

# ITF NEWSLETTER

## INFORMATIONS INFORMATIONEN INFORMATIONSBLAD

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### NEWS ABOUT THE ITF

#### ITF helps end Grancolombiana dispute

A four-year dispute between the Colombiana shipping company Flota Grancolombiana and two ITF affiliates, Unimar and Anegran, has been brought to an end with the help of pressure from the ITF.

Unimar and Anegran, which represent Grancolombiana seafarers and office workers respectively, had been in conflict with the company over a number of issues; one of the most important was the company's refusal to comply with a law which states that where basic wages are paid partly in Colombian, and partly in US currency, the same system should be applied to other components of earnings, notably overtime, allowances and social benefit payments. Attempts to obtain compliance with the law proved fruitless, and the company counter-attacked with dismissals and other forms of victimization.

The unions were prevented from backing their protests with industrial action by a Colombian law which imposes military discipline on the merchant marine. The ITF had warned the company that if requested by its affiliates it would not hesitate to call upon maritime unions in other countries for solidarity action against Grancolombiana vessels. This stand was reinforced at the ITF's recent Congress in Copenhagen, which passed a resolution authorizing the General Secretary to use all means at his disposal, including the possibility of a boycott of Grancolombiana shipping, to pursue the matter to a final and satisfactory conclusion.

We have now heard from J.F. Otero, ITF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean Area, that agreement has been reached in New York between Grancolombiana and the two unions involved in the dispute. This agreement was achieved with the assistance of Otero himself and T. Gleason, President of the US International Longshoremen's Association (also affiliated to the ITF), whose organization had declared its readiness to boycott Grancolombiana vessels. It provides that:

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- (a) there will be no further staff cuts, and employees arbitrarily dismissed by the company during past months will be the subject of joint study by the unions and the company;
- (b) the use of crew members for longshore work will cease;
- (c) proper safety equipment will be provided on board vessels;
- (d) a tripartite committee will be established to examine grievances;
- (e) new employees will no longer be obliged to sign blank resignation forms to enable the company to fire them arbitrarily; and
- (f) certain other points are referred to arbitration because they involve questions of Colombian law. These include the problem of payment in US dollars. The company has agreed to accept the arbitration award.

RAILWAYMEN
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GREAT BRITAIN

Productivity bonus scheme to be drafted

A subcommittee of the Railway Staff National Council is to draft proposals for productivity bonus schemes for all British Railways regions. This follows a recent decision by the recalled annual conference of the Association Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen to permit its leaders to discuss productivity measures in connexion with claims for bonus payments. The question of bonus payments has been in dispute for some time, and has caused a number of unofficial go-slows and stoppages among footplate employees.

Assurances on liner trains

The National Union of Railwaymen has received further assurances from the British Railways Board on two issues which were holding up the union's agreement to the introduction of "liner" trains - a new rapid door-to-door freight service. The guard will travel in a brake-van, and not in the engine driver's cab as had been proposed originally, and which the union feared was a prelude to eliminating the guard altogether; and guarantees have been given against redundancy among British Railways drivers resulting from the opening of liner train terminals to private road haulage vehicles.

SWITZERLAND  
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Cost-of-living compensation

Federal employees, including railwaymen, are to receive an allowance of 5.5% of salary for the year 1965, to compensate for increases in the cost of living. The minimum amount payable is set at 620 Sw. Fr. (about £51 5s. or \$143.50). The amounts due will be paid out in a lump sum before the end of the year.

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

GREAT BRITAIN  
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56% of lorries found faulty

More than half of the heavy lorries subjected to spot checks by Ministry of Transport vehicle examiners during June were found to be faulty. They tested 12,484 heavy goods vehicles at road-side sites and at the premises of the operators. Of this total, 6,967, or 56%, were found to have faults. In 1,673 cases (13%) the defects were so serious that immediate prohibition notices were issued by the examiners.

PORT WORKERS

GREAT BRITAIN  
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Devlin Report recommends full decasualization

Employment of the entire dock labour force on a permanent weekly basis and the complete elimination of the present practice of daily hiring of casual workers are recommended in the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the port transport industry headed by Lord Devlin. The report also calls for a drastic reduction in the number of port employers; those remaining would be allowed to employ port labour only under licence. At present only about a quarter of Britain's 65,000 dockers are permanently employed. The report concludes that most of the troubles in the way of greater efficiency in the industry have stemmed from the casual nature of the dockers' employment.

The Committee found that the main causes of dissension were: the dockers' lack of security; preferential treatment given to some regular dockers; lack of responsibility among casual dockers and employers alike; time-wasting practices; piecework and overtime arrangements; welfare amenities and working conditions; and difficulties of trade union organization and control.

The remedies suggested are: 1) all registered dock workers should be offered regular weekly employment by a greatly reduced number of employers who would be licensed as employers of dock labour; 2) elimination of restrictive practices arising out of casual employment should form part of the negotiations on decasualization and modernization; 3) the National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry should establish a small negotiating committee including representatives of all dock unions to work out details of the decasualization plan; 4) the National Dock Labour Board should make a comprehensive review of welfare facilities and put in hand a programme for improving them urgently.

The report has been welcomed by both the port employers' association and the largest dockers' union, the Transport and General Workers' Union, which has described its recommendations as constructive. The T & GWU is planning an information campaign to get across to its members the value of the Committee's recommendations. It has also agreed that the National Amalgamated Stevedores' and Dockers' union should be represented on the special committee which will work out the recommendations in detail. The T & GWU have for many years been at loggerheads with the NASD, which was expelled from the TUC for "poaching" members. Agreement has now been reached between the two unions on a plan to sort out their jurisdictional differences.

SEAFARERS

INTERNATIONAL  
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New simpler code of signals proposed

A revised international code of signals, formulated by the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, will be presented for approval at IMCO's general assembly in Paris from 14 to 29 September. The code, which is simpler and shorter, is suitable for all means of transmission thus dispensing with the separate radiotelephony code. Each signal represents a complete meaning - a whole sentence, and the revised version is limited to less than 1,000 sentences, made up almost entirely of two-letter groups.

For the first time the code now includes an international system of signalling between ice-breakers and their assistant vessels. It is claimed that a completely revised medical section enables vessels to request medical advice, either from other vessels or from coast stations, in international code.

UNITED STATES  
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Marine engineers' dispute settled

Settlement of the eight-week strike of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association against companies represented in the

American Merchant Marine Institute was announced by the US Secretary of Labour on 17 August. All contract provisions had been agreed before, except the issue of manning of automated vessels. It now appears that this question has been settled according to a formula proposed by President Johnson. This provided for a panel headed by the Secretary of Labour and George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, to investigate and put forward a solution.

Early agreement is now also expected in the disputes involving the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots and the American Radio Association, which followed MEBA out on strike against the same companies.

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

UNITED STATES  
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Union makes charge of discrimination

The Air Line Stewards' and Stewardesses' Association of the Transport Workers' Union has called upon the US Equal Opportunities Commission to investigate charges that the nation's airlines are discriminating against their female flight attendants. The Association attacked the use of restrictive age requirements, enforced termination of employment at a certain age, and the differentials in pay which exist between male and female employees doing essentially the same work.

GENERAL

GREAT BRITAIN  
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TUC statement on Transport Policy

The British Trades Union Congress has produced a policy statement on Transport Policy which will be presented to this year's Congress next month.

The statement contends that the coordination of transport cannot be achieved satisfactorily on the basis of price competition. "The only way in which the public interest can be furthered is for coordination to be achieved by integration, under the aegis of a newly constituted British Transport Commission. This will involve changes in the licensing arrangements affecting long distance road transport and the rapid expansion of British Road Services (nationalized), which will cooperate closely with British Railways at all levels, including the servicing of liner trains, so that the

integrated public authority will be able to offer the consumer a comprehensive door to door service."

The statement says that there is an important difference between the sort of policy which a public enterprise can follow and that which is inevitably pursued by private enterprise. In the case of public service transport, it is particularly necessary that profit should not be the overriding consideration.

In the field of passenger transport the statement argues that it is essential to counteract the spiralling decline in public transport, which results both from the obligation to make profits, and therefore continually to raise fares, and from the growing use of private cars. The direction of transport policy must therefore be changed and this will involve "the judicious use both of subsidies in giving priority to public transport and disincentives to journeys being made by private transport."

New administrative arrangements are needed for the coordination of passenger transport. "Area authorities should be created under the British Transport Commission to be responsible for the provision of an integrated road and rail service, including all bus services, some of which are at present run by private companies."

On coastal shipping, the statement notes that it has very low costs of carriage, but says this does not mean that there is no scope for improvement. "Consistent with an economic division of traffic between coastal shipping and the railways, this natural advantage of geography should continue to offer great benefits to the economy."

The development of pipelines "will probably lead to a wide range of products being transported in this way and there are strong grounds for the creation of a new public authority under the Minister of Transport to coordinate the transport of goods in pipelines and the capital investment involved."

The statement argues that new criteria are needed for transport investment, and declares: "Just as profit is not the best guide to pricing policy, neither does it represent the most useful guide to investment policy within a comprehensive system of national and regional planning, which alone reflects the nation's needs."

TRADE UNION RIGHTS
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EAST AFRICA  
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Strikes banned in Common Services Organization

The Kenya Minister of Labour issued an order on 16 August

declaring illegal any strike by employees of the East African Common Services Organization. This body is controlled jointly by the governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and is responsible for communications, transport and other services common to the three countries.

PERSONALIA

Herman Müller, President of the Swiss Union of Public Service Workers since 1958, celebrates his sixtieth birthday on 21 August.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan: Karachi Port Trust Employees staged a 24-hour token strike on 27 July in support of claims for improved conditions.

Denmark: the Danish shipowners' association is considering inviting seafarers' unions to discuss the possibility of trying out the "alternation" system of manning, along the lines of experiments being made in Norwegian vessels, where deck and engine room crew members may be required to work in either department.

Finnish seamen and officers of vessels in the Vietnam area are to receive a 100% bonus on all earnings.

Colombia: the ITF-affiliated "Avianca" Workers' Union reports that a serious dispute threatens in its negotiations on a pay claim; the airline is refusing any increase on the grounds that it cannot afford to pay.

COST OF LIVING  
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January 1963 - 100

Netherlands - June 1965 - 113.08 points.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS  
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Special Road Transport Workers' Section Conference - London, 20, 21 October 1965  
Executive Board - London, 16-18 November 1965  
Asian Seamen's Committee - London, 24-26 November 1965.