

ITF

NEWSLETTER

INFORMATIONS

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INFORMATIONSBLAD

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ABOUT THE ITF

Executive Board Meets

The ITF Executive Board met in London from 16 to 18 November. Present were G. Alink (Netherlands), Z. Barash (Israel), D. Beattie (USA), R. Degris (France), R. Dekeyzer (Belgium), H. Düby (Switzerland, President), J. Elliott (USA), S. Greene (Great Britain), F. Hall (Canada), G. Hauge (Norway), H. Hernández (Venezuela), R. Kamisawa (Japan), A. M'Baye (Senegal), H. Nicholas (Great Britain), R. Oca (Philippines), A. Okon (Nigeria), H. Pettersson (Sweden, Vice-President), P. Seibert (Germany), W. Smith (Canada), E. Tolosa (Argentina). Fritz Prechtl of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union and Gerhard Kugoth of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union were co-opted as members to replace the late Josef Matejcek and Heinz Kluncker (who had resigned) from the same organizations.

Most of the meeting was given over to a wide-ranging review of the ITF's activities to see whether changes were needed in policy or practice to make even better use of the means at the ITF's disposal. These discussions are to be continued at further meetings both of the Management Committee and Executive Board.

The Board also decided to give the ITF's full backing to the All Japan Seamen's Union in the likely event of a strike from 27 November. The union sought the ITF's help in anticipation of being forced to extend the strike to Japanese vessels in foreign ports. (See item on page 199 of this issue).

Applications for affiliation were accepted from the (South) Vietnamese Transport Workers' Federation and the Argentinian Merchant Marine Captains' and Officers' Union. Other applications from India, Nigeria and the Congo (Leopoldville) were accepted subject to the completion of certain formalities.

The Board unanimously endorsed the Fair Practices Committee's decision to intensify the ITF's campaign against flags of convenience (see next item).

Fair Practices Committee meets

At a meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee, held in London on 11 and 12 November, representatives of the ITF-affiliated seafarers' and dockers' unions (from Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States) considered policy against flag-of-convenience ships. The following statement was adopted:

"This ITF Committee for the Promotion of Fair Practices, meeting in London on 11 and 12 November, 1965,

Having given detailed consideration to the overall ITF policy relative to flag-of-convenience ships,

REAFFIRMS the belief that the existence and continuing increase in the amount of merchant tonnage so registered constitutes a grave threat to the best interests of dockers and seafarers;

AGAIN APPEALS to the governments of maritime nations and the appropriate international agencies urgently to work towards the definition and implementation of the principles of the Genuine Link embodied in the United Nations Conventions on the Regime of the High Seas; and

DECLARES the intention of the ITF to intensify its campaign both to have these ships re-registered in countries observing all these principles and to obtain the appropriate agreements for the protection of the seafarers serving in them, by boycott programmes, legislative action and direct approaches to shipowners."

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

BELGIUM

Tram conductors' bonus

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Tramwaymen's Union has negotiated a new bonus arrangement for conductors, who have to sell books of tickets for several journeys as well as single tickets.

Originally each conductor received a bonus based on the number of booklets he sold, but because the pressure of work is increasing and more and more vehicles are manned only by the driver some shops are now being allowed to sell ticket books and this resulted in a drop in the bonus. A new arrangement has therefore been negotiated under which each employee receives a daily bonus of 8 Fr. (just over 1s. or 16 US cents).

GREAT BRITAIN

Municipal busmen's bonus scheme agreed

Busmen employed by municipal transport undertakings outside London have ratified an agreement negotiated by unions including the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union. The agreement provides for weekly bonus payments of between 10s. and £1 10s. depending on length of service. Staff who are absent through unofficial strikes automatically lose all bonus entitlement for six months. They may appeal against such penalties to the national joint council for the industry, sitting under an independent chairman; union approval will be required before an appeal can be made.

Scottish private car and coach drivers' agreement

Members of the ITF-affiliated Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union employed as private car and coach drivers by the Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society have obtained the following improvements in working hours and overtime arrangements, effective 22 November 1965:

- The working week to be reduced from 44 to 42 hours;
- Time worked on Sunday within the working week to be paid at time and a half instead of time and a quarter;
- Time worked in excess of the normal working week to be paid at time and a half;
- Time worked on a rest day or on Sunday outside the normal working week to be paid at double time, with a minimum payment of four hours at double time;
- Six public holidays a year.

INLAND NAVIGATION WORKERS

FRANCE

Inland navigation workers' dispute

Crews of motorboats carrying hydrocarbons were called out on strike by the ITF-affiliated FO Federation of Dock and Allied Workers on 19, 20 and 21 November in support of claims for

improved pay, rest periods, annual leave and other working conditions. The union warns that unless a satisfactory settlement is reached by mid-December a further strike of unlimited duration will be called.

SEAFARERS

ARGENTINA

Strike settled with help of ITF mediation

The strike of Argentine engineer officers, which began on 2 September, ended on 30 September after agreement had been reached between the government and the unions according to a formula worked out with the help of the ITF, represented by J. Otero, ITF Regional Director for Latin America, and E. Tolosa, ITF Executive Board member, and the Argentine Transport Workers' Confederation (CATT), represented by Angel Bono of the ITF-affiliated Locomotivemen's Union La Fraternidad.

The engineers struck in protest against the application of a government decree redistributing authority on board ship. The back-to-work agreement provided for a three-day provisional stoppage in the first instance; no victimization of strikers; a joint committee on which the unions concerned would be represented to be set up to study the issue in dispute and to come to a decision within 90 days; the same committee would make an immediate ruling on the name by which the senior engineer officer was to be known, which had been one of the strike issues. On the latter point the joint committee decided that until the final recommendations were made the senior engineer officer would be known as Chief Engineer.

DENMARK

Negotiations with small shipowners

The ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union is negotiating with the association of small shipowners on new contracts for its members on board 300 small vessels. A warning strike is already in progress against five of these vessels, but it is hoped that agreement will be reached before it becomes necessary to call a general stoppage.

JAPAN

ITF Executive Board pledges full support in seamen's strike

On 22 November the executive of the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union decided to call a strike for an initial period of 10 days starting on 27 November. This follows a strike ballot

supported by 95% of the membership. The strike will affect about 900 ocean-going vessels to start with; however, negotiations for coastal shipping and fishing have also broken down and a decision on action to be taken in these sectors will be made soon..

The union is seeking substantial wage increases but the shipowners have so far offered only a very small proportion of what the union considers necessary. In addition some owners have acted in a provocative manner by refusing to operate the check-off arrangement provided for in the collective agreement, and the union is already on strike against these owners.

At its meeting last week the ITF Executive Board pledged its full support to the All-Japan Seamen's Union and has sent out an appeal to all affiliated seafarers' and dockers' unions to take what solidarity action they can.

SWITZERLAND

New agreement

The ITF-affiliated Commercial and Transport Workers' Union has obtained the following improvements in its contract with the Swiss Shipowners' Association:

The terms of the agreement may now be extended to cover deck and engineer officers if they so wish. Overtime rates are increased from 25% to 30% of the basic wage. Seafarers who have served 12 months with the same owner have their fares home paid when they take their annual leave. Victualling allowance of 5.50 Sw. Fr. a day will be paid when several days' accumulated leave are taken together, or in conjunction with annual leave. Sickness and accident pay, instead of being a lump sum as previously, is set at 100% of basic pay plus victualling allowance of 5.50 Fr. per day. Insurance cover for medical expenses is raised from 3,000 to 4,000 Fr. Personal effects insurance is increased by 50%, the new amounts being as follows: Deck, Engineer and Radio Officers, 2,250 Fr., Trainee Officer, Chief Steward and Assistant Engineer, 1,800 Fr., Carpenter, Boatswain, AB, Ordinary Seaman, Donkeyman/Storekeeper, Motorman, Oiler, Fireman, Cleaner, 2nd Steward, 1st and 2nd Cook, 1,200 Fr., Deckhand and Messboy, 750 Fr.

Minimum Pay has been increased by 8%. Below are the new basic monthly pay and hourly overtime rates:

	Monthly basic	Hourly overtime
1st officer, 2nd engineer		by special arrangement
2nd officer, 3rd engineer	Fr. 865.-	Fr. 5.60
3rd officer, radio officer, 4th engineer	755.-	4.90 Con.p.201

	Monthly basic	Hourly overtime
Boatswain, carpenter, donkeymen/ storekeeper, assistant engineer	595.-	3.85
Able Seaman, motorman, oiler, fireman	540.-	3.50
Ordinary Seaman	410.-	2.65
Deckhand	270.-	1.70
Chief Steward	620.-	3.45
2nd Steward	485.-	2.70
3rd Steward	410.-	2.30
Chief Cook	620.-	3.45
2nd Cook	485.-	2.70
Messboy	270.-	1.50

(There are 12.10 Sw. Fr. to £1 and 4.29 to US \$1.)

UNITED STATES

Masters, mates and pilots strike

The ITF-affiliated International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots called a strike on 19 November against owners belonging to the American Maritime Association, but the dispute was settled the following day when the latter agreed to apply the same 3.2% pay increase which had been agreed by shipowners in the American Merchant Marine Institute earlier this year.

Curran attacks safety measures on board Yarmouth Castle

Joseph Curran, President of the United States National Maritime Union, has stated that the 5,000 ton passenger ship Yarmouth Castle (Panamanian registry), which caught fire and sank on 13 November with the loss of 84 lives, was an example of ships operating under runaway flags to escape US safety standards. The union had described the ship as a fire trap three years before.

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

FRANCE

Air France strike

Members of the ITF-affiliated flying staff unions - pilots, navigators, engineers, stewards and stewardesses - went on strike against Air France on 24 November for four days. They are protesting against the company's refusal to grant them the 5.2% pay increase awarded to other Air France employees, as it is bound to do under the terms of an agreement dating from 1958.

SWITZERLAND

Improved pay for Swissair ground staff

Ground staff of Swissair, belonging to the ITF-affiliated Public Service Workers' Union, have obtained a flat-rate increase of 36.80 Fr., on top of which is added a 4% increase by way of compensation for increases in the cost of living. (An additional lump sum equal to 6% of one month's salary is being paid in December to "catch up" with the cost of living figures which outstripped estimates earlier in the year.)

Further improvements have been obtained as follows: minimum monthly pay for a married employee with family responsibilities is raised from 734.40 to 833.80 Fr.; pay for juniors up to the end of their 19th year is increased from 325 to 375 Fr., with a minimum annual increment of 30 Fr. per month (previously 25 Fr.). Juniors who have completed their training get a minimum of 725 Fr. instead of 650 Fr.

The Christmas bonus is gradually being transformed into a thirteenth month's salary in the following manner: a lump sum is paid of 450 Fr. for married employees, 150 Fr. for single employees and 200 Fr. for single employees with dependants. To this is added an annual increment of 5% of a month's salary for each year's service, subject to a minimum of 40 Fr.

GENERAL

SWEDEN

Employers turn down LO claims

In the negotiations for next year's wage increases, the Swedish Employers' Confederation has turned down point-blank the LO's

claims and demanded that the current agreement be prolonged. The LO (national trade union centre) is seeking a general increase of 6%, with a minimum increase of 55 øre per hour, but up to 20% for certain groups of particularly low-paid workers. New talks have been arranged for 25 November to try to break the deadlock.

TRADE UNION RIGHTS

SPAIN

New strike legislation

The Cortés (Spanish parliament) has passed an amendment to the law which made strikes acts of treason. The new provision states that labour conflicts which have no political ends and which do not upset the normal activity of the state will no longer be subject to the penalties for sedition.

PERSONALIA

Einar Haugen, Vice-President of the Norwegian Seamen's Union, and Chairman of the ITF Fishermen's Section, celebrated his sixtieth birthday on 22 November.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Finland: the free trade union centre SAJ is recommending a general wage increase of 9% as the aim for its affiliated unions, together with a cut in the working week from 45 to 44 hours.

German established public servants including railway employees have been offered two pay increases of 4% with effect from 1 January and 1 October 1966 in reply to their claim for at least 12%. The German Railwaymen's Union has stated that this is quite unacceptable.

Japanese private railway workers plan a series of strikes in support of claims for shorter working hours and later retirement. The first stoppage will be from departure time of the first train on 2 December until 10 a.m., the second on 5 December until 12 noon, and the third for 24 hours on 15 December.

Rhodesia: African railway workers went on strike in Bulawayo on 18 November in protest against the rebel white regime.

United States: the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has obtained a flat-rate bonus of \$1.25 for each tour of duty on which its members employed by the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton railway have to operate engines with radio or radio-telephone equipment.

LATE ITEM

INTERNATIONAL

ITF Asian Seamen's Committee meets in London

A meeting of the ITF Asian Seamen's Committee was held at the Charing Cross Hotel in London on 24 and 25 November under the chairmanship of Capt. D.S. Tennant. Present at the meeting were Messrs. E. Berthelsen and S. From Andersen (Denmark); H. Hildebrand and H. Wiemers (Germany); W. Hogarth, W. Marshall, T. Sutton, T. Goff and J.W. Slater (Great Britain); B. Majumder (India); R. Kamisawa (Japan); Ch. van Zuylen (Netherlands); T. Sønsteby (Norway); J. Thore (Sweden), together with H. Imhof (General Secretary); L. White (Assistant General Secretary); and C. Blyth (ITF Representative in Hong Kong).

In an extensive review of present policy, the Committee gave particular attention to the situation which has resulted from changes in the pattern of maritime trade since the Second World War. These changes have led to the employment of Asian seafarers -- often at sub-standard rates and conditions and without the protection of trade union organization -- on routes where ships were formerly not so manned.

In view of the increasing threat which these developments imply for seafarers' standards throughout the world, the Committee agreed to recommend to the ITF Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections certain proposals for meeting and dealing with this threat. The proposals will be considered by meetings of the two Sections, including a joint conference, to be held from 28 to 31 March in Hamburg. An early meeting will also be sought with the International Shipping Federation, at which shipowners' representatives will be informed of the broad lines of the policy worked out by the Asian Seamen's Committee and the measures which the ITF proposes to take in order to implement it.

Action will also be initiated at international level in order to remind governments of the responsibilities which ILO Member-States have under ILO Recommendation No. 107 concerning the engagement of seafarers for service in vessels registered in a foreign country. This states inter alia that each Member should be everything in its power to discourage seafarers within its territory from joining or agreeing to join vessels registered in a foreign country unless the conditions under which such seafarers are engaged are generally equivalent to those applicable under collective agreements and social standards accepted by bona fide organizations of shipowners and seafarers of maritime countries where such agreements and standards are traditionally observed.

The Committee also gave detailed consideration to a report on the current situation with regard to the recruitment, employment and trade union organization of seafarers in Hong Kong, presented by the ITF's Representative in the Colony. The

Committee noted with satisfaction that the government-controlled Seamen's Recruitment Office is now expected to begin registering seamen in January 1966 and to supply crews to ships during the following month. It was felt that the introduction of this scheme, if properly implemented and supervised, could do a great deal towards regularizing the chaotic conditions which exist in Hong Kong in the field of seamen's recruitment and engagement. However, since the scheme is open to the possibility of abuse because it makes provision for the licensing of individual shipping companies to supply their own crews, the Committee recommended that a close watch should be kept by the ITF Representative on the working of the Recruitment Office, once it becomes effective.

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