

# ITF NEWSLETTER

## INFORMATIONS

## INFORMATIONEN

## INFORMATIONSBLAD

No. 12

23 June 1966

IN THIS NUMBER: The British seamen's strike (p.120 & Supplement); International aid for Alitalia personnel (p.121); ILO International Labour Conference (p. 121); Railwaymen's Section meets in Rome (p. 121); CBRT "non-ops" threaten strike (p. 122); Greek train personnel take strike action (p. 122); Pay increases for Belgian drivers (p. 123); London taximen protest against minicabs (p. 124); New Swedish road haulage agreement (p. 125); New York cab drivers reach settlement (p. 125); Canadian dockers end their strike (p.126); 26 per cent increase for Chilean dockers (p. 126); Danube workers' warning strike (p. 127); World-wide stoppages by Argentine seamen (p. 127); Grancolombiana crews strike (p.127); Pay increase for French seafarers (p. 127); Big improvements for German fishermen (p. 128); Air France personnel call strikes (p. 130); Scandinavian airline pilots' strike (p. 130); IAM dissatisfied with mediation proposals (p. 131).

### ABOUT THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL  
\*\*\*\*\*

#### The British National Union of Seamen's strike

In order that we can include last-minute developments in a rapidly-changing situation, we are including a full report on the British seamen's strike as a Supplement to this issue of the Newsletter.

- 120 -

### International aid for striking Alitalia personnel

All personnel employed by the Italian airline Alitalia, with the exception of pilots, took strike action towards the end of last month in support of their demands for a new and improved agreement. On 26 May, the ITF-affiliated Italian Union of Airline Workers requested ITF assistance in stopping four Alitalia DC-8s which were due to call at New York for repairs.

Following contact between the Secretariat and two of the ITF's United States affiliates -- the Transport Workers' Union of America (TWU) and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) -- action was taken against these four aircraft. TWU members refused to load or unload the planes, whilst IAM members employed by Alitalia also gave 100 per cent support to their Italian colleagues, resulting in the cancellation of all flights by Alitalia.

The Italian civil aviation personnel later resumed work pending the result of new negotiations, which began on 3 June. These did not lead to any agreement, however, and on 21 June our affiliate informed us that it had now decided to organize a series of short strikes in support of its demands. It requested that assistance should be refused to a further Alitalia DC-8 which was flying to the United States for repairs at the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. The ITF Secretariat immediately took action on this request through the International Association of Machinists.

### International Labour Conference discusses fishermen's questions

The 50th Session of the International Labour Conference opened in Geneva on 1 June and is scheduled to continue until 23 June. It is being attended by 105 of the ILO's 114 Member-States. Among the subjects on its agenda is consideration of the three draft international instruments on fishermen's questions which were drawn up in October last at the ILO Preparatory Technical Conference on Fishermen's Questions. The three instruments, in the establishment of which the ITF and its fishermen's affiliates have played a very important rôle, deal respectively with vocational training; accommodation on board fishing vessels; and fishermen's certificates of competency.

The ITF Secretariat has been represented at the Conference by the General Secretary, Hans Imhof, and G. Brothers.

We will be giving a fuller account of the Conference's work following its conclusion.

### Railwaymen's Section meets in Rome

A Conference of the Railwaymen's Section has been taking place in Rome this week. Delegates discussed a wide range of topics, including two subjects which are on the agenda of the Eighth Session of the ILO Inland Transport Committee, to be held

in November: "Machinery for collective bargaining and the settlement of disputes on railways" and "Railway pay structure". The ITF Secretariat has prepared comprehensive surveys of both pay structure and trade union rights in railway employment, the findings of which were fully discussed by the Conference with a view to formulating the approach of the ITF Railwaymen's Section to problems relating to these subjects. In addition to these and other important items on the agenda of the Rome meeting, Conference delegates also discussed the Section's future programme of work. A full report on all these deliberations and on decisions taken will be published in the next Newsletter.

RAILWAYMEN

CANADA  
\*\*\*\*\*

CBRT "non-ops" threaten strike

The ITF-affiliated Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers (CBRT) is conducting a strike ballot among its 20,000-strong non-operating membership on Canadian National Railways. The non-ops' long-outstanding demands (reported in Newsletter no. 7 of this year) for a 90 cents per hour wage increase and other improvements are expected to go before a conciliation board, as agreed last March after months of abortive negotiations. But the Brotherhood does not hold out hopes of any real gains from conciliation and regards a strike as inevitable. The CBRT points out that railwaymen's conditions have declined in relation to those of other workers. They need a big wage increase and are determined to "fight every step of the way" to achieve a just settlement.

The disputes of other unions organizing Canadian non-operating railwaymen and of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen with Canadian National and Canadian Pacific have already gone before conciliation boards.

GREECE  
\*\*\*\*\*

Greek train personnel take strike action

Greek locomotivemen and trainmen, who had been on strike for ten days, returned to work on 2 June, after the Communications Minister had promised them that full consideration would be given to their claims. Mobilization orders had been issued and many of the strikers, who belong to the ITF-affiliated Panhellenic Railwaymen's Federation, had been committed for

trial. On 6 June all other railwaymen were due to strike for 24 hours in sympathy with their trainboard colleagues. The ITF sent a cable to the Communications Minister backing up the striking train - and footplatemen, who were claiming an increase in travelling allowances from between Dr. 25 and Dr. 30 to Dr. 50 per day. The back-to-work arrangement, subsequently announced, provided for: the withdrawal of mobilization orders, no victimization and payment of wages for strike days. A report has since been received however that promises made to the railwaymen to get them back to work have not been kept, and a fresh strike is due to be held on 25 June.

SWEDEN  
\*\*\*\*\*

Railway staff to benefit from new civil service agreement

Union negotiators have accepted terms for a new three-year agreement covering state-employed staffs. Some railway employee categories, represented by the Council of State Employees' Organizations (Statstjänarkartellen), to which the ITF-affiliated Railwaymen's Union belongs, will benefit under the agreement, which provides for overall increases of 8 per cent in the first year, 7 per cent in 1967 and 5.5 per cent in 1968.

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

BELGIUM  
\*\*\*\*\*

Pay increases for coach and lorry drivers

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB) reports agreement on wage increases for two important groups of road transport drivers. Drivers on coach and special bus services get a minimum starting hourly rate of 38F (increased from 35F), rising to 39F after 5 years and to 40F after 10 years (increased from 36F and 37F). The new rates have effect from 1 May 1966.

Following the recent rise in the Belgian consumer price index, road haulage drivers' pay goes up by 2.75 per cent, with effect from 2 May. The new rates, which remain in force for a rise of 2.49 points in the index, vary from 37F per hour for drivers of vehicles between 0 and 2 tons to 42.10F per hour for drivers of vehicles over 15 tons (from 38.85F to 44.20F respectively for work done between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.).

(There are 140 Belgian Francs to £1 and 50 to \$1).

GREAT BRITAIN  
\*\*\*\*\*

London taximen protest against unlicensed cabs

Taxi drivers, members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers Union (T & GWU), kept their cabs off the streets of London for 24 hours on 14 June to protest against unfair competition from minicab operators. London's taxi fleet consists of specially built vehicles licensed under very stringent regulations to ply for hire and carry passengers. The drivers themselves also have to satisfy strict requirements. The minicabs, on the other hand, are ordinary small cars operated commercially by certain firms for carrying passengers, and are subject to none of these regulations. The taxi drivers are demanding that laws governing the cab trade should be amended to ensure competition on an equal footing, and to bring their point home they voted overwhelmingly at a special T & GWU taxi drivers' meeting to take a "coordinated rest day" on 14 June. The action was an outstanding success and was widely supported by the taxi operators, the largest of whom agreed to close their garages on the day. The taxi drivers have stated their intention to boycott stations, hotels and other establishments which give facilities to the minicabs.

London busmen accept 6.6 per cent pay increase

A delegate conference, representing 32,000 London busmen, of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union has accepted the recent report of the Prices and Incomes Board on London busmen's pay, recommending an increase of 6.6 per cent. This will mean £1 more for crews on central services and 19s. more for those on country and long distance (Green Line) service. The conference also agreed to one-man operation on an experimental basis for one long-distance service.

Busmen in the provinces, are angered by the Board's refusal to recommend more than 3 to 3½ per cent for them. One municipal authority, Coventry City Corporation, however is to introduce a new revised wage system for its bus workers, which will provide an increase in basic pay of about 40 per cent, though overtime will be reduced and a complex system of bonuses will be eliminated so that the increase in overall earnings will be much less. The new system, designed to give drivers and conductors a "more realistic wage" and to increase efficiency, should enable bus crews to earn an average of £1,000 per year without overtime.

SWEDEN  
\*\*\*\*\*

New road haulage agreement

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union has concluded a new agreement for road haulage workers, which provides increases in wages and piece work rates, a progressive reduction in hours of work, and other improvements.

Lorry drivers on time wages with two years service (and new entrants who have undergone a period of training) get an increase of kr.40 per week, giving them a basic kr.258 for a 45 hour week. Higher basic rates have been negotiated for areas where the cost of living is higher (kr.266 or kr.272, depending on the driver's base area, in other parts of Sweden, excluding Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö).

A new improved system of piece work pay has also been introduced for those on piece rates. In forestry transport, for example, the rates, formerly linked to vehicle capacity, are now based on the work itself alone, i.e. loading, unloading, driving. Loading rates vary from 36.4 öre (100 öre = 1 krona) to 81.9 öre per ton, according to the type of loading equipment in use. Driving rates range from kr.5.30 (vehicle + trailer: kr.5.90) for 6 miles to kr.25 (kr.29.05) for 60 miles, with kr.2.55 (kr. 2.90) for each additional distance of 6 miles. The unloading rate is kr.2.28 per load (vehicle + trailer: kr. 4.10) with a supplement of 45 öre (kr. 1.35) for one-man working. Kr. 1.80 per day is paid for vehicle maintenance. All road haulage piece rates contain a "fixed element", which for the forestry sector is kr.2.12 (kr.2.42).

The new road haulage agreement is retroactive to 1 March 1966 and remains in force for 3 years. Hours of work are reduced this year to 45 hours and in further annual stages to 42 hours 30 minutes by 1 January 1969.

(Kr. 14.50 = £1 and kr. 5.15 = \$1, approximately)

UNITED STATES  
\*\*\*\*\*

New York cabmen accept mediation proposal

A mediation proposal, providing for improved pay, shorter hours, pensions, life insurance and union shop for all drivers, part or full time, has been accepted by the New York Taxi Drivers' Organizing Committee, representing 24,000 cab drivers and garagemen.

The new contract will increase meter commissions from 44 per cent to 46 per cent as of 17 May 1966 and to 47 per cent on 1 December 1966. It also provides for retirement pay

of \$50 per month for men aged 65 and having worked for 25 years or more with any New York cab fleet, for full union shop, breakdown pay, health and welfare benefits, life insurance with a special \$5,000 benefit for death while on duty, and grievance procedure ending in arbitration of disputes. Garage workers get a pay increase of \$4 per week, with a reduction in hours to 45 per week immediately and to 40 per week in December.

PORT WORKERS

CANADA  
\*\*\*\*\*

St. Lawrence dockers back at work

Four thousand dockers, members of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association, at the St. Lawrence ports of Montreal, Quebec and Trois Rivières ended their 39 day strike on 16 June after accepting a new two-year contract providing for increases amounting to 80 cents (5s 4d) an hour over the two years. The Government is to set up a commission of inquiry to look into the questions of gang sizes and technological innovations on the waterfront.

St. Lawrence Seaway workers get pay increase

A strike of 1,200 St. Lawrence Seaway workers, due to begin on 20 June, was averted by an agreement reached at the last minute between the ITF-affiliated Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers and the Seaway Authority. Under the agreement Seaway operators and headquarters personnel get an immediate increase of 20 per cent, retroactive to 1 January 1966 and a further 10 per cent on 1 January 1967. In addition the Authority takes over the full cost of welfare programmes, formerly shared between management and employees.

CHILE  
\*\*\*\*\*

Stevedores win new contract

The Chilean Stevedores' Federation, belonging to the ITF-affiliated Chilean Maritime Confederation (COMACH), has won an important new national agreement for its members. It provides for a 26 per cent increase in basic rates, and a number of special bonuses and other improvements. An outstanding feature of the new agreement is the establishment of a compensation fund financed by contributions from the employers, representing 2 per cent of wages paid to the stevedores.

INLAND WATERWAY WORKERS

AUSTRIA  
\*\*\*\*\*

Danube workers' warning strike on pay claim

Employees of the Austrian Danube Shipping Company (DDSG) took part in a 24-hour warning strike on 6 June which crippled both passenger and cargo traffic on the River Danube. The workers, who are organized in the ITF-affiliated Austrian Commercial and Transport Workers' Union, were striking in support of their claim for a ten per cent pay increase. They were joined in the strike by employees of the Cosmos company, which is privately-owned as opposed to the DDSG which is a nationalized undertaking.

SEAFARERS

ARGENTINA  
\*\*\*\*\*

World-wide strikes by Argentine maritime workers

The ITF-affiliated Argentine Maritime Workers' Union (SOMU) is calling a series of strikes on a world-wide basis following the breakdown of negotiations on a new collective agreement. The seamen were due to stage 48-hour stoppages on Argentine ships throughout the world on 16 and 17 June, followed by a further 48-hour strike on June 29 and 30. In addition, go-slow actions are scheduled for 18-21 June and 24-27 June.

COLOMBIA  
\*\*\*\*\*

Grancolombiana crews strike

The ITF-affiliated Colombian Seafarers' Union (UNIMAR) called officers and men of the Grancolombiana Fleet out on strike on 1 June, following the company's refusal to meet pay demands. The ITF has given its affiliate full support in the dispute.

FRANCE  
\*\*\*\*\*

5 per cent pay increase for French seafarers

A new thirteen-month agreement has been concluded for officers and crews of the French merchant navy. Pay goes up by 3 per cent as of 1 April 1966 and by a further 2 per cent on 1 August 1966.



The proportion of seamen in permanent employment is increased from 70 to 80 per cent with effect from 1 July. Seamen ashore waiting for ships will henceforth be paid 63 per cent of their shipboard wages, as against 50 per cent under the old agreement.

NORWAY  
\*\*\*\*\*

New home trade agreement

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's, Mates' and Engine Room Officers' Unions have concluded a new two-year agreement with the shipowners for seafarers in the home trade. The agreement provides for overall pay increases of 8-9 per cent as of 1 April 1966 and of 5-6 per cent from 1 April 1967.

Cost of living adjustment in the deep sea trade

Agreements for the deep sea trade are not due for revision until the autumn, but in view of the recent rise in the cost of living the seafarers' organizations have negotiated a compensatory pay adjustment of 5.5 per cent, effective from 1 May 1966, for those on board foreign trade vessels.

PAKISTAN  
\*\*\*\*\*

Officers demand 44-hour week and extra leave

The ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Pakistan is demanding a strict 44-hour week for officers, extra leave in compensation for Saturday afternoons, Sundays and public holidays worked at sea or in port, and cash compensation for hours worked in excess of 56 per week. The union has set 15 July as the deadline for the satisfaction of these demands.

FISHERMEN
-----------

GERMANY  
\*\*\*\*\*

Big improvements won for deep-sea fishermen

Negotiations between the ITF-affiliated German Transport & Public Service Workers' Union and the employers on new agreements covering deep-sea fishermen have resulted in substantial improvements in both earnings and conditions. The new agreements take effect from 1 March last.

So far as general conditions of service are concerned, the following are among the main innovations:

Sick leave on full pay in the case of illness for which the fisherman is not responsible has been extended from the existing basic six weeks to nine weeks as from the fourth year of service with the same company and to twelve weeks as from the sixth year of such service. In the case of industrial accidents, sick leave on full pay is given for twelve weeks, regardless of length of service.

Where a skipper changes from one company to another, he now receives the same catch-share as in his original company or, where applicable, a higher share.

Items not considered as directly belonging under the heading of fishermen's effects but which are used for educational or recreational purposes (e.g. books, tape-recorders, cameras, etc.) are now covered by loss-of-effects insurance up to a total value of DM 300 (about £27 or US \$75.60).

Hours of rest on the fishing grounds have been increased from 6 to 8 hours in every 24, but with a minimum of six hours' consecutive rest. Weekly working hours in port have been reduced from  $42\frac{1}{2}$  to  $41\frac{1}{4}$ . In compensation for regular Saturday work at sea, a monthly lump sum amounting to 10 per cent of the trip rate is payable.

An additional vacation allowance amounting to 10, 20 and 30 per cent respectively of the stand-by pay while a fishing vessel is in port is payable after one, two and five years' service.

So far as wages are concerned, the new agreements provide for a number of major improvements.

Trip rates are increased by 20 per cent, with half of the increase being accounted for by the new lump sum compensatory payment for Saturdays at sea. Stand-by rates go up by 10 per cent, whilst guaranteed rates are increased by between 23 and 60 per cent in order to safeguard the earnings of crew members on trips when catch-shares are inadequate. Victualling and subsistence allowances are also to go up by 10 per cent.

Substantial increases have also been won for two individual categories, namely radio operators and cooks. A Radio Operator 1st Class, for example, will receive a rise of 37 per cent in his regular trip emoluments, including compensation for Saturdays at sea. A cook receives an increase of 30 per cent in his trip rate.

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

FRANCE  
\*\*\*\*\*

Flying staff conflict settled

Following two 48-hour strikes this month, which took place on 7-8 and 17-18 June, unions representing Air France flying staff have concluded an interim agreement with the Company providing for an immediate pay increase of 2.35 per cent, retroactive to 1 April 1963 and for machinery to deal with any disputes which may arise in the future. The settlement is the outcome of a three-year old dispute over Air France's refusal to honour an agreement dating back to 1958, under which flying staff should automatically get pay increases awarded to ground personnel.

In 1963 and 1964 the ground staff got increases totalling 5.2 per cent, but these were not extended to the flying staff on the pretext that the latter's pay had not lagged behind.

Air France ground staffs also began a 48-hour strike on 24 June in support of a series of demands which involve a reduction in hours of work, additional annual leave in compensation for uncongenial working conditions, and the ending of practices under which some personnel are expected to start their day's duty at 5 a.m.

SCANDINAVIA  
\*\*\*\*\*

Scandinavian pilots take strike action on claims

Swedish, Norwegian and Danish pilots employed by Scandinavian Airlines System came out on strike on 13 June following the breakdown of mediation proceedings which had led them to postpone strike action originally set for 6 June. Earlier, however, on 1 June Danish pilots had called a separate 48-hour strike.

In Norway, the Government has invoked compulsory arbitration powers to settle the dispute so far as the 300 Norwegian pilots of SAS are concerned, and as a result the latter resumed work on (16 June).

The most important claims submitted by the pilots' organizations are concerned with pensions and job security. They are asking that pilots should be able to retire on full pension at 55 instead of 60 as at present. They are also calling for the introduction of an invalidity pension instead of a lump-sum compensatory payment in the event of loss of licence on medical grounds. Better arrangements are also being claimed

in respect of time off and the working week. Higher salaries are being sought and the pilots have already turned down mediation proposals which would have involved a 21.5 per cent increase spread over the period 1966-68. Finally, the pilots want an agreement covering one year only as against the three-year contract offered by SAS. They say that an agreement of such length is not feasible in an industry which is as expansive and fluid as civil aviation.

Footnote

The pilots are now reported to be back at work. The Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Communications Ministers had earlier called on the parties to submit all questions which could not be settled by direct negotiation to arbitration. The Danish pilots accepted and returned to work on 22 June. The Swedish Pilots' Association at first rejected the proposal and decided to continue the strike. But on 23 June the Association's President, Göte Lindgren, signed an agreement with SAS providing for voluntary arbitration on a number of outstanding issues, and for the Swedish pilots' return to work.

UNITED STATES  
\*\*\*\*\*

Ground staff dissatisfied with Emergency Board proposals

The Presidential Emergency Board, appointed to inquire into the dispute between the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists (IAM) and five major airlines over claims on behalf of some 35,000 mechanics and other ground staff, has recommended a 42-month contract providing, amongst other things, for total increases of 48 cents an hour for top-grade mechanics and 34 cents for other workers. The IAM's wage policy committee has declared that the recommendations give no sound basis for a contract. Under the emergency board procedure (the Railway Labor Act) the union is barred from striking till 5 July. (A strike due to start on 23 April had been suspended under this procedure).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Argentinian workers staged a 24-hour general strike on 7 June in protest against the Government's modification of redundancy legislation which had already been approved by Parliament.

British fishermen are demanding a reduction of the present 56-hour seven-day week to 48 hours with no loss of pay.

Guyana (formerly British Guiana) has been admitted to membership of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The Lebanon has become a member of the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO).

PERSONALIA

Erich Gygax was elected President of the Swiss Transport and Commercial Workers' Union (VHTL) at the Union's 17th Convention, which took place earlier this month. He takes over from Männi Leuenberger, who has retired after 25 years as President.

CORRECTION  
\*\*\*\*\*

Our previous issue carried a report on the decisions taken by the ITF Executive Board at its meeting last month in Utrecht. This referred inter alia to a decision to increase the ITF's budgetary allocation for regional activities to 30 per cent. For the sake of clarity, we should point out that this decision refers to the budget for the 1966.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Other important work at the Secretariat has unfortunately delayed the preparation of this Newsletter. We apologize for its late appearance.  
\*\*\*\*\*

LATE ITEM  
\*\*\*\*\*

Sabena strike ends

News has been received that pilots and flying staffs of the Belgian airline, Sabena, are to return to work pending a resumption of talks on their pay demands.

THE BRITISH SEAMEN'S STRIKE

ITF APPEALS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NUS

The strike by the National Union of Seamen -- entering its seventh week -- is still continuing, but there is now some hope of a settlement being reached as the result of the re-opening of direct negotiations between the NUS and the owners.

A special meeting of the ITF Management Committee was held in London on Sunday, 26 June, to discuss the present situation and at this it was decided to launch an immediate appeal to all affiliates for financial support to the NUS, which has spent roughly £400,000 during the course of the strike. All contributions to the fund should be sent to the ITF, which is setting up a special committee to supervise the receipt and transfer to the NUS of such donations.

The Management Committee adopted the following resolution on this subject:

Having noted the support given by the ITF to the British NUS in pursuing its legitimate claims for improvements in wages and conditions of employment; and

Being aware of the steps taken by the British TUC which have resulted in a re-opening of discussions between the British Shipowners and the NUS.

This Management Committee of the ITF requests affiliated unions to render all possible financial support to the NUS, such support to be directed to the ITF.

The Management Committee further decides to set up a small committee to supervise the receipt and transfer to the NUS of contributions in response to this appeal.

The following is a brief account of developments which have occurred since the last ITF Newsletter. Affiliated seafarers' and dockers' organizations have, however, been kept regularly informed of the progress of the strike and efforts made to reach a settlement through special circulars issued by the Secretariat.

On 2 June, the ITF Secretariat, in accordance with a request from the NUS, asked all affiliated maritime unions to watch carefully 1) for non-British vessels which were known to have taken over trades or charters along the British coast previously carried out by NUS-manned vessels,



and 2) for non-British flag tankers known to have been diverted while at sea to UK refineries, and to inform the Secretariat in order that such information could be passed on to the NUS.

At this stage, the union was becoming increasingly concerned at the strikebreaking tactics of the shipowners, who were replacing British tankers by foreign-flag vessels on UK routes, switching crews and cargoes, and attempting to retain crews on articles after completion of voyages. In view of this, the NUS Executive Council, meeting on 7 June, decided to ask the ITF to place an embargo on British ships throughout the world and to black all tankers carrying oil to ports in the UK normally carried by British ships. In addition, British unions were asked to place an embargo on foreign-flag ships which had taken over British coastal trades.

A circular informing seafarers' and dockers' affiliates of these decisions was despatched by the ITF Secretariat on 8 June. However, since the report of the official Court of Inquiry (the Pearson Inquiry) into the dispute was due to be issued later the same day and discussed by the NUS Executive Council, this circular requested affiliates to be prepared to take action but not to do so before confirmation was received by cable from the Secretariat.

The Court's report recommended the application of the 40-hour week next year (instead of in 1968, as had been offered by the shipowners) and reduction of the present 56-hour week to 48 hours immediately, with no reduction in consolidated pay. The shipowners' offer of 36 days paid leave per year (under the 56-hour agreement, seamen had on average 53 days paid leave, which included both normal annual leave and days off in compensation for Sundays at sea) was increased to 39 in the Court's recommendations.

The NUS Executive Council, however, unanimously rejected these at its meeting on 8 June. The British Trades Union Congress (TUC), on the other hand, felt that the Report did provide a basis for a settlement and asked the NUS Executive to reconsider its rejection. The NUS said that it was not willing to do so and in the light of this situation, the TUC decided that it could not advise its affiliates to support the NUS request for sympathetic action.

The ITF's General Secretary, Hans Imhof, then decided to call an immediate meeting of the Federation's British affiliates, which are also all members of the TUC, in an attempt to clarify the position. It was considered that this was necessary to comply with the provisions of the ITF Constitution concerning assistance in major disputes and the guide-lines on international solidarity actions laid down jointly by the Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections in September 1961.

This meeting took place on 10 June and the following statement was adopted:

Whilst continuing our support for the National Union of Seamen, having regard to the actions now being taken by the British Trade Union Congress to assist them in resolving their dispute, no action should be taken on ITF circular No. 43/S.14/D.11 of 8 June 1966. The British affiliates will continue to give close attention to the matter.

With this decision, circular No. 43/S.14/D.11 of 8 June was cancelled.

On 14 June, the TUC announced that it had submitted to the British Minister of Labour a new solution of the dispute, which involved an improvement on the leave provisions contained in the Pearson Report. After a special Cabinet meeting to discuss the strike position and the TUC's proposals, the Prime Minister announced that the Government could not approve any departure from the terms of the Pearson Report. Additional leave could only be provided through an agreement which guaranteed increased productivity. The NUS had a number of meetings with the Prime Minister, the TUC and the shipowners, but the position remained substantially the same: any settlement had to fall within the cost of the Pearson recommendations or to be justified by increased productivity.

Following this series of meetings, the NUS Executive Council met again to consider the position and decided to continue the strike. On 18 June, the Council renewed its appeal to the ITF for support. The ITF General Secretary then circularized all ITF-affiliated seafarers' and dockers' unions on 20 June (Circ. No. 48/S.17/D.14) requesting them to: boycott British-flag UK-registered vessels which, instead of proceeding to an intended UK port, are diverted to avoid strike action; to refuse to supply crew members for service on British-flag UK-registered vessels; and to instruct their members to refuse to carry out any work normally performed by NUS members.

At the same time, the General Secretary requested authority from the Executive Board under Rule XVI, para 4, of the ITF Constitution to call on affiliates to give financial assistance to the NUS. Even before any such request could be sent out, however, the generous sum of DM 50,000 (£4,464 or \$12,500) had been received from the German Transport & Public Service Workers (OeTV). The General Secretary further decided to call a special meeting of the ITF Management Committee for 26 June.

Before this meeting took place, however, there had already been further developments in the situation. The NUS informed the TUC General Council that it was no longer so insistent on the claim for an immediate 40-hour week providing that the



original leave entitlement remained the same. As a result of further meetings between the NUS and the TUC, it proved possible for new talks to be opened between the seamen and the shipowners. Exploratory talks were held on 23 and 24 June, and at a further meeting held during the evening of 24 June a possible formula for negotiations was worked out. This would involve an increase in annual leave of nine days (making 48 in all), balanced by reducing navigational watches by one man, who would be available for maintenance work, and by the payment of standard rates instead of overtime for non-essential work on public holidays.

On the following day, the NUS Executive Council agreed to accept this formula as a basis for negotiation and a meeting between the union negotiating committee and the shipowners has been arranged for 28 June.

Earlier, the NUS Executive Council had voted to sign an agreement with Townsend Ferries which conceded the seamen's original claim in full, including an immediate 40-hour week and an increase of 12s.6d in the consolidated basic rate. Townsend, which operates cross-Channel ferries out of Dover, had offered to settle as long ago as 9 May, but the complete breakdown of negotiations with the shipowners which had led to the strike meant that this offer was not accepted.

Before direct negotiations began again between the two sides, the British Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons on 20 June concerning another aspect of the dispute. He said that "since the Court of Inquiry's report a few individuals have brought pressure to bear on a select few of the Executive Council of the NUS, who in turn have been able to dominate the majority of that otherwise sturdy union". He referred in this connection to a "tightly knit group of politically-motivated men who, as the last general election showed, utterly failed to secure acceptance of their views by the British electorate, but who are now determined to exercise back-stage pressures". It was generally assumed that in making this statement, the Prime Minister was referring to activity by members of the British Communist Party.

Mr. Wilson has since been pressed to give further details of these charges by both Members of Parliament and the trade union movement. The General Secretary of the TUC, Bro. George Woodcock, had an interview with him on 22 June. At this, Mr. Wilson also claimed that officials of other British unions, whose activities were being stimulated or originated by a political party, were exerting influence on the NUS Executive. Bro. Woodcock later commented that if this were so, then it was a crime against trade unionism. The TUC will be making its own inquiries into these charges. The Prime Minister has since promised to give further details of his allegations in Parliament on Tuesday, 28 June, and is expected to name those whom he believes to have been involved.

A pamphlet entitled "Not wanted on voyage -- the seamen's reply", published by the Chairman of the NUS Hull Disputes Committee and an NUS member at present studying at Hull University, and later endorsed by the NUS Executive Council, contains references to the alleged "lack of support" from the ITF and the TUC for the British seamen's strike. We think we can safely leave it to our affiliates to judge from the above account of the part played by the ITF in this dispute just how little truth there is in such a charge.

---oooOooo---