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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

TOGO

ITF holds seminar for Togolese transport workers

An ITF Seminar for Togolese Transport Workers was held in the Centre for Labour Education in the capital Lomé from 19 to 23 July 1982. Twenty-six officials from five unions organizing port, rail, maritime, civil aviation and road transport workers participated in the seminar, which discussed in depth the particular administrative and leadership problems of Togolese trade union officials and conducted a detailed examination of Togolese labour legislation. Lecturers included D.D. Tsibiaku, Organizing Secretary of the national centre (CNTT), as well as officials from the Ministries of Transport and Labour. The smooth running of the seminar was due in no small measure to the efforts of E.K. Fantognon, General Secretary of the Civil Aviation Workers' Union, who was responsible for the organisational work behind the scenes, together with fellow General Secretary K. Noumedor of the Port Workers, who gave him much valuable assistance.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

OECD countries show declining employment in national merchant marine

A report issued last month by the Maritime Transport Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development charts the continuing decline in the number of seagoing personnel employed in the merchant fleets of member countries. Countries where the loss of jobs was most marked were Germany (down 12% in 1981 compared with 1979); Denmark (down 11%); the United States (down 13%); and the United Kingdom (down 6%), the only exceptions to this general trend being Norway and Belgium which at the end of 1981 reported a growth in the number of seafarers they employed of sixteen and seventeen per cent respectively over 1979 levels. The Committee noted that where employment levels fell the general pattern was for a more pronounced cutback in the number of non-nationals employed.

GERMANY

Rail union's publicity campaign attracts widespread support

A public information campaign under the title "The Railways must survive" launched this spring by the ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) with the aim of involving the general public in rail workers' efforts to ensure a secure future for the Federal Railways has proved an unqualified success. Over a million citizens of the Federal Republic have given evidence of their support for the union's objectives by filling in a postcard attached to the publicity leaflet stating the union's case and returning it to GdED headquarters in Frankfurt, with their views and suggestions. Nearly one thousand signatures were obtained from persons in national and local government, while over ninety per cent of rail users who picked up the leaflet said that they wanted the railways to be retained and the rail network expanded. They expressed their opposition to line closures and the privatisation of the railways and were in favour of the transfer of heavy goods traffic from road to rail. Rail users generally felt it was important that the railways should be more heavily subsidized, and that fares should be kept down. They also laid stress on less crowded trains, cleaner stations and passenger coaches and sought an improvement in the punctuality of commuter trains.

GREAT BRITAIN

Londoners vote for return to cheap fares

Four out of five Londoners who took part in a referendum conducted by the Labour-controlled Greater London Council to test public opinion on the future of public transport in the capital have voted for a return to the cheap fares policy outlawed by the Law Lords last December. Respondents were asked to choose between a number of policy options involving varying levels of subsidy, fares and services.

NIGERIA

Renewed attacks on vessels off Lagos give cause for concern

International pressure is mounting on Nigeria to reinforce its anti-piracy measures following renewed reports of serious attacks on vessels off the port of Lagos. Danish ships' officers have urged the Danish Foreign Ministry to lodge a strong protest with the Nigerian authorities after a Danish crew was reported as having witnessed a shooting on board a semi-containerized vessel that resulted in injury to two crew members. Two Danish coasters have also been boarded by armed robbers in recent weeks. In another incident, six robbers swarmed on board a Spanish vessel waiting to enter the port and stole various items of value belonging to the crew.

UNITED STATES

National Transportation Safety Board publishes report on
B 737 crash in Washington

Following a lengthy investigation into the crash last January shortly after take-off from Washington International Airport of an Air Florida Boeing 737^x, the US National Transportation Safety Board has established as the "probable cause" of the accident the flight crew's failure to use engine anti-ice during ground operations and take-off, their decision to take off with snow and/or ice on the airfoil surfaces of the aircraft, and the captain's failure to reject the take off at an early stage when his attention was drawn to anomalous engine instrument readings. Failure to use the engine anti-icing system, according to the Board's accident report, gave the crew misleading information about the engine's power, and although the first officer expressed his concern about the engine performance the captain did not decide to abort the take off. The report also cites two further factors as contributing to the accident, namely the prolonged delay (49 minutes) between de-icing of the aircraft and the initiation of take off caused by poor weather conditions, and the flight crew's limited experience of jet transport winter operations (the captain had flown seven times in weather conditions conducive to icing, while the co-pilot had only two flights to his credit under such conditions). Also contributing to the accident in the NTSB's opinion, was the known inherent pitch-up characteristics of the B 737 when the leading edge is contaminated with even small amounts of snow or ice.

^xsee also ITF Newsletter No. 3,1982, page 25 and Supplement No. 2 to May Newsletter

TRADE UNIONS

INTERNATIONAL

Public Services International celebrates its 75th anniversary

The Public Services International - founded in Stuttgart in 1907 - celebrated its 75th anniversary on 14 September at a commemorative ceremony in the city in which it first saw the light all those many years ago. The ITF extends its heartiest congratulations to the trade unionists from all branches of the public service grouped in our sister International on this happy occasion and wishes the PSI every success for the future.

CANADA

Five major unions form Alliance

Five major Canadian unions with a joint membership of 56,000 - two ITF affiliates, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, together with three others organizing respectively shipyard workers in British Columbia, fishermen and allied workers and Nova Scotia seafarers - have recently joined forces in an Alliance of Canadian Transport and Maritime Unions. All the unions involved have had a close working relationship for many years and in forming the Alliance have undertaken to coordinate their organizing efforts and maritime and transport policies and to cooperate in research projects to further the mutual interests of their joint membership. A three-man Coordinating Committee has already been set up, with Don Nicholson, CBRT & GW National President as its chairman, and it is hoped that a number of other unions affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress and with membership in the same field will shortly join the Alliance and thus reinforce this first effort to provide an effective central organization for transport and maritime workers.

POLAND

Poles mark second anniversary of Solidarity

The people of Poland marked the second anniversary of the signing of the Gdansk Agreements that led to the formation of the independent trade union Solidarity by gathering in large numbers in the main squares of the capital and the major industrial cities to demonstrate their continuing support for Solidarity and to renew their demand of the government that it initiate a series of labour reforms.

Unions worldwide, led by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, marked the occasion by once again proclaiming their adherence to the aims of Solidarity, calling for an end to martial law, demanding the release of all internees, including Walesa and leading Solidarity officials, and urging a global amnesty for the 2,000 Solidarity activists sentenced to terms of imprisonment in recent months.



SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

ARGENTINA

Maritime unions seek higher pay

Dockers and seafarers employed by nationalised shipping lines and some private owners struck on 26 August to back their demands for salary improvements. Agreement was subsequently reached in principle with several shipping companies - one of them state-owned - on higher pay. However, members of the unions involved are now subjecting the vessels of those companies that are still holding out to a twelve hour sailing delay.

Only a week earlier, suburban railwaymen and bus drivers had stopped work for twenty-four hours in support of substantial pay rises to help maintain their purchasing power.

DENMARK

Higher rates for ships' catering personnel

New pay rates came into operation on 1 September 1982 for catering staff represented in the ITF-affiliated Danish Ships' Catering Personnel Association. The following monthly salary ranges (basic pay plus cost-of-living allowance) apply: chief steward: 11,005 kr to 12,718 kr; cook: 7,752 kr to 8,215 kr; messman and stewardess: 6,674 kr to 6,979 kr. Overtime rates (per half hour) are 41.35 kr on weekdays and 52.48 kr on Sundays and Public Holidays for chief steward; 28.01 kr and 35.85 kr for cook; and 24.11 kr and 30.86 kr for messman and stewardess.

GERMANY

Pan Am pay talks prove inconclusive

The 1982 pay negotiations conducted by the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) on behalf of 1,500 ground and flying staff members employed by Pan Am in the German Federal Republic have proved inconclusive. Talks broke down initially under the company's insistence on a 12-month pay freeze and the extension of the basic agreement by a further two years, and the matter was referred to mediation. The mediator recommended a 4% pay increase from 1 July 1982 plus a lump-sum payment of 300 DM for the months of March to June - an award identical to that made in an earlier dispute between the OeTV and British Airways and subsequently accepted by both parties. This proposal was rejected out of hand by the company, and a ballot of the OeTV's Pan Am membership resulted by only the very narrowest of margins in a vote against strike action. In the

absence of a settlement, Pan Am's staff in Germany are having to work without a valid collective agreement.

GREAT BRITAIN

Support grows for action by Air India's London-based staff

Despite the best efforts of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Air India is still refusing to reinstate those London-based employees it sacked last month for going on strike^x and to rescind the dismissal notice it had earlier served on a shop steward when he refused to cooperate in the introduction of new rosters. Although some Air India staff have returned to work in the face of the company's intransigent attitude, Air India's cargo and reservations services are still substantially affected by union action, which now has the active support of other sections of the T and G's air membership. Another British aviation affiliate, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, has also instructed its members to withdraw all services from Air India for the duration of the dispute.

The T&GWU has now requested practical support from other ITF aviation affiliates in order to achieve the resumption of genuine negotiations and the reinstatement of its dismissed members.

^x see also page 89 of last issue

Rail unions disappointed at level of 1982 pay award

The Railway Staffs National Tribunal, in its report published earlier this month, recommends that British Rail's 177,000 workers should receive a six per cent pay rise from 6 September in return for agreement to certain productivity improvements, notably in the area of manning. The tribunal further recommends that the minimum earnings level of £76.60 should be raised by 6% from 19 April last, and that the two social partners should hold further talks at a later date with a view to reaching agreement on the pay award for next year and the introduction of an extra day's annual leave before the industry's settlement date of 17 April 1983.

The union reaction has been one of extreme disappointment at the level of the award, which is not backdated and therefore worth about four per cent over the year, while British Rail has said that it will not pay even the six per cent until agreement on the productivity issues listed by the Tribunal is virtually assured.

Two-year pay deal for Liverpool dockers

Dockers in the port of Liverpool have accepted a two-year pay and productivity deal from the port employers' association, which gives them an extra £9 per week on basic rates this year plus £144 in back pay in return for an undertaking to accept changes in working practices and reduced manning on certain operations. Rates will be increased by a further £9 in 1983, financed out of the increased trade the port is expected to attract during the remainder of this year.

The dockers are members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union.

Equal Pay Act comes under fire

The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has ruled that Britain's Equal Pay Act is in breach of the European Community's Equal Pay Directive of 1975. The key principle of the Directive is that there should be equal pay for work of equal value, while British law only requires that equal pay should obtain for jobs that are identical or "broadly similar". The Act will now have to be changed to broaden the definition and the government is also expected to consult both sides of industry before establishing an independent authority that would be the final arbiter in the assessment of equal pay claims.

ISRAEL

Supreme Court orders El Al to continue flying on Sabbath

After considering evidence from the airline's pilots and other of its employees, the Israeli Supreme Court has issued an interim injunction suspending for 45 days the official government ban on El Al flights on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, and requesting the government to furnish its reasons for the closure decision. Israeli workers called off a massive protest strike called to coincide with the imposition of the ban on learning of the court's ruling, which was also warmly welcomed by El Al staff.

NORWAY

Coastal trade agreement renewed under strike threat

The collective agreement covering officers and ratings in the Norwegian coastal trade has been renewed under a strike threat after pay negotiations with the shipowners' association broke down and the dispute was referred to mediation. The new agreement^x which has since been approved by all three unions involved, provides for a general increase, on 1 April 1982, of 2 kr per hour for ratings (6% in the case of officers), followed by an increase of 1.40 kr per hour for both groups (410 kr per month in the case of ships' engineers) on 1 October 1982. Other improvements include: a victualling allowance of 45 kr per 24-hour period on working days and 30 kr on days off; previous stand-by allowance of 5 kr (weekdays) and 10 kr (Sundays) for ratings and 6 kr and 12 kr respectively for officers converted to 1/5 and 2/5 of an hour's pay respectively for both groups; and special tanker rate of pay replaced by 3 per cent tanker bonus. The starting rates of officers and ratings will be increased by 167 kr per month on 1 October 1982, and the owners have also agreed to introduce a general accident scheme from 1 November 1982 giving cover of 428,000 kr for disability (214,000 kr in the event of death).

^xthe Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association, the Ship's Engineers' Union and the Seamen's Union (all ITF affiliates)

SWEDEN

Higher allowances for international road haulage drivers

International road haulage drivers are already benefiting from substantially improved allowances recently negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union. These include: an allowance of 5.70 kr for each 10 km driven in the case of one-man crews (6.50 kr for two-man crews), with a guaranteed minimum of 390 kr per trip; a tonnage bonus of 6.45 kr per tonne, with a guaranteed minimum of 162 kr per trip; and 60 kr for working Sundays. In lieu of backdating, drivers will receive a lump-sum payment equivalent to the sum of all previous allowances plus 3.8% for the period 1 January - 29 May 1982, payable by 30 June at the latest.

UNITED STATES

Engine drivers call off strike

A four-day-old strike of engine drivers belonging to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers against 117 privately-

owned railway companies was called off on 22 September after Congress adopted emergency legislation obliging the BLE to accept the Presidential Emergency Board's recommendation for a new 39-month pay agreement.^x The drivers will receive total increases of 29 per cent over the life of the contract, which also includes a no-strike clause.

^xsee also page 81 of July issue of Newsletter

NEWS IN BRIEF

A significant milestone was passed last month with the deposit at the International Labour Office of the five thousandth ratification of an International Labour Convention. The government of Egypt ratified ILO Convention No. 73 on the medical examination of seafarers, thus marking the five thousandth occasion that a member state of the ILO has undertaken to abide by one of its Conventions.

After receiving the necessary number of ratifications, three new ILO Conventions have now entered into force: No. 154 on collective bargaining, No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health and No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities.

A two-day ports strike was staged earlier this month by members of the ITF-affiliated Colombian National Federation of Port Workers (FEDEPUERTOS) in support of dockers at the key coffee exporting port of Buenaventura, who had taken action in a dispute over alleged non-payment of fringe benefits. Normal working was resumed after a satisfactory settlement was reached in talks with officials of the national ports authority.

British Airways, which cut its total workforce by 10,000 last year and is about to embark on a further 7,000 job cuts, is now so short of cabin staff that it is having to pay stewards and stewardesses to work during their holidays and to recruit additional cabin staff from among its existing labour force. BA cabin personnel who have already sought voluntary severance are being asked to remain until after the winter schedules have been introduced.

United States: Pan American World Airways announced earlier this month that it plans to cut its workforce by 5,000.

PERSONALIA

The ITF extends its sincere congratulations to Omer Becu, former President and General Secretary of both the ITF and the ICFIU, who celebrated his 80th birthday on 21 August. We wish our old friend many more years of continued good health.

Johnny Grönberg was elected President of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union at the union's Congress last month in succession to Bertil Gustavsson. Other elections to the union leadership are: Sture Skoglund, national secretary, Gunilla Jerlinger, national treasurer, and Hans Wahlström, negotiating secretary. Grönberg has worked at the union's national headquarters since 1978 as the official with overall responsibility for road haulage pay matters. Since May 1980, he has been interim treasurer of the union. Hans Wahlström is currently a member of the Committee of the ITF Dockers' Section and also represents Swedish dockers on the ITF Fair Practices Committee.

Heinrich Wiemers, Chairman for the past eleven years of the committee which manages the affairs of the German See-Berufsgenossenschaft (Seafarers' Guild) and the Seekasse, celebrated his 60th birthday on 27 June. We extend hearty - if belated - congratulations to a loyal friend, who is a former Vice-Chairman of the ITF Fishermen's Section and who was for many years a much-valued member of the Seafarers' Section Committee. Prior to taking up his current post, Wiemers was a long-serving official of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV), in the latter years acting as head of its Ports, Shipping and Inland Waterways Section and as Director of the OeTV School for Seafarers.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Offshore Activities	- Oslo, 5-6 October 1982
Management Committee	- Bremen, 18 October 1982
Executive Board	- Bremen, 19-20 October 1982
Dockers' Section Conference	- London, 26-27 October 1982

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

GENERAL WORKERS' UNION/SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSPORT SERVICES
DISPUTE OVER UNION RECOGNITION:

600 DOCKERS DISMISSED FOLLOWING GO-SLOW IN PORT ELIZABETH

(See also Supplements to ITF Newsletters of January, March, May, June and August.)

Faced by the blank refusal over many months by South African Transport Services (SATS), the country's single largest employer of labour, to have any dealings with the ITF-affiliated General Workers' Union (GWU) in spite of its substantial membership among dockers employed by the company, GWU docker members in Port Elizabeth began a go-slow on 30 August. The union's leaders had tried to keep the temperature down, but the off-hand rejection of their proposals to have talks without pre-conditions had made it more and more difficult to restrain the members themselves who are determined to be represented by a truly independent union and not the Black Staff Association which the management hastily promoted and tried to thrust upon them.

On 1 September, the GWU dockers were told they had been dismissed. They were loaded onto police vans and buses and taken back to the hostels where they were lodged.

On 2 September the company announced publicly that 400 of the dockers, out of a total workforce of about 1,000, had been dismissed for refusing to obey instructions (namely to work normally) and for breaking the law which forbids all strikes in South African railways and harbours. (The GWU maintains that in fact approximately 600 dockers have been dismissed). Shortly afterwards the dismissed dockers were evicted from their hostels and left to find what lodgings they could.

.../

The ITF General Secretary immediately cabled the Ministers of Transport and Manpower calling for their personal intervention to secure the reinstatement forthwith of the dismissed dockers and the opening of a dialogue between SATS and the GWU. He also pointed out that the ILO had asserted many times the principle that where strikes are banned in essential services, there must be an impartial and speedy machinery for the settlement of disputes. Affiliates in countries believed to have some influence with South Africa were asked to back his call. So far, protests have been made at South African embassies in fifteen different countries.

The union's members employed by private stevedoring companies in the port, for whom the GWU has recognition, then announced that they would take action to support their SATS colleagues if there was no satisfactory settlement by Friday, 10 September, but they were later asked to defer their action when the private stevedoring employers offered to try to mediate in the dispute by seeking talks with the government. Following the stevedoring employers' meeting with the Ministry of Transport, under whose legislation SATS operates, the Minister of Transport issued a statement on 9 September reiterating the claim that SATS' present industrial relations machinery worked perfectly satisfactorily and refusing to countenance the admission of an "outside" union such as the General Workers' Union. However, the Minister also revealed at the end of his statement the existence of a Committee to examine and report on the present circumstances and future requirements of SATS' industrial relations machinery and stated that all interested parties were "naturally at liberty to request to give evidence before this committee".

On 16 September the ITF General Secretary wrote to the Chairman of the Committee of Investigation into the Staff Associations of South African Transport Services requesting the opportunity to make representations to the Committee.