

ITF NEWSLETTER

INFORMATIONS

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INFORMATIONSBLAD

No. 17

1 September 1966

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TRANSPORT WORKERS (GENERAL)

GREAT BRITAIN

Further reactions to wages standstill

More ITF affiliates in Britain have decided on the attitude they will adopt towards the government's wages and prices standstill when the subject is debated at the Trades Union Congress next week. The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers has decided to oppose the freeze, although its executive has reaffirmed support for a voluntary incomes policy. The National Union of Seamen and the Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union are also opposed to the freeze, whilst the National Union of Railwaymen's executive has decided to support the government's action at the TUC. The NUR also decided to recall its annual conference to discuss the standstill, but this will not take place until after the TUC. The United Road Transport Union will oppose the freeze.

The Transport and General Workers' Union has made further attempts to persuade municipal bus authorities to pay increases agreed before the freeze was announced, but the authorities have so far stood by their refusal to do so. The T & GWU is threatening to withdraw cooperation and may refuse to enter into any local productivity agreements. There may also be bans on standing passengers and on the introduction of one-man buses, and stricter adherence to time schedules. No reply has been received from the Department of Economic Affairs to the union's letter questioning the legality of applying the standstill retrospectively to the municipal busmen.

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NORWAY

Agreements for land transport workers and dockers

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Transport Workers' Union has recently concluded a new two-year agreement concerning wages and working conditions. Two wage increases are to be given, the first of 0.68 kr. per hour or 30.60 kr. per week, effective from 15 May 1966; the second of 8.55 kr. per week from 1 April 1967. The agreement also includes provisions for sick and industrial accident benefit, severance pay and the adjustment of wages in line with the cost of living. (See item later in this issue on dock rationalization scheme.)

RAILWAYMEN

CANADA

Strike of 118,000 railway workers

Sixteen unions representing 118,000 Canadian railway employees, mainly non-operating staff and workshop employees, called their members out on strike on 26 August in support of wage claims. The unions had previously rejected recommendations made by Conciliation Boards, and strike plans were coordinated following overwhelming support for strike action in membership ballots. The strike has brought to a halt Canadian National, Canadian Pacific and five smaller lines.

The government has presented two bills to Parliament proposing action to deal with the situation. The first would order the strikers back to work immediately, and give them interim pay increases of 4% from 1 January 1966 and a further 4% from 1 July 1966. The unions have denounced this as quite insufficient to meet their demands. The bill also provides for negotiations to be resumed, and if these produce no agreement by 15 November the issues would be submitted to compulsory arbitration. The second bill would revise the Railways Act with the aim of freeing the railway companies from freight-rate controls and allowing them to abandon uneconomic branch lines and passenger services.

Later the government gave an assurance that the final settlement would provide a pay increase of not less than 18%, the figure recommended by the Conciliation Boards.

Late news

The bill ending the strike was passed on 1 September and the unions have told their members to report for work.

SWITZERLAND

Parliamentary committee's views on 44-hour week

A committee of the Council of States (upper house) has decided by seven votes to three that the working week of operating employees in federal undertakings (including railwaymen) should be reduced from 46 to 45 hours from the end of May 1967 and to 44 hours from the end of May 1969.

The National Council (lower house) had previously decided that the 44-hour week should be introduced from the end of May 1968, and the three minority votes were in favour of this decision.

The ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union regrets this further setback in their hopes for a 44-hour week in 1967. It expresses the hope that the Council of States will take a more progressive view than its committee; otherwise there will be great disillusionment among the workers involved at the manner in which their working hours have been handled in parliament. If the Council of States ratifies the decision of its committee there will be a difference of opinion between the two houses of parliament and this will have to be resolved by the National Council in the autumn or winter sessions.

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

IRISH REPUBLIC

Bus strike ends

A strike of bus maintenance workers which began on 8 August ended on 24 August after members of unions including the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union voted to accept the terms of a settlement with CIE, the national transport company, which provides for pay increases ranging from 7s. 9d. per week at the Dublin, Cork and Limerick depots to 5s. 6d. per week at the smaller ones.

NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam taxi drivers' demands

Taxi drivers in Amsterdam are demanding an increase in basic pay from 145 G. to 165 G. per week (£14 10s. to £16 10s. or \$40.6 to \$46.2) and the reorganization of the taxi service along cooperative lines with standardization of vehicles and lower fares. Fares were recently increased by 45%, which the

drivers claim makes Amsterdam taxis the dearest in Europe. They feel that once the tourist season is over business will drop sharply, but claim that if the owners consider that business will not be affected they can afford to pay the higher wages the drivers are asking for.

UNITED STATES

Strike damages claim rejected

Claims for damages against the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union and Amalgamated Transit Union were rejected by New York State Supreme Court recently. The claims, totalling more than \$100 m. in all, were brought by the Transit Authority after the 12-day strike of transport workers in New York city last January. In his decision the Judge stated: "While there may have been damage and loss (caused by the strike), there has been no violation of any recognized legal right of the plaintiffs and no remedy is afforded them by any act of the Legislature or any common law doctrine." This answers clearly the question of whether a union lays itself open to damage by individuals who claim they are injured by what a court has adjudged an illegal strike, and has been hailed as an important precedent decision for unions throughout the country.

PORT WORKERS

NORWAY

Dock rationalization

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Transport Workers' Union has concluded an agreement with the employers' confederation on rationalization in the docks, providing for more stable employment and wages and greater social security for dockers.

The preparations for this agreement had been made by a joint committee set up in 1964, with the task of studying problems of rationalization in the light of the rapid technological developments taking place in recent years in the docks, and of submitting recommendations for amendments to the provisions governing loading and unloading of ships, such as the size of gangs, piece work, etc.

The new agreement lays down that, where piece work is carried out by traditional methods, the present gang sizes will be maintained. For partly and wholly mechanized methods minimum gang sizes have been determined varying from two to seven men according to the method applied. Whereas previously there was no

concrete provision for the employment of dockers on an hourly basis on ships in the coastal trade, it has now been agreed that when the load weighs more than seven tons no fewer than two men shall be employed.

As a result of the effects of rationalization on employment, a provision for retirement at age 65 at full national pension rates has been included in the agreement (normal age of retirement in Norway is 70.) This provision will take effect only after one experimental year.

The agreement further provides for the maintenance of guaranteed earnings. During the experimental year of the agreement, which runs from 1 July 1966 to 30 June 1967, the parties will also consider the problem of training and further education of dockers.

SEAFARERS

GERMANY

Demand for 40-hour week

The ITF-affiliated German Union of Transport and Public Service Workers (OeTV) has given notice that it will terminate all its agreements covering seafarers on 31 December 1966. The union is seeking the introduction of the 40-hour week with the aim of increasing the amount of time seafarers can spend with their families ashore. It also wants such benefits as Christmas bonuses, holiday pay, etc., which are common practice in land employment, to be extended to seafarers. Wages should be increased to compensate seafarers for the hardship and inconvenience of their occupation.

The OeTV believes that only by a substantial improvement in working conditions can the serious manning shortages be overcome. The number of exemptions to full officer manning requirements granted by the Minister of Transport has reached unacceptable proportions, and the union considers that any increase in such exemptions would endanger safety of operation.

GREECE

Seafarers may be exempted from military service

The Greek Merchant Navy Minister has agreed to support new moves to exempt merchant seamen from compulsory military service. It is thought that this would improve recruitment into the merchant service at a time when there is a shortage of crews. Past attempts to achieve this exemption have proved unsuccessful.

NORWAY

Shipboard automation developments

Changes in the union's constitution adopted by delegates to the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Engineer Officers' Union mean that membership is now open to foreign engineers with qualifications equivalent to those of Norwegian engineers, and also to experts in the automated techniques of future shipboard operations.

A new school which will give instruction in automated shipboard devices is to be set up in the spring of next year at Stavanger, which experienced deck and engineer officers may attend to learn how to handle all the automated equipment which is likely in future to be installed in merchant vessels. The courses will last five months.

UNITED STATES

Senate approves ship safety measures

The US Senate has approved a Bill which would empower the US Coast Guard to bar from US ports any foreign and domestic vessels considered unsafe; it would also require full disclosure of vessel safety standards in all advertisements and literature offering passages on ocean voyages, and owners and charterers of passenger vessels would have to establish their financial responsibility to meet liability incurred by death or injury of passengers. The Bill is a strengthened version of one passed by the House of Representatives, which now has to consider the amendments.

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

UNITED STATES

IAM strike over - members accept settlement

Members of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists voted on 19 August to accept the terms of a new three-year contract negotiated with five airlines against whom they had been on strike for 43 days. The main terms of the agreement are as follows:

Wages

Effective 1 Jan. 1966 - 5% increase (applied also to overtime worked since that date).

Effective 1 Jan. 1967 - 5% increase computed on new rates.

Effective 1 Jan. 1968 - 5% increase computed on new rates.

Wages are also to be adjusted to compensate for movements in the consumer price index.

Public Holidays: One additional public holiday (Good Friday) is granted and overtime worked on public holidays qualifies for pay at the rate of double time and a half.

Health and welfare benefits: companies which do not already do so will contribute towards dependants' health and welfare benefits; the employers have also given an undertaking that premiums paid by employees will not increase during the life of the agreement, which means that should hospital and medical costs increase the employers will be obliged to absorb such increased costs.

Annual leave: With effect from 1 January employees will qualify for 4 weeks' annual leave after 15 years' service (previously 20 years). With effect from 1 January 1968 employees will qualify for 3 weeks' leave after 8 years' service (previously 10 years). (The period of the strike is not to be deducted from an employee's service record.)

Line Maintenance Premium: Mechanics, lead mechanics and inspectors assigned to line maintenance duties receive a bonus of 5 cents per hour on the basic rate. This does not apply for less than 4 hours' work on line maintenance. (Eastern Airline already paid a 3-cent bonus, and this has been increased by 2 cents to establish a uniform bonus.)

TRADE UNION RIGHTS

ARGENTINA

Strike legislation

The Argentine government has issued a decree providing for compulsory arbitration to prevent strikes which might adversely affect the country's economy or the welfare of the people.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Austrian deliverymen have obtained a 10% pay increase effective from 1 August. This increase applies to all pay elements, and all workers involved also receive a lump sum of 100 Schillings (about £1 8s. or \$3.92) as compensation for delay in applying the increase which was originally due to have come into effect from 1 July.

Greece: The ITF-affiliated Panhellenic Seamen's Federation has threatened strike action unless some owners of cruise ships and Mediterranean passenger vessels withdraw their refusal to pay their crews an agreed long-service bonus.

PERSONALIA

Olaf Jespersen has been appointed secretary of the transport workers group in the ITF-affiliated Danish Transport & General Workers' Union.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- Management Committee - London, 16 September 1966
- Asian Advisory Committee - Seoul, 26-30 September 1966
- Executive Board - London, 14-16 November 1966

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OLYMPIC AIRWAYS DISPUTE SETTLED; INJUNCTION AGAINST ITF LIFTED

Pilots and certain groups of ground staff personnel employed by Olympic Airways ended their two-week-old strike at 8 p.m. on 30 August, following the reaching of an agreement earlier in the evening on cost-of-living increases for all Olympic employees. Full details of the agreement are not yet available, but it is understood that the company has made available an amount of 28,000,000 drachma (just over £330,000 or \$933,000) to cover the increases. It is also understood that the Greek Government is to make a further provision for this purpose. In the case of the pilots, who were the first group to come out on strike, the actual increases are said to vary between 25 and 37 per cent.

The final settlement of the dispute came a few hours after a High Court Judge in London had refused to continue an injunction which had been granted to the Company against the ITF, the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) and three British unions. The injunction had been issued on 24 August following the blacking at London Airport of Olympic aircraft by the three British unions: the Electrical Trades Union; the Amalgamated Engineering Union; and the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives, & Technicians. The injunction was granted on an ex parte basis (which meant that the unions were not represented at the hearing) and prevented any further action being taken against Olympic aircraft until the second hearing took place on 30 August. In a press statement issued on 26 August, the ITF's General Secretary, Hans Imhof, expressed astonishment that it was possible for such an injunction to be granted as requested without the union case having been heard. The injunction made legal history since it was the first time one had been granted in the English Courts in a case involving international solidarity action and international trade union organizations.

The injunction was sought despite the fact that the ITF had tried throughout the strike to bring about a negotiated settlement of the dispute, both in talks with Olympic representatives in London and through approaches to the Greek Minister of Labour. The Minister was requested in a cable of 20 August to use his good offices with both sides to achieve a settlement and on 22 August the ITF, after consultation with its Greek civil aviation affiliates, made definite proposals for an interim settlement of the strike pending further negotiations on a final agreement. The Minister later replied informing the ITF that these proposals were taken into consideration in his efforts to find a solution to the dispute and that he valued our endeavours. Even earlier, however, at

a meeting with Olympic management representatives in London on 16 August, the ITF had urged them to resume negotiations on the basis of a definite offer in order that the strike could be ended.

After the injunction had been discontinued, Olympic's legal representatives indicated that they were considering further legal action against the union organizations, in the case of the ITF naming the General Secretary and the Secretary of the Civil Aviation Section, K.Golding, as representative defendants.

The satisfactory settlement of the dispute which has now been reached in Athens is a tribute both to the tenacity shown by our Greek civil aviation affiliates during their strike and to the international solidarity which was displayed by both ITF affiliates and unions who are not members of the ITF. On behalf of both our Greek civil aviation unions and the ITF we would like to say a sincere "thank you" to all concerned.

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