

# REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

OF TRANSPORTWORKERS' ORGANISATIONS

HELD AT THE CONCERTGEBOUW, AMSTERDAM,

ON APRIL 29th AND 30th 1919.



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## LIST OF DELEGATES.

Country	Name of the organisation	Represented by:	Member- ship
Belgium	Belgische Transportarbeidersbond. (Belgian Transportworkers' Union)	J. Chapelle A. Wieme	14.500
Dutch East- Indies	Vereeniging van Spoor- en Tramwegpersoneel in Nederl.-Indië. (Union of Railway- and Tramwayworkers in the Dutch East-Indies).	H. Sneevliet	7.000
Germany	Deutscher Transportarbeiterverband. (German Transportworkers' Union)	J. Döring	380.000
	Deutscher Eisenbahnerverband. (German Railwayworkers' Union). International Secretary	L. Brunner	300.000
Great Britain	The National Transportworkers' Federation	H. Jochade E. Bevin H. Gosling R. Williams	280.000
Holland	Centrale Bond van Transportarbeiders. (Central Union of Transportworkers)	J. Brautigam	22.000
	Nederl. Federatie van Transportarbeiders. (Dutch Federation of Transportworkers)	S. van den Berg E. Bouwman	10.000
	Nederlandsche Vereeniging van Spoor- en Tramwegpersoneel. (Dutch Union of Tramway- and Railwayworkers)	P. Moltmaker	18.000
	Temporary Bureau at Amsterdam.	Edo Fimmen J. Oudegeest	

## AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE.

1. Opening of the conference.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Examination of credentials,
4. Drawing up of Agenda.
5. Report of the Central Council.
6. Report of the temporary Bureau which during the course of the war was established in Holland.
7. Financial Report of the Central Council.
8. Discussion of the Draft of the new constitution and rules of the I. T. F.
9. Appointing of the country in which the head-quarters of the Central Committee of the I. T. F. shall be established.
10. Appointing of the countries, the representatives of which shall form the General Council of the I. T. F.
11. Investigation of the possibility to give financial support to the organisation which need assistance as a consequence of the war. (Request of the Belgian Railway Organisation and possibly of other organisations).
12. Discussion of proposals that may be submitted by organisations affiliated to the I. T. F.
13. Appointing of the place where the next Congress shall be held.

## FIRST DAY, APRIL 29th.

In the afternoon at 2 p. m. the first session of the conference was opened by the secretary of the Temporary Bureau of the I. T. F. at Amsterdam, comrade J. Oudegeest, who delivered the following address of welcome to the representatives present.

In accordance with the good old custom always followed at international congresses, to open these in the language of the country where they were held, I will now open this conference in the Dutch language, which language has at this moment still this advantage, that it is a neutral one.

Also on behalf of the press it is desirable that at least the opening words should be spoken in the language of the country, in order that they are taken over correctly by the papers. The representatives of the press will certainly not have an easy task during the sessions of this conference and consequently they most probably will not object to the opening speech being delivered in their own tongue. The conference will have to decide in what languages the discussions should further be held.

The I. T. F. is the first trade-secretariat to meet since 1914, since the outbreak of the war. And there is a reason for this fact, as there is no international body that had so much influence in its trade as the I. T. F. Have the Diamond-workers the strongest international organisation, the I. T. F. follows immediately after. No group of workers needs one's others co-operation and assistance more than the seamen. This is also the case with the railwaymen. The rest of those engaged in the transport-trade, which are in constant communication with the other groups mentioned, of course feel the influence of it. For that reason it was essential for the I. T. F., more than for any other international trade-union organisation, to try and maintain the international relations when the war broke out.

This necessity had as a consequence that the Central Council at Berlin resolved in November 1914, to establish a temporary bureau at Amsterdam. They requested me to take charge of it, in co-operation with our comrades Brautigam and Heykoop of Rotterdam, in order to maintain the international relations and to thus prevent the destruction of all that had been built up in preceding years. This did not entirely succeed however.

Nobody had thought that this war would last so long; the estrangement between the nations, hatred and animosity have continually grown, for no small part due to the way in which the press in the various countries influenced its readers. Much has collapsed of what had previously been built up, but that it is possible to re-build, this meeting gives a conclusive demonstration of it.

During the course of the war endeavours were made to keep up the relations by correspondence and by the publication of the "Correspondence Sheet" and the "Weekly Report", but after some time the publication of these periodicals had also to be stopped. Besides, postal and telegraphic communication continually grew worse, so that in the end almost all ties had become disconnected. We then endeavoured to go to France and England in order to try, by personal interviews

with the parties concerned, to restore the relations, but this proved to be impossible as no passports could be obtained.

Though the international ties had been disrupted, nationally the transport-workers' organisations have performed an arduous task by strengthening their organisations and by improving the position of their members. And if the reports that reach us about this matter are true, the organisations have increased enormously in power, or have consolidated the power they already possessed.

In Holland for instance a central union has been established, which, with the exception of the railwaymen, comprises all groups engaged in the transport-trade.

In England we see the powerful alliance of transportworkers, railwaymen and miners, the Triple Alliance, that has become such an enormous factor in the economic life in England. We beg to extend our best thanks to our English comrades for what they have accomplished. Let us hope that the example they have set will be followed by other countries, that a stop will be put to the dissension prevailing in various countries, and that in those countries where there exist various smaller groups, unity and concentration of the trade-unions will be brought about.

Many difficulties had to be overcome when preparing this conference. Immediately after the armistice had been concluded, it was our intention to convene an international conference.

On November 15th we received a letter from the Central Union of Transportworkers at Rotterdam, of which our friend Brautigam is president, requesting us to convene an international conference of representatives of Transportworkers' organisations as soon as possible. The discussions we held about this subject with the Dutch organisations were crossed by a letter of Williams, secretary of the British Federation, dated December 19th, enclosing copy of correspondence passed between him and Lindley of the Swedish Transportworkers' Union about the same subject.

On February 3rd a letter was sent to the organisations affiliated, proposing to hold a small conference at Berne on March 20th. A draft-constitution was forwarded to all organisations affiliated on February 10th, which previously had been sent out by the Central Council, but which, according to information received, had not reached many of the organisations.

From correspondence we received, it appeared that the initiative taken for calling a conference together met with general approval. The date of March 20th was considered too early however, and furthermore various objections were raised to designating Berne as the place where the conference would be held. For this reason this conference was cancelled, of which all parties concerned were informed by wire and on March 22nd a new conference was definitely convened towards April 29th, to be held at Amsterdam.

The following countries informed us that they would participate in this conference, to wit:

Belgium:	Belgian Transportworkers' Union.
France:	French Railwaymen's Union.
Sweden:	Swedish Transportworkers' Union.
	Swedish Railwaymen's Union.
Finland:	Finish Transportworkers' Union.

Austria:	Austrian Transportworkers' Union. Austrian Railwaymen's Union.
Great Britain:	British Transportworkers' Federation.
Holland:	Dutch Transportworkers' Union. Dutch Transportworkers' Federation. Dutch Railwaymen's Union.
Switzerland:	Swiss Transportworkers' Union.
Hungary:	Hungarian Transportworkers' Union.
Germany:	German Transportworkers' Union. German Railwaymen's Union.

Of these organisations some let us know afterwards that, owing to special circumstances, they were prevented to send a delegate. Of the French Railway organisation nothing has been heard, though they wrote us on March 12th, that "on our part there is not a single objection".

The Swedish Transportworkers' organisation wrote us that they could not send a delegate on April 29th on account of conflicts for higher wages and activities in connection with the 8-hour day.

The Finish Transportworkers' organisation wrote us that they could not come, as a result of difficulties in obtaining passports and in connection with domestic conflicts. The Transportworkers' organisations and Railwaymen's Unions of Austria and the Railwaymen of Denmark and the Transportworkers of Norway wrote us that, on account of their being overwhelmed with work, they could not possibly send delegates to this conference.

The Transportworkers' Union of Switzerland and the Railwaymen of Spain wrote us that they did not see their way to send a delegate in connection with the expenses this entailed.

The Swedish Transportworkers' Union and both the Austrian organisations requested us to postpone the conference to the end of May or the middle of June. These requests reached us a week ago, consequently too late to comply with same.

It is gratifying to note, that not a single organisation which was affiliated to the I. T. F. before the war, refused to send delegates to this conference.

This is the first meeting of delegates of the Transportworkers' Trade-Unions of the countries involved in the war. The Governments and capitalists have done much to sow hatred amongst the nations, also amongst the toilers, but if the working-classes want to succeed in extending their power and to be up to performing their natural task in a proper way, it is essential to restore unity in their ranks, for only then there is a chance to succeed. Wherever they may live, whatever language they may speak, the interests of the workers are the same all over the world. It will be the task of this small conference to re-unite the workers of the various countries, in order that the work of the I. T. F. may be resumed again.

It is to the future that we should look; the past can merely serve to learn lessons from. The interest of the workers demands this. The noble task devolves upon us to create a new world-organisation of the transportworkers, in order that the work of peace, reconciliation and brotherhood may be continued in the interest of the working-classes in general and the transportworkers in particular.

Oudegeest finishes up by extending a most hearty welcome to all those present and relies upon it that the discussions will be of a most friendly nature. This will be all the easier, because this conference has an economic object in view; we may leave politics to others. (*Applause.*)

*Item 2 of the agenda, the election of the Bureau.*

Oudegeest (Temporary Bureau-Holland) proposes to form the bureau, this conference being so small, from the delegations of the largest countries, i. e. England and Germany. These may then take the chair alternately.

Döring (Germany) proposes, in consideration of present conditions, to let the neutral Dutch preside over the meetings and to leave these matters to Oudegeest and Fimmen, at least, if they can spare sufficient time. Such an arrangement would certainly be the best solution of this question.

Gosling (Great Britain) supports Döring's proposal.

Oudegeest (Temporary Bureau-Holland) is willing to comply with the request. He proposes to entrust the secretariat of this conference to Fimmen. As the latter knows German as well as English, we have a guarantee that a proper report of the conference will be drawn up.

Oudegeest's proposal is accepted.

*Item 3 of the agenda.*

The Chairman is of opinion that it is not necessary to examine the credentials, as we know one another well enough.

The Dutch East Indian Union of Rail- and Tramwaymen counting 7000 members and of which organisation there is a representative here, asks to be admitted to the conference.

Jochade (International Secretary) reports that the Dutch East Indian Union of Rail- and Tramwaymen applied for affiliation to the I. T. F. in 1914. At that time there were, however, two organisations in the Dutch East Indies, one of the employees of the State-Railway Company and one of the employees of other companies. I wrote them at the time, advising them to first make up their differences. We never heard any more of them, probably owing to the bad postal service.

For the rest, they never paid any contribution.

Sneevliet (Dutch East Indies) says that in 1910 there existed 2 organisations in the Dutch East Indies. These organisations have amalgamated. In the Union European as well as Indo's are organised. It counts 6200 natives and 800 Europeans, together 7000 members. In 1914 I became editor of the Union's Journal and, having been president of the Dutch Railway Organisation, I advised affiliation to the I. T. F., which was resolved to do in 1915 at Soerabaya. No reply was received to the request of affiliation, which no doubt must be attributed to the bad postal service, for it was also very difficult to correspond with Holland. He promises, that, if required, his organisation will pay the contribution due and hopes that the other organisations will follow the same course.

Williams (Great-Britain) is glad that the Dutch East Indian Union is represented here. He hopes that it will be possible to work together with the organisation in the name of which Sneevliet is attending. He does not want, however, that admission be granted subject to the payment of 5 years contribution; he fears, that if such decision should be taken, a precedent will be created.

The Chairman says that Sneevliet's promise is sufficient and that the Dutch East Indian Union will only have to pay, if the other organisations will pay. This matter will be further dealt with when the finances of the I. T. F. are discussed. The Chairman welcomes the Dutch East Indian Union to this conference.

F i m m e n (Secretary of the Conference) reports the names of the organisations that are represented.

The representatives of Hungary and Switzerland have not yet arrived, while comrade Franzén (Swedish Railwaymen) wired that he is detained in Hamburg, his passport not being quite in order. The organisations present represent 1.031.500 members, consequently a larger number than the I. T. F. counted at the outbreak of the war. Telegrams conveying fraternal greetings have come in from organisations of Finland, France, Austria, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

*Item 5 and 6 of the agenda.*

The C h a i r m a n deems it advisable to read the reports of the Central Council and the Temporary Bureau at a following conference where, as he hopes, more countries will be represented.

W i l l i a m s (Great-Britain) agrees with the chairman. It would be desirable, however, to have the reports printed in 3 languages and to forward them to the organisations affiliated, but not to have them read out. When they are printed we can study things better. The reports may be discussed at the next conference.

D ö r i n g (Germany) is of opinion that Oudegeest's and William's proposal must have as a consequence that the headquarters of the I. T. F. remain in Berlin till the next conference, because the present Central Council will then have to remain in office to issue their report.

We regret that we have not written a report. The uncertainty however, whether the conference would or would not be held — first it would be held in Berne, later on again in Amsterdam — was the cause hereof. Besides we are overwhelmed with work at this moment.

However, if we now report by word of mouth, we may all the same prepare a written report later on.

It will make a peculiar impression however, on the press as well as on the countries not represented here, when we do not render a report of what the Central Council has done since the London Congress till this moment and for this purpose he asked the conference to allow him to render a short verbal report.

C h a p e l l e (Belgium) inquires whether it is certain at this moment already that the International Secretariat will remain in Berlin.

The C h a i r m a n says that this is just not the case. Döring wishes to render a report in order to facilitate the removal of the headquarters.

C h a p e l l e (Belgium) is in favour of a verbal report, though being of opinion that the Central Council ought to have had a report printed.

The C h a i r m a n proposes to allow the endering of a short verbal report now and to send out a printed report later on.

W i l l i a m s (Great-Britain) supports the proposal. A short report will consequently be taken up in the report of this conference, while later on a detailed printed report will be sent to the organisations.

The Chairman's proposal is carried.

D ö r i n g (Germany) wishes to render a provisional report of the I. T. F.'s activities since the international congress of 1913, held at London, till this moment.

Political as well as other circumstances prevented to calmly write a report. A detailed report shall be published however in due course.

As a consequence of the deplorable war the activities of the I. T. F. could not be continued. As the participants in the London congress know, it was



there resolved to establish the I. T. F. on broader principles. A new constitution would be drafted and a committee was appointed to discuss these matters.

The Central Council then drafted the constitution which is now in the hands of the organisations, and the members of the Committee were requested to attend a conference at Vienna on August 8th 1914, in order to discuss this new constitution and to prepare a congress.

In the end of July the war broke out and the proposed conference at Vienna could not be held. We have endeavoured to send the draft-constitution to all organisations, in order to show them that the Central Council had carried out the decisions of the congress. On the outbreak of the war, Germany was however almost completely isolated, while for the rest the censor did not let much correspondence pass. When the war with England broke out, all communication was cut off. Later on it became evident to us that many of the organisations had not received the draft-copy we sent them.

The Central Council then had to solve the problem, however difficult this was, to maintain the relations. We were of opinion that we had to apply for the assistance of neutrals. First of all we applied to the Scandinavian organisations, but these conditions were not of such a nature as to warrant a proper management. Denmark was from an organisational standpoint not strong enough. In that country only a Sailors' and Stokers' Union and a Railwaymen's Union existed. Moreover, in the Scandinavian countries not sufficient interest was taken in the matter.

We then communicated with the Dutch comrades in order to maintain the relations through these neutrals. They nor we could surmise that the war would last  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years — probably no one has — but it must be said that the Dutch have always helped us and did not spare trouble or work. As a consequence they have incurred the danger of being regarded as pro-German, but this did not ever dismay them. Through their offices printed matter, letters and the "Weekly Report" were forwarded to the organisations affiliated. For us the point was to keep up the relations, and the Dutch shared our views.

It is fairly certain that soon after peace will have been signed, the capitalists will work together again. The workers have to do likewise, for not only before, not only during, but also after the war the proletariat will be the sufferers. It is said here and there that the re-building of the world will only be feasible at the expense of the workers.

Heavy economic conflicts are consequently to be expected after the war will be over. Only a strong organisation will be in a position to offer resistance to the power of the capitalists.

We never ceased our endeavours to make the International function again. In the beginning we issued the "Weekly Report" and tried to publish the news, which reached us through neutral channels, with regard to events in the transportworld. We selected the most important items of news and published the paper as best as we could, which was then sent out by the Dutch. When these reports also failed to reach us, we had to stop the publication of our periodical. Besides the finances of the I. T. F. neared exhaustion; only the Austrians, the Germans and a few Dutch and Danish organisations continued to pay their contribution.

It consequently seemed as if the I. T. F. would collapse. We still tried to make new organisations affiliate, but in vain.

Should the labour-press in the various countries have done more to promote our work, this would have been to the good of the international relations; „Sozialdemokraten”, the Danish labour-paper, has always assisted us, but this cannot be said of the Dutch labour-paper „Het Volk”.

The Chairman observes that this question is virtually out of order.

Döring (Germany) continuing, says that he wants to make this observation to show how difficult the task of the Central Council has been to maintain the connections. Should the neutral press have judged more objectively, this would certainly have been for the better.

He then points out that various meetings of transportworkers' organisations were held, which felt the necessity of re-establishing the I. T. F. It is to be deplored that the English sailors are trying to found a separate international organisation. And it are not only the English sailors, for the fact should be stated, that also the Scandinavian organisations want to follow in that direction. We consequently will have to reckon with the possibility that the sailors will keep themselves at a distance from the I. T. F. for a longer or shorter period. Yet it are the sailors who in the first instance need the I. T. F. and when they secede, they will very much prejudice their interests. To every worker endowed with ordinary intelligence it must be plain, that when the war will be over, the exploitation of the toilers will recommence. The hearts of the capitalists have not been softened; at this juncture they may strike a benevolent attitude, but even in Germany where the workers see almost all their demands fulfilled, on account of the employers simply being unable to resist them, a beginning of resistance is all the same noticeable again amongst the great-capitalists.

The economic conflicts will again rage as in former times and the workers will have to fight again to get their demands complied with. The capitalists are organised internationally; if the workers do not also organise internationally, they will become a prey to the arbitrary methods of the employers.

Consequently he gives the participants in the conference into consideration to try and remove discord and dissension in their countries and to promote affiliation to the I.T.F. He further states that the Railwaymen will remain loyal to the I.T.F.

With this conference we have arrived in a new stage. The Central Council is of opinion that what is behind us should remain behind us. The future belongs to us. Otherwise we shall not get any further. More than one million members are represented here. If the organisations in the small countries affiliate again, we shall have a membership which will be twice as large as before the war. This is a sign of development, about which we may rejoice.

This is a brief report of what the Central Council has done and about the present position of the I.T.F. During the last few years there has practically been nothing to do.

The Central Council place their mandate in the hands of this conference; whatever decision may be arrived at in respect of the removal of the headquarters, the German organisations will remain loyal to the I.T.F. and will continue to do their duty.

Döring finishes by thanking the Dutch comrades, who so efficiently supported the I.T.F. and who have exerted all their influence in order to maintain the international relations.

Chapelle (Belgium) asks the chairman whether the Central Council ever protested against the Imperial German Government about the submarine-warfare. Should this be the case, he requests the Central Council to hand over a copy of this protest to the conference. Further he asks, whether in the opinion of the Central Council the murder of unarmed sailors does not deserve the strongest condemnation.

The Chairman says, that these questions do not belong to the agenda, this conference only having to deal with economical questions. All political questions should be taboo. That has always been the good custom at our international congresses. Not only at the congresses of the Trade-Secretariats, but the same rule was followed at the last conference at Berne. This conference would be well advised not to allow Chapelle to make these questions.

Bevin (Great-Britain) wants to remind the conference that Chappelle's questions do not only concern the sailors. The British sailors are also organised in the National Federation, but their business is also the business of the whole British proletariat. It is not his intention to here discuss the question of who is responsible for the war but he thinks that this question is not a purely political one.

The German proletariat may not be blamed for the way their rulers have seen fit to conduct the war. We have come here to re-establish the I.T.F. and for that reason Döring's reply to Chapelle's questions will be of paramount importance for the further development of the I.F.T. If it should be feasible to clear up this business, the greatest difficulties which stand in the way of resuming the old relations will be overcome.

Havelock Wilson told me that on the outbreak of the submarine-war the British sailors requested our government to see to it that the German imprisoned sailors were decently treated. Havelock Wilson applied to Müller and Jochade, requesting them to protest against the murder of women and children, which the U-boats committed.

We, Britishers, understand, that the German soldiers shot British soldiers and that armoured ships and victualling ships were being sunk, it is not against this that we wanted the Central Council to protest, but we did want them to protest against torpedoing unarmoured ships and against killing drowning people.

The reply to Wilson's letter ran that this matter concerned the conduct of the war and that the Central Council could not intervene.

We realize the difficult position in which the Germans found themselves, but all the same, we are of opinion, that they should have protested. Should from the side of the English anything of the nature of the torpedoing of the „Lusitania” have occurred, the English Transportworkers would not have failed to do all that was in their power, even by means of a strike, to cause the downfall of their government.

It is also our wish to bring the organisations together again. Döring requested us to try and make the sailors affiliate again to the I.T.F. But he should not forget that the sense of chivalry amongst sailors has received a severe blow, as a result of the behaviour of the German U-boats.

Consequently what has happened should be condemned and whatever can be made undone should be made undone.

He wants to be quite clear; the object is not to make the position of the British stronger. Great indignation prevails not only amongst the sailors and transport-

workers, but amongst all the workers of Great Britain, and the Trade-Union congress held at Blackpool, attended by more than 1000 delegates representing 4½ million members were unanimous in their opinion that the sailors' demands were just. British workmen hold that a sailor who has fallen into the water has a right to save his life. All the same they were fired at. The German workers are not to be blamed for this method of warfare, but the Central Council, has not done its duty, because it did not protest.

By Chappelle's questions one of the greatest difficulties has been broached. Everything should be done to get this matter settled and I call upon the Germans to give us their co-operation in this matter, considering that all of us want the organisation to grow and to prosper. The object in view is certainly worth its price.

Chappelle (Belgium) says that Döring's verbal report had for its object making propaganda for the Bureau at Berlin. I am here in my quality of secretary of the Belgian Sailors' Union. I have been on sea during the war and have seen from close by the harm done by the U-boats. Do not you then understand our state of mind, now that we are together with individuals who did not protest when our comrades, when women and children were killed by the U-boats?

I do not blame Jochade that he did not protest. He never was more than an employee at the offices of the I.T.F. and never the leader of that body. Paul Müller who formerly was called the „Kaiser" of the German transport-workers, has always dominated in the Central Council. I neither blame Döring personally, but we cannot let this opportunity pass to protest. More than 20.000 sailors of the Allies lie on the bottom of the ocean, amongst which there are 300 Belgians, all murdered by the U-boats.

Further Paul Müller wrote in the „Seemann" as I have been told, that he rejoiced that the German flags were flying from the towers of Antwerp and that he hoped that they should remain there, which means that Belgium should remain a subjugated country.

I understand that the Central Council will not go down on their knees and implore to forgive them, but in the name of the dead comrades I protest. We can demand of the Central Council to apply to the German Government for indemnification on behalf of the families of the sailors murdered as a consequence of the submarine-warfare.

He moves the following motion:

„The international conference of Transportworkers considering that nearly 20.000 seamen of all nations were murdered by German submarines, calls upon the German Government to provide as soon as possible, full compensation for the families of the murdered sailors."

Lloyd George has promised to discuss this matter at the Peace-conference and said that it would be one of the first items of the Treaty of Peace. But I expect of the Germans that they will urge upon the Government of Ebert and Scheidemann to comply with our demands, it being better that the Germans declare, in anticipation, to be prepared to meet our demands, than being compelled by force later on.

The Chairman can readily understand the state of mind of the Belgians. Belgium has suffered very much during the course of the war. But in spite of all the injury done, the Belgians should, when discussing matters, try to be fair and adhere to the truth while they should express themselves in a proper way. Bevin

and Chapelle have both been prompted by the same line of thought. Both gave utterance to their aggrieved sentiments, to the injury done them, but each did it in his own way. Bevin did it in a dignified manner, Chapelle loses sight of every sense of propriety. How much more convincing would Chapelle's argumentation have been, if it had been couched in other language, if he had not insulted comrades who so far fulfilled their duties with the concurrence of all and who were placed in their positions, also with the co-operation of the Belgians.

The chairman has his own opinion about the German Trade-Union movement and the German government; a discussion of these matters at this conference is however of no use. But he wants to point out that Chapelle's remark, as if the Central Council has rendered a report in order to keep the Bureau at Berlin, is absolutely false. If Döring had rendered a report and should have said at the end: consequently let the headquarters remain in Berlin, Chapelle would be right. But Döring on the contrary said: The Germans put their mandate in the hands of the conference; wherever the headquarters may be established, the Germans will remain loyal to the I. T. F.

Does not Chapelle understand that this is quite the reverse of his assertion? His remark is an uncalled for insult of the Germans who for years have enjoyed the confidence of the French, the English, the Dutch and also of the Belgians, as well as of all other workers.

Chapelle (Belgium) interrupting: Are you also talking about Paul Müller?

The Chairman: I am talking about the whole Central Council of which also Paul Müller was a member, but who did not at all dominate in the Central Council, as Chapelle asserts. Should this have been the case, the Central Council would certainly have acted differently than it did and I may add: much worse. Also with regard to Jochadé, Chapelle was very unfair. Jochadé was elected international secretary in 1904 unanimously and till the outbreak of the war, he was continually re-elected, also with the votes of the Belgians. Every time his work was examined and approved. If he should not have been up to his task, he might have been reelected once or twice but certainly not for 10 years.

It is our desire to reconcile and to rebuild what has been devastated during the war. In connection therewith, we should keep our discussions on a high level. The protest of Bevin was at least as forcible as that of Chapelle, but it was not insulting.

Chapelle (Belgium): Don't forget we are Belgians.

The Chairman has not had Chapelle's resolution before him in writing, but he thinks that he can concur with the general purport of it.

Brautigam (Holland) can leave much of what he had intended to say unsaid, as the chairman expressed himself already about these matters. He wants to state that the Central Council has not at all acted at Paul Müller's instigations and that the latter did not occupy such a prominent position in the Central Council as Chapelle wants us to believe. In the course of the war, shortly after the outbreak, I was in Germany, on behalf of the Dutch organisations and on the ground thereof I may state that it was the Central Council who opposed Paul Müller. It is indeed a fact that it was Paul Müller who wrote, not in the „Seemann" but in the „Courier", the sentence Chapelle cited about the flag which had to remain flying from the towers of Antwerp. At the time

I just happened to be at Berlin and I know that on account of that article, a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the German Transportworkers' Union was held, where steps were taken in order to render a repetition of a similar chauvinistic utterance impossible. As regards the submarine-war, the sailors of all nations look upon it as a form of crime. Not only the Allied, but also the neutrals. Many Dutchmen, more than 1100, consequently about four times as many as Belgians, lie on the bottom of the sea. But we should not forget that these did not find their death exclusively as a result of the U-boats. Indeed a large number perished by this method of warfare, but a great many of them were killed by the explosion of mines, perhaps even a larger number than by the U-boats; by German mines but also by French, English, Russian and even by „neutral” mines. For the first offer was brought during the first days of the war as a consequence of the explosion of a Dutch mine on the Scheldt, by which 3 Norwegian sailors lost their lives. With Bevin he is of opinion that the German organisations and the Central Council of the I. T. F. is not to be blamed for the way the German Government conducted the war. Yet he is sorry about the reply the Central Council gave to Havelock Wilson. The Central Council placed itself on a neutral standpoint in that letter and thought that it had not to make a protest against the sub-marine warfare.

C h a p e l l e (Belgium) : That is just the thing for which we blame them.

B r a u t i g a m (Holland) : So do I. The Central Council should have replied differently. The Central Council has certainly not encouraged the use of this weapon, but the fact that no protest was made, I attribute to the German mentality. The Central Council won't have had the courage to protest. But did they not feel themselves bound to protest as Germans, they should have considered it their duty to protest as leaders of the international organisation, to which also the sailors' Unions were affiliated. What can be done now, after all this has happened, to make good as much as possible? We cannot call the dead back to life again, neither can we heal the invalids. But something can be done for the widows and orphans of those who fell a victim to the submarine warfare. The families of the Dutch sailors that have perished have not remained unprovided for altogether. But what has been done, is not at all sufficient. He is of opinion that not only the Governments, but that also the large shipping-concerns, in whose vessels the sailors found their death, which concerns have made huge profits during the war, should contribute. He is willing to support all measures that will be taken in this matter and is consequently in favour of the motion. But he would much prefer the Germans declaring here that they will urge their government to obtain what is being asked in the motion and that they will subsequently succeed in obtaining from their Government, that it will do its duty in respect of the families of those killed or having become maimed as a consequence of the submarine warfare. If the German make this declaration, he believes the motion to be superfluous.

D ö r i n g (Germany) informs the conference that the German Transportworkers' Unions tried to bring about improvement of the conditions under which the enemy prisoners of war were living. The Germans have always recognised what the English have done for the amelioration of the position of the prisoners of war and in various meetings Havelock Wilson's endeavours have been sympathetically commented upon.

He wants to point out however that this took place in the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915, while the U-boat war only commenced in 1917; Havelock Wilson's and Bevin's particulars about this matter are consequently not quite exact. The Germans have also tried to do something but they missed the necessary influence on their Government. The conditions in Germany were at the outbreak of the war so quite different to those in England. In our country, the Government tried to destroy the trade unions. The German organisations that co-operated with foreign organisations were looked upon as enemies of the "fatherland" and their leaders were threatened with imprisonment. We had no influence on our Government. Nevertheless we succeeded later on in obtaining some improvement. We even succeeded in getting somebody released from Ruhleben, but after 8 days of freedom he escaped, thereby at the same time taking the chances away for his comrades.

In respect of the question Paul Müller, indeed the fact is true that the latter wrote the words referred to, in the very first stage of the war. As Brautigam intimated already, a meeting of the executive of the German Transportworkers' Union was held immediately after the publication of the article, who outright condemned Paul Müller's article and appointed me censor of the articles Paul Müller was going to write in future, in order to prevent that such expressions should be used in our papers ever again.

Paul Müller is of a very impulsive nature; he afterwards very much regretted what he had written at the time, but then it was too late, for a paper once having been printed and sent out, the words cannot be taken back anymore. However, we did what was necessary for preventing something of this nature in the future. And since then nothing of the kind ever occurred again.

I should like however to draw attention to the fact that it was always the international congresses who sided with Paul Müller. In Copenhagen he was called the „Kaiser" of the German sailors, but in Germany itself he did not have that influence to which Chapelle referred; on the contrary, in our country he never had much influence.

As regards Jochade, what Oudegeest said about him was quite correct. He is an earnest worker who has always done his duty. He was not a man like Paul Müller, he did not like to make himself conspicuous, but he was a quiet worker and the way the I. T. F. developed during the 10 years he was the secretary of it, shows that he did his work well.

The German working-classes strongly opposed the submarine warfare and the social democrats have continually been speaking against it. Particularly the president of our Union, who was also a member of the Reichstag has been speaking against it. But we simply missed the power to cause the Government to change the methods Havelock Wilson requested us to protest against. We amply discussed this matter in the Central Council, but we came to the conclusion that it was not our business to meddle, considering that if we should start protesting, we should have to protest to-day against the Government of one country and to-morrow against the Government of another country. Besides, suppose the German Government would have dealt with our protest in a serious way, the consequence would certainly have been that in the event of something having happened on the side of our enemies, it would have given us into consideration to lodge a protest with the Government of that country and of course there would have been no end to the business.

The Lusitania-case evoked a storm of indignation in Germany. That

nothing thereof transpired abroad is not the fault of the German workers, but it is due to the fact that all papers had to pass the military-censor. The result was that anything that was written against the conduct of the submarine-war was scratched. Finally, Döring wants to point out that the Central Council was not in a position to judge all cases objectively. It could hardly be assumed that the German press in similar cases would give trustworthy particulars. The Baralong-case has been enormously inflated in Germany, but we are still in the dark as to what actually did happen. We do not only condemn the murdering at sea, we condemn all murders committed during this war and we think it just as bad when somebody is killed by a bomb from an airship as when somebody is drowned on account of the ship on which he finds himself, being torpedoed. He goes on by saying that the German working-classes who sent their Government to the devil, have given ample proof of it that they did not approve of the way that government conducted the war. It is said that endeavours are now being made in Germany to found a separate sailors-organisation and rumours go that this is being done at the instigation of Havelock Wilson from whom money is said to have been received in order to wreck the German organisation. The position of the German seamen is not a very enviable one. The German mercantile marine has been wrecked, because the ships are being taken away from us and soon we shall have to support 60.000 unemployed. Unity will therefore also be a most essential factor for our sailors. The German delegation can agree to the subject-matter of the resolution-Chapelle and if the offensive terms are deleted we can accept it. The present German Government, though it cannot be made responsible for the actions of the old government, is all the same willing to make the wrong done by the previous government undone, as much as this lies in its power.

The Chairman proposes to adjourn the meeting as it is already a quarter to seven. He thanks the Central Council for the report and the particulars they submitted to this conference. He proposes to adopt the report. As the this Central Council also reported about the activities of the Dutch organisations, this item of the agenda has now been dealt with already. Further he says to be much obliged for the words of appreciation for the work the Dutch have done.

To-morrow the translated texts of the resolution-Chapelle will be submitted to the conference and a vote on same will soon be taken.

Williams (Great-Britain) is of opinion that the discussions should not be re-opened as we have received ample information now.

The Chairman is of opinion that to-morrow the matter may be finally settled in a quarter of an hour.

The conference is adjourned till the next morning at 10 a. m.

## SECOND DAY, APRIL 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Chairman reopens the conference at 10 a. m. and submits the resolution-Chapelle, somewhat modified by mutual arrangement between the British and the Dutch delegates, which now reads as follows:

„That this conference of the International Transport Workers' Federation having in mind the awful destruction of human life consequent upon the German submarine warfare, that destruction amounting to something like 20.000 lives, calls upon the representatives of the German organisations



to use every means within their power to require their Government to provide full compensation to the families of the seafaring workers who have been killed or injured by the use of the submarines."

W i e m e (Belgium) cannot concur with the text as drafted by the English and the Dutch; he wants to retain the word „murder" which appeared twice in the resolution moved by Chapelle. The Belgian delegation maintains its resolution unaltered.

D ö r i n g (Germany) states that his delegation agrees to the resolution as it runs now. The German people, the German workers sent their Kaisers, Tirpitzes and Ludendorf's to the devil and thus demonstrated not to agree to the warfare, not of the German Government only but to condemn war in general. The German delegation most strongly objects to the use of the word "murder". All those who died in the war were murdered, whether they fell by a bomb thrown out of an airship or an aeroplane or whether they were struck by a shrapnell, the result is all the same: they died. Murders have been committed by all countries that took part in the war. Thousands of Germans have died through being starved by the blockade.

We are willing to urge upon the present Government to comply with the wishes expressed in the resolution; we cannot do more.

However the word „murder" should not appear in the resolution, because it might otherwise be construed that only the Germans committed murders.

G o s l i n g (Great-Britain) believes it to be good that from the side of the British delegation some words are said on the matter. I am one of those who have fervently been longing for a conference these 5 years and when I heard Döring speak yesterday, I was very glad to hear the confirmation of what I myself always believed and of what I always said to my fellow-workers viz. that when the war would be over, when we could discuss matters together, the veil which, during the war, covered the truth would be removed, that the Germans would show that they abhorred the submarine warfare just as much as the British comrades. And now that this proves to be the case, it is possible to retain comradeship on the seas. The submarine war was unfair. It was not an honourable fight because it was a fight of the armed against the unarmed. I have always maintained that the German working-classes did not approve of this way of fighting.

What have we got to do now?

The German comrades are prepared to put proposals before their Government, the Government that did not make the war, which correspond with what we ask in the resolution. To call the dead back to life is an impossibility, but it is possible to provide for their families. The Germans agree to do this; we cannot ask more. In this conference we should be lenient towards one another. He therefore gives in consideration to adopt the resolution as it runs in its new wording. The laws of the sea of pre-war times should also reign after the war. The submarine war broke these laws, but through the words spoken here by Germans, and I want to accept these as the words of honourable men, the possibility has been created of restoring again the good comradeship between the seafaring workers of all nationalities. He feels confident that the Belgians will agree.

C h a p e l l e (Belgium) says that the text of the resolution is untrue. The soldiers in the trenches were killed; the victims of the U-boats were murdered. He insists upon calling a spade a spade. It is not impossible that the deletion of the

word „murder” is a result of the gentlemen having been dining together last night.

Williams (Great-Britain) most strongly protests against the last words of Chapelle, which are an unheard of insult and requests the chairman to compel Chapelle to take his words back.

Chapelle (Belgium) complies with this request and takes back his incriminating words.

The Chairman is of opinion that the request of the Belgians to alter the text in the way they want, cannot be complied with. He asks whether it is necessary to put the resolution to the vote, considering the promise of the Germans, or that it may be taken that the resolution has been carried unanimously.

Chapelle (Belgium) states that after all, he will vote in favour of the resolution.

Wieme (Belgium) cannot give his vote to the resolution and will therefore refrain from voting.

The resolution is carried unanimously with the exception of Wieme's vote.

The Chairman: Jochade requested me to allow him to address this conference and I now want to give him the opportunity to do so.

Jochade (Germany) wants to point out that 800.000 Germans are being kept imprisoned by the Allied, which have not yet released them. As republicans, not as subjects of the former German Government, we are here. Germany needs her men in order to better democratize the country than has so far been possible. That is why we ask your co-operation for the release of these men, in order that they may return to their homes as soon as possible.

The German Railways have been almost entirely reorganized. They are now in the hands of the State. Formerly the railwaymen missed the right of combination, the right to strike was simply out of the question altogether. Now they do enjoy these rights, and the clerks, who formerly were adherents of the government, now enjoy these rights too. 300.000 members of our organisation and 50.000 of the South German organisation, with which we work together, now enjoy full trade-union rights. He informs the conference of these facts in order to demonstrate to what extent conditions have changed in Germany and on these grounds the Germans request their foreign comrades to co-operate with them, in order that the German Democratic State may be further developed.

For that purpose we also need the men that are now still imprisoned, amongst which their are many belonging to our trade.

But also on behalf of the wives and children of these unfortunate we appeal to our foreign comrades. These prisoners, as well as their families, suffer physically as well as morally, because they remain separated from their wives and children, from their husbands and fathers. He requests the English comrades to do what can possibly be done, in order to promote the release of the prisoners of war and also wishes to make this appeal to the French.

If they declare themselves to be prepared to make endeavours in that direction, they may rest assured of the gratitude of the German people and of the German proletariat in particular.

Gosling (Great Britain) says that the British delegation has listened with sympathy to the words Jochade spoke. The prisoners have not to perform hard labour in England any more. He may add that also as a result of the pressure

which has been brought to bear by the English Labour movement, the repatriation of the prisoners may be expected within a few weeks.

Williams (England) observes that Jochade's speech was more of a political than of an economic nature. The English trade-unions, however, set themselves not only an economic but also a political task. The Labour Party has continually endeavoured and is still endeavouring to obtain lenient peace-terms; it is doing its utmost that the peace to be concluded shall not be a chauvinistic peace containing the germs of a new war, but a peace that shall unite the nations and lead to unity and harmony.

Some weeks ago, the Triple Alliance held a conference at Southport demanding from the Government to stop the invasion in Russia, to raise the blockade and to release the prisoners.

The English working-classes do not wish the coming peace to be like that the Hindenburgs and Ludendorffs dictated at the time to the Russians at Brest-Litowsk. The consequences thereof would be the same as they have been for Germany. He wants to congratulate the Germans with the revolution in Germany, which made an end to the old government and hopes that the German working-classes will further develop the revolution in a favourable sense and that it will serve as an example to the English and other comrades, so that the idea of the international proletarian revolution will further grow in influence.

The Chairman has listened with very much pleasure to the words of the British comrades and registers the fact that Jochade's words are fully underlined by the whole conference. He now proposes to discuss item 7 of the agenda:

*The report of the Central Council on the finances of the I. T. F.*

Williams (Great-Britain) proposes not to discuss item 7, but to first deal with items 8, 9 and 10.

At this conference representatives of the various countries have come together in order to re-establish the I. T. F.

What has happened in the past, we should leave behind us and now at once proceed to discuss the foundations on which the new organisation of the I. T. F. shall have to be built.

He is grateful to the German comrades for the work they have done, particularly for the constitution they have drafted, but it appears to him that this has become obsolete already, because since 1914 things have undergone a considerable change. It will therefore be necessary to have a new constitution drafted by a small commission. In the first instance he wants to put on record, by means of a resolution, that it is decided to re-establish the I. T. F. for which purpose he submits the following proposal.

"That this Conference of the Delegates of the Transportworkers-organisations from the various countries hereby resolves to reconstitute the International Transportworkers-Federation".

This resolution is the first one of its kind. It expresses that now, after the termination of the war, the International Trade Union action should be started again.

Williams goes on by saying that he is much obliged to the Dutch comrades for the work they performed. Yesterday we heard how difficult it was to get a conference like this one together. It is true that only a few countries are represented, but not a single organisation refused, on principle, to attend it. On the contrary, our conference has met with great sympathy from all sides.

It will be most essential to re-establish the International, for the conditions for the transportworkers do not look particularly bright. International capitalism is actively engaged in getting its footing again. The international capital is continually being concentrated in a smaller number of hands and the capitalists will apply their enormous power against the working-classes. We should not come lagging behind them. On the contrary, we should co-operate in a most fraternal way in order to establish a strong international organisation.

Especially the transportworkers have to face difficult problems. There will be great unemployment amongst them. Capitalism has proved a great failure in these times, but will do everything to reassert itself again.

England, the country from which it may be assumed that it suffered least from the war, has now to support more than one million of unemployed and when everything possible is not being done, unemployment will still increase. When in England there is no work to be found in the factories, the workers go to the docks to try and earn something there. This has as a consequence, that undesired elements are dumped into the docks and against the so-called free-labour organisation, which is being supported by the capitalists and which may be regarded as an organisation of blacklegs, we have to direct all our forces. Unfortunately these have cast a reflection on the English workers, because often blacklegs were recruited from England. Also for that reason the meeting of the International is essential. Still in 1919 the I. T. F. must be made to function again.

Whatever the capitalists may think about our work, is a thing which does not concern us. Formerly we were called trade-unionists, then socialists, then syndicalists and now they call us bolshevists.

The main thing is however that we know our own business and that we do what we have to do. This cannot be but in the interest of the I. T. F. because the time is not very distant anymore that English ships will enter the German ports and vice versa. We want to restore the international brotherhood. That is why we hope that our resolution will be carried and that our proposal about the small commission will be adopted.

The Chairman is of opinion that this conference is too small to take a decision in the question of a new constitution. He would therefore propose to deal with the following matters. 1. Finances. 2. Designation of the country where the headquarters will be established for the time being. 3. To take a decision in respect of forming a commission for working out the new constitution, a draft of which was made by the Central Council in order to facilitate this work, for the next congress. The commission appointed by the London Congress might be called together and confer about this matter with the Executive. Therefore he would like that Brunner now renders his financial report, though this may also be issued in print. The financial position is not very bright and something must be done in this matter, if, at least, the British agree.

Moltmaker (Holland) reminds the conference that in London 7 men were appointed. Are all of them still alive? Only Williams and Jochade are present here. He proposes to appoint a new commission consisting of 5 members.

Chapelle (Belgium) concurs with the chairman when the latter says that first of all it will have to be decided where the headquarters of the I. T. F. shall be established, and is also of opinion that this conference is too small to deal with the new constitution. The principle of removing the headquarters may be accepted however and the secretariat may, at least provisionally, be removed.

Later on a definite decision may be taken. He finally proposes to hold a congress at Amsterdam in August, which congress would have to deal with the following matters: 1. Headquarters of the I. T. F 2. Appointment International commission, in which France and Scandinavia should also be represented, in order to prepare a new constitution. The expenses of this commission to be born by the I. T. F.

The Chairman says that the discussions should not be continued in this way. Before everything we need money. He should like this conference to decide to pay the contribution again, at the rate of 6 Pfennings per member from January 1st 1919. If possible the organisations should also pay up their arrears.

Bevin (Great-Britain) realizes the financial difficulties of the I. T. F. but is afraid that the British Transportworkers' conference, to be held in June next, will refuse to vote the moneys, unless a definite decision has been taken to restore the I. T. F. somewhere else than Germany.

The Chairman proposes to unanimously adopt the resolution of the English delegation to which the conference agrees.

The Chairman now proposes to again pay the contribution from January 1st 1919, at the rate of 6 Pfennings per member.

Williams (Great-Britain) informs the conference that the British organisation is not a rich one and has no large cash resources while it has spent large amounts during the course of the war. Nevertheless we shall fulfil our obligations and pay every penny, in conformity with the decisions to be taken. We are bound however by the decisions of our Executive, as well as by those of our General meeting and may only then pay when a decision has been taken in reference to the removal of the headquarters. In this respect we are bound by the mandate given us. In the first instance, we have to establish the headquarters in a country where the civic rights are such that the bureau can properly carry out its functions.

The Chairman now proposes to deal first with the question of the removal of the Headquarters.

Chapelle (Belgium): The Belgians have very strong prejudices against Holland as the country for the temporary establishment of the headquarters of the I. T. F. The Belgian sailors are also affiliated to the new sailors' organisation of Havelock Wilson and as this organisation has succeeded in procuring much higher wages than are being paid in Holland, a conflict between this international federation and the sailors-unions in Holland is to be expected. The wages in Belgium have gone up 280 % and this is not the case in Holland. In Belgium wages are being paid now, which are considerably higher than those stipulated in the Dutch collective contract. The Belgians refuse to work below the English standard, in spite of the great unemployment. With the co-operation of the Americans, the English and Belgians will be able to maintain their scale of wages and because these sailors have placed themselves at the disposal of their respective Governments during the course of the war, these owe them a great deal and the high scale of wages will also be assured in the future. According to the stipulations of the Dutch contract, the firemen will receive 120 guilders a month, while the English wages are £ 15.— i.e. more than 50 % higher. Considering that the Dutch are unable to look after their own business in a satisfactory manner and play in the hands of the capitalists by pressing down our wages, because the capitalists will, which is quite natural, refer to

the Dutch wages, the headquarters of the I.T.F. may not be established in Holland, as the Havelock Wilson's sailor's organisations would not see their way to co-operate with the Dutch. The Dutch sailors are in this way cheating their English and Belgian comrades for 50 to 70 guilders a month and I cannot give this conduct of the Dutch any other name but organised black-legging. At the sailors' conference at London, it was resolved to establish the headquarters of the sailors' International at Antwerp and it would be advisable to also have the headquarters of the I.T.F. at that place as this would certainly promote co-operation. As I think, however, he continues, that such a proposal should not be laid before this conference, only a few countries being represented and the proposal consequently having little chance of being adopted, I propose to temporarily remove the headquarters to London, but they should on no account be established in Holland. Further he is of opinion that in Holland there is not sufficient broad-mindedness, because in this country there is a continual conflict raging between the syndicalists and the modern transportworkers' organisations, as well as between the Trade-Union Centers, the N.V.V. and the N.A.S. The papers of the different parties are always at one another, in stead of fighting together for the attainment of economical and political objects. When, some little time ago, I got a number of the journal of the Central Union of Transportworkers in my hands, I got the spanish-flue of the quarelling about petty things, which was going on between the two parties, as appeared from that paper. In Holland there still exists the discord and intollrance of pre-war times.

**F i m m e n** (Temporary Bureau Holland) wants to point out that the position of the class-conscious organisations is not the same as before the war. Chapelle does not seem to know that recently the N.V.V. and the N.A.S. laid the foundations for co-operation in the future, not only for economical but also for political purposes, when and where this is deemed necessary. Though all differences will not be overbridged at once, yet the class-conscious workers have resolved to, aim at cooperation, in the interest of the working-classes.

The **C h a i r m a n** wishes to add to Fimmen's words, that, when the Dutch come together with comrades, they do not commence with insulting these. Chapelle has spoken about organised black-legging. This has sorely grieved me. We, Dutch, are proud because we may frankly state that there is not a country in the whole world that supplies so few black-legs as Holland and certainly no transportworkers.

**C h a p e l l e** (Belgium) Neither does Belgium.

The **C h a i r m a n**. I did not say that. I am not at all surprised that the wages in Antwerp and Rotterdam differ. I am very glad indeed that the wages in Antwerp are so high. There once was a time however, that the wages in Holland were higher than those in Belgium. But at that time the Dutch did not call the Belgians black-legs. Chapelle would have done better, before expressing himself in the terms he used, to first make enquiries as to the difficult circumstances under which the collective contract was accomplished.

**V a n d e n B e r g** (Holland) interrupting: A short time before the contract was concluded, there were Belgian black-legs in Rotterdam.

The **C h a i r m a n**. I won't blame the Belgian organisation for that. I trust that the tone of the further discussions will be better.

The conference is then adjourned till 2 o'clock.

After re-opening of the session

Brautigam (Holland) says that he does not blame the Belgians for trying to get the headquarters removed to their country, but he does blame Chapelle very much for the bad form in which he is trying to achieve this. The use of an expression like „organised black-legging” when speaking of the Dutch organisations, which have always fulfilled their obligations, also internationally, cannot be tolerated. Chapelle complains about the Dutch wages for sailors being so low. During the 25 years that I belong to the trade-union movement, Brautigam goes on, I have noted that the English wages were always higher than those of the Continent. Chapelle said, that in spite of the great unemployment, the English wages have all the same been maintained. But for the Belgians this is a very simple matter, because the English vessels did not muster at Antwerp but in France or in England. The Dutch wages only apply for mustering in Dutch ports, in foreign ports the wages in force there apply. Besides Belgium has no fleet of any importance, neither did she have one before the war. The Belgian sailors mostly signed on in foreign ports, but in Holland, with its various own large trade routes, matters are quite different. The Dutch have done everything in their power to raise wages to the highest possible level. Of course we tried to get more than we have got, but it is not uncommon that not everything is obtained for which a demand is made. At the time the contract was entered into, the unemployment in Holland was at least just as widespread as it is now in Belgium. As many hundreds of unemployed as there are in Belgium, as many thousands there are here in Holland. Besides, there was no question of a regular shipping-business during 1½ years. The Dutch ships were being taken to American and English ports and had to sail under foreign flag. The Dutch sailors refused this, returned to Holland and became unemployed. And even now the greater part of the commandeered vessels are not back yet, as a consequence of which there is a large number of unemployed at this moment. Chapelle should further not overlook the necessary relation there must exist between the wages of the sailors and the wages of the harbour and dock-workers, which we were bound to accept. And besides we have to take into account the ruling scale of wages in other trades. At this moment the ruling wages of the Dutch dockworkers are taken as a basis for the wages in the other trades. For the rest, Holland is not the only country where the wages are lower than in England. This f.i. is also the case in Denmark and Sweden and the wages of the Belgian dockers are again considerably below those of their Dutch colleagues. Even if the demands now being made by the Belgian organisation are fully complied with, which is hardly to be expected, the Belgian wages, it is true, will reach about the level of the Dutch, but all the same they will be lower. It does not enter speaker's mind however to blame the Belgians for this, for are these not questions which the organisations themselves have to solve, considering that they have to take into account the wages that are being paid by other trades? As to the removal of the headquarters of the I. T. F. there are no divergencies of opinion about the organisation and the way the I. T. F. will have to function, in the event of the headquarters being removed to Holland. I do not think we will have many differences about the way matters should be managed and I am firmly convinced of it that, should the headquarters be established in this country, a lot of work, and good work too, will be done on behalf of the I.T.F. Brautigam does not wish to advocate the removal of the offices of the I.T.F.

to Holland, because he does not consider this to be his task; he will leave this to others.

A noble task awaits the I.T.F. As soon as possible it should be re-established and for that reason the headquarters may not be removed to Belgium, not from the one belligerent country to the other belligerent country, but to a neutral state, because in such country the re-building can be taken in hand to the best advantage.

The Chairman suggests not to deal with the question of wages to-day, but to only discuss the removal of the headquarters.

Van den Berg (Holland) in general agrees with what Brautigam has said in respect of the conclusion of the collective contract. His organisation was in a somewhat difficult position, as the Protestant and the Roman Catholic organisations stood over against it and to a certain extent also the modern organisation. But Chapelle should not talk about organised black-legging. As I have intimated by interruption, there were in 1918 in Rotterdam, as well as in Groningen, a number of Belgian black-legs. It would be very advisable for Chapelle to make thorough investigations before uttering such accusations. As regards the removal of the headquarters, I never was an admirer of the German system. When I laid down my function in my organisation to become an editor of the "De Telegraaf" less friendly remarks were made about me in the "Weekly Report". I won't go further into this matter, because we had better leave the past behind us. I do not agree with Fimmen and Brautigam that there are signs noticeable in Holland of the syndicalists and the modern organisations making up their differences. On the contrary, I am of opinion that this is not at all the case. I know nothing about negotiations between the N.V.V. and the N.A.S. and am not at all convinced that the relations between the organisations will become so friendly. I am opposed to the headquarters remaining in Berlin or to these ever being established there again and also against establishing the headquarters in Holland, because the tactics of the Dutch modern organisations are copied from the Germans. He therefore wants to propose to remove the headquarters to Denmark or to Switzerland, but as he does not know whether these countries are prepared to accept this, to remove them for the time being to London.

Döring (Germany) will not reply to van den Berg's remarks about the German system, which is diametrically opposed against syndicalism and he knows that van den Berg has always been an opponent to the modern theory. Van den Berg's remark, as if he should have received a discourteous treatment from the Central Council when he left his organisation is not true. Speaker only wrote:

Verily it saddens me,  
To meet thee in such company.

The Germans declared yesterday already that they would remain loyal to the I.T.F. to whatever place the headquarters might be removed, but I must all the same gravely warn against removing them from one to another belligerent country. When the secretariat is taken over, the documents have to be taken over too and the Germans cannot possibly go to Belgium or England. What Van den Berg suggests, viz. to temporarily establish the headquarters somewhere, is a way out of the difficulty. He therefore proposes to charge the Dutch with the management, because they can easily take over the business. He believes



that the Dutch will undoubtedly do all they can for the development of the I.T.F.

Sneevliet (Dutch East Indies) is against the headquarters remaining in Berlin but does not wish to remove them to Amsterdam or Antwerp either. He should like to see them established in London, where for some years a new spirit is prevailing which will bring the working classes to greater power. When he heard Oudegeest deliver his address of welcome, it was still the old spirit (this is a pun on Oudegeest's name, which stands for „old spirit“) speaking, the practical, sober trade-unionist who will not hear of politics in the trade-union movement. We should leave the past alone, certainly, but not without having drawn a lesson from it for the future. Williams has been speaking here about the powerful Triple Alliance existing in England, which is not limiting its activities to economical objects only, but which has also political objects in view. It shall exert its influence to obtain a peace at Paris, which will not contain the germs for new wars, which shall not be like the peace of Brest-Litowsk, against which the Germans never raised their voices. This action of the English, which goes against the invasion in Russia, is a symptom of the new spirit which should also make head-way in the trade union movement; we have to expect everything of this new spirit and therefore the headquarters of the I.T.F. should not be removed to Antwerp either, because Chapelle has only advocated the removal to Antwerp on purely chauvinistic grounds. Neither should the headquarters remain in Holland. I have not much confidence in the co-operation which is about to come between the N.V.V. and the N.A.S. and for that reason I want to propose the removal of the headquarters to London. The Dutch working-classes have not achieved much. What for instance has been attained by the November demands? From this it appears that the tactics of the Dutch are not right. He believes that the revolutionary spirit will not emanate from the Dutch.

The Chairman observes that it is 4 o'clock already and that we have been talking long enough now. He informs the conference that a resolution has been handed in by the Dutch Federation of Transportworkers and the Dutch East Indian Union of Rail- and Tramwaymen, to establish the headquarters of the I. T.F. in London. Is it the intention to establish the headquarters there permanently? This conference is too small to take a definite decision. He urges upon the conference not to adopt this resolution. Don't let us, while the world is topsy-turvey, take a definite decision, but let us remove the headquarters to a neutral country. It is all the same to us whether it be to Holland, to Scandinavia or to Switzerland. Such measures should be taken, which will make it easy to confer with the Germans and to take over the secretariat from them. He therefore proposes to establish the headquarters not in Berlin, nor in London, but in a neutral country.

I do not wish to go in on Sneevliet's argumentation; it is not the place here for such a debate, but I may say that even Oudegeest has not remained immune from the great changes which have taken place in the world. He only wishes to say to Sneevliet: If I am asked, "Show me the place where you have sowed," I am not afraid to give a reply to that question.

Williams (Great-Britain) is very grateful and very much honoured by the proposal to designate London for the headquarters of the I.T.F. but he is of opinion that the British cannot accept it. The British are practical people. Our organisation consists of 33 unions, and it is a great mistake to think that the policy of such a Federation is a one man's policy; on the contrary. When

Sneevliet thinks that the British spirit will have to be the new spirit for the I.T.F., it is not necessary to remove the headquarters to London for that purpose. Wherever the headquarters will be established, the British will always do their best to pervade the organisation with the British spirit. I hope to find Sneevliet at my side in these efforts. But finally, the majority has to decide in what spirit the entire international organisation shall be conducted. That spirit won't be inspired by the Bureau of the I.T.F. I consider it best to establish the headquarters in a neutral country. It would be impossible for all of us to meet in London, on account of passport difficulties. We should then have to meet on neutral territory and it entails great difficulties to always carry all documents etc. about. The English are unanimous that the headquarters should remain at Amsterdam for the time being. The British will see to it that their conceptions are properly represented in the I.T.F.

For the rest, the British mentality is a very complicated one. There are syndicalistic as well as modern sections, but they do co-operate, convinced as they are that it is better to work together than to be at loggerheads. Where two divergent sections co-operate, the consequence is always that moderate results are obtained. But better moderate results than no results at all. He therefore gives into consideration to establish the headquarters for the time being at Amsterdam. Probably it would be advisable to later on remove them to Geneva where the seat of the Ligue of Nations will be established, but this conference is too small to take a decision. When we have a conference attended by 100 to 150 delegates, we may decide matters definitely.

The Chairman proposes to proceed to take a vote about the matter.

Van den Berg (Holland) is prepared to withdraw his proposal in favour of the proposal of the English, provided it be decided that all sections existing in Holland are represented in the Executive Committee to be formed.

Williams (Great-Britain) says that this is his intention and that the Executive will have to be composed in proportion to the memberships of the organisations.

It is decided to provisionally establish the headquarters of the I. T. F. at Amsterdam, in accordance with the proposal of the British delegation; the Belgian delegation voted against the proposition.

Bevin (Great-Britain) moves a resolution which is to be considered as a supplement to the one already adopted, in which the desirability to restore the I.T.F. was expressed.

This resolution runs as follows:

„That a provisional Committee of 5 be appointed: 1 from Great Britain, 1 from Germany, 1 from Belgium, 1 from the Scandinavian Countries and 1 from France, which together with the acting Secretariat of the Dutch organisations, shall be charged with the responsibility of drafting a new constitution which shall provide for, inter alia:

1. A Central Council representative of the International movement in proportion to the relative membership of the various organisations.

2. An Executive Committee which shall represent at least five countries, and the members of which can be summoned in emergency and which shall meet at least four times a year.

3. The draft Constitution shall provide for the administration of the International Federation in sections, in order to establish departments to deal with purely departmental work as follows:

- a. Seafaring Workers.
- b. Railway Workers.
- c. Dock & Waterside Workers.
- d. Road Traffic and Transport Workers.
- e. Inland Waterway Workers.

The Provisional Committee shall meet and report to an International Congress to be held not later than October of the present year, and shall circulate their Report of the draft Constitution as soon as possible.

Each country not represented at the Amsterdam Conference to be asked for their approval of the decisions of that Conference and if and when their approval is obtained, their affiliation shall date from January 1st, 1919."

He is of opinion that it is necessary and possible to bring the right people together and to thus found a strong international organisation. The League of Nations is nothing but an international League of Employers. Over against this organisation we must place the international power of the employed. In further explanation of the resolution Bevin says: We have resolved to temporarily establish the I. T. F. at Amsterdam and to form a committee in proportion to the relative membership of the organisations.

In the old International the Executive was formed by one organisation only. We are of opinion that a small commission, consisting of organisations of various countries will have to meet at stated intervals, in order to discuss all important questions.

We believe that also the Germans will agree to such arrangement. Besides it will be necessary to take more special action on behalf of the various groups which we organise, by which we shall draw the various sections of the transportworkers-world to us still more than has so far been the case.

The new International of the Transportworkers will become much larger than the old one ever was and the British will do their best — and they hope to succeed too — to bring the colonial organisations into the I.T.F. But not only the organisations of America, Australia and India, also those of Japan have to become members of the I. T. F., lest the Asians become a danger to the European workers. Capitalism also begins to develop in Japan and a start is being made with labour legislation in that country. Recently a law was passed providing that children under 12 years of age are not allowed to work longer than 14 hours a day.

The task of the Dutch Committee will further be to prepare, as quickly as possible, a report of this conference and to convene a new congress, which will have to be held in September or October of this year.

What has been done on behalf of the International of the Transportworkers during these few days would have been impossible half a year ago. The workers will come together again. The capitalists want to build up the world again and believe that this can only be done by exploiting the workers still more than ever before has been attempted. It is plain that we have to resist these attempts with all the resources at our disposal and for that reason the organisations which are not present here should be asked whether they approve of the decisions taken and they have to be asked to again become affiliated to the I.T.F. It should be stipulated, when writing them, that they are considered to be affi-

liated from January 1st. 1919. The contribution will have to be paid again by the organisations affiliated from January 1st. 1919.

The Chairman is afraid that it will not be easy to still hold the new international conference in the course of this year, when various meetings of representatives of the organisations will have to be held, and therefore suggests to charge the Dutch organisations with drafting a new constitution.

Bevin (Great-Britain) does not approve of only one country drafting the constitution.

The Chairman suspends the meeting for half an hour, in order that the representatives may consult one another about this matter.

*After the reopening of the meeting,*

Williams (Great-Britain) intimates that his colleagues have decided that the committee for drafting the new constitution shall consist of representatives of the largest countries, i.e. one from England, one from Germany, one from France and one from Scandinavia, to which a representative of the Belgians might be added. We should like to see Bidegaray appointed as the representative of the French Railwaymen and Lindley for Scandinavia, as one of the leading personalities of the old I.T.F.

To these might be added one or two Dutchmen, to give an advisory opinion. The Dutch themselves shall nominate their Committee, while the Committee of 5 shall have to be summoned when important matters have to be dealt with. He hopes that it thus will be feasible to still convene a new international congress in October next.

The Chairman proposes to adopt the proposal-Williams, to which the conference agrees. The resolution-Bevin is adopted.

The Chairman now proposes to fix the contribution from January 1st. 1919, not at 6 pfennings but at 1 penny per member, the rate of exchange of Marks being so low at this moment.

Brunner (Germany) observes that the German, Austrian and a few Dutch organisations have regularly paid their contributions. Will they now have to pay up the difference?

The Chairman admitting this, withdraws his proposal.

Williams (Great-Britain) says that German currency is so low at this moment as a consequence of the transactions of international capitalism. He is of opinion that we, labourers, should not try to take advantage of it and therefore wants to pay the contribution on the basis of the former rate of exchange, so that the English will pay 6 pfennings per member, as formerly.

Brunner (Germany) gladly underlines Williams' words.

It is resolved to pay the contribution from January 1st 1919 at the rate of 6 pfennings per member, at the rate of exchange ruling before the outbreak of the war.

The Chairman announces that a telegram has been received from the French Railway-organisation, stating that the invitation to this conference, which was forwarded on March 29th, has only reached them on April 26th, rendering it impossible to send a delegate. This fact clearly shows how difficult it has been to keep up the international relations.

He proposes not to deal with items 11 and 12 of the agenda as no applications for support have been received by the Temporary Bureau. Item 13 of the



agenda has already been fully dealt with. Further the Chairman announces that the Belgian delegation left, after the interval, without saying good-bye.

Williams (Great-Britain) says that 2 Belgian organisations received a donation from the British Transportworkers Federation of £ 50 each and that the Trade-Union Congress also collected money on behalf of the Belgian organisations. There is moreover every need to assist all the countries which have suffered so much, by helping to establish the Trade Union Movement, especially of Transport Workers in the Balkans, in Poland and throughout the Baltic provinces.

Fimmen (Temporary Bureau Holland) says to have been very pleased to hear that the British have already given financial assistance, but he is of opinion that centralisation in collecting money for support is very necessary. If consequently, an organisation affiliated to the I.T.F. sends a request for support to the sister-organisations, it is very desirable to refer the organisation which makes the application to the Bureau at Amsterdam, which then may make an appeal to all organisations affiliated. The International Federation of Trade Unions followed this procedure in collecting a large sum on behalf of the Belgian and Serbian trade-union movement.

Döring (Germany) says that the Germans so far always rendered assistance and contributed large amounts for supporting weak organisations. When money was being asked for the Belgian trade-union movement, a collection was held in Germany during the course of the war and a large amount was collected. But later on we heard that the money had not been accepted by the Belgians. It is plain that this was very disagreeable to the Germans and that they do not wish to run the risk to be again treated in such a way.

The Chairman thinks that the best course to follow is the one Fimmen suggested.

The Chairman now states that the agenda has been finished. As this conference may be considered as a historical event, he suggests, to present a photo of it to all the participants.

Gosling (Great-Britain) says, that the pleasant duty devolves upon him to heartily thank the Dutch comrades, also in the name of his colleagues, for convening and conducting this conference and for the cordial reception given them. The photo will, as long as we live, remain a pleasant remembrance of these days. He cannot express what he felt during these last few days. During the whole course of the war, he felt and knew that there must be in the other countries involved in the war, friends and comrades who thought like he did and who were longing for the moment that it would be possible to work together again as comrades internationally, and he hopes that never again anything like this great war will occur and that nothing may ever separate us in the future.

Again he thanks the Dutch and the chairman that they have made it possible to hold this international conference.

Döring (Germany) fully underlines the words spoken by Gosling and can only express his admiration for the way the Dutch conducted this conference and for their exertions to re-establish the I.T.F.

We came over to Holland with a heavy heart, after all that had been said and written about us. In particular the reconciling attitude of the British has far exceeded our expectations and we sincerely hope that with their assi-

stance, the differences which there still may exist, shall be cleared. With melancholy we now give the management of the I. T. F. out of our hands which has been entrusted to us for 15 years, during which time we succeeded in making it a large organisation. We hope, that to whatever place the headquarters may be removed, those who will have the future management of the I.T.F. will be working in the interest of this organisation with the same love and devotion as the Germans always did. Very often it was difficult to overbridge the contrasts prevailing in the different countries, but the fact that never an organisation seceded was always a great satisfaction to us.

Once more he thanks the Dutch and all who have contributed to the success of this conference. Full of hope and confidence the Germans may proceed on their journey home.

The Chairman has listened with great pleasure to the expressions of satisfaction from the British as well as from the Germans. We have been here together with sentiments of comradeship and he thanks the delegates for the way in which, with very few exceptions, they have performed their tasks. This augurs well for the future and for the rebuilding of the International.

Speaker further wants to thank the translators, especially Fimmen, who has given him so much assistance, not only during the days of this conference, but to whose work, on behalf of the preliminary arrangements, we owe in no small degree the success of this conference.

When taking leave of Döring, the chairman wishes, in the name of the whole proletariat employed in the transport-trade, to thank the Germans for leading us these 15 years and for all they did to make the I.T.F. an influential power.

The Central Council will now be formed by the Dutch, for the time being, and I wish to give my word that the Dutch will continue the business with the same ardour and all the energy there is in them. It will be the task of the workers to build up again what has been destroyed by the capitalists and this conference has certainly set a splendid example to the toilers of all countries of the way in which this has to be done.

Oudegeest closes the conference with the well-known maxim of Marx:

**PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE!**