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IN THIS ISSUE: New ITF agreements for Panamanian ship crews (p. 9); ITF rejects "Les Routiers" pretensions (p. 10); Transport problems at the Economic Commission for Europe (p. 10); Liberia: Complaints to ILO (p. 11); Nigerian affiliates join forces (p. 12); ITF sponsors organization project in Venezuela (p. 12); UK action on ILO instruments for fishermen (p. 13); British unions demand bans on unsafe lorry operators (p. 13); Argentina: Union centre calls general strikes (p. 13); New contract for Canadian trainmen (p. 14); Danish seamen agree on alternation (p. 14); Great Britain: Wage freeze continues to block pay rises (p. 14); - Seamen's pay negotiations may be reorganized (p. 14); Bombay dock pilots strike over pay claim (p. 15); Israel: Pay increases for seamen and dockers (p. 15); Spain: International protest over anti-labour measures (p. 15); United States: Contract gains for "non-op" railmen, Philadelphia transit workers, seamen, New York tugmen; Labor Department bid to void NMU elections (p.15).

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

New ITF agreements for Panamanian ship crews

Three more flag-of-convenience vessels have been brought under ITF custodian agreements. They are the "Karin", "Chun An", and "Rauma", all flying the Panamanian flag. Agreements covering the crews of the "Karin" and the "Chun An", which were stopped in Swedish ports, were concluded on behalf of the ITF by the Swedish Seamen's Union, and the "Rauma" was dealt with by the Finnish Seamen's Union. Thanks to the good work of our Scandinavian affiliates, three more crews of runaway flag-vessels have been made members of the ITF Special Seafarers' Section and have been assured

wages and conditions in line with those enjoyed by unionized seafarers aboard ships flying bona-fide maritime flags.

EUROPE

ITF rejects "Les Routiers" pretensions

Road transport workers' organizations in Europe affiliated to the ITF have complained recently of attempts by a French organization, the "Confédération Nationale des Chauffeurs Routiers et des Salariés de France", to involve them in its activities. It should be made clear that the ITF, having made extensive inquiries, shares the opinion of its French road transport affiliate, the Fédération Nationale (FO) des Transports, that "Les Routiers" is not a bona-fide trade union organization, that collective bargaining and the defence of wage earners' interests are not its sole functions and that its links with the employers are altogether too close.

Any statement which may have been made by this organization that it has entered into relations with the ITF are untrue. The ITF similarly has not associated itself in any way with a recent attempt by "Les Routiers" to set up an international organization for road transport drivers. The legal and other assistance which "Les Routiers" claims to be able to make available to drivers in difficulties abroad is already assured by the system of mutual agreements between ITF affiliates which was worked out by the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section in 1958 and which has since successfully satisfied the need it was designed to meet.

Transport problems at the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

The Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) met from 16 to 19 January 1967 in Geneva. Twenty European countries and the USA, together with larger number of international organizations from the transport industry were represented. General Secretary, H. Imhof, and Head of the Research and Information Department, U. Hauser, attended for the ITF as official representatives of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). H. Raben, Director for international transport affairs in the Dutch Ministry of Transport, took the chair. A particularly extensive agenda dealt with problems of inland transport as a whole, the International Tourist Year 1967, the transport of dangerous goods, the new World Convention on Road Traffic, which is now in the drafting, and many other current questions.

Of particular interest was the discussion on the chances of an early entry into force of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), which was signed in 1962. These questions once again became current as a result of a Resolution adopted at the beginning of December 1966 by the European Conference of Transport Ministers (CEMT), after about three years during which the tendency seemed

to be to put the Agreement into cold storage, pending the promulgation of a set of regulations in the European Economic Community (EEC). The same divergence of opinion has also been in evidence in the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section in recent years. In spite of this there was always agreement on the broad principle, namely that international transport of passengers and freight must eventually be subject to a system of regulations in respect of the most important working conditions of professional drivers.

If the statements of many of the Government representatives at the Geneva meeting are to be taken seriously, it should be possible, with the holding of a special diplomatic conference, for the AETR to enter formally into force before the year is out. France, Holland, Spain and Yugoslavia have already ratified the Agreement, and it looks as though the Governments of Italy, Luxemburg and Switzerland may ratify it this year, whilst Belgium, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia are making the necessary preparations. The General Secretary of the ITF, when he addressed the meeting, pointed out the differences of opinion which existed in his organization and also the fact that various provisions of the AETR seemed to be somewhat out of date. In spite of this, he explained, an early entry into force of the AETR, as an international instrument for European road transport as a whole would be preferable to further delays. Improvements could be made in the AETR after it came into force, in close consultation with the EEC authorities.

In connection with the preparatory work in progress on a new World Convention on Road Traffic, the General Secretary made it known that his organization was currently working out certain proposals which would take account of the special interests of the professional driver.

During the discussion of the programme of work for 1967, the Working Party on Road Safety was, on the suggestion of the General Secretary, instructed to undertake preparatory studies with a view to establishing the conditions to be satisfied by holders of or applicants for the various types of driving licence, before the licences are issued.

During their stay in Geneva, the ITF delegates had discussions with officials at the International Labour Office (ILO) and the Geneva office of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and with the leaders of various international trade secretariats.

LIBERIA

Liberian Government reacts on ICFTU, ITS complaints to ILO

Since the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and two ITS's -- Miners (MIF) and Plantation and Agricultural Workers (IFPAAW) -- submitted complaints to the International Labour Organization (ILO) over the violation by Liberia of ILO

Conventions on freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, a Liberian Government mission has visited the head offices of the ICFTU and the ILO for consultations on issues raised by the complaints. Reports indicate that the situation which prompted them has eased somewhat, with the lifting of anti-labour emergency legislation and the release on bail of the jailed trade unionist, James Bass, leader of the Liberian Congress of Industrial Organizations.

In February last year the Government of Liberia adopted emergency legislation, under which trade unions could be banned if considered to be under outside influence and all unofficial strikes could be ruled as subversive. These measures, clearly designed to restrict the activities and development of the Liberian trade unions, have been causing grave concern in the international trade union movement.

NIGERIA

ITF affiliates join forces

All branches of ITF affiliates in Port Harcourt, an important industrial and maritime centre in Eastern Nigeria, have joined forces in an ITF Activity Committee. The branches concerned, which represent seamen, dockers and port clerical staff as well as land transport workers, will by coordinating their activities be able to exert a greater influence on the development of the democratic trade union movement in their area and to play a more important part in educational projects.

VENEZUELA

ITF sponsors union organization project

The ITF is assisting its Venezuelan affiliate, FEDETRANSPORTE, in the planning and execution of a large-scale trade union organization project designed to swell the ranks of organized transport workers in Venezuela and to create firmer and more effective links between FEDETRANSPORTE and its various regional and industrial groupings. The project includes a number of trade union leadership courses and other educational events. FEDETRANSPORTE and ITF representatives are to tour the country, holding meetings and discussions with local workers' groups and giving advice and assistance. It is hoped that the experience gained from this programme of activities will prove useful in planning similar projects elsewhere in Latin America.

TRANSPORT AND THE TRADE UNIONS

GREAT BRITAIN

UK Government action on ILO Instruments for fishermen

The United Kingdom Government has announced its intention to ratify ILO Convention No. 126, laying down minimum standards for crew accommodation on board fishing vessels. Recommendation No. 126 on the Vocational Training of Fishermen is to be accepted, subject to certain reservations. Ratification of Convention No. 125 on Fishermen's Certificates of Competency would require legislation to extend UK certification requirements to engineers, and the Government will consult with the employers' and workers' representatives before taking action. These three instruments were adopted at last year's International Labour Conference in Geneva. The participation of a strong delegation of ITF unions in the working out of these instruments helped to ensure that the standards they lay down in their final form will be of real benefit to fishermen.

Two unions demand bans on unsafe lorry operators

Two British affiliates of the ITF have demanded a change in the law to enable courts to take away haulage licences from firms which operate defective road vehicles. Under present legislation the British courts can only impose fines, but the United Road Transport Union and the Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union, representing 43,000 drivers, would like employers who run defective lorries to face the threat of being put out of business.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

ARGENTINA

Two general stoppages scheduled for March

The Argentinian Trade Union Confederation (CGT) has set dates for two general strikes to take place in March in protest against the Government's social and economic policies. The first is a 24-hour stoppage scheduled for 1 March, the second will begin on 21 March and will last 48 hours.

CANADA

Trainmen approve new contract

Canadian members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen have voted acceptance of a new agreement providing for a 24 per cent pay increase over three years and fringe benefits estimated to be worth a further 4 per cent.

DENMARK

Seamen conclude alternation agreement

The ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union has negotiated a special agreement with the shipowners providing for alternation of ratings between the deck and engine room on Danish ships. In return for their availability for work in either department, as required, the men get an alternation bonus of 100 Kroner per month.

GREAT BRITAIN

Wage freeze continues to block pay rises

Although the standstill imposed by the British Government on pay and prices officially ended at the close of 1966, the freeze continues in effect for another six months. Wage increases are only admissible if they benefit the lowest-paid workers, or if they are tied to union undertakings to improve productivity. The Government is also considering the retention of some measure of control after the freeze ends, though the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industries are against this.

Transport workers are among the victims of the present "severe restraint" stage of the freeze. An increase of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent negotiated by unions including the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) for 100,000 provincial busmen employed by private companies, which was due to take effect on 1 March, has been frozen by the Minister of Labour until 1 July. A claim for the reduction of the working week from 56 to 48 hours for trawler fishermen in Britain's major ports, also sponsored by the T&GWU, was rejected recently by the Industrial Court, because the claim did not conform with the Government's pay policy.

Seamen's pay negotiations may be reorganized

It is expected that the Final Report of the Pearson Committee, set up during the seamen's strike last year to inquire into the British shipping industry, will recommend separate pay negotiations for different trades and types of ship. At present British seafarers' pay and conditions are negotiated for the industry as a whole through the National Maritime Board.

INDIA

Bombay dock pilots strike over pay claim

A five day-strike of pilots and masters of port service vessels in the Port of Bombay, which began on 4 February 1967, has ended in a settlement. Strike action, called by the Bombay Port Pilotage Service Association and supported by the All-India Port and Dock Workers' Federation, proved the only way forward for the pilots, after two years of fruitless attempts to obtain a revision of their pay scales. The settlement reached provides for the setting up of a three-man committee to look into their grievances and to report within three months.

ISRAEL

Pay increases for seamen and dockers

3,000 seamen employed by the Israeli shipping line, ZIM, should get a pay increase of 7 per cent once final negotiations on a new agreement have been completed.

Dockers' pay went up by another 7½ per cent on 1 January, after an increase last year of 26 per cent.

SPAIN

Measures to quell labour unrest prompt international protests

Unofficial strikes and demonstrations of workers, protesting against poor pay and working conditions, high living costs and the suppression of genuinely representative workers' organizations, have taken place recently on a large scale in Spain and have been accompanied by the usual repressive measures. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has sent messages to the Spanish workers encouraging them in their struggle and to the Spanish Government protesting over arrests and jailings and the cruel repressive measures adopted by the authorities. Trade unions of the countries belonging to the European Economic Community (EEC) have also demanded the release of the trade unionists jailed in Spain in a message sent by the ICFTU European Trade Union Secretariate to the Spanish Ambassador in Brussels.

UNITED STATES

Non-op railmen win 2-stage pay rise

An agreement negotiated recently between 4 "non-operating" rail unions and nearly all of the United States railroads provides for

a 5 per cent general wage increase retroactive to 1 January 1967 and a further $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent rise on 1 January 1968. The contract leaves room for negotiations to secure a further increase on 1 July 1968. The unions involved, representing some 150,000 railwaymen, are the Maintenance of Way Employees, Transport-Communication Employees, Railroad Signalmen and Hotel and Restaurant Employees (dining car staff).

New TWU contract for Philadelphia transit workers

A new contract negotiated between the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America and the Philadelphia Transportation Company for some 5,000 urban transport workers provides for wage rises of 15 cents an hour immediately, a further 15 cents on 15 January 1968 and 12 cents on 15 July 1968.

Substantial gains for deep-sea men

The ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union of America has registered substantial gains in recent contract negotiations on behalf of some 40,000 members sailing aboard deep-sea vessels. Ratings get a flat increase of \$30 per month (\$25 for new entrants) and 20 cents (15 cents) per hour in overtime rates. Pensions and welfare benefits have also been extensively improved. The new contract terms become effective on 16 June 1967.

Labor Department bid to void NMU elections

The United States Labor Department is to seek a Federal Court order setting aside the results of the National Maritime Union's 1966 elections. The Department claims that the requirement in the Union's Constitution that candidates for union office should have first served for at least one year in a lower elective position is too restrictive. NMU President, Joseph Curran, pointing out that this Rule was approved by a secret ballot of the membership in 1960, has announced that the Union will fight the Labor Department's action "all the way".

New York tugmen's strike ends in shorter hours deal

The recent strike of tugboat crews in the Port of New York ended with a contract providing for a 30-hour week on 40 hours pay, pension improvements and guarantees against redundancy due to automation. The deal, negotiated for the 3,500 boatmen involved by the National Maritime Union, replaces the old three-crew system, whereby two crews were always aboard while one crew was on leave, by a system using four crews - two on board and two ashore. The boatman thus has his time off increased by one third.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Management Committee	-	London, 2 - 3 March 1967
Seafarers' Section Conference	-	London, 3 - 5 April 1967
Executive Board	-	Göteborg, 16-18 May 1967
Road Transport Section Conference	-	Berlin, 13-16 September 1967
29th ITF Congress	-	Wiesbaden, 28 July - 3 August 1968

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING FURTHER
INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM IN THIS
NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT ON REQUEST
FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ITF.

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