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No. 5

May 1968

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

Meeting of Executive Board, London, 8-10 May

The ITF Executive Board met in London from 8 - 10 May 1968 and was concerned primarily with preparations for the forthcoming ITF Congress. The meeting reaffirmed the resolution on the Middle East crisis, previously adopted by the Executive Board in Innsbruck, on 2 - 4 November 1967 (see Supplement to Newsletter No. 11, 1967). The meeting also adopted the following resolution on the Danish Mates' and Radio Officers' strike:

THIS MEETING,

HAVING BEEN INFORMED that the Danish Mates and Radio Officers have been on strike since midnight on Tuesday, 7 May,

HAVING NOTED that pledges of support for the strike have been given by other sections of the Danish labour and trade union movement,

DEPLORING the intransigent attitude of the Danish shipowners concerned, who, in spite of substantial concessions made by the Mates and Radio Officers on their initial claims, in attempts to achieve a compromise solution, have refused to reciprocate in the slightest degree, but have adhered rigidly to their original position,

NOTING that the wage scales of Danish Mates and Radio Officers have steadily lagged behind the wage standards of other comparable categories of Danish workers and that consequently, the present wage claims of the Danish Mates and Radio Officers are fully justified,

NOTING IN PARTICULAR that the Danish Mates and Radio Officers have exercised considerable patience and restraint in face of the delaying tactics used by the shipowners during the past twelve months, have scrupulously complied with the requirements of Danish industrial law, and that soundings of the memberships of the two unions have resulted in large majorities in favour of such action,

RECALLING the resolution which was adopted by the ITF Seafarers' Section in London in April 1967, which noted and deplored the paradox of a reactionary group of shipowners who shamed a state, world-renowned for its high standards of democracy and fair play, to the point of flouting, in the case of the Shipmasters, ILO Convention No. 98 concerning the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, which Convention the Danish Government has ratified,

NOTING that the same shipowners did not deign to respond to an appeal of the ITF that they should try to find a negotiated settlement of the dispute with the Danish maritime unions, but preferred openly to ridicule the ITF in any role it could play in helping to solve the conflict,

CONGRATULATES the Danish Mates and Radio Officers in their determined and valiant stand against a feudally-minded group of shipowners,

PLEDGES the fullest possible support in the struggle,

APPEALS to all ITF-affiliated unions, particularly those of dockers and seafarers, to take such action as is open to them in support of the Danish Mates and Radio Officers.

Civil Aviation Section Safety Committee, London, 17 April

The Safety Committee of the ITF Civil Aviation Section met in London on 17 April 1968 to consider future action in the field of safety in Civil Aviation. An order of priorities was drawn up in the light of findings in recent survivable accidents, particularly the BOAC crash at Heathrow Airport, where the excellent work of flight deck and cabin crew, and the ground staff rescue team, underlined once again the need for emergency evacuation procedures to be carried out by properly trained and licensed cabin crew. The accident also illustrated the importance of improved techniques and further investigation into the use of gelled fuel and flame-resistant material. These items are both to be given priority in the ITF Civil Aviation Safety programme, as is the equally important question of adequacy of emergency equipment and airport aids and facilities.

By concentrating on these matters, where urgent action is required, the ITF Safety Committee hopes that it can make a useful contribution to the safety of the flying public and crews.

The meeting also adopted the following resolution on ICAO:

THIS MEETING,

HAVING NOTED with satisfaction Capt. Jackson's remarks concerning possible cooperation between the ITF and IFALPA in the field of exchange of information and close cooperation in representation matters at ICAO,

RECOMMENDS that the ITF Executive Board consider effective ways of coordinating the activities of the two organizations so as to avoid duplication of effort and bring about maximum results for the benefit of all personnel engaged in the civil aviation industry,

EMPHASIZES that ITF affiliated organizations be encouraged to make use of the possibilities open to them for influencing ICAO policy through their State delegations by approaching and briefing them in their own countries;

EXPRESSES its strong wish that the ITF Secretariat should explore possibilities of maintaining closer contacts than in the past with ICAO Headquarters at Montreal;

PROPOSES that unions representing the different categories of civil aviation workers should approach the ITF Secretariat to include representatives of their categories in the ITF delegation to ICAO meetings as technical advisers, when problems affecting these categories are to be discussed.

Flight Engineers' Technical Committee, Berlin, 25-26 April

The ITF Flight Engineers' Technical Committee met in Berlin on 25-26 April 1968. The meeting dealt with a number of subjects, including flight time limitations, a proposed symposium on flight instrumentation, and relations with ICAO. The meeting endorsed the Safety Committee's resolution on this subject (see above).

A working paper was presented on the Twin-Engined Air Bus, and a press statement on the subject was issued at the Hanover Air Show, expressing regret at statements concerning the European air bus made by the German Minister for Economic Affairs at the Show. The Committee's statement continued: "The support of the German Government for the Airbus concept in its present design is particularly regretted. The twin engine design has been repeatedly criticised by the ITF Civil Aviation Section and the Flight Engineers' Technical Committee as well as other international bodies, and we restate our conviction that such a design is less safe than a three or four engined one. Additionally, current operational restrictions inherent in a two engine design render the project questionable from an economic viewpoint. This is apparent by the need for pressure to be exerted by the German and UK Governments on their national airlines in order that sufficient sales are promised to enable a prototype aircraft to be built."

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL *****

Peru joins IMCO

The Government of Peru has deposited with the United Nations its acceptance of the IMCO Convention. This brings the number of Member States to 67.

CANADA

Canadian maritime safety advisory council to be set up

A maritime safety advisory council, a permanent body to be consulted by the Department of Transport on all matters affecting the safety of ships and crews, is to be established in Canada. It will be made up of representatives of the Government and of both sides of the Canadian commercial shipping industry. The council will be asked to report on the characteristics of ships now in service, and of ships coming into service, as far as these may be related to the qualifications and training required of officers and crews. The council will also recommend future qualification and training programmes, including basic safety training, specialist and refresher training. Regional committees will be set up to consider special problems in the various sectors of the industry.

GREAT BRITAIN

British report on air safety recommends 'director of training and licensing'

A recently published Report on the "Safety Performance of United Kingdom Airline Operators" has found that although the overall safety level of civil air transport undertakings has improved over the past 10 years, it has been below that of certain other countries, e.g. the United States and Australia. The level of the independent operators was significantly lower than that of the state corporations, BEA and BOAC. The Report adds that independent airlines find the achievement of high standards of operation and maintenance very costly and that this in some cases puts a severe strain on available financial resources. The Report further criticises the system under which the competence of pilots is sometimes checked by their own company examiners. Among the recommendations made is that the system of inspection of aircraft be reorganized and that a director of training and licensing be appointed.

BUA refuses to join national industrial negotiating council

Britain's biggest independent airline, British United Airways, has been threatened with court action by the trade union leaders on the civil aviation industry's national joint negotiating council, for its refusal to join the council during present negotiations for a pay increase. Trade unions representing all categories of civil aviation staff are members of the council. BUA has offered employees a three-year pay deal and promised to rejoin the NJC when negotiations have been completed, but this has been rejected by the union side.

GREECE

Moves to attract more ships to Greek flag

The Greek government is considering a proposal from the Union of Greek Shipowners to attract to the Greek register 15 million tons of Greek-owned shipping now under flags of convenience. Under these proposals, ships under 10 years of age transferring to the Greek register would be exempt from taxation until completion of their 10th year of age - an exemption already enjoyed by new ships registering under the Greek flag. The proposals also include one year's tax exemption for every \$50,000 of repair work on vessels repaired in Greece when less than 20 years old, and a 12 year tax free period for vessels built in Greek yards and registered under the Greek flag.

NORWAY

Re-organization of Norwegian State Railways

The Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) has approved recommendations for a new system of administration for the Norwegian State Railways - NSB. The NSB will have a Council consisting of 16 members, 8 of which will be elected by Parliament and 8 appointed by the Government. The latter will include 4 employees' representatives. The new NSB Board will consist of 7 members, 2 of whom will represent personnel.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

BELGIUM

Survey on SABENA staff needs - unions suspend protest action

After a protest demonstration against the dismissal of SABENA employees, organized by the three trade unions representing SABENA staff, the unions agreed to observe a truce until the end of August, in view of the difficult financial situation of the Belgian state airline. The airline management have given an undertaking that there will be no further dismissals during this period. Meanwhile, a detailed analysis will be carried out, to determine the number of staff required and the possibilities for redeployment of redundant workers. The union demands that any reduction in the work force should be by natural attrition. (See also Newsletter No. 1, 1968, p.2.)

DENMARK

Strike of Danish Mates and Radio Officers

Members of the ITF-affiliated Danish Mates' Union and the Danish Radio Officers' Union went on strike against the Danish Shipowners' Federation from midnight on 7 May. The dispute arises out of a claim submitted jointly by the Masters', Mates' and Radio Officers' Unions as far back as February 1967, designed to bring wage rates up to the normal national level. After refusing to recognize the right of the Masters' Union to negotiate on behalf of the masters, the shipowners made an offer to the mates and radio officers which represented only a fraction of the original claim and which was considered totally unacceptable (see ITF Newsletter No. 7, 1967, p. 65). The Mates' and Radio Officers' Union served a collective notice of strike action in July 1967, but this was rejected by the shipowners on the grounds that such collective notice was not legal. A special arbitration tribunal ruled that the unions would need a personal authorization from each member to act on his behalf before being able to serve legal strike notice (see ITF Newsletters No. 11, 1967, p. 99 and No. 12, 1967, p. 106). The Mates' Union secured written authorization from 85% of its members, and the Radio Officers' Union from all of its members, and on 20 December 1967, the two unions gave notice that they would call their members out on strike on 22 April 1968. This date was postponed for 2 weeks by the government arbitrator. The new Danish coalition government has attempted to push through legislation in Parliament designed compulsorily to end the strike, but so far with no success.

The ITF Executive Board at its meeting in London from 8 to 10 May passed a Resolution in support of the two Unions (see p. 33 of this Newsletter).

A special meeting, urgently called by the ITF of representatives of northwest-European Seafarers' and Dockers' Trade Unions in Bremen on 17 May, 1968, decided to ask the General Secretary of the ITF:

- a) to address a cable to the Government and Parliament of Denmark suggesting that they use all their influence in order to promote a solution acceptable to the striking organizations;
- b) to inform all affiliated Seafarers' and Dockers' Organizations about the situation in Denmark;
- c) to urgently call a further Conference should developments require further discussions or decisions.

FRANCE

French flight engineers demand recruitment of more flying staff

The ITF-affiliated French Flight Engineers' Union (SNOMAC) called a 48-hour strike on 14-15 April, in protest at poor working conditions and long flying hours for French flight crews. Air France management regularly asks for permits from the French authorities to allow certain aircraft on certain routes to exceed flight time limitations laid down in official regulations on working conditions on jet aircraft. The strike was sparked off when Air France was granted a special permit to operate certain long-distance flights without the officially required relief flight engineer. SNOMAC's basic demand was an increase in the number of Flight Engineers recruited and trained by Air France, in order that normal working conditions, rest periods and holidays could be resumed.

Proposal for shorter officers' training in France

The French Maritime Training Board has proposed to the Ministry of Transport radical changes in conditions for admission to training colleges for captains and ships' officers. Thirty-six months at sea instead of the present forty-eight will be required. The standard of the examination for admission to such schools will be raised, so that courses can be shortened. It will then be possible to qualify as an officer in four and a half years, instead of six as at present. The proposals are likely to be implemented shortly.

GREAT BRITAIN

3.3% pay offer unacceptable to British seamen

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen (NUS) has described as unacceptable an offer made by the British Shipping Federation of a 3.3% increase in seamen's earnings plus changes in overtime payments for its 62,500 members. The offer was made in response to a claim for a 5% increase in consolidated basic pay plus premium overtime rates (see Newsletter No. 3, 1968, p. 20). Earlier, the union had rejected an unprecedented proposal by the Minister for Employment and Productivity to suspend negotiations on the pay claim while the matter was referred to the Prices and Incomes Board, on the grounds that such intervention by the Minister was "against all the principles of trade union collective bargaining and a serious threat to the breaking down of industrial relationships".

5% pay claim for British merchant navy officers

The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) has submitted a claim for an overall increase of 5% and a reconstruction of the salary scales for merchant navy officers, to provide annual salaries based on 40 hours duty per week in port and at sea.

ITALY

Italian drivers strike against one-man operation of articulated lorries

Italian road transport workers belonging to three road transport unions, including the ITF-affiliated UILTATEP-UIL, held a 24-hour strike on 28-29 April, in protest at a Ministry of Transport circular authorizing transport firms to operate articulated lorries with only one driver on journeys of up to 150 kilometres. The unions consider that this constitutes a serious threat to road safety, to the level of employment, and, indirectly, to wages.

NICARAGUA

12% pay rise for Nicaraguan airline workers

A two-year collective agreement has been signed between the Nicaraguan Airline Employees' Union (STELAS) and Taca International Airlines, providing for a 12% direct salary increase for all categories of personnel. Other benefits include increased holidays, from 6 to 15 days per annum, 40% salary adjustment during hospitalization, and a payment of 25% for unjust dismissal after 2 years continuous work and the same percentage for each additional year worked.

NORWAY

Working week reduced to 42½ hours

Agreement has been reached in principle between the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Norwegian Employers' Federation that working hours shall be reduced from 45 to 42½ hours per week, and this reduction included in all collective agreements concluded between the two organizations after 1 July 1968. It was also agreed that adult employees would receive a 1.2% cost-of-living allowance from 1 January 1969.

OBITUARIES

Henry Hildebrand

It was with great sorrow that the ITF learnt of the death of Henry Hildebrand, Head of the Maritime and Dockers' Section of the German Transport Workers' Union (OeTV) on 1 May 1968, at the age of 66. Since the late 1940's and early 1950's Henry Hildebrand has served as a member of the ITF General Council, as Chairman of the ITF Inland Navigation Section Committee, and as a Member of the committees of the ITF Dockers' Section, Fishermen's Section, Seafarers' Section and Special Seafarers' Section.

Sture Christiansson

Sture Christiansson, former President of the Swedish Railwaymen's Union and Member of the ITF Executive Committee 1946 - 1951, died on 4 May at the age of 75.

CORRECTION

The conversion rate for the Yen is £1 = 870.25, and not 87.25 as stated in Newsletter No. 4, p.30.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 29th ITF Congress | - Wiesbaden, 28 July - 3 August
1968 |
| Inland Navigation Section
Conference | - London, 29-30 August 1968. |

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