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PREFACE TO THE STUTTGART CONGRESS

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At its meeting of 26 to 28 October, 1949, the Executive Committee of the I.T.F. decided to convene the twenty-first International Transport Workers' Congress in July, 1950, at Vienna. The decision was made in the belief that the Peace Treaty, re-establishing Austrian national sovereignty, would be signed within a matter of weeks and with the intention of seizing the first opportunity of honouring the Austrian Labour Movement, whose resistance to Fascism was exemplary.

At its meeting of 6 to 8 February, however, the Executive Committee had to face the fact that the Treaty had not been signed and, furthermore, that there was little or no prospect of its being signed in the immediate future. The Committee had to conclude that freedom of expression was not yet guaranteed in Vienna and that, consequently, the most important condition for allowing the I.T.F. Congress to be held in that city was not fulfilled. The presence of Russian occupation troops was considered to be a factor of uncertainty and even of insecurity. The actions of the U.S.S.R., her "profsoyuzy"—a title falsely translated by "trade unions"—and her sympathizers in Europe and elsewhere will, of necessity, be severely criticized by some speakers at the Congress and no one could foretell whether the Russian occupation authorities would react nor in what manner. The Committee, therefore, decided not to take the risks involved. The Austrian members, who were enthusiastically engaged in preparing the Congress, had to be told that the time for the holding of this I.T.F. gathering in Vienna had not yet arrived.

The choice of venue of each post-war I.T.F. Congress has had a certain symbolic significance. In 1946 the Congress met in Switzerland. Spiritually that country had fought on the side of the defenders of freedom, but officially it had been neutral and was, therefore, an acceptable meeting ground for delegates from all countries. In 1948 the Congress met in Norway—a small country which had been overrun and had won world-wide sympathy by its brave fight for freedom. The third post-war Congress was scheduled to be held in Austria, an outpost in the new fight for freedom which has started in recent years. With Austria ruled out, which country was next?

Before consideration could be given to London, the city which upheld the spirit of all Europe throughout the war, the German organizations offered their services for arranging the Congress in their country. In view of what Germany had symbolized for the whole world until Hitler's power was broken and in view of the fact that the feelings kindled by Hitler's war are still intensely alive, the gesture was a courageous one. The Executive Committee quickly came to the decision to accept the offer and to convene the Congress in Stuttgart. That decision is the I.T.F.'s contribution to the overcoming of the war psychosis. It is the expression of our belief that the German people are willing to do their

share in the work of peace and of our desire that they be given the opportunity of so doing in association and co-operation with all free nations. It is also our homage to the resisters to Fascism; to those who died on the headman's block, in the prisons and in the concentration camps; as well as to those who, having survived, are to-day giving of their best to the reconstruction of the trade union movement and the revival of democracy in Germany. The Congress will pay a special tribute to those who, in 1933, responded to the call made by the I.T.F. and set up clandestine organizations of transport workers in Germany. But the Congress is also meant to impress the younger generation of German workers; to show them that the organized workers of the free world have faith in the ideals of free trade unionism and a justifiable confidence in the effectiveness of democratic methods. The Congress should enhance or kindle the young German workers' faith in international trade union solidarity.

The Congress will meet in an atmosphere different from that of 1946 and 1948. The continued existence of the I.T.F. as an independent and autonomous organization is no longer in question. The free trade unions have given up the experiment of association with the Soviet-controlled organizations, and the problem of the relations between the I.T.F. and the W.F.T.U. has thus ceased to exist. The question of relations with the new I.C.F.T.U.—the successor to the old I.F.T.U.—is simple and as good as solved. All that remains to be done is to explain the machinery of co-operation which is being established . . . and to set it in motion.

The task of the Congress is to scrutinize the activity of the I.T.F. during the past two years. Practically all important decisions have been acts of defence against Communist manœuvres and attacks. There is the refusal to continue negotiations with the W.F.T.U.; the refusal to support the political strikes of the Canadian Seamen's Union and the Finnish Transport Workers' Union; the accentuation of support to the E.R.P.; the continued propagation of the idea of integrating European economy and European transport—an idea which could, in the circumstances of the last two years, apply only to Western Europe; the creation of the Vigilance Committee for countering Communist interference with maritime trade, and the endorsement of the military provisions of the Atlantic Treaty. When passing judgment on these actions, the Congress cannot but define also the line of action to be followed in the future.

By the very nature of things, the Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections of the I.T.F. are those with the widest scope for internationally combined action. They are, therefore, likely to "steal the show" with discussions on past and future action for settling the problem created by the Panamanian and some other flags; for securing the ratification of the international maritime labour conventions; and for safeguarding the workers' interests against the adverse effects of international competition between merchant fleets and ports.

The railwaymen and road transport workers have to decide on their policy with regard to hours of work, at present governed by the Washington Convention of 1919

and the Convention on Hours of Work in Road Transport of 1939 respectively, both of which are based on the eight-hour day and the forty-eight-hour week. For many railwaymen and road transport workers, these two conventions are out of date; for many others they have not yet produced all the beneficiary results possible. Between these two groups is a third waiting for an opportunity, or a signal, to forge ahead.

The inland waterfarers and the deep-sea fishermen have, so far, been the poor relations. In both their industries—as also in road transport—there are numerous undertakings run by very small concerns and self-employed people; a well-known obstacle to trade union organization and action. Signs of progress are beginning to become evident in inland navigation, but the fishermen cannot boast of even so modest an achievement. The Congress should afford an opportunity of drawing attention to the needs of these two groups.

The air transport workers set up their section in October last and are still groping their way towards internationally combined action. They are endeavouring to understand their own situation, to define their own problems and to hammer out a policy of social progress for their industry. The Stuttgart meeting should help them to ascertain how they can dovetail their action with that of the other transport workers with whom they have common interests.

The representatives of some countries are likely to claim attention for problems which are more or less localized but which are of great general significance, such as: the uphill struggle of the reborn free French trade unions of transport workers; the complicated task being tackled by the organizers of the new Italian transport trade unions; the heroic, though silent, fight which the Spanish transport workers are waging against Franco; the material and moral difficulties confronting the Greek transport trade unions; the efforts and problems of the Pakistan Transport Workers' Federation; the plans and hopes of those trade unionists working in the peculiar economic and social setting of Japanese society. If Latin-American delegates attend they will throw light on the fate of free transport workers' trade unions in the Argentine and other Latin-American countries. And last, but not least, those acting as hosts to the Congress will explain their problems and the solutions which they work and hope for.

This time the delegates will be able to take the long view and to state in a more emphatic and precise manner than in the past what general and special objectives they wish the I.T.F. to pursue, for the I.T.F. can now plan action without being uncertain about its own future. It is to be hoped that all concerned will make ample use of this regained freedom in order to supply the raw materials for a programme, the realization of which will be the task of to-morrow.

The world seems to reel like a drunkard; to assume plot and counterplot; to shudder with the impact of each new and violent development. The world constituency of little people is in a state of bewilderment and apprehension and looks with fervent hope to statesmen for formulæ for peace.

(Report of the Director-General of the I.L.O.)

THE TRADE UNION HISTORY OF THE WEST EUROPEAN PORTS

We have devoted a substantial section of this issue to historical surveys of conditions in various West European ports as seen from our trade union point of view. These ports were recently the scene of Communist attempts to shake the determination of the nations of Western Europe to maintain their free democratic way of life by sabotaging armaments shipments sent from the United States consequent upon the North Atlantic Treaty.

These Communist attempts may be looked upon as a trial of strength by Moscow which, had it been to any extent successful, would have resulted in a new strategy of Communist sabotage, the possible results of which cannot be speculated upon.

Be that as it may, we were able to report in Press Report No. 10 of 15 May under the relevant section Against Communist Disruption that "the battle is now over and has ended in a victory for the forces of democratic trade unionism, as we were confident it would. Communist bluff did not work on the Atlantic Treaty front. None of the serious hold-ups planned by the Communists materialized and we suspect that they must by now be rather at a loss to explain away their evident failure."

In our opinion this chapter in the story of Communist agitation is, as we pointed out on 15 May, now closed. Nevertheless, in order that the actual outcome of the abortive Communist agitation may be properly appreciated, we consider it appropriate to provide a background to the recent battle in the shape of the story of trade union organization and its achievements in various ports.

In order to complete the picture we summarize below our own reporting on the course of the battle, together with references to articles already published by the I.T.F. on the subject.

The section of the I.T.F. Press Report entitled Against Communist Disruption was first published in the issue of 20 February, 1950, and has, since that date, become a regular feature of our fortnightly news service. It has contained up-to-date reports on Communist activities and the measures taken to oppose them in the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Surveys of the position with regard to the handling of Atlantic Treaty arms shipments in the various European ports were given as at 1 May and 15 May respectively.

In addition, a Supplement entitled The handling of American arms in American ports by Alberto Tasca was attached to Press Report No. 6 of 20 March, 1950, and a Press Communique entitled Wooing the French maritime worker—Communist style, written by Pierre Ferri-Pisani, General Secretary, French Seafarers' Federation, was issued on 20 April, 1950.

A previous issue of the I.T.F. Journal, viz. No. 1 of this year, had as its leader an article entitled On the transport of military supplies written by Mr. T. Yates, General Secretary, National Union of Seamen of Great Britain, and Chairman of the I.T.F. Vigilance Committee.

THE EVOLUTION OF WORKING CONDITIONS IN DUTCH PORTS

By P KOEDIJK

Dutch Transport Workers' Union

Anarchist tendencies have played an important role in the port industry of Holland, and pseudo-revolutionary slogans at one time had a strong hold on the workers of this industry. To listen to these political prophets, the walls of capitalist Jericho were to collapse at the trumpets of the revolutionary phrase-mongers. Strikes flaring up here and there, lasting for a few hours, a day or a few days at the most, and ceasing as abruptly as they started, were to bring the judgment day of capitalism and the day of the general strike ever closer.

Such was the situation, generally speaking, until shortly before the outbreak of the First World War. It is not surprising, with such a mentality of the workers, that the free trade unionism originally made slow progress in this industry. The trade unions, for the most part local in character, were not able, given the state of mind of the

workers, to achieve much, and consequently the most chaotic conditions prevailed in the industry.

Shockingly long working hours, up to 36 hours and longer at a stretch, alternated with periods of unemployment, during which—as during periods of sickness—the dockers were not entitled to any assistance whatsoever. High incidence of serious and fatal accidents, often caused by defective loading and unloading gear, wrong and harassing working methods and fatigue due to the excessive working hours, made the docker's calling one of the most unsafe in the country.

No wonder that in such miserable circumstances abuse of alcohol was the ruin of many dock workers and their families. The employers had a free hand and were in a position to lay down wages and conditions of employment practically as they thought fit.

A change for the better took place after the First World War. The influence of our trade unions had slowly but surely increased. Though the anarchist influence remained apparent, there was a steady decline in the number of workers who listened to the propaganda of pseudo-revolutionaries.

In 1920 our Union took part in the submission of demands for better wages and working hours and general improvement in the dockers' position. The partial rejection of these demands by the employers led to a 10-week strike at the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. The strike did not result in a clear-cut victory for either side.

Following the strike, however, the employers introduced a number of measures which went a long way towards meeting the demands which had been presented. Wages were increased, a certain measure of social security was obtained by the introduction of sickness and unemployment benefits, and some provision was made for old age and invalidity.

Unfortunately, this social progress registered following the strike of 1920 was partly or wholly lost again during the subsequent years of economic depression. The fact that during these years of depression, under pressure of the widespread unemployment which prevailed, many dock workers made the mistake of leaving their trade union and thus weakened their position towards the employers, contributed to the retrograde tendency.

Nevertheless, the desire for social improvement had been awakened also among the dock workers. Though somewhat uncertainly at first, they learned increasingly to fight in the right way for their demands, namely, by building up trade union organization.

Holidays with pay were won by the Union as a recognized institution of the industry, though many dockers, among them especially the pseudo-revolutionary elements, had viewed the attempt with scepticism. These sceptics had come to regard unemployment as the only form of holiday dockers could expect. In spite of apathy and opposition, holidays with pay—at present two full weeks plus six public holidays—is an accomplished fact in the port industry of Holland.

In the field of social provision there were now statutory schemes covering sickness, invalidity and accidents, while in addition the public authorities paid supplementary benefit where the industry itself still failed to make adequate provision for unemployment.

Furthermore, the Union continued to press for a retirement pension payable by the industry, and but for the Second World War this demand would have been dealt with sooner than now proved practicable.

Discussions on our outstanding demands could not be resumed until after the Second World War. These discussions were again retarded because anarcho-Communist elements—for many of those in the industry who formerly believed in anarchism had meanwhile pinned their faith to the Communist ideology—saw their last opportunity of throwing a spanner in the works.

The dock industry, notably at Amsterdam and Rotterdam, was practically the only industry of any size in

Holland where the anarcho-Communist tendency was successful during the first years following the war in causing unrest by stirring up political strikes. But the dockers soon saw that this was leading nowhere.

It is interesting to note, incidentally, that in a number of smaller ports where the influence of the anarcho-Communists was formerly quite considerable, they were now conspicuously unsuccessful, with the result that our Union in recent years had the opportunity to work in peace for the reforms which were still required.

For the major ports as well as for some of the smaller ones a decasualization scheme has been secured which guarantees the payment of up to 80 per cent of wages in case of unemployment. In addition, the industry has established schemes providing for retirement and widows' and orphans' pensions. Furthermore, there are statutory schemes which provide for invalidity, sickness and accident insurance as well as care for the sick, for all industries, including the docks.

The law also provides for a certain measure of legal security, against arbitrary dismissal and the like. A start has been made with schemes for vocational training, especially for young workers, which will eventually make for an increase in safety and efficiency of work.

All these measures, established by legislation or by collective bargaining, mean a substantial improvement in the legal and economic status of the workers, including those employed in the dock industry. Far more than was formerly the case, the workers are to-day regarded and treated as human beings.

There is still an important item on our programme which aims at making this recognition still greater. That is the workers' demand for joint control of industry, the general principle of which is already recognized by the existing legislation. It will depend upon the power and influence which our Union is able to exert, whether joint control will soon become an accomplished fact also in the dock industry.

Meanwhile the Communist influence among the dockers, which not so long ago was still quite considerable, has dwindled rapidly. Although since February this year the Communists, through so-called Peace Committees sponsored by them, have been carrying on incessant agitation designed to persuade the dockers to refuse to handle shipments of military supplies under the Atlantic Pact, these efforts have not met with the slightest success. On the contrary, the ships carrying these cargoes have in all cases been handled normally by the dockers of Rotterdam in accordance with the advice of the Union.

This is particularly significant because the Dutch dockers have always been strongly opposed to handling shipments of arms. But in this case they have come to understand that the Communist peace talk is a lie and that the implementation of the Atlantic Defence Pact is the best safeguard against war. Their understanding is reflected in the fact that the trade union started by the Communists among the Rotterdam dockers has dwindled from a group of some importance to a few hundred followers.

WHY THE COMMUNISTS FAILED IN NORWEGIAN PORTS

By **ALFRED SKAR**

Norwegian T.U.C.

On 20 April, 1950, the first vessel to arrive in Norway with a cargo of arms delivered under the terms of the Atlantic Treaty, the *Mormacdale*, tied up at one of the quays in the port of Oslo. The discharge of its cargo began immediately.

Shortly afterwards, twenty-five to thirty Communists appeared on the scene and attempted to distribute leaflets. A few of them were arrested, but, after having given their names and addresses, were later allowed to go free. Apart from this little incident, the unloading of the arms continued without any interruption whatsoever.

It was an ignominious defeat for the Norwegian agents of the Cominform, the more so as the Communists had worked out an elaborate plan of campaign designed to prevent the discharge of such cargoes in Norway. The plan misfired completely, and there are good reasons for believing that the Norwegian Communists have had to put up with some pretty harsh criticism from their Cominform masters as a result of their failure to implement Cominform policy in Norway.

The Norwegian Communists undoubtedly did their best to prevent their country from taking delivery of the arms assistance necessary to the defence of its freedom and democratic way of government. The reasons for their failure must be sought in the economic, social and political development of Norway.

The Norwegian transport workers are members of the "old guard" which helped to build up the country's trade union movement and thus laid the basis of the living standards to-day enjoyed by the Norwegian working class as a whole.

Four years have now passed since their organization, the I.T.F.—affiliated Norwegian Transport Workers' Union—founded on 2 April, 1896—celebrated its Diamond Jubilee, and many of the union's local sections are a good deal older. Many hard battles fought during this period taught the Norwegian transport workers both the need for solidarity and a proper appreciation of the results obtained by it.

Permanent dock workers in Norway are 100 per cent organized. They realize that their living standards, both economic and social, result from their solidarity, discipline and organizational strength. If the Communist political adventurers find little support among the Norwegian transport workers, that fact is closely allied to the economic and social standards which the latter, in common with the whole of the Norwegian working class, have won.

Wages and Working Conditions

As in the case of the overwhelming majority of wage-earners in Norway, the wage and working conditions of transport workers are governed by collective agreement.

This applies, in particular, to dockers in all Norwegian ports. Although figures as to hourly rates and yearly earnings do not mean much, it is at least worthy of mention that the average hourly rate in those industries for which collective agreements have been negotiated is kr. 2.31 (about 2s. 6d.) (rest periods inclusive). This means that a transport worker who works the 48-hour week laid down by law is actually paid for 60 hours. In the larger ports, piece work is normal and payment for it is made according to standard rates for individual types of cargo. The average annual earnings of a Norwegian transport worker are between 7,500 and 8,000 kroner (based on an average work week of 35 hours).

By reason of the fact that Norway possesses an unusually long coastline which is trafficked by regular coastal steamer services, much transport work is performed at night. Night work is normally paid at either time-and-a-half or double time rates. The period between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. is considered as constituting normal working hours, but even though a worker may have performed no work whatsoever between these hours he is still paid at overtime rates, should his period of duty begin after 6 p.m.

The question of a minimum wage has been settled so far as Oslo is concerned. Even where a worker has been found no work during normal working hours, his employer has, nevertheless, to pay him a fixed daily wage, at present amounting to eight kroner.

In some ports, dock work is administered by a joint board composed of an equal number of workers' and employers' representatives, together with a neutral arbitrator appointed by the port authority or management. These local boards or committees have an employers' obligation towards the dockers so far as all questions touching upon their work are concerned. This system is at present operated in the ports of Oslo, Trondheim, Stavanger, Bodø and Arendal. It gives the transport workers employed in them a measure of economic and social security which was previously quite unknown.

Industrial Safety Legislation and Social Rights

The extremely comprehensive safety regulations laid down by the Industrial Inspectorate ensure for the transport workers the same high degree of protection against industrial accidents and injury to health as is enjoyed by employees in all other branches of Norwegian industry.

The system of industrial inspection has reached a high level of development in Norway. The enforcement of safety regulations is carried out by inspectors of both the national Industrial Inspectorate and the communal inspectorates. It is worth noting here that the present

head of the Industrial Inspectorate is an active trade unionist and a past president of the Norwegian T.U.C.

All transport workers are insured through the State Insurance Scheme which covers both partial and total disablement and death resulting from industrial accidents. The Norwegian Transport Workers' Union maintains, in addition, its own accident insurance fund which pays lump sums of 3,000 and 6,000 kroner as death and disability benefits respectively. This fund also covers non-industrial accidents in which members may be involved.

Norwegian transport workers thus enjoy all those rights won by the working class as a whole in our free and democratic country. Their working hours are regulated by law and their wage rates are laid down and guaranteed by collective agreement. Industrial safety regulations are as comprehensive as possible under existing circumstances. In the event of workers being involved in an accident which makes them unfit for work both they and their dependants are guaranteed a basis of existence.

In the larger ports, rest rooms and dining halls are available and in some cases also clothing lockers and baths. In Oslo, for instance, there is a port employment centre, from which dockers are directed to available work, equipped with showers and baths as well as separate clothing lockers for each man. This gives dockers an opportunity of taking a bath, should they wish to do so, before they go home from work—one of which many workers in the central port areas take advantage.

There are, of course, still many things which remain to be done before all demands are satisfied, but it cannot be denied that in recent years an improvement in the living standards of transport workers has taken place which has done much towards stimulating their self-respect and raising their social position.

Communists Provide a New Version of the Lion and the Skin Rug

In the Norwegian language there is a proverb which could very well be applied to the action planned by the Communists against the unloading of Atlantic Treaty arms and the results obtained from it. It is: "To spring up like a lion and fall back like a skin rug."

The plan drawn up by them was, in theory, perfect and could be put into effect in any Norwegian port. The only trouble with it was that it did not work in practice.

The Communists in Norway, as in many other countries, prefer to operate through the medium of various front organizations, the actual organizations used varying according to the nature of the action to be carried out. In their campaign against the Atlantic Treaty they made particular use of the "Democratic Women's Federation", the "Democratic Youth Federation", Communist-controlled "peace committees" and various other organizations.

The plan of campaign was briefly this: Through its front organizations the party was to carry on agitation among transport and other workers and to incite them to take strike action in the name of "peace". In addition, the workers were to be encouraged to march in

procession to the quays at which arms vessels were being unloaded and hold demonstrations.

The discharge of the *Mormacdale* took place in the near vicinity of Akers Mekaniske Verksted, Oslo's largest industrial establishment, a shipyard, among the workers of which the Communists have had some influence. In spite of this latter fact, however, the employees of Akers Verksted passed by the Communists distributing leaflets without showing either interest for or inclination to take part in a Communist demonstration. Equally unproductive of results were later attempts made to organize a "peace demonstration" at other workplaces in the city.

The Communists did the best they could to carry out their orders to weaken the country's defence potential. Their newspaper published the information that deputations calling upon the dockers to refuse to unload the arms would be sent from many industrial establishments. But, unfortunately for them, the deputations never arrived! Everywhere in Oslo the workers refused to allow themselves to be used for traitorous ends. A few members of the Communist youth organization continued to hand out leaflets, but that was all.

In this way, the Communist "action" against the first arms cargo to Norway fizzled out. When the second cargo arrived the Communists did not even try to organize a demonstration; but this fact does not mean that they have given up. One must be prepared for new attempts to prevent the discharge of arms shipments at other ports, but it is unlikely that these will have any greater success than the first.

It, of course, goes without saying that the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union, in common with all other sections of the labour movement in Norway, had no illusions about the traitorous plans of the Communists. All necessary steps to ensure that the Norwegian Parliament's decision to adhere to the Atlantic Treaty should be made effective were taken.

Norway Knows the Value of Freedom

Still fresh in the memory of the Norwegian people is 9 April, 1940, the day on which a totalitarian power, assisted by an internal fifth column, attacked and overran a peace-loving nation. The Norwegian people is no less peace-loving to-day, but five years of war, German occupation and terror have indelibly impressed themselves upon its memory. It is quite unthinkable that the Norwegian nation should take part in an aggressive war or in preparations for an attack on the peoples of other nations, but it is equally certain that Norway would fight if it were again the object of aggression.

The transport workers love peace, but they have also a burning love of liberty and they know what they, in common with all other Norwegian workers, have to defend—their freedom, and the relatively secure living conditions and social standards which they have both fought for and won.

The fact that they know these things explains the complete failure of Communist attempts to prevent the unloading of Atlantic Treaty arms shipments in Norway.

DOCK LABOUR IN BELGIUM

By **R. DEKEYZER**

President, Belgian Transport Workers' Union

Although Belgium is a small country with only some nine million inhabitants, it is comparatively well known in the rest of the world, a fact for which it probably owes much to the fame of Antwerp as a world port. Antwerp's position as the chief port of Belgium, before Ghent, Brussels, Ostend, Bruges and Liège, is unassailable, and we shall therefore confine this brief résumé to the position there, merely adding that conditions in other ports only differ to a very slight extent.

The reasons for the great development of Antwerp as a seaport largely lie in the industrial and commercial character of Belgian economy, though it owes a good deal also to the country's geographical position at the meeting-point of many of Europe's trading routes. It not only serves for the import of foreign and export of Belgian goods, but engages above all in transit trade, as it lies at the focus point of the most highly industrialized regions of Europe—Northern France, the Ruhr and Rhine basins, Westphalia, Alsace-Lorraine and Switzerland.

It is easy to understand, therefore, that Antwerp is an important labour market, and has 14,500 registered dockers. Ghent, Belgium's second port, has only 987.

Because the Belgian Constitution guarantees freedom of association, practically every industry has two or three rival trade unions belonging, according to their ideological leanings, to the Belgian General Federation of Trade Unions (*Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond* or *A.B.V.V.*), affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the Christian General Federation of Trade Unions (*Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond* or *A.C.V.*) or the Liberal group of trade unions. In the case of Antwerp the dockers are organized as follows :

Belgian Transport Workers' Union (A.B.V.V.)	11,120
Christian Transport Workers' Union (A.C.V.)	2,960
Liberal Trade Union	280
Unorganized	140

The ratio is roughly the same in other Belgian ports, and in view of the overwhelming majority which the Belgian Transport Workers' Union has everywhere there is no question but that we have the leadership in determining policy with regard to wages and working conditions, and that the other unions follow reluctantly after.

To understand Belgian conditions properly it is necessary to bear in mind that the "closed shop", as known in the United Kingdom or America, is illegal in our country, and further that the differences between the several trade unions are based on religious and political beliefs.

Prior to 1940 our dockers had managed to secure, thanks to the Union, rates of wages that would stand comparison with those of skilled workers in other industries. They were the first to win the seven-hour day and forty-hour week, which they obtained as a result of big strikes in 1936. Since the liberation, wages have been

adjusted to post-war conditions and now amount for the day shift (8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 4 p.m.) 195 Belgian francs plus 14 francs walking time ; altogether 209 francs for seven hours' work. Special rates are paid for the other shifts—morning, afternoon, early night and night. Double rates are paid for Sundays and holidays, and supplements varying between 10 and 125 francs are paid to men handling certain goods, such as timber, bricks, hides, guano, cotton, meat, pitch, etc.

The Belgian Transport Workers' Union has not confined its interest to wage rates, but has also paid attention to other working conditions, with results of which we are proud. In the first place all dockers are now registered ; the maximum number being determined by a Joint Committee of workers' and employers' representatives. Each Belgian port has an official hiring hall. It is run by a Government service, but the Joint Committee determines the manner in which the men are called and lays down penalties for employers or workers who do not observe the regulations.

Our dockers attach great value to the decasualization scheme, under which they receive about 60 per cent of their basic wage for days on which they get no work, irrespective of how much they may have earned on previous days. The cost is borne out of an employers' contribution equal to 15 per cent of wages paid, which is paid into a fund which is jointly administered.

The dockers, like all Belgian workers, are entitled to the benefits of the Social Security Act, eight to ten paid official holidays and six days' annual holiday with double pay.

It should be mentioned that the work and composition of gangs has been carefully worked out and laid down by collective agreement.

We have safety committees composed of workers' and employers' representatives—both paid by the employers' association—whose duty it is to see that safety regulations are observed as strictly as possible. Dockers suffering accidents in the course of their work receive a minimum compensation of 60 per cent of their basic wage.

Finally, it may be mentioned, in connection with working conditions, that we are now negotiating about a supplementary pension for men employed in the industry.

This brief and therefore somewhat sketchy survey of the wages and other working conditions of the Belgian dockers will show that we probably top the list as far as European dockers are concerned.

Taking into consideration the fact that we have no closed shop and freedom of association is entirely unrestricted, the percentage of the dockers who belong to the Belgian Transport Workers' Union is sufficient indication that they regard our organization as the most active and energetic, and that it enjoys their trust. The endeavours of rival organizations, strikes declared and

the activities of a few dozen Communists have so far failed to shake this trust.

It is true that the Communists, by using terroristic methods—such as seriously wounding a trade union delegate and endeavouring to destroy the hiring hall—have now and again managed to kick up a shindy in the Antwerp docks, but the sound common sense of the dockers has always prevailed and the Communist agitation come to nothing. Our Union has taken determined measures against those who tried to undermine its activities, expelling them from membership.

The Communists have very little influence in the ports. Taking their orders from the Cominform they first set themselves against Marshall Aid, and later against the

Atlantic Pact. In the case of the latter, taking "Peace" as their watchword, they did all they possibly could to hinder the discharge and transport of military supplies. Supported by their women's movement they left nothing undone that was calculated to bring work in the ports to a standstill. Manifestos were distributed and demonstrations organized day after day. But it was all in vain. All shipments of arms coming to our ports were duly discharged; the dockers showing once more that they have no use for orders from Moscow.

We feel that we have every reason to be proud of our Union, and we are determined to keep it on the path it has followed so far.

DOCKS AND THE NATION

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RECENT TROUBLES IN THE PORT OF LONDON

By **ARTHUR DEAKIN**

General Secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union

During and following the recent unofficial stoppage in the Port of London, many people have written with "great authority" suggesting that they know the answer to the unofficial stoppages which have, from time to time, arisen in the London docks. Above all, there is the suggestion that there is something wrong with the Dock Labour Scheme. Mr. Arthur Deakin, who is a member of the I.T.F. Management Committee, has joined issue with these critics, whose particular views need not concern us here. We reproduce Mr. Deakin's views only in so far as they throw light on the confused position on London's dock labour front. His observations make a contribution to clear thinking and are, consequently, calculated to raise the curtain of mental fog obscuring the actual issues.

In the atmosphere created by the feeling that there is something wrong with the Dock Labour or Decasualization Scheme, and following pressure in the House of Commons, the Government decided to inquire into the causes of the recent stoppages within the following terms:

"In view of the stoppages which have taken place in the London Docks, to investigate the problem fully and to consult with representatives of both sides of the port transport industry with a view to reporting what steps can be taken to avoid further unofficial action of the type that has taken place during the past three years and has proved injurious to the trade of the country."

The position of the Union is perfectly clear. We have striven, year in and year out, since 1889, to uproot those customs and practices which left the dockers prey to all the disadvantages which arose from casual and irregular employment. In the old days men had to fight "tooth and claw" for such employment as was available. Only the physically fit and strong had a chance of a job, except during peak periods of employment. Wages and conditions were extremely bad and the fight for the "Dockers' Tanner" (6d. an hour) went only a short way towards easing the position. In the strikes of 1911-12 no great progress was made, there were too many unions involved and too little cohesion. In other words, there was too little power in the hands of the dockers.

Background Information

In 1919 the "Shaw Inquiry" heard the case of the docker presented by Ernest Bevin and awarded a minimum wage and a uniform working week, but this did not provide an answer to the decasualization problem, and the fight went on. In 1924 the "MacLean Committee" recommended in favour of decasualization, but it was not possible to negotiate conditions throughout the ports which would achieve this much-needed reform. It was not, in fact, until 1940 that the first Docks Decasualization Scheme came into operation, primarily to meet the needs of wartime conditions. It was then my privilege to negotiate this with my old colleague Ernest Bevin, who at that time had been chosen to serve as Minister of Labour and National Service. The Dock Labour Scheme in wartime did a remarkable job of work; it maintained a labour force in dockland which would not have been possible under any other circumstances. At the end of the war, the Dock Workers' (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1946, was placed on the Statute Book, leaving the Minister of Labour with the responsibility of setting up a permanent scheme for the decasualization of the dock industry. At last our objective was in sight.

Following this, and acting upon the invitation of the Minister of Labour, both sides of the industry gave

serious consideration to the form of permanent scheme which should be applied. No agreement was possible, the employers claiming the exclusive right to control the scheme. The unions stood for joint control. This is where we still stand and we shall remain in that position. Time has long since passed when workers in industry are prepared to accept the idea that they are not entitled to a "say" in the conditions under which their employment is regulated. The Dock Labour Board does not, either at local or national level, take any part in the negotiation of wages and conditions of employment in the industry. Both are still a matter for negotiations between the unions and the employers through the medium of the National Joint Council for the Port Industry, negotiating at national and local level, and providing means for the avoidance of disputes. The great work which has been put in over a number of years cannot be overlooked. Hundreds of settlements stand to the credit of the National Joint Council and its Conciliation Committees.

Psychological Factors

To those who are interested in the industry, and it is recognized very clearly that we are running a public service and that any dislocation of the industry vitally affects not only the Government, but the whole community, I would say that the Union is as anxious as anyone to find an answer to the problem of how peace in the docks can best be maintained. In my view, however, it is not a problem which can be answered merely by a suggestion that this or the other adjustment will provide an answer. It is a psychological question conditioned by the way men's minds work in a period when change is very rapid, as it is in wartime, and in a world of changing conditions after an upheaval of the character through which we have passed, we are bound to have difficulty. It is not always possible to keep everyone in step with the progress we are making. In looking for the answer we must be prepared to base our

conclusions on the fundamental causes, not attempting to distort or disguise unpleasant facts, but striving at all times to achieve that measure of change which is so vitally important when one is dealing with great human problems. Neither can it be said, with any semblance of truth, that the Union is out of touch with its members. We have achieved that revolution in dockland for which the Union has fought so consistently over the past sixty years.

Our Object

It has been suggested in this connection that our task is not merely one of a crusading force fighting for wages and conditions (which, of course, are still important), but to shape a policy related to a new set of circumstances, at the same time consolidating and safeguarding the progress we have achieved over a period of years.

The answer is not to be found in penal action against the great majority of our members in the dock industry, even although they have at times been misled by reckless, irresponsible elements and there is no need for our members to develop a "fear complex", with a feeling that they are a continuous target for the employers. The Union stands "four-square" behind its members.

If, however, we are to do a real job of work, and maintain an effective place within the industry, we must have behind us a body of members who are prepared to carry out their obligations and honour the agreements entered into on their behalf, realizing, that above all, confidence and co-operation between all parties within the industry is vitally necessary.

To our members on the docks I would say: There is no problem confronting us which we cannot solve within our ranks. We shall face the inquiry, when it opens, with a determination not to allow anything to happen which will take away any of those hard-won gains arising from long years of patient effort.

WORKING AND TRADE UNION CONDITIONS IN SWEDISH PORTS

By *ANDREW FLENSTRÖM*

Swedish Transport Workers' Union

Sixty years ago, before the trade unions got into their stride, dock labour in Sweden was mainly casual. Every stevedoring contractor had a certain number of regular men in his employ, to whom he entrusted jobs requiring special skill, but the great majority of the workers were engaged according to the needs of the moment from among the more or less shifting mass of men seeking work at the docks. The large ports were at that time the point of convergence of maladjusted workers coming from all parts of the country and all trades. Drunkenness was very common, and there were, of course, no welfare arrangements for dockers at that time.

Antagonism between the dockers and the stevedore

contractors soon developed, and the first trade unions for the industry were established in the early eighteenth century, joining up with the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, which in its turn entered the Swedish Federation of Trade Unions.

In addition to securing wage increases, the Swedish Transport Workers' Union signed with the stevedoring contractors, at the beginning of the present century, an agreement under which its members were given priority for any work available.

In the meantime the employers also began to organize. 1906 saw the foundation of the Stevedoring Contractors' Association of Norrland, whose activities also extended

to the minor ports of Skutskär and Fagerviken, in Uppland; and in 1908 the Stevedoring Contractors' Association of Southern Sweden was established, covering all the southern ports except the two in Uppland already mentioned. In the same year the two associations joined the Swedish Employers' Association, and a dispute soon arose over the agreement with the Transport Workers' Union establishing priority for its members.

After a long struggle this agreement was replaced by another under which the employers secured the right to distribute the work and engage or dismiss workers as they thought fit. At the same time, however, a pool of registered dockers was established at every port, membership of which was subject to agreement between the two parties. Only after exhausting this pool are employers allowed to take on outside labour. Workers, on the other hand, are required to hold themselves at the disposal of the employers, and cannot take work other than that allotted to them except with the permission of the employer concerned. The method of engagement and the procedure for filling vacancies are dealt with in the next column.

These arrangements were based on an agreement signed in 1907 between the Swedish Shipowners' Association and the Swedish Employers' Association, the purpose of which was to establish more settled conditions in the ports. To facilitate this it was laid down that there should as a rule be only one stevedoring undertaking in every port, combining the interests of the different traders, and that the dividends it should pay out should be limited. The Shipowners' Association undertook that all work should be given to these undertakings.

In accordance with this agreement an endeavour has been made to confine loading and discharging work in the smaller and medium-sized ports to a single stevedoring undertaking, which is generally established and run by the Shipowners' Association jointly with the shippers and importers. Most of them take the form of limited liability companies, and dividends are generally limited to 6 per cent; rates for loading and discharging operations being calculated accordingly. Apart from this an endeavour is made so to consolidate the position of the undertaking that it is able to maintain its charges for a considerable time in spite of economic fluctuations.

In most Swedish ports there is now a single stevedoring undertaking, which accordingly has a monopoly of loading and discharging work, but in some, including Gothenburg and Stockholm, there is more than one; some of the big shipping companies, for instance, running their own in accordance with their special needs. In Gothenburg there are twenty-two such undertakings, seven of which are run by shipowning companies to handle their own ships; in Stockholm eight, three run by individual shipowners. Notwithstanding the existence of several different undertakings in these two ports, certain uniform standards are maintained, as the several interests—shipowners, stevedores, coal importers, brokers and shippers—have set up a joint organization known as the Port Work Office to deal with the workers and calculate and pay out wages. Port Work Offices also have stands where dockers are engaged. Similar stands

also exist in ports where there is no Office. They have waiting rooms, and in some places washing accommodation, canteens, cooking facilities for the warming of meals and clothes-drying cupboards.

The provisions for the registration of port workers are still in force, and the standard collective agreement contains the following clause:

"The pool of registered dockers shall consist of . . . men, and the work available shall be allotted amongst them in the most equitable way so that each of them gets the chance to do similar and equally profitable work, and workers of equal capacity and diligence as far as possible equal remuneration."

In some ports a system of calling in turn exists, which means that as soon as a worker has finished a job allotted to him he is entered next on a list, and when workers have to be engaged they are called in the order in which they appear on it. This system is not entirely fair, as a man who happens to secure remunerative turns may earn in the course of the year more than another who is not so fortunate.

Another system which is employed in a majority of the ports is based on statistical data, all wages earned by every docker being recorded, together with sick pay and payments to men on leave. Workers who do not answer their call, who do not do the work for which they have been engaged, who slack during working hours or who leave their work without permission are debited with an amount which varies from one port to another, but is generally about 50 crowns. On the basis of the record a calling is made up of the workers in the order of their earnings, the worker with the lowest earnings being on top. Even with this system there can be differences in earnings over a calendar year, but when averaged over a period of two or three years they are generally negligible.

The agreement relating to the registration of dockers contains an important provision which limits the right of the employer to select the workers he is to employ. There is also a stipulation that in accepting workers for the pool the employers must take into account the necessity of ensuring good co-operation between the members of the pool. They may not enter workers against whom the trade union has objections; men who have acted as strike-breakers, for instance, or who have been expelled from their union for being in arrears with their contributions. Nor may they expel men from the pool, as a punishment, without an enquiry at which the men concerned and representatives of the union are entitled to be present.

In the regulation of port work there are two conflicting interests. On the one hand there is the interest of the shipping industry which requires that there should be enough dock labour available to prevent delay in the loading and discharging of the ships; on the other the interest of the workers in keeping the supply of manpower down so that every worker may be fully employed.

As we have already mentioned, the size of the regular pool is established by negotiation between the stevedoring undertakings and the trade unions; the object being to adjust it to the amount of work available. This is generally done in such a manner that the members of

the pool perform on an average 70 per cent of the work in the port. When the amount of work available decreases and it is necessary to reduce the size of the pool, this is done by not replacing men who leave it, so that the process is a gradual one and dismissals are avoided.

All the members of the pools belong to the local branches of the Transport Workers' Union, which therefore has full control of the ports. 97 per cent of all dock work is done at piece rates, of which the agreement contains very detailed lists. The remaining 3 per cent is work such as the erection of staging, sweeping out of holds, etc., to which it is difficult to apply the piece-rate system.

The hourly wage varies slightly from port to port, and there is also a general difference between the southern and northern part of the country. In 1949 dockers' earnings averaged 3.97 crowns an hour in the north and 3.69 in the south.

There is no guaranteed wage, so that earnings, whether weekly, monthly or yearly, depend on the degree of occupation, which is highest, and most regular, on the larger ports. In Gothenburg, which is Sweden's largest port, registered dockers work about 2,100 hours a year, in Stockholm 1,900, in Malmö and Norrköping 1,700, and in the remaining medium-sized ports in southern Sweden and the larger ones in the north about 1,500.

Practically all the ports in the north, including the inland ports, are closed by ice in the winter for a period which varies from a few weeks to five or six months in the year, and even when port activity is not entirely at a standstill it is substantially reduced during the winter. It is quite usual for dockers in the northern ports to take up forestry or other work at such times. The seaports from Stockholm southwards, however, are open to shipping the year round.

The hourly rate of wages paid to dockers is higher than in some other industries—a sort of compensation for the irregularity of their employment. As a result the annual earnings of registered port workers in the larger ports reach a figure which will bear comparison with that of the better paid workers in industry generally. In the smaller ports the registered port workers are normally agricultural workers or fishermen, and port work is for them only a secondary occupation.

There are no clauses in the agreement relating to the handling of dirty goods, but the piece rates do provide for higher pay for dirty work or work requiring great physical effort.

Swedish social legislation gives all workers the right to paid holidays, accident compensation and superannuation at 67 years of age, or earlier in the case of incapacitation for work. In addition, employers are required to provide waiting rooms, canteens and washing facilities. The law also imposes on the employer the obligation to take all possible precautions to prevent accidents and unhealthy conditions during work.

In so far as social conditions generally are concerned the agreement contains nothing that is more favourable than the law provides, except in so far as annual holidays

and the right to pension are concerned. One of its clauses lays it down that a registered docker shall have six days' annual holiday with pay even when not entitled to it by law, and that if the law gives him title to less holiday pay than four per cent of his earnings during the preceding year the employer must raise it to that figure. The agreement further obliges employers to pay incapacitated dockers a pension based on rates of income in the various ports in the year 1938, and varying from 100 to 400 crowns a year.

It has already been pointed out that the registered dockers are 100 per cent organized, and on the whole they are loyal to the Union. It is not possible to give definite figures as to their political opinions, but it can be assumed that about 90 per cent are members of or sympathizers with the Social-Democratic Party, and the remaining 10 per cent Communistically inclined. Generally speaking the Communists have little influence either in the trade union movement or in the ports. As an example it may be mentioned that when the Nazis first came into power in Germany and replaced the old German flag by the swastika, the Communists in Sweden carried on an intense campaign to persuade the dockers to refuse to work ships flying it, but in spite of the latter's hearty dislike of Nazism they preferred to follow their Union's orders rather than that of the Communists.

No special steps have been taken in Sweden to fight Communism. Communist members are subject to the same rules as other members—that is to say, that those who do not obey Union rules and decisions are expelled; and it is gratifying to be able to say that it is very seldom necessary to take such a step.

As in other countries, the Swedish Communists, acting no doubt under Cominform orders, have been carrying on propaganda to persuade the dockers to refuse to load and discharge war material. Its only result has been a decision, some time ago, of the branch of the Union at Gothenburg, where the Communists have many followers, to the effect that "in the interests of peace" there would be no handling of such material. A report on the matter sent in by the branch on a request from Union headquarters stated that "naturally the refusal to handle war materials does not relate to war materials as such, but only those intended for nationalist China, Greece, Spain, France, Holland and England, as well as war materials sent by the United States to other countries". It is noteworthy that Argentina is not among the countries mentioned. When Union headquarters replied that they could in no circumstances approve of members refusing to handle war material nothing further happened.

The report sent in by the Gothenburg branch has been so interpreted in the Communist Press as to deceive the public in Sweden and abroad, and make them believe that it represented the general views of the Swedish dockers; but this has had no more effect than water on a duck's back. Since Sweden is not a party to the Atlantic Pact there can be no question of loading or discharging war material in our ports, but in the unlikely event of anything of the sort happening there is little chance of any difficulty arising from the dockers' side.

GERMAN SHIPPING PROBLEMS

By A. KUMMERNUSS

President of the German Public Services and Transport Workers' Union

Before the war broke out in 1939 the German merchant marine consisted of over 1,500 seagoing ships, of an average age of between ten and fifteen years and an aggregate tonnage of 4,000,000 G.R.T. Of these, the Hamburg America Company owned 109 ships totalling 720,000 G.R.T., and the North German Lloyd another 600,000. In addition there were about a thousand sailing vessels with auxiliary motors, totalling some 130,000 G.R.T., and bringing the grand total up to 4,130,000 gross register tons. War losses amounted to 2,643,000 G.R.T., leaving us at the end of hostilities with 1,487,000 G.R.T. Of these, the occupying powers requisitioned 90,000 tons (X tonnage) and a further 1,280,000 had to be handed over to them (including 28 ships totalling 180,000 tons which were loaded with gas bombs and sunk). So that we were finally left with only 117,000 G.R.T., or 2.83 per cent of our original tonnage.

This remnant consisted of 130 seagoing ships, totalling 80,000 G.R.T., of an average age of 40 years (90 per cent over 28 and 66 per cent over 41 years: the largest 50 and the oldest 75 years of age), and 292 sailing vessels with auxiliary motors, totalling 37,000 G.R.T.; making altogether 117,000 gross register tons, corresponding to a deadweight capacity of 165,000 tons.

In October, 1949, our seagoing fleet consisted of 153 German-owned vessels of 107,003 G.R.T., 32 requisitioned (X tonnage) vessels of 16,901 G.R.T., and 12 OMGUS chartered vessels of 14,824 G.R.T., making a total of 197 vessels of 138,728 G.R.T. This, corresponding to a deadweight capacity of 194,000 tons, means a carrying capacity, in the near coasting trade, of something like 6,000,000 freight tons a year. The following table compares the freight carried by our seagoing merchant fleet in different years:

Year	Tons carried	Tons per ton of deadweight capacity
1936	51,000,000	9.1
1946	1,020,000	6.2
1947	3,154,000	19.1
1948	5,212,000	30

In so far as tonnage is concerned our coasting fleet is back to the position of 1930; as regards technical efficiency to that of 1910. We have now 198 seagoing ships and 292 auxiliary sailing vessels, or a total of 490 altogether, of which 21 of the seagoing and all of the sailing ships are used in the coasting trade. Only 205, of between 250 and 450 tons deadweight capacity, however, are fully utilizable for the coasting trade. 108 of these ships are more than 20 years old, and by 1952 only 97, totalling 30,000 tons deadweight capacity, will be fully utilizable. Efforts are therefore being made to build by then another 200 vessels of 300 to 500 tons each, totalling

80,000 tons deadweight capacity, so that we should have at our disposal for the near coasting trade something like 110,000 tons deadweight capacity, or 80,000 gross register tons.

The Western Allied powers have already acknowledged the need to build up the German merchant fleet. It is clear that if Germany is to keep its economic affairs in anything like equilibrium she will need to have the shipping required to carry her own imports and exports.

The present limitations on the size and speed of her ships prevent them from being a paying proposition, and there does not seem to be any certainty that finance will be available for building up the merchant fleet, though this will no doubt be mainly provided from public funds. There will only be certainty that amortization and running costs will be covered when the size and speed of ships bear some relation to competitive requirements in international shipping. If any appreciable amount of the tonnage is to be mainly financed with public funds, our Union, as representative of the workers concerned, will use its influence to secure for them a voice in the management. We are in no mind to let public funds be used to build up a public service under private ownership for the exclusive benefit of the private owners.

It is very clear to the German trade unions that the German economy needs a German merchant navy, so that foreign currency can be saved, but it is necessary also that guarantees be given that such a merchant navy will not develop into war potential, and that it will not mean the restoration of private ownership based on profit and unfair and unsound competition in international shipping. And for this the German trade unions need the help of their international friends at home and abroad.

We are very much concerned about the fifty to sixty thousand German seafarers who see no prospect for some considerable time to come to return once more to the trade they have learnt. At least twenty thousand of them hold professional sea certificates, and can only earn a living at sea. It is our duty to find jobs for these capable and willing workers, and here again we need the help of our international friends, so that these men may once more be enabled to place their abilities at the service of Germany and the world.

These aims do not call for separate pursuit, as they are interlinked, and the achievement of one will facilitate the achievement of the others. It will be one of the great aims of our international work to ensure that the position of transport, and particularly shipping, in economic affairs shall not only be determined by the state of markets or the advantages to be gained from the industrial point of view.