

# ITF NEWSLETTER INFORMATIONS INFORMATIONEN INFORMATIONSBLAD

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## ABOUT THE ITF

### THE AMERICAS

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#### ITF representatives participate in OAS conference

Humberto Hernandez, one of the two Latin American members of the ITF Executive Board and Jack Otero, Director of our Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean Area, took part in the Second Inter-American Conference of Labour Ministers on the "Alliance for Progress" which was held in the vicinity of Caracas, Venezuela from 7 to 14 May under the auspices of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Among the subjects discussed at the Conference were the promotion and coordination of national programmes designed to increase productivity with the direct participation of workers' organizations, and the participation of democratic trade union organizations in national planning and social development.

### GREAT BRITAIN

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#### ITF pledges full support to British seamen's struggle

Britain's first national strike of seamen for over half a century (the last was in 1911) got off to a highly successful start at midnight on 15 May. Within a few hours, the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen was able to report that every message which it had received from its branches was of 100 per cent support for the union's fight to achieve higher pay and shorter working hours.



The strike aboard ships already in British ports is total and more and more seamen will join the movement as vessels arrive back in Britain after completing their voyages. Latest reports indicate that over 500 ships are tied up and that more than 13,000 union members are on strike benefit. Many other British unions have assured the seamen of their support and numerous messages pledging international solidarity by ITF-affiliated seafarers' and dockers' organizations have been received by both the NUS and the ITF Secretariat.

The dispute stems from dissatisfaction with the implementation by shipowners of the agreement which the NUS signed in March 1965. This gave the seamen a lump sum increase in their consolidated rates as compensation for up to eight hours' work each on Saturdays and Sundays at sea. This was, however, considered as a theoretical maximum only. The spirit of the agreement was clear enough. Weekend work at sea was to be severely limited to watch-keeping and essential duties, and the 40-hour week was to be applied to the greatest possible extent while at sea and in any case while in port.

A number of shipowners, however, used the fact that the agreement provided for a theoretical 56-hour week to invent work on Saturdays and Sundays. It was this attitude which caused widespread resentment among the NUS membership and decided the union to submit a fresh claim which called for the introduction of the 40-hour week with no reduction in the consolidated rate negotiated in March 1965.

In the negotiations which followed, the union rejected a counter-offer by the shipowners which in essence provided for the introduction of the 40-hour week in three annual stages coupled with direct overtime pay for work at weekends and on public holidays, also in three annual stages. The shipowners, however, also wanted a three-year wage freeze and withdrawal of the existing Sunday-at-sea Leave Agreement, which would have meant an average loss of 37 days' paid compensatory leave per year.

It was their failure to improve on this offer which decided the union to take strike action, despite last-minute intervention by both the Minister of Labour and the Prime Minister.

The union has since indicated that it is willing to consider an improved offer from the shipowners, as an immediate interim measure, coupled with a full Government inquiry into seamen's pay and conditions. The Minister of Labour is expected to intervene within the next few days and try to promote a settlement between the two parties. NUS General Secretary, Bill Hogarth, has however warned the Prime Minister of the very grave consequences of intervention by the Royal Navy in the dispute. (Mr. Wilson had hinted that the Royal Navy might be used to keep essential supplies moving if the ports became badly congested, as is expected to happen within the week if no settlement is reached to make a return to work possible). Hogarth has said that the NUS is not going to be used as a chopping block to force through a prices and incomes policy and that: "If the gauntlet is thrown down our members will not be backward in accepting the challenge."

The ITF General Secretary, Hans Imhof, sent the following message to the National Union of Seamen shortly after the strike started:

On behalf of millions of transport workers throughout the world, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) declares its unequivocal support for the striking British seamen of the N.U.S. The seafarers' and dockers' affiliates of the ITF have expressed their support and solidarity in an unprecedented fashion; by letter and telegrams to both the N.U.S. and I.T.F. headquarters they have shown their readiness to assist British seamen in their strike for better conditions. The National Maritime Union of America, the US International Longshoremen's Association, the Norwegian Transport Workers' Federation, the Norwegian Seamen's Union, the Belgian Transport Workers' Union, the Danish Radio Officers' Union, the Finnish Seamen's Union, the National Union of Seamen of India, the Maritime Union of India, the Swedish Seamen's Union, the Swedish Ship Officers' Association are only a few of the unions who have sprung to the side of the N.U.S. This is concrete evidence of what international solidarity means when an affiliate has chosen to use the ultimate weapon in the hands of labour.

The British shipowners have for too long ignored the seamen who man their ships, for too long they have clung to outdated practices in human relations which have forced the seamen to work under conditions far inferior to their fellow workers ashore. They now add insult to injury by refusing to pay a decent wage for a 40 hour week.

The shipowners' case, if they have any case at all, rests on a myth. The British seamen are amongst the poorest paid in Europe - as a look at the rates of pay for Continental seamen will show. The Danes, for example, work a 45 hour week for £74 a month; the Swedes, for the same hours, earn £77 a month, and the Germans are paid £64 a month. Why should the British seamen, long recognised as being the best in the world, work 56 hours for less than £60 a month?

Make no mistake when I say to you that the seamen of the entire world are united in the struggle to put you, the British seamen - the heroes in war but the forgotten men in peace - on an equal footing with your fellow workers ashore.

TRANSPORT WORKERS (GENERAL)

FRANCE  
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Transport workers join national strike for higher pay

Transport workers played a prominent part in the national stoppage called by the French trade union centres on 17 May to further their struggle for higher pay and improved working conditions. The

unions are protesting against the French government's policy of limiting pay increases to five per cent, despite the fact that the cost of living has risen to a far greater extent.

Some two million public service workers, supported by workers in several private industries, took part in the stoppage, which lasted from midnight on 17 May to 0600 hours on the 18th. Among them were practically all groups of public transport employees, including railwaymen, busmen, taxi drivers, Métro workers, and airline staff. The strike was one of the biggest public demonstrations by French workers since the end of the war.

RAILWAYMEN

CANADA  
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Dispute over manning of turbine-powered train

A conflict is reported to be developing in Canada over whether a new 160 mph turbine-powered train, planned for early introduction by the Canadian National Railways, should carry a locomotive fireman. The company is claiming that the new train, which will operate between Toronto and Montreal, should be considered as a self-propelled unit and does not therefore require a fireman in the cab. The firemen's union is disputing this and states that it may have to seek arbitration of the issue, if the CNR insists on its definition.

GERMANY  
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German Railwaymen's Union wins working time improvements

Some 110,000 railwaymen employed in operating and train service on the German Federal Railways will benefit from a new regulation of their working time which takes effect on 22 May.

Under it, one hour of the turn-round time of operating staff and also one hour of the stand-by time included in a duty shift will now be counted as working time.

The new regulation has its origins in a parliamentary intervention by Philipp Seibert, President of the ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union. The union considers it as a first step towards a complete overhaul of stipulations on railwaymen's working time, which will bring these more into line with modern standards. At present, railwaymen can be required to work a maximum of 54 hours per week.

Rail negotiations continue

Negotiations on the ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union's claim for a nine per cent increase in wages and salaries and the staged introduction of the 40-hour week were resumed earlier this week after two previous rounds of discussion had failed to result in an agreement. During the most recent

negotiations, the union rejected an offer by the Federal Railways to increase wages and salaries by five per cent from 1 April last, with a further two per cent from 1 January 1967.

GREAT BRITAIN  
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#### Investigation of railwaymen's pay to begin

An examination of pay structure on British Railways and of ways to increase productivity is to begin as soon as possible. This was announced after a recent meeting attended by leaders of the railway unions, the Minister of Transport, representatives of the British Railways Board, and held under the chairmanship of the Minister of Labour. The proposed investigation was promised by the Government last February, when the ITF-affiliated National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) called off its strike threat. NUR General Secretary, Sidney Greene, has said: "We are hoping that the same enthusiasm as was shown in modernizing the railways will be shown in modernizing the pay and promotion structure."

JAPAN  
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#### Threat to Japanese railwaymen's right to strike

The Japanese Ministry of Transport has submitted proposals to the next session of the Japanese Diet in December under which the right to strike at present enjoyed by railwaymen would be seriously curtailed.

At present all aspects of railway operations are governed by the Railway Operations Act of 1900. The Act has been amended in part four times since then. The present amendment proposals would revise the Act by inter alia providing more severe penalties in the case of railwaymen who "do not carry out their duties for adequate reasons". If accepted, they would be a direct blow against the Japanese railwaymen's right to strike.

The question of the revision of the Railway Operations Act became acute in recent years in connection with the rewriting of the various Acts in the transport field, the provisions of which were in conflict with ILO Convention No. 87 (on which trade unions base their claim to the right to strike).

In 1960, proposals to revise the Act to provide a maximum prison sentence of one year or a fine of ¥20,000 (about £20) were approved by the Cabinet, but no action was taken. In 1963 a special Committee was set up to study the Act and submitted a "comprehensive revision draft" at the end of March, 1965. The present version proposals, with their punitive clauses, are largely based on the Committee's draft.

UNITED STATES  
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Firemen & Enginemen to appeal against strike ban

The ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen have announced that they intend to fight a decision by a US District Court Judge which institutes a permanent injunction against strikes by rail unions aimed at restoring some 25,000 jobs which were eliminated by a 1964 Presidential arbitration board. The injunction not only applies to firemen's jobs but also to the Switchmen, Conductors & Brakemen, and Railroad Trainmen, all of which had members who were affected by the 1964 arbitration order.

The District Court judgement resulted from a petition by a number of major railway companies. The BLF & E contended that the two-year arbitration award had now expired and that previously-existing work rules were effective again. The judge ruled, however, that the positions eliminated in 1964 were "permanently abolished".

The BLF & E's President, H.E. Gilbert, commented that the ruling amounted to a "shocking disregard of past precedent and principles of the Railway Labor Act". It virtually abolished collective bargaining on the railways, he said.

ROAD AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT WORKERS

GREAT BRITAIN  
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More pay and shorter hours for British lorry drivers

The British Minister of Labour has now decided to make an Order giving effect to the improvements in lorry drivers' pay and hours which were proposed by the Road Haulage Wages Council earlier this year (see Newsletter No. 5 of 3 March).

Under the Order, which is expected to come into force in mid-June, minimum rates will be increased by three per cent, overtime pay will be at time and a half instead of time and a quarter, and working hours will be cut from 42 to 41 per week.

UNITED STATES  
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New York taxi drivers strike for higher meter commission

Some 18,000 drivers who belong to the AFL-CIO Taxi Drivers' Organizing Committee (TDOC) went on strike earlier this month in protest against their employers' refusal to submit a dispute over the granting of higher meter commissions to arbitration. Nearly seven thousand cabs operated in company fleets were affected, and some 5,000 owner-drivers have also been cooperating with the TDOC.

The commission issue was first raised during contract negotiations which began last February. The TDOC points out that the average driver earns meter commissions of \$58 for a five-day week and \$70 if he works six days. Tips add \$35 to \$40 a week, but only if the driver works between ten and 14 hours a day.

The Committee is claiming an increase in the commission rate from 44 to 50 per cent of meter bookings. This would mean an extra \$1.80 per day for day drivers and \$2 for those on night work. The employers' negotiators, however, have rejected this, even refusing to consider an increase to 45 per cent, a rate already paid by some New York taxi firms.

The strike ended on 17 May, however, when the Mayor of New York City, John V. Lindsay, offered his services in settling the commission question. Other issues in dispute are also to be included in an eventual settlement. These include some form of pension plan, standard vacation periods, breakdown pay and life insurance.

(£1 = \$2.80; is = 14 US cents)

SEAFARERS
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INTERNATIONAL  
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India has deposited its Instrument of Acceptance of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1960. The acceptance will take effect on 28th May 1966.

MEXICO  
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Seamen to be covered by national social security system

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen, Firemen and Catering Personnel of Mexico has informed our Latin American Regional Office that an official memorandum prepared by the Mexican Government now proposes that seafarers should be included in the national social security system.

It will be recalled that earlier this year, the ITF wrote to the President of Mexico urging his personal intervention to ensure that seafarers were covered by such benefits, which already apply to all other groups of Mexican workers.

SWEDEN  
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Swedish seamen win 21.5 per cent pay rise

The Swedish Seamen's Union (an ITF affiliate) has now concluded a new wage agreement for its members, which provides for a wage increase of 21.5 per cent spread over three years. The agree-

ment takes effect from 1 February last.

This year, the increase, which applies to both basic rates and seniority increments, amounts to 11 per cent. From 1 February 1967, pay and increments go up by another 5.5 per cent and on 1 February 1968 by a further five per cent.

The new commencing rate for an A.B. goes up to kr. 1114 (£76. 16s. 6d.). After two years, it is kr. 1157 (£79 15s. 10d.); after five years, kr. 1184 (£81 13s. 0d.); and after ten years kr. 1212 (£83 11s. 7d.).

Present basic hours of work are 45 per week, with compensation in the form of time off in port for all hours in excess. As from 1 February, however, basic hours go down to 44; in 1968 they will be reduced to 43 and in 1969 to 42½, with compensation for hours worked over and above the new maxima.

The agreement also provides higher pay for those employed in so-called general service on board automated vessels. Boatswains and repairers receive supplements of kr. 200 per month, able seamen and motormen kr. 125, and all other ratings kr. 75.

#### Swedish pilots work to rule

Swedish ship pilots are working to rule in protest against the National Shipping and Navigation Board's attitude to their salary claim. In answer to the pilots' demands the Board quoted paragraph 16 in their regulations, which states: "The captain of a ship takes the responsibility for the navigation." The pilots have decided to interpret this literally and are acting only as advisers to masters, instead of giving direct orders from the bridge.

UNITED STATES  
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#### Temporary settlement in automated ship dispute

The ITF-affiliated Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA) is reported to have reached a provisional settlement on 6 May of its dispute with Lykes Bros. Inc. over the manning of the automated vessel "Elizabeth Lykes". The ship had been idle for 97 days as a result of the dispute. Lykes Bros. have now agreed to a provisional manning scale of one chief engineer and five engineers.

#### NMU may strike over crew cuts

Lykes Bros. is also one of the 6 companies in dispute with the ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union (NMU) of America over cuts in crews aboard automated cargo vessels. Negotiations on the question of manning for these vessels have now broken down and crews are due to strike on 24 May, unless a settlement is



reached in the meantime. NMU President, Joseph Curran, has said: "It is obvious that the companies expect seamen to pay the price of automating their ships."

CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS

ARGENTINA  
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Aerolineas Argentinas continues to victimize employees

Agreement was reached on 11 April between the ITF-affiliated Argentinian Transport Workers' Confederation (CATT) and Aerolineas Argentinas on terms under which negotiations for a new collective contract for the airline's ground staff could continue peacefully. Latest information is however that Aerolineas Argentinas continues to use strong arm methods against its employees, in violation of the agreement of 11 April, with reprisals against those who participated in the recent strikes.

BELGIUM  
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Sabena flight personnel to strike

Negotiations between unions representing Belgian pilots and navigating staff on the one hand and Sabena on the other for improvements in pay and conditions finally broke down on 17 May. The flight personnel, who are claiming an increase of 18 per cent in salaries, met immediately afterwards and voted overwhelmingly to strike. The strike begins at midday, 20 May, and will last for 48 hours.

UNITED STATES  
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Airlines found guilty of firing "over-age" stewardesses

In a new ruling by the New York State Human Rights Commission, two US airlines -- American and Trans World -- have been found guilty of dismissing three airline stewardesses on age grounds. The dismissals were described by the Commission as discriminatory and not based on their ability to do their jobs.

It will be recalled that in an earlier decision, the Commission recommended that airlines should be prohibited from grounding stewardesses before they reach normal retirement age. The latest ruling results from a case brought against the two airlines by the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union. After the ruling had been given, TWU officers said that the airlines could no longer dodge their responsibilities and demanded the immediate reinstatement of the three stewardesses -- two aged 33 and one aged 35 -- and all others who had been similarly victimized by discrimination.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Argentinian railwaymen held a 24-hour strike on 23 May to protest over Government delays in the payment of wages and pension benefits. The unions complain that some workers have not been paid their wages for April.

4,250 Canadian dockers at Montreal, Quebec and Trois Rivières have been on strike since 9 May over pay claims. The dockers are members of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association.

In Italy a number of strikes involving transport workers have taken place recently. On 12 May busmen, tramwaymen and suburban railwaymen staged a nation-wide 24-hour strike to demand negotiations for the renewal of their collective agreement. The dockers' unions called a 24-hour strike for 13 May and a ban on overtime to follow. On 21 May two air transport ground staffs' unions called a 4-day strike against Alitalia Airlines.

PERSONALIA

The Austrian Transport and Commercial Workers' Union has elected Johann Roposs as its new President and Karl Hosztynek as Vice President and General Secretary.

Rudolf Lindforss has retired as President of the Swedish Commerical Employees' Union, a post he had occupied since 1938.

Frank Sheehan, International Vice President of the Transport Workers' Union of America, died on 26 April at the age of 56. It is the second time this year that the unfortunate TWU has been plunged into mourning for one of its officers, the first shock having been the untimely death of late International President, Michael Quill. Sheehan was one of the major contributors to the TWU's record of courageous and inspiring leadership.

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\* We apologize for the late appearance \*  
\* of this Newsletter. The delay was \*  
\* caused by arrangements for ITF mee- \*  
\* tings, which had to take priority. \*  
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LATE ITEMS  
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Cyprus Airways workers requisitioned

The Government of Cyprus has ordered the mobilization of Cyprus Airways ground staff, following the decision of their union, the ITF-affiliated Cyprus Airways Employees' Trade Union, to call a strike over a dispute concerning the working hours of shift workers. The union questions legality of the 1946 defence regulations under which the mobilization order was made.

Swedish dockers pressing for improved contract

Swedish dockers represented by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union are pressing for amendments to the conciliation proposals made by a mediator in connection with the negotiations on new contracts in the transport field between the employers' associations and the Union.

On behalf of its docker members, the Swedish TWU is urging that the following improvements amongst others should be written into the new contract:

The regulations governing Sunday work to be amended so that work on this day may be done on a voluntary basis in conformity with former practice; and that Saturday work be compensated on the basis of "work done during inconvenient hours", which carries a supplement.

The Union is also not fully satisfied with all the new contract proposals as regards workshop staff employed by SAS.

British seamen's strike

The British government has declared a State of Emergency as a result of the strike of British seamen of whom, according to latest figures available, some 14,698 on 518 tied-up ships are now directly involved.

The declaration means that the government can bring into effect at a moment's notice some 30 Emergency Regulations as needed. These cover inter alia control of dock and port labour to ensure that ports do not become congested by tied-up British ships, thus preventing the unloading of foreign ships carrying food and raw materials for industry.

The strike, which is now in its second week, is extending as more and more vessels become tied up on arrival at a British port.

A meeting of union and shipowner representatives with the Minister of Labour on 23rd May did not appear to give rise to any hope of an early solution.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS  
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Railwaymen's Section Conference - Rome, 23-25 June 1966.