal

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*Forthcoming meetings:*

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| London    | 3 February 1965<br>Management Committee                         |
| Amsterdam | 9-11 February 1965<br>Road Transport Workers' Section Committee |
| London    | 15-16 February 1965<br>Automation Committee (Seafarers)         |
| London    | 17-18 February 1965<br>Asian Seamen's Committee                 |
| Frankfurt | 24-26 May 1965<br>Executive Board                               |

### Tomorrow—or Yesterday?

TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS and scientific productivity methods are racing ahead of our time. What yesterday was modern, will tomorrow be obsolete. To stand still means to go back. The technical revolution we are undergoing involves and is paralleled by radical re-orientation in economic structures and systems.

Trade unions know that tomorrow's social objectives—a shorter working week, higher standards of living and social security—cannot be won under yesterday's economic system. That is why they welcome modernization and rationalization. But not at any cost. The retention of a social past is incompatible with a technological future.

The march into the future is particularly noticeable in transport. Road construction and safety lag far behind vehicle growth. Even further behind come provisions for the status and safety of the professional driver. In aviation, we will soon be flying at supersonic speeds, although passengers would prefer an increase in comfort and safety.

For railways, the pressure to modernize and rationalize began with the emergence of road transport as a competitor. Long before the war, trains became faster, locomotives more powerful, and signaling systems safer. Both private and State railways thought in terms of rationalization and staff reductions. Then came the devastation of war. Technical renewal came to a halt and all available equipment was cannibalized for the war effort. In the first years of peace, the emphasis was on making railways fully operational as soon as possible. The future was sacrificed to immediate needs, utilizing the inheritance of the past. When further modernization became imperative, capital was not available—at least for State railways. Deficits — caused not by resistance to efficiency but by the absence of sound government transport policies and of funds for new investment, by extraneous obligations which governments placed on them or failed to relieve them of—became a regular feature. Today, the cry is no longer simply for modernization and rationalization. The Beeching axe is waved over railway networks. They must be hacked about and branch lines lopped off.

*(Continued on page 24)*

# Operation on a near relative

RAILWAYMEN ARE GENERALLY considered to be sober, good-humoured and patient people. Their attitude towards their own work is also a very sober one. They perform their own jobs conscientiously and efficiently and are perhaps more aware than most workers of the heavy responsibility for service and safety which they carry. They do not have the reputation of being militant for the sake of militancy; nor do they suffer from any Luddite complex in their attitude towards their job and changes in it. They are slow to take industrial action and when railwaymen do strike one can usually be certain that there is either something radically wrong with their own treatment or with the management of their industry.

And yet, despite this reputation, railwaymen in many countries are now *angry and disappointed and are calling for action*, both nationally and internationally, to defend their own position and that of their industry. They are beginning to think of themselves as the sacrificial lambs of the transport world; as the whipping boys for the faulty policies and economic failures of governments and managements. They feel that all too often when things go wrong in the economic sphere the cry is raised: 'Who can rid me of these troublesome railways', and that the justification for this cry is all too artificial to merit its constant repetition.

How has this situation come about and why do these tolerant, rather long-suffering men and women now feel that they need to do something practical to demonstrate their uneasiness? There is, of course, no short answer to this question nor has there been any one incident which has provoked them out of their traditional calm. Their anger has been slow-burning; the product of a long series of developments which can perhaps be said to have culminated in the issue of the Beeching Plan in Great Britain and its imitation in varying forms in countries as far apart as the German Federal Republic, Argentina, the United States, Venezuela and Canada.

To put the matter bluntly, railwaymen are angry at the blatantly unfair treatment meted out to their industry over a very lengthy period. The railways are expected to compete on equal terms with other forms of transport, but they are apparently also expected to do so under conditions which are anything but equal. So far as the majority of governments are concerned, the railways are not just a means of transport. They are in fact also extensively used as instruments of economic and social policy. As common carriers, they are expected to provide regular services around the clock, even in areas where there is little or no possibility — under existing conditions of uncontrolled competition — of such services paying their way, let alone making a profit. They are also expected to provide transport at uneconomic rates for certain sections of the community, for example workers and schoolchildren, but are not expected to ask for government subsidies which would enable them to give these socially necessary services without sustaining a financial loss. Such compensation has actually been recommended by the Conference of European Ministers of Transport — who can be presumed to know what they are talking about — but the implementation of their recommendation has been rejected by the Ministers of Finance.

In the field of goods transport they are harassed and hampered by unfair

competition and the lack of rational planning in the transport industry as a whole. Bulk, long-haul consignments are often carried by private road transport operators, who have no common carrier obligations and can therefore easily skim off the loads which are most profitable to them and leave the rest to be carried — often uneconomically because they are unsuitable — by the railways.

Nor is there any equality of competition between the two forms of transport in another extremely important respect, that of track costs. The railways have to provide and maintain their own tracks out of their own financial resources and then hope that they will be given the opportunity of achieving maximum utilization of them. The road haulage operator or the operator of transport for own account, on the other hand, has his track provided for him by the State or local authorities and the amount he theoretically pays towards the cost bears no relationship whatsoever to the use which he makes of the highway or to the wear and tear which his vehicles cause.

Finally, it should also not be forgotten that governments have further interests in the railways, this time as instruments of defence policy or of regional industrial development. Here again, obligations can be laid upon the railways which have nothing to do with the commercial considerations on which their operating results are judged.

To sum up, the position of the railways in all too many countries is this: They are expected to compete with rival forms of transport, but to accept restrictions and obligations which make this impossible. On the other hand, the compensation for accepting such obligations is either totally inadequate or non-existent. The same applies to the protection granted to the railways against the inroads of their more favoured competitors. If one adds to all these factors the general lack of planning in transport as a whole; the stop-go policies which have been followed; and the successive scrambling



and unscrambling of the transport egg, then the almost universal deficits from which railway undertakings now suffer appear not simply explicable, but inevitable.

Even here, however, the reaction of governments is completely illogical and irrelevant to the deficit situation. Not only do they continue to apply the doctrine of economic self-sufficiency to an industry which they themselves have prevented from living up to this doctrine. They go a stage further and in their panic to exorcize the evil genie of financial loss which they have summoned up, they even throw some of their own principles out of the window. As we have seen, they claim to have an interest in the railways' utilization to provide a necessary social service to the community, and indeed insist that the industry tailor its operations to this requirement. However, as soon as railway deficits become a political liability, their first thought is to find ways in which such service can be curtailed.

The unprofitable lines which the railways have conscientiously maintained, without proper compensation, as a social contribution are closed down and whole communities are deprived of their rail links with the rest of the country. Programmes of regional industrial development are also jeopardized by this irrational behaviour. In fact, as one of our British affiliates rightly pointed out in reference to Dr. Beeching's famous plan: 'The general public fail to realize that a near relative of theirs is lying on the operating table'.

The logical solutions to the railway problem — the development of an integrated transport system in which the individual sectors complement one another and are not considered solely as separate competing units, coupled with a recognition that community subsidies must inevitably follow from the assumption of uneconomic community obligations — are unfortunately all too often rejected. Instead, one hears the repeated parrot-cry of 'the need for rationalization' in the railway industry.

The politicians' ideas on rationaliza-

tion are, however, usually very far removed from those of the unions and also, it should be added, from those of many transport experts. Wild slashing at railway services is worse than useless. Piecemeal measures adopted in an atmosphere of panic produce only piecemeal solutions — and often no solutions at all. Rationalization and modernization, as the Social Charter drawn up by the ITF Railwaymen's Section has clearly pointed out, is vitally necessary if the railways are to be allowed to develop into efficient modern enterprises. However, it also underlines the fact that rationalization cannot be confined within the strait-jacket of purely economic and technical considerations. The railways have a social duty which is in fact a dual one. Firstly, as we have already seen, they have an obligation towards society as a whole, even though this is accepted in too haphazard a fashion. In addition, they also have a duty to consider the social consequences of rationalization and modernization on their own employees.

Here again, the ITF Social Charter on the Rationalization and Modernization of Railways makes the very cogent point that the human being must be regarded as the most important factor in any such planning. The ITF railwaymen's unions roundly reject the notion that rationalization and modernization measures have as their sole purpose an improvement in the profitability of railways. 'Such an attitude', they stress, 'must lead to acute industrial dispute because it demands ever greater efforts from the personnel without giving them in return a share of the results of increased productivity to which they are entitled as a result of their increased efforts'.

Railwaymen, in other words, will not accept rationalization measures uncritically. They put forward four main prerequisites for their wholehearted cooperation in this field.

Firstly, they ask that railways should be given their rightful place in a coordinated transport system and that their modernization should be considered within the framework of a

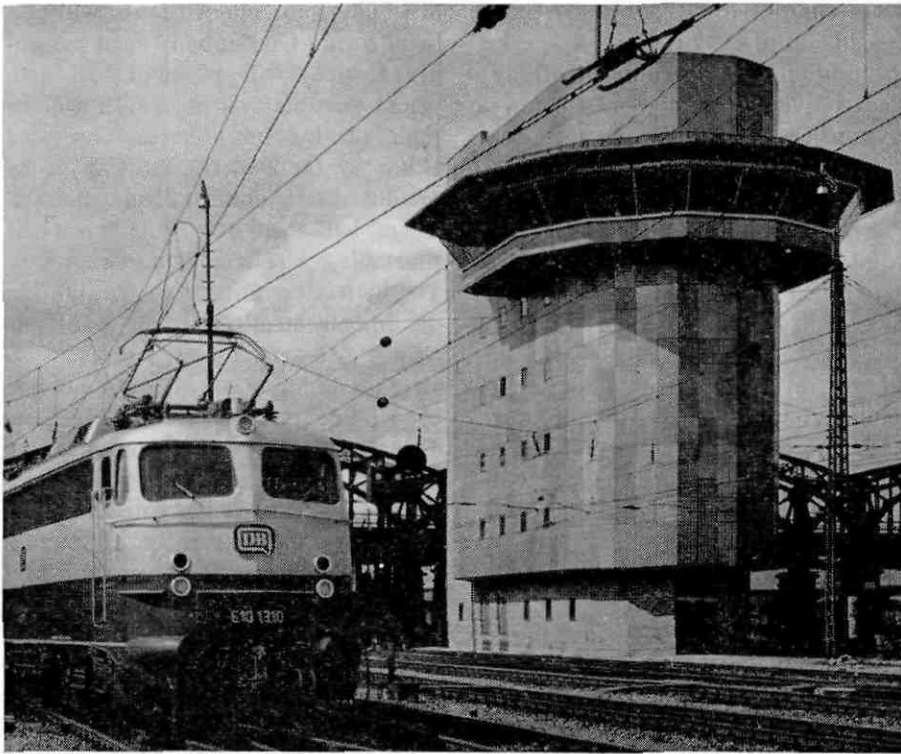
comprehensive investment programme which takes account of the total economic requirements and, when necessary, any existing need for increased employment possibilities. Secondly, that railwaymen's unions should be consulted, *in advance*, on the introduction of proposed measures of rationalization and should also be given the opportunity to modify these by suggesting ways in which adverse effects on railway employees could be obviated or lessened. Thirdly, when rationalization measures are actually put into practice, every possible effort should be made to avoid social hardship. Dismissals should *not* take place. Where reductions in staff are unavoidable, there are a number of alternative methods available: the non-replacement of those reaching normal retirement age; voluntary retirement; premature retirement on pension; changes in recruitment policy, and, as a last resort, transfers to other work or to a different area. In applying all these, nevertheless, the keynote should be that no railway worker should suffer loss of income or acquired rights, nor be expected to bear the burden of additional expense. Satisfactory compensation arrangements and retraining programmes are obviously a necessity here.

Finally, the worker should also benefit positively from the increased productivity which results from his participation in rationalization measures. Such benefits would include reductions in working hours without loss of income; improvements in social benefits; increases in real wages; improved vocational training and promotion possibilities; and better compensation for overtime and work done during inconvenient hours, for example, at weekends and on public holidays.

All these questions have been the subject of intensive discussion at meetings of the ITF Railwaymen's Section held during the last two years. In some countries, notably Scandinavia and Switzerland, railwaymen have not been adversely influenced by the

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## Treatment or Amputation?

THE GERMAN FEDERAL RAILWAY, by virtue of its high standards and efficiency, occupies a leading position amongst European railway systems. The burden of its modernization has cost around DM 22,000 million since 1948, and DM 17,000 million alone since 1957. In spite of a five hour reduction in the working week over recent years productivity has increased in freight traffic by 50 per cent, although in passenger traffic the rise has only been 8 per cent.

If the German Government had granted the railway the contributions and restitutions recommended by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport in 1957, and which in Europe are known as 'normalization', the German railway system would be one of the three most profitable in Europe. But the German Government, for internal budgetary reasons, decided to grant less than 40 per cent. of these amounts, which were intended to ease the burden of unprofitable branch lines, and of concessions and reduced fares for social purposes. In 1963 the Federal Railway's books showed a net deficit of DM 350 million. And yet this deficit is relatively modest, when one considers that local passenger traffic by itself showed a loss of over DM 900 million. In the final figures this loss was found to have been balanced out to the above amount by surpluses in freight and long distance passenger traffic. An even greater deficit is, however, expected for 1964. The losses for 1963 were not covered by the Federal Government. The Federal Railway is at present carrying them over month by month, together with the losses incurred during 1964. This led in July to the first financial crisis. In consequence the investments planned for last year had to be curtailed by about DM 80 million. A reduction of close on DM 900 million is expected in the 1965 investment programme.

In view of these alarming developments the German Minister of Transport, Dr. Seeborn, called on the Federal Railway Board on 15 July, 1964 'to evaluate the most recent analyses of costs for the individual branches of the Federal Railway's service and, on the basis of a comprehensive assessment, to indicate any measures of self-help which might suitably counteract the deficitary developments of the Federal Railway.' The Board completed its task with astonishing speed. Its report was ready by 1 September, but was at first treated as a highly confidential document. It was not until November 1964 that the report was cleared for publication. Its contents are to be found in some extracts, which we give below, from an article appearing in *Eisenbahnfachmann* (No. 52, November 1964), one of the Federal Railway's official organs. The article bears the title: 'The Railway of the Future'. Since it is impossible for us to know the future, and we can only form ideas of it, the report of the Federal Railway Board appears not as an assessment, but, significantly, as: 'Considerations of the Management'. These considerations are, in their theme and content, a fresh version of the British Beeching Report with German variations.

The following paragraphs from *Eisenbahnfachmann* are of special importance:

'The Management is convinced that the railways, if operated in accordance with the purposes for which they are technically suited, have a real economic future, even under conditions which will continue to change. But because the railway came into being as the first means of mechanically-propelled land transport it had to serve areas not situated on any of the main traffic routes and to meet all light transport needs. The motor vehicle has since become the conventional means of transport for these requirements and for any light transport over short distances. In this area of competition the railway is at a disadvantage, for its strength lies in its ability to transport large numbers of people and large

volumes of goods at any time and in any weather and at the lowest cost. The Federal Railway Management therefore considers it appropriate to give a broad outline of its views on an economically sound railway of the future, although developments can only be forecast with any certainty on the basis of a wide analysis covering all the means of transport and giving due consideration to national transport policy.

This picture of the railway of the future envisages a network containing only lines of high traffic density along with auxiliary and diversionary lines necessary for operational purposes. This presupposes the abandonment of lines still in use today which have a lower traffic density. On the other hand this network would have to be supplemented by entirely new lines to meet the demand for transport made by new communities and industries. Some unprofitable lines still in operation at present would be adapted for use as high density main lines on which fast traffic could be separated from slow. Passenger and profitable freight traffic could then be operated at faster speeds. The use of modern automatic remote control signalling along stretches entirely free from crossings would achieve further vitally-needed rationalization. The service the railway had to offer would be determined by the extent of its modernization. Its role would in the future be restricted essentially to long-distance passenger and wagon-freight traffic. In commuter areas a suburban-type railway service would remain or be introduced, provided its infrastructure costs or other internal costs not covered by receipts were taken over by the local government authorities. A similar situation would exist in freight traffic where a fast, low-cost parcels service could be operated between important centres.

As first steps towards this objective the Federal Railway Board has proposed a number of measures, which it believes could exert a positive influence on the productivity of the Federal system immediately. The first proposal is to modify the rendering of accounts procedure. The demand for transport

varies sharply from region to region. Freight transport is not a paying proposition from the Federal Railway's point of view, where it falls below a certain density of traffic. In such cases private undertakings would refuse to meet the transport need. But the Federal Railway has a legal obligation to meet the transport needs of remote and economically weak areas. The same is true for passenger transport, but the situation is even more unfavourable to the railway because of competition from the private motorcar. In the one field therefore the Federal Railway is able to operate economically, but in the other it is impossible to provide transport which pays for itself, although there remains a socially justified transport need to be met. The economic principle of supplying a demand therefore comes into play here. The Federal Railway operates as the sole large transport undertaking in both fields. On the one hand it is a profitable commercial enterprise, and on the other an "institution" run at a commercial loss for the purpose of meeting a general public need. But in the rendering of accounts costs, or expenditure, and returns in both fields of operation are shown together. This however no longer corresponds to real needs nor to the objectives of present day transport legislation and does not bring home to the public the real successes of the railway undertaking. For these reasons it has been proposed that accounts be rendered separately in future.

The railway network should not be maintained indefinitely in its present form, because the economic and political circumstances, as well as the transport background, in which it was created 100 years ago are totally different today. Developments in the meantime have made necessary an intensive reexamination of the whole network, main and branch lines, to determine its economic value to the Federal Railway undertaking and re-adapt it to changed circumstances. First hit will be small stations on branch lines, but small stations on main lines which cater for a light flow

of traffic to the major centres will also be affected. Uneconomic local passenger services will be abolished and, where possible and profitable, will be replaced by bus services operated either by the Federal Railway or by private owners under railway contract. There will then only remain on the timetable, apart from the fast expresses, a system of semi-fast local trains. In the Management's view the wholesale closure is warranted of passenger services on declining stretches of main and branch line totalling 7,000 to 8,000 km. These closures will also have an inevitable effect on express parcels services. The Board therefore considers mandatory the closure of all parcels forwarding centres no longer served by passenger trains, as also a reexamination with a view to closure of small express parcels centres which forward or receive up to 20 tons per year. This would mean the closure or reexamination of some 1,850 stations and altogether 5,535 forwarding centres whose daily turnover is not more than three consignments weighing together 0.04 tons at DM 5 (9s. or \$1.25) in freight charges. The same is intended for the ordinary parcels traffic which employs large numbers of staff. A programme of gradual rationalization in this traffic, which has already had some success, has been intensified and the number of parcels forwarding centres still operating is to be further reduced. Thus it has been judged expedient that all parcels centres forwarding and receiving a daily average of less than four tons should be abandoned. This affects some 2,050 centres bringing in 10 per cent of the total yearly revenue of the 3,613 still in operation. But the Board also feels that the closure of many small wagon-freight centres on main and branch lines is also necessary. Their existence is no longer justified by the cost of keeping them in operation. Centres forwarding or receiving up to two wagon loads per average working day would serve here as a rough guide, to be reviewed in individual cases. Some 2,800 to 3,000 freight stations (52 to 55 per cent. of the total) fall into this category. Of these about 1,600

*German railwaymen are hardly to blame for their industry's poor financial situation.*

alone are situated on branch lines, and moreover 1,000 of them (about 70 per cent) handle no more than one wagon load per average working day. The majority of the small freight stations, then, are situated on branch lines, and the withdrawal of passenger services will in any case involve the complete abandonment of some 6,000 to 7,000 km of branch line. Naturally before a definite decision is reached on which lines, stations and centres are to be closed the Management considers it essential that certain individual cases should be studied and that local opinion should be sounded.

Since this policy, dictated by economic necessity and legal mandate, of limiting transport services offered to the community is bound to cut into the economic, regional and social structure of the Federal Republic, it constitutes a political issue of great importance. The Management of the Federal Railway system therefore stresses that it will only be possible to translate its considerations into action if the Federal Government is prepared to approve and be politically responsible for such action.

In the face of difficulties presented by the problems which have to be solved, the Board has also made an alternative proposal, according to which those Federal Railway services which further the interests of the State could continue to be operated, but on the basis of a separate rendering of accounts. They would be operated on behalf of and at the expense of the State. The Board gives an assurance that it and the railwaymen would do all in their power to operate this side of the Railway's services under appropriate legislation safely, reliably and at the lowest possible cost.

The long-term objective is to transform the Federal Railway system into a modern transport service, working in proper relation to its great technical and economic advantages. Railwaymen would thus be freed from the intolerable reproach that their work is



unproductive and that they are part of a deficitary state undertaking. The railwaymen, the Board stresses, have always shown their willingness to perform responsible service and their readiness to accept progress and innovation. Without this reasonable attitude the great successes of rationalization and modernization, especially where they affected railway personnel, could not have been achieved, much less the point of peak productivity reached in the winter of 1962-63. The Federal Railway Board regards it as imperative, and of the utmost political expediency, that such good will on the

railwaymen's part should be maintained — for the sake of the railway and of the State — and that their services in future should be directed towards a task which will bring before the public the successful side of railway operation.

The "Considerations of the Board of Management on Ways of Improving the German Federal Railway's Economic Position" are now being studied by the Government. Its decisions will determine the form in which Germany's "railway of the future" will appear.

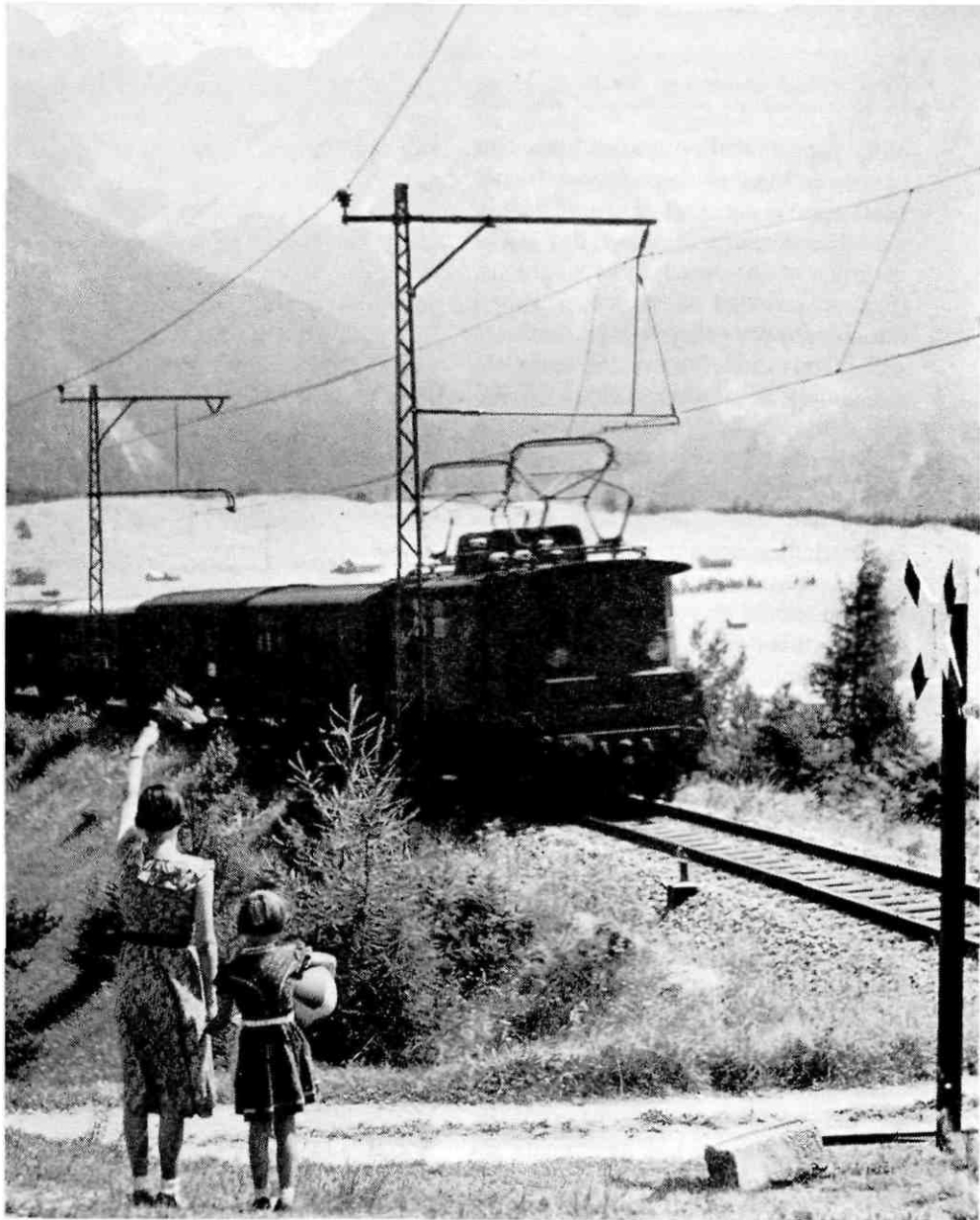
This, then, is what the *Eisenbahn-*



*The more remote districts would be seriously hit by the Rail Board's closure proposals.*

fachmann had to say. We did not have long to wait for the reaction of the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) to the 'Considerations of the Railway Board'. In a resolution adopted on 10 November, 1964, the General Council of the GdED declared that the Board's proposals were not a suitable means of altering the railway's financial position effectively and decisively. The drastic closure of passenger and freight stations and the abandonment of a quarter of the railway network would set at a severe disadvantage those remote areas which rely entirely on the railway for their transport. The resolution further stresses that the Federal Railway should not, as a public undertaking, be obliged to operate its services at a profit in the commercial sense. Under such conditions it would not be in a position to fulfil satisfactorily its obligations to the community. The Union's General Council proceeds to some concrete proposals aimed at immediately improving the Federal Railway's financial position. It demands a restitution by the Government of all retirement benefits paid by the Railway in excess of 30 per cent. of salary paid to permanent staff; and an increase in the Railway's working capital according to the requirements of its investment programme, in order to prevent its debt of over DM 12,000 million from rising to unredeemable proportions, provided at moderate interest rates. It further demands that the Federal Government take upon itself the unredeemed losses incurred by passenger services. Finally, the rendering of accounts procedure should be separated for passenger and goods traffic, so as to demonstrate that the Federal Railway can maintain itself in a genuinely competitive position, and at the same time to establish an exact basis on which losses on passenger services can be made good.

The 'Considerations' of the Federal Railway Board result from a development which is not peculiar to Germany. This development has been brought to a head there by measures which the



Government has adopted in its financial and economic policy. Apart from these external factors the German Railway's financial picture is quite comparable with that of most European State railway undertakings. In accordance with the prevailing profit-based philosophy these undertakings are directed to conduct their operations on a commercial, private-enterprise footing and are being forced to compete with other transport carriers on a distorted and unfair basis. That is only one aspect of the matter. It is stipulated that a state undertaking must, in the Western economic system, operate competitively in the same way as a private concern. Practical economic, social and regional

requirements are not taken into account. But Governments and politicians who seek re-election cannot afford to ignore these things. The State railways are therefore issued with a list of obligations and instructed to meet these requirements. Any private concern would reject such exacting demands out of hand, unless the restitution of losses arising from such obligations were guaranteed by the Government down to the last penny, plus a reasonable margin of profit. State railway undertakings, such as the German Federal system, also require compensation. And the railwaymen all

*(Continued on page 24)*



# Aviation problems discussed in Stuttgart



*View of a section of the ITF Civil Aviation Conference in Stuttgart showing Greek and Belgian delegates in the front row.*



*C. A. da Silva from Singapore (centre) seen with German delegates at the dinner given by the host union during the ITF Conference.*



*J. K. Post, Section Chairman, in discussion with P. de Vries, General Secretary, and G. Kugoth of the OeTV Civil Aviation Section.*

A CONFERENCE of the ITF's Civil Aviation Section was held in Stuttgart from 21 to 23 October, 1964, attended by forty-eight delegates from fourteen countries representing both ground and flight staff. The host organization was the German Union of Transport and Public Service Workers (OeTV), in whose headquarters the Conference was held, under the chairmanship of J. K. Post of the Netherlands Transport Workers' Union. The delegates' overriding concern to secure maximum safety of operation was reflected in decisions to press for the licensing of all



*Heinz Kluncker, new President of the OeTV, enjoying a drink with D. S. Tennant, Great Britain, and J. Horst, United States.*

flight operations officers and for the recognition of the vital part played in the civil aviation industry by ground maintenance engineers. The plan to create Air Union by the six European Common Market countries was also discussed in the light of its probable effects on the workers in the countries involved, and the Conference also considered the future introduction of supersonic aircraft. On both these subjects the participants stressed the need for governments and airlines to afford full rights of consultation and negotiation to their employees' representatives.

# The story of American labour\*

\*ORGANIZED LABOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY, by PHILIP TAFT, published by Harper and Row at £4 14s.

THE FOREIGN TRADE UNIONIST, whose knowledge of his American counterpart's work is probably confined largely to the context of international activities and may be coloured by stories of violence and corruption inflated beyond their true proportions by a sensation-hungry press, may have little idea of the overall pattern of domestic trade unionism in the United States and how it has come to be built up over the years. It may be too readily assumed that the development of the American labour movement corresponds roughly to the traditional pattern of European movements. To those who wish to know more, *Organized Labor in American History* gives a picture of the historical development of America's trade unions, linking the general philosophy which has determined their present-day character to the social, economic and political circumstances of the years during which they formed and grew strong, and to the personalities of their outstanding leaders.

Philip Taft's achievement is a remarkable one. To sustain interest and clarity through 709 pages; to select the significant episodes and turning points and place them firmly in their historical context; to balance general analysis against illustrative detail; and to create of the whole a clear and eminently readable work; this required immense discipline and sympathy with the subject. The author is a noted expert on the Labour movement and Professor of Economics at Brown University. He has also written *The History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932* (with SELIG PERLMAN), *The Structure and Government of Labor Unions*, *The AF of L in the Time of Gompers* and *The AF of L from the Death of Gompers to the Merger*. This book, with its comprehensive index, clear chapter titles and subheadings (and the excellent typographical design by Sidney Feinberg also makes an important contribution) is a fine work of reference.

In order to set the right atmosphere for an account of the American Labour

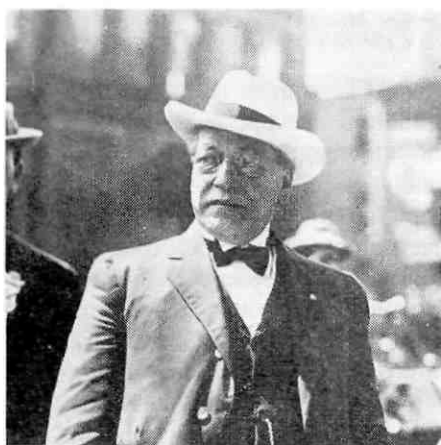
movement, it is perhaps best to quote from the end of the book. In his closing observations, Philip Taft writes: '[Organized labor's] lack of interest in abstract and long-range reform programs, its pragmatism, its limited political interests reflect the practical outlook of the American community . . . the majority of unions in the United States still concentrate most of their activities upon protecting the members in the place of employment . . . Unions have continued to follow the policy of 'more and more' in matters of wages, and like the rest of the community labor believes that continual improvement is the right and destiny of all Americans . . . [The labor movement's] major interest remains improvement in the conditions of employment within the established institutional framework . . . It is not without faults, but it has represented in the past as it does today the only agency in this society which can prevent the growth of absolutism in industry which inevitably spreads when power is un-

restrained.'

Effective organization of workers began in the printing, shoemaking and building trades in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The aims of these early craftsmen's associations were to fix wages and hours at levels which members considered reasonable. They presented these standards to the masters, and did not shrink from striking when necessary. The associations were also moderately successful in controlling the supply of labour by the closed shop. However, it was difficult in those early days to maintain the stability of the organizations; there was little real and consistent appreciation of the value of combination, and membership tended to fall off rapidly after a first flush of enthusiasm and especially after a successful claim. The leaders were prosecuted on charges of conspiracy for attempting to fix wages.

Later organizations of workers from the 1830's onwards professed the same purposes, but added to their activities the function of employment agencies, maintaining lists of members and insisting that vacancies within their area of influence should be filled from the list in strict rotation. Attempts were also made to extend the sphere of influence by agreeing on the interchangeability of union cards between associations of the same trade in different towns. By this time organizers were beginning to see the advantages of joint action by the different trades; by the 1850's it had become possible to organize individual trades on a national basis, and although general organizations of all the trades were for the most part short-lived, unions did succeed in combining for specific campaigns, such as that for the ten-hour and later eight-hour day.

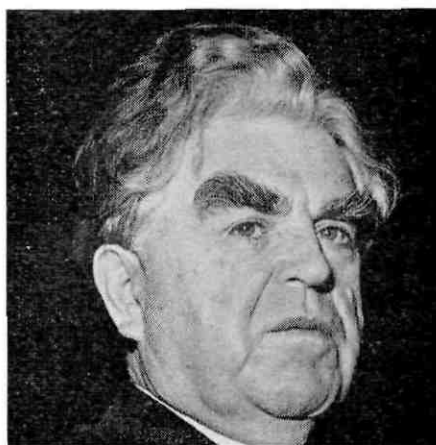
It was not until 1869, however, that a really national organization of working men was established. The Knights of Labor, created by individual craftsmen for the protection and improvement of their conditions of employment, was initially a secret association. Its progress was slow in the early years and money for the



resistance fund was slow in coming in since the benefits of membership were not immediately apparent. Many of those who joined the Knights of Labor were already members of unions of their own trades, and this dual membership, together with the conflict of jurisdiction which accompanied it, was to prove a serious and in the end fatal problem for the organization.

A rapid expansion of membership after 1880 led working men to expect great things of the Knights of Labor, but the organization aroused the resentment of the trade unions which felt that the Knights were usurping their functions. In the end the awkward structure of the Knights of Labor proved inadequate to handle the large conflicts of the day and its influence declined after 1886 when it failed to support the May strike for the eight-hour day in Chicago's stockyards. In that same year the craft associations combined to form the American Federation of Labor under the Presidency of Samuel Gompers. The cardinal principle of the Federation, which has remained intact right up until the present day, was the total autonomy of affiliated unions. Whilst this restricted the power of the central organization, the federal structure proved more workable and more lasting than the diffuse character of the Knights.

The early years of trade union development were marked by sporadic outbreaks of violence, beginning with the lawless assaults and murders organized by the Molly Maguires—a secret society of Irish immigrants operating mainly in the anthracite mining areas



during the 1860's and 1870's. Violence of a different sort was provoked by the reactions of employers and authorities against strikers in many industries. It was a common thing for the National Guards, thugs appointed as deputies, and the ill-famed Pinkertons (the Pinkerton Detective Agency had an unsavoury reputation as a weapon of anti-union interests) to be brought in to break strikes, nor were they in the least scrupulous in their methods. Anti-labour feeling was aggravated by the fear and hatred inspired by immigrant revolutionaries and anarchists who attached themselves to the workers' movement and who provided the excuse for violent repression of legitimate labour protest movements by the authorities.

The economic crisis of the 1890's and the serious unemployment which accompanied it saw a considerable decline in trade union membership and influence. There was a revival at the turn of the century, however, and impressive gains were achieved. The friendlier climate of public opinion towards the demands of labour was reflected in legislation, and between 1897 and 1904 a gain in trade union membership of 52 per cent was registered. (The transport, mining, metal and building industries were the strongest features of trade unionism right up to the 1930's.) After 1904 membership was more or less static, but it began to rise again after 1910 and maintained a continuous upward course until 1920. The labour legislation around the turn of the century provided for the regulation in some degree of

*Left, Samuel Gompers, founder of the American Federation of Labor in the year 1886.*

*Right, John L. Lewis, former President of the United Mine Workers' Union of America.*

labour-management relations, and 1900 saw the beginning of organization by employers.

Although mediation and arbitration of labour disputes was now provided for, the general mood of trade union activity tended more towards strikes and militancy than towards conciliation, and they quickly became disenchanted with arbitration as a method for reaching settlement. In the unions' view, arbitrators were usually ignorant of conditions in the industries they were dealing with, and in any case were more often than not inclined to favour the employers' side. On the other hand, militancy brought results.

The American Federation of Labor found itself having to mediate in jurisdictional disputes between unions. Following its policy of admitting to membership only the one union for each craft, it encouraged mergers and cooperation between unions operating in the same field. The early days of the century saw the beginnings of an issue which was later to cause the grave split within the American labour movement — pressure for the acceptance of industrial unionism. The AFL established its first trade departments — uniting unions organizing different categories within the same trade — in 1907. Organizations hostile to the philosophy of the AFL made their existence felt, particularly those which organized the unskilled and migrant workers and which were revolutionary in outlook. Among these rivals to the craft traditionalists of the AFL were the socialists, and the Industrial Workers of the World who sought the creation of 'One Big Union' of all workingmen.

Despite these divisions, the organizing momentum was maintained up to the First World War. The labour movement was generally anti-militarist but as American involvement in the First World War became inevitable the AFL agreed to cooperate with the





*George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO since the two organizations merged in 1955.*

government to ensure the effectiveness of essential industry. Wartime dispute regulations were drawn up in the docks, shipbuilding, merchant navy, railroad and mining industries. The war had a favourable effect on labour's influence, since trade union membership increased and collaboration with the government earned the movement a respect from the authorities which it had hitherto lacked.

The mainstream of trade unionism as represented by the AFL unions had generally steered clear of direct involvement in politics, although pressure in this direction had on occasion aroused heated argument. A number of politically-oriented organizations of working men had been formed with platforms including demands for legislation on labour and social questions. The AFL refrained from commitment to any one party, although its leaders, including Gompers, stood for election to Congress and attended party Conventions to seek the inclusion of labour's demands in their programmes.

After the First World War the Farmer-Labor party gained in influence but its impression on the ranks of organized labour was limited. Its career culminated in 1924 when it ran La Follette for President — the AFL also supported his candidacy — and he polled five million votes, and won the state of Wisconsin. America's participation in the First World War had its

effect on the strength of radical elements such as the socialists and the IWW, and this development was helped on its way by the emergence after the War of Communism in America. The Communists set up the Trade Union Educational League in 1922 with the aim of influencing individual trade union members, but made little immediate impression on the labour movement.

During the economic depression of the 'twenties, trade unions lost ground considerably. Wages were cut, there were armies of unemployed, trade union membership inevitably declined, and the organizations got into financial difficulties. There was little scope for the traditional task of improving conditions and it was as much as they could do to hold their own against the effects of crisis, particularly under governments which were far from sympathetic to their aims. However, the Roosevelt administrations provided a more congenial framework for the labour movement, with legislation guaranteeing the right to organize and giving the trade unions a stronger position in the labour-management relationship.

The recovery programme created millions of new jobs and large numbers of hitherto unemployed or unorganized workers began to seek trade union membership, particularly in the expanding mass-production industries.

The AFL, with its craft structure, was initially somewhat at a loss to know how to handle these numbers, but finally decided to enrol them in 'Federal Labor Unions' for distribution later among the appropriate existing unions. The Federal Labor Unions aroused some charges of poaching among the craft organizations, who wanted workers whom they regarded as belonging to their own jurisdiction to be transferred to them immediately, and only the unskilled and semi-skilled to remain in the Federal Labor Unions. Naturally enough, pressure built up on the other side too, to persuade the AFL to grant charters of affiliation to unions of the mass production industries, but the interests of the craft unions prevailed, and in 1935 the AFL Convention resolved that mass production workers were not to be permitted to form industrial organization within the Federation.

Almost immediately after this Convention the Committee for Industrial Organizations was formed — participants included the Mine Workers, the Typographical Workers, Clothing Workers, Ladies Garment Workers, Textile Workers, Oil Workers, and Hatters — to promote the growth and influence of industrial organizations. The AFL reacted strongly against the move, but the Committee refused to disband and John L. Lewis, leader of the mine workers, resigned his seat on the AFL board. The AFL demanded that those of its affiliates which had participated in the Committee should withdraw from the latter by September 1936. In the event none of them did so; they were therefore suspended from the AFL, and all were subsequently expelled. From this point on the AFL laid continual charges against the CIO unions of poaching members.

The Committee for Industrial Organizations changed its name to the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1938. As with the AFL, its constitution guaranteed complete autonomy of action to affiliates. Great organizing campaigns initiated by the CIO brought

*Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers and former head of the CIO.*

many members into the movement and the AFL also benefited from the enthusiasm for labour organization. The advent of the Second World War again favoured labour, as the First had done. Employment soared, especially in the defence industries, and conditions were good. Trade union leaders were brought in as government advisers on labour relations and their influence in the economic life of the country increased.

After the war, however, it was a different story. Labour was on the defensive against the unemployment and wage cuts which it feared would follow. 1945 and 1946 saw strike waves of unprecedented proportions. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 sought to limit the serious effect on the country of strikes in key industries by forbidding jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts (sympathy strikes by workers not directly involved in a dispute), by permitting damage suits against either party for violating a contract, and by introducing a 'cooling-off' period which could be imposed when a particularly grave stoppage was threatened to give the parties time for further negotiations. The Act was severely criticised by all sections of organized labour, and the last provision particularly has had the unfortunate effect of encouraging dilatory tactics on the part of employers and tying union officials up in long-winded negotiations.

Sporadic attempts were made on both sides after the split to reunite the AFL and the CIO, but none was pursued very seriously until about ten years after the end of the Second World War. A no-raiding agreement between the two federations came into effect in 1954 and was the breakthrough which made possible the merger one year later. A joint Unity Committee was set up, and the governing bodies later drew up a new constitution and merger agreement which was presented to parallel Conventions of the AFL and the CIO in December 1955; the inaugural Convention of the AFL-CIO was held immediately afterwards. Under



the merger agreement, all previous affiliates of both organizations became members of the new body, with full autonomy and covering the same jurisdictions as they had had previously. Unions competing for membership in the same fields were to be encouraged to amalgamate, whilst both craft and industrial unions were recognized as necessary forms of organization. The right of all workers to belong to affiliated unions irrespective of race, creed, colour or national origin was affirmed; and unions were to be protected from corrupt influences and communist infiltration. Industrial union departments were to be set up, and the AFL was to provide the President and Secretary-Treasurer initially.

The direct political involvement of the American labour movement is today no greater than it has ever been. Unions individually and through the AFL-CIO try to press for legislations favourable to labour; a good deal of publicity is given in the trade union press to the voting records on social matters of politicians seeking reelection; individual candidates — but not parties — get union endorsement; and the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (the offspring of the AFL Labor's League for Political Education and the CIO Political Action Committee) makes its contribution by concentrating largely on 'Register and Vote' campaigns.

Communism gained a foothold in a number of unions before the War, but several of the communist leaders became disenchanted with the party and others were ousted by anti-communists; today there are still a number of quite important unions which are communist-dominated but they are ostracized by the mainstream of American labour.

Among the closing chapters of his book Philip Taft has a particularly interesting section on the position of Negroes in the American labour movement. A number of AFL unions barred Negroes from membership. Whilst the AFL itself deplored this and even before the turn of the century Gompers was urging them to remove colour-bar clauses from the constitutions, the unions could always shelter behind the cloak of their individual autonomy and attempts to obtain their expulsion from the AFL regularly failed to pass the Convention. No CIO union, on the other hand, had any formal discrimination or segregation, and the CIO was always active in education and propaganda against racialism. Since the merger the AFL-CIO has expressly condemned discrimination and has a Standing Committee on Civil Rights. Among the most stubborn offenders in the past were some of the railroad brotherhoods, but their leaders

*(Continued on page 24)*

# Pension scheme for British seamen

DURING THEIR 1964 wage negotiations Britain's seamen noted an important breakthrough in the development of their working conditions. The National Union of Seamen negotiators at last succeeded in getting the shipowners to operate a pension scheme which will cover all ratings. Some individual companies already operate schemes for their own seamen, but the Union has been working for years towards a national scheme which would benefit all seamen equally. The goal has now been achieved. The shipowners agreed early last year to set up a fund for the purpose. The scheme will be non-contributory—in other words the cost will be borne by the owners—and will be operational this year. Arrangements will be made to integrate existing facilities with the new scheme.

Eventually a seaman will be able to retire on a weekly pension at the age of sixty. If he retires before that age he will receive a lump-sum gratuity. If he dies before retirement his dependants will receive a death benefit.

The pension will only be payable on retirement at age sixty or over and after a minimum of 25 years' pensionable service, in other words 25 years of service performed at any time between the date the scheme comes into effect and the date the seaman reaches the age of sixty. In this case the pension will be £2 per week. After 40 years' pensionable service the benefit becomes £3 10s. per week.

Any man entitled to a pension at sixty however could continue to serve at sea, and his pension would increase year by year till he reached the age of 65. On retirement at 63 after 25 years' pensionable service the weekly payment would be £2 8s. (after 40 years, £4 4s.). At 65 it would become £2 16s. (£4 18s. after 40 years). The pension would rise no further beyond the age of 65, but any rating who wished to continue at sea would still get his pension. One of the aims behind the scheme, however, is to remove the need to carry on working after retirement age.

The gratuity payment has been incorporated into the scheme so that those who have given long service, but leave

the sea before they reach retirement age, may also benefit. Any rating who gives up his career at sea before the age of 60 will be entitled to a lump sum payment in lieu of pension provided he has served for at least twenty years. It is hoped that these gratuities will range between £200 and £300. Death benefits ranging between £50 and £350, according to length of service will be paid in respect of any rating if death occurs while he is still serving.

Full pensions and gratuities cannot be paid immediately, as funds for a scheme of this nature have to be built up over a number of years. Many seamen will retire before it becomes possible to pay out full benefits. Nevertheless some provisions have been worked out for them too. Reduced pensions will be payable to seamen on retirement at age 60 having served the necessary 25 years during any period since April 1947. Those who reach retirement age before they have been able to serve the necessary number of years since April 1947 will be eligible for a special gratuity payment of not less than £50.

The year 1965 opens a new era for British seamen. The NUS has fought for many years to win for its members the same degree of security enjoyed by workers on land. The new pension scheme is a leap in the right direction.

THE CARRIAGE OF DANGEROUS goods by transport systems which must cross national boundaries has been the subject of much study, both at national and international level. In 1956, under the auspices of the United Nations Organization, a Committee of Experts compiled a comprehensive list of dangerous goods and had established a system of classification and labelling which was published as a recommendation for future international agreement in the various fields of international transport.

International air traffic is regulated by the International Air Transport Association, the commercial carriers' organization. In Europe, there are in force a number of inter-governmental conventions which regulate international traffic by road, rail and inland waterways. In other parts of the world, where common frontiers create problems in the carriage of dangerous goods, local agreements between states have had to be brought into effect in order to facilitate commerce.

Agreement, in a comprehensive and detailed form such as has been achieved for the other modes of international transport, will soon have been reached for the carriage of dangerous goods by sea. In 1961, following the recommendation of the International Conference on the Safety of Life at Sea in 1960, the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization set up a working group charged with the task of drawing up a code of practice which may be adopted for the international carriage of dangerous goods by sea.

The work of the IMCO group is now coming to fruition in the form of a draft International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, which will eventually comprehend all those substances likely to be found as cargo aboard ship.

The basic system of classification and labelling which was recommended by the UN in 1956 is being used in the IMCO Code. It is a major prerequisite that any international system of classification and labelling should be common to, or at the very least compatible with shipping and the modes of land transport which are national in



# Labelling dangerous goods

character.

To achieve this, it will, under the 1960 Safety Convention, be the duty of countries to which that Convention will apply to separate their national maritime regulations for classification and labelling of dangerous goods from any nationally integrated transport regulations. To do this, a period of twelve months after the Convention comes into force is allowed to any country to which the Convention will apply.

It will follow that in some respects the regulations for international traffic by road, rail, inland waterways and air will need to be modified in conformity with unified international practice. The UN has supported the proposal which its Committee of Experts drew up in 1956, and since then national governments and international bodies having responsibilities in the field of transport have frequently met to consider and adopt measures which would implement the UN plan.

IMCO comments: 'Only when a dangerous substance is named, classified, labelled and packaged in a manner which will enable it to be sent from producer to consumer via road, rail, air, inland waterways and sea without special dispensations having to be sought at trans-shipment points, only then can we afford to feel satisfied. The time now seems ripe for concerted action which would have resulting benefits to all nations.' Alongside is shown a facsimile of each label in the UN labelling scheme, which is to be incorporated in the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code. The warning text is optional in any of IMCO's four official languages (English, French, Spanish and Russian).



# Room for movement

THE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS of a big city in any industrialized country are no small headache. Those with which Stockholm has to cope are of particular concern to the men who earn their living at the wheel, for they are finding themselves literally crowded off the roads by a growing army of private motorists. So that he does not lose the advantage of his private means of transport, the car-owner must be able to park it at or near his destination. Very often he is the sole occupant of the vehicle.

Stockholm's bus, lorry and taxi drivers are unanimous in condemning the unfair advantage which these private road users have over them. The freedom which they enjoy is out of proportion to the transport needs which the private vehicles supply. Lorry drivers find it impossible to stop

for loading and unloading without blocking the carriageway, and bus and taxi drivers likewise are forced to obstruct the free flow of traffic while they set down or take on passengers. As if this were not enough they are often penalized by the police for infringing traffic regulations. Each year 5,000 of these drivers pay parking fines.

The tide of protest and indignation against this sort of victimization is mounting. Stockholm's drivers are prepared to tolerate it no longer.

The labour journalist, Magnus Johansson, writing in the Danish Transport and General Workers' Journal, has reported on a protest meeting, organized by these drivers to give their grievances a public airing.

At Arlanda Airport, on his way back to Denmark, Johansson was able to see for himself how private motoring was becoming a millstone round the community's neck. The taxi which had brought him the 24 mile journey from Stockholm could find no place to park, and so the usual procedure of contravening traffic regulations had to be followed while our writer got out and paid his fare. The airport was well provided with parking space, but none of it was free at the time — for the simple reason that it was Sunday afternoon: Arlanda is linked with Stockholm by motorway and is an ideal spot for a family outing. The airport and its buildings were thronged with car-owning families enjoying the sights. In the departure hall there was nowhere for travellers to sit with relatives and friends and talk for a last few minutes. All seats were taken — and very few of their incumbents were actually travelling. It seemed that the costly business of planning and building an airport should take into account additional facilities to satisfy the needs of those who come for the sole purpose of watching other people travel.

The same principle seems to apply in the city itself. In the name of freedom facilities have to be laid on for traffic which meets no real transport need. The motor car has become for many a mere status symbol — an essential part of the well dressed man's

outfit.

In Stockholm, where the traffic on the road is rapidly destroying what remains of the city's charm, private motoring has made conditions so bad that there is barely room left for working drivers to carry on their trade. Having for so long contained their exasperation at being slowly crowded off the streets by the vast number of private cars flowing into the city every day, the drivers felt that the matter be brought to a head. Last autumn at a protest meeting, the drivers took up the cudgels against the authorities and the private motorists. Stockholm's drivers did not intend to continue spending honestly earned money because parking was monopolized by motorists. They rejected the idea that the private motorist should be able to leave his car wherever it suited him, at the expense of essential public transport and delivery services.

The protest meeting demanded more stringent measures against non-essential motoring. A ban on waiting was proposed for all the city's central areas, which at the same time would permit stops for loading and unloading, or taking on and setting down passengers.

This proposal was opposed by the private motorists and city councillors. They tried to minimize the problem. The city was not as bad as all that to drive in — and many other occupational groups had hazards and difficulties peculiar to their work, but they did not call meetings to protest about them.

A lorry driver pointed out, by way of example, that possibly hospital staffs worked under serious difficulties, but at least they were not followed around by policemen who took their names if a visitor could not get where he wanted.

A representative of the municipal authorities said that he could very well understand the drivers' problems but stressed that the city was doing all it could to solve them. He mentioned the Underground, but had to admit that it could be used to a greater extent than was the case at the time. (The Underground's success is more attributable to users of other transport forms going over to it than to private car owners

leaving their vehicles at home.)

The councillors reported that a traffic census had been carried out on one of the main roads leading into the city parallel with the underground. During the morning peak hours some 5,000 road vehicles carrying 7,000 people had used this route to come into the city. The Underground had brought in 26,000, and even so there was room for an increase in its capacity. He was of the opinion however that too much constraint should not be applied, and that people should be allowed to find out for themselves the most sensible way of making the journey into the city.

But the drivers did not give him a very sympathetic hearing. They felt that surrendering to the situation in this way would not solve any problems. They did not intend to wait until reason had implanted itself in every private motorist to secure reasonable working conditions. They did not want to carry on working on the basis that the only way to keep traffic flowing smoothly was to disregard regulations entirely. They considered their driving to be an honest occupation and an indispensable public service. It was intolerable that they should have the threat of fines hanging over their heads every day for rendering this service efficiently.

The working drivers of Stockholm did not wish to take away the citizen's right to possess and drive a car of his own, it was said at the meeting, but if motorists were not willing to accept certain reasonable restrictions they must take the consequences. They would have to choose between parking outside their front doors and having their dustbins emptied; between leaving a space outside the shop and finding nothing there to buy.

Similarly for bus and taxi passengers it may be a choice between arriving where they want to go, if traffic regulations are made more reasonable, or being set down wherever the driver can do so without fear of a fine.

To demonstrate the chaos which would ensue if Stockholm's working



*Kungsgatan, one of Stockholm's busiest streets. The city's working drivers are tired of paying fines in order that the private motorist can have unlimited space to park his vehicle.*

drivers scrupulously observed the law, a two-day 'law-abiding' campaign was organized for the 30 November and 1 December. During these two days no lorry double-parked in order to load or unload, no bus drew out from its stopping place before as much of the road was free of traffic as the law prescribed, and no taxi obstructed the flow of traffic in order to take on or

set down a passenger.

But in order to comfort Stockholm's unlucky police force, the drivers' spokesman assured them that they would return to disobeying the law as from midnight the second day. 'And then perhaps we shall be able to have more constructive talks,' he added. 'Transport services must and will have room for movement.'



# Kampala College

by DON TAYLOR

A HIGH-PITCHED YODEL AROSE from the nearby village and swelled louder as the village women began to scream out the alarm signal. 'A thief! They are after a thief,' said one of the students, and we ran to the edge of the slope at the rear of the College to see what was happening. There was a great commotion among the trees and houses and finally he broke into view, a small man in a ragged shirt and shorts running barefoot desperately up the hill just on the other side of the fence separating us from the village. He was carrying a folded grey blanket, and as his pursuers began to close in on him, he threw it to the ground and ran on. Finally, he was hauled down from behind by two of the fleetest men, and very shortly, his struggling figure disappeared in the mob of villagers who pounced upon him. We could hear the thud of fists, feet and sticks upon his body and his answering groans and cries.

A very fat woman, her progress restricted by the long busuti she wore, arrived upon the scene, puffing from her efforts and waving a stout stick over her head. Finding an opening in the crowd, she moved forward, stick upraised to strike the man on the ground. She lost her balance in the process and toppled over backwards, much to the delight of the others, but finally, amidst much good-natured laughter, she regained her feet and got in two good licks at her victim's head.

The beating continued for a short time with everyone trying to administer a punch or a kick, until the groggy, bloodied little man was pulled to his feet and dragged violently along at the head of a procession heading down the road towards the Wandegeya market. Passersby (including the driver of a taxi) and latecomers now approached, aimed kicks or blows at the unlucky captive and then proceeded on about their business.

We hurried back inside the College to telephone the police division at Wandegeya. If the little man was lucky, he would be handed over to the

police still alive and have his day in court. If not, the case would be closed, for in this part of the world, death on the spot is a likely consequence of stealing.

The place was the city of Kampala in Uganda, East Africa. The time was April 1961, shortly after my arrival from Canada to teach at the African Labour College of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Those who stood with me and watched swift justice being meted out to the blanket thief were African union leaders, students at the Labour College, representing the labour movements of 14 different English-speaking countries in Africa. To some of them from far-away West or Central African countries this particular method of dealing with a thief was as new as it was to me. To those from Uganda itself, or from neighbouring Kenya and Tanganyika, the incident was familiar. But, unlike me, they were all equally aware of the value of a blanket to its African owner and the seriousness of the offence of stealing it.

Poverty (and the ignorance and



*In this article, Don Taylor (left), of the Research Department of the United Steelworkers of America, relates his impressions of trade unionism in Africa — impressions gained whilst teaching at the African Labour College of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions at Kampala, Uganda. He gives an account of the subjects taught at the College and why they were chosen; and describes how he himself learned much from the students about the practical difficulties of trade union organization in Africa.*

disease which accompany it) is the status quo for most of the native inhabitants of the African continent. The village of mud-walled huts roofed with straw thatch or corrugated iron sheets from which the blanket was stolen is a typical Kampala suburb. Its shacks contrast strikingly with their new neighbour, the \$325,000 Labour College and with the elegant buildings of the University College of East Africa situated nearby. Each hut has its small patch of banana trees, maize and sweet potatoes, perhaps some coffee bushes, a few simple cooking utensils and possibly a blanket or two. Its owner may be employed for a wage or salary but has no job security. Most of the time, the family depends upon that small garden patch and those simple household possessions for its existence.

This situation is a challenge to governments and to trade unions. This is the reason for the existence of the ICFTU African Labour College. The College, built in late 1960, is located on a hillside just outside Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. It is less than

*Students in class at Kampala College, Uganda. The 'workers' side' is seen preparing its case for a mock negotiation session.*

10 miles from Lake Victoria, one of the world's largest lakes and the source of the River Nile, and sits just about on the equator amidst the lush, green rolling hills of the Kingdom of Buganda. The combination of equatorial situation and height about sea-level (about 4,000 feet) provide an ideal climate; cool at night, pleasantly warm during the day and never humid or uncomfortable.

Uganda, an independent nation since 1962 and a former British protectorate, has not been racked by racial strife as have some other African countries. This is mainly because there has been no white settlement in Uganda. Although there were and still are white civil servants and managerial and technical employees in private commerce and industry, the land is owned by Africans and the country's principal export crops, cotton and coffee, are grown mainly by African smallholders.

The Labour College contains modern facilities for feeding, housing and teaching up to 42 students at a time, and is occupied at least 8 months of the year by trade unionists on ICFTU courses. The facilities are also used for residential courses sponsored by the cooperative movement, for community dances and as a polling centre during elections. It employs a lecturing staff of 6 and a custodial staff of 20 and houses the ICFTU's African Research Office. It costs about \$150,000 a year to operate, a small but significant investment in the job of organizing people to combat poverty.

If the poverty of Africa were simply the result of suppression and exploitation by the white colonialists, as so many people believe, the problem would already have been overcome by the independent African governments. But the poverty of the Africans, as of two-thirds of this planet's population, is not simply a matter of unfair distribution of the wealth; it is the lack of sufficient production of wealth in a nation to afford a decent life for its



citizens. 'Under-development' is the word now popularly used to describe this plight.

The African labour movement's generals for the 'war' on underdevelopment and poverty are, most of them, young men. The 40 students gathered at Kampala in April 1961 included the General Secretary (top executive officer) of the Nyasaland Plantation Workers' Union, age 19; the General Secretary of the Tanganyika Post and Telecommunications Union, age 26; Assistant General Secretary of the Nigerian Timber and Woodworkers' Union, age 22. The average age of the group was 27.

They are literate and English-speaking and have at least some secondary school education. This means that those representing unions of manual workers, such as plantation unions, are not drawn from the ranks of illiterate cane-cutters or tea-pluckers; they come from the small clerical staff of the industry — or from entirely outside the industry. The national leader of a union, therefore, may have little knowledge of the industry with which he deals, and he is almost certain to lack experience in the organizing and administration of a union. The trade union is a relatively new form of organization in Africa and there is therefore no reservoir of experienced leadership for these young men to rely upon. The idea of a democratically operated, voluntary and continuous national body, based upon common economic in-

terests, is foreign to a society based mainly upon traditional family or tribal institutions.

Local union leaders are not at all reserved in the presence of the press, and it was not uncommon to begin the day with the news that a union executive board had dismissed and expelled its chief executive officers the previous evening and installed new ones in their places. Such a story invariably carried the comment from one of the deposed officials that the action had been irregular and unconstitutional, and, the following day or week, the papers would reveal that a second board meeting had 'passed a vote of confidence in the original leadership' and 'voted to expel' the dissident group from membership. It hardly needs to be said that the employers take full advantage of this dissension. The most hair-raising headlines appear when a labour leader threatens a nation-wide general strike in support of some union bargaining goal or in response to some unwelcome government-proposed legislation.

These 'blunderbuss' techniques illustrate the lack of tact and strategic insight that stem from the inexperience of the leaders. But it would be misleading to imply that no capable leadership has been developed. The labour movement in Africa is pre-eminent as a training ground for popular leaders. There is scarcely one of the new African states whose top

*Culmination of a successful course of study: a student receives her graduation diploma.*

politicians are not former trade unionists. These include: Julius Nyerere and Raschidi Kawawa, President and Vice-President of Tanganyika; Tom Mboya, Kenya's Minister of Justice and his country's top trade and aid negotiator; Cyrille Adoula, the harassed former premier of the turbulent Congo; Sekou Touré, President of Guinea, and Joshua Nkomo, the principal African nationalist leader in colonial Southern Rhodesia.

The subjects taught at the African Labour College place a necessarily heavy emphasis on how to do it: how to organize; how to efficiently administer an organization; collective bargaining and grievance handling techniques. But in countries where most employers have been whites or Indians, representatives of 'exploiting races', much attention has to be paid to elevating the conduct of industrial relations above the level of black against brown or white. The use of the union's machinery to settle personal scores — like getting an unpopular foreman fired — generates a lot of heat and action but achieves little in the way of general improvement in the lot of the workers. The study of industrial relations is therefore an important part of any course.

Classes in the 'how-to-do-it' subjects can be at least as enlightening to the foreign teacher as to the African students. When questioned about the membership-in-good-standing of his union, one student asked me, 'Do you mean ordinary members or financial members?' In other words, those whose names are on the books or those who also pay subscriptions (dues). I learned that willingness to pay dues is no indication of the member's support, or lack of support, for his union. Given an important issue, the physical and moral support is usually available. The habit of regular financial support is not part of the traditional background, and this means that it is a lot easier to call a strike than to carry on the routine day-to-day business of the union. The



natural result is the inflation by the leadership of every issue into a major dispute. Check-off goes a long way toward solving this problem, and even employers are beginning to recognize its beneficial possibilities.

These and a raft of other peculiarly African problems make it impossible to tackle very many routine union situations in the North American or European fashion. You don't, for example, distribute leaflets to illiterate workers (unless you have the services of a clever cartoonist). You don't advise organizers to get lists of names and addresses of potential members. A man usually has at least three legitimate names and may frequently decide to substitute one for the other as the name by which he prefers to be identified. (A standing rule of the University College of East Africa limits students to one change of name for the duration of their studies.) As for addresses, African workers have none in most parts of East Africa, unless they live in houses provided by employers or in municipal estates. Mud huts are not necessarily built on streets and have no numbers, no sewers and no water connections.

Status also becomes a problem within the African labour movement. Imagine that you have been ruled over for several generations by members of a foreign race, technologically more advanced and materially far richer than yourself. There is no way of measuring

all the effects this situation has on a human being, but you can appreciate how sensitive you would be on questions of status. For example, in a class dealing with union financial management, students expressed considerable surprise that a list of budget items I had placed on the blackboard omitted the item of salary for a driver for the union's vehicle. Surely, I didn't expect the General Secretary to drive himself. My objection to this item being added and my reasons therefor were the subject of many a lively argument.

The status attached to even the most routine clerical jobs (due to the original scarcity of literate people) is far higher than that afforded to skilled and semi-skilled manual trades which the African countries now need most desperately. This attitude, held widely even among union leaders, necessitates many sessions at the College on the changing wage structures required to promote skills and to harmonize with rationalization and expansion of industry.

Misconceptions based on status and the rash haphazard approach to industrial relations exemplified by the frequent threats of general strikes indicate a confusion as to what are the proper objectives of the unions in these underdeveloped countries.

'We will take drastic action' is a statement often recorded in press interviews with union officials who are being frustrated in bargaining. Too often,





*The kitchens at Kampala. The magnificent equipment was given by German unions.*

'drastic action' consists of further, more intemperate press releases; and too often, the union official is uncertain about what it is he really wants to accomplish in bargaining.

This is why the Labour College courses spend a great deal of time on the teaching of basic economics and on discussion and argument about the structures, objectives and roles appropriate for trade unions in the developing countries.

Most African countries depend for their income upon the export of one, or a few, raw-state agricultural products. The East African region, comprised of Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar, is a good example. Almost its entire income is derived from the sale abroad of sisal (hard vegetable fibre used to make binder twine, upholstery, etc.), coffee, cotton and tea. The prices paid for these raw products are fixed on the world market and thereby subject to drastic fluctuations. Sisal is threatened by competition from artificial fibres if its price increases very much; coffee is a glut on the market due to heavy world overproduction and the present price levels are maintained only by a precarious international agreement on prices and export quotas negotiated by the world's coffee producing countries with the largest coffee-consuming countries. Cotton, like coffee, is subject to surplus situations, and like sisal, stands to be affected drastically if the

United States decides to dump its stockpiles into the world markets.

One answer to this problem is for the large and rich consuming nations to agree to fix generally higher prices for these products. Another is to perform more secondary processing operations in the producing countries to stimulate both domestic and export manufacturing activities. This would provide steady employment for the labour force.

And what about the labour force? Here is another difficulty for African unions. The total of salary and wage earners in most of these countries constitutes only between five and ten per cent of the population. Even wholly organized, this would be a small minority group in the nation, albeit a vital one. And, this labour force is illiterate and, lacking skills and industrial background, is extremely inefficient. Its sole virtue, until the coming of the unions, had been its cheapness and plentiful numbers. The bulk of the population are peasant subsistence farmers.

At the College, we asked questions like these:

— Should there be a trade union movement at all in these countries in view of the immediate need for central planning and direction by government in the uses of manpower and resources?

— Isn't there a danger that the relatively small interest group formed by organized labour will become a

comparatively highly paid élite due to collective bargaining, leaving the majority of peasant farmers unaffected and more deeply impoverished than ever?

— What, if any, is the proper role for unions under conditions prevailing in underdeveloped countries? What should be labour's goals?

— What trade union structures are the most appropriate under these circumstances?

The answer to the first two questions is in both cases — 'Yes'.

Yes, there is a need for trade unions. Government and labour in the young nations aim to create modern states, with expanding industries and increasing standards of life. The manpower requirements of a modern state require a skilled, literate and permanent labour force fully committed to employment and not constantly drifting back and forth from the workshop to the *shamba* (the Swahili word for peasant small-holding). Such a labour force can be dragooned into existence by an elaborate and expensive state apparatus, but can be created more cheaply and effectively through the joint efforts of government, employers and voluntary organizations of the workers themselves. The union way has the added advantage of instilling more initiative, self-confidence and leadership ability.

The other questions provide the framework for intensive discussion of suitable structures and goals, topics which only became important upon the attainment of political independence by the African states.

Canadian labour and the world's other independent trade union movements can, through the ICFTU, play an extremely important rôle in the creation of modern self-sufficient nations in Africa. We represent working people. We are fundamentally interested in the enrichment of the lives of working people and not in the winning of cold war victories (as are the various

*(Continued on page 24)*

# Round the world of labour

## **AETR not ratified**

THE EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON Working Conditions of Crews Engaged in International Road Transport, known by its French abbreviation, AETR, was scheduled to come into force on 20 November, 1964. It did not do so, for the required number of governments had not ratified it. AETR, which lays down maximum time at the wheel and minimum rest periods for crews of vehicles working outside their base countries and therefore no longer subject to national legislation, was formulated by the Inland Transport Committee (Sub-committee on Road Transport) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in January 1962. So far the only governments which have ratified it are those of France, the Netherlands, Spain and Yugoslavia. Before it comes into force ratifications by at least three adjoining states must be registered. This has not happened.

The road transport employers' associations and their international mouthpiece, the International Road Transport Union (IRU), have not spared much effort in attempting to weaken some of the principles contained in the Agreement. They have brought pressure to bear on governments to have parts of the Agreement reformulated, before ratification. Their main wishes are that the sections dealing with time at the wheel and rest periods should be made less favourable to crews. The workers' organizations did not have all their demands met in the Agreement, but they were prepared to adopt a reasonable attitude and to content themselves with the principles that were laid down. They call on governments to accept the Agreement as it stands. Unions organizing road transport workers in countries which have not ratified AETR should continue to press their governments and the competent authorities to take this necessary step.

## **Rail accidents rise as crews are reduced**

OFFICIAL ACCIDENT FIGURES for the railroads of the United States, recently published, have been quoted as clear proof that firemen are essential to safe railway operation.

On 7 May last year a compulsory arbitration ruling gave the railroad companies leave to abolish helpers' (firemen's) jobs on yard and freight locomotives, except in states which had 'safe crew laws'. The railwaymen's organizations for three years disputed the companies' right to abolish these jobs, throwing thousands of men out of work and endangering life and property by reduced safety. It seems that railway labour's point of view has been vindicated, for the accident statistics published by the Interstate Commerce Commission for the United States railroads show a marked increase in the number of persons killed and injured on the railroads between May and July, 1964 — the first three months locomotives had been under one-man operation. The period showed 696 more casualties than in the same three months of 1963. According to a reliable labour economist, the jump was six times the rate of increase for the first four months of 1964.

\* \* \* \*

## **Amenities lacking for Maltese busmen**

AN ARTICLE appeared in a Maltese daily newspaper recently pointing to the unsatisfactory conditions existing in the island's transport services. It suggested that the standard of services offered was poor, and that the drivers' and conductors' working conditions were bad. Their hours of work were too long and they had nowhere to go and rest in between turns of duty. The article made the sound point that, if the busmen had canteens, washrooms and pleasant surroundings in which to rest, the standard and efficiency of services might show a marked improvement.

## **Shipboard officers in short supply**

OVER RECENT YEARS many shipping companies have had difficulty in finding crews for their vessels. Officers have been as scarce as men. The problem is made more acute by the increasing numbers leaving the sea for jobs on land. Shipping companies in Sweden and Finland are particularly hard hit by this flight from the sea. The officers' organizations in these countries have studied the problem in all its aspects and attempted to find solutions. It is an important problem, for the worst storms of the ocean can be ridden by a vessel which is well crewed and well commanded, but the lack of trained and experienced officers as also of crew can become a safety risk, and can threaten a company's prospects of staying in business to compete with tonnage from other countries.

Long absence from home and family are an important factor in the drift from service at sea. In Finland the basic pay of an engine room officer is considered too low to compete with salaries which he could earn on land doing similar work. Officers' salaries on board Swedish ships are considerably better, and Finnish companies lose a number of their officers to Sweden. But in spite of this Swedish companies have the same problem. The captain of a Swedish ship, if he cannot find properly qualified officers, may sail with men of his own choice, whom he thinks adequately capable of discharging an officer's duties. Rather than cost his company thousands in port duties delaying the ship until properly qualified officers can be found, the captain is not always too particular about the men he recruits. It is estimated that some 10 per cent of all ship's officers and 20 per cent of engine room officers are without proper training in the Swedish merchant fleet.

A chief engineer on board a Swedish ship gets a good salary — at the age of thirty five he may be earning close on 40,000 Kronor per year (£2,750 or \$7,700) with all extras — but a third engineer gets considerably less by comparison. His monthly pay works out at about 1,300 Kronor (£90 or

\$250). It is too little to attract recruits who may not advance from the post for many years. The situation in the deck department is similar.

Although the Swedish merchant navy officer is well paid by comparison with what he might earn ashore, there are very persuasive advantages to shore work. Not the least of these is the possibility of going home to a wife and family at the end of every day.

If the shipowners wish to recruit and keep good officers, say the Swedish officers' unions, they must offer salaries and conditions — welfare facilities, holidays and trips home included — which compete against the temptation to take a job ashore which may be less well paid but have so many more advantages from the point of view of social and family life.

\* \* \* \*

### Plan to beat unsafe trucks in Britain

UNIONS ORGANIZING ROAD haulage drivers in Britain have complained bitterly over the failure of some operators to ensure that their vehicles are serviced and repaired at frequent intervals. Their negligence has in some cases resulted in serious mechanical failures and bad accidents. But it was not until the Ministry of Transport held a series of intensive checks in June and July last year that the appalling extent of the operators' negligence was discovered. 53 per cent. of the vehicles inspected were defective, and 11 per cent. were so badly in need of repair that they had to be ordered off the road immediately.

The Minister of Transport called a meeting of road haulage concerns to find ways in which the situation could be improved. The result was a series of proposals for combating these abuses handed in three months later by the Traders' Road Transport Association, which represents companies engaging in transport on their own account, but whose main activity is not transport.

The Association recommends that vehicle operators should not be allowed to obtain or renew their carriers' licences without furnishing proof that their system of keeping vehicles in a good state of repair was satisfactory.

This requirement would be additional to regular compulsory testing of vehicles. Proof of maintenance could, according to the Traders' Road Transport Association's proposals, take any one of three forms: (a) Adequate maintenance facilities at a company's own premises with a proper maintenance schedule; (b) Maintenance of vehicles according to a manufacturer's voucher scheme; or (c) Proof that a company belonged to a recognized inspection scheme.

Each of these means of proving maintenance would be subject to spot checks, and, if a vehicle was found wanting, the maintenance system would be investigated to find out whether it was working satisfactorily.

\* \* \* \*

### Bullet proof taxis

THE TAXI DRIVER'S JOB can be a hard one and it has its dangers. He is the ideal victim for thieves and thugs. They know that he is forced to carry money around with him and because he must concentrate on his driving he may easily be taken by surprise. The thief has only to ask to be driven along a lonely stretch of road, and to wait his opportunity.

In some countries so many attacks have occurred, with frequent fatal results, that the problem has become one for public concern. In Germany a new taxi has been developed by Daimler-Benz which, it is claimed, offers the driver full protection against attacks. The new taxi has a partition to separate the passenger accommodation from the front seat. The lower part of the partition is made of steel while its upper part consists of a bullet proof glass pane. The latter is fitted with a small drawer into which the passenger places the money for his fare. The driver collects the money on his side, and uses the drawer to pass back the change. The meter showing the amount payable is clearly visible from both the driver's and passenger's sides. They can communicate through an opening in the glass partition which is protected by fine mesh metal netting. The driver's windscreen and side windows are also bullet proof.

Old cars can also be fitted with the bullet proof glass at reasonable cost, and taxi drivers in Hamburg, where the frequency of attacks has become alarming, recommend that this be done. The West German Ministry of Transport has urged taxi owners to adopt the new safety installations in their vehicles, although there is as yet no law which can force them to do so.

\* \* \* \*

### New collision regulations

THE NEW REGULATIONS for Preventing Collisions at Sea prepared by IMCO's safety conference in 1960 are to come into force on 1 September 1965, now that sufficient acceptances have been secured. The new regulations will greatly contribute to safety at sea as they take into account recent developments in the maritime industry. Among the interesting changes which have been made in the previous regulations, which date back to 1948, are the following:

— The criterion of tonnage which was previously used to determine the size of a vessel in certain cases has been abandoned, and the length of the vessel has been adopted instead.

— Steering rules for sailing vessels have been substantially modified; notably, it is now provided that although a sailing vessel has the right of way when meeting a power-driven vessel on collision course, in a narrow channel it shall not hamper the safe passage of the power-driven vessel which can only navigate inside that channel.

— With reference to information obtained from radar, the regulations state that such information does not relieve any vessel of the obligation of conforming strictly with the rules on sound signals, speed and conduct in restricted visibility. A clear distinction is drawn between detecting another vessel and hearing her fog signal or sighting her visually. Although such detection may give rise to early and substantial action, the implication is that detection (by any method, including radar) is not a substitute for visual sighting and that a mariner with radar on board must be *more cautious* than one without it.



## Book Reviews

LABOURING MEN, by E. J. HOBBSAWN (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London; price 55s.)

LABOURING MEN is a collection of studies in industrial history by the Reader in History at Birbeck College, University of London. Some of these have already appeared as articles in various publications; others were previously unpublished.

The whole book is immensely readable and thought-provoking. Although one may often disagree with Mr. Hobsbawm's conclusions, one is time and time again forced to examine one's own views — and of course prejudices — in the light of his extremely well-reasoned arguments. The studies cover a wide range of subjects, including reconsiderations of the machine-breakers and the British Fabians; trends in the British Labour Movement; the standard of living; and essays on union organization and development in particular industries, including a short but intensely interesting study of unions in the waterside industry.

Mr. Hobsbawm is a well-known British Marxist social historian, although his association with 'The New Reasoner' indicates that he is not a particularly orthodox Party-line Marxist. Like most 'Why' historians who hold strong views on either politics or the philosophy of history, his beliefs are very much in evidence in his writing. It would be going too far to say that he is biased, since all history-writing involves some degree of selection in using both facts and material and this selection is naturally very much influenced by personal outlooks. Let us, say, rather, that Mr. Hobsbawm is often out to prove a point.

The point is best shown by quoting a single sentence from his study on trends in the British Labour Movement. He writes: 'Virtually all suggestions for the modernization of trade-union structure and policy have always come

from the contemporary left — the Marxists of the 1880s, the syndicalist-Marxists of the 1910s, the communists of the 1930s and 1940s'. The short answer to such a statement is, perhaps, that it depends not only on what you understand by modernization but also on what you decide represents the contemporary left.

Mr. Hobsbawm's point is of course not a main theme in his book, but is nevertheless an underlying motif which can sometimes lead him into rather dubious premisses. The study entitled 'National Unions on the Waterside' can be used to illustrate this. Mr. Hobsbawm sets out to deal with two main questions: the relatively late development of dockers' unions (which is common to most industrial countries) and the particular form which British waterside unions assumed.

One of the biggest factors in the 19th century waterside industry, as Mr. Hobsbawm indicates, was the casual nature of dock employment, particularly among the unskilled workers. This not only made tight union organization difficult; it also militated against the waging of successful industrial warfare, since the existence of a large reserve of unemployed and part-time labour made it possible for employers to utilize blacklegs on a colossal scale and even to import and export them. On the other hand, the obvious answer to this problem — decasualization, or as Mr. Hobsbawm calls it, old-fashioned restrictionism — was not easily accepted by the dockers themselves. In this instance, the social correctness of the policy was overshadowed by its human reality as the dockers saw it. To quote Mr. Hobsbawm: 'It was one thing to stop new men entering the trade; quite another to throw Bill and Jack (and perhaps oneself) out on the streets'.

One factor which imposed the idea of national organization on the British

dockers — who could easily have ended up in a loose federation of local unions because of their intensely local allegiances — was the tendency of employers, following the lead of the Shipping Federation, to treat local attempts at insurrection as a threat to the industry as a whole. Mr. Hobsbawm compares the effect of this to the strategic theory of escalation, with each blow by one side producing a greater concentration of forces by the other. He quotes the creation of the ITF as one such concentration of forces.

His final argument on this question, however, is rather more debatable and comes back to his theory concerning the influence of the 'contemporary left'. The dockers emerged, he states, in an age of socialist revival and this set its stamp upon their tactics and ideas. 'It is characteristic' he writes, 'that within a few years of their birth the British unions (on the London left-wingers' initiative) formed an International Federation of Ship, Dock & River Workers\* in order to unionize actively not only all British, but all foreign ports: a characteristically socialist enterprise'. The initiative in forming the National Transport Workers' Federation, which shortly afterwards fought its first successful struggle in 1911 but was not so successful during the employers' counter-attack of the following year, also came from the left-wing London union led by Ben Tillet.

The predominant part played by the 'left-wingers' is naturally a very attractive theory to Mr. Hobsbawm, but the more one looks at it the more one wonders. It would, for example, be possible — by using essentially the same data — to produce an equally attractive argument which proved quite the opposite. It would run like this:

It was not the London left-wingers who were responsible for the *idea* of an International Federation, but the seamen's leader J. Havelock Wilson. The idea can in fact be traced back to the international support which his union gave to a Dutch *dockers'* union in May 1896. He also took the initial

\* *The original name of the ITF.*

practical steps in getting the Federation under way. It is true that once the Federation was formally inaugurated, Tom Mann became its first President and acted in this capacity for a relatively short period. The concept of this 'characteristically socialist enterprise' did not, however, originate with the London left-wingers but with a trade unionist who was certainly intelligent and dynamic (to use Mr. Hobsbawm's description of his idealized left-wingers) but was certainly no socialist revolutionary. To claim the opposite is — to use an analogy from the jazz field in which Mr. Hobsbawm is also an acknowledged expert — rather like asserting that the cornet-player Bix Beiderbecke was responsible for creating the Paul Whiteman Orchestra.

Again, one can agree with the basic idea that the initiative for the formation of the National Transport Workers' Federation came from Ben Tillett and his London union, but one also remembers the very active rôle played in this venture by Havelock Wilson (to which Tillett himself paid a very wholehearted public tribute) and also that the successful seamen's strike of 1911 was in fact the prelude to the wider transport workers' movement. Mr. Hobsbawm actually makes a passing reference to this latter point and also to the fact that the seamen's agitation started off the movement which led to the great London dock strike of 1889. One can also speculate on the extent to which Tillett's own ideas on closer union organization were influenced not so much by Marxist thought as by his contacts with the rather right-wing German transport workers' unions of the period, which were already operating on centralist industrial lines. It would appear that Tillett himself was thinking of federation as no more than a stage on the way to amalgamation (his union's Christmas card for 1911 speaks of amalgamation in 1912!).

One could of course use the above data to support any number of theories: for example, that Tillett and other left-wingers were in turn strongly influenced by non-revolutionary ideas and personalities; that they were looking for

an 'Open Sesame' and made use of ideas from a number of sources in their search for the right formula. One could perhaps even argue that there was a certain catalysis between seamen and dockers during this period and that their temporary strategic alliances were of considerable significance. This would naturally run counter to Mr. Hobsbawm's thesis that 'the occasional dreams of national or even international transport solidarity were never more than of momentary importance', but one also wonders about that remark.

Naturally, there are large holes and even larger assumptions in the theoretical argument which has been put up against Mr. Hobsbawm's doctrine concerning the influence of the 'contemporary left'. Nevertheless, it does illustrate the dangers of setting out to prove a political point when you are dealing with a trade union movement which is made up of real human beings and has developed rather pragmatically.

\* \* \* \*

THE RISE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REICH, by BRIAN BUNTING (Penguin Paperbacks, London, 1964, 4s. 6d.) OVER THE PAST DECADE and a half South Africa has hit the headlines of the world's press with increasing frequency. Adverse publicity in most cases, for the stories they tell seldom make edifying reading. One reads of police atrocities, inhuman prison sentences, wrong convictions, deprivation of liberties and legislation to extend and consolidate the rule of tyranny. There was a time when one could glance over the lines of print and pass on. But not any more. It was perhaps the Sharpeville massacre that irrevocably destroyed any esteem in which freedom-loving nations held the Union of South Africa. No longer is anybody deceived by the South African Nationalist Government's definition of its apartheid policy as one of 'good neighbourliness'. Individual freedoms have been restricted beyond all reason and justice, police power has been strengthened and built up to alarming proportions, the civil service, public utilities and the nation's business have been interfered

with, voting rights and parliamentary representation have been manipulated, all in a sacred cause: that the Nationalist régime may perpetuate itself in power and enforce its odious ideologies against the will of the majority of the people and to the detriment of the country's unfortunate non-white population. The main object of these ideologies is, as most of us now know, to preserve white supremacy and to ensure the survival of European culture and 'civilization' in South Africa.

But there is more to it than just that, as Brian Bunting has demonstrated in his book, *The Rise of the South African Reich*. He has given us a shattering account of the growth of white nationalism in South Africa and of its crystallization in the totalitarian régime which elevated itself to power in 1948. The title of the book is not an idle comparison. There are distinct similarities between Nazi and South African Nationalist ideologies. Events in South Africa since 1948 have shown a pattern which will be grimly familiar to anyone who was able to observe the development of Hitler's régime in Germany. Even during World War II, when thousands of South African soldiers, Brian Bunting among them, were fighting to free the oppressed peoples of Europe from Nazi tyranny, Nationalist leaders at home were preparing terms under which they might enjoy power under Hitler's protection, should the Allies lose the war. (In 1941 a newspaper, whose editor-in-chief was none other than the present Prime Minister, Dr. Verwoerd, was found in court to have published Nazi propaganda in its columns.) Three years after the end of the war they did in fact gain power. From that moment they proceeded relentlessly and skilfully to eliminate all opposition and to make their power secure. How this was done is described in all its astounding detail in Brian Bunting's book.

The author, a journalist born and bred in South Africa, has been a militant crusader for social justice in his country. He stood for election to parliament as one of the Native representatives in 1952 in defiance of a

ministerial order. He won his seat but was prosecuted, acquitted and expelled under one of South Africa's general-purpose laws, the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1960 both he and his wife were held for several months without trial after the Sharpeville shootings. In 1962 he was banned from attending meetings and placed under thirteen-hour house arrest. All the newspapers he has worked for since the Nationalists came to power have been banned or forced out of print. The Government killed the most recent one, *Spark*, by the ingenious trick of forbidding all its main reporting and editorial staff to publish any material. This was done under another piece of general-purpose legislation, the Sabotage Act.

*The Rise of the South African Reich* is an important book. It is authoritative, detailed and well documented. The South African Government has had to protect itself against writers of Brian Bunting's calibre. And well it needs to, for the truth can hurt those who have much to hide.

(Continued from page 2)

general trend in their industry. Enlightened social policies, excellent economic conditions and national labour shortages have made this possible. In the majority of countries, however, the situation — although varying in detail — is basically similar to that which we have described in this article.

The overwhelming majority of railwaymen, too, are extremely bitter at the treatment which is being handed out both to their industry and to themselves. They are also determined to express their dissatisfaction internationally and to bring home to the general public the appalling facts of the present position. During the next few months they will be considering how this can best be achieved.

(Continued from page 6)

join in demanding it, for they are tired of being branded as 'deficit producers' in return for the hard work they put in.

But as the railways are State enterprises they are considered able to support losses and shortfalls in receipts without compensation. Reasons of State are still stronger than the postulates of commercial operation.

The railwaymen of Germany, and their opposite numbers all over the free world who see themselves faced with the same situation, must ask themselves how long they intend to go on watching this tragi-comedy acted out between their employers — the railways — and the holders of political power.

(Continued from page 11)

are now men firmly committed against segregation.

Among the most vigorous campaigners for Negro rights within the trade union movement has been A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a leading figure in the national civil rights movement.

The book's penultimate chapter deals with violence and improper activities and relates a number of 'cleaning-up' operations which have had to be undertaken over the years within different unions.

(Continued from page 19)

governments involved in furnishing aid to Africa).

My wife learned something about our special obligations to Africa when she went shopping for a pineapple in one of Kampala's open air markets. She waited while an Indian woman haggled (in the usual way) over the price of a pineapple with the African stallkeeper.

A price of 70 cents East African (about 10 cents Canadian) was agreed upon and the sale completed. My wife seized a pineapple and extended 70 cents. 'One shilling', said the stallkeeper (15 cents Canadian). 'But you charged the Indian woman only 70 cents,' she replied.

'You are European. You can pay more,' he said, with a generous smile.

She did.

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Cover picture :  
*Still life aboard a Rhine waterway vessel.*

## COMMENT

(Continued from inside front cover)

And what of the railwayman? One cannot escape the feeling that in many countries, management is so hypnotized by cybernation and commercialism that the railwaymen and their interests are considered only as debit items. And yet there is unequivocal statistical evidence that in few branches of industry has productivity per man-hour risen so sharply during the past fifteen years as on the railways. Despite this, the living standards of railwaymen in many countries are well below the comparable average. Deficits and inadequate profits are advanced to excuse this. As if the railwaymen were to blame!

Railways cannot plan for tomorrow and cling to the social conditions of yesterday. Their attitude is an anachronism; it will not do for today.



# International Transport Workers' Federation

General Secretary: P. DE VRIES

President: FRANK COUSINS

**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
- 335 affiliated organizations in 81 countries
- Total membership: 6,500,000

## *The aims of the ITF are*

to support the national and international action of workers in the struggle against economic exploitation and political oppression and to make international trade union 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 to organize in trade unions;

to defend and promote, internationally, the economic, social and occupational interests of all transport workers;

to represent 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*

Aden \* Argentina \* Australia \* Austria \* Barbados \* Belgium  
Bermuda \* Bolivia \* Brazil \* British Guiana \* British Honduras  
Burma \* Canada \* Chile \* Colombia \* Costa Rica \* Curaçao  
Cyprus \* Denmark \* Dominican Republic \* Ecuador \* Egypt  
Estonia (Exile) \* Faroe Islands \* Finland \* France \* Gambia  
Germany \* Great Britain \* Greece \* Grenada \* Guatemala  
Honduras \* Hong Kong \* Iceland \* India \* Indonesia \* Israel  
Italy \* Jamaica \* Japan \* Kenya \* Lebanon \* Liberia \* Libya  
Luxembourg \* Madagascar \* Malawi \* Malaya \* Malta  
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Nicaragua \* Nigeria \* Norway \* Pakistan \* Panama \* Paraguay  
Peru \* Philippines \* Poland (Exile) \* Republic of Ireland  
Rhodesia \* El Salvador \* St. Lucia \* Sierra Leone \* South  
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