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No. 8

August 1967

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

Another runaway flag ship covered by ITF custodian agreement

On the 16 August, 1967, the Finnish Seamen's Union was successful in applying an ITF custodian agreement to a further flag-of-convenience vessel which was loading in Kotka, Finland. The vessel named the "Mistral I" now has an agreement incorporating British National Maritime Board rates of pay and an amount of £920 representing payment to the Special Seafarers' Section and the Welfare Fund was received from the shipowners' agent in Finland.

Our Finnish friends are, once again, to be congratulated on a successful action.

TRANSPORT AND THE TRADE UNIONS

INTERNATIONAL

UNCTAD report on the effects of containerization

Trade routes where ports have high stevedoring expenses and slow despatch are highly suitable for containerization which saves both stevedoring and port time. Those with low stevedoring expenses and good despatch are least suitable. These are the conclusions of a report submitted to member states by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The report states that, with few exceptions, the hopes of developing countries of benefitting from the technological revolution in shipping, bringing lower transport costs, will rest for some time on the use of simpler techniques such as palletization. The bigger the total volume of general cargo moving on a route, the more likely it is that container vessels will become larger than conventional ships, and will be able to operate at lower unit costs. This means that trade to and from developing countries will be in a less favourable position than trade between developed countries.

INTERNATIONAL

New International Convention on Load Lines

The International Convention on Load Lines 1966, prepared and signed by a conference held last year under the auspices of IMCO, comes into force next July. Compared to the 1930 Convention, it allows for a smaller freeboard for large ships, but calls for more stringent protection of opening in decks and superstructures. Tabular freeboard for large tankers and ore carriers have been reduced up to 15 per cent, and for dry-cargo ships fitted with steel weathertight hatch covers, up to 10 per cent. Bulk carriers may have similar freeboards to those for tankers under the 1930

Convention, provided they comply with certain requirements for subdivision. IMCO claims that the new Convention will contribute towards increased efficiency in the carrying of cargo, and improve the watertight integrity of the hull and superstructure.

AUSTRIA

Ban on Saturday driving important for road safety

The ban on Saturday driving for lorries is an important aid to road safety in Austria. This is the conclusion of the ITF-affiliated Commercial and Transport Workers' Union (HVT), which strongly condemns the proposal of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce to end the ban. The HVT insists that in Austria, which is the only country to ban lorries on Saturday, the ban contributes to road safety in two ways. First, it helps relieve congestion over the weekend, when the roads are crowded with private cars. Secondly, it reduces the number of accidents caused by fatigue by ensuring that lorry-drivers get a much-needed break. If Saturday driving were re-introduced, it would be much easier to contravene regulations on maximum hours and rest periods, to the detriment of road safety.

BELGIUM

Belgian local transport union to join public service union

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Tram and Bus Workers' Union (Centrale Belge du Personnel des Tramways, Vicinaux et Autobus) has decided at an extraordinary congress to affiliate to the Belgian Public Service Union (Centrale Générale des Services Publics) as a single national sector, the Tram and Bus Workers' Sector. The decision has still to be ratified by the National Committee of the CGSP.

GHANA

Ghanaian dockers' National Executive meet in Accra

The Second National Executive Council of the Maritime and Dockworkers' Union of Ghana was held in Accra from 30 June to 1 July. 73 delegates from 23 branches throughout Ghana were present, and the meeting was chaired by the National Chairman, S.K. Agboh. Among the subjects exhaustively discussed were the establishment of a national dock labour scheme in which unemployed casual labour would be offered jobs on an impartial basis; safety and health in dock work; extensive education and vocational training of workers within the industry; and an intensive job classification study to secure proper regulation of jobs and more job opportunities. The economic problems of Ghana and the social needs of workers were discussed, and the Council called on the authorities to provide effective safeguards for the protection of workers whose services have become redundant. On decasualization, the Council appealed to all the shipping companies to cooperate with the union in bringing about the establishment of a national dock labour scheme with a minimum of delay, and appointed a 4-member Committee for this purpose.

GREAT BRITAIN

Safety precautions for fishermen

A new working group which includes representatives of the various organizations concerned with the fishing industry has been set up under the auspices of the Board of Trade to study measures for improving the safety of fishermen engaged in deep-sea trawling. Recommendations on safety precautions are to be made as soon as possible.

GREECE

Faulty life-saving equipment - Greek master fined

The master of the Greek cargo vessel Maria Hadjipateras has been fined by an Australian court for failing to keep all life-saving and firefighting appliances fit and ready for use. A government marine surveyor reported that it took nearly 10 hours to free a lifeboat on the ship because the winching system had become frozen with rust. The emergency diesel fire pump in the engine room was out of action, the only fire hose in the engine room was badly worn, and the two hoses for deck work had nozzles which did not fit.

ITALY

Italian motorway toll collectors form new union

Toll collectors working for the Italian Motorway Company (Società Autostrade) have formed a new National Union of Motorway Toll Collectors, attached to the ITF-affiliated UILTATEP-UIL. The new Union has said that present conditions do not give the men adequate compensation for the mounting pressure of work due to greatly increased traffic. Union demands include a reduction in working hours and higher bonuses to make up for increased work-load.

LIBERIA

ILO upholds complaints against Liberian Government

In an interim report, the Governing Body of the ILO has found that a prima facie case has been made against the Government of Liberia for violating ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. The complaint was lodged by the ICFTU, the International Federation of Plantation and Allied Workers (IFPAAW), and the Miners' International Federation (MIF), and arose from the imprisonment of trade union leaders, the use of emergency legislation to ban trade unions considered to be

under outside influence, and to treat all 'unofficial' strikes as subversive. The ILO found that the Liberian Government had given unsatisfactory answers on certain issues raised, and had omitted to give any answer at all to others. On the question of detentions and arrests, the ILO emphasized the importance it attaches to the right of all detainees to receive a fair trial at the earliest moment.

SWEDEN

Right-hand driving in Sweden may affect drivers' earnings

Negotiations between the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union and employers on the question of new mileage rates for 5,000 lorry drivers have reached dead-lock, and the Union has decided to bring the case to arbitration. The Union maintains that the lower speed limits to be introduced with the change-over to right-hand driving in Sweden will affect the drivers' earnings, but the employers refuse to accept this argument. It is in the interests of road safety, the Union argues, that drivers should not be compelled to exceed the speed limits merely in order to maintain their present level of earnings. The conflict is unlikely to result in industrial action, since the lorry drivers are bound by a three-year agreement.

UNITED STATES

College of aviation needed to meet manpower shortage

The number of airline passengers is likely to be four times as great in 1980 as it is today. This is the conclusion of an enquiry carried out at the University of Arizona under government sponsorship. It concludes that new training methods for pilots must be used, and proposes the setting up of a college of aviation to turn out 2000 pilots and mechanics every year. It recommends cooperation between the different branches of the civil aviation industry to finance the venture.

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| SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS |
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CANADA

Big gains for Canadian railwaymen

A tentative settlement for a new contract bringing major gains for locomotive engineers has been signed by Canadian National Railways and officials of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE). It is still to be approved by BLE committees. The pact calls for wage increases totalling 28% in yard and transfer service and 22% in railroad service between May 1967 and May 1969. It also provides vacation gains, better mileage regulation and improved grievance procedures and work opportunities. It contains

a provision that run-throughs (the elimination of points where crews are changed over on long runs), changes in home stations, or other material changes in working conditions which would have significantly adverse effects on engineers, shall be subject to negotiations.

Meanwhile BLE has asked for conciliation in its dispute with Canada's other major railway, the Canadian Pacific.

The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT) have won a new contract - to be endorsed by the employers - for members working on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (Canada's third largest), calling for the national settlement of a 24 per cent wage increase and other benefits. 95 per cent of the membership voted in favour of the agreement. A rule already in existence on PGE, allowing the Railway to operate certain yard assignments with a reduced crew, was removed from the agreement. BRT members employed by two other companies, the Northern Alberta Railway (road and yard service), and the Public Markets Limited, St. Boniface, (yardmen) have won a similar increase of 24 per cent and other improvements.

Deadlock in Canadian seamen's strike

There is little chance for an early settlement of the strike called by the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' International Union affecting seamen on the Great Lakes. Bargaining reached stalemate and the strike began on 17 August. The strike was called after the Federal Government granted shipping companies an 18-month exemption from the provisions of the Canadian Labour Code which requires a 40-hour week.

DENMARK

Danish ferrymen's strike called off

The strike by 43 Danish ferrymen on the Mols-Line planned for 21 August was called off by the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union, after agreement had been reached on 17 August. The agreement provides special compensation of approximately £15 a month for ferrymen who have to travel far to their place of work and for those who are forced to live in high-cost areas.

GERMANY

Shorter working week, not staff cuts, for German railwaymen

Staff cuts are no transport policy. This point is stressed in an article in the official journal of the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) by GdED President and ITF Executive Committee member Philipp Seibert. He argues that the Government's latest and still unpublished plan for an integrated transport policy must not repeat the proposals of the previous transport minister who recommended that the work force on the railways be reduced by 60,000 or even 70,000. The cure for the present ills of the German Railways depends, rather, on political decisions concerning transport and economics. These might or might not lead to staff cuts at a later stage.

The management of the German Railways, Seibert recalled, had already agreed to a reduction in working hours, subject to Government approval. German railwaymen were long overdue for a big cut in hours to keep up with other workers. Under the present system, they worked a 44-hour or even a 54-hour week. A gradual shortening of the working week would help reassure railwaymen that their needs were not being overlooked, and would also provide a clear basis for the transport minister's integrated policy.

GREAT BRITAIN

Decasualization for Britain's 65,000 dockers

Under a new Dock Labour Scheme, arising out of the Devlin Report's proposals for ending casual labour in the docks, the British Minister of Labour, Mr. Ray Gunter, has set 15 September 1967 as the deadline for decasualization. Agreements have been reached between port employers and the unions for, among other things, permanent employment for dock workers on a minimum daily wage, a modernization payment of £2 a week, a guaranteed national minimum of £15 a week (£16 in London), and sick pay of up to £6 a week according to earnings.

Cut in hours for British flight crews

The Board of Trade in Britain has introduced measures to reduce the risk of aircraft accidents arising from excessive fatigue, which include reducing flying hours in any consecutive period of 28 days from 115 to 110, and establishing duty period limitations and minimum rest periods for cabin staff. Guidelines have been issued to airline operators, which contain general remarks on work/rest periods, physical environment, pre-flight sleep and activities, and time zone changes. They suggest longer rest periods in certain circumstances, and indicate what factors should be taken into account when establishing work/rest cycles. A "norm" of 12 hours flying duty is regarded as a maximum for crews with two or more pilots; this norm could be increased if an additional crew member is on duty, but should be reduced where more than five sectors have to be flown. The guidelines will be reviewed periodically in the light of more experience and further advances in aeromedical knowledge of fatigue. The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) have welcomed the stricter measures as being long overdue, but regret that they do not go far enough to meet the requirements of flight crews themselves.

Maximum flying hours vary widely. In the United States the maximum is 93 hours for one or two-pilot aircraft and 112 hours for three or more; in France 88 hours; India 116 hours; Japan 112 hours for propeller aircraft and 75 for jets; Canada 112 hours; and in Italy 93 hours for short haul, 121 hours for medium haul, and 130 hours for long haul.

JAPAN

Japanese public servants win pay award

A long drawn-out wage dispute in Japan between management and labour in public enterprises has been settled by an arbitration award calling for an average wage increase of 6.5 per cent. The pay rise, which applies to national railway services, and other nationalized industries, has been made retroactive to April. The Ministry of Labour announced that all bodies affected should be able to meet the expenses, except the Japan National Railways, which are in financial difficulties, and meetings are to be held between representatives of the Finance and Transport Ministries and the Railways in order to discuss possible sources of revenue.

NETHERLANDS

Developments in the Dutch coastal shipping strike

The dispute in the Dutch coastal shipping affecting vessels of less than 500 gross tons, which had been called for 1 September, has been postponed for one month after shipowners agreed to talk, and negotiations are now proceeding. The ITF has pledged support for the strike, which would affect 7,000 men, and Dutch coasters in foreign ports would face boycotts from dock labour, pilots and tug crews. During the past weeks, the ship owners have threatened that if the unions do not cooperate in reducing the cost of wages in the industry - at present accounting for 60 per cent of operating costs - the trade as a whole will go into liquidation; in a recent development, owners of about 90 coasters applied to the government for approval to transfer their ships to Panamanian registry. The Dutch government cannot prevent ship owners from taking such an action, except in times of war. Operating under Panamanian flag would enable owners to cut down on wage costs, and in addition, they would not be bound by stringent rules in respect of manning. The unions have protested, and action has been taken to prevent such a step from being carried out.

UNITED STATES

U.S Airline unions move to kill strike insurance pact

Five major US airline unions have described the strike insurance agreement of seven airlines as a "continued irritant" which "can do nothing but promote strife and disorder" in airline labour relations. In an application to the Civil Aviation Board (CAB), the five ITF-affiliated unions, the Flight Engineers' International Association (FEIA), the Airline Dispatchers' Association, the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, the International Association of Machinists and the Transport Workers' Union, urged the Board to reject the carriers' application for an indefinite renewal of the 1964 Mutual Aid Pact, which will remain in force until the CAB makes its decision. The unions have publicly threatened to go to court if the pact is not killed.

U.S. unions foil plan to use foreign-flag ships

A Plan by the US Defence Department to use foreign-flag ships in the coastal oil trade was quickly scrapped after three ITF-affiliated maritime unions; the National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), the National Maritime Union (NMU), and the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (MM&P) threatened a general maritime strike. The Defense Department had asked for a waiver to permit foreign-registered tankers to engage in domestic operations, which are reserved to US-flag ships under cabotage law. As soon as union leaders heard of the plan, a telegram was sent to the Defense Secretary, describing the plans as a "blow to our national maritime policy" and threatening strike action. It pointed out the contradiction between the Defense Department request and statements of the Defense Secretary, as recent as June 1967, that "Clearly we do not need more tankers in the US-flag fleet". The telegram brought an immediate response from the Department that there was, after all, "no need for a 30-day waiver".

OBITUARY

Niilo Wälläri

The death of Niilo Frans Wälläri, President of the Finnish Seamen's Union, and Deputy Member of the ILO Joint Maritime Commission, came as a great shock to all who are intimately connected with the ITF and the work of the Seafarers' Section. His passing, on the 25 August at the age of 70, brought to an end 29 years of outstanding leadership of his own union, as well as his participation in numerous state committees dealing with shipping and seafarers. Internationally he was known for his fervent and active support of the ITF Panlibhon campaign. His determination to bring decent conditions to all seamen, irrespective of nationality, gained him the reputation of a man of action as well as of oratory. Under his leadership, the Finnish Seamen's Union became 100% organized and one of the strongest in Scandinavia. It is with a deep sense of loss that his own union, and his many friends within the ITF, record his passing.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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| Road Transport Section Conference | - Stuttgart, 13-16 September 1967 |
| Fishermen's Conference | - Hull, 17-18 October 1967 |
| Management Committee | - Innsbruck, 1 November 1967 |
| Executive Board | - Innsbruck, 2-5 November 1967 |
| Civil Aviation Section Conference | - Amersfoort, 1-3 November 1967 |
| 29th ITF Congress | - Wiesbaden, 28 July-3 August 1968. |

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

ITF General Secretary H. Imhof visits Greece

At its meeting in May, the ITF Executive Board considered the situation in Greece and adopted a resolution on the subject (see Supplement to May 1967 Newsletter, Resolution on Greek Military Coup). Essentially this resolution was confined to a condemnation of the 21 April military coup, and called for a careful watch on further developments. Affiliated unions were called upon to keep a close watch on Greek ships and to take appropriate action when there was any doubt about the seaworthiness of such ships, or about whether the provisions of the collective agreement were being observed.

In order to observe for himself the most recent developments in Greece and to discuss them with affiliated Greek unions, the General Secretary accepted an invitation from the Greek Seamen's Union to visit Greece. He went to Athens on Saturday, 26 August, leaving on the morning of the following Wednesday.

During this short visit, the General Secretary was given every opportunity to meet trade unionists and members of the military government. It became clear that measures were being taken or contemplated which would have very adverse effects, especially on the functioning of the civil aviation and railwaymen's unions. The General Secretary was very insistent on this point in his discussions with the Prime Minister, Mr. KOLLIAS, the Minister of the Interior, Mr. PATAKOS, the Minister of Labour, Mr. LEKKAS, the Minister of Communications, Mr. TSADILAS, and with the Merchant Marine Minister, Mr. ATHNASSIOU. The last of these talks took place on Wednesday morning at 7.15 with Mr. TSADILAS. The Secretary in charge of Civil Aviation, Mr. SCAMALIORAKIS, was also present. All complaints were discussed thoroughly and with typical Greek animation. The General Secretary, Brother Imhof, was assured that all these complaints would be examined sympathetically. He was also assured that the long overdue reforms of the Greek trade union movement and the methods of financing it would be discussed with the democratic trade unions, and tackled as soon as possible. The cooperation of the free international trade union organizations would be welcome.

Finally, It should be pointed out that all the Greek trade unionists whom Bro. Imhof met - some of them he has known personally for many years - were unanimous in their plea that the present situation in their country required an understanding attitude rather than a purely negative hostility. They are inclined to help the government to carry out its colossal tasks, and confidently expect that there will be a return to constitutional government in due course.