

ITF NEWSLETTER

INFORMATIONS

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INFORMATIONSBLAD

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NEWS ABOUT THE ITF

New ITF actions against flag-of-convenience vessels

Six tankers and two general cargo ships operating on a flag-of-convenience basis were recently brought under ITF agreements covering wages, conditions and trade union membership, as the result of three boycott actions taken in Sweden and Finland. The boycotts were part of the stepped-up campaign against flag-of-convenience operators decided upon by the recent ITF Congress in Copenhagen.

First the Swedish vessel Bromalm was stopped in the port of Gothenburg by a combined action under ITF auspices and organized jointly by the Swedish Seamen's and Transport Workers' Union (the latter includes Swedish dockers among its membership). The Bromalm had recently been sold to a Greek owner, but it was later learned that at the time of the sale arrangements were made for it to be immediately chartered by the former Swedish owner - thus evading normal shipowner responsibilities.

As a result of the boycott, implemented as soon as the Bromalm called at Gothenburg, an agreement was signed giving the crew British National Maritime Board wages and conditions and providing for payments by the owner to the ITF's International Seafarers' Welfare Fund.

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In the case of the second boycott, carried out in Helsinki, the Finnish vessel Wirma was sold to the Italian company AGEMAR, renamed San Nicolas, and registered in Liberia. Her crew complement was entirely Italian. When the case was referred to ITF headquarters by the Finnish Seamen's Union, contact was made with the Italian Seamen's Union FILM-CISL and subsequent investigations established that the company operated five further ships under Panlibhon flags.

The owners were immediately informed that unless agreements were signed for all six ships, the San Nicolas would be held indefinitely in the Port of Helsinki. As a result of the negotiations which followed with company representatives in both Genoa and at ITF headquarters in London, a regular union agreement was signed with FILM-CISL and agreement was also reached on Welfare Fund payments for all six vessels. All contracts were finalized on 25 August and the San Nicolas was released by the Finnish Seamen's Union.

The vessels here were the San Nicolas, Phinix, Pampa, Mar del Plata, Gauchito and Olivos. All were under the Liberian flag.

The third boycott, also called by the Finnish Seamen's Union, was against the Golar Fruit, flying the Liberian flag and owned by the Stockholm-based Salén Company. After an agreement was signed guaranteeing British NMB wages for the ship's crew of 42 and providing for shipowner payments into the International Seafarers' Welfare Fund, the Golar Fruit was also released.

RAILWAYMEN

CANADA

Non-op unions get important health and welfare agreement

Fifteen unions organizing non-operating railway personnel in Canada recently negotiated a supplementary agreement on health and welfare benefits with the Canadian railways. Under the agreement an employee participating in the benefits scheme is entitled to a weekly indemnity of \$50 maximum for wage loss on account of sickness or non-occupational accidents and is life-insured. The scheme is to be administered jointly by the unions and employers. A twelve-man administrative committee consists of six members for each side. It is to be financed by equal contributions from employees and the railways, with the proviso that when funds exceed \$300,000 the excess should be used to reduce premiums.

GERMANY

Railwaymen's Union protests against closure proposals

The National Executive of the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) has called for a stop to reductions in railway services. The Union is concerned at the intention of the German Federal Railway to operate parcels and wagon freight traffic on a more centralized basis, as this would involve the large scale closure of small forwarding stations outside the areas of large traffic concentration. Collection and distribution services in the districts affected would have to be transferred to private road haulage operators, who have already declared that they will be unable to take over unprofitable transport operations without subsidization from public funds. The saving made by the Federal Railway in abandoning these services would be paid for by the nation, just as the deficit resulting from their retention would have been covered from public funds, the GdED claims.

GREAT BRITAIN

Unions obtain Rail Board reaction on pay claim

Leaders of Britain's railwaymen's unions are at present studying the outline of a plan put to them on 20 August by the Chairman of the British Railways Board for phased wage increases, the introduction of the 40 hour week by April 1966, additional leave and pension improvements. The pay increases proposed in the plan fall short of what the unions had demanded, as also the date scheduled for reducing working hours.

NUR Executive rejects liner trains recommendations

The Executive Committee of the National Union of Railwaymen has rejected a recommendation of the Union's Negotiating Committee on terms under which the Railways Board's plan to introduce liner trains -- fast freight trains to be operated regularly between major centres -- could be accepted. The Negotiating Committee had recommended acceptance of the liner trains plan on condition that they be run for a year on an experimental basis, that a joint NUR-Railways Board working party be set up to keep the project under observation and that within three months of their introduction the NUR and the Railways Board review arrangements for their operation.

KENYA

Unified organization for Common Services' employees

Three Kenyan unions catering for employees of the East African Common Services' Organization (EACSO) have decided to form a unified body. Among them is the ITF-affiliated Railway African Union, the other two being the Union of Post and Telecommunications Employees and the Common Services' African Civil Servants' Union. A fourth union catering for customs officials, also employed by EACSO, has been invited to participate in the drafting of a constitution for the new organization.

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

GREAT BRITAIN

Extra week's leave for British Road Services staff

The ITF-affiliated British Transport & General Workers' Union announces that agreement has been reached that British Road Services staff who have not less than ten years' service on the 1st of January in any year (commencing with 1966) will receive one additional week's holiday with pay. This will make a total entitlement of 18 working days for the 5¹/₂- or 6-day worker, or fifteen days for the five-day worker.

NORWAY

Taxi drivers seek increased pay

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Transport Workers' Union is claiming higher pay for its taxi membership in Oslo, Baerum, Asker and Bergen. The claims are currently being prosecuted within the National Wages Council.

The principal demand being made on behalf of taxi drivers in the capital is that weekly rates should be increased by kr. 20.70 (a krone equals one shilling or 14 US cents). Of this increase, kr. 16.20 represents compensation for rises in the cost-of-living index since the last taxi agreement was signed. The Transport Workers' Union points out that when this was negotiated, it was not in line with agreements in other industries concluded at the same time owing to the introduction of mutually-agreed pension arrangements for taxi drivers. This meant that the agreement was concluded for a shorter period than the other contracts and also did not cover either general or cost-of-living rises during its period of validity. The current claim is therefore being submitted in order to bring the taxi men up to the same level as other workers.

The union is also asking for a special allowance of kr. 15 per shift for night duty and an increase from kr. 20 to kr. 30 per shift in the bonus paid for work performed on public holidays. A further claim is for the establishment of a permanent Personnel Committee for the taxi industry consisting of two representatives from each side.

PORTWORKERS

GREAT BRITAIN

First step towards implementing the Devlin recommendations

The British port industry has taken an important step towards implementing the recommendations of the Devlin Committee of Inquiry into the working of the docks, outlined in the last Newsletter (No.16, 19 August 1965). The National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry, on which dock unions and employers are represented, has agreed on a policy directive providing a basis on which work may proceed to give effect to recommendations made in the Devlin Report. The directive contains the following eight points:

1. The preservation of the principles of the Dock Labour Scheme;
2. The establishment of all employment on a weekly basis;
3. The development of an adequate sick pay scheme and a review by the National Joint Council of pension arrangements;
4. The establishment of a satisfactory standard of amenities;
5. The acceptance by employers and dock workers of the principle of transferability of men on a temporary basis between employers;
6. The acceptance by the dock workers of the principle of work sharing;
7. The abolition of restrictions which have been essentially a feature of the casual method of employment;
8. The pledge that the modernization agreement will not lead to redundancy.

The Council has also decided to set up a National Modernization Committee which will consist of six members each for unions and employers and, in addition, three independent members, of whom the Chairman would be one.

Soon after the publication of the Devlin Report the Transport and General Workers' Union, which is the largest organization catering for dock workers in Britain, issued a broadsheet to its 65,000 members in the docks, explaining the Report and outlining objectives which the Union will press for in the negotiations to come. The Broadsheet, entitled "What Devlin means", calls for an end to the system of casual employment still practised in Britain's docks and declares: "Now is the time to replace it with a system of high earnings, based on a high guaranteed wage, and regular employment."

PAKISTAN

ITF support for Port Trust Workers

ITF General Secretary Hans Imhof has cabled the Karachi Port Trust Authority and urged it to effect a speedy settlement of outstanding claims submitted by the ITF-affiliated Karachi Port Trust Workers' Organization.

The union claims -- for increases in basic salaries and cost-of-living allowances, bonuses and overtime rates -- were made as long ago as November 1964. The issues in dispute were finally submitted to conciliation, but on 13 July last, following months of talks, the conciliation officer had to admit failure. A successful 24-hour protest stoppage was staged by our affiliate later the same month, but no progress was made in subsequent talks with management.

SEAFARERS

INTERNATIONAL

New collision-avoidance regulations now in force

Improved international rules designed to reduce the risk of collision at sea came into force on 1 September. Issued under the auspices of the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), they incorporate recommendations made by the 1960 International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea on which IMCO member-organizations reached "substantial unanimity" twelve months ago, thus enabling them to be given international effect.

The principal revisions are designed to take account of the use of radar by vessels navigating in restricted visibility and give guidance on the proper utilization of radar and of the information which it provides in order to prevent collisions at sea. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the utilization of radar information does not relieve vessels of the obligation to make the required sound signals and to proceed at moderate speed in poor visibility conditions.

DENMARK

Danish Radio Officers will strike this month

If current negotiations on a new agreement do not end in a satisfactory conclusion by 15 September, sea-going members of the ITF-affiliated Danish Radio Officers' Union will take strike action as from 00.00 hours on the same day.

Radio officers on board ships in Danish ports will leave work immediately, whilst those outside Denmark with at least twelve months' service will inform the ship's master of their intention to sign off and ask for free repatriation to Denmark, as they are entitled to do under the provisions of the Danish Seamen's Law. Others will sign off on completion of 12 months' service if the strike continues.

The reason for our affiliate's decision to call a national stoppage is the great disparity which now exists between the salaries of sea-going and shore-based Radio Officers. Originally, the employers had agreed that marine radio officers would be paid higher rates than those ashore because of their greater responsibilities in maintaining and operating the ship's radio equipment alone, and in ensuring radio safety at sea. In recent years, however, the employers have gone back on this agreement and there is now a gap of approximately Kr.600 (about £30 or US \$84) in monthly salaries in favour of the shore-based radio operator.

Information on the dispute was given to delegates at the recent Copenhagen Congress of the ITF. In the meantime, a conference of the Scandinavian Radio Officers' organizations has discussed the situation and has also pledged the fullest possible support to our affiliate if it is forced to implement its strike decision.

GREAT BRITAIN

British Radio Officers fight attempt to reduce radio safety

The ITF-affiliated British Radio Officers' Union (ROU) is strongly opposing proposals recently made to the Board of Trade by the Shipping Federation that vessels under 3,000 tons gross engaged in the North-East coastal coal trade should be exempted from the Merchant Shipping Radio Rules. This would mean that such vessels would not be required to carry a Radio Officer or be equipped with wireless telegraphy (W/T).

When the question was discussed at the latest meeting of the Ship's Wireless Working Party, on 23 July, the ROU produced evidence directly refuting the shipowners' claim that all communications between ship and shore in this

trade were carried on by radio-telephone. This statement, said our affiliate, was incorrect in substance and in fact. Investigations carried out by the union covering 35 vessels showed that on 27 of these wireless telegraphy was used as the normal method of communication. Only one in six ships investigated passed traffic by radio-telephone only and even in these cases link calls were usually initiated by W/T, because of the difficulties in establishing direct R/T calls in the present state of R/T congestion around the British coast.

The ROU also pointed to the fact that the safety service at sea would be gravely imperilled if radio-telephony were to be used as the sole means of communication. W/T, it said, was more efficient in bad conditions and there was no language difficulty involved. In distress cases, communications were conducted largely by W/T because of the Radio Officer's ability to read morse signals through interference - something which could not be done satisfactorily in the case of speech signals. Neither had there been any relevant advances in radio-telephony on such ships in recent years, as had been claimed by the Shipping Federation. VHF radio equipment had been introduced, but at the present time this had no value whatsoever for either normal communications or distress work.

It will be recalled that the ITF Congress in Copenhagen adopted a resolution expressing its concern at attempts to replace wireless telegraphy by radio-telephony and to dispense with specialist radio personnel on shipboard. Referring to the British situation, the resolution stated bluntly that the Shipping Federation's proposal would seriously impair safety of navigation and further reduce the distress signal network, already weakened by the closure of UK coastal direction-finding stations in recent years.

The ROU points out that it is significant that when the subject was discussed on 23 July, the shipowners tried to extend the discussion to cover all home trade and coastal vessels. This was rejected out of hand by our affiliate.

NETHERLANDS

Dutch seafarers to sue shipping companies over manning

The ITF-affiliated Dutch Seafarers' and Fishermen's Union is taking legal action against five shipping firms which, it alleges, are not adhering to manning regulations for navigating officers laid down by collective agreement. The agreement states that in ships of 500 gross tons and over, at least three navigating officers must be carried, but our affiliate says that an increasing number of shipowners have been ignoring this provision.

The matter was taken up with the shipowners' organization and the Shipping Council in May last, and as a result a number of owners have now agreed to abide by the manning regulations. The five which are being sued have, however, refused to do so.

UNITED STATES

Agreement reached in US shipping strike

On 29 August, President Johnson announced that a settlement of the 75-day-old shipping strike in United States East coast and Gulf ports had been reached. The strike, which involved more than 100 vessels, had been called by three unions: the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA); the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (MMP) and the American Radio Association (ARA). All are ITF affiliates. As reported in the last issue of the ITF Newsletter, MEBA had already reached agreement on 17 September.

The main issue in the dispute had been the manning of automated ships and a panel, headed by Secretary of Labor, Willard Wirtz, and the President of the AFL-CIO, George Meany, had been set up to resolve this issue. No details of the settlement were given by President Johnson in his announcement, but he stated that "a firm basis had been laid for resolving manning disputes resulting from automation without interruption of operation".

The settlement is now subject to membership ratification.

FISHERMEN

GREAT BRITAIN

Overtime dispute in trawler fishing industry

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union has asked the British Minister of Labour to try to end the deadlock which exists between its trawler fishermen members and the employers over an overtime dispute. The union states that a settlement is a matter of urgency in view of the vital nature of the industry.

Our affiliate is seeking to establish the principle that fishermen, while having to work the long hours necessary on voyages, should qualify for overtime payments as is the case in other industries. It points out that this principle was conceded to British seafarers earlier this year, but that when the matter was raised in the National Joint Council for the Trawler Fishing Industry last month, there was complete failure to reach agreement.

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

FRANCE

Two-day strike by Air France pilots

Pilots employed by Air France took part in a 48-hour strike beginning at midnight on 31 August. The main point at issue is the pilots' contention that co-pilots should be able, from time to time, to take the left-hand seat in the cockpit, i.e. that of the Captain, in order to gain experience in handling aircraft - particularly during take-off and landing. This is not officially permitted under present Air France regulations and the pilots believe that this represents a severe restriction on the training and qualifications of co-pilots.

UNITED STATES

IAM wins joint negotiations with airlines

The ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists last month reached agreement with five major US airlines under which joint contract negotiations will be conducted. The agreement is considered as a first step towards industry-wide collective bargaining, a goal which was set by the recent IAM Convention.

The airlines covered by the agreement are United, Trans World, Eastern, National and Northwest. The new system will be implemented on 1 October, when the IAM and the airlines will exchange contract proposals. Two weeks later bargaining will begin on local issues with individual airlines for a maximum of three weeks. Then, on 15 November, national negotiators will meet for discussions covering rates of pay and progression, annual leave, health and welfare plans, overtime rules, pensions, hours of service, licensing requirements, etc. Unresolved issues will be referred to the National Mediation Board after four weeks.

PERSONALIA

Thomas W. Gleason, President of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association, has been selected as one of the two recipients of this year's Greater New York Union Label Award of Merit.

P. Lennon and T. Cavanagh, both leading officials of the ITF-affiliated Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union have been elected as Vice-President and General Secretary respectively of the TUC of Rhodesia.

Clarence N. Sayen, former President of the US Airline Pilots' Association and of the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations, was among the victims of the recent United Air Lines jet crash at Lake Michigan. He was at one time a very active member of the ITF Civil Aviation Section. The General Secretary has sent messages of sympathy to both ALPA and IFALPA.

Broer Smeding, until 1937 a leading official of the former Netherlands Central Union of Transport Workers, died in Amsterdam on 10 August at the age of 90.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belgian railwaymen had their pay increased by 2.5% on 1 August 1965, following a rise in the cost of living. The same increase applies to pensions.

More British air hostesses are to be recruited by BEA. The Corporation is beginning an intensive campaign to fill vacancies resulting from the introduction of the Trident jet. Target is 600 recruits per year.

Buenos Aires port railwaymen struck work on 30 August in protest against a decree ending the autonomy of the Port Administration Office and placing it under the jurisdiction of the Customs Bureau. The railwaymen were supported by white-collar employees of the Port Administration.

Canadian railway workers have successfully fought off an attempt by the Canadian National Railways to deprive them of the full benefits of the new national Canada Pension Plan. Instead of being integrated with railway pensions as the company had proposed, the national pension will now be added to these.

French railwaymen are to get a pay increase of 4% on 1 October 1965.

Italy Negotiations in progress between the Italian railwaymen's unions and the railways management have been concerned with problems of trade union freedom in the Italian railway industry. The unions decided to institute a 'round table' which would enable them to discuss their respective points of view and harmonize their approach to the management on these and other questions. They have already reached agreement in principle on matters concerning the unrestricted right of Italian railwaymen to strike, which is the subject of the present negotiations with the railways management.

New South Wales (Australia) state transport workers staged a 24-hour strike from midnight on 29 August. This is the second 24-hour strike within two months in support of union claims for higher pay.

Swedish seafarers' organizations and the Shipping Federation are due to resume negotiations at the end of this week on claims for higher war risk bonuses for vessels entering the Vietnam war area or its immediate vicinity.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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| Special Conference of the Road
Transport Workers' Section | - London, 20-21 October 1965 |
| Fair Practices Committee | - Venue not yet fixed,
11-13 November, 1965 |
| Management Committee | - London, 15 November, 1965 |
| Executive Board | - London, 16-18 November,
1965 |
| Asian Seamen's Committee | - London, 24-26 November,
1965 |