

International Transport Workers' Journal

6-7



in this issue

This is a special issue to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the ITF. It contains articles describing the International's various activities since it was founded in 1896 and a number of contributions from personalities intimately connected with the ITF over the years.

International Transport Workers' Journal

6-7

Monthly Publication of the ITF

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Cover picture: The earliest pictorial record of an ITF meeting, showing delegates to the London Congress in 1898, at which the name of the organization was changed to International Transport Workers' Federation. Centre with stick is Tom Mann. In the second row on Mann's immediate left are Charles Lindley and Havelock Wilson. Tom Chambers is second from right in back row.

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



The ITF's younger generation. Hans Imhof congratulates the winner of an international young railwaymen's skiing championship.

and the need to tackle a variety of new and challenging problems has ensured that it has remained young, active and dynamic at all stages of its development. During its seven decades of existence, the ITF has had its successes and its failures (the former much more numerous than the latter); has made its mistakes and has learned from them. All that it has learned and experienced has been put to practical use; has been refined, distilled and placed at the service of the transport workers which it represents.

SEVENTY YEARS YOUNG!

WHEN A MAN has reached the age of 70 — the three score years and ten of the Bible — he is already considered to be old and usually has the active part of his life behind him. The knowledge and experience which he has acquired during that period can only very rarely be put to practical use any more, and most men are content to spend their final years in retirement and to live on their memories.

All this, however, is not necessarily true of an organization formed by human beings to represent their interests as a group. In fact, in the case of an organization like the ITF the very reverse is the case. Throughout its history, our Federation has been continuously evolving, constantly adapting its store of knowledge and experience to deal with new tasks and new situations, and always adding more progressive ideas and more modern methods to its stock of working tools.

The ITF's story has been one of regular and healthy rejuvenation. The injection of new trends, fresh blood

And what a rich variety of experience it has had! The ITF was there when the very first strikes of the then newly-organized seamen, dockers and other transport workers took place during the final years of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. It was there because, even then, it was actively engaged in supporting and leading those early battles, without which the transport workers' trade union movement would not exist today. Its leaders and collaborators at that time included some of the greatest names in the trade union movement and read almost like a roll of honour: Andrew Furuseth of the United States; Johann Döring and Paul Müller of Germany; Charles Lindley from Sweden; Havelock Wilson, Tom Mann and Ben Tillet of Britain; August Forstner and Karl Weigl of Austria; Brautigam and Oudegeest of Holland, and many, many others. In the company of such men, the ITF took part in bitter struggles for a living wage and decent conditions in almost

all the countries of the Old and New Worlds — at a time when the ideas of international brotherhood and solidarity and even the very notion of an effective trade union movement, operating internationally as well as nationally, were still quite novel.

The very first successful international seamen's strike for example — that of 1911 in Great Britain, Holland and Belgium — had its origins in a decision taken at an ITF Congress and our Federation played a major rôle in assisting and organizing international support for the strikers. By a strange coincidence, as this article is being written, the ITF is again supporting its British seamen colleagues in what is their first national stoppage since the great strike of 1911. In other words, although conditions have changed very much during the intervening half century, and although the work of trade unions has become more complex, more sophisticated and in many ways less clear-cut, the ITF is still called upon to do one of the basic jobs for which it was created seventy years ago.

Since those early years, however, the scope of the ITF's task has been immensely widened and has taken on many new dimensions. At all times, the Federation has kept pace with developments affecting its ever-growing membership and in many cases has been well in advance of them. One need only think back to the inter-war period, when the ITF, in addition to its constantly increasing tasks in the industrial field on behalf of both the maritime and inland transport workers, also shouldered the immense burden of organizing resistance to the march of dictatorship across so many European frontiers and acted as a spur and encouragement to the whole international labour movement. This was a task which it was to continue during the war against Fascism, when it again served as a rallying-point for both exiled transport workers and those who were fighting the lonely underground struggle against the invaders and oppressors of their countries.

When that war ended, the ITF applied the same vigorous energy to the job of helping to rebuild the war-shattered economies and the transport workers' trade union movements of the former occupied countries. But this, of course, involved only one side of its activity: the restoration of what had been destroyed by a terrible world conflict. In addition, the ITF redoubled its efforts to tackle the social problems which had been created by the rapid development of new transportation techniques during the war and the equally rapid growth of mass travel media during the post-war period. It also undertook the task of representing the international interests of new groups of transport workers within its ranks, such as the Rhine boatmen and the workers employed in civil aviation.

At the same time, because of the growing trend towards international cooperation in both the political and economic fields — something which inevitably has a very immediate impact on the work of trade unions both nationally and internationally — the ITF has during the last few years moved in the direction of more and closer contact with official international organizations, such as the ILO, IMCO, ICAO and the institutions of the European Common Market.

But above all, it has progressively stepped up its work on behalf of transport workers in what were at first still mainly colonial countries but which have since become the newly-independent States of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean Area, as well as in the under-privileged and developing countries of Latin America. The job of helping to organize and educate those transport workers and of strengthening and assisting the young trade unions which they have set up is a tremendously exciting and stimulating one, as well as being one of the most important tasks of the present-day international trade union movement. It is a task which the ITF has tackled with vigour and energy and the clearest evidence of its success is to be seen in

the mass affiliation of transport workers from the developing countries and in the large-scale practical assistance which the ITF has been able to give those same workers in an enormous variety of ways, ranging from intervening in industrial conflicts to the provision of loans and grants for the establishment of improved union facilities.

And that task is by no means at an end. On the contrary, we are now devoting more and more of our energies and resources to work in the regional field. When our Executive Board met very recently, for instance, it decided to substantially increase the financial allocation for the ITF's regional activities and also instructed the Secretariat to work out a comprehensive programme of such activities covering the next five years. Work which has been well begun will now be followed up and new tasks and new ways of tackling them will be planned and carried through. Our aim here is a simple one: to help ensure that the transport workers of the developing countries are given the opportunity of playing their full part both as trade unionists within their own countries and as members of a truly world-wide ITF.

The ITF at 70, therefore, is as young as on the day it was first conceived. In fact, it could not be otherwise. The ITF's field is a constantly changing panorama of activity, with new problems and ideas succeeding the old and a kaleidoscopic variety of tools and working methods being evolved to

solve and implement them. The increasing utilization of automated techniques in our industry; the introduction of new, faster and more complicated forms of transport, such as the supersonic aircraft, the high-speed train, the hovercraft and the super-tanker; the use of more sophisticated methods of handling cargo, carrying freight or catching fish — all these are developments which are continually making their appearance on the ITF scene and taking their place among the more traditional workaday problems of the transport workers' international movement. It would be surprising indeed if an organization covering such a rich field of human activity and endeavour were ever to suffer from a hardening of its arteries due simply to age.

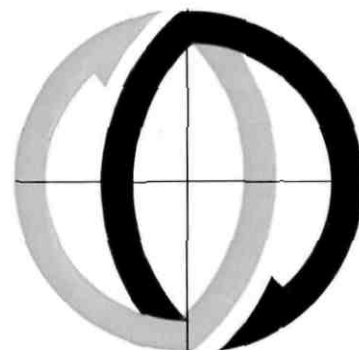
The ITF's mainspring remains — as it always has been — the concept of international brotherhood and mutual aid. In putting that idea into practice over the years, however, the ITF has both advanced and changed with the times. At the same time, it has consistently retained its fresh and vigorous approach to its many responsibilities on behalf of the world's transport workers. We are sure that this will always be the case and that we will always be able to claim with justifiable pride that our ITF is a young and dynamic organization — however many birthdays it may have celebrated.

HANS DUBY, *President of the ITF and of the Swiss Railwaymen's Federation*

HANS IMHOF, *General Secretary*

NEW ITF EMBLEM

A NEW EMBLEM has been officially adopted for the ITF. The design, shown on the right, was one of a number sent in by artists in a competition judged by the Management Committee at its last meeting. The prize of £150 goes to Mr. Ian Eastwood, of the George Austin Organization Ltd., Great Britain, for his design, which will now be used on ITF letterheads, badges and banners, and for various other purposes.



The birth and rebirth of the ITF

IN A SENSE THE ITF can be said to have been born twice—or perhaps even three times, depending on your point of view. Its original birth, of course, took place seventy years ago in London. However, although there is no doubt about the year being 1896, there is nevertheless some reason for argument about whether the Federation in its true form saw the light for the first time in either June or July. There was an organization already in existence during the former month under the name of the International Federation of Ship, Dock & River Workers, but at this time the Federation was very much a national extension of the British seafarers' and dockers' unions which were probably using the title 'International' for mainly propaganda purposes.

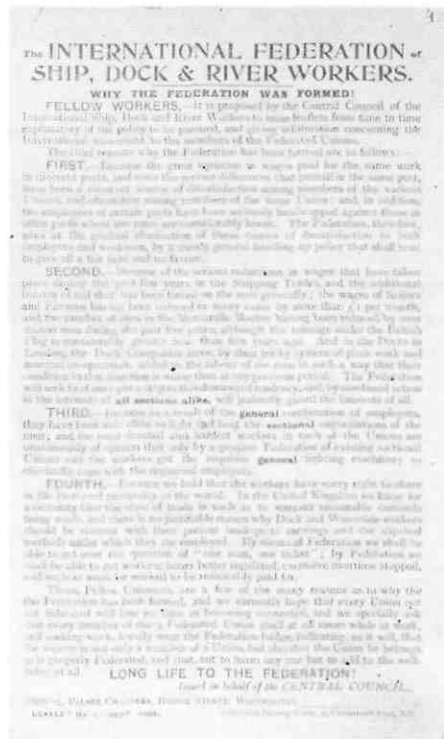
There can be no doubt of course that the organization later known as the ITF grew out of the International Federation of Ship, Dock & River Workers, but the latter did not hold its initial *international* meeting—generally considered as the first real ITF conference—until the end of July. Up to this point, in fact, there had been no non-British representative on any of the committees which had been set up by the IFSD & RW. A further factor to be taken into account is that although this organization was quite definitely the forerunner of the present ITF—it simply changed its name—it was a purely maritime workers' organization to begin with. The railwaymen, who were not to join the ITF in any substantial number for several years, had, however, created an organization of their own in 1893. Nevertheless, this was not a trade union federation in any real sense of the word, but rather an international study committee established to exchange information and views on railwaymen's conditions and legislation affecting them. It had no programme of industrial action or demands and indeed was virtually moribund for the greater part of its very brief existence. It was finally

wound up in 1906 and the organizations associated with it then joined the ITF in a body.

The ITF itself was to survive in its original form for only another ten years before the national hatreds of the First World War brought about its complete collapse—something which had become inevitable as soon as the war started. It was not reconstituted until 1919 when it made a remarkable recovery, more than doubling its pre-war membership within the first two years of its new existence.

It is worth having a closer look at the birth and rebirth of the ITF, for both have their dramatic moments.

Firstly, let us go back to Victorian London, still the capital of a great and world-wide Empire, a London which was full of the contrasts of riches and abject poverty so typical of this period of social history. Britain's trade union movement was already a very strong one, but most of its individual unions—and particularly those organizing the unskilled and semi-skilled—were still having to fight hard for their very existence. Especially was this true of the dockers and seamen, two groups which were very definitely at the bottom of the Victorian social ladder. Both had



The first leaflet issued by the International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers, in September 1896, explained the reasons why the Federation had been formed, called upon every eligible union 'not yet federated to lose no time in becoming connected' and urged every member of a 'federated' union to wear the Federation badge at all times.

relatively strong unions with excellent leaders, but had gone through long periods in which success and failure alternated at alarmingly frequent intervals.

The dockers of London were organized in the Dock, Wharf & Riverside & General Labourers' Union, led by Tom Mann and Ben Tillett. Then there was the Stevedores' Union led by Tom MacCarthy. In Liverpool, there was a second big dockers' organization. This was the National Dock Labourers' Union, whose best-known official was James Sexton, aided by Edward McHugh.

The seamen were in a single organization, the National Sailors' & Firemen's Union (NS&FU). This, the forerunner of the present-day National Union of Seamen, had been founded by its President, J. Havelock Wilson. Wilson was a Sunderland man, whose early success as a local seamen's leader, had spurred him on to extend his

A scene during the great dock strike of 1896 in Rotterdam. Cavalry of the National Guard are seen moving along the waterfront to take up position outside the Central Strike Committee Rooms.

union's influence to national level and had eventually brought him to London. Wilson was an extremely shrewd, active, and far-sighted man with a strong flair for publicity. In his early days in Sunderland, he had a Swedish friend and fellow union agitator, the seaman Karl Gustaf Lindgren (or Lindberg), who was better known, both then and later, as Charles Lindley, one of the earliest ITF pioneers and its President for many years. Lindley returned to Sweden before the formation of the ITF and succeeded in creating dockers' and seamen's unions in his own country in the early 1890s.

Assisting Wilson in the NS&FU were its General Secretary, Edmund Cathery, and L. M. Johnson, the Editor of the union's paper, the 'Seamen's Chronicle'.

Most of these men had worked closely together in the recent past and a number of them had also been involved in the great London dock strike of 1889—perhaps the most important single industrial action of the 19th century in Britain. Both the seamen's and dockers' leaders had, in addition, been toying with the idea of a national federation of maritime workers which would combine their strength in their continuing struggle against the powerful Shipping Federation. This was particularly true of Havelock Wilson and Tom Mann. Their plans took shape early in 1896, when a conference of 'the unions connected with the shipping and carrying trades' was held in Anderton's Hotel in London. At this, the groundwork was laid for the creation of a Federation of all the unions then existing for seamen and dockers.

It was in May, shortly after this decision, that Wilson undertook an organizing visit to Liverpool. While in the port, he learned that the crew of a British ship which had recently arrived from Rotterdam had been dismissed because they refused to act as strike-breakers against their Dutch docker



colleagues by unloading cargo. This was obviously the first Wilson and the dockers' leaders in Liverpool had heard of a strike by the Rotterdam dockers, but he learned a great deal more during his talks with the British vessel's owners—which incidentally led to the crew's reinstatement. As a result of the information which he gained, he immediately contacted the Central Committee of the Dutch strikers, and within a few hours was on his way to Rotterdam by the night ferry, accompanied by L. M. Johnson, the Editor of the 'Seamen's Chronicle'.

On arrival in Rotterdam, Wilson had immediate talks with the strike committee. He discovered that the strike mainly concerned men employed by one firm, which had tried to reduce average cash wages from about £2 10s. to 30s. a week. Wilson at once offered his help to the strikers and went on to address a meeting of British seamen in the port, appealing to them not to handle any cargo—as they were being pressed to do by the employers. The majority of them responded to the appeal. Two British ships, however, had already begun to discharge cargo with their crews and it proved impossible to contact the latter because of the strong police and military escort which had been supplied to the owners (both war-

ships and cavalry had been brought into the port in an attempt to intimidate the strikers). Wilson therefore decided to send telegrams to the dock workers in London, Liverpool and the Scottish ports informing them of what was happening and urging them to boycott the two vessels if they returned to Britain.

Leaflets addressed to British seamen in Rotterdam and urging solidarity with the Dutch workers were printed, as was also one to British dock workers. Wilson hired a steam-launch in order to distribute the leaflets to British ships, running the gauntlet of a large number of police launches which were strategically placed in the port area. He then went on to address meetings of the strikers and their wives, and followed this up with another meeting for the British seamen in the port at which he formally established a Rotterdam branch of his own National Sailors' and Firemen's Union.

Having done all that they could to aid the strikers, Wilson and Johnson returned to England. On the day that they arrived back, they received a cable from the strike committee. It was short, but to the point—'Strike done, victorious'.

The Rotterdam strike is important in the ITF's history for two reasons. Firstly, it appears to be the first

recorded example of direct international solidarity in the maritime field which had a successful outcome. Secondly, it was undoubtedly this episode which gave Wilson and the British dockers' leaders the idea of extending their national federation of unions 'in the shipping and carrying trades' into the international field.

There was certainly a great deal of talk about international organization during the next two months, particularly within the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, which also set up two further branch offices on the European mainland — in Antwerp and Hamburg. There are even references to an actual organization — known as the *International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers* (also *Industries*) — and to a Central Council having been established, but it is clear that both were entirely British at this stage. On the other hand, it is obvious that the British were already in contact with a

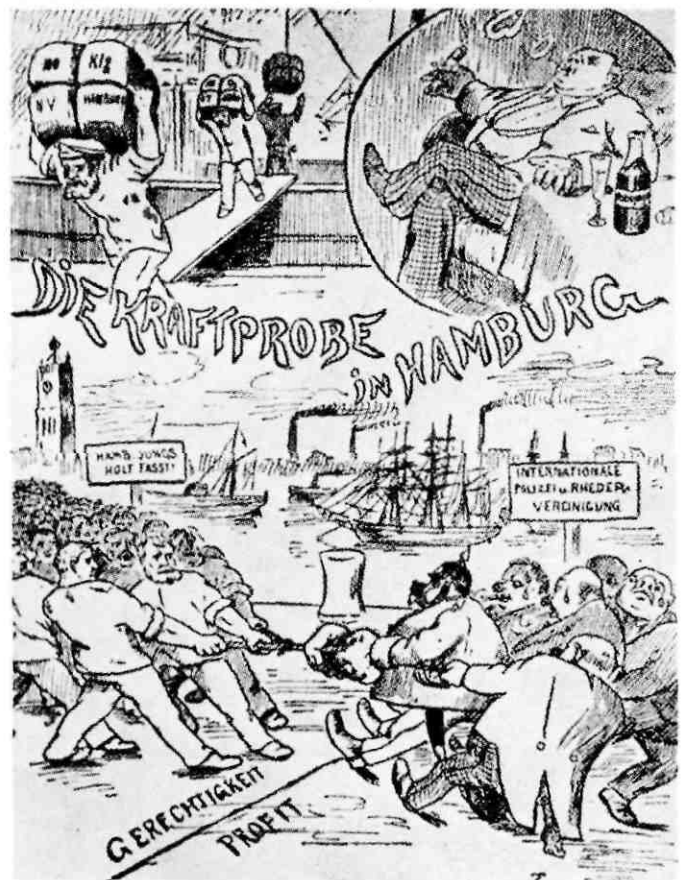
number of maritime organizations — mainly of dockers — or those who were trying to form them on the European continent and even in Australia and the United States. The existence of foreign branch offices of Wilson's union must have been of great help here, although constant police surveillance and a series of deportations of the officials appointed to run them must have seriously handicapped their activities.

One of the main policies of the embryo Federation at this time was the submission of a series of demands on wage increases, union recognition and the conclusion of collective agreements to both shipowners and dock employers. Wilson announced at a mass meeting held in July 1896 that this would be done on the 30th of the same month and that if the demands were not accepted by 16 August, a general strike of ship, dock and river workers would take place. Here again, however, both the demands and the threatened strike

were entirely concerned with the membership of the British unions.

Nevertheless, it was during July 1896 that the opportunity came for Wilson and the other leaders of the Federation to arrange a first conference with foreign participation and to discuss the possibility of making the organization a really international one. On 26 July an International Socialist and Trade Union Congress opened in London and, taking advantage of the presence of many delegates from abroad, the Federation's Central Council held a meeting on the following day, which was continued on 29 July. It was this meeting which can be said to represent the start of the Federation as we know it today. Attended by Wilson, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett and Johnson from Britain; Wilson's old friend and trade union colleague, Charles Lindley, from Sweden; L. M. Janssens (Belgium); McGuire (New York); A. Störmer (Hamburg); Henry Polak (Netherlands);

Left: Ben Tillett addressing a dockers' meeting during the British transport strike of 1911 (Illustrated London News photo). Right: A cartoon illustrating the Hamburg dock strike of 1896/7. Entitled 'Trial of strength in Hamburg' it shows a tug of war by Hamburg dockers against police and shipowners across a line marked 'Justice' on one side and 'profit' on the other.





The Paris Congress of 1900.

and Louis Favert (France), the meeting unanimously agreed on 'the necessity for an immediate and durable federation of the unions'.

Tom Mann was chosen to head the new organization, as he had already done in the case of its purely British predecessor. It was also decided that the strike date originally fixed if the Federation's demands were not accepted by the employers should be cancelled and a new one substituted. The revised date (28 September 1896) was set at a later meeting by the British representatives, but although the demands were sent in and rejected, the threatened strike never took place. The first alternative to it suggested by the Central Council was a Ca'Canny or go-slow movement, but this too was dropped when a ballot of the Federation's membership showed conclusively that the majority was in

favour of a further period of organizational work before launching the Federation on any type of strike or go-slow action.

However, before the year was out, the Federation was already to have had its first baptism of fire, when a spontaneous dock strike broke out in Hamburg in November. Wilson immediately went to Rotterdam to organize support for the strikers among the Dutch and Belgian maritime workers. Swedes, Norwegians, Danes and the French were also called upon to show international solidarity, while Tom Mann himself went direct to Hamburg to confer with the German dockers and to mobilize the support of foreign seamen in the port. He was arrested and deported within 24 hours of his arrival, but even in that short time he had succeeded in getting quite a lot done.

The strike itself went on until 7 February 1897 and ended in dignified defeat. Despite considerable financial aid and ship boycotts organized by the Federation, the dockers were defeated by sheer starvation in the depths of a particularly bitter winter and the fact that none of the unions in other countries were yet sufficiently well organized to prevent the sending of huge numbers of strikebreakers to Hamburg.

This was clearly a lesson which was taken very much to heart by the Federation and its leaders, and for the next eighteen months considerable emphasis was placed on organizing work and strengthening of the links between its individual affiliates.

It was at the end of this period, when the first major international Congress was held by the Federation in London in June 1898, that a decision was

taken to change the name of the organization to 'The International Transport Workers' Federation' and thus widen its scope to include workers outside the maritime industry. Although the new title had little immediate practical consequence, since the bulk of the ITF's membership still consisted basically of dockers and seamen for some time afterwards, this was nevertheless a second turning-point in the ITF's history. The decision, in fact, provided the key which was later to open the door to the mass affiliation of land transport workers.

Before that happened, however, Tom Mann was to resign from his position as President (or Secretary, the two titles were virtually interchangeable at this period) in 1901 and was succeeded as the Federation's chief officer by Tom Chambers, who had originally acted as Clerk to the Central Council. Chambers, however, worked on a part-time basis only for the ITF, the greater amount of his time being devoted to the service of the British National Sailors' & Firemen's Union. In addition, he obviously had to contend with continuous financial difficulties resulting from the fact that not only had the Federation's affiliation fees been set at too low a level but they were almost always late in coming in.

In consequence, both the Federation's administration and activities ran down badly. Chambers himself resigned as Secretary and at a meeting held in London in February 1904 was replaced as a temporary measure by Ben Tillett. A great deal of dissatisfaction with the administration of the Federation's affairs was also expressed at this meeting—particularly by the German affiliates—and this led to a decision by the Amsterdam Congress of August 1904 that the ITF's headquarters should be transferred to Germany.

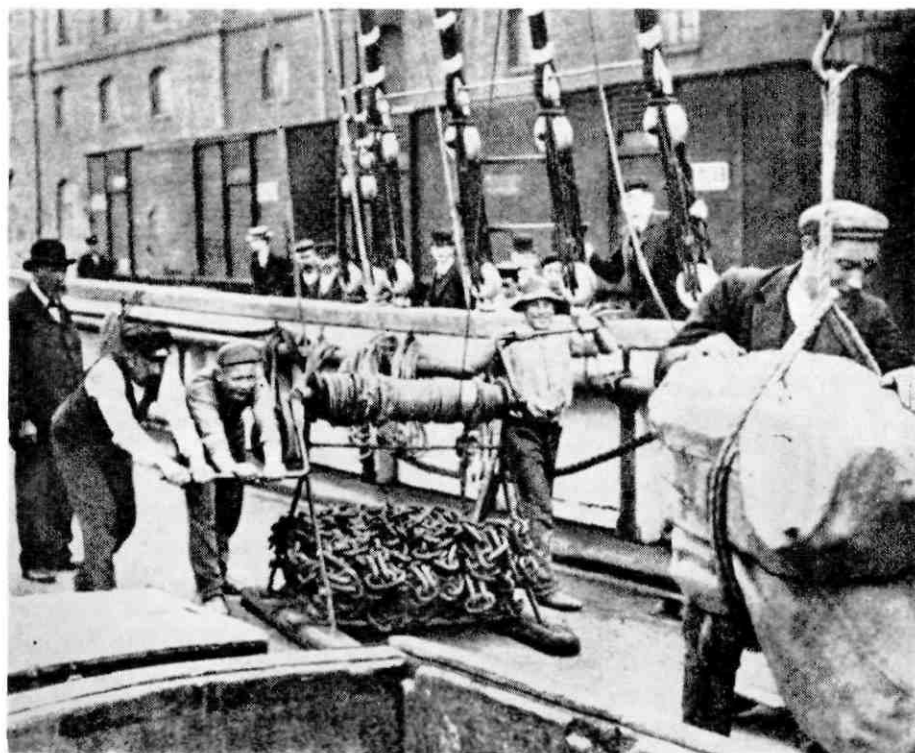
The move took place in October of the same year. The Secretariat was established in Hamburg (six years later it was shifted to Berlin) and Hermann

Jochade of the German Railwaymen's Union was appointed as Secretary, backed by an all-German Central Council. The ITF was reorganized very effectively by the German affiliates and was soon placed on an extremely sound administrative and financial basis. Many new organizations were contacted and a considerable number of them were to affiliate with the ITF during the next few years. In addition, the International Railwaymen's Study Committee, as mentioned earlier, was wound up in 1906 and its member-organizations joined the ITF, thus providing it with the nucleus of a sizeable Railwaymen's Section. A great deal was also done to build up a system of mutual assistance and international solidarity, and this was given practical effect in a number of national disputes, including the great British seamen's strike of 1911 which developed into a nation-wide movement by most groups of transport workers in Britain and also had its counterpart in seamen's strikes in both Belgium and Holland.

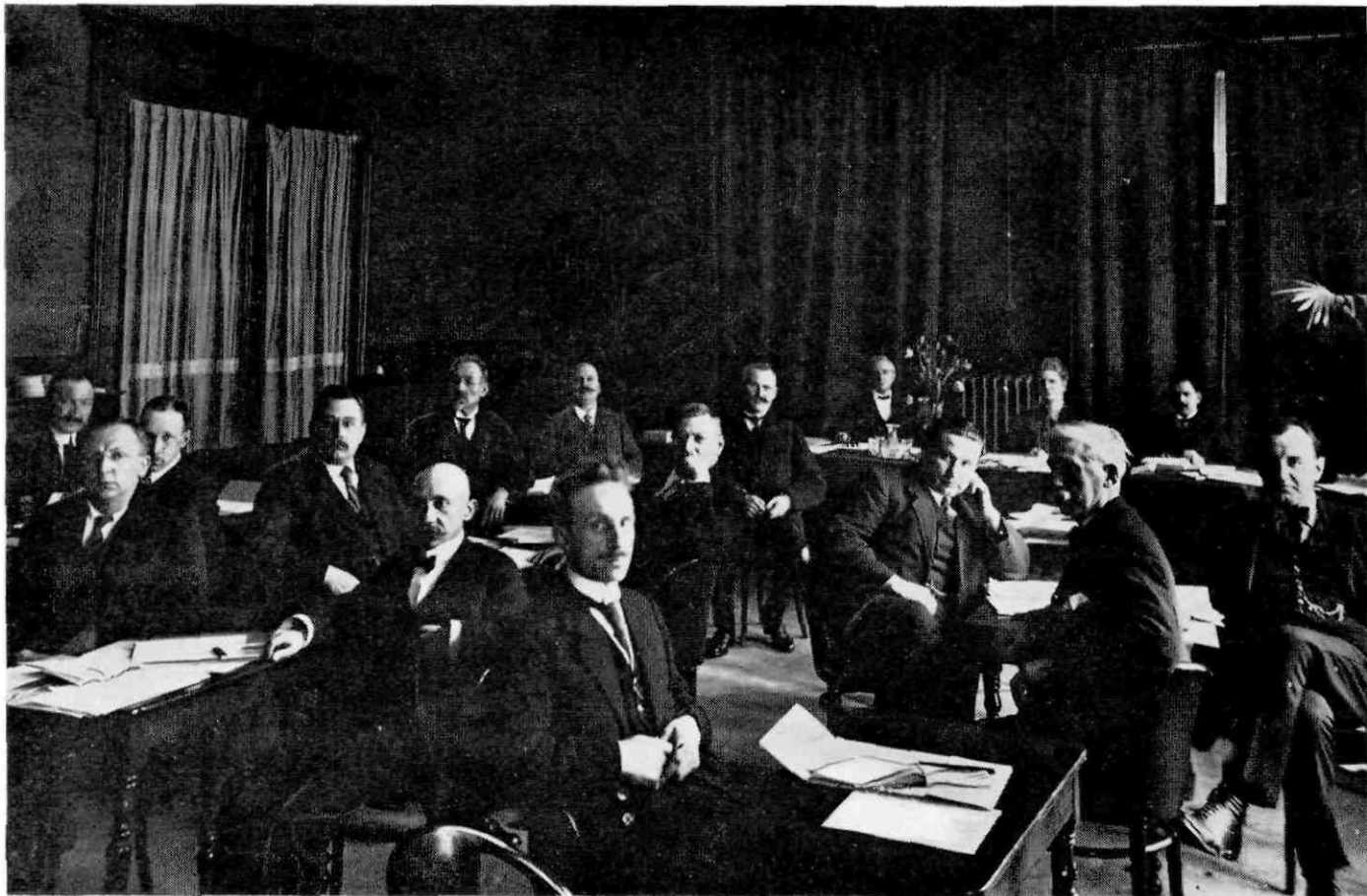
But although the ITF had grown immeasurably stronger since its transfer to Germany and its membership was to soar to slightly over one million by

1914 (as compared with less than 100,000 in 1904), there was growing criticism of its leadership among important affiliates—particularly in France, Italy and Great Britain. The most repeated call was for more positive action in the industrial sphere, accompanied by criticism of what was considered to be too much gradualism and bureaucracy. This reached its high point at the last pre-war Congress, that was held in London in August 1913. At this, a number of delegates urged that the ITF should be reorganized, that the Central Council should be an international one, and even that the Secretariat should be moved to another country. The Congress did in fact decide that a Reorganization Committee should be set up, but by the time it was due to hold its first meeting (in Vienna in August 1914), the First World War had already begun and with it the struggle to keep the ITF alive at all.

The Secretariat remained in Berlin for as long as the ITF still existed, although because of the difficulties of postal and other communication between the belligerent countries a one-man liaison office was established in the Amsterdam headquarters of the



Workers unloading a ship's cargo in the Port of Stockholm during the early years of this century.



Leaders of the European transport workers' organizations met again after the first world war to reconstitute their International. The first post war international transport workers' conference, held in Amsterdam, April 1919, formed a provisional Executive Committee and called a full ITF Congress for the following year, to take place in Oslo (at that time Kristiania), Norway.

Netherlands Trade Union Federation (Holland was, of course, neutral during the war). The tensions and hatreds of war, together with the call-up of most of the ITF's principal officials and particularly of Jochade himself, meant that there was little chance of the ITF surviving as a viable organization. There were acrimonious exchanges about the conduct of the war on both sides between the Germans on the one hand and the British and French on the other, especially on the subject of submarine attacks on merchant shipping. By the end of 1916, the first ITF was already dead.

Even before the war ended, however, moves were already under way in Scandinavia and the Netherlands to re-create the Federation. The major figures in these efforts were Charles Lindley of Sweden and Edo Fimmen, later to be the ITF's General Secretary

for 22 years, but then an official of the Dutch Trade Union Federation. It was Fimmen who organized the first post-war meeting of former ITF affiliates in Amsterdam on 28 April 1919. He often told the story of the prelude to that meeting, and it is a dramatic but also very simple story. It went like this:

Delegates from both Britain and Germany were already in the city. There was tension in the air. Both delegations were looking forward with some apprehension to their forthcoming meeting.

On the afternoon before the Congress opened the Germans decided to go in search of their ex-enemies and sound them out before the official meeting took place. On their way to the hotel where the British were staying they had to cross a bridge over one of Amsterdam's many canals. It was on this bridge that they suddenly came face to

face with the British, who as it later turned out were on their way to see the German delegates.

It was an unforgettable meeting. At first the Germans hesitated, wondering what would be said, what reproaches would be cast at them. Germany, after all, bore responsibility for the War, and the German working man, who had been unable to stop it, had to share the blame. But the British delegates crossed the road to meet them. Robert Williams (the ITF's first post-war President) was the first to shake hands, and he was followed immediately by Ernest Bevin and Harry Gosling. The 'How do you do?' uttered by the British made it seem as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened during the four years the two delegations had been in enemy camps.

(Continued on page 144)

TWO GREAT LEADERS OF THE ITF— EDO FIMMEN AND CHARLES LINDLEY



Fimmen with Charles Lindley in Mexico.

EDO FIMMEN WAS THE MAN who held office as General Secretary of the ITF for the longest period — from 1919 to 1942. He was also the man who more than any other set the stamp of his personality upon the Federation and made of it not simply an international association of transport workers, but a fighting organization of transport workers. In a way, this might seem a rather strange thing, because Fimmen neither came from a working class background, nor was he a transport worker by profession. He was born in Amsterdam in 1881 into a comfortable middle-class home and he himself, like his father before him — who died when Fimmen was sixteen — entered upon a career in commerce, in which he was very successful at a very early age.

Fimmen, however, had an extremely strong social conscience and became active in social welfare work when still quite young. He also had strong religious convictions at this stage and a great deal of his social work was carried on through religious organizations, especially the Salvation Army. It was almost certainly these twin skeins in his early life which led to the development of his interest in trade unionism. He was only 24 when he helped to found the Dutch Union of Commercial and Office Employees and became treasurer of this organization a year later — thus launching himself on a trade union career that was literally meteoric and led to his becoming one

of the best-known and most colourful international labour figures of his generation.

In 1916, after acting for several years as Secretary of his own union and of the International Federation of Commercial Employees, he was appointed as General Secretary of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions. It was during this period — in the middle of the First World War — that he was engaged in liaison duties on behalf of international trade union organizations such as the IFTU and the ITF. He took the main initiative in reviving the ITF after its war-time collapse and, as mentioned elsewhere in this issue, was responsible for organizing the 1919 conference at which the ITF was reconstituted. He became its first post-war Secretary in an honorary capacity and combined this with his duties as joint General Secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions — a post which he was to give up in 1923 to devote himself to full-time work as General Secretary of the ITF.

Even before that, however, he had given clear proof of his belief that the international trade union movement existed not as an international letter box but to intervene actively on behalf of its members whenever and wherever they needed help. One of his first actions in 1919, for instance, was to organize a relief campaign for the starving population of Vienna. During the following year, a boycott of Poland was intro-

duced when that country attacked the young Soviet Union, which at this time was supported by many workers as a hope for the future. Later during the same year, Fimmen was instrumental in having applied a successful boycott of Fascist Hungary, which was carrying on a reign of terror, torture and murder against anyone suspected of links with the Socialist and trade union movements. This resulted in an extremely effective blockade of all communications — including those by rail — with Hungary by transport and other workers in the neighbouring countries of Germany, Austria and Yugoslavia.

It was Fimmen, too, who encouraged the Italian workers to resist the Mussolini regime when it first seized power and organized what must have been among the earliest leaflet raids by aeroplane in order to help keep the spirit of opposition alive in Italy. He was also the driving force behind the great International Peace Congress which took place in The Hague in 1922 and at which Fimmen tried to unite all sections of the organized labour movement in the struggle to safeguard the peace which he saw threatened by the rise of nationalist and Fascist movements in so many countries.

Although the preservation of peace was his main concern at this time, he was no starry-eyed pacifist. He not only thought that the workers had a duty to work for peace, but also that they should fight actively against those who



Above: *Fimmen during the 20's.* Opposite: *ITF/IFTU food shipments for workers in Austria (above) and Russia (below).*

threatened it. He was constantly calling for more positive action in this field and bitterly criticized the trade union movement when he considered that it was failing to do its job properly, that it was too slow or too weak in its reaction to injustice and oppression.

When the Ruhr was occupied by French and Belgian troops in January 1923 and the world's labour movement failed to act against it, he wrote in his famous 'Black January' article in the ITF News Letter:

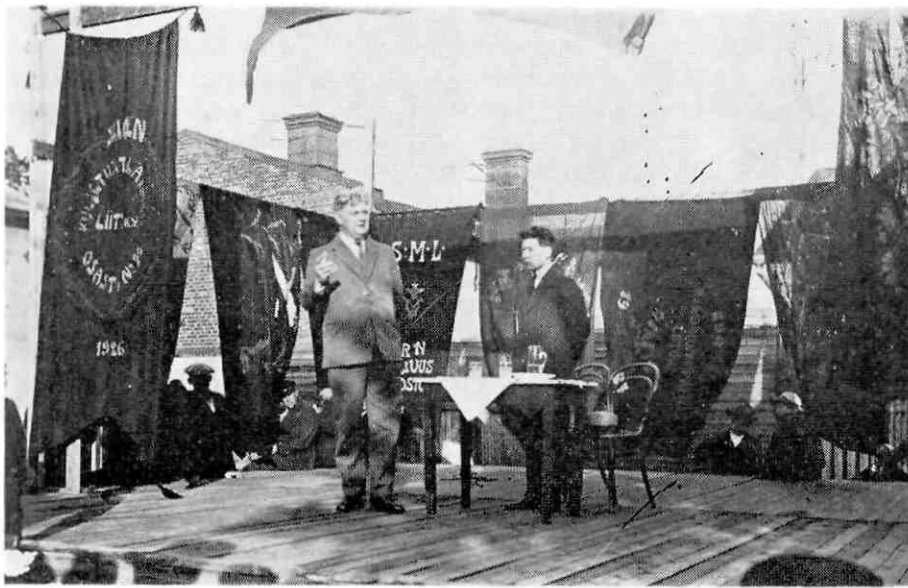
'The working classes are asleep. They are much too indifferent, they are not prepared, they are incapable of energetic international action which transcends their own little personal interests.'

This was something which he could just not understand. He himself saw

the problem clearly. Each unchallenged move, each victory by reaction and fascism was for him a further nail in democracy's coffin and a new step in the direction of war. He himself worked and fought untiringly and completely selflessly in this struggle and he expected the organized workers and leaders to do the same. In this he was often disappointed, but he never gave up his determination to waken those who were still sleeping or to encourage those who were not giving of their best.

He never ceased to urge the workers' organizations to declare 'war against war', a slogan which he made peculiarly his own, and to impress upon them the need for the greatest possible degree of unity in their fight in both the industrial and political fields. It was he who

organized an international trade union embargo on British coal during the 1926 General Strike, an action which was to have its counterpart in many other similar movements of solidarity during his years as General Secretary of the ITF. It was he who, long before the international trade union movement was active in the regional field, stressed the need for the European workers to support and to fight shoulder to shoulder with the workers of the colonial countries. He warned the European workers of the threat which existed to their own conditions if they allowed the exploitation of coloured workers to continue anywhere in the world, and warned them too that for years they would have to expend much time, much energy and much money in



Fimmen addresses a meeting of transport workers in Turku, Finland, in 1927, with Niiilo Wälläri acting as interpreter.

this task without the assurance of immediate and tangible results.

His own great gifts as speaker, writer, thinker and linguist were thrown wholeheartedly into the twin struggles for international peace and international trade union solidarity. Wherever he could help, wherever he thought that his assistance was needed, there he would be. He became as well known to the workers of Bulgaria, Finland, Argentina, Japan or India as he was to those of his native Holland. His voice was heard and his presence felt wherever the trade union movement was engaged in battle.

Fimmen reached a major turning point in his life and his outlook when it seemed likely that Hitler would seize power in Germany. He made desperate efforts right up until the last moment to persuade the German unions to resist a Nazi take-over, but was not successful in this. It was, however, characteristic of the man that he did not give way to despair or apathy, but immediately began to gather together a group of German trade unionists who could form the basis of an underground resistance if the Nazis won their expected victory.

Once this happened, Fimmen threw himself heart and soul into the underground struggle. From the ITF's headquarters in Amsterdam he kept close contact with the resistance workers inside Germany and probably knew

better than anyone else at this time the full extent of their hidden fight. Nor was it sufficient for him to sit in Amsterdam or to travel to other countries to meet the illegal workers who managed to slip out of Germany, to receive their reports, to plan their future activities, and to encourage them to further effort. Despite repeated warnings of what would happen to him if he fell into the hands of the Gestapo, he and other members of the ITF Secretariat undertook dangerous journeys into Hitler's territory so that he could see conditions for himself and have on-the-spot discussions and planning meetings with the German workers.

His experience of the Nazis and their methods convinced him that it was no longer possible to preserve both peace and democracy. The man who had earlier called for war against war, now felt that war, in the form of a life-or-death struggle against totalitarianism, was both unavoidable and necessary if freedom was to have any future in the 20th century world.

When in 1936, the Spanish generals revolted against the legally-elected Republican Government, Fimmen took on new burdens both for himself and the ITF. Despite the farce of non-intervention which was the official policy of the democratic governments at this time, supplies of food and arms were sent to Spain for the Republican

cause, and cargoes for the Franco forces were systematically sabotaged by ITF transport workers on every possible occasion. Both Fimmen and Nathan Nathans (then Assistant General Secretary)* went to Spain on a number of occasions on important missions of service to the legitimate government and the people of that country. After Franco's eventual victory, the ITF was also fully engaged in assisting the many thousands of refugees who streamed into exile. These men and women became part of the work which the ITF had long been doing on behalf of similar refugees from Germany, Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia and other countries conquered by fascist movements.

Fimmen now knew that war was only a short time away and he made plans accordingly so that the ITF could continue to fight and play its part in democracy's resistance to the dictators. Although struck down by a stroke in 1938, he urged that the ITF Secretariat should be transferred from Amsterdam to London, which he rightly thought would become the centre of the struggle. This was done in 1939, shortly before the official outbreak of the war in which Fimmen himself had been fighting for so long. Despite the fact that he was already a very sick man, he insisted on carrying on with his work for as long as he could. His condition gradually worsened, however, and made this increasingly difficult. In October 1941 he was finally persuaded to accept an invitation to leave for Mexico, where his colleagues and friends hoped that he might have an opportunity of recovering his health.

Just over a year later, however, he was struck down by a cerebral hæmorrhage which was to prove fatal. He died almost exactly twenty years after he had first launched his rallying-cry of 'War against war' in The Hague.

In one of his last letters, he wrote the following lines which put into words both his life and his creed:

* Nathans was killed in an aeroplane crash on one of these missions.

'Fight, in spite of war, against terror and violence; fight for peace and the rights of man; fight for a world where brown and white, black and yellow, French, German and British, all those who toil in Africa, in America, in Asia and in Australia, shall live together as equals and brothers.'

IF ONE CAN SAY THAT Edo Fimmen was the man who set the stamp of his personality on the ITF during the inter-war period, it is equally true that for the major part of the ITF's existence the name of Charles Lindley was almost synonymous with the organization for which he did so much.

Lindley was one of the very first pioneers of the ITF. He was present and played an active part at the very first international conference of seafarers and dockers — that which saw the beginnings of the ITF as we know it today. It was also Lindley who proposed the change of name which transformed the tiny maritime workers' International which first saw the light of day in July 1896 into the all-embracing International Transport Workers' Federation, with its millions of members spread all over the world. His international activity spanned over fifty years of the ITF's life, and even after his formal retirement as President

in 1946 (a post which he had held since 1933) he still retained a very close and lively interest in the Federation which he had helped to found and until his death in 1957 at the age of 91 was a regular, popular and honoured guest at ITF Congresses.

But he was not simply a pioneer of the ITF, but of national trade unionism as well. He was probably unique in that he helped to create seamen's unions in two countries — his native Sweden, where he had been born Karl Gustaf Lindgren in October 1865, and in England to where his early life as a seaman on board British ships took him and where he adopted the name by which he became known all over the world. As told in another article in this issue, he was an early collaborator of the late Havelock Wilson and with him was largely instrumental in 1887 in the creation of the British Sailors' and Firemen's Union.

When he finally returned to Sweden in 1894 — only 29 years old but already a seasoned veteran of the seamen's struggle — he immediately set to work on the task of organizing both seamen and dockers. Three years later, he founded the Swedish Transport Workers' Union and became its first President. He was to remain at the head of his union until 1937. It was he who guided its development from a small

organization struggling against what seemed hopeless odds to one of Sweden's most important and influential unions. At all stages of its existence, the union which Lindley created was one of the most loyal and active members of the ITF, as it still is today.

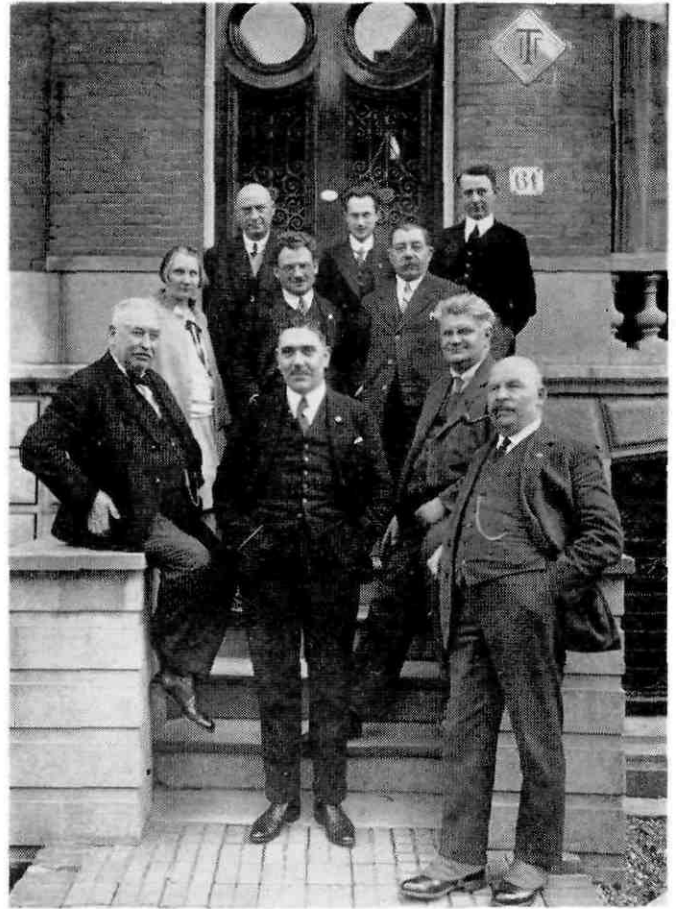
Lindley, however, saw his task as a representative of the seamen, dockers and other transport workers of Sweden in the widest possible perspective. Not only was he a transport workers' leader of great stature; he was also a leading figure in his country's trade union movement as a whole. He was a co-founder of the Swedish Trade Union Federation and his rôle in innumerable national strikes in Sweden was of the greatest possible value to the furthering of the workers' cause there. In addition, he successfully contested a seat in the Swedish Lower Chamber in 1906 — at a time when trade union parliamentarians were very rare birds indeed — and used his position during the next three decades to fight both hard and long to improve the situation of Swedish seamen and other transport workers, as well as that of workers in many other fields.

In addition to his work within the ITF before the First World War, when he acted on various occasions as either Vice-President or President, he also became a very well-known figure in the general international trade union and socialist movements.

When the First World War came, he was one of those in the neutral countries who did everything they could to keep the ITF alive and when this proved to be a vain hope it was not long before Lindley was actively engaged in plans to re-establish the Federation as soon as hostilities came to an end. Because of an industrial conflict in Sweden, he was unable to take part in the reconstitution conference of 1919, when he was appointed to the Emergency Committee, but was present at the first post-war Congress held in 1920, where he was elected as Scandinavian member of the



Mexican workers pay their last respects to Edo Fimmen at his funeral on 15 December 1942 in Cuernavaca.



Above: (left) Charles Lindley during the 1890's. (right) Some members of the Executive Committee in 1925, photographed on the steps of the ITF Headquarters at 61 Vondelstraat in Amsterdam. Front Row, from left to right: Charles Lindley, C. T. Cramp (President), Edo Fimmen and Johann Döring. Immediately behind C. T. Cramp is Assistant General Secretary Nathan Nathans, who died 12 years later in a plane crash on his way to Spain. Next to him is M. Bidegaray of France. Below: A meeting of the Management Committee about 1930. (From left to right) Johann Döring, with Nathan Nathans standing behind him, Robert Williams, Edo Fimmen and Charles Lindley.

General Council. From 1920 he served as a member of the Executive Committee and later again became the ITF's Vice-President.

In 1933, during one of the most difficult periods of the ITF's history, Lindley became President of the ITF following the death of Charles Cramp. Like Edo Fimmen, he was closely concerned in the struggle against dictatorship, and in addition to undertaking many missions for the ITF—something which, incidentally, he had been doing ever since the rise of totalitarian régimes after the end of the First World War—he also helped many refugees to asylum in Sweden, including his old friend Karl Weigl of Austria, who is the only surviving participant in the ITF's London Congress of 1913.

When the Second World War came, his own country was again neutral—but not so Charlie. As the ITF's



President and as an ardent believer in the cause of democracy, he considered it his duty to remain at the helm where he had already been for so many years. Although physically separated from his beloved ITF by the conflict, he still made sure that he overcame that separation on every possible occasion and by every means within his power. He was still as familiar a figure at ITF councils held in war-time Britain as he had ever been during the peace.

A few years ago, at Charlie's graveside, Omer Becu told the story of how he first met the ITF's Grand Old Man at this period:

'It was during the early part of the war, when I myself was working on behalf of the Allied seafarers' movement in London. Charlie had come over to England from Stockholm to attend to some trade union business. Perhaps that does not sound particularly unusual, but I would remind you that this was war-time and that the circumstances of his visit were anything but normal. Charlie in fact had just flown across from Sweden in a British courier plane, with all the risks that such a flight over Nazi-occupied territory involved. The aircraft that he had flown in was not a luxurious airliner, but a converted light bomber, designed not for comfort, but to get to its destination as quickly as possible—with its equipment stripped of all but the bare essentials. To reduce the risk of interception by enemy fighters or anti-aircraft fire, it was necessary to fly by night in the worst possible weather. This was the kind of journey which had been undertaken by a man who was already 77 years of age, a man who could, if he had wished, have been sitting quietly in the safety and comfort of his own home in a country happily untouched by war. But that sort of life was not for Charlie Lindley.'

Lindley was in fact a man of great physical courage and of strong convic-

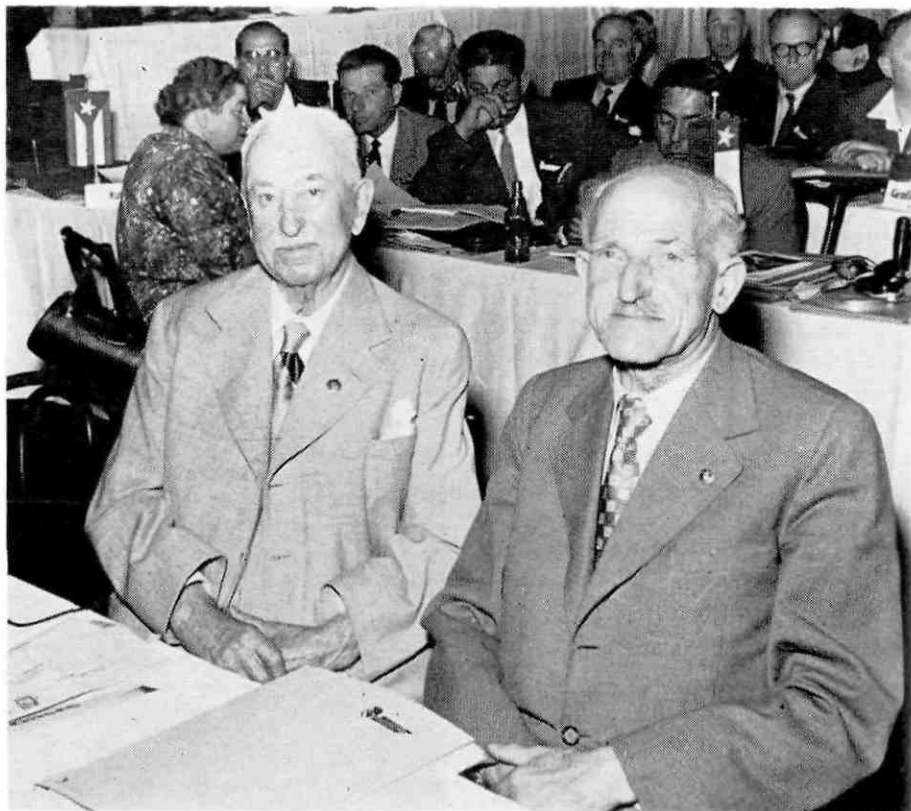
tions allied with equally strong powers of persuasion, which he used to tremendous effect in his trade union work at both the national and international levels. But he was also a man of great simplicity and good humour, with a tremendous zest for life and action which, even when he was old in years, made him seem much younger than those who were half his age. He could be extremely serious—indeed passionate—about the causes in which he believed, but he also enjoyed good company, a good yarn and, whenever he could, a good sing-song—particularly when he was able to perform the sea-shanties of his youth.

He was always bright, cheerful and energetic and he often said that one of the secrets of his vigour in old age—apart, of course, from the extremely strenuous exercises in which he indulged right up to the end of his life—was the fact that however many worries he had he always managed to enjoy a good night's sleep. He added that he thought he owed it to the movement to make sure that he began the next day's work in the best possible condition.

Charlie's devotion to the ITF knew no bounds and his concern for its welfare and independence was always uppermost in his mind. One of his last acts as President of the ITF—and one which was also very typical of his great foresight—was to warn the 1946 Congress of his fears that the ITF might be swallowed by the Communists if it allowed itself to be incorporated as one of the Trade Departments of the then newly-established WFTU. For him the ITF was a living body which was in real danger of being stifled by those who wanted to use it for purposes quite different from those for which it had been created. He said that he did not want to be around if this ever happened.

Happily, his warning did not go unheeded and he lived to see his ITF—still proudly independent like himself—grow stronger and more effective than ever before.

When Charlie died in 1957 only two days before his 92nd birthday, a whole lifetime of the ITF's history died with him and the whole of the ITF's membership lost a very dear and courageous comrade and friend.



Charles Lindley with Karl Weigl (now the only surviving ITF veteran of the pre-World War I period) at the Vienna Congress in 1956.

ITF MEMORIES

A number of prominent personalities in the international transport workers' movement, who are able to look back on a long association with the ITF, some of them now in retirement, have sent us fraternal greetings on the occasion of the ITF's 70th anniversary and have set down some of their memories and impressions of the ITF. Their contributions appear in these pages and elsewhere in this Journal.

From OMER BECU, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions:

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY of the International Transport Workers' Federation makes me realize that I have been associated, either directly or indirectly, with your great organization for well over half of its lifetime. My relationship with the ITF dates back to 1929 when I became an official, with the function of Assistant General Secretary, of the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association.

The title of this association indicates that it dealt with mercantile problems and consequently there had to be close cooperation between it and the ITF seafarers' section for the benefit of all seafarers.

When I became General Secretary of the IMMOA in 1933 I realized the necessity of going beyond close relationships and having an organic link between the two bodies, with a view eventually to their integration. However, in those areas before World War II this integration did not come about because the attitudes of officers from captain downwards were not ripe for such a major move. Yet whatever problem of common interest to all seafarers arose at a national or international level, the IMMOA always found the ITF standing ready to defend, not only its own members, but also those of the organization which it represented.

A major and outstanding event in that respect happened at the Inter-

national Maritime Conference of the International Labour Organization in Geneva in 1936. This showed clearly the extent to which solidarity between officers and ratings was already effective. At that particular Maritime Conference the most important question was that of the limitation of hours of work for seafarers, based on an eight-hour day as already achieved by the shore workers since 1919. One has to remember that the seafarers had been struggling without success since the first International Maritime Conference in Genoa in 1920 for an eight-hour day. But when a new chance was given to the seafarers in 1936 to win the principle of the eight-hour day, it was found that shipowners and a majority of the governments wanted to exclude the officers from such a Convention. The ITF took the view and held to it strenuously that the Convention should include all seafarers without exception; thus that particular Conference failed to achieve its main objective from the workers' point of view on account of the ITF's position in favour of the IMMOA. This was certainly an eye-opener to the officers in the Merchant Navy, making them realize that they had to fight on the same front as the ratings.

The merger came about finally in 1946, when the IMMOA decided to dissolve and recommend all its affiliates to join the ITF. No doubt the atmosphere for the merger enabled both to move forward under the banner of the ITF had been created by war-time

circumstances, where in the appalling conditions which prevailed at sea it was proved to the officers again that no difference could exist between one human being and another. I am pleased to be able to state that the seafarers' family has been living happily together ever since and nobody today thinks of a distinction between officers and men.

Looking at how that goal was achieved one cannot but think of the greatest General Secretary whom the ITF has ever had and who stayed in that function until his death in 1942: Edo Fimmen. One has to acknowledge without any shadow of doubt that that man was the inspiration of everybody in the transport trade union movement. He was the spiritual father of many of us personally and of the ITF as a whole. If the ITF is a strong organization today and holds aloft the fighting spirit which has always prevailed, it is due to the image which that great man was able to implant ineradicably among transport workers everywhere.

The space at my disposal does not allow me to dwell upon even the major aspects of ITF activities between the two World Wars and afterwards. One thinks back naturally to the positive action of the ITF in the Russian Revolution, to the fight against the Dolfuss regime in Austria, the fight against the totalitarian powers in Spain during the bloody Civil War and the prolonged battle against the Nazi regime of Hitler and the Fascist regime of Mussolini. All these struggles were of outstanding importance for our civilization and for the maintenance of our democratic way of life. Whilst the ITF did not always succeed in its endeavours, it came out of these struggles with great honour and with its flag flying. One found the ITF always in the midst of any battle affecting workers generally and transport workers in particular, whether in the economic and social or in the political field.

The ITF has helped to win many a strike against tremendous odds, where not only employers but governments were opposing the workers. I remember vividly my first visit to the great city

of Calcutta in 1951. I was given a tremendous reception as ITF General Secretary, with banners flying out in the streets expressing the gratitude of Indian seafarers for the help which the ITF had given them morally and materially to win their strike as far back as 1929!

During the ten years I had the honour and privilege to be General Secretary of the ITF between 1950 and 1960 I found that even in the remotest parts of the world to which I travelled as General Secretary, the ITF and Edo Fimmen — both were synonyms — were known about to the extent that feelings of international solidarity spread down from the union leadership throughout the rank and file. The ITF's flag and badge were sometimes better known than their own national symbols. That is why the task of any General Secretary to the ITF who came after Edo Fimmen was so gratifying and was so greatly facilitated. Thanks to that great everlasting image of the ITF we were able to win many battles and even the first international strike which ever occurred in the annals of the international free trade union movement. Most readers will at once understand that I am referring to our struggle against ships flying flags of convenience.

Apart from that, the ITF is as strong as it is because of its excellent structure under which transport workers of all sectors can deal with their problems — railwaymen, seafarers, dockers, fishermen, inland navigation workers, road transport workers and civil aviation workers. Through this a policy has been unbreakably established: one for all and all for one!

As the ITF moves on towards its centenary and the international transport problems become ever more vast and complex I hope, from the bottom of my heart, that the same fighting spirit and cohesion will be maintained and that the organization will never cease to provide inspiration to transport workers everywhere.

Omer Becu is a former General Secretary of the ITF.

From MANIBEN KARA,
President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation:

I AM GLAD TO KNOW that the International Transport Workers' Federation will be celebrating in July 1966 seventy years of its glorious existence. Let me therefore, on this auspicious occasion, send you and the ITF fraternal greetings on behalf of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation and the Maritime Union of India.

The association of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) dates back to the 'thirties, when the late Mr. Guruswamy, the AIRF General Secretary at that time, was maintaining very intimate contacts with the ITF. The interest taken by the ITF in the growth of the trade union movement in the transport industry in general and of railwaymen's unions in particular is well known in India. The fraternity and solidarity shown by the ITF for the cause of railwaymen in their struggle for better working conditions are highly appreciated in this country.

My first contact with the ITF was in April 1944, when I was in London. During my brief visit to the ITF office I was very much impressed by the work the Secretariat was doing, and on my return to India I persuaded the Maritime Union of India (MUI) to affiliate. Since its affiliation the MUI has been in close contact with the ITF, and for some time the ITF's regional information office was housed in the MUI's offices.

The ITF is a dynamic world organization of transport workers. It has done fine work in the task of building up and strengthening the democratic trade union movement in the world, in fighting to defend the rights of transport workers everywhere and in helping them to improve their working conditions. The ITF has also taken an interest in the trade union movements of the developing countries. Vast numbers of workers in these lands are exploited and are still unorganized. There is tremendous scope for organizational and educational work in these countries. I am sure the ITF will con-

tinue to play its rightful part in assisting the democratic trade union movement of the developing countries.

At a troubled time, when the world is in turmoil, heavy responsibility lies with the ITF to protect the democratic rights of transport workers. I wish you all possible success in the fulfilment of this task. While sending you fraternal greetings and a message of solidarity on this occasion, on behalf of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, of the Maritime Union of India, and of other Indian transport workers, I assure you that we shall be with the ITF in its fight to improve the lot of working people.

* * * *

From RYO KAMISAWA,
International Secretary of the All-Japan Seamen's Union:

OUR WARMEST FRATERNAL GREETINGS to the International Transport Workers' Federation! It is with a deep feeling of admiration and the closest attachment to the International that we have the honour to commemorate its Seventieth Anniversary.

The history of the ITF itself reflects its untiring and ceaseless fight for the cause of the trade union movement in all continents and in all countries at various stages of development, ever since its foundation in 1896.

It was in 1930 that our organization, the only industrial union of seafarers in Japan, joined the ITF. Before their reorganization on a unified industrial basis Japanese seafarers had been organized in several different craft and company-based unions. One of the factors which led to the reorganization was the attendance prior to that date of Japanese seafarers' representatives at international meetings, such as the 1920 Maritime Conference of the ILO.

This gave our seafarers an insight into the importance of unity and of international cooperation between workers, and this insight has helped us to the position we enjoy today.

We are all aware of the difficulties which still remain to be overcome. Transport workers are faced with many problems today, and our struggle to overcome the problems which affect our

members' lives will never end. It is therefore imperative that we maintain and promote solidarity and co-operation between workers in the increasingly diversified activities of the international movement, under the banner of the ITF, to meet each challenge which emerges.

We join our brothers the world over in extending our most cordial congratulations to the ITF, and salute the staff of the ITF Secretariat for the fine work they have done.

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From W. J. SMITH, National President of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Transport and General Workers: THE CANADIAN BROTHERHOOD of Railway, Transport and General Workers was the first union in North America to affiliate to the International Transport Workers' Federation. The decision to affiliate to the ITF was made 43 years ago, at our 1923 convention in Calgary, Alberta. Another 25 years were to pass before other unions on this continent decided to follow our example and help build true international labour solidarity.

We take great pride in our long and congenial association with the ITF. It has broadened our horizons and enabled us to make some small contribution to fruitful cooperation with our sister unions in the transport industry all over the world.

Brotherhood officers have attended most of the congresses and many of the sectional conferences of the ITF down through the years. The contacts with national leaders of other transport unions, and the opportunities to participate in discussions on world problems have proved invaluable.

Our Brotherhood has been especially interested in the work of the ITF in assisting transport workers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to build their own unions. It is our sincere hope that the ITF's efforts in this direction will be intensified. There is no more important rôle for the ITF, in our view, than to aid in the formation and growth of new unions in the emerging nations.

On behalf of the 33,000 members of the CBRT & GW, I take pleasure in

congratulating the ITF on its historic Seventieth Anniversary. May it long continue to thrive as the great unifying agency for transport workers everywhere in the free world.

W. J. Smith is President of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers and a member of the present ITF Executive Board.

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From J. JARRIGION :

AS A FORMER MEMBER of the ITF Executive Committee and as a member still of the ITF through the Retired Personnel Section of the Force Ouvrière Railwaymen's Federation of France, I am proud and happy to join in celebrating the 70th anniversary of the ITF.

It is a pleasure to me to record the constant growth of our International. In 1919 it grouped 12 organizations in 7 countries, with a total membership of 746,482; in 1930 it had grown to include 93 organizations in 35 countries, with 2,275,336 members; today it has many times the membership of those years. It is heartening to see the constant intensification of the ITF's efforts to maintain fraternal relations between the trade union movements of different countries, to defend the economic and social interests of all transport workers (wages, hours of work, safety, provision of documentation) and to promote the solidarity of the working class in the struggle against the oppression of the monsters of capitalism, especially in the holocausts into which they, with the help of the dictators, have led the peoples of the world.

I am happy to recall that the ITF, acutely aware of its duty, has always worked to defend the interests of each group of workers (railwaymen, dockers, seamen, civil aviation workers, road transport workers, etc.) within the transport sector, without favouring one against the other, seeking to ensure that technological and other developments and competition between the financial combines do not disrupt social harmony within the transport industry, destroying jobs and spreading unemployment, using blackleg labour to break justified strikes, etc.

This conception of the ITF, which was very pronounced at the Railwaymen's Section Conference of Madrid in 1930, should in my opinion be maintained, having in mind certain pronouncements of a Minister of my country's Government concerning a current social conflict (French flight personnel and Air France) and the development of new means of transport (the air bus, the hovertrain, etc.).

Along with this more strictly occupational activity, the ITF has played a supremely important part in the social struggles of the working class in general. In the interests of putting an end to war profiteering and to the heavy financial burdens placed on the shoulders of the proletariat, the ITF at its Congresses (Geneva in 1921, Vienna in 1922, and again at Prague in 1932) took a firm stand for the abolition of political war debts and reparations, recalling its determination to defend humanity with all the means at its disposal from a repetition of the capitalist war.

No-one should ever forget the ITF's financial aid and various forms of solidarity to sustain the fight against Hitlerism, fascism and totalitarianism generally, and the struggle to uphold free trade union rights.

To go into detail about these activities and methods of assistance, direct or indirect, public or sometimes — necessarily — clandestine, would take up too much time and space.

Suffice it to say that those brave men of the ITF, most of whom have passed away, were comrades with whom I am glad to have been associated, and that I earnestly desire that, leaving aside sterile regrets and virtuous recriminations, disregarding the bribes of employers and the siren calls of the more or less domesticated forces of reaction, the transport workers, loyal and determined, stronger and more closely united than ever within the ITF, will secure social progress and world peace through their struggles, still necessary today.

Long live the ITF!

From ADOLPH KUMMERNUSS :

THE FACT THAT the ITF is 70 years old this year makes me wonder what things were like at the start.

Every worker who knows a little about the history of his movement is aware that the formation of *this* organization was necessary.

But I think mainly of the men who founded it.

Seventy years ago there was neither right nor freedom of association. The foundations had to be laid for what today is regarded as self-evident.

Countless men had to leave their homes, their families and their jobs merely because they wanted to realize the ideal of workers' solidarity.

Who has gauged the spiritual and physical sacrifice of these men? Who helped them then, or even could help them? The port workers, who only had work for three or four days a week and who earned three Marks a day? The local union, with its membership of a few hundred? Only the 'union brother' could help, and that help was always a sacrifice.

I have before me the text of a speech by our unforgettable Edo Fimmen, which he made in Vienna in December 1923. The subject was: the unions and international solidarity. He talked about aid for the German working class. Fimmen spoke harsh but frank words and his criticisms of the prevailing social order were arresting. I should like to quote a passage from this speech:

'In the Balkans, in Italy, Spain and Hungary and, I may add, in Germany too, fascism reigns. In the other countries of Europe fascism does not yet hold sway in its most brutal form, but the seeds are there. In those countries too, reaction is making itself ready.

'The words spoken by Count Westarp, if I am not mistaken, in the German Houses of Parliament that the German proletariat will starve when granaries are full, have for us abroad illuminated the situation in Germany like a flash of lightning.'

Forty-three years have passed since that speech was given. The road of the

trade unions has not led from victory to victory. There have always been setbacks and defeats.

My memory takes me back to the time, which I hope will never again return, of fascism and national socialism and to the illegal struggles of the trade unions.

To the credit of our International and its leaders, it should be said that the ITF stayed in the vanguard by its support for these struggles.

Men like Edo Fimmen and Japie Oldenbroek threw themselves body and soul into the fight.

I shall never forget the journey I undertook with Japie Oldenbroek in 1935, during the dark years of Nazi rule, from Hamburg to Berlin. We were organizing illegal meetings in various parts of Germany. Hour by hour we risked our heads and the lives of our families. For me, as a German trade unionist, it was the only course of action. But that it was also a matter of course for the ITF and for the Dutchman, Oldenbroek, was a heartening lesson for me.

This selfless action in support of one another's interests, which we should not forget in these politically uneasy times, should remain the rule for the international and national trade union movements in the fight for universal freedom.

Adolph Kummernuss is ex-President of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union and a former member of the ITF Executive Board.

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A PILLAR OF STRENGTH

by

G. JOUSTRA

THIS YEAR OUR ITF, founded in 1896, is celebrating its 70 years of life.

The mark of an anniversary of a special kind is usually that it celebrates a long and worthwhile existence.

If I were to be asked whether the 70th birthday of the ITF was the occasion for a special celebration, I should answer, as an observer with decades of first-hand knowledge, an emphatic yes and with every reason!

The ITF's innumerable activities would make a big book and probably only the man who wrote it would be able to show the full significance of the ITF's existence.

Taking advantage of this opportunity to set down my feelings on the history of our transport workers' International, I could not do better than to highlight what has most deeply impressed me in the course of the years.

Within this limit, then, I must first mention what has most characterized the leadership of the ITF — manifested both by its executive officers and by those who have worked closely with them: its sheer humanity. This has always been a criterion for the ITF's activities and has in my opinion also in many ways served as an example to the affiliated unions.

This was already in evidence at the beginning of the century. In 1903, when the Dutch Railwaymen's and Tramwaymen's Union had lost a strike and were in an almost hopeless position, the German sister organization, under the leadership of a man who had helped found the ITF, helped it back onto its feet again.

The same thing occurred immediately after the second world war, when help came to the Dutch Railwaymen's Union from America, Britain, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark.

After mentioning briefly these examples of valuable ITF action and assistance, I should call to mind that the ITF's efforts to bring about better labour law for the benefit of workers in *all* branches of the transport industry and to raise the living standards of *all* transport workers are sure proof that the intentions and ideals which inspired our pioneers when they founded the ITF have borne fruit.

For the ITF has, by its enduring presence and its heart-warming services in our fields of labour, become an extraordinary pillar of strength for us.

Keep your line, ITF!

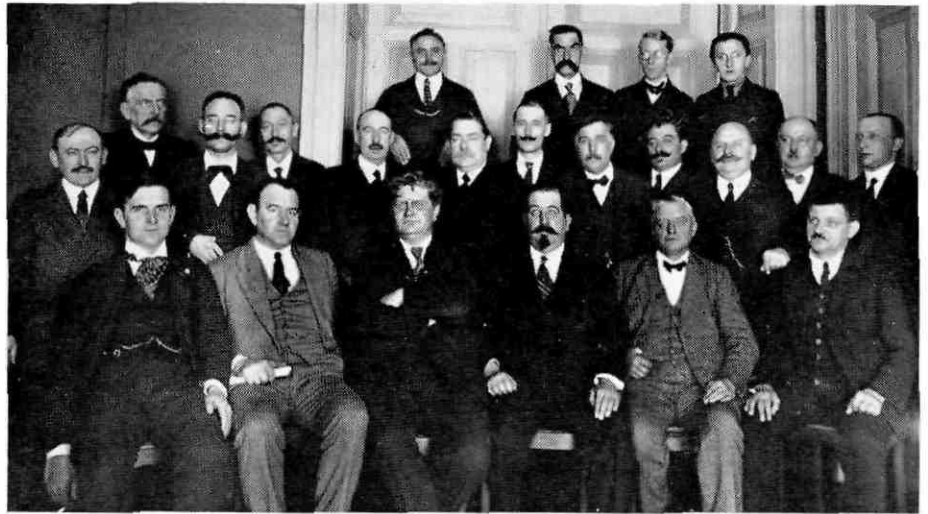
G. Joustra is ex-President of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union and a former member of the ITF Executive Board.

THE FIGHT AGAINST TOTALITARIANISM

'AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION organization which has won its spurs in the struggle for peace and against oppression of any kind, and which can claim never to have misinformed the workers' are the words used to describe the ITF in a resolution of the special Vigilance Committee set up during the early post-war years to combat communist activities in European ports. The Vigilance Committee's claim is certainly no overstatement. Whenever a nation falls into the grip of tyranny in any shape or form the ITF loses no time in bringing the world's attention to it and condemning it. No organization has been more alert than the ITF to the danger of totalitarianism or more vocal in exposing its false promises. Whatever brand of dictatorship comes to power, whether it be a collective or a one-man regime, whether it be of the left or of the right, the ITF denounces it for what it is. Whatever name the tyrants go under — they may be Communists, Nazis, Fascists, Phalangists, or even the innocent-sounding Nationalists of South Africa — the ITF treats them all the same.

Nor is the ITF's record one of empty words of pious outrage. Whenever a situation came about in which something concrete could be done to help a people labouring under tyranny to regain its liberty, the ITF lost no time in acting and calling on all affiliated organizations to do their part.

The first major action of this kind was taken in 1920 to help — strange as it may seem today — the new Soviet regime in Russia defend itself against aggression from Poland and other countries which wished to see Russia brought back into the capitalist fold. In those days the Russians were



One of the IFTU's international conferences against war during the early 'twenties. Edo Fimmen, also Secretary of the IFTU, is in the centre of the front row. The ITF is represented by Robert Williams (to the left of him), M. Bidegaray and Johann Döring (third and fourth from right in second row).

acclaimed by trade unionists the world over as heroes of the working class. Their Revolution had been a victory of the working man over capitalist exploitation, and workers in western countries rallied willingly to help the Russians preserve their new social order.

The boycott against Hungary in 1920

The transport workers have always been in an especially favourable position from the point of view of solidarity action. Acting together as a combined force they have the power to bring a nation's economic life to a standstill. A mere threat may be enough to demolish opposition. Threats were not enough in the first boycott actions which the ITF carried out in the fight against oppression. Early in 1920 transport workers, following the call of the ITF, refused to handle cargoes of arms destined for Poland for use against the Soviet forces in Russia and their action had some effect. But the first real victory over tyranny was won in Hungary.

Later in the year the Hungarian trade union centre appealed to the International Federation of Trade Unions for help. The Government in power in Hungary could have been a model for the fascist dictatorships which were to seize power in so many European countries during the 'thirties. Trade union rights and other basic human liberties had been curtailed and trade unionists were in prison. The Horthy Government was exercising a reign of terror — the 'White Terror', as it became known. On 20 June 1920 the IFTU declared a boycott of Hungary, in which the transport workers were clearly going to play the crucial rôle. The boycott was total and covered all traffic to and from Hungary, including postal and telegraphic communications as well as all goods transported. The boycott against Poland had only affected arms shipments.

The ITF, under Edo Fimmen's leadership, and in particular the Austrian affiliates, played a crucial rôle



German railwaymen's leader, Hermann Jochade, who had been a member of the ITF Executive Committee before the War, and who had been Secretary of the pre-World War I ITF at its Berlin Secretariat, was kicked to death by the Nazis in a concentration camp.

in the action against Hungary. The Austrian transport workers did their job magnificently. Wagons destined for Hungary piled up at the border, or were redirected 'by mistake' to other countries. And the sacrifice made by these workers, exhausted by four years of war, acute food shortage and an exceptionally severe winter, for their Hungarian brothers was enormous. When businessmen promised Austrian railwaymen working at the frontier the equivalent of one year's wages for every wagon they let through, the men refused point blank. For 10 months not a single railway truck passed from Austria into Hungary.

The boycott was lifted on 1 August 1920, after consultation with Hungarian trade union leaders, who said that the situation had improved considerably. The Horthy dictatorship was not broken, but most of the brutality and terror with which the Hungarian people had been ruled previously disappeared and the trade union movement survived. Indeed the movement was able to gather its forces in the years that followed and enjoy a position of strength it had never known before. The Hungarian Govern-

ment never again dared to use the repressive measures of the White Terror against the labour movement, even after its alliance with the Axis powers 20 years later.

The rise of fascism

The White Terror was a foretaste for the European labour movement of the fascist menace which was to grow during the 'twenties and 'thirties and finally engulf the world in war. Edo Fimmen was very much alive to the menace and his appeals for vigilance and for preventive measures grew ever more urgent. When Italy fell to fascism he sent a circular to all organizations affiliated to the ITF urging them to look at what had happened in Italy and to do all in their power to ensure that their own countries should not suffer the same fate. Almost all union leaders who replied expressed the conviction that fascism could not come to power in their countries, or in any country where there was a strong trade union movement and a firm belief in democracy. They also claimed that the press had exaggerated the danger of fascism. Future events in Europe showed how wrong their complacency was and how right Fimmen was in his unrelenting struggle against the forces of totalitarianism.

International action against the new regime in Italy, on the lines of that taken against Hungary in 1920, proved to be impossible. For success any boycott would need support from inside, and as this did not seem likely to be forthcoming, workers' organizations in other countries decided not to become involved.

Fimmen, however, organized a clandestine service of tracts and handbills, giving information which the Italian press withheld and appealing for resistance to fascism. The leaflets were printed in small type usually bearing the title of a work of literature or of a technical article. The task of circulating and distributing these 'dangerous goods' was carried out by transport workers of the countries bordering on Italy and in Italy itself, under the direction of their leader, Fimmen. The daring 'confetti

raid' on Milan in 1930 is one of the more spectacular events in the story of the ITF's propaganda campaign in Italy. That was when an Italian airman, Giovanni Bassanesi, on a mission for the ITF, flew a plane over his country and dropped copies of an ITF manifesto against fascism to the oppressed workers of Milan. After this 'attack from the air' one of the leaflets was received back at ITF headquarters with a note written in the margin: 'We have to look to you. It is impossible for us to move'.

After Italy more European countries succumbed to a totalitarian form of government: Spain (under Primo de Rivera), Yugoslavia, Greece, Lithuania, Finland, Germany, Austria. . . . And the trade union movement was invariably among the first victims of repression.

At the London Congress of 1930, a year after the Wall Street crash, the world economic situation was the dominant theme, but the sinister spectre of fascism also cast its shadow over the proceedings. A German railwaymen's delegate spoke these memorable words: 'We are today living in a state of latent war which is the more dangerous because it creates the moral conditions necessary for the outbreak of another war in which weapons still more destructive of life and property would be used. Herein lies the great danger of fascism, and here also are its roots. Fascism feeds on the misery and sufferings of our times. In the measure in which we succeed in healing this moral sickness so will the power of Hitler decline.'

The Nazi menace

At Prague, where the ITF held its next Congress in 1932, it was the Nazi menace which was uppermost in everyone's mind. The Italians were represented by delegates in exile, the Polish representatives were prevented from attending by their Government, and it was the last ITF Congress the Germans were to attend till after the War. The ITF offered them its unqualified support in any action they might take to beat back the fascist menace in their country. But the offer was not taken up by the Germans who mis-

ITF President, C. T. Cramp, presents the flag of the ITF to the Austrian Railwaymen's Union. The flag was to become a symbol of the Union's heroic stand against fascism and of its loyalty to the ITF. After the Nazis seized power in Austria, a woman smuggled the flag into Czechoslovakia, whence it was brought by three of the clandestine leaders of the Union to the ITF's Congress in Copenhagen, 1935, to be handed over for safe keeping. It was handed back at the Zürich Congress in 1946.

takenly thought that their organizations were strong enough to withstand any onslaught without help from abroad. When Hitler seized power in 1933, the German democratic trade union movement crumbled like a house of cards. Leaders disappeared underground, went into exile or were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Buildings, equipment, funds and staff were taken over by the Nazis and put at the disposal of Nazi-operated organizations. ITF trade unionists and especially Fimmen himself were deeply disappointed, but they did not give up the struggle.

Fimmen lost no time in organizing what was left of the German transport workers' unions into a body which would carry on the fight from outside Germany. The famous 'Antwerp Group' was hardly a trade union organization in the true sense of the word, but more of a fighting unit which worked ceaselessly — until the War and the occupation of Belgium by the Nazis — for the overthrow of tyranny and the restoration of democracy and normal trade union rights in Germany.

The trade unions in Austria were the next to fall victims to the forces of fascism. The Dolfuss regime declared open war on the labour movement, in an effort to dismantle what democratic institutions still survived. The Austrian workers, unlike their colleagues in Germany, put up a heroic fight and their country was torn by civil strife. Quick action was needed: Fimmen wasted no time in calling conferences, but immediately sent what aid he could to the stricken Austrians. But the ITF's

The clouds have begun to gather over Europe and the menace of fascism is increasing daily, but the tramwaymen of Vienna celebrate May Day, 1931, in the usual manner. Their banner proclaims: "...but we're still going to march!"



aid arrived too late and there was too little of it to provide the Austrian organizations with all they needed in the way of arms and munitions. Thus in 1934 the Austrian trade union movement was silenced by the bullets of the fascists.

ITF and the Spanish Civil War

Now the whole of Eastern and Central Europe was under dictatorial rule. Only in Czechoslovakia did democracy continue to exist precariously. The horizon to the south, too, began to darken. In

1936 civil war broke out in Spain. Like the Austrians, the Spaniards rallied to defend their democracy against the threat of dictatorship. And, unlike the Germans, they urged their brother workers abroad to help them. The ITF was quick to respond to their plea. The call went out to boycott vessels bound for ports which were in the hands of the fascists. The ITF set up a special fund, bought food and chartered ships to carry provisions to Republican-held parts of Spain. Reliable crews were also





1933: the Swastika reigned supreme in Germany. The trade unions were taken over by the Nazis. Many labour leaders escaped to carry on the fight against fascism from foreign countries. Those not so fortunate disappeared into concentration camps. (Keystone picture)

specially selected by the ITF for these missions. National governments were pursuing a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish conflict, and many ITF seamen and dockers got into trouble with their national authorities over refusing to sail or handle ships bound for ports held by Franco's forces. The Norwegian Seamen's Union, for example, had to face legal action brought against them by shipowners who were inconvenienced by the ITF's sailing boycott. But the maritime workers did not give a thought to the convenience of their employers or governments, as long as they could do something for their fighting Spanish brothers.

Contingents of ITF workers actually fought in the War alongside the Republicans and the men of the International Brigade. Edo Fimmen went to Spain to organize and coordinate the ITF's many-sided assistance. The war in Spain, indirectly, cost the life of ITF Assistant General Secretary Nathan Nathans, who had the job of directing the ITF's activities in Spain. An aircraft taking him to Spain crashed in 1937.

But industry in Italy and Germany was working round the clock to ensure

that the Phalangists were kept supplied with the arms and provisions necessary to win the war, and the democratic governments of Europe stuck rigidly to their policy of non-intervention. The rest of the world stood by and watched the assassination of the Spanish Republic.

No defeatism

War was now approaching rapidly in Europe. Fimmen and other ITF leaders realized that it was inevitable and they acted to ensure that the ITF might carry on its work unhindered. The Secretariat was moved from Amsterdam to England, which alone of all the countries in the western Alliance was to remain unoccupied. But in spite of the hopelessness of the situation at the time of the last pre-war Congress in Luxemburg in 1938, there was no defeatism. The ITF redoubled its efforts to break the power of the fascists without war. Contacts were maintained with illegal trade union groups in Germany, and German workers, who alone could bring the Nazi war machine to a standstill, were urged to organize resistance and free themselves from their oppressors. A radio station was set up on an old abandoned ship in the port

of Gdynia in Poland which broadcast ITF propaganda to German workers, and leaflets were constantly being smuggled into Germany.

But these courageous activities did not prevent the bloody struggle between the forces of democracy and totalitarianism, which was to prove the only way the scourge of fascist oppression would be removed and prevented from swallowing up the entire world. After war broke out the countries of western Europe fell one by one to invading German troops, until only the British Isles remained free of Nazi domination. The ITF made numerous radio appeals from London to the seamen of the Belgian, Danish, Dutch, French and Norwegian merchant navies to refuse to sail their ships to Nazi-controlled ports, but to bring them to Great Britain and join the growing ranks of those who had taken refuge there and carry on the fight to free their countries. Thousands of seamen responded to these calls and offered their services to the cause of democracy. The ITF helped them to organize into a combined trade union of seamen in exile.

To the land transport workers appeals of a different nature were sent out. They were urged to refuse to carry out the orders issued them by the enemy or by the bosses who collaborated with the Nazis, and to obstruct their intentions in every way possible. German transport workers were called upon to organize sabotage, and workers in neutral countries were asked to stop the transport of any goods which were destined to supply Hitler's war effort.

ITF help in underground resistance

In 1942 an agreement was reached with the British Broadcasting Corporation, under which the ITF was to assist in a more systematic way in the dissemination of radio propaganda to the Continent of Europe, and in 1943 a Joint Council was formed between the ITF, the Metal Workers' International and the Miners' International to provide for regular broadcasts to workers in Germany and Nazi-occupied countries.

Throughout the war the ITF continued to publish trade union news and



An aid-to-Spain meeting in Mexico, attended by Edo Fimmen in 1938.

anti-Nazi propaganda. The special news bulletin, *Fascism*, was published regularly in English and German all through the war, and in other languages for much of that time. *Fascism* reviewed events and developments in countries controlled by Nazi and other Fascist regimes and performed a useful service in bringing home to the free world the misery and fear in which the peoples of these countries lived, and in providing workers in enemy-controlled areas, where the publication was clandestinely circulated, with news which the censors withheld from them.

Contacts were maintained with transport workers' groups in Germany and in occupied Europe throughout the period of Nazi domination. But much of what the ITF did had to be under the cover of secrecy. The full story of the fight carried on by the transport workers of Europe during those years has never been told, and probably much of what happened will never be known. The use of the written word was for obvious reasons avoided. When letters or documents were carried they were invariably in code, and real names were not used. Whole chapters in the story died with their protagonists. The names of ITF leaders who had died during the war, read out at the first post-war Congress at Zürich in 1946, made a long list. One of them was Hermann Jochade, General Secretary before the 1914 war, who died in a concentration camp in 1939. He was trampled to death

by the Nazis. But the list did not include the many rank-and-file transport workers who had died in the fight to restore freedom and human dignity to Europe. Their heroic activities deserve a special tribute from the survivors, who benefited by their sacrifice.

The threat of communism

After the war a new threat to the peace and freedom of the world's peoples appeared in the shape of communism. Communist regimes were established in many eastern European countries, and it seemed that, unless the nations of western Europe, shattered and worn-out by the most destructive war man had known, could get back on their feet

and face the threat with determination, they too would be engulfed. Aid to these countries from America under the Marshall Plan helped them to rebuild their economies and put their industries back into production, and the Atlantic Treaty provided them with the means of repelling possible aggression. Thus the Communists saw their advance westwards checked, and the chances of their gaining power in the west receded. They had to restrict their activities to hampering the smooth execution of the aid programmes in any way they could. They infiltrated the trade unions and sought to win the workers over to their 'peace campaign'. The dockers' organizations provided one of the main targets for their disruptive tactics. They knew that their best chances of success lay in making trouble at the first point of entry of American arms into Europe. By stirring up trouble in the docks they could prevent the unloading of arms 'in the interests of peace', and at the same time seriously hinder the economic development of western Europe. Supplies of arms shipped from Poland to Albania, however, for the use of communist guerrillas in Greece were not affected by the 'campaign for peace'. The ITF was quick to expose this hypocrisy. The Battle of the Ports was on.

A Dutch seafarers' meeting, held under ITF auspices in Liverpool, England, during the War.



In order to prevent the communists from sabotaging the Atlantic Pact, the ITF in October 1949 set up Vigilance Committees to watch developments in European ports and organize action to secure free transit for the vital Pact shipments.

A central committee and three regional committees for (1) the Baltic and Scandinavian area, (2) the North Sea and Atlantic Coast area, and (3) the Mediterranean area were set up to plan and coordinate action. The committees were composed of leaders of ITF-affiliated seafarers', dockers' and inland navigation workers. Similar joint committees were set up at national level and in the individual ports also. Systematic propaganda work was carried out among dockers and seafarers: literature was distributed in ships and dock areas, special meetings were held, at which dockers and seafarers were warned of communist schemes and informed of the activities of the WFTU Transport Department. The workers quickly realized that their real interests would only be served by free democratic trade unions, which were genuine industrial organizations and not political tools of the Cominform. By the middle of 1951 the Central Vigilance Committee could report that the Battle of the Ports had been won and that the communist threat had been successfully beaten back.

The Red Terror

But although the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy have been defeated, totalitarianism is not dead. It lives on, in particular, in the communist world, where millions of workers still live under regimes which do not allow them the freedom to express an opinion or air a grievance. And for improvements in wages and conditions they are dependent on the bounty of a one-party Government whose power is perpetuated by 'elections' in which there is no choice. The ITF has done what it could to stop the spread of Communism and will continue to reinforce the democratic trade union movement in the free world, particularly in the developing countries, as the best



After the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, the ITF contributed 5,000 gift parcels to a shipment of relief provisions which the Austrian Trade Union Confederation was sending to Hungary for distribution amongst the stricken workers. Standing beside the convoy at the Austrian-Hungarian frontier are (left to right): a truck driver, Austrian union leaders, Josef Steiner (Transport and Commercial Workers), Ernest Ulbrich (Railwaymen) and Paul Koch (Trade Union Confederation).

means of holding back communist expansionism. It is with bitter irony that we recall the ITF's first boycott to aid an oppressed people against the enemies of the Soviet regime in Russia, followed closely by a more intensive action against the White Terror in Hungary, but that decades later in 1956 the ITF called for action against tyranny of another kind in Hungary. This time it was the Red Terror. The people of Hungary had tried to throw off the yoke of communist tyranny, but their attempt had been brutally suppressed by Russian military intervention. The ITF called for an international trade union boycott of all goods and services for Russia. Dockers in many European ports, outraged at the news from Hungary, had already refused to handle Soviet ships without waiting for the call from the ITF.

White Terror in 1920, Red Terror in 1956: whatever the colour, as far as the ITF is concerned it is totalitarianism and the enemy of working men and women throughout the world. The ITF will continue to fight by all legitimate means to defend peace, freedom and democracy wherever these are threatened. Its past record is not to be dismissed lightly and stands as a

promise that future attempts to bring peoples under the yoke of dictatorship will be resisted.

(Continued from page 128)

Throughout the Congress no word of reproach came from the British delegation. Every attempt to side-track the discussions was resisted by them, particularly by Bevin who insisted that the first and most important thing to be done was to reconstitute the ITF. A resolution which he drafted to this effect was adopted.

Difficulties were sometimes raised by outsiders, but the British stuck firmly to their determination to avoid reproaches. On the evening of the second day of the Congress delegates were together in a restaurant, surrounded by Press men who were eager to know what the results of the meeting had been. Harry Gosling's only answer was to take a roll of bread from the table and share it with a member of the German delegation.

And in this way, the ITF as we know it today was born, a new, better, and more powerful ITF which was to learn from and avoid the mistakes which had been made by its pre-1914 forerunner.

RECOLLECTIONS

by KARL WEIGL

OUR ITF IS SEVENTY years old, yet in itself and through its activities since 1896 it has become ever more youthful from decade to decade. For those who have been associated with the ITF over the years, this brings back many memories. And so for me too.

I first came into contact with the ITF in 1913, when I went to London to attend my first ITF Congress, as a delegate from the Austrian transport workers. It was a lively meeting. The debate roared to and fro in the unceremonious manner of the seamen and transport workers of that time. In those days only European organizations were affiliated to the ITF. The terrible living and working conditions which these workers had to put up with were the theme of the proceedings. The Austrian union had the seamen and dockers of the Adriatic ports of Trieste and Pola well organized (the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was still in power at the time). That Congress was of great significance for us. It confirmed our conviction that we were on the right road and that, when the need should arise, we should be able to call on the assistance of our International. As we in our own union had to look after the interests of workers in no less than eight nations ruled by the monarchy — we were a small international ourselves — we fully understood the difficulties of the ITF. It was, I believe, at that time that the spirit of loyalty was born in which the transport workers of Austria maintain their relationship with the ITF.

It was no wonder that the Austrian Transport and Commercial Workers' Union (HTV) has always been ready to support with all the means at its disposal the actions of the ITF, even when this proved difficult. I remember vividly the struggle against Horthy in Hungary and Pilsudski in Poland. In the first instance, the call from the ITF was to stop all transport to and from Hungary.

The Horthy regime had thrown trade unionists into jail and had subjected them to torture. Edo Fimmen, who was to intervene in the name of the ITF, was refused permission to enter Hungary. Thereupon the boycott was carried out and made 100 per cent effective by railwaymen and other transport workers in Austria. Not a wagon, not a train, not a ship was allowed to cross the frontier. Our Danube boatmen forced Hungarian convoys arriving in Austria to put out the fire in their boilers. A loaded vessel was anchored in the middle of the Danube in front of the Imperial Bridge in Vienna to block the navigation channel, so that no boat could sail either up-stream or down-stream. And on land the transport workers and railwaymen were able to prevent all transport across the frontier, so that success had to come. Soon, Fimmen went to Budapest and negotiated for the liberation of some of the imprisoned trade unionists and for the humane treatment of the remainder. For the trade unions themselves he won the right to carry on an official existence.

In the case of Poland, Austrian railwaymen discovered that two trains from Italy had loaded arms and munitions for Poland under false declarations. True to the ITF's boycott call, the trains were not allowed to proceed. There was a heated debate in the House of Representatives, after which the Government found that it had no alternative but to send the trains back to Italy.

After the Austrian Civil War in 1934 the ITF concerned itself with the fate of our trade union leaders. Our friend, Nathans, came to Vienna posing as the agent of a button factory and even armed with a large collection of button samples, to take stock of the situation and to see what help could be given.

I myself have the ITF to thank for having escaped Nazi concentration camps and probably even worse things. I was asked by the German-Bohemian Trade Union Commission in 1936 to go to Aussig on the Elbe in order to take charge of the secretariat of the German

Transport and Food Workers' Union there and to reorganize the union. But in the autumn of 1938, following the notorious Munich negotiations between the British and the Nazis, I was expelled from Czechoslovakia. I had to be out of the country in 14 days, or else be placed at the Austrian frontier. And Nazi soldiers were already in control of the frontier. Edo Fimmen sent for me to go to Luxembourg and provided me with the necessary papers. But this was not possible, since I should have had to pass through Germany, where the Nazis, who were after me, would certainly have caught me. It was Charles Lindley, President of the ITF, who came to my assistance. A few days before my notice to leave Czechoslovakia expired, Mr. Granath, an emissary of the Swedish Ministry of Social Affairs, turned up and informed me that, on Lindley's behalf, he was to take me back with him to Stockholm, dead or alive. He procured visas and the necessary papers for me and for two other trade unionists who were in danger. The journey, which took us through Poland, was eventful and fraught with difficulties, all of which Granath overcame. From Stockholm I went to Amsterdam for consultations with Fimmen, who was already sick. I was to go to Geneva to act as a contact man between the ITF and the International Labour Office. But the local authorities in the Geneva district of Switzerland did not grant me an entry permit, so I had to go instead to Berne and carry out my liaison work from there. These activities came to an end when the ILO moved to Montreal.

I could relate many another experience from my association with the ITF, but to do this would take up a great deal of time and column space. It only remains for me to express my pleasure at the development of our ITF and to convey my heartfelt wishes for all success and good fortune in the future.

Karl Weigl is ex-President of the Austrian Transport and Commercial Workers' Union and a former member of the ITF Executive Board.

AN UNCOMMON EVENT AND ITS LESSON

by PAUL TOFAHRN

SEPTEMBER 1943. The Railwaymen's Section of the ITF held a conference in London. There were two American fraternal delegates, Jim Phillips and F. K. Switzer. The British TUC held its annual conference, with fraternal delegates from Soviet Russia in attendance, among them P. Tarasov and Mrs. Zhukova, from the Soviet Railwaymen's Union. The ITF invited these Russians to its conference. They came. Never before had the Railwaymen's Section of the ITF been honoured by the presence of American or Russian guests.

The conference surveyed post-war problems likely to arise for railway trade unions and the railway industry. It also discussed the rôle of railwaymen in the war effort and devoted attention to sabotage possibilities open to railwaymen on the European continent eager to help in defeating the Nazis. Phillips and Tarasov recorded on BBC machines their endorsement of appeals addressed to Italian and German railwaymen urging them to help in winning the war, and to European railwaymen to prepare for winning the peace.

An international trade union conference with Americans and Russians sitting cheek by jowl was an uncommon event, but it was as true to the character of the ITF. It was as if efforts made in the 'twenties to establish friendship and co-operation between the transport workers of the Soviet Union and their brethren in Europe and the whole world were unexpectedly bearing fruit. But this appearance was deceptive — 1943 was the year of the battle of Stalingrad. The outcome of that battle had made Hitler's final defeat a certainty, but the defeat had still to be achieved through stupendous efforts during many months on many battlefields, in many armament factories and on many routes of communication by sea, land, and air. The reality was that we were gripped by a common purpose, thanks to which comradeship sprang up between us all by itself.

It is saddening to think that victory meant the end of the common purpose and thereby also of comradeship. It is sobering to realize that given again a common purpose we could join hands in dismantling the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall.

Paul Tofahrn is General Secretary of the Public Services International and one-time ITF Assistant General Secretary.

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THREESCORE YEARS AND TEN

by J. H. OLDENBROEK

THE CLAIM THAT THE ITF has made history in the seven decades of its existence goes unchallenged, but will social historians of the next century devote as many as two or three hundred words to it, when the world will really have changed?

Being in the forefront of the fighters for free and independent trade unionism, the ITF's struggle has not been confined to the promotion of decent working and living standards, but has also been waged for human freedom and for the equality of all races. Today this sounds almost a commonplace, although much has still to be done to achieve these aims on a world-wide scale. But imagine what it meant in those early days, when governments were usually anti-union, to carry on a continuous struggle against *all* governments (and especially one's own) to defend fellow workers in other countries. Compare this situation with today's, when all too often governments put trade unions in chains and they acquiesce under the slogan: right or wrong — my government! But this is not the way in which principles and ideals are served.

Only once was the independence of the ITF really in jeopardy, namely, during those negotiations concerning the incorporation of the international trade secretariats into the WFTU in the late '40s. The difference between free and captive trade unionism was perhaps best illustrated in the exchange between the Russian representative Kutznetzow and myself. He: 'Do I understand that an international sea-

men's conference of the ITF could make a decision in favour of an international strike and that the Russian seamen would have to abide by such a decision? We would never face it.' I: 'It would be for the Russian Seamen's Union to issue the strike order, but if it did not, I can assure you that Russian seamen would have a bad time in foreign ports.'

If the ITF continues to perform its day-to-day work efficiently (and I have no doubt it will), if it holds high the banner of free trade unionism in these days of upheaval, then the future will be bright, and the historical mission will be accomplished.

My thoughts are with you, as they have been for some 45 years.

Jacobus Oldenbroek is a former General Secretary of the ITF.

* * * *

AN ANNIVERSARY GREETING TO OUR ITF

by ROBERT BRATSCHI

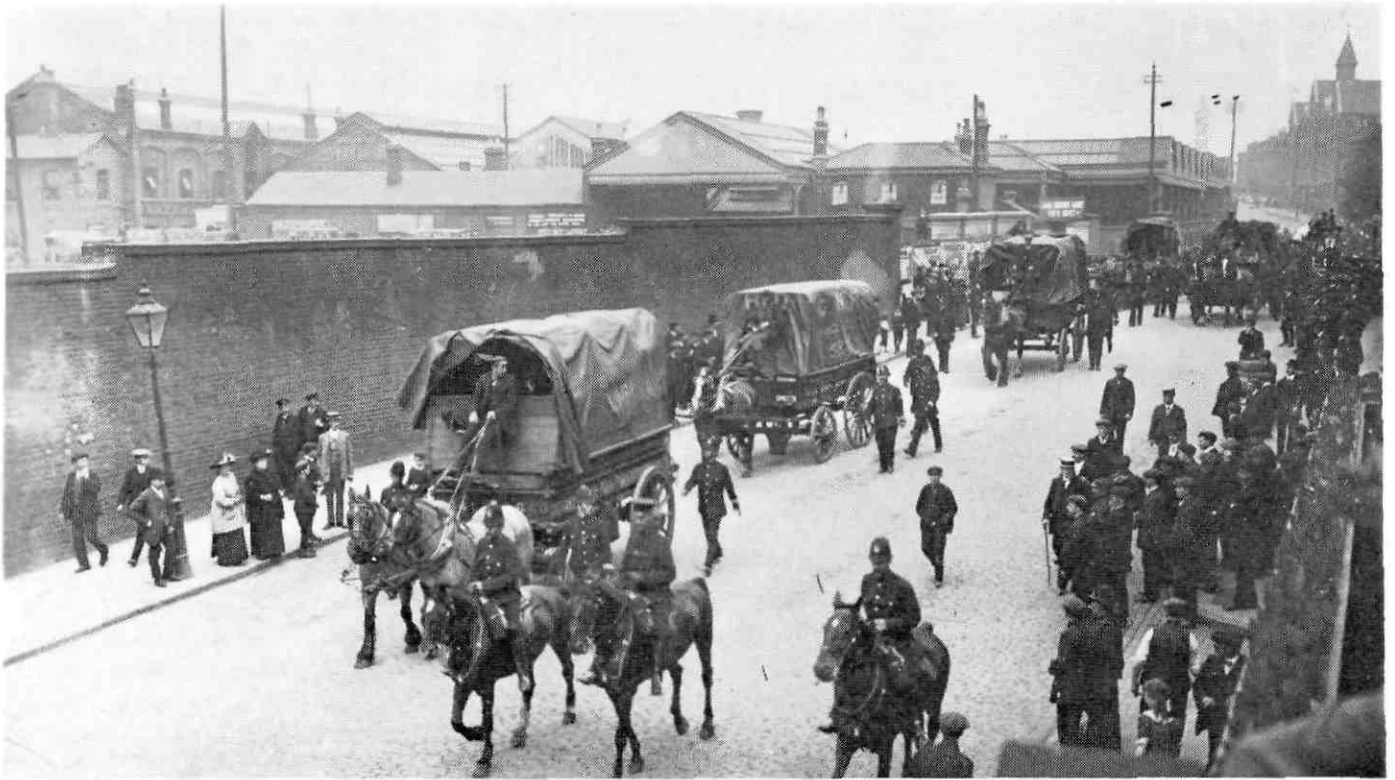
OUR ITF IS SEVENTY YEARS old, but still going strong and still as ready as ever to carry out forcefully the many tasks which fall to its lot all over the free world.

The Foundation Congress of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) in 1919 decided unanimously and with enthusiasm to affiliate to the ITF. Since that time I have had the honour to be associated with the ITF.

I have had the privilege of addressing in the name of the SEV, the Swiss free trade union movement and other national groups, three Congresses of our proud International which have been held on Swiss soil.

In 1921 the first major Congress since the first world war, was held in Geneva. For the first time I was able to meet such ITF pioneers as Edo Fimmen, Ernest Bevin, Charley Lindley, Hermann Jochade and many other leading figures in the International. Shortly before, the Communists had attempted to split the world labour movement. The ITF had been one of their special targets. A delegation of Russians appeared on the

(Continued on page 161)



The British transport strike of 1911: police escort railway goods carts driven by blacklegs past a railway depot, while strikers and passers-by look on.
(Radio Times Hulton picture, library photo)

SOLIDARITY THROUGH THE ITF

THE VERY PURPOSE OF THE ITF'S creation was to provide a vehicle for international solidarity action. Transport workers' leaders in Europe at the turn of the century, particularly in the shipping, river transport and waterside trades, knew that if men could stop work simultaneously in all branches of transport in all countries of a given area, opposition would crumble and the employers would have no alternative but to concede the workers' demands in full. Although an international strike covering all branches of transport has never been carried out, the principle of solidarity underlying it has been applied again and again through the ITF with great success.

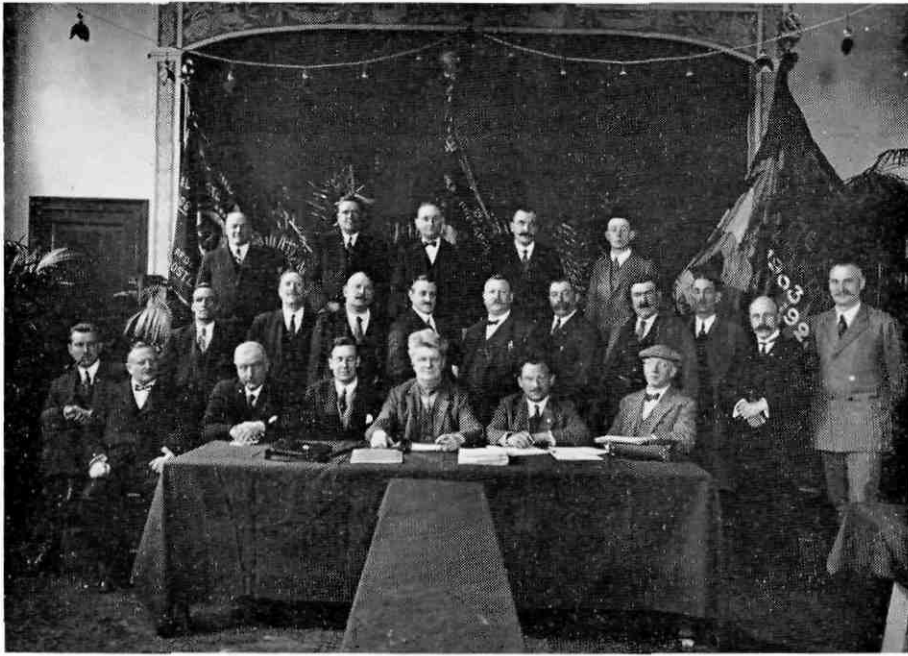
The British transport strike of 1911

One of the more spectacular examples of what could be achieved through solidarity of action dates back to the early years of the ITF, when the idea of the international strike was still very much to the fore. Early in 1911 the ITF seamen's unions of Britain, Belgium, Holland, Germany and the Scandinavian countries came together to discuss the possibility of an international strike.

Only the British, Belgian and Dutch seamen decided to proceed with the concerted strike plan, but in Britain the action snowballed into a general transport strike. The British seamen struck on the 14 June 1911 and the effect was dramatic. At a time when trading conditions were lively, the shipowners could not afford to have their ships tied up for long and, faced with the determination and unity of the seamen, they

proved eager to make concessions. But the seamen had no intention of going back to work until all their demands had been met. Seeing the success of the seamen's action, the dockers and river workers subsequently came out in support of their own demands, and were followed soon afterwards by the carters and ultimately the railwaymen. By the end of August the strike was over, and all the unions could register significant gains. Above all the whole British transport workers' movement had grown in strength. Union membership had increased, and, in particular, the railwaymen, who had never struck on this scale before, forced the companies to negotiate with and recognize their unions.

The ITF had played a unique rôle in these events. The ITF had been a



A joint meeting of the ITF and the International Federation of Mineworkers at Ostend, Belgium, in May 1926 to discuss action in support of the British General Strike.

catalyst, in that the strike had been in the first place an international seamen's strike but had been eagerly seized by the British transport workers and made their own, and had performed no small service in supporting and sustaining the strikers. The ITF, from its headquarters in Berlin, had prevented blackleg crews from being exported to Britain from the Continent, had organized boycotts of British ships defying the strike, and had sent financial aid. The support and encouragement which the German Secretariat under Hermann Jochade gave to the British affiliates, once it realized the significance of the strikes, earned generous tributes from the British unions.

The British General Strike in 1926

In 1926 the ITF was called to the aid of workers in Britain once more. This time it was the miners who were in need of ITF assistance. A long-standing dispute in the British mining industry had led the British Trade Union Congress and Miners' International Federation in July 1925 to approach the ITF for assistance, should a conflict break out. The ITF immediately alerted its affiliates, asking them to prepare to stop shipments of coal to Britain in the event of a strike or lockout in the British coal mines. Conflict was avoided till the following year. On 1 May 1926 the

miners, who refused to accept reductions in wages, a lengthening of working hours and a general deterioration in conditions, were locked out by their employers. The TUC immediately called a general strike, involving some of the ITF's affiliates in Britain.

The ITF had already, on the day before the general strike was called, sent out telegrams requesting its affiliates on the Continent and in Scandinavia to prevent the export of coal to Britain and to stop the bunkering of British ships in their ports. Requests to the same effect had even gone to unions (as yet unaffiliated) in America and Australia. Later the blockade was extended to other merchandise besides coal, and the possibility was pursued of stopping coal from the Ruhr in Germany from reaching Rotterdam, where it had been found difficult to stop the bunkering of British ships. Throughout the strike the ITF maintained constant contact with affiliates, issuing a special bulletin in five languages on developments in Britain and on sympathetic action on the Continent. Information was also broadcast by radio.

Nevertheless, a report presented by General Secretary Edo Fimmen to the Paris Congress in September 1926, indicated that the ITF was up against

considerable difficulties in its efforts to help the British miners. Fimmen complained that the Secretariat, which was then in Amsterdam, was not kept properly informed about the course of events in Britain and that the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) had been uncooperative in the matter. The ITF had before the outbreak of the conflict pressed the IFTU to make a decision on the question of compensation for transport workers who took action on behalf of workers in other industries, but no indication was given that the IFTU had come to a decision on this question. It was not fair that transport workers, 'the shock troops of the labour movement', should have to shoulder the whole financial burden of these struggles.

But in spite of difficulties of one kind and another, the Continental affiliates threw in their lot with the British strikers and did all they could to make the embargo effective. It is significant that when the press announced that the strike was over, none of the Continental unions, with one exception, resumed work on British-bound cargoes. And in the one port where work was resumed, the order was immediately cancelled on instructions from the ITF that the embargo should continue.

Events in the years that followed — the depression and consequent decline in union membership and depletion of union funds, and the ITF's loss of affiliates in Germany, Italy, Spain and Eastern Europe — made action of this kind increasingly difficult. Yet the practice of organizing solidarity assistance was continued — action on behalf of the Antwerp dockers in 1928 and of the Belgian, Dutch and Finnish seafarers during the 'thirties may serve as examples — right up until the outbreak of war, and was resumed after the war.

The Deutsche Lufthansa and Flying Tiger disputes

In 1955 the ITF was first called upon to aid civil aviation workers in dispute. One of the disputes involved American

During their 1955 strike against Flying Tiger, IAM members recruited a live tiger for picket duty. Members of other unions refused to cross the picket lines in any case, and the ITF's international boycott ensured that Flying Tiger aircraft were grounded at foreign airfields.

air transport workers who, as well as belonging to the youngest industrial group in the International, were also members of one of the ITF's most recent affiliates, the US International Association of Machinists. They were ground personnel employed by Flying Tiger Airlines Inc.

But the flying staff recruited by Germany's newly established post-war airline, Deutsche Lufthansa, were the first to claim the ITF's attention. Full details of standards of pay and working conditions on other airlines had been supplied to the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (ÖTV) in 1954, so that comparable standards could be negotiated for the flying staff on the new airline. Lufthansa, however, refused to offer more than seventy per cent of the average figure, and the union broke off negotiations. The ITF immediately embarked on a press campaign to bring Lufthansa's low wage policy to the notice of the public and of civil aviation interests all over the world, and appealed to air transport affiliates to support the Lufthansa flying staff. A press notice affirmed the refusal of air transport workers to tolerate 'that an economically developed Germany will play such a scandalous rôle in civil aviation as is the case with Panama in the shipping industry.' Assurances were received from flying staff affiliates in other countries that none of their members would work Lufthansa flights, should the ÖTV call a strike. Ground staffs' organizations also declared that no servicing facilities would be given to Lufthansa aircraft in the event of a strike.

The ITF's campaign achieved the desired effect: Lufthansa approached the union for a resumption of negotiations. The result was an agreement providing for salaries comparable to those of other European airline flying staff.



But before Flying Tiger would agree to give its employees a fair deal, action had to be taken.

Wages and conditions were well behind those enjoyed by the ground personnel of other US airlines with whom the International Association of Machinists (IAM) had negotiated satisfactory contracts. In June 1955, after six months of fruitless negotiations, the Flying Tiger mechanics went on strike. The company's attitude provoked the first global civil aviation boycott, a sobering lesson for Flying Tiger and for any airline which might subsequently have tried the same tactics. The ITF obtained assurances from its civil aviation affiliates that none of the aircraft on Flying Tiger's overseas flights would be handled. Solidarity was completely effective, in particular at London Airport, which Flying Tiger used frequently and where the unions on the British Joint Council for Civil Air

Transport unanimously decided that no ground facilities of any kind should be granted to Flying Tiger aircraft. On 6 October IAM was able to announce the conclusion of an agreement providing for rates on a par with those paid by other US airlines, and including no-victimization clauses.

The Panlibhon boycott-of 1958

The ITF's campaign against flag-of-convenience shipping, the background to it and the results achieved since it was first started, is a story in its own right, but no account of the ITF's efforts in the field of international solidarity action would be complete without the inclusion of at least one chapter of that story.

The year 1958 saw the fulfilment of the dream of the pioneers of international trade unionism, that one day workers all over the world would take joint action to secure a common aim. For four days a total boycott was

enforced against ships flying the convenience flags of Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica in ports around the globe. The object of the boycott was to bring to the attention of the world not only the substandard wages paid and working conditions provided on these vessels, but also the implications of the growth in this trade to the shipping industries of bona fide maritime nations whose laws ensured collective bargaining, safety at sea, and other standards which the cheap registries of the Panlibhon countries enabled 'fly-by-night' shipowners to flout.

Selective boycotts had been carried out before 1958 and have been carried out consistently since, but at that time, when it seemed that flag-of-convenience tonnage was going to grow to a point where shipping from bona fide maritime countries would no longer be able to compete, drastic action was seen to be necessary. A boycott of *all* ships flying the Panamanian, Liberian, Honduran and Costa Rican flags was called for four days from midnight on 30 November 1958. In spite of legal hindrances preventing some dockers' unions from participating and the refusal of Communist, Christian and other non-affiliated unions to act with the ITF, less than 10 per cent of ships affected escaped the boycott. Two hundred vessels in seventeen ports were completely immobilized.

The main aim of the action, of bringing home to the public and their governments in maritime nations the magnitude of the problem, was achieved, though it is to be regretted that governments have been extraordinarily reluctant to do anything to regulate the question. A considerable measure of success was also achieved in the other objective, of enabling as many Panlibhonco ships as possible to be brought under collective agreements either with ITF-affiliated seamen's unions or with the ITF Special Seafarers' Section. Even before the boycott began shipowners were queuing up to sign agreements, in some cases for hundreds of vessels. A notable achieve-

ment of the campaign as a whole in 1958 was the decision of the Costa Rican Government to withdraw facilities for foreign shipowners to register their vessels under the Costa Rican flag.

The East African railwaymen's dispute of 1960

In 1960 the ITF provided a different kind of assistance to affiliated unions in dispute. In February of that year railwaymen in Tanganyika went on strike for an increase in wages. The dispute was a complicated one, involving railwaymen in Kenya and Uganda as well, though they did not take part in the strike. The strike in Tanganyika took place against a general background of bad industrial relations between the African railwaymen's unions in the three East African territories and the East African Railways and Harbours Administration. One of the issues at stake was the need for suitable collective bargaining machinery and proper procedure for dealing with grievances.

As there was no sign of an end to the strike and the situation seemed to be getting worse, the ITF and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) decided to send representatives to assist the parties in reaching a settlement. Pieter de Vries (then Director of Regional Affairs) for the ITF and Jack Purvis for the ICFTU went to East Africa in mid-April, and their services were gladly accepted by the three unions. De Vries and Purvis had repeated meetings with the EAR&H management to put the unions' case, and eventually, after much hard bargaining, increases were agreed which were acceptable to the railwaymen. The Tanganyika strikers went back to work, having been out for eleven and a half weeks, with full guarantees against victimization. One of the most important provisions of the agreement, which was to cover railwaymen in all three territories, was for the conducting of an independent inquiry into the state of industrial relations in the EAR&H. This finally bore fruit in 1962 in the establishment of regular central negotiating machinery for the whole of the

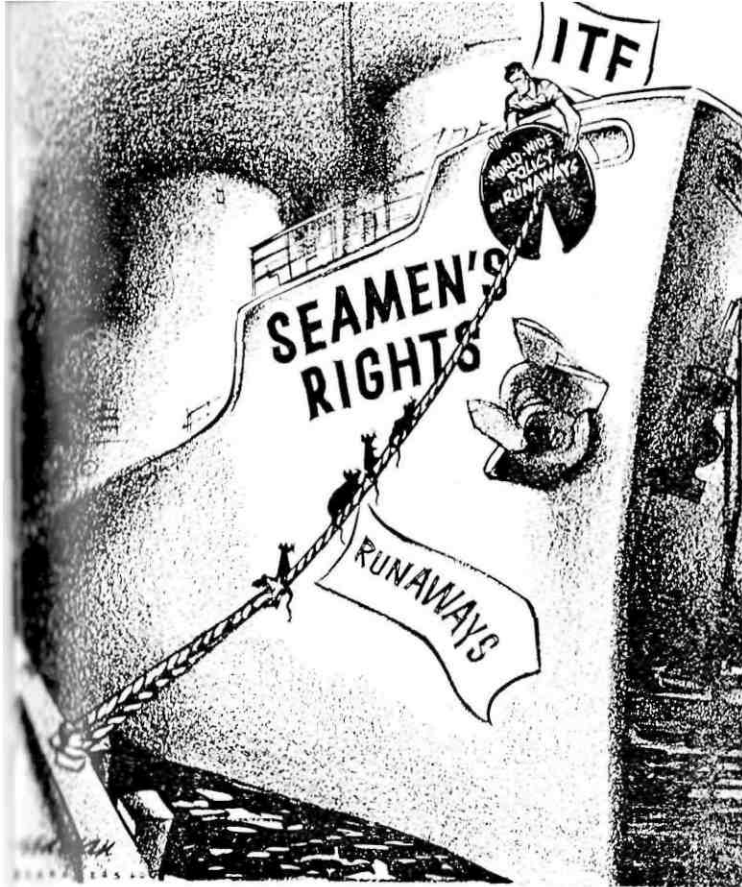
territory covered by EAR&H with territorial committees for each of the three countries. Previously the unions in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda had been forced to negotiate separately with the EAR&H.

The Manila port workers' strike of 1963

From May to September 1963, longshoremen in the port of Manila, Philippine Islands, were engaged in a life and death struggle to preserve their trade union rights and maintain their standards of pay and working conditions. The Government had taken over the operation of cargo handling services in the port, formerly carried out under contract to the Government by a private company, and was claiming that consequently all employees came under the labour regulations covering state employees. Workers directly employed by the state had no collective bargaining rights, but came under state pay plans which laid down their wages entitlements unilaterally. A distinction was made for those undertakings which, though Government-owned, operated on a commercial basis. This is the point on which the whole dispute hinged, for the Government insisted that the port service was not a commercial undertaking (though it always had been when it was under private contract) and refused to recognize the five-year agreement the Philippine Transport and General Workers' Organization (PTGWO) had concluded with the port service contractor in 1961. It soon became clear that the Government was laying siege to the port workers' union, and indeed to the whole trade union movement of the Philippines, through its arbitrary attempt to curtail basic trade union rights.

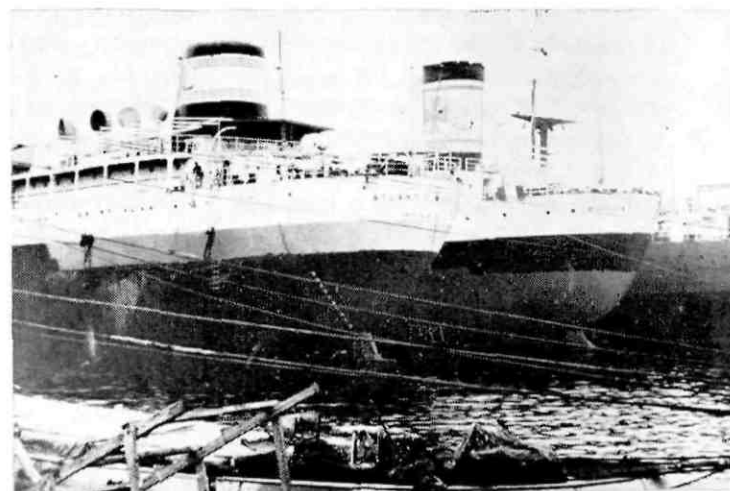
The strike dragged on and troops were used to bring strikebreaking labour onto the quays, resulting in some violence. The dispute was taken through court after court, until finally the Supreme Court decided in favour of the PTGWO. The port service was a commercial function.

The Government capitulated, though not merely because the Law was not on



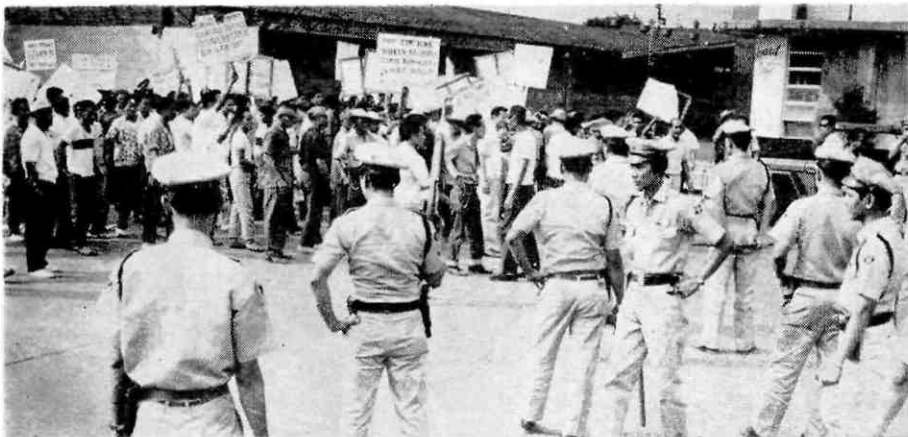
THE PANLIBHON BOYCOTTS OF 1958

Above: a cartoon which shows clearly what the flag-of-convenience campaign is about. Below: (left to right) Special Seafarers' Section Secretary Lawrence White, General Secretary Omer Becu, and US National Maritime Union President Joseph Curran at an ITF boycott meeting. Right: (from top to bottom) American seafarers demonstrate their support for the ITF boycott; Greek seafarers walk off their Liberian-flag ship in New York; Swedish seamen's representatives talk to policemen during a boycott of the Panamanian-flag 'Philadelphos' in Sweden; Panlibhion ships tied up in Piraeus, Greece. (photo: Planet News)



its side. The ITF had intervened, calling for international solidarity action on behalf of the Manila port workers. Cargoes were not reaching Manila, and ships proceeding from the Philippines were blacked in ports all round the world. The ITF also sent financial assistance and called upon its affiliates to do the same. The response to this appeal was generous, and without the money received from abroad the PTGWO certainly would not have been able to hold out for as long as proved necessary.

A full list of all the disputes in which the ITF has played a part, mobilizing the vast strength of a united international transport workers' movement on behalf of an affiliate in trouble, would be far too long to fit into these few pages. The examples described here, however, bear witness to the decisive influence which an involvement of workers beyond the confines of national frontiers can have on the outcome of a dispute, and may also serve to emphasize the importance of every single union playing its part when the call goes out, mindful that one day its own members may need the help of brothers abroad.



Above: A protest demonstration of the Manila longshoremen during their 1963 strike, watched carefully by police. Below: Pieter de Vries, Director of ITF Regional Activities (later to become General Secretary), with officials of the Kenya Railway African Union during the East African railway conflict in 1960.



THE ITF AND THE FINNISH TRADE UNIONS

by NILO WÄLLÄRI, General Secretary of the Finnish Seamen's Union

AS THE ITF celebrates its 70th anniversary, all of us can be proud of its glorious rôle in the international labour movement, a rôle which has a prominent place in the history of the struggle for freedom, justice and human dignity.

Particularly Finnish seafarers and transport workers have a deep feeling of gratitude for the active part the ITF has played in our fight for a place in the sun. Our unions were suppressed by reactionaries as a consequence of the civil war which we lost in 1918, and workers had to overcome innumerable obstacles. Employers refused flatly to have anything to do with trade unions, and whenever the unions fought for their rights and for better conditions,

armed strike-breakers were often ordered out against strikers. Political differences among the workers added to the general weakness of the unions, and in the 1920s many strikes were fought by transport workers. The ITF was regarded as a reliable stronghold, and it inspired the transport workers against unequal odds to fight on. Edo Fimmen, General Secretary of the ITF at that time, paid frequent visits to Finland. He attended the congresses and meetings of our seamen's and transport workers' unions, and his devotion to the workers' cause and untiring zeal in the struggle of transport workers in general created such confidence among Finnish seafarers and transport workers that, even during the darkest periods of reaction, the ITF was regarded as a safe citadel. Sometimes, perhaps, the practical weight of the ITF was overestimated, for it cannot

do more than its affiliated organizations are able to do. But the spirit of the ITF and its readiness to help whenever help was needed, has helped to build strong and militant unions in Finland.

Today the strongest trade unions in Finland are to be found among the ITF affiliates: the seamen and locomotivemen are 100 per cent organized, the dock foremen, and the pilots and lighthousemen (their union is now part of the Seamen's Union) are 95 per cent organized.

Today these strong unions are not in serious need of help from outside. But we have not forgotten the significance of solidarity and support extended to those in need. That is one of the valuable lessons taught by the ITF. And in recent times the Finnish Seamen's Union, together with the dock workers' organizations have made Panlibhon boycotts 100 per cent effective in

Finland. Whenever a boycott action is needed on the waterfront in Finland, it will be taken. The old fighting spirit of the ITF prevails among our seafarers and transport workers.

The ITF has not fought in vain. As we pay tribute to the ITF on its 70th anniversary and express our deep gratitude for its gallant career, we wish our International all success for the future.

* * * *

ON THE ITF's 70th BIRTHDAY

by PIETER DE VRIES

SEVENTY YEARS OF organized international activity is certainly worth a moment of reflection. One of the first thoughts which spring to mind is that those pioneers, the seamen and dockers, who seventy years ago took the initiative in establishing this world-wide cooperation amongst workers of all grades and categories engaged in the movement of goods and passengers in all modes of transport and in all parts of the globe, could never have anticipated, even in their wildest dreams, that their initiative would gather such momentum.

But the International Transport Workers' Federation of today, known amongst the organized *t r a n s p o r t* workers of the whole world by the initials which are so familiar to us, 'ITF', has had its ups and downs. In the course of the unrelenting struggle for human standards of living and for recognition of basic trade union rights, which was particularly rare seventy years ago in the world as a whole and still is in the developing countries today, the ITF has lived through two world wars and has set its face against their destructive consequences in the political, economic and social fields. It is understandable that in each case its existence was threatened and it suffered a certain amount of upheaval.

We should be grateful that after both wars the ITF, thanks partly to the rapid reconstruction of national organizations, was able to resume its international tasks. Undoubtedly the fact that the ITF could continue its activities outside occupied Europe during the war, after

the transfer of its Secretariat from Holland to Great Britain, played a decisive rôle, as also the contacts which were made during that period with the North American seafarers', railwaymen's and port workers' organizations, which led after the cessation of hostilities to their affiliation.

My own association with the ITF goes back to the 'thirties, to the time when I became active within the Dutch seafarers' movement (1 February 1932). There was already at that time close co-operation between the ITF and the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association (IMMOA) — to which my own organization, the Union of Dutch Mercantile Marine Captains and Mates, was affiliated — with the two Internationals sending representatives to each other's congresses, special meetings, etc. It was at this time too that I first became acquainted with Edo Fimmen and Jacobus Oldenbroek, two of the men who had preceded me as General Secretary of the ITF.

For the younger generation of seafarers it may be interesting to note that even at that time the flag-of-convenience question regularly appeared on the agenda of ITF and IMMOA meetings and was brought to the attention of the International Labour Organization. But then it was a case of 'floating coffins' only, and Panama was still the only registry which was prepared to lend its flag for such abuses. Also, in this connection there is nothing new under the sun.

Cooperation between the ITF and IMMOA continued in England during World War II and led, partly as a result of stronger feelings of solidarity between officers and men, whom war conditions had brought closer together, to the IMMOA's decision after the war to cease its industrial activities and to advise its affiliates to join the ITF, a development which has certainly increased the international influence of organized seafarers.

I have already said that a seventy-year jubilee is worth a pause for reflection. But not only to look back. A long and honourable past can be a

worthwhile asset, if good use is always made of it. It is, however, without value if one fails to draw the lessons which it contains and which can give useful guidance in the carrying out of future tasks. For the ITF this means, as I see it, that it must continue its efforts on behalf of the developing countries unabated and must intensify them, to the extent that the means available allow.

I am of the opinion that this, in the coming years, will be the all-important task for the international organizations, which their affiliated national organizations should, according of course to the means at their disposal, place them in a position to fulfil. Primarily, because this follows naturally from the aims and objectives we have laid down for ourselves in Article 1 of the ITF Constitution, but also because it is an essential part of the concept of solidarity, which has always been fundamental to the ITF, its existence and its strivings. And lastly — a consideration of a more material kind — because the very existence of our community of nations will stand or fall with the success or failure of the efforts, under way in all parts of the world, to close the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in the shortest possible time. I know that this is an enormous task. But it is a task which, the way I see it, must be done, if we are to find in this valley of tears which is our world a way of living together in peace and happiness.

For these reasons my wish for the coming period, after congratulations to the ITF on reaching this milestone, is that all ITF-affiliated organizations will interpret the signs of the times in this light and will be able to act accordingly and provide the ITF with the means of continuing its work for the benefit of the developing countries and to extend it wherever it may appear necessary, so that the ITF may play its full part in this historic task and take on its full share of the work to be done.

Pieter de Vries is a former General Secretary of the ITF.



The first International Tramwaymen's Conference (Brussels, 1925) was one of the first of the sectional conferences, which became a regular feature of the ITF's activities in the 1920's.

Some industrial achievements

TRANSPORT IS BY ITS NATURE both national and international. It is therefore of particular importance to transport workers that they should have an effective means of securing international basic standards in wages and working conditions. The ITF has provided the machinery by which international action can be coordinated to achieve general improvements. To perform this task efficiently leaders of the ITF realized early that action would have to be pursued along sectional lines. Thus at the Geneva Congress in 1921, separate conferences were held to discuss questions affecting seamen, railwaymen, dockers, and other transport workers. Sectional meetings thereafter became a regular feature of the ITF's activities.

In order to represent the interests of workers in the transport industry as fully as possible, the ITF maintains close contacts with international organizations and agencies whose activities cover transport, sending delegates or observers to their meetings where possible. These bodies include: the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its specialized committees for the transport industry — the Inland

Transport Committee, the Joint Maritime Commission and the *ad hoc* committees created for civil aviation and fishing; the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO); the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); the Central Rhine Commission; and, more recently, the United Nations Committee on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD). The ITF is also in constant touch with the planning and administrative bodies of the European Economic Community through the specially created Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC.

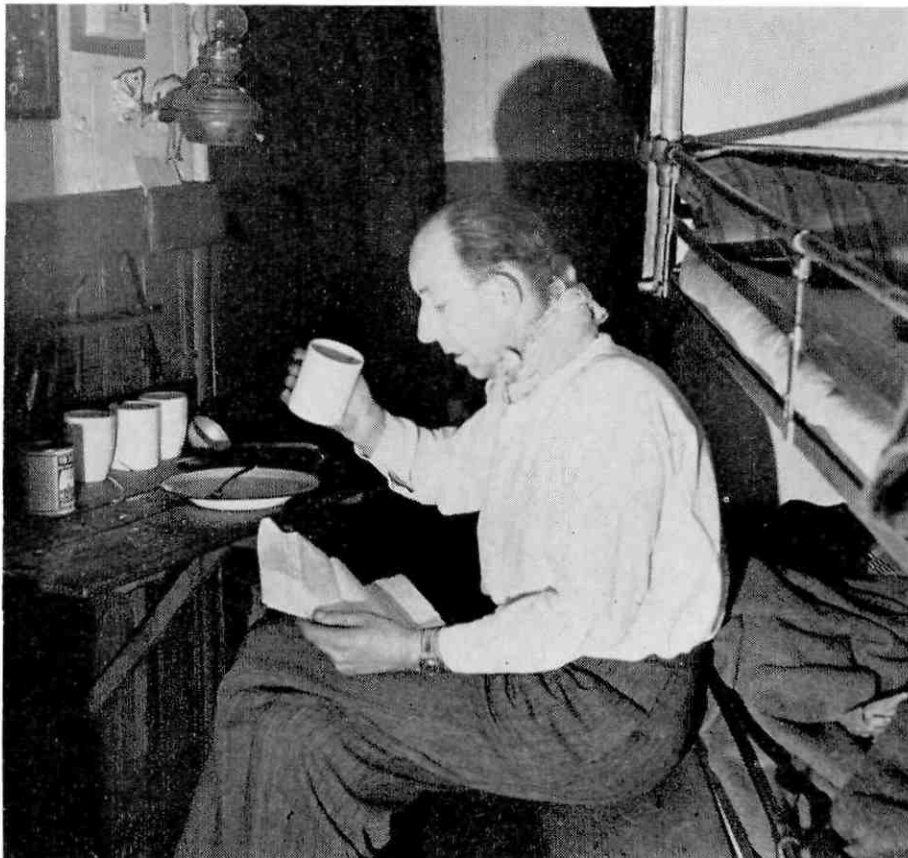
Of supreme importance, in the struggle to secure universally recognized minimum standards with regard to wages and working conditions and in the interests of raising the general standard of living of transport workers everywhere, is the ITF's work within the ILO. In 1941 the ITF submitted a proposal for the creation of a transport section within the ILO, and this bore fruit in the ILO's decision after the war to set up industrial sections. The first meeting of the ILO's Inland Transport Committee was held in London in December 1945, with almost the entire workers' delegation composed of representatives of ITF-affiliated unions.

Work in the Joint Maritime Commission and the Seattle Conventions

The Joint Maritime Commission of the ILO was already in existence in the 1920s, and it was through this body that the ITF concentrated its efforts to improve the standard of living of seafarers. The workers' side of the JMC consisted entirely of ITF representatives, with the exception of one delegate from the International Mercantile Marine Officers' Association (IMMOA).

The first breakthrough did not occur until 1936, however, with the adoption by the International Maritime Labour Conference of that year of four Conventions—one of them concerning hours of work at sea, which were limited to 8 per day and 56 per week—and a Recommendation on the Promotion of Seafarers' Welfare in Ports. Resolutions were also adopted regarding accident compensation and unemployment insurance, equality of treatment for national and foreign seamen, crew accommodation on board cargo vessels, and seamen's wages. Although the results of the conference were not entirely satisfactory from the seafarers' point of view, these first achievements were considerable ones.

While the Second World War was still being fought, a joint committee of ITF and IMMOA leaders worked out the International Seafarers' Charter—a comprehensive programme of demands covering wages, increments, allowances, bonuses and overtime; continuous employment contracts; entry, training and promotion; working hours and manning; annual leave, voyage leave and subsistence allowances; accommodation; safety; hygiene, food and medical services; social insurance; trade union recognition; rights and obligations of seafarers. The Charter was adopted in its final form at an International Seafarers' Conference held in July 1944, and the work began of getting its provisions recognized and put into effect. At a meeting of the Joint Maritime Commission in January 1945, called to consider the International Seafarers' Charter, there was general agreement that the main points in the



Years of work carried out by the ITF Seafarers' Section, in particular the drafting of the International Seafarers' Charter, were instrumental in the adoption by the 1946 International Maritime Conference of the Seattle Conventions, which represented a considerable advance on existing standards, particularly in the fields of wages, hours and manning and crew accommodation. (ILO photo)

Charter should be made the subject of ILO Conventions. To this end a tripartite preparatory technical conference was arranged, which took place in Copenhagen a few months after the war ended. The Copenhagen Conference worked out a series of draft Conventions and Recommendations to be considered at the International Maritime Labour Conference at Seattle, USA, in June 1946.

The Seattle Conference adopted nine Conventions, covering: wages, hours and manning; holidays with pay; crew accommodation; food and catering; certification of ships' cooks; certification of able seamen; medical examinations; social security; and pensions. Four Recommendations were adopted dealing with social security, medical services to dependants, vocational training and the provision of personal requisites on board ship. In addition nine resolutions were adopted relating,

amongst other things, to regularity of employment for seafarers, freedom of association for shipowners and seafarers, seamen's welfare in ports and the speedy ratification of ILO Conventions.

The Convention on wages, hours and manning provided for the first time in history for an international minimum wage for seafarers. The figure of £16 or \$64 per month, which was agreed upon, certainly seemed low by American and European standards, but large numbers of seafarers in the world were earning less than this. When the Convention was revised in 1958 this figure was not changed, but a Recommendation adopted at the same time laid down £25 as a minimum rate.

Work on fishermen's questions

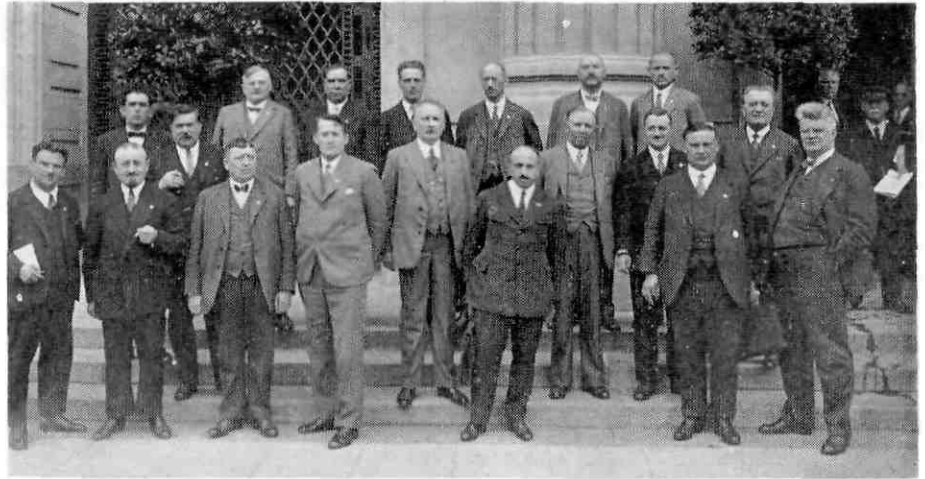
One of the nine Seattle Resolutions instructed the ILO to draft an International Charter for Fishermen, similar

to that already adopted for the seafarers. The ITF had made a start on this task before the war, when an International Fishermen's Conference held at Ostend, Belgium, in 1938, took the first steps in formulating a programme designed to improve wages and working conditions in the fishing industry. Like so many other things, this work was shelved for the duration of the war.

Following the Seattle Conference the Seafarers' Section of the ITF decided to set up a special sub-section to deal with fishermen's questions, and the following year it was decided that the fishermen should have their own industrial section in the ITF. The International Fishermen's Conference held in 1947 at Hull, Great Britain, had before it a preliminary draft of the International Fishermen's Charter, and this was subsequently elaborated by a drafting committee in the light of points raised at the Conference. One of the first fruits of this work of the ITF was the creation by the ILO in 1954 of a tripartite Committee of Experts on Conditions of Fishermen, the workers' side of which was composed largely of representatives of ITF-affiliated unions.

As a result of the Committee's work, three ILO Conventions were adopted through the double discussion procedure at the International Labour Conferences of 1958 and 1959. The Conventions, which deal with the minimum age of admission to employment; medical examinations; and articles of agreement, have been ratified by a substantial number of countries in the comparatively short time which has elapsed since their adoption.

As a second success in its work for fishermen, the ITF's efforts resulted in the establishment by the ILO in 1962 of a Committee on Conditions of Work in the Fishing Industry which, in addition to recommending a number of other fishermen's questions for future ILO study, drew up two sets of conclusions concerning accommodation on board fishing vessels and the vocational training of fishermen. The Committee also recommended that the subject of



Above: *The ITF delegation to the 11th Session of International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1928. Below: A meeting of the Road Transport Workers' Committee set up by the ITF during the thirties to work out an International Motor Drivers' Programme, prior to the drafting by the ILO of a Convention and two Recommendations on work in road transport and their adoption by the International Labour Conference immediately before the outbreak of war.*



fishermen's certificates of competency should be studied with a view to the establishment of international minimum standards. A Preparatory Technical Conference held in Geneva last year drew up draft Conventions on accommodation and certificates of competency and a draft Recommendation on vocational training. These are now (at the time of writing) before the International Labour Conference in Geneva for adoption as international instruments.

The Rhine shipping agreements

Another group of workers who have benefited substantially from ITF activity on their behalf are the Rhine boatmen.

In August 1946 at Basle, Switzerland, the ITF held a special Rhine Navigation Conference, which adopted the provisional draft of a programme of demands covering wages, hours, manning and working conditions in general. A Committee, set up to work out the programme in its final form, approached the ILO to suggest action in this field. As a result the Inland Transport Committee set up a special sub-committee to deal with Rhine shipping problems. The sub-committee recognized the need for agreements between all states which operated ships on the Rhine (Switzerland, France, Germany, Holland and

Belgium) to coordinate social security arrangements, standardize working conditions and establish minimum standards. The five countries concerned were invited to a tripartite conference to work out the agreements. This conference did not meet until October 1949, but in the meantime the ITF made sure that the parties concerned had full knowledge of the boatmen's demands, circulating in all the languages of the riparian States details of the programme, worked out at Basle and at subsequent meetings of the inland waterway workers' section.

The Tripartite Conference of 1949 adopted two draft agreements, providing for reciprocal social insurance arrangements, full pension rights, minimum wages, minimum rest periods and holiday entitlements, and maximum hours of work. The agreements were subsequently approved by the ILO Governing Body and later by a Governmental Conference of riparian States. Changes in manning regulations, which are the concern of the Central Rhine Commission, required by the new minimum standards were later worked out at a tripartite conference convened by the Commission.

Other industrial activities

Space does not permit a full-scale evaluation of the ITF's achievements in industrial matters during its 70 years of existence, but it should not be thought from the above examples that the ITF has reserved its most strenuous efforts for workers employed in waterborne transport.

In the docks industry the ITF has worked for decasualization, standard weekly wages, protection against accidents and industrial diseases, and for the limiting of loads to be carried by one man. Though the last mentioned is a question affecting workers in all industries, the ITF has pursued it through its Dockers' Section. Efforts in this field have now borne fruit in the draft Convention and Recommendation adopted by this year's ILO Preparatory Technical Conference on the maximum load question, to be submitted for final



ITF work on behalf of Rhine boatmen in the immediate post-war years helped towards the establishment of minimum conditions of employment and the introduction of reciprocal social security arrangements through Agreements between the riparian states in 1950.

adoption to the International Labour Conference of 1967.

In the inland transport sectors the ITF has ceaselessly pressed for coordination between the different modes of transport, for the elimination of cut-throat competition between the railways and road transport and for the organization of transport in such a way that it serves the best interests of the community and not the sole purpose of making profit, particularly when this is done at the workers' expense. The trade union rights of railwaymen, who are in many countries forbidden to strike, have received the close attention of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, as also the subject of railwaymen's pay structure. Both these subjects have, as a result of ITF pressure, been included in the agenda of next October's meeting of the ILO Inland Transport Committee.

International regulation of working conditions in road haulage, legal assist-

ance to road transport drivers in foreign countries, training and professional status of road transport drivers, safety and comfort in driving cabs, working conditions in urban transport are all fields in which the ITF has been active and has scored successes.

The civil aviation workers, though comparative newcomers to the ITF (the Civil Aviation Section was set up in 1948), have also benefited. The ITF has been pressing for a long time for permanent machinery within the ILO to deal with questions affecting them and a definite advance was made in 1960, when the ILO held its first tripartite meeting on civil aviation. But progress has been made through other channels, notably the International Civil Aviation Organization which has dealt with a number of questions raised by the ITF. Fields in which the ITF Civil Aviation Section has worked include hours of work and rest of flight personnel, crew complement (full specialist flight crews),

health hazards in aviation, and the licensing of ground mechanics and cabin staff.

The future

The ITF cannot claim to have obtained satisfactory results on every issue which it has taken up with the ILO or with any other body through which the interests of transport workers can be furthered. But failure for the ITF is not permanent. If it does not succeed, it tries again. Many of its achievements have been the fruit of long years of hard and conscientious work and perseverance through difficulties and setbacks. What has been achieved stands as a record to be proud of.

Also, the road into the future is one which will have to be negotiated with care and determination. We are at present passing through a new industrial revolution, in which technological change is displacing thousands of workers in all industries, including transport. The future offers a new challenge which the ITF has already accepted. All industrial activities must now take account of the social dangers inherent in technological innovations which, if introduced without regard to the human element in industry and for motives of pure profit, will be paid for by the workers. This must not happen. The ITF is watching closely all developments in the technological field, so as to be able to keep its affiliates informed of the dangers and to advise them on ways of making sure that their members share in the benefits of improved efficiency and increased profitability in their industries.

An important task, and one which the ITF will carry out with the energy and sense of purpose which have marked all its endeavours since 1896!

* * * *

The ITF through Indian eyes

IN AN ARTICLE ON THE ITF, published in his union's Journal, *Oceanite*, J. D. Randeri, General Secretary of the Maritime Union of India, writes about the importance of the ITF to Indian seafarers. Calling, amongst other things, for greater participation of Asians and Africans in the ITF and, in particular,

for greater Asian representation on the Executive Board, he writes:

'There can be no doubt that the ITF is the strongest, the best and most widely known of the international trade secretariats. It has a fine record of active service in the cause of the workers for the last Seventy Years.

'It has condemned South Africa and Rhodesia and has taken a consistently democratic and anti-colonial stand on all issues. It has taken international action to prevent the exploitation of our seamen on Panamanian and Liberian ships. The MUI, which was one of the first ITF affiliates in India, also supplied its first Asian Regional Secretary, when Joe Soares set up the ITF Regional Office in Singapore. The MUI has given a helping hand in India at the request of the ITF, in organizing Indian ratings.

'We are looking forward to a closer association of other affiliates in India, both with us and with the ITF. On its 70th birthday, we send out to it greetings of fraternity and solidarity, and hope that together we shall march forward in bringing about better living and working conditions for workers in this region. Seafarers, more than any other workers, are in need of a powerful workers' international, and the ITF is the only answer.'

* * * *

Imhof addresses ILO Conference

IN AN ADDRESS TO THE 50th Session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva, 1-23 June 1966, ITF General Secretary Hans Imhof spoke of the interest the ITF took in the activities of the International Labour Organization, commenting on certain points in the Director General's Report and suggesting some fields in which transport workers would like to see further ILO action.

Among the ILO's recent activities, Imhof singled out for praise the symposium on shipboard automation, held in Elsinore, Denmark, in September 1965, suggesting that it should be followed up by something similar to deal with big ship economics and the growing use of container traffic in the shipping industry. Both of these

developments were likely to have an enormous effect on seafarers' working conditions and should be the subject of early study.

Speaking on matters affecting civil aviation personnel, he welcomed the work the ILO was doing in studying the medical aspects of work in civil aviation, but pointed out that the time had come for an ILO conference on civil aviation questions, as a follow-up to the *ad hoc* meetings held in 1956 and 1960. It was also time that the ILO established permanent machinery to cover this extremely important branch of transport.

Another important topic which he dwelt upon in his address was the problem of restrictions placed upon public service workers in the exercise of their trade union rights. He reminded delegates that the ITF was conducting a detailed investigation into this subject, as far as it concerned railway workers, and noted that the subject of methods of collective bargaining and settlement of disputes was on the agenda of the forthcoming 8th Session of the ILO Inland Transport Committee. The ITF's inquiry had shown that railwaymen were restricted in many countries in their freedom to take whatever action they saw to be right in achieving a just settlement of their claims. There was no valid reason why such restrictions should be placed on them in particular, while other workers were free to exercise their trade union rights. Restrictions of this kind had no place in a democratic society and there was clear evidence that they were outmoded. Full collective bargaining rights, including the freedom to strike, had recently been granted to railwaymen in Sweden, and a similar decision was expected in the near future from the Netherlands Government. Lastly, Imhof urged that consideration should be given to the possibility of embodying in an ILO Recommendation the principles of Resolution No. 9 of the Inland Transport Committee (adopted as long ago as May 1947), which called for full trade union rights for all inland transport workers, including railwaymen.

A PRELUDE TO REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

THESE PICTURES ILLUSTRATE an event which foreshadowed the major rôle the ITF was to take on after the war in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The year is 1931. At that time the ITF had very few affiliates outside Europe. The Stockholm Congress in 1928 had given a great deal of attention to the need to make the ITF into a truly world-wide organization. One of the decisions taken at that Congress was to send an ITF delegation to India and the Far East with the purpose of visiting what affiliates the ITF had there, studying working conditions and setting up a sub-secretariat of the ITF for the Region. The countries which the tour was to cover were Japan, China, Indonesia (at that time still the Dutch East Indies) and India. An international conference of ITF-affiliated unions in the Region was to be held in India, after all the countries had been visited. But this was not to be, since General Secretary Edo Fimmen, who in the end undertook the journey alone, was refused permission by the British and Dutch Governments even to set foot in India and the East Indies. He did, however, visit Japan, making very fruitful contacts with transport workers' unions in that country, China and the Philippines.

The years that followed saw a gradual expansion of ITF activities and a steady increase in membership outside Europe. Since the war, with the affiliation of an important bloc of American transport workers' unions and with the intensification of activities in the developing countries, the ITF can be said to have become a truly world-wide organization.

Top: Edo Fimmen with leaders of the pre-war Japanese Seamen's Union. Centre: Fimmen addressing Japanese seamen at a meeting called by their union. Policemen watch the proceedings carefully. Bottom: Fimmen addressing a meeting of Chinese seamen in Shanghai.



LAWRIE WHITE RETIRES



ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY, Lawrence White, has retired. At the end of May he brought to its conclusion a long career in the trade union movement, fourteen years of it with the ITF.

Lawrie's work in the Special Seafarers' Section has earned him the reputation of a man who knows how to drive a hard bargain, for it was his job to organize action against Panlibhon ships and to negotiate agreements for their crews. But though he may not enjoy much popularity amongst the shipowners, he is well liked in the ITF. Pleasant, easy-going, humorous, and,

above all, good at his job, he has earned the affection and respect of those who have worked with him over the years.

Lawrie White first came to the ITF from the British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA), in which he held the post of National Organizer.

He first went to sea as a radio officer, serving for ten years on tankers, coasters, tramps, cargo liners and passenger vessels. In the 'twenties he was an active member of the Association of Wireless Telegraphists, which was later to become the Radio Officers' Union.

From 1930 on he was active in the British merchant navy officers' trade union movement, helping to organize officer personnel.

During the war, as MNAOA District Secretary for the Bristol Channel, he helped seafarers from the occupied countries of Europe to reorganize themselves in Great Britain and to preserve their trade unions. After his appointment as National Organizer in the MNAOA, his negotiating responsibilities drew him more and more into the sphere of international problems and hence into the ITF. In 1951, shortly before he entered regular service with the Secretariat, he represented the ITF on an ICFTU mission to West Africa. Since then he has travelled many times on ITF and other assignments to distant places in order to bring assistance to emergent trade union organizations.

We offer him, on behalf of the Civil Aviation and Special Seafarers' Sections, whose interests he looked after, and indeed of the ITF as a whole, our thanks for the work he has done and our heartiest wishes for a happy retirement.

JACK OTERO LEAVES THE ITF



AT THE END OF JUNE, Jack F. Otero, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, leaves the service of the ITF. After five years of outstanding work to make the ITF's activities in the developing countries of the Western Hemisphere truly effective and bear fruit in higher living standards for transport workers of the Region, he has decided to return to his own union in the United States to work as its Deputy Director for International Affairs.

Otero was born in Havana, Cuba, on 3 April 1934. At the age of 18 he emigrated to the United States. Both he and his wife — he has been married for ten years and has three children — became American citizens in 1959.

In 1955, as a railwayman working in St. Louis, Missouri, he joined the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and became very active in that organization. He served the Brotherhood in a number of capacities on a local and regional basis.

In June 1961 he entered service with the ITF as Special Representative in Brazil, where he organized ITF activities and carried out liaison work with other international trade secretariats. In 1963 he was chosen to act as Interim Director of the ORIT-ICFTU Mission in Brazil, with the special task of reorganizing its operations and programmes. In June 1964 the ITF Executive Board appointed him Director of the ITF's Regional Activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

His decision to return to the United States is a sad one from the ITF's point of view, but he leaves the Regional Office in Lima in the capable hands of Manuel Medrano, who takes over as Regional Director. The evidence of many a job well done in Latin America confirms our appreciation of Jack Otero's work for the ITF. We wish him all success and good fortune in the tasks that lie ahead of him.

TWO NEW SECRETARIAT APPOINTMENTS

ONE OF THE RESULTS of the recent Executive Board meeting in Utrecht was the decision to appoint a Secretary for Regional Activities, and a new Secretary to the Special Seafarers' Section to replace Lawrie White who retired in May.

Neither of the two men chosen is a newcomer to the ITF. Harold Lewis, now Secretary for Regional Activities, has worked at the Secretariat in various capacities for 11 years and Charles Blyth, the new man in charge of the Special Seafarers' Section, worked for the ITF as its Hong Kong Representative, before taking on his new job.

Charles Blyth was born in Grimsby, England, in 1916. He first went to sea at the age of 16 as a deck boy. In the years that followed he worked on deck aboard tramps, tankers and passenger vessels in every rating. He later served as third, second and first mate on cargo vessels and holds a first mate's foreign-going certificate. He served aboard troopships and cargo vessels throughout the war.



Charles Blyth.

In 1949 he came ashore to work for the British National Union of Seamen. Through his work for the NUS he showed himself to be a capable trade union officer, and in March 1965 his Union seconded him to the ITF for the difficult task of helping Hong Kong's seamen to build a viable trade union movement.

Harold Lewis was born in 1933 in London. He has been an active trade unionist since the age of 21, when he was elected Chairman of an important branch of the British Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union. At the age of 22 he became a member of the ITF's Secretariat staff, working as a research and publications assistant, and in the same year he was elected as a labour councillor to the municipal



Harold Lewis.

authority of a London suburb. He retired from the Council at the age of 25. Since joining the ITF in 1955 he has also worked as a translator and as a personal assistant to three General Secretaries: Omer Becu, Pieter de Vries and Hans Imhof.

It will be good news for affiliates in the Regions that the Secretariat in London once more has a man to take charge of the ITF's work on their behalf, especially a man who knows the ins and outs of regional activities as well as Harold Lewis. The Executive Board's timely decision to appoint a successor to Lawrie White is equally fortunate in view of the determination of the Seafarers' Section to step up the campaign against flag-of-convenience shipping.

(Continued from page 146)

platform and tried to disrupt the work of the Congress. They were unsuccessful. That Congress laid the foundations for the work to be done during the tempestuous inter-war years.

In 1946 the first Congress after the second world war was held in Zurich. It was at the same time the 50th anniversary Congress and was chaired by 80-year-old Charley Lindley, who had helped to found the ITF seventy years ago. During this Congress a moving scene occurred in which Japie Oldenbroek handed back to our Austrian friends the flag they had given to Edo Fimmen for safe keeping at the

Copenhagen Congress in 1935, after Austria had fallen into the hands of dictatorship.

Finally, in 1960, long after the ITF had got into its post-war stride, the famous Bern Congress took place, the third to be held in Switzerland.

Of all my many unforgettable experiences in the ITF, the one which made the deepest impression on me was the journey I undertook together with my friend and, at that time, deputy, Hermann Leuenberger in November 1944 to London, where we were to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee. German V1 and V2 rockets were exploding on that sorely tried city.

Yet Londoners were going about their work as usual. The ITF and the British unions were attending to their difficult tasks unabashed and Ernest Bevin, at that time Minister of Labour in Churchill's wartime cabinet, welcomed us at the first telephone call in the true spirit of trade union friendship, comradeship and loyalty!

This is the spirit in which the ITF has carried on its work and will continue to do it on a world-wide basis. I am happy that two of my closest friends — my successor in the SEV, Hans Düby, as President, and Hans Imhof, as General Secretary — are able to take a leading rôle.

THE NORWEGIAN TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION

One of the ITF's earliest affiliates is also 70 years old this year

IT WAS THE DOCKERS who, 70 years ago, laid the foundations of the Norwegian Transport Workers' Federation. It was a modest start. Only five unions were involved. There were other unions in various parts of the country, though not very many, but it was the dockers in the capital and its outlying districts who made the first move. Oslo — or Christiania, as the capital was then called — had three unions organizing port workers. They were involved in the setting up of the Federation. But the initiative came from the small town of Drammen, some distance outside Oslo, where there was just one union. But it was a strong one and already had an eventful history behind it. The fifth union organized workers in Moss, another of the small towns in the Oslo area.

Five unions, with a total membership of about 1,100 workers, might be considered a meagre basis for a federation. But few Norwegian trade union organizations had started off in a stronger position than this. And the small circle of union representatives who met in Christiania on 2 April 1896 had confidence in themselves. The new combination received the name *National Dock Workers' Organization*.

This title was changed in 1899 to the 'Norwegian Dock Workers' Federation', since the Norwegian word *Landsorganisasjon*, or 'National Organization', was adopted in the title of the national trade union centre formed in that year.

The name was changed again in 1901. This time the new title—the *Norwegian Port and Transport Workers' Federation*—indicated plans to extend the Federation's organizational field. The objective was now to unite all Norwegian transport workers under one banner.

Road transport comes in later

The road transport workers had also formed unions. In 1893 the Drivers' Union was founded in Christiania. In those days most of its members were

drivers of horse-drawn vehicles. Today, under its present name, the Oslo Transport Workers' Union, it continues to organize road transport personnel and is the NTF's strongest constituent union.

Instead of taking up the invitation offered by the Dock Workers' name change, this union took the initiative, together with a union organizing similar workers in Drammen, in forming a new Federation, the Norwegian Drivers' and Warehousemen's Federation.

Farsighted men amongst the leaders of both Federations understood the importance of solidarity. In the absence of a formal combination, they worked in collaboration until the sense of belonging together had become strong enough for the two Federations to join forces. In 1917 the Norwegian Drivers' and Warehousemen's Federation amalgamated with the Norwegian Port and Transport Workers' Federation.

In 1918 the new organization adopted its present title: *Norsk Transportarbeiderforbund* or Norwegian Transport Workers' Federation (NTF). The nation's transport workers were united.

Into larger communities

The Dock Workers' Federation had had strong reservations about commit-

ting itself to participation in joint trade union activities, and it did not affiliate to the national centre, the *Landsorganisasjon* (LO), until 1907.

This hesitation is strange, considering that the Federation was so quick to take on similar commitments abroad, affiliating with the ITF in 1899.

In the following year, Norwegian delegates to the Congress of the Swedish Transport Workers' Federation put forward a proposal to set up a combined Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation. It was hardly more than an idea, and had not been thoroughly worked out. But as a result of the discussion which this proposal brought about, conferences were held at Scandinavian level which constituted a forerunner for a formal Scandinavian Federation. This joint trade union body, which has undoubtedly been an important force in the Scandinavian transport workers' fight for better conditions, was founded in 1907 and will thus be celebrating its 60th anniversary next year.

The struggle for survival

The background against which the Dock Workers' Federation was founded, of course, as anywhere else in the world where trade unions have sprung up, was the unsatisfactory wages and working conditions which workers were forced to accept as long as they did not act as a united force.

The united strength of the Dock Workers' Federation was put to its first serious test in 1899, when the Federation called its first strike.

Dockers at that time worked a fifty-five-hour week, which included 10 hours night work without extra pay.

The Federation demanded a wage increase and special payment for night work, but the employers rejected their claim, and the workers went on strike. The strike began on 1 May.

It did not last the month out, however. The employers were able to put strike breakers to work from the first day, and the organized workers lost the fight.

It was a galling defeat. The condition under which strikers were allowed to



The NTF's congress in 1965 was the first congress of an affiliated union that Hans Imhof attended as General Secretary of the ITF. The picture shows him with guests from the Netherlands, A. W. Korbijn and G. Akkerman.

return to work was that they sign individual contracts binding them to their bosses. As a result of this the organization had its hands tied for a long time, and the effects showed in the membership figures, which fell off appallingly. The largest of the unions, the Christiania Dock Workers' Union, lost 800 of its 900 members.

In 1908 the Federation had retrieved enough strength to attempt a fresh onslaught. This time the aim was to do away with the individual contracts of 1899. Once again the employers succeeded in mobilizing enough strike breakers to beat the organized workers.

The contract system was not abolished until 1917.

In other settlements the Federation had won improvements in wages and working conditions. It was chiefly in Christiania that the employers were so resolute and united in their opposition to the workers' demands.

Transport workers pool their strength

The Norwegian Drivers' and Warehousemen's Federation had better luck in its first conflicts.

In 1913 a walkout was threatened in Drammen when the employers refused to negotiate on improvements in wages and conditions.

When the employers threatened to use strike breakers, the more timid workers left the Federation, but those who remained did not give way under the threat. It was the employers who had to give in, and all the organization's demands were met. Among the concessions were the introduction of special overtime rates, payment of wages during the first three days of sickness, and three days' holiday per year on full pay. Drammen's example was soon followed in Christiania, where a similar action was carried out with equal success in 1914. But here the employers had the humiliating experience of having a

four-day strike on their hands without being able to obtain suitable men to break the strike.

The lessons learned from these two disputes emphasized the advantages of having all the transport workers combined in one organization, not the least because by their unity they could make it more difficult for the employers to use strike breakers. There is hardly any doubt that these experiences contributed to the formation of a combined Federation in 1917.

In the years that followed the new united Federation carried out a number of actions limited in scope, but which nevertheless brought about significant improvements in the way of social benefits as well as in wages and working conditions. A threatened general strike in 1916, which would have involved a number of unions in the LO, prompted the authorities to bring into effect legislation they had been preparing to

provide for compulsory arbitration, in the face of strong protests from the trade union movement. The law was a temporary measure to be withdrawn when the 1914-18 war ended. But with small amendments it remained in force until 1923.

Disputes and the Depression

The NTF did not embark on its first big conflict until 1924, when collective bargaining could be carried on in freedom once again. It was supported by a large section of the Norwegian trade union movement, because, amongst other reasons, the employers enforced a lockout.

It was a long struggle, lasting 24 weeks, and a costly one. The NTF paid out a total of 900,000* Kroner in strike benefits to its members. In spite of assistance from the LO and from fraternal unions in Denmark and Sweden, the NTF had to borrow money in order to ease the burden.

That the Norwegian Transport Workers' Federation, which had for so long been spared any major conflict of its own, could overburden its budget in a single total strike, was partly attributable to the fact that its members had so often supported other federations' strikes by sympathy actions.

In 1921 the NTF had staged a sympathy strike for the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, which had cost 743,000 Kroner. For the first time the Federation received solidarity aid from the ITF. The 5,880 Kroner received proved that international solidarity had become more than just idealistic phrases.

Transport workers in a key position

On the whole, by virtue of their key position in their country's economy, it is the fate of transport workers all over the world, if they are reasonably well organized, to 'bale out' workers in other industries, engaged in disputes which they cannot easily bring to a successful conclusion on their own.

Every year, from 1924 to the middle of the 1930's, when Norway's economic

position began to improve and after the nation had chosen a Labour Government, the Federation participated again and again in sympathy strikes on behalf of workers in other industries, without carrying out any major action for its own part.

It should be mentioned, however, that the transport workers' strike of 1925 was the first of its kind in Norwegian trade union history. In support of a strike of Danish dockers, the NTF called a partial work stoppage, so that no ship either to or from Denmark would be loaded or unloaded.

The NTF was taken to Court by the employers who demanded that such a strike in support of foreign workers should be declared illegal. But the Court upheld the legality of the Norwegian transport workers' action.

In 1928-29 the NTF called a strike in sympathy with the Finnish Transport Workers' Federation who were striking for the recognition of the dockers' right to strike and to organize. This sympathy action lasted from 16 June 1928 till 16 April 1929, and the Norwegian transport workers gave considerable amounts of money to support their Finnish colleagues.

In connection with this last conflict there was widespread resentment in the Scandinavian transport workers' organizations over the passive attitude shown by the ITF and its affiliates in other European countries.

The next dispute in which the NTF took major action did not arise until 1955, when the maritime and inland transport workers went on strike for 14 days. Financially it was on a much smaller scale than the 1924 strike. The total amount paid out in strike pay was not more than 300,000 Kroner—a trifle, considering the difference in money values and the level of wages between 1924 and 1955.

On the other hand the strike which took place in 1963 was somewhat more expensive. This time it was the bus workers. They had to strike twice in the course of their contract negotiations that year. These two strikes together

lasted for seven weeks and strike pay totalled 1.5 million Kroner. But then the NTF had been building up its strength over many years and could stand the strain.

Financial assistance amounting to 115,000 Kroner was received from sister unions during this conflict, proving that the concept of international solidarity had stood the test of time and that the affiliates of the ITF had increased their organizational and financial strength over the years.

Of course throughout these years there have been many conflicts on a smaller scale. The fact that the NTF has succeeded in achieving economic and social progress for its members, which compares favourably with that won by workers in other industries, without any industrial action on a large scale, can be attributed in some measure to a collective bargaining procedure by which transport workers are covered in individual groups, rather than centrally as a whole. This practice has had the effect of weakening the other side and enabling the NTF to limit its actions.

70-year jubilee without celebrations

The NTF celebrates its jubilees in a modest way. It observed its 70th birthday as just another day—a busy working day full of the bustle and activity connected with the central negotiations (each year the LO and the Norwegian Employers' Federation negotiate a frame agreement to cover the whole of the Norwegian labour market, in the context of which each industry negotiates its own particular terms). Celebrations will be saved for the 75-year jubilee in 1971.

The history of the Norwegian Transport Workers' Federation has been set down in two volumes, published respectively on the NTF's 50th and 60th anniversaries. The Federation hopes to publish a comprehensive and more extensive account on the occasion of its 75th anniversary in five years' time. It will prove to be an important and decisive chapter in Norwegian history, and indeed in the history of Scandinavian and international trade unionism.

* Present rate of exchange: Kr 20.03 to £1 and Kr 7.14 to \$1.

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 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
Guyana * 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

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Internationale Transportarbeiter-Zeitung

ITF Journal (Tokyo - Japanese version)

Transporte

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