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No. 8

August 1977

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ITF's 30th Congress is held in Vienna

The 30th Congress of the Federation took place in the Gewerkschaftshaus of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union in Vienna from 28 July to 6 August and was attended by a total of 317 delegates and 106 advisers, representing 171 affiliated organizations in 52 countries from all over the world. Hosts to the Congress were the ITF-affiliated Austrian Railwaymen's and Transport Workers' Unions. The Congress was also celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the ITF's foundation in 1896 and many of the speakers and official guests - who included the Austrian Minister of Transport, Erwin Frühbauer; the President of the Austrian Trade Union Federation, Anton Benya; and the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Wilfred Jenks -- paid tribute to the successful work of the ITF and to the tradition of solidarity and militancy which it had displayed throughout its long history.

Congress had a very heavy agenda which it successfully completed in both plenary sessions and conferences of the individual Industrial Sections of the ITF. One of the main items on its agenda was a searching analysis of current and future developments in the transport industry and of the problems of transport policy arising out of these. This item was introduced by Fritz Prechtel, President of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union, under the title of "Transport Policy in the 1970s".

The Vienna Congress adopted a number of resolutions dealing with, inter alia, Industrial Action; Hours of Work; Multi-national Companies; Sabotage and Attacks on Crews and Ships; Trade Union Relations on the Danube; Working Conditions in Road Haulage; The Situation in East Bengal; the hijacking of a BOAC aircraft by the Libyan authorities; and the Japanese Public Transport Workers' Right to Strike.

The Congress also unanimously agreed to increase the standard rate of affiliation fee to the ITF to 5 New Pence per member per year with effect from 1 January 1972, with this increase being made voluntarily retroactive to 1 January last. It also approved a further increase to 6 New Pence per member per year as from 1 January 1973.

To succeed Hans Düby, who is now retiring and to whom extremely warm tributes were paid, Congress elected Fritz Prechtel of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union as President of the Federation. Heinz Kluncker, President of the German Transport & Public Service Workers' Union, was elected as Vice-President in succession to Frank Cousins, who is also retiring from active trade union work.

The General Secretary, Charles Blyth, was unanimously re-elected.

The composition of the newly-elected Executive Board is as follows: F. Prechtel (President, (Austria); J. Jones and S.F. Greene (Great Britain); W. Meier (Switzerland); H. Aasarød (Norway); E. Svensson (Sweden); G.J. H. Alink (Netherlands); L. Buonaccorsi (France); W. Cassiers (Belgium); Y. Yagol (Israel); H. Kluncker (Vice-President) and Ph. Seibert (Germany); A. Ayoub (Tunisia); J.R. Baiden (Ghana); R.S. Oca (Philippines); K. Kihata (Japan); L. Gallardo (Mexico); C. Melgarejo (Argentina); W.C.Y. McGregor and D.N. Secord (Canada); D.S. Beattie and J.M. Elliott (United States).

The following will act as members of the Management Committee: the President, Vice-President, D.S. Beattie, L. Buonaccorsi, S.F. Greene J.L. Jones, Ph. Seibert, and the General Secretary.

A more detailed report on the Congress will appear in the current issue of the ITF Journal.

ITF Seminar for Lagos Municipal Bus Workers

Forty members of the ITF-affiliated Amalgamated Union of Lagos Municipal Bus Workers took part in a seminar organized under ITF auspices on 17 and 18 July at the Lagos Trade Union Institute for Social and Economic Development.

The seminar, which was extremely successful and considered of great value by the participants, was conducted at an advanced level. Subjects dealt with were: Problems in labour-management relations; collective bargaining; the rôle of road transport in a developing economy; problems of road congestion in Lagos; the Motor Traffic Ordinance as it affects bus workers; industrial relations in the Lagos City Transport undertaking; Nigerian labour law and the rôle of Labour in nation-building; together with the structure and functions of the ITF.

Lecturers included representatives from the University of Lagos, the Trade Union Institute, the traffic police, Lagos City Transport, the Nigerian United Labour Congress, and Ben Odogwu, ITF Representative in Ghana, who was also responsible for organizing the seminar.

The seminar was widely covered by Nigerian television, radio and the Press.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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IMCO Sub-Committee on Navigation meets

The 11th session of the above Sub-Committee was held at IMCO Headquarters, from 5 to 9 July. The discussion centred on matters related to traffic separation and the revision of the collision regulations. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Maritime Safety Committee should adopt a number of additional traffic separation schemes. The International Radio-Maritime Committee (CIRM), on the question of unification of performance specifications for electronic navigational aids, proposed that in the case of flag transfer a ship's compulsorily carried equipment should be accepted by the new country, provided that the previous administration had approved it, but the Sub-Committee found the proposal to be premature in the absence of the required performance specifications. It is our view that such a proposal if ever adopted, could only have a negative influence on the present equipment standard in that it may lend to a reduction in the present high standards maintained in some countries. Dual standards would be equally undesirable. D. Seaman, Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, United Kingdom represented the ITF in an observer capacity.

IMCO Sub-Committee on the Carriage of Dangerous Goods

The 19th session of the above Sub-Committee, which met at IMCO Headquarters from 19 to 23 July, discussed a number of proposals to amend the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code and its possible extension to cover inter alia the handling of dangerous goods in port. The Sub-Committee also put the final touches to the draft of the Medical First Aid Guide (to be published by IMCO in co-operation with WHO and the ILO) which was adopted unanimously. It further considered a proposal concerning the grouping of substances according to their properties to facilitate segregation during stowage and invited member governments to submit comments for further discussion of this proposal. Finally, the Sub-Committee urged that the preparation of the new edition of the Code should be accelerated.

Malaysia becomes IMCO member

The Government of Malaysia has now deposited its acceptance of the IMCO Convention with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and thus becomes IMCO's 73rd member.

Iceland extends fishing limits

At a meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Seabed held earlier this month, Iceland announced that it is to extend its fishing limit to cover the waters of the continental shelf area a distance of between 50 and 70 miles round its coast-

line. The new limit, it was stated, would be introduced not later than 1 September 1972. At present, the limit is of twelve miles.

TRADE UNIONS

GREAT BRITAIN

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Lightermen vote to merge with Transport & General

In a ballot, the results of which were announced earlier this month, the membership of the 3,300-strong Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemen's Union has voted overwhelmingly to merge with the ITF-affiliated British Transport & General Workers' Union. The bulk of the Lightermen's Union membership is in the London area.

UNITED STATES

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US unions denounce Nixon "wage freeze"

The American trade union movement has bitterly assailed President Nixon's recently-announced economic package, which includes provision for a 90-day wage freeze. The AFL-CIO Council, which met in emergency session on 19 August, described this as "unequitable, unjust, unfair and unworkable". In a statement which was adopted unanimously, the Council also said that "we have absolutely no faith in the ability of President Nixon to successfully manage the economy of this nation for the benefit of the majority of its citizens".

Referring to the 10 per cent investment tax credit to big business, which also forms part of the Nixon programme, the AFL-CIO stated:

"He would do this at the expense of the poor, the state and local governments and their employees, the federal government's employees and wage and salary earners. He froze wages and salaries. He forbade employers to limit the earnings of business, investors, moneylenders or speculators".

The ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Executive Council has voted to consider its current contract with the railroads null and void if a five per cent pay rise, which is due on 1 October, is not paid by 13 November, the day after the Nixon wage freeze ends.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA

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Australian Radio Officers oppose R/T-only container ship

The ITF-affiliated Australian Professional Radio Employees' Institute is in dispute with the Australian National Line (ANL) concerning an exemption granted by the Department of Shipping and Transport which would allow the coastal motor container vessel ECHUCA to use radiotelephony only for communications.

A meeting to discuss the situation is to be held between maritime unions and the Australian Trade Union Council. Earlier, a strike by the Institute against all vessels operated by ANL was averted. The ECHUCA, however, is being held at Melbourne until the dispute is settled.

AUSTRIA

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Time and a half for all overtime in Austria

The Austrian Parliament has given its approval to a governmental Bill providing that all overtime worked should be compensated for at the rate of time and one half. This would include the first four hours worked in any week (at present such overtime qualifies for a supplement of only 25 per cent). The new stipulations will take effect from 1 January 1972, and a further Bill being introduced will extend them to public workers also.

Agreement for road haulage workers signed after 12 years

Following efforts lasting for twelve years, the ITF-affiliated Austrian Transport Workers' Union has finally succeeded in re-establishing the principle that road haulage workers should be covered by a national collective agreement. A new agreement was signed last month.

During the past years, the employers had succeeded in convincing road haulage workers that their earning potential was excellent even without their being covered by a collective agreement. The union pointed out that, although wages were often high, they were achieved at the expense of the drivers' health through the need to work excessively long hours and of an increasing number of serious road accidents.

The new agreement provides both good wages and proper limitation of working hours. It also gives road haulage workers, for the first time, social benefits such as sick pay and holiday bonuses which have long been enjoyed by other groups of Austrian workers.

GHANA

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Ghanaian train drivers end strike

Train drivers in Ghana took part in a ten-day strike last month in protest against delays in introducing a new salary structure. The strike ended on 15 July following assurances by the Government that steps were now being taken to resolve outstanding grievances.

GREAT BRITAIN

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British railwaymen want substantial wage increase

The executive council of the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Railwaymen has decided to submit a claim for a substantial wage increase on behalf of its 190,000 members. A similar claim by the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (also an ITF affiliate) was lodged earlier.

Pay rise is agreed for Hull and Grimsby trawlermen

The ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union has negotiated pay increases for 3,000 trawlermen on freezer and factory trawlers operating from the east coast ports of Hull and Grimsby. Under the new pay structure, which came into effect on 1 August, deckhands will receive a basic weekly wage of £28, plus a 25p tonnage bonus for each voyage. Agreement has been reached for the tonnage payment to be increased to 27p on trawlers, where the number of deckhands is reduced from 15 to 14, and provision has also been made for further reductions in manning at agreed tonnage rates provided agreement is reached with the crews concerned.

JAPAN

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Japanese seamen act against piracy

The ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union, which last month began a boycott of vessels sailing for Philippine waters as the result of attacks by pirates on such ships, has now called this off following agreement with the Japanese Shipowners' Association on an investigation into the situation. The boycott has been lifted temporarily pending the outcome of a visit by a joint seafarer/shipowner inquiry team to Manila.

During this year, no less than twelve Japanese vessels have been attacked by pirates operating off Mindanao Island and in Manila Bay.

NORWAY

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Union protest at police impounding of drivers' licences

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Transport Workers' Union has issued a public protest against the practice followed by the Norwegian police in impounding the driving licences of professional drivers involved in traffic accidents until court proceedings have taken place. It says that it is no longer prepared to accept this.

Walter Kolstad, the union's President, stated that "in our opinion economic sanctions are being applied against a whole professional group. In the majority of cases, the professional driver is acquitted of responsibility in traffic accident cases, but is nevertheless more severely punished than many persons found guilty of crimes of gain because, during the period when the police have custody of his licence, he is deprived of his normal means of earning a living and is at the same time subjected to psychological stress".

Some years ago, the union proposed to the authorities that separate courts dealing with road traffic offences should be established in order to achieve quicker treatment of such cases. The union also submitted that such courts would have the necessary expertise to enable them to understand the problems facing professional drivers in emergency situations on the roads. The proposal was not followed up by the authorities, but Kolstad states that the union will now consider whether this demand should not be re-submitted.

SWEDEN

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Strike by officers' unions against ferry vessels averted

A strike called for 20 August by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Ship Officers' Association and the Engineer Officers' Association against ferry companies operating domestic routes and to Britain, Denmark, Germany and Finland, has been postponed pending the outcome of fresh talks between the two parties arranged under the auspices of the mediation authorities. The dispute concerns the failure to reach agreement on new contracts covering conditions on board the ferry vessels. The fresh round of talks began on 25 August.

Earlier, before the strike was averted, the ITF had requested seafarers' affiliates in certain countries not to supply officers to the vessels if the stoppage took place.

TURKEY

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Turkish railwaymen win 40 per cent increase

The ITF-affiliated Turkish Railwaymen's Federation has informed us that it has now won a 40 per cent cost-of-living increase in renewed negotiations with the railway administration. The Federation's delegation to the ITF Vienna Congress drew their dispute to the attention of the Railwaymen's Section Conference

held in conjunction with Congress. Their claim was based on an increase in the cost of living of 30 per cent up to the beginning of 1971 and an anticipated similar increase during this year. Owing to the current martial law situation in Turkey, it would have been difficult for the Federation's members to take strike action in support of the claim, and a lockout was also being threatened by the employers. As a result of their report, a cable of support for the claim was sent by the ITF to the Turkish Prime Minister.

UNITED STATES
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UTU strike ends in victory for railwaymen

A two-week old strike for improved wages and working conditions, called by the ITF-affiliated United Transportation Union (UTU), ended in a major victory for the union in a settlement reached on 2 August.

The stoppage, which began in the form of selective strikes against two railway companies on 16 July after the US courts had refused to uphold the employers in their contention that such selective strikes were illegal, had been extended to ten companies by the time the settlement was reached, with further companies scheduled as strike targets.

In a statement made to the UTU Convention earlier this month, the union's President, Charles Luna said that "the right to strike selectively which the UTU won in federal court and had confirmed in the Supreme Court, put the punch back into collective bargaining. We can now return to negotiations as a way of life instead of begging or taking the carriers' dictates".

PERSONALIA

Joe Attard Kingswell, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Malta General Workers' Union, has been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of his country. Among his functions will be that of Malta's permanent representative to the United Nations and the EEC. C.S. Consiglio has been appointed Assistant General Secretary of the Malta G.W.U. to succeed V. Esposito, who earlier became the union's Deputy General Secretary.

Harold McRitchie has been elected by the Annual General Meeting of the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Railwaymen to serve as President during 1972.

Joseph Buchan, Albert Begg and Eric Nevin have been appointed as Assistant General Secretaries of the ITF-affiliated British Merchant Navy & Airline Officers' Association.

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM IN THIS NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT ON REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ITF