

# International Transport Workers' Journal

4



in this issue

Volume XXVIII No. 4 April 1966

James Larkin — pioneer of Irish trade unionism

The 1965 Danish radio 'officers' dispute

An affirmation of labour rights

The Japanese seamen's strike

Fire at sea

# International Transport Workers' Journal

# 4

*Monthly Publication of the ITF*

Head Office: Maritime House, Old Town, Clapham, London, SW4  
Telephone: Macaulay 5501-2  
Telegraphic Address: INTRANSFE

Representation: ASIAN OFFICE — 18 (1st Floor) Jalan Sultan 52/4,  
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

TOKYO OFFICE — Kokutetsu Rodo Kaikan,  
1, 2 - chome, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo

WEST AFRICA — 85, Simpson Street, (P.M.B. 1038),  
Ebute Metta, Nigeria

LATIN AMERICA — Apartado 1250, Lima, Peru

*Forthcoming meetings:*

London	Railwaymen's Section Committee 20-21 April 1966
Utrecht	Management Committee 23-24 May 1966 Executive Board 25-27 May 1966
Rome	Railwaymen's Section Conference 23-25 June 1966

# Contents

	Page
Thinking aloud India — optimistic in the end by Hans Imhof, General Secretary	73
James Larkin — pioneer of Irish trade unionism .....	74
The 1965 Danish radio officers' dispute .....	79
The wheelless trains of the future ...	81
An affirmation of labour rights — the verdict of the Canadian Freedman Report on railway closures .....	82
Profile Bikas Majumder, General Secre- tary of the National Union of Seamen of Indian (Calcutta) .....	85
The Japanese seamen's strike .....	86
News from the Regions .....	90
Committee reports on railwaymen's pay in the Netherlands .....	92
The driver carries the can .....	92
Coordination of transport in London	92
Canadian passenger train services to be run down .....	92
Norwegian Metal Workers' Union 75 years old .....	92
Fire at sea .....	93

*Cover picture:* A Zambian train guard.

Articles written by outside contributors published in the *ITF Journal* do not necessarily reflect ITF policy or express ITF opinion.

# Thinking aloud—

by HANS IMHOF, General Secretary

## *India optimistic in the end*

**'Poverty has its own ethics and its own scale of human dignity'** Nehru

ALTHOUGH INDIA COVERS only a third of the area of the United States, her population is two and a half times bigger. Again, India is thirteen times the size of Great Britain or the Federal Republic of Germany, but has only nine times as many inhabitants as each of these countries. The first comparison suggests a relatively small country with a high population density, while the second leaves the reader the impression of a vast country which is not particularly densely populated. Either way, India is a vast country and is teeming with humanity. The approximate figure now being quoted is 475 million. The number is constantly and rapidly growing, while the area of land for habitation stays the same. This is one of the problems with which India — as indeed the whole world — finds herself faced. To procure enough food to sustain the millions and at the same time to bring about gradual changes in feeding habits, which are to a large extent bound up with tradition and religion, are a further problem. Then there is illiteracy, hanging like a lead weight on the heels of progress but also providing agitators and demagogues with unlimited fields of activity.

The population explosion, the food shortage and illiteracy, however, are problems which do not affect India alone. And, since problems shared are problems halved, to solve and overcome them is of great importance but not of immediate urgency. There are other issues: castes, languages, religions, irrigation, unemployment, the homeless, epidemics, drainage, China, Peking and Moscow communists, rising prices, transport problems, reactionary employers, divided unions, tribal insurrections, brigands, the Five Year Plan, industrialization and — last but not least — the parliamentary elections in 1967! India is indeed a sea of problems. And each one gives scope

for thousands of opinions as to how they should be solved. The supply of issues for more or less peaceful argument is assured for years — and even decades — to come. We can see from this that the Indian's greatest problem is solved: he can criticize, discuss, demonstrate and quarrel. For thousands of years the spirit of struggle and resistance has been directed against foreign invaders and colonial masters. Now that the foreigners have left and no longer provide targets, this spiritually very gifted people needs new directions in which the energies of its individualism and intellect can be channelled.

That is the impression, complemented by what I have learned from conversations, meetings and mass gatherings, which I have brought home from a three week marathon through India. In spite of all the problems besetting this land so rich in contrasts, one should beware of looking too much on the black side of things. There is in India, as in all our countries, more light than shade. The present food crisis is of course taxing the nation's brains, but the fact is that the crisis is attributable rather to administrative shortcomings and to the difficulty of overcoming opposition to changes in feeding habits than to a real lack of foodstuffs. The Indian is proud of his country and her great potential; this pride is insulted, when he hears that exaggerated accounts of the famine situation have prompted the world to embark on food collections and acts of charity. He is convinced that this crisis could have been prevented, if only the Central Government and State Administrations had applied themselves more to the problem instead of indulging in complacency. The exaggerated self-esteem of the senior civil servant, however, is part of a sickness which is still to be found everywhere in India: it is the attitude of the lord to his bondsman, the master to his servant. This attitude is also the greatest obstacle in the way of the trade unions' efforts to create good relations between workers and employers.

The trade union movement, for its part, suffers from divisions. No less than four centres, including one which is communist-dominated, declare their right to represent workers at national level. At the same time, there are unions and federations which are affiliated to none of the four centres. The centres themselves hardly play the effective part they would like to play as trade union organizations active in the fields of economic and social policy. On the other hand party political influences in the leadership of the trade unions are all the

*(Continued on page 85)*

# JAMES LARKIN

## *A pioneer of Irish trade unionism*

IN THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY before the First World War the whole of Europe was in a ferment. Socialism had in the previous century proclaimed its intention of overthrowing the old capitalist order, but in the early 1900's new and even more revolutionary trends appeared in socialist thinking. The accent shifted to direct or economic action, with the strike as the main weapon, to topple the capitalist order, rather than constitutional or parliamentary action. The unskilled workers were now being organized into industrial unions, and the mass of the proletariat was taking its place alongside the skilled trades in the trade union structure. This process resulted in the emergence of a new type of leadership in the labour movement. The old socialist leaders had mostly been converts from the middle classes. But the new men were strictly proletarian in their origins, and could scarcely be called intellectuals. They were self-educated and pragmatic, *class-conscious, articulate and individualistic*. They had come up through the ranks and were as confident as only self-made men can be. They were full of the truth of their mission and determined to awaken the working classes by preaching their gospel of discontent.

The English-speaking countries provided the world with many of these leaders. Eugene Debs and Bill Haywood in America, and Tom Mann and Ben Tillett in Britain were some of them. But the most remarkable of all was Ireland's James Larkin, a labour leader who was able to unite in his own *personality the most discordant themes* of the time: socialism, nationalism and the Catholic faith.

He was born in Liverpool, England, on 21 January 1876, the son of Irish parents. His father, who had emigrated from Ireland, like so many, to escape poverty and unemployment, died of tuberculosis at the age of 38. Young James Larkin went out to work at the age of eleven. The misery and degradation of the Liverpool slums taught him what poverty and ignorance can

do to a man. He became a convinced socialist before he was twenty and joined the British Independent Labour Party in 1893.

Along with his fellow workers he suffered exploitation in a precarious labour market, working in many different jobs. As a seaman he experienced *the brutish life of men at sea in those days*. As a docker he first became interested in the trade union movement. In 1905 he was appointed organizer for the British National Union of Dock Labourers. His first assignment was the reorganization of the Scottish ports. Early in 1907 he undertook the more difficult task of reorganizing the Irish ports.

After working for a time in Belfast, he went to Dublin, where the organizational task was even harder. Thirty per



*James Larkin at Liberty Hall in Dublin.*

cent of Dublin's inhabitants were living in the most abominable conditions. Death, disease, immorality, insanity, crime, drunkenness, unemployment, low wages and high rents were the fearful concomitants of life in the Dublin slums. The infant mortality rate was the highest in the British Isles, wages among the lowest and unemployment figures among the highest. This was the background against which Larkin began his work in Dublin. He organized branches of the National Union of Dock Labourers in Dublin and Cork, and in both ports the employers did their very best to smash the union. Employers in these days were not easily persuaded to reduce their profits by increasing wages. It was thus no mean achievement that in 1908, in the face of a severe economic depression and acute unemployment, Larkin won three disputes in the Dublin docks.

In spite of his successes, Larkin was not supported by the executive of the British-based union, and in 1908 he founded the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, to which most of the Irish membership of the NUDL went over. The task was now to build a militant and independent Irish labour movement.

During the years that followed, labour's star was in the ascendant in Ireland. Workers were no longer pre-

pared to stand aside and allow the employers to reap all the fruits of their honest toil. As one Irish observer put it: 'Labour has lost its old humility and its respectful finger touching its cap. It is one of the great powers of the world. . . . The child in the cradle today before it is a middle-aged man will see the hands of labour on the reins of government and the jaded beast called capital responding freely to the spur and the whip.'

The year 1911 ushered in a time of great unrest in the labour market, in Britain and the rest of Europe, as well as in Ireland. In the summer of 1911 Britain's transport was paralyzed by two great national strikes: first the seamen, with the dockers, carters and coal handlers coming out in sympathy but at the same time in support of their own claims, and then the railwaymen. These strikes also had their repercussions in Ireland, where transport workers under Larkin's leadership supported their British colleagues by refusing to handle 'black' cargoes. In July 2,000 members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union were locked out in Dublin, for refusing to handle goods shipped to the port on vessels manned by 'blackleg' crews. However the shipowners crumbled before the combined action of the seamen and shore trades in Britain. The Irish port workers also went back to work with an increase in wages: a victory for Larkin and his 3-year-old union. The railwaymen's strike was effective in Ireland as well as in Britain, and the Dublin timber merchants locked out some of their men as a result. The men, who were members of Larkin's union, refused to go back unless they got a 2s. per week increase. The railway porters, three weeks later, agreed on the request of the Transport Union not to handle timber from the firms in dispute. The railway company would not recognize the railwaymen's right to this kind of sympathetic action, however, and the Railwaymen's Union was forced to declare a national strike in Ireland. But



as the footplatemens did not support the strike—Larkin agreed to withdraw his request for sympathetic action. The railwaymen had to surrender and the ITGWU's strike against the timber merchants also collapsed a week later.

Disputes over the right of combination were also common at this time. In August 1911 the employees of an iron foundry in Wexford voted to join the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Their employer refused to countenance any association of their workers with the ITGWU and a bitter, long drawn out struggle ensued. Blacklegs were enlisted to replace the striking workers, and there was a good deal of violence. The dispute was finally settled in February 1912 under terms which allowed the workers to form an Irish Foundry Workers' Union which could affiliate with the ITGWU. This was in effect a victory for the Transport Union since, two years later, the new union became officially the Wexford branch of the ITGWU.

These strikes and sympathy actions, of which some resulted in victory and others in defeat for the workers, were typical of the labour scene in Ireland in 1911, and were not confined to the trades or districts in which Larkin and the ITGWU were strongest.

The novel feature of the 1911 wave

of strikes in Britain and Ireland was their spontaneous and sympathetic nature. In Ireland Larkin's use of the sympathetic strike and his refusal to handle 'tainted goods' had won him the reputation of being a revolutionary syndicalist. As an ardent and militant socialist he did in fact believe in the ultimate advent of a new social order, when the working classes would finally be in the seats of power. But until then the only weapon the worker had in his armoury was the strike. There was a situation of total war between labour and the exploiting employers. A strike was not just an action in pursuance of an individual claim, but a single battle in the continuing war.

This conception of industrial action followed the doctrines of the syndicalist movement, which was then spreading its influence through Europe and the United States, rather than the tradition of the British unions which were less inclined towards revolutionary objectives. But Larkin's brand of unionism was planted in what was virtually virgin soil in Ireland. The British unions had a long tradition behind them and had evolved firm lines of policy. They were not so receptive to new ideas, such as syndicalism, as were their counterparts in Ireland.

Yet Larkin's beliefs were eclectic.

He seemed to borrow ideas from many currents of thought, according to which suited the occasion best. His use of the strike in so many disputes, for example, can only be reconciled with his declared disapproval of strikes by supposing that he believed they should not be necessary in conditions of social justice. As such conditions did not exist, strikes were a necessary evil. This was understandable when a Dublin employer, whose workers had been organized by the ITGWU, could remark: 'as a result of the Irish industrial revival we have been doing an increased business... the men think they can come in and say: "we must also have our share of the increased earning."' Anyone can see that if that principle were accepted it would kill industrial enterprise.'

1913 was another year of great labour unrest in the British Isles. In Dublin alone there were 30 strikes between January and August. And the unrest in Ireland was not confined to Dublin. It was a time when Irish labour was still fighting for trade union recognition and for acceptance by employers of the most basic trade union rights.

Larkin and the ITGWU won a significant victory in this battle in 1913.

He had organized the dock foremen and brought them over from the shipping companies into his own camp. Now his task was to force the companies to recognize the union and its rights. As a result of a strike in early 1913, lasting for nearly three months, against the Dublin Steampacket Company, which had the government mail contract, the ITGWU won substantial increases in wages with full recognition for the union as the waterfront workers' bargaining agent. This victory also heralded an end to the resistance put up by the other shipping companies. In May that year six of the most important companies signed an agreement with the ITGWU providing for a new wages schedule.

But Larkin did not get it all his own way. The agreement ruled out sympathetic strikes.

By this time almost all the unskilled workers in Dublin were under Larkin's leadership. But there were notable exceptions, such as the tramway employees. The tramway company had a system of employment which made unionization extremely difficult, but Larkin was determined to organize these workers. The ITGWU put in a

demand for a wage increase for the tramwaymen, but the company got in first and issued a statement refusing to recognize the union. On 26 August 700 men walked off their trams, leaving them where they stood in the streets. To make the tramway strike effective Larkin infiltrated other provinces of the financial empire belonging to the tramway boss, William Murphy. His main target was the newspaper *Irish Independent*, which Murphy owned. But when Eason & Son, Ireland's largest news distributor, would not drop the paper, dockers in the port refused to handle consignments shipped for the firm. The Dublin shipping companies protested that this violated the May agreement, but Larkin claimed that he could not get his men to handle 'tainted' goods.

On 3 September, at a meeting of the Employers' Federation, assembled on Murphy's wishes, 400 employers decided to lock out all ITGWU members working for them. The lock-out was to drag on for five months. By 22 September the number of men affected was about 25,000.

On 30 August, however, a warrant was out for Larkin's arrest on charges of seditious libel and seditious conspiracy. He escaped arrest until the next day, when he was due to speak in O'Connell Street. On the afternoon, Sunday 31 August, he managed to get to a first floor window in a hotel and began to speak to the crowd outside. But he did not have time to say much before he was led away by four policemen. There was a scuffle in the crowd outside. The police, who had had a trying time protecting 'scab' tram crews against striking tramwaymen, panicked and made a baton charge into the crowd. Police brutality was extreme, and a great many citizens were injured, including innocent Sunday afternoon strollers. That day went down in Irish history as Bloody Sunday, 1913.

The next day the British Trades Union Congress opened in Manchester. The TUC, when the Dublin employers refused to give way in their determination to break the ITGWU, voted to



The 'Bloody Sunday' riots in Dublin, 1913.

To settle the Dublin dispute says the British Daily Herald in 1913, the workers have only one thing to do: NOTHING.

support the locked-out men, as the basic right of combination was at stake. An immediate contribution of £5,000 to the funds of the stricken workers was voted and an appeal for more funds was made by the TUC. Larkin, when he was released from jail on bail, travelled around the British Isles calling for assistance. During the five months the lock-out lasted the total sum collected was £150,000, a magnificent tribute to the spirit of solidarity which prevailed at the time.

The Government held an official inquiry into the Dublin dispute. The hearings began on 1 October 1913. The employers brought in first class legal talent to present their case, but the workers could hope for no more eloquent an advocate than Larkin himself, who had not yet been tried for sedition. Records of the hearing in fact bear a great testimony to his quick wit and outstanding ability as a speaker. He laid responsibility for the living conditions of Dublin workers squarely on the shoulders of the employers. 'There are 21,000 families—four and a half persons to a family—living in single rooms,' he said. . . . '[The employers] said they control the means of life; then responsibility rests upon them. Twenty-one thousand people multiplied by five, over a hundred thousand people huddled together in the putrid slums of Dublin.'

The report of the inquiry came out against the use of the sympathetic strike but also criticized the employers for attempting to enforce terms which demanded that the men renounce their union. The employers rejected the report as a basis for negotiations, although Larkin had intimated willingness to back down on the sympathetic strike issue.

On 27 October Larkin went on trial for sedition. His subsequent imprisonment raised a great outcry in Ireland and Britain, but he was released soon afterwards owing to pressure on the Liberal Government in London.

# The Daily Herald

No. 515 [REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES]

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1913

ONE HALFPENNY



## HOW TO SETTLE DUBLIN—FOLD ARMS!

Our revolutions of old were conducted with bloody knives and bursting bombs. We have discarded these methods of an immediate day. We no longer want the gutters to run red with the blood of the Exploiters. It is unnecessary! We wish the Murphys joy of our change to more humane tactics. To day we merely wish to make them sweat drops of blood, not by doing them harm, but merely by refraining from doing them good! Let us do none of their work! To have the Dublin dispute settled at once, we, the Workers, have only to do one thing—and that thing, in the words of Bill Haywood is—'NOTHING.' Will today's Congress be capable of the implacable brutality of this course of ordering the Rank and File to stay in bed for twenty-four hours?

Immediately he came out of jail, Larkin declared that he was going in a few hours to 'light a fiery cross' in England, Wales and Scotland. He wanted action in support of the locked-out men in Dublin, not just words and relief donations. The ITGWU had already closed the port of Dublin, after the employers had brought in 'scab' labour to work the congested quays, and an appeal was made to British trade unions to keep it closed. This and Larkin's 'fiery cross' tour was the

beginning of a steady deterioration in relations between the ITGWU and the British unions. The Irish union's approach to industrial conflict was fundamentally different from that generally adopted in Britain, and the British were becoming weary of support for a strike in which tactics they would never have countenanced were used. Larkin's revolutionary posture and his insistence on sympathy strikes as a way of solving the difficulties of the Dublin workers antagonized many trade unionists and



*After nine years in America, part of that time spent in jail, Larkin returns to Dublin.*

labour politicians in Britain, as did the ferocious and often personal attacks he made on them in his speeches. His 'fiery cross' tour and his aggressive eloquence at a meeting of the British TUC in December failed to get him the support he wanted.

In January 1914 workers in Dublin began to drift back to work, and the union had to concede victory to the employers. In February the BTUC's Dublin relief fund was closed, and a bitter Jim Larkin wrote: 'And so Irish workers must go down into Hell, bow our backs to the lash of the slave driver, let our hearts be seared by the iron of his hatred, and instead of the sacramental wafer of brotherhood eat the dust of defeat and betrayal. Dublin is isolated.'

In the years that followed Larkin became increasingly caught up in the nationalist fervour which pervaded an Ireland impatient for her independence and freedom from British rule. The fight for a new social order and the national struggle for political freedom became

one in his mind. He now appealed to the workers of Ireland to answer the call of Cathlin ni Houlihan (Ireland), and to follow in their fathers' footsteps 'at the rising of the moon', so that she might 'sit enthroned in the midst of the Western sea.'

Larkin left for America late in 1914 in order to raise funds for the ITGWU. He did not return to Ireland until 1923, having spent part of his American sojourn in jail for his left wing activities. The Russian Revolution which occurred while he was in the US had made a profound emotional impact on him, and his political views had veered further and further towards the left.

In 1923 he returned to an Ireland which had secured her own Government after centuries of being ruled from London, but torn by civil strife, for Home Rule had not established the Republic with full independence so ardently desired by Irish patriots. The first thing Larkin did was to call for peace and to urge Republicans to fight for their cause through constitutional

means and not through force of arms. The fight against the British had already taken its toll of Irish lives. James Connolly, in charge of the ITGWU in Larkin's absence, was among those executed by the British for their part in the Easter Rising in 1916.

On Larkin's return an unfortunate difference arose between him and the union executive on a revision of the union's rules. It led eventually to a complete split in the union, with one faction supporting Larkin and the other the ITGWU executive. The end result was the foundation of a new union, the Workers' Union of Ireland, under Larkin's leadership, with the former membership of the ITGWU now split between the two organizations.

In the latter part of his life, Larkin ceased to be a focus of popular revolutionary feeling, but he carried on his work and continued to be active in public life and outspoken on national and international issues. In 1937 he was elected to the Dáil, the Irish legislative assembly, as an independent labour candidate for North East Dublin, but the Dáil was dissolved later in the year and Larkin failed to retain his seat in the new elections.

In 1945 the Workers' Union was admitted to the Irish Trades Union Congress, but only after the ITGWU had withdrawn earlier in the year because of a dispute over the growing influence of British-based unions in Ireland, and had set up the rival Congress of Irish Unions. Thus the split in Irish labour was greater than ever. And Larkin did not live to see a reconciliation. He died in 1947, ever to be remembered as one of the great union-building pioneers, a man who, in the words of Sean O'Casey, 'combined within himself the imagination of the artist with the fire and determination of a leader of a down-trodden class.'

*Acknowledgements to Emmet Larkin for his book, 'James Larkin', published last year in London by Routledge & Kegan Paul.*

An article appearing in the January issue of the *Journal*, entitled 'Safety on the Docks', was taken from the magazine of the Port of London Authority, *PLA Monthly*, and acknowledgements should have been made accordingly. We apologize for this omission.





## THE 1965 DANISH RADIO OFFICERS DISPUTE

by S. BØJE LARSEN

General Secretary of the Danish Radio Officers' Union

AT THE 28TH CONGRESS OF THE ITF (28 July - 6 August 1965) I had the opportunity to report on a strike situation which had arisen from lengthy but fruitless negotiations between the Danish Radio Officers' Union and the Danish Shipowners' Association.

From 3 April to 14 June we had argued with the owners. We were claiming a basic salary of 1900 Danish Kroner, or approximately £100, per month and could refer to agreements already concluded with other shipowners without conflict of any kind.

Even the negotiations for renewal of the agreements covering our members working at Danish and Greenland coastal radio stations, at airports and with the armed forces had been conducted without recourse to industrial action, resulting in a new basic salary of 1926 Kroner for a 45-hour week.

We were, and still are, of the opinion that a seagoing radio officer deserves to be paid a salary at least as good as that earned by his land-based colleague. It is, we think, generally accepted that a

seafarer is entitled to some compensation for sacrificing the benefits of a normal family life in order to serve the interests of shipowners engaged in foreign trade. Most vessels in the Danish merchant fleet never call at Danish ports or pass through Danish waters.

The Shipowners' Association did not accept our view. They argued — and they said as much before the compulsory arbitration board — that they had evolved a pay structure to cover all seafarers serving aboard Danish ships. Salaries paid to the master, the deck officers, the chief engineer, etc., were to be in a definite proportion, according to this pay structure. The proportion was based entirely on the evaluations of the shipowners themselves.

Our Union could not tolerate this attempt to impose a pay structure, to which none of the unions had agreed and in the formulation of which each union should clearly have participated.

We referred again and again to the results obtained by our Union in other negotiations, but the shipowners continued to reject our demands.

The strike we planned should have taken effect on 15 September 1965, but the Danish Conciliation Board intervened and postponed it till 30 October. On 13 October the Conciliation Board came out with compromise proposals which, though they did not meet our original demands, were an improvement on what the owners were prepared to concede and were especially favourable to radio officers with several years of service behind them.

Our Executive Committee examined the compromise proposals very carefully and, after some hesitation, decided to accept them. The shipowners, however, turned them down.

The Conciliation Board reported to the Government on the negative results achieved by voluntary arbitration, and, had no further attempts at arbitration been made, strike action would have been taken as scheduled on 30 October. According to the Danish Seamen's Act radio officers on Danish vessels must serve 12 months in the foreign trades before they are entitled to be repatriated. Considering the fact that most Danish merchant vessels never call at Danish ports it seemed that the strike could only become effective for radio officers on vacation or 'sick leave and for members on vessels which did happen to call at Danish ports. As far as the others were concerned the strike would gather momentum gradually, as they terminated their twelve months' service and could leave their vessels in ports outside Denmark. This situation would have called for the support of other seafarers' organizations affiliated to the ITF, since the shipowners would have been forced to try to sign on radio officers of other nationalities in ports outside Denmark. Other ITF affiliates would have played a crucial rôle in



*S. Boje Larsen, General Secretary of the Danish Radio Officers' Union and author of this article.*

bringing our action to a successful conclusion.

However, the shipping industry occupies a key position in Denmark's economy, and the shipowners were able to make a political issue out of the dispute. They appealed to the conservative groupings in the national legislature for their assistance. The conservatives managed to get a majority of members of parliament behind a bill they were sponsoring to impose compulsory arbitration on the radio officers.

We protested against this attack on our legal right to strike, but we did not

succeed in stopping the bill. It became law on 28 October and we were forced to submit to compulsory arbitration.

How did the conservatives manage to bring such an undemocratic measure into effect? Why was the Danish Voluntary Arbitration Act not invoked? Under Section 4 Paragraph 5 of this Act the Conciliation Board may postpone a strike for 14 days, if the Board considers the impending strike to be contrary to the national interest. If the threat of a strike which has been so defined is not lifted in the course of the 14 days, Parliament can enact the Conciliation Board's compromise proposals into law.

In our opinion this is what the shipowners did not want, which is precisely the reason why we had to face compulsory arbitration.

We did not consider the Conciliation Board's proposals to be satisfactory — although more acceptable than the present situation — but we accepted them. When the shipowners rejected the proposals, we were sure that they were out for nothing but the protection of their own economic interests. In our view the steps subsequently taken by Parliament proved that we were right.

*Officials of the Danish Radio Officers' Union planning tactics during the 1965 campaign. Government action forced them to abandon their plan to call a strike.*



On 29 November a compulsory arbitration board reduced the basic salary recommended earlier by the Conciliation Board by 98 Kroner (£4 10s.). Our original claim had been for 1900 Kroner. This figure was reduced to 1588 Kr. by the Conciliation Board, and finally to 1490 Kr. by compulsory arbitration.

The new salary scale, backdated to 1 April 1965 (including seniority allowances awarded on 1 April 1964), was as follows:

<i>Length of service</i>	<i>Salary in Danish Kroner</i>
Under 1 year	1512
1 year and over	1567
2 years and over	1693
4 years and over	1820
6 years and over	1945
8 years and over	2070
10 years and over	2199
12 years and over	2282
14 years and over	2365
16 years and over	2448
18 years and over	2531
20 years and over	2614

In concluding this article I should like to say something about our Union's plans for future negotiations and, in particular, about how we intend to steer clear of Government interference in our legal negotiating procedure in the bargaining round of February-March 1967.

Although the Executive Committee has made no definite decisions as yet, it is clear that if we ever serve strike notices on the shipowners again we shall have to adopt a policy of exempting certain vessels or trades. If in any strike, boycott or other action we can steer clear of tactics which could be interpreted as contrary to the national interest, we have a fairly good chance of regaining our democratic rights.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to convey my Union's thanks to the ITF and its affiliated unions for their sympathy and solidarity with the Danish radio officers during the 1965 dispute.

(There are approximately 19.30 Kr. to £1 and 6.90 Kr. to \$1.)

## The wheelless trains of the future

THANKS TO AN EXTENSION of the hovercraft principle to a recent monorail development, it may one day be possible to run regular trains between major population centres at speeds which would enable passengers to complete their journeys in less than the time it would take to travel by air.

Research engineers and scientists of the British firm, Hovercraft Development Ltd., are working on the development for overland transport of a vehicle using the principle of movement on air cushions, successfully applied on waterborne craft. The vehicle will propel itself along a monorail by means of a new form of electric traction—the linear induction motor—which provides direct locomotion without the use of wheels or rotating parts. It will support itself on air cushion pads which will keep it in position on but not in contact with the rail. The monorail will possibly be in the form of an inverted T supported by concrete pylons, though various forms of track are being tried at HDL's research establishment at Hythe in Southern England.

The 'hovertrain', as it is called, is felt to hold great possibilities for faster and more efficient overland transport.

Projects on which HDL is at present working aim at two distinct types of train: one for fast travel between major centres, moving at speeds of over 250 miles per hour, and another for slower movements over shorter distances or between centres of secondary importance. The ability of the high speed hovertrain to start and complete its

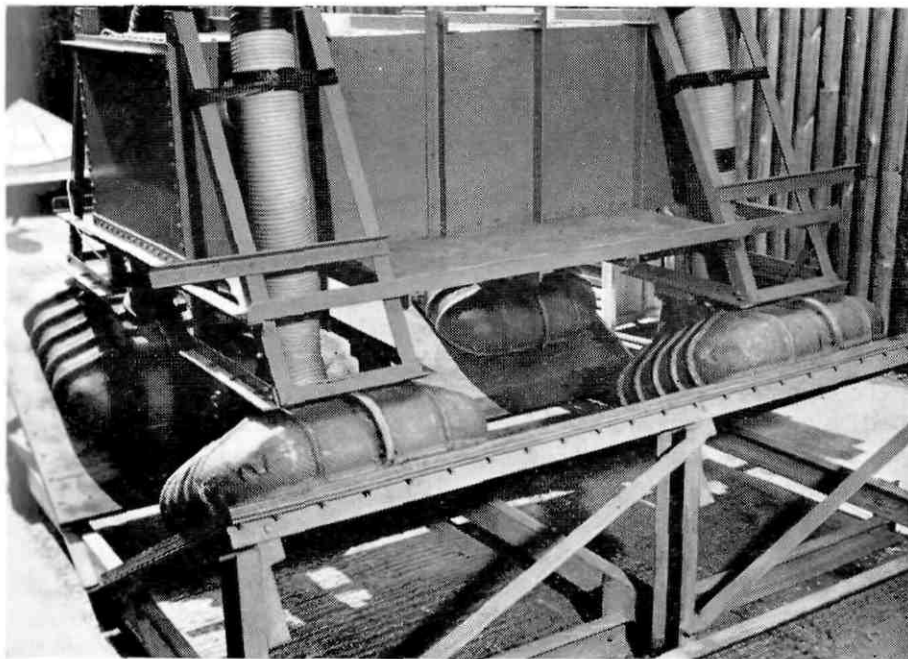
journeys in city centres, coupled with the capacity to maintain a high average speed will lower the total time for journeys of up to 500 miles to below that attainable by airline travel. The slower, smaller versions will be much faster than conventional transport and will provide a very high frequency service.

Studies carried out by HDL's Tracked Hovercraft Group have shown the system to be technically feasible and economically attractive. Fares would

compare favourably with the cost of present day rail travel. Hovertrains would be fitted with a completely automatic and fail-safe control system which would enable them to operate under all weather conditions, including zero visibility.

Work is also in progress in France on the development of a hovertrain. In fact French engineers are ahead of the British in their research. The Société d'Etudes de l'Aérotrain built and tried out a model hovertrain with enough success to arouse the interest of the French Government, and obtain aid from public funds to continue its research. Work is so far advanced that a man-carrying vehicle has been built, able to carry four passengers, a driver and a technician. During trials it has reached the speed of 84 mph, running on a pre-stressed concrete track in the form of an inverted T. The air cushion is supplied by two 50 horsepower blowers. It acts not only against the flat of the track but also against the upright section, to provide stability on curves or against winds and other laterally acting forces. Unlike its projected British counterpart, the French hovertrain vehicle will be propelled by a 250 horsepower motor driving a propeller mounted at the back. The designers are, however, thinking in terms of ultimately using the linear motor.

Although the project is still in its early experimental stages, many features of a fully operational French hovertrain, travelling at 250 mph, can be indicated. Each car will have its own air compression system designed in two units, each capable of bearing the vehicle should the other fail. Metal skids will take the weight of the cars when the train is not in service. They might also be used as a third braking system, supplementing negative thrust from a reversed propeller and the action of metal jaws which grip the centre rail.



*One of the test rigs being used by Hovercraft Development Ltd. in Britain to examine the performance of air cushions on a 'V' type track. Other types of track include the inverted 'T' variety. (HDL Photo)*



## AN AFFIRMATION OF LABOUR RIGHTS

### *The verdict of the Canadian Freedman Report on railway closures*

THE FREEDMAN REPORT on the issues behind the run-through dispute of 25 October 1964 on the Canadian National Railway system, has been hailed by the ITF-affiliated Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers as 'Labour's Magna Carta'. Three United States affiliates with locals in Canada — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen — issued a joint statement praising the Report's vindication of the railwaymen's case. The Report gives complete

support to the employees' right to consultation on all matters which are likely to affect their conditions of employment, and in particular on changes arising from alterations to operating practices due to technological developments.

The dispute of 25 October 1964, affecting mainly trainboard employees, had arisen as a result of the CNR Management's decision to eliminate the train servicing stations at Nakina, Ontario, and Wainwright, Alberta. These two depots and other similar ones had been established in the days of steam motive power, when it was

considered necessary to service locomotives at intervals of approximately 150 miles. The CNR management decided that with the changeover to diesel-electric motive power many of the servicing depots were no longer required. It has plans to close down 15 of the old terminals in a 3-5 year scheme which it is estimated would save nearly \$1 million per year in operating costs. The first phase of the scheme was due to start on 25 October 1964, but at midnight on 24 October more than 2,800 train-crew men booked off duty sick in protest against the way in which the

The Canadian Railway Labor Executives' Association recently made a series of recommendations on legislative improvements, one of which calls for negotiations on measures likely to lead to loss of jobs. Leaders of Canadian RLEA unions, seen here in conversation with the Prime Minister, Lester Pearson (far left), are (l to r): Charles Smith (CRLEA Chairman), W. G. McGregor (Trainmen), J. H. Huneault (Maintenance of Way Employees), A. R. Gibbons (Firemen and Enginemen), and R. C. Smith (Transport-Communications Union). (Labor Photo)



plan was to be implemented. The strike virtually paralyzed the Railway.

The Government agreed to a proposal by the CNR to hold an inquiry into the stoppage. The CNR said that it would suspend its run-through scheme pending the outcome of the inquiry and the striking train-crews returned to work on the following day.

Mr. Justice Samuel Freedman of the Manitoba Court of Appeal was appointed to make the one-man inquiry. His Report is a document of the greatest importance not only to the Canadian Railway trade unions, but to labour in every field of industry where technological developments lead to large-scale reorganization of working methods.

The Report deduced that the main cause of tension between CNR and its employees was the insistence of the Company that it alone had the right to decide on matters of policy and that changes in operating practices such as the run-throughs were not matters for negotiation between it and the organizations representing the employees. The Report recognizes that on the basis of the law and existing practice the Company does in fact have the right to change its working methods to suit its policies. It recommends, however, that this right should no longer be recognized. The principle on which this recommendation is based is that of good citizenship by both companies and the organizations representing their employees. Companies should give communities every assistance in their efforts to adapt to new circumstances. Trade unions must recognize that developing technology means that changes in living and working conditions are inevitable and they must be prepared to co-

operate in adapting to new conditions. Judge Freedman says that the law must be amended to embody the principle of good citizenship and to require proper consultation between all parties concerned. He states: 'The present situation which permits management to make unilateral changes in working conditions during the contract period is a manifest inequity which clamours for attention and correction.' If management wishes to ensure continuous industrial unrest in any particular sector, the most certain way of doing it is to keep its employees ignorant of its development plans, thereby promoting feelings of insecurity.

Dealing with the particular case which had led to the setting-up of the Commission—the proposed run-throughs at Nakina and Wainwright—the Judge says with regard to Nakina the actual area in which the Company was willing to permit discussions was too limited. In the case of Wainwright the Company placed too much emphasis on their contention that the issue was not negotiable. The Commission considers that a company has obligations towards its employees when it is planning to alter its organization as a result of technological developments. The cost of protecting employees from adverse consequences is a proper charge against the benefits and savings of the scheme. In this instance the CNR was under

certain obligations to the railwaymen who would be disturbed. The Commission recommends that any employee who is required to change his place of residence should be compensated by the Company for any financial loss resulting. Moving costs on a door-to-door basis should be paid by the Company. Staff who have been employed for more than one year and are made redundant should receive severance pay of one or two types as set out in the Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Act. One type permits a monthly allowance calculated on average payment over the year preceding the loss of employment and continuing for a period determined by the length of employment, with a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 60 months. The alternative type would be a lump sum, again based on average pay, of a number of months—minimum 3, maximum 12—determined by the length of employment.

The Commission suggests standard procedure should be adopted when run-throughs are proposed in the future. The Company should give the trade unions 30 days' notice as a prelude to negotiations in each instance. As the effects of all run-throughs are not the same, either party should have the right to ask an arbitrator whether a proposed run-through would cause a material change in working conditions. If he decides it would not, the Company



Many changes have taken place on Canada's railways since this picture was taken. The fast transition from steam to diesel traction has caused redundancy. Now the Freedman Report affirms the right of workers to be consulted on industrial innovations which may cause loss of jobs. (NFB photo)

could carry on with its plans. If it would, the Company would have to withdraw its plans until the time came for the contract to be renegotiated.

In addition to notifying the Unions concerned, the Company should also notify the communities who are likely to be affected. The communities would then have the right to apply to the Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada (or alternatively to the Branch Line Rationalization Authority, if and when it is established) for a hearing on the proposals. The Board would decide when and how, rather than if, the plans should be carried out. It would then be the responsibility of the nation to ensure that the community did not suffer hardship.

The Commission's terms of reference also required it to make recommendations 'for general application to similar situations arising in future'. The Commission took the view that this meant any situation where technological developments are likely to have a material effect on working or living conditions. The parallel between run-throughs and technology is stressed repeatedly in the

Report. The findings of the Commission, therefore, are intended not only for application in the Railway industry but also in any industry where technology has made existing practices obsolete.

The CNR administration has already expressed its willingness to enter into discussions with the unions concerned to determine whether voluntary agreement can be reached without the need for legislation, but it is the fervent hope of Canadian Labour that the recommendations of the Freedman Report will be accepted by the Government and will eventually receive the recognition they deserve by being translated into legislation. If the Government shirks this responsibility or retreats in the face of business pressure, however, the consequence is likely to be increased disruption throughout the country as technology develops at an ever-faster pace. The Commission warns that a thing which is unfair should be corrected not perpetuated. It sees greater danger in failing to correct this unfairness than in acting to bring run-throughs within the realms of negotiation.

### New commuter experiment proposed in Amsterdam

AN AMSTERDAM firm is to try out a new fast transport service to bring private-car commuters into the centre of the city during peak hours. A fleet of ten buses will run daily during the morning and evening rush periods bringing the car drivers into the centre of the city from a point just outside, situated on one of the routes most heavily used by car-owners from the outskirts of Amsterdam to get to their work. The point from which the service will run has ample parking facilities. The idea is to bring the motorists into central Amsterdam as quickly as they could get in by car, at the same time relieving the streets of the congestion which private rush-hour motoring causes.

\* \* \* \*

### Five year plan will benefit Greek shipping industry

THE NEW FIVE YEAR plan recently published by the Greek Government promises important measures to help the Greek shipping industry. These include changes in the maritime taxation system and measures to cope with the shortage of seamen and are aimed at attracting Greek-owned ships to the Greek register and at increasing the Greek merchant fleet's contribution to the national economy.

\* \* \* \*

### State 'full crew' law upheld in US locomotive firemen's case

EARLIER THIS YEAR the United States Supreme Court found that Arkansas state legislation requiring firemen to be carried on locomotives operated in the State was valid. This decision was handed down on an action which the railway operating brotherhoods had brought appealing against the decision of a District Court that a Federal Law, enacted in 1963 and requiring compulsory arbitration on crew complement issues, applied in this case. The Supreme Court found that the Federal Law did not cancel out the Arkansas State Law. Other states with 'full crew' laws are: Ohio, New York, Indiana, Washington and Oregon.

(Continued from page 73)

more clearly discernable. Many union posts are occupied by individuals who have not come from industry, but have made their careers in the trade union movement out of inner conviction and the desire to see India free. By virtue of their origins and education the doors of the 'masters' were more readily opened to them than to union men of lower caste. Without their help the Indian trade union movement would still be in the very early stages of development. Thanks to the country's strenuous efforts in education — for both children and adults — the unions now have at their disposal an army of well educated officers, who understand very well what they are working to achieve. A gradual trend towards the disappearance of the man from outside becomes apparent in conversations with Indian union personalities. It would be of great advantage to the democratic trade union movement, in its striving for unity, if these outsiders did eventually withdraw.

Any discussion of the possibility of uniting the democratic unions starts off invariably with an excursion into the past and with accusations against the other side. One's partner in conversation then begins to admit the faults of his own side and declares himself in favour of unity — with the reservation of course that it does not come up for discussion before the next parliamentary elections. There is general optimism over the subsequent development of this issue, as over all matters which are being stored for future consideration.

This optimism is what most surprised me in India. It often has the ring of a pioneering spirit. Indians are aware of their difficulties but they also know that one day they will overcome them. In a country whose history and culture go back over thousands of years, what happens tomorrow is not so important. The important thing is that there will be a better future. I am happy myself to believe that there will be.

## Profile

**Bikas Majumder, General Secretary of the National Union of Seamen of India (Calcutta).**



BIKAS MAJUMDER WAS born in 1927. In his early teens he joined his country's struggle for independence, undergoing all the hardships and privations which this involved. In 1945 he entered the trade union movement, which in those days was closely identified with the liberation movement. For four years he worked to organize the engineering industry, leading three strikes and representing workers in two major industrial tribunals.

Independence in 1947 and the partition of the Indian Sub-continent into two nations — India and Pakistan — posed new problems for the labour movement. Communism, having taken advantage of the confused situation after partition, was becoming a threat to the democratic trade unions. Communists had virtually gained control of the waterfront in Calcutta. In December 1950 Majumder was approached by some seafarers, who were gravely concerned over trade union developments in the shipping industry, and asked to take on the job of reorganizing the Seamen's Union on democratic lines. The Union had fallen under Communist domination and, since the Communists were interested only in their political objectives, had ceased to function as a bona fide trade union at all.

While he was tackling this immense task the then General Secretary of the ITF, Omer Becu, visited India and helped Majumder lay the foundations of a single union for seamen in Calcutta and Bombay. The new National Union of Seamen of India was formed in 1953. There are now two separate organizations for Bombay and Calcutta. The Calcutta Union, of which Majumder is

General Secretary, now has a membership of 21,000 — out of a total of 24,000 working seamen in Calcutta.

As leader of the NUSI (Calcutta) Majumder has worked ceaselessly for the improvement of the Indian seaman's standard of living. (In 1957 the NUSI negotiated the first increase they had had since 1939.) His concern to see the abolition of abuses in seamen's recruitment practices in the port of Calcutta played a large part in the decision of the Indian Government to set up a Seamen's Employment Office in the port.

He has represented Indian seamen at a number of maritime conferences of the ILO. But he has also done a lot to further the ITF's activities in solving Asian seamen's problems. He has been a member of the Asian Seamen's Committee since it was set up in 1961. He went to Hong Kong for the ITF on two occasions in order to pave the way for increased international efforts to put a stop to the exploitation of Chinese seamen as cheap labour.

Bikas Majumder's work both at home and in the international movement bear witness to his stature as a trade union leader.

# THE JAPANESE SEAMEN'S STRIKE



ONCE AGAIN THE ALL JAPAN Seamen's Union has proved capable of working miracles — miracles which are, when described by the Union itself, just natural results of proper tactics and earnest efforts on the part of the membership, and as such not to be marvelled at. But people at large see it differently. When the strike was first threatened towards the end of last year, the circumstances seemed too formidable and unfavourable for the Union to proceed.

The determination to fight back was unusually strong in the shipowners' camp. They did not want to 'lose face' any more. For the past twenty years the owners had always eventually been obliged to bow before the firm determination of the Union. Should the Union make considerable gains in the present dispute, it would, by setting up a market price, directly affect the Spring Campaign for wage increases to be carried out this year by a number of trade unions throughout the country. This is why employers in general, and the Japanese Employers' Association in particular, spared no effort to back up the threatened shipowners.

Another factor that roused owners to take an extraordinarily firm stand is the peculiar situation in which they are placed at present. As a result of the last World War, Japan's merchant navy was reduced to almost nothing. And naturally owners did not have suf-

ficient funds to rebuild the shipping industry. Most of the money needed for building ships therefore came from bank loans. But the Government, recognizing the importance of maritime reconstruction, decided to subsidize the shipping industry by paying the banks the balance between the market rate of interest and the special rate applied to such loans.

This scheme is generally known as 'planned shipbuilding'. In other words the subsidies are paid within the limit of what has been planned by the Government and approved by the Diet.

In addition a Shipping Reconstruction and Consolidation Scheme has been in operation since June 1963. Based on more generous Government subsidies and deferment for five years of interest payments to the National Development Bank, this scheme makes it imperative for ocean-going shipowners and/or operators to amalgamate into larger concerns if they are to enjoy these benefits. Thus the major owner-operators have regrouped themselves into six shipping companies. (Smaller owners do not as a rule operate their ships, but lend them on charter to bigger operators.)

Having freed itself from suicidal competition and implemented a number of rationalized plans under the Scheme described above, the nation's shipping industry seems to have at last reached

a turning point with the prospect of prosperity ahead. The N.Y.K. Lines Co., for instance, has recently started paying a dividend on shares for the first time in the post-War period. Should the wage increases demanded by the Union be granted in full, owners and operators feared, such prosperity would be nipped in the bud.

It was rather unusual for them to combine their strength so resolutely. As early as in October last when the Union held its Annual Convention, they distributed hand bills among the delegates to the effect that the Union's 'extravagant demands' would lead to bankruptcy for a number of shipping companies and result in unemployment for seafarers. Newspapers and other means of mass communication were used to propagate the same argument.

Bonds amounting to nearly 30 billion Yen\* were collected from all the owners and operators concerned to form a strike protection fund! An owner or operator who forestalled others by coming to terms with the Union was to have his bond confiscated. This measure was taken in the light of past experiences in which some weak-kneed owners gave in prematurely, opening the way to an ultimate general agreement.

\*1,012 Yen = £1, and 360 Yen = \$1.00, approximately.



Were the seafarers' demands 'extravagant' as their employers claimed? Were they not a contribution to the task of maritime reconstruction? Let us see how the Union came out with these demands and why it had to resort to strike action. Seafarers' wages are negotiated every other year, usually in autumn. The existing wage rates had been negotiated in November 1963. Last year, however, due to the acute inflation prevailing, they had to negotiate a temporary increase in the spring. (The inflationary trend in Japan has for the past few years been sharper than in any other country, except perhaps in a few Latin American countries. During 1965, for example, the cost of living went up by about 7.7 per cent.) After some negotiations, owners agreed to grant them a flat increment of 3,000 Yen a month plus 5 per cent on each individual rate of pay. The total amounted to something like 4,150 Yen a month on average for those employed in the four major owners' groups. (The figures quoted here are only applicable to such seafarers. Wages paid by smaller owners and fishing companies are less favourable.) But inflation was growing at such a rate that the temporary increment was quickly swallowed up by the rising cost of living. That was why the All-Japan Seamen's Union's Annual Convention, last October, unanimously approved the Executive's proposals concerning demands for wage increases. These demands centred around an average monthly increase of 9,805 Yen including the temporary increment, or 5,655 Yen excluding it. The answer given by owners during negotiations that followed the Convention was always that they could not add a cent to what had been granted since the spring of the same year (1965). They showed no sign of concession. Apparently, they were determined to give 'the conceited Union' a good thrashing this time.

The Union found no alternative but to resort to industrial action in order to break the deadlock. The issue was referred to the membership. More than 94 per cent of those who voted approved of the proposed strike.

It is worth noting in this connection that the Seamen's Union always takes a vote of its entire membership in such cases, whilst in many other unions in Japan the Annual Convention mandates the Central Executive to call a strike whenever the latter finds it proper to do so. Where a membership vote has been taken the workers regard the strike as their own affair. They are inclined to attach more importance to it and to make a greater effort to achieve success, than if the decision had not been their own.

But even before the commencement of the strike, the four owners' groups warned the Union that they would withdraw the check-off concession.

The Union promptly denounced this proposal of the owners on the ground that the agreement under which check-off is practised was still in force. Some owners went to such extreme measures as stopping the payment of wages for the month of November and refusing the remittances of families whose breadwinners were at sea. (In Japan wages are usually paid monthly.) In retaliation against such unfair labour practices the Union tied up the ships of the owners concerned even before the strike.

The official strike started on 27 November 1965 and came to an amicable end on 31 January 1966. The dispute lasted for 65 days altogether, but the strike itself was split up into four 'waves'.

As a seafarers' strike it was the biggest both in scale and importance ever carried out in Japan and, indeed, in the whole of the world. In fact the strike began seriously to affect the national economy. (Important commodities, such as petroleum and iron ore, are imported from abroad almost exclusively. And coastal shipping is responsible for about 42 per cent of goods transported nationally.) People feared that the strike would intensify the inflation which had become critical. As the sponsor of the Shipping Reconstruction and Consolidation Scheme and the payer of the shipbuilding subsidies, the Government tried various ways of expediting a settlement of the dispute, apparently, however, with more concern for the interests of the shipping industry (i.e. owners).

Under such circumstances, the Union had to pay scrupulous attention to public opinion. (In Japan, perhaps as in many other countries, people in general do not adopt a very enlightened attitude to fundamental trade union rights. At the time of a strike, they are more concerned about their own inconvenience than about the interests of the striking workers.) Thus certain types of ships — such as passenger ships, emigration ships, ships called upon to perform rescue services, etc. — were not tied up. By the same token, crew members' services in the unloading or loading of certain types of goods — of fresh food and dangerous goods, for example —

Strike	Duration	No. of ships ultimately held
Pre-strike action (Protest against unfair labour practices)	26 November	83
1st wave	27 Nov.- 6 Dec.	1,050
2nd wave	7 Dec.-18 Dec.	434
3rd wave	19 Dec.-25 Dec.	1,455
4th wave	25 Jan.-31 Jan.	353
Number of members who participated in the strike ...	...	72,276
Number of shipping and fishing companies affected ...	...	648
Number of ships affected ...	...	2,414
Loss suffered by owners ...	demurrage ...	Y6,000 million
...	use of foreign ships ...	Y12,000 million
...	suffered by coastal trade ships up to the end of 3rd wave ...	Y600 million

were not withdrawn. Safety watchers were left on board ships to guard against disasters.

The fact that the strike was conducted in the form of 'waves' showed that the Union was ready to resume peaceful negotiations whenever possible. The return to work between each successive 'wave' was proof enough of the Union's willingness to abandon the strike if a satisfactory basis for negotiations were found. And as a matter of fact, several talks, official and unofficial, were conducted throughout the whole period. The Union's top leaders also met with the Transport Minister and with a representative of the Government Party, Mr. Kuraishi, former Minister of labour, both of whom were charged with the task of bringing about a possible settlement to the maritime dispute. These talks, however, did not produce any tangible results, since owners, clinging doggedly to their original stand that they could add nothing to the temporary increment, did not come out with a new proposal on which negotiations for detailed terms might be carried on.

In the meantime, on 23 December 1965 a Conciliation Committee, formed within the framework of the Maritime Labour Relations Commission, presented each side with a conciliation plan providing for an additional 1,200 Yen, on average, to be added to the temporary increment. Both the Union and the two groups of coastal shipowners rejected the plan. But the other two groups of ocean-going ship owners indicated acceptance on condition that

- 1) the Union also accepts it;
- 2) the Union co-operates with owners in the matter of rationalization — i.e. reduced manning and, in particular, retrenchment of wireless operators; and
- 3) the Union promises not to demand further increases during the life of the present agreement.

One thing the Union feared most of all was the possibility of Government intervention, with the Prime Minister exercising his prerogative to declare an

emergency adjustment, under Article 38 of the Labour Relations Adjustment Law which states:

When it has been publicized that an emergency adjustment has been decided upon, the parties concerned shall not resort to any act of dispute for 50 days from the day of its publication.

And it is generally known that such a freezing period always works in favour of the employers concerned.

It was very wise of the Union therefore to have exempted coastal trade ships from the third wave of the strike and to have provided for a prolonged interval between the third and fourth wave. In Japan the New Year (usually the first five days of a year) is celebrated on a larger scale than in Western countries and towards the end of the old year people do their New Year shopping. Quite a big portion of the merchandise for these purchases is carried by ships. The above-mentioned concessions were made so that the Union might not become too unpopular. There were cases, however, where organizers had to be sent from Headquarters to urge strikers to be patient.

When the strike was resumed in its fourth wave, people felt that the end was just round the corner. Major ocean-going shipowners who actually control the shipping industry began to feel that some sort of concession on their part could not be avoided. While the fourth wave of the strike was still in progress, vigorous efforts were made to adjust differences. It was ironical indeed that the major shipping companies found it difficult to talk the smaller (coastal trade) owners round, whose financial position was much weaker and who threatened the former that their bonds deposited in the strike protection fund would have to be forfeited should they insist on an 'impossible' settlement.

The Union, for its part, too, had to give consideration to various factors which were coming into play, namely the possibility of government intervention, an unfavourable public opinion in the event of the Union's maintaining

an intransigent attitude, and the like.

Thus at long last, on 30 January, the parties came to terms. The average monthly increase agreed amounted to about US\$20, or more than 70 per cent of the original demand, though it was only applicable to the 'four major groups'. The strike was called off at 8 a.m. on 31 January.

In the coastal trades, however, the dispute dragged on well into February. The Union had a series of talks with the National Coastal Shipowners' Association, but the two parties reached deadlock. The Union reduced its demands for coastal seafarers to 4,732 Yen, but even this was rejected by the owners. The Union had no alternative but to call a strike, on 17 February, against the 326 coastal owners, tying up 336 vessels. The small coastal vessel owners soon agreed to the Union's demands and the strike was called off eleven hours after it had begun.

The Union does not claim that the strike was a great success. There is even a certain amount of dissatisfaction among both members and leaders at what has been achieved. Nevertheless the Union was applauded on its victory. Some valuable lessons were learned and the nation was impressed by the Union's determination, fighting spirit, clever strategy and high standard of discipline. These things, so necessary for a good union, are not so easily accomplished.

The strike was supported not only by the national centre, Domei, to which AJSU is affiliated, and its member unions but also by many unions belonging to another centre, Sohyo, including Sohyo itself, as well as by independent unions in Japan. Quite a number of workers' organizations in overseas countries, too, showed strong solidarity, pledging moral and material support.

It is reported that the Union had spent as much as 3,000 million Yen from its Strike Fund by the end of the third wave of the strike. It was decided that a special levy of 5,000 Yen should be collected from each member to help fill the gap. This is expected to add 650 million Yen to the Fund.

*(Continued on page 92)*



*The story of the Japanese seamen's strike told in pictures. The above four pictures show (top left) the Union negotiating with the ocean-going shipowners, (top right) representatives of the Union's branches discussing strike tactics, (bottom left) one of the Union's motor boats visiting a struck ship, (bottom right) a union meeting held on board ship. The picture on the left shows seamen's wives playing their part in making the strike a success. The two pictures below show (left) strikebound ships outside the port of Yokohama and (right) a union worker at the AJSU headquarters recording the number of ships held in various ports up and down Japan's coastline.*



# News from the Regions

## Argentinian union wants 'truckers' statute'

THE ARGENTINIAN ROAD TRANSPORT Workers' Union, impatient with the Government's continued failure to introduce legislation to regulate working conditions in road transport, has itself prepared a Bill which it hopes the Argentinian legislature will enact into law. The Bill, which the Union calls 'the Truckers' Statute', aims to control such things as working hours, loading and unloading operations, minimum rest periods, and the like. It has been formulated to protect the health and maintain the safety of the road transport workers themselves and at the same time to serve the best interests of the nation's transport system.

Announcing the Bill, Ricardo Pérez, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Road Transport Workers' Union, which is also a member of the Argentinian Transport Workers' Confederation (CATT), pointed out that legislation of this kind was long overdue in Argentina. It was inconceivable, in view of the extent to which road transport had grown in the country, that the Government had still not enacted legislation to regulate such things as working conditions and working hours of drivers. The Union's Bill was designed to establish for the first time standards which will ensure decent basic working conditions in the industry and which, at the same time, will bring some degree of order into one of Argentina's most

vital means of transport, till now wholly given over to disorganized operation by private interests. This anarchical situation will continue to grow more acute as the industry develops, says Pérez, for as long as the Government fails to introduce measures to enforce some kind of rational control. The Union hopes that, even if legislation is not the immediate result, Congress will at least discuss the Bill at some time in the not too distant future.

As soon as the Road Transport Workers' Union's legislative proposals were announced, the ITF conveyed to the authorities in Argentina its support for the 'Truckers' Statute'. The ITF will continue to back its affiliate's efforts to secure the realization of the Argentinian road transport workers' legitimate aspirations.

\* \* \* \*

## Rhodesian union starts credit scheme

RHODESIA'S STRONGEST AFRICAN trade union, the Railway African Workers' Union, has recently launched a credit society for the benefit of its 17,000 members. Members who have paid the £5 fee required to join the scheme can claim assistance from the society's funds—in cash or kind—whenever they need it.

The RAWU launched its Credit Union Society, with 30 members paying the £5 joining fee, in Umtali, where the first branch was opened. The rest of the membership will pay the joining fee by instalments deducted from their monthly wages until the whole of their £5 fee has been paid. The headquarters of the Society, which has been registered in Rhodesia but not yet in Zambia, is in Bulawayo, where it will have its Rhodesian banking account. Another headquarters will be established in Broken Hill, Zambia, where the society will also have a banking account. Other branches will be opened in various parts of Rhodesia and Zambia, as the Society grows.



## Brazilian transport workers' leader tours the US

MARIO LOPES DE OLIVEIRA, President of the Brazilian Land Transport Workers' Confederation (CNTTT), has been touring the United States. In the course of his trip he has had several meetings with US trade union leaders and Government personalities. Here he is at the headquarters of the Railway Labor Executives' Association (RLEA) in Washington, conferring with Lester Zosel (left), International Representative of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, and Leslie Dennis (right), Assistant to the Executive Secretary of the RLEA.

A full-time organizer for the scheme has been appointed. He is 28-year-old Constantine Musikiwe, who has worked with the RAWU for some time in different capacities. Ananiah Mwanza, the Union's General Secretary, explaining the purpose of the Credit Union Society, said: 'We devised the scheme because we feel that union members should have something to lean back to when they are in trouble'.

\* \* \* \*

### United labour movement in Trinidad

THE TRINIDAD LABOUR movement, for a long time split into two dissenting trade union centres, has now regrouped itself into a single central trade union organization, the Trinidad and Tobago Labour Congress. The new T&TLC was formed on 6 March under the Presidency of Woodrow Wilson Sutton. A General Secretary was still to be chosen, but Joseph Grannum, of the ITF-affiliated Caribbean Air Transport Trade Union, was appointed Deputy General Secretary, and George Munroe, of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union, another ITF affiliate, was appointed one of the trustees.

\* \* \* \*

### Vietnamese fishermen help war relief

LAST YEAR SEVERAL million people living in the rural areas between Saigon and Da-Nang in South Vietnam were living under the threat of slow starvation. The war had disrupted transport routes and cut off vital supply lines. A US trade unionist working in Vietnam got the idea of calling on members of the Vietnamese Fishermen's Federation to help out by using their junks — till then used almost exclusively for fishing — for transporting supplies from the congested ports to the hard-pressed areas further north. The Federation agreed and a contract was signed between the Fishermen and the United States Operations Mission (USOM) in Vietnam for the transport of food cargoes. The placing of 400 junks under contract to the USOM, as agent of the South Vietnamese Government, has increased the earnings of the Federation's members and has helped to keep the nation's lifelines open.



### Education and Organization Combined in Venezuelan Campaign

AT THE BEGINNING OF this year the Venezuelan National Transport Workers' Federation (FEDETRANSPORTE) and the ITF together embarked on a major campaign to organize transport workers in Venezuela and swell the ranks of FEDETRANSPORTE's constituent unions. The aim is to strengthen existing unions and create new ones. This nationwide programme had been planned in detail in advance by President Humberto Hernández and the Executive Committee of FEDETRANSPORTE, with the co-operation of the ITF's Regional Director for Latin America, Jack Otero, and his assistant Medardo Gomero. It took place in two stages: the first two months — January and February — were devoted to educational activities, after which began the organization campaign proper.

The first stage of the campaign consisted of two trade union education projects, which have already been reported in the March issue of the *Journal*. The first of these seminars took place in Barquisimeto (Western Venezuela) from 24 to 29 January 1966, the second at the 'Los Caracas' workers' holiday centre about 45 miles from the capital, Caracas, in Central Venezuela. They were attended by union officials at all levels and from all parts of the country. The subjects dealt with included: organizing techniques, structure of the Venezuelan trade union movement, public speaking, parliamen-

Above: participants at the 'Los Caracas' Seminar. Below: ITF's Jack Otero gives a talk at the seminar in Barquisimeto. On his right is A. Salinas, Executive Board member of FEDETRANSPORTE.



tary procedure, labour relations and collective bargaining, labour law, and the international trade union movement.

These seminars had the effect of increasing the number of trained leaders and organizers at FEDETRANSPORTE's disposal, which was of immense benefit in the execution of the second stage of the campaign. The purely organizational activities, aimed at increasing the membership of democratic transport workers' unions in Venezuela and planned as the second stage in the ITF-FEDETRANSPORTE programme, began in 1 March, and it is confidently hoped that, once the campaign has run its full course, the position of FEDETRANSPORTE will be considerably strengthened.

### **Committee reports on railwaymen's pay in the Netherlands**

A COMMITTEE, SET UP to establish to what extent wages of railwaymen had fallen behind the general trend of wages in the Netherlands, the Van der Dussen Committee, has recently reported its findings.

According to the Committee's report, railway wages in the Netherlands have fallen, on an average, 10 per cent below comparable wages in other industries. The railwaymen's organizations are pressing for a 10 per cent increase, in order to make up for lost ground, and a further 7 per cent to keep with the general trend of wage demands expected this year. Over the past 10 years the labour force has been reduced by 15 per cent to 24,000, but productivity has risen by 22 per cent. Ever since the great Dutch rail strike of 1903, the railwaymen have been forbidden by law from striking and have thus not been able to back up their wage claims with the threat of possible industrial action. The signs now, however, are that the anti-strike law will soon be repealed. At a recent ceremony to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Personnel Council — a body, on which the unions are represented, working within the railway administration to deal with personnel matters — the Minister of Transport expressed the hope that the 63-year-old strike ban would soon be abolished.

*(Continued from page 88)*

The All-Japan Seamen's Union is especially grateful for the support of the ITF and its affiliated organizations all over the world. The Union repeatedly declared its readiness to extend the strike to foreign ports, if the owners maintained their unfair attitude. Through the ITF many seafarers' and dockers' organization pledged their co-operation, if needed. If the strike were to be extended to foreign ports, it would have become an international problem, and the owners dreaded this most of all. The solidarity shown by ITF affiliates, though practical action was not in the end necessary, certainly played its part in the settlement.

### **The driver carries the can**

JOHN BROWN, A TRUCK DRIVER from Nottingham, England, took out a vehicle with faulty brakes. He had reported to his boss on three different occasions that the brakes needed repairing, but no repairs were carried out. Finally he lost control of the brakes on a hill and ran down it, killing two adults and four children. He was brought to Court and found guilty of dangerous driving, though the judge said: 'I should have thought the employer's share of the blame was greater than the driver's, to send a lorry out in such a state.' The firm the driver worked for was in fact fined £50 plus £10 10s. costs and the transport foreman, in charge of maintaining the firm's vehicles — he had tried in vain to persuade his employer to repair three vehicles he considered to be in a dangerous condition — was fined £25 plus £15 costs. But the driver himself was fined £25 and banned from driving for 10 years. He suffered severe shock as a result of the accident, and was ultimately re-employed in a factory of the same firm on a wage £5 or £6 less than he was getting as a driver. The long-term hardship he and his family suffered as a result of his being banned from his trade for ten years was far greater than the fine exacted by the Court. As usual in a case like this, those who were really responsible did not have to pay the full penalty — for they had a scapegoat.

### **Coordination of transport in London**

A TRANSPORT COORDINATION Council for London was set up recently by the British Minister of Transport. The Council, composed of representatives of the trade unions, the city transport and national railway authorities and the Greater London Council, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Transport, has been formed to tackle the growing problems posed by the movement of goods and people in London. The various aspects of the Council's task, for which special working groups have been created, include coordination of the different means of transport and planning interchange facilities between

the different carriers (private car, train, bus and aeroplane).

The unions are represented on the Council by Harry Nicholas, Acting General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and Sidney Greene, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, both members of the ITF Executive Board.

\* \* \* \*

### **Canadian passenger train services to be run down**

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC Railway has submitted to a parliamentary committee on transport its plans for phasing out unprofitable passenger train services. Those which it intends to retain are the 'Canadian', which runs daily between Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, and the important inter-city connections in the east between Montreal and Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City, and Montreal and Saint John, N.B. But the CPR did not say exactly for how long these services would be maintained. Claiming a loss of \$201,800,000 on passenger services between 1958 and 1965, the CPR urged that the Federal Government act quickly on the proposal of the MacPherson Royal Commission on Transportation for a five-year plan to abandon all unprofitable passenger train services in the country. The parliamentary committee, to which the CPR has submitted its plans, has the job of deciding whether the CPR's passenger operations are adequate to meet the effective demands of travellers now and in the future.

\* \* \* \*

### **Norwegian Metal Workers' Union 75 years old**

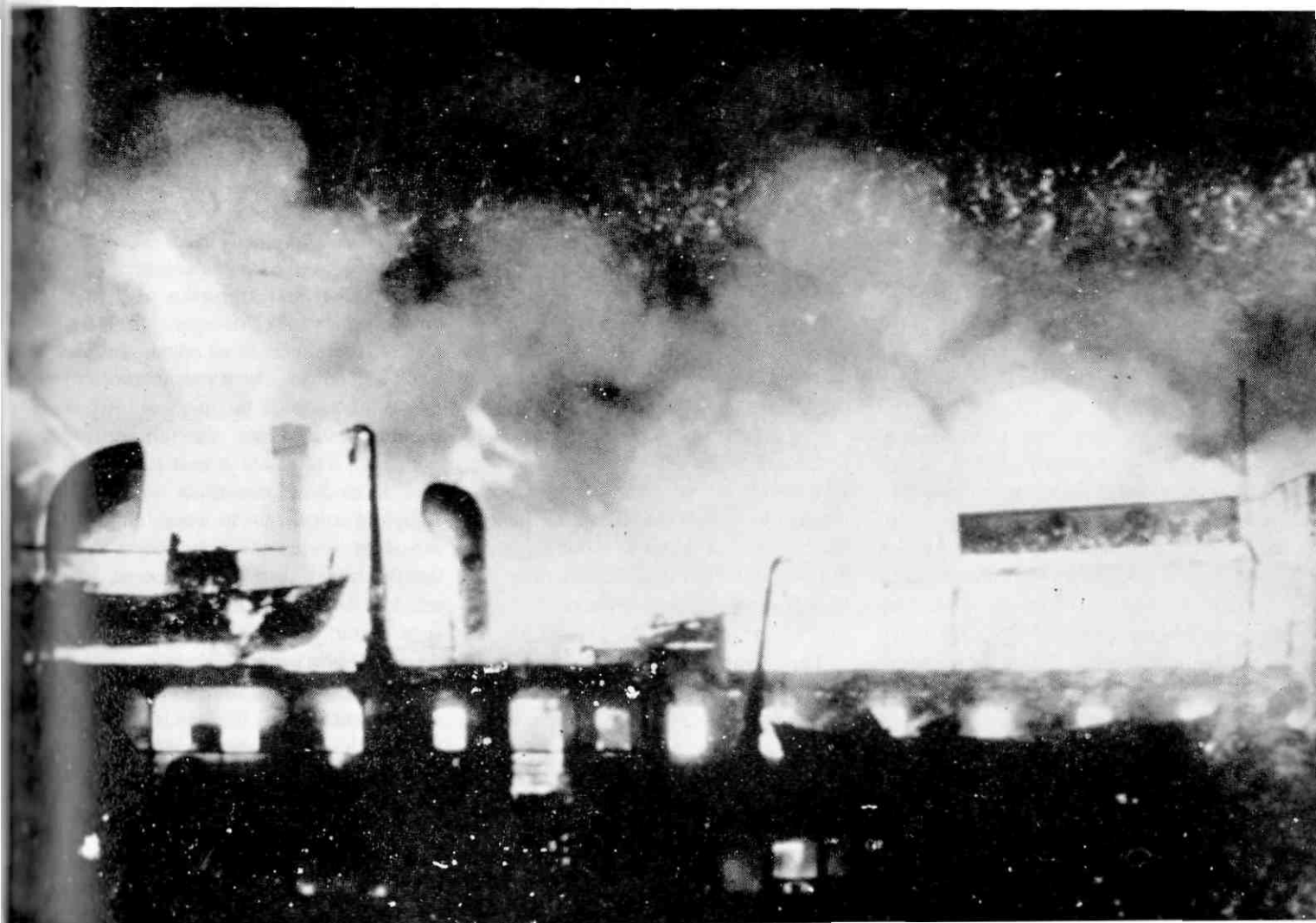
THE NORWEGIAN METAL Workers' Union, affiliated to the ITF for its civil aviation ground staff membership, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Four unions representing the various metal trades took the first step towards forming a single organization to cover the whole of the metal industry in Oslo on 28 February 1891. On 19 April that year the new union held its first national congress. Today 'Jern og Metall', with 78,000 members, is Norway's strongest trade union.

# FIRE AT SEA

*A taxi driver taking a passenger to board the Lakonia in December 1963 said: 'God help you', when he heard the ship's name. In an article published after the Lakonia went down in flames in the Atlantic, the NMU Pilot listed the Yarmouth Castle, two years later to suffer the same fate, as one of the 'floating fire-traps' operating cruises from US ports.*

AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE Maritime Safety Committee of the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) in London, the United States delegation submitted a paper on the need for urgent attention to be given to the question of fire protection aboard passenger ships. Recent fire disasters at sea had highlighted the need for measures to prevent such catastrophic loss of life and property as occurred, for example, in the *Lakonia* and *Yarmouth Castle* tragedies. Delegates saw a film of the *Yarmouth Castle* fire and, after hearing the United States proposals for amending the 1960 Safety of Life at Sea Convention so as to improve standards of protection against fire, agreed to convene a special session of the Committee to discuss the matter. The Thirteenth Session of the IMCO Maritime Safety Committee, to be held in London from 2 to 6 May, will thus be wholly devoted to the question of stricter precautions against fire aboard passenger ships.

The Committee's decision has not been made before time. The number of incidents which, given the right conditions, can start a blaze on board are legion. A spark produced by a short circuit in the electrical wiring system or a cigarette end which has not been properly put out are enough to turn some ships into blazing infernos within hours. Conditions which will aid the rapid spread of a fire are to be found on old passenger ships whose interiors contain large amounts of combustible materials. Walls, floors and furniture aboard such ships are not only made of wood, but are often varnished and polished with highly inflammable products. Furnishing fabrics used and the many coats of paint covering metal structures are likewise inflammable. These vessels are often not provided with fireproof partitions and fire doors which would enable a blaze to be confined in the part of the ship in which it started. Long airy corridors, hollow spaces behind panelling and under floor-



boards, air conditioning systems and stair wells, with no fire doors or fire-proof partitioning, are the channels by which a blaze can roar from stem to stern and from top to bottom in a matter of hours. A fire can spread under such conditions at the speed of a man's walk and can be beyond control before it is even discovered.

Many old ships built to such standards in the twenties and thirties have been reprieved from their overdue voyage to the scrap yard, bought by ship-owners eager to make a bit of easy money, repainted, patched up and put into service in the luxury cruise trade. Some of these vessels — which, if they were hotels ashore in countries with strict fire regulations, would be closed by the authorities — are so ramshackle from all points of view that no respectable maritime nation will register them. Witness the ill-fated *Yarmouth Castle*, which used to limp round the Caribbean, flying the Panamanian flag, with American holidaymakers from Miami, till she sank in flames on 13 November 1965 taking 88 of them with her to fiery or watery deaths.

The 5,000 ton *Yarmouth Castle* was built in 1927 as the *Evangeline*. She changed her name and owner five times during her long life. She had not sailed under the US flag since 1954. If she had continued to do so, she would never have been allowed out of port by the American Coastguard, for she could not have complied with the very stringent US maritime safety regulations. Provided foreign-flag vessels meet the minimum provisions of the International Safety of Life at Sea Convention, they cannot be stopped from carrying passengers out of American ports, though shipping experts shake their heads and wonder how some of them stay afloat.

Under flags of convenience vessels such as the *Yarmouth Castle* can also evade the high wages and good working conditions negotiated by the US maritime unions with national-flag ship-owners. Crews consist of poorly paid, ill-trained seamen with no notion of firefighting. On the *Yarmouth Castle* 40 per cent of the crew was inexperi-

enced and wages were between \$45 and \$90 a month. But there is little that even a crew with proper training can do if the firefighting and lifesaving equipment on board is inadequate or not in working order. Survivors of the disaster said that the ship's fire alarm had not sounded and that the overhead fire sprinklers had not worked. Many cabins had no life jackets and there had been no fire drills. Some of the lifeboats could not be lowered because the ropes had been painted. Only four were in fact lowered. The other ten had either been destroyed by fire or could not be moved. The ship only carried one radio officer, who was off duty at the time the fire broke out. The flames spread rapidly and the radio room had been destroyed before a distress signal could be sent. Five hours after the fire had started, the *Yarmouth Castle* sank.

The blaze which sent the *Lakonia* to the bottom on 22 December 1963, whilst on a cruise from Britain to the Canary Islands, started as a small fire in the hairdresser's salon. This outbreak might have been a minor incident, had the fireproofing installations and firefighting arrangements been adequate. The location but not the exact cause of the outbreak was determined on investigation. There were three possible causes: a lighted cigarette left burning in the barber's shop, a short circuit in one of the appliances, or spontaneous combustion of one of the inflammable cosmetic articles stored in the barber's cupboard.

The large quantities of inflammable materials kept there fed the flames and the blaze was soon roaring its way through the ship. The fire detection system did not operate and the loudspeaker system was out of action before warnings could be relayed. The crew fought the fire with courage and self-sacrifice, but without plan or co-ordination and clearly with no knowledge of firefighting.

The arrangements for abandoning ship also left much to be desired. The *Lakonia* had 24 lifeboats, quite adequate for the number of passengers on board. But their condition and that

of the lowering apparatus was deplorable. Many of them had rusted or had been painted fast to the davits and had to be hacked free. Some of them swung against the ship's side on being lowered and were damaged; some overturned in the water; others leaked badly. One passenger inspected the lifeboats shortly after the ship sailed from Southampton and remarked to his wife then: 'God help us if we have to go down in these.'

Preparations for the *Lakonia's* entry into the luxury cruise trade had apparently been hurried. Passengers reported seeing fitters still at work on her in Southampton two hours after she should have sailed.

Built in 1929, she gave her former Dutch owners many long years of service as the *Johan van Oldenbarnvelt* till they withdrew her and offered her for sale. The Greek Line bought her in December 1962 for £360,000 — just £90,000 more than she would fetch as scrap — and renamed her *Lakonia*. The Greek Line spent half a million refitting her and painting her up at a Genoa shipyard and rushed her over to Southampton for the Christmas 1963 cruise season. Last minute conversion jobs were done here to help her regain her lost youth, and she was off to the Canary Islands.

She was 'the painted ship', as David Marchbanks has so aptly titled his book on the *Lakonia* tragedy (Secker & Warburg, London 1964). The coloured brochures and lyrical itineraries may have done their job, but once on board not all the passengers were fooled by the paint and polish. There were many complaints about poor facilities and defective installations. But the ship carried the safety certificate which the Safety of Life at Sea Convention obliges all signatory countries to issue annually for ships under their registries. And the British Ministry of Transport, like the US Coastguard, has no power to stop a ship leaving port, if the safety certificate is in order.

In the Inquiry into the *Lakonia* disaster carried out by the Greek maritime authorities, gross negligence was attributed to the Captain, Matthew Zar-



bis. But was he to blame for the age of the ship or for the fact that the entire crew was new to her? Was he responsible for the standard of the firefighting equipment installed or for the extent to which fireproof materials had been used in her construction and subsequent conversion for the cruise trade?

The International Safety of Life at Sea Convention of 1960 lays down certain minimum standards of construction to ensure that any fires which may break out on board passenger ships should be prevented from spreading or should at least be quickly detected and extinguished. But it only applies to those vessels built since the Convention came into force. Ships built between 1948 and 1960 have to comply with the 1948 Convention, but it is left to the discretion of the shipping administrations of each country which signed the Conventions to decide which, if any, requirements should be met by ships built before 1948.

Thus it is that many floating tinder boxes built in the twenties and thirties, repainted and patched up many times, are still plying the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and other favourite sunshine seas as luxury cruise liners.

The disaster of the *Morro Castle*, which went down in flames off the coast of New Jersey in 1934 with the loss of 121 lives, shocked the United States into tightening up her maritime safety regulations. Today they are reputed to be the most stringent in the world. There are strict design rules to which US flag ships must be built. Bulkheading and partitioning must be such that fires can be confined easily. Electrical installations must meet high insulation standards; fire doors, load lines, sprinkler and detection systems are closely specified; and extensive firefighting equipment is required. Furniture and furnishing fabrics must be made of fire-resistant materials: the use of wood is rigidly restricted.

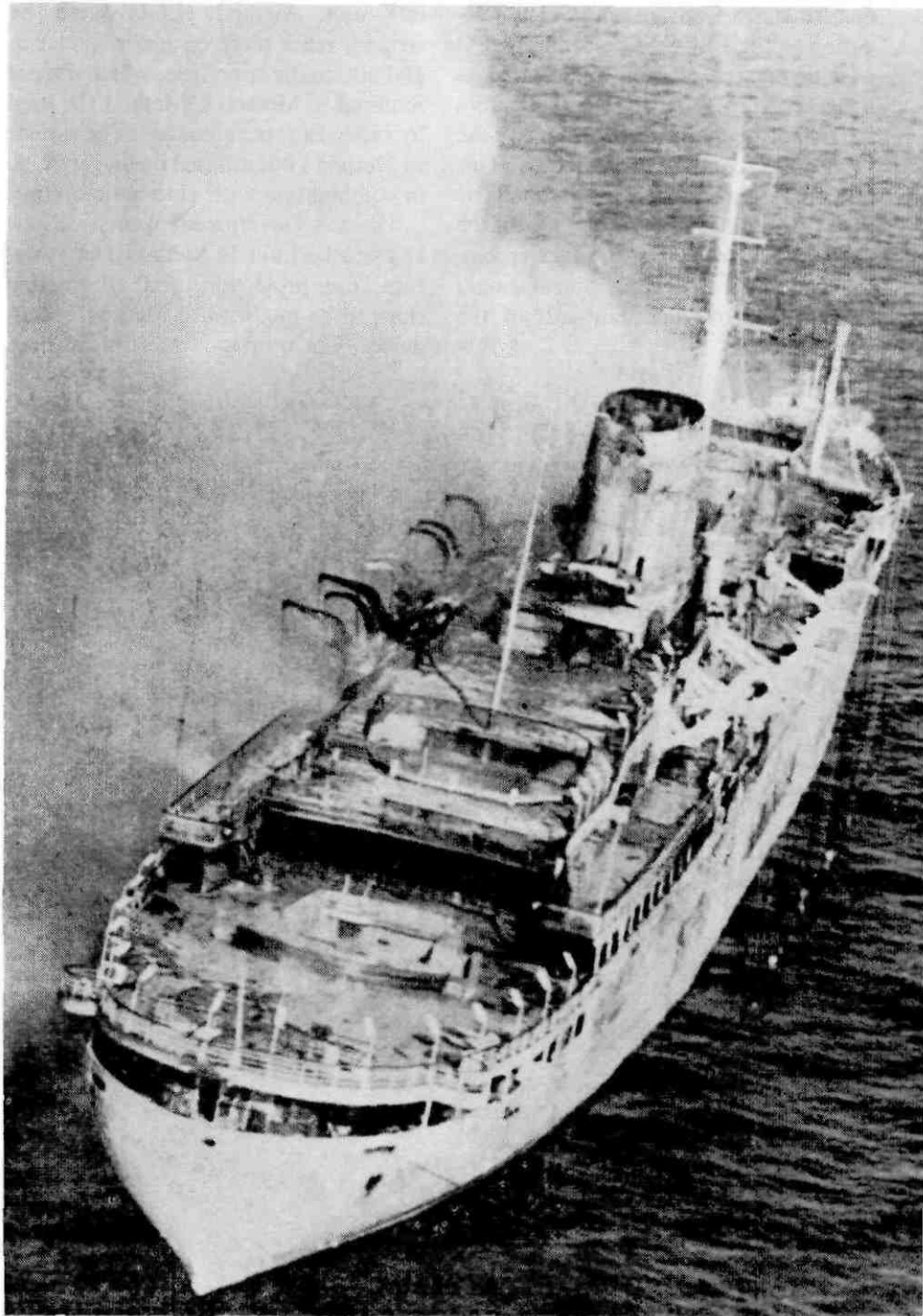
US shipbuilders have virtually eliminated the use of wood as a construction material. On the transatlantic liner *United States* the only permanent wooden installations are the

butcher's block in the galley and the grand piano in the lounge.

The National Maritime Union of America has for many years been carrying on a campaign against the 'fly-by-night' shipowners who use old unsafe ships under foreign flags in the luxury

cruise trade. At the time of the *Lakonia* disaster the NMU's newspaper *Pilot* published an article entitled 'Floating firetraps', listing a few of these vessels which operated out of American ports. Among them was the *Yarmouth Castle* (still the *Evangeline* at that time). When

*The Norwegian cruise liner, Viking Princess, caught fire in the Caribbean just before Easter this year. The disaster was less tragic than previous ones: only two people lost their lives (both suffered heart attacks). Norwegian ships are built to high standards of safety and their seamen are well-trained, but the US maritime unions want their Government to stop all foreign ships taking passengers out of American ports, unless they conform to US maritime safety standards.*  
(Associated Press picture)



she went down last November, the Union stepped up its campaign, using all possible means to alert prospective passengers to the risks they bought along with their cheap cruise tickets.

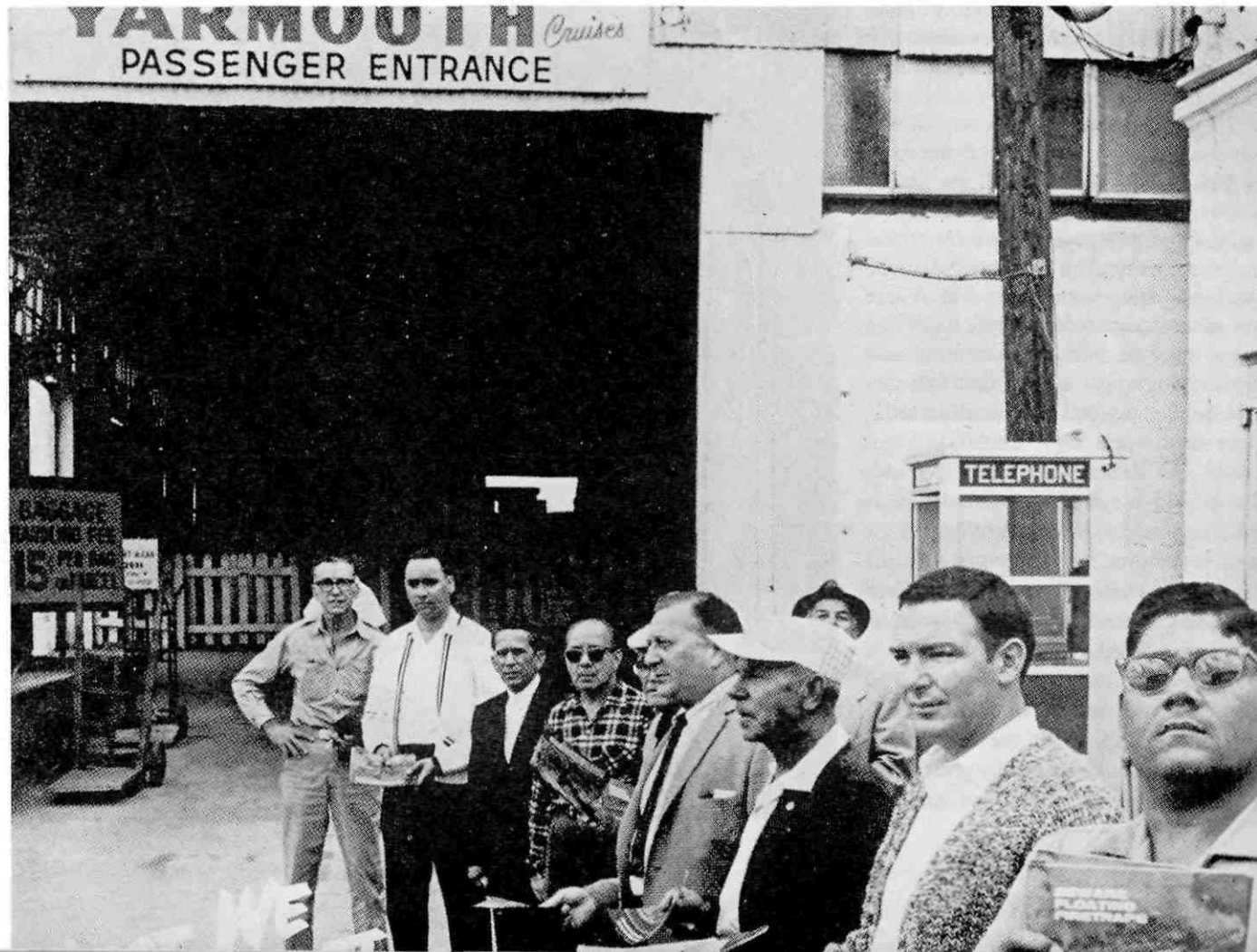
The United States Government has now decided to take the initiative in tightening up international regulations aimed at minimizing the danger of fire at sea, particularly on board passenger vessels. In a statement supporting its proposals for amending the 1960 Safety of Life at Sea Convention, the US delegation to the 12th Session of the IMCO Maritime Safety Committee declared its belief that IMCO had 'no task more important or more urgent than to take immediate action on this problem'. This initiative was recently underlined by the report of the US Coastguard on the *Yarmouth Castle* disaster, which recommended that the US Government should seek to improve the standards of the Convention.

The American proposals are directed at removing the escape clause which allows individual governments to pass unsafe ships built before either the 1948 or the 1960 Convention came into effect, and at removing the choice between the three methods of structural fireproofing provided by the Convention. Method I, used by American shipbuilders, requires that each section of a ship down to the smallest compartment be built as a self-contained incombustible unit. Method II, favoured by Britain, relies more on sensitive alarms and automatic sprinklers, which are not required in Method I. Method III, used by other European countries, is similar to Method I but is based on bigger units, in combination with automatic alarms.

The US Government wants all new ships to be built to Method I of structural fire protection, and all existing ships to be modified to Method I standards. The proposals are drastic ones

— aimed at tackling a drastic situation. If the Safety Convention is amended accordingly, the ships of reputable maritime nations, who consider their regulations concerning protection against fire on board to be quite adequate, will have to be entirely rebuilt and standard designs used in ship construction will have to be scrapped. Whether the structural fire protection regulations in the Safety of Life at Sea Convention are tightened up in line with American wishes will depend on the outcome of next month's meeting of the Maritime Safety Committee of IMCO. But whatever action the Committee decides to take, it should be aimed above all at irresponsible shipowners and shipping nations who merely pay lip service to international conventions and operate vessels of any age and in any condition, making sure only that the ship carries a safety certificate and that she is presentable enough to attract passengers.

*The cover picture of the NMU Pilot of January 1966 showed members of an old people's club joining NMU members in distributing 'Floating Firetrap' leaflets where they could do most good — outside the berth from which the Yarmouth Castle's sister ship, Yarmouth, was still operating cruises in Miami, Florida.*



# International Transport Workers' Federation

General Secretary: HANS IMHOF

President: HANS DÜBY

**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
- 330 affiliated organizations in 83 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 \* Congo \* Costa Rica  
Curaçao \* Cyprus \* Denmark \* Dominican Republic  
Ecuador \* 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 \* Mauritius \* Mexico \* The  
Netherlands \* New Zealand \* Nicaragua \* Nigeria \* Norway  
Pakistan \* Panama \* Paraguay \* Peru \* Philippines \* Poland  
(Exile) \* Republic of Ireland \* Republic of Korea \* Rhodesia  
St. Lucia \* Senegal \* Sierra Leone \* South Africa \* South  
Vietnam \* Spain (Illegal Underground Movement) \* Sweden  
Switzerland \* Taiwan \* Trinidad \* Tunisia \* Turkey \* Uganda  
United Arab Republic \* United States of America \* Uruguay  
Venezuela \* Zambia

editions of journal

**International Transport Workers' Journal**

**Internationale Transportarbeiter-Zeitung**

**ITF Journal (Tokyo - Japanese version)**

**Transporte**

**ITF-aren**



publications  
for the  
world's  
transport  
workers

editions  
of newsletter

**Informationsblad**

**Informationen**

**Informations**

**Boletín de Noticias (Lima)**

**Newsletter**