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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ITF and the crisis in Czechoslovakia

A few days after the brutal invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and four other Warsaw Pact countries, the ITF called upon its member unions to "implement a boycott of all rail, road, sea and air transport operated by the USSR and by Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary and Poland in protest against their unlawful invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia and as a demonstration of solidarity with the suffering Czech people."

The boycott was to begin at midnight on Tuesday, 27 August. On 27 August, the ITF issued the following statement to the press:

"The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has decided to postpone the boycott it had asked its affiliates to carry out against Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian and East German transport with effect from midnight, 27 August. The postponement has been dictated by the need to give the Czech Parliament and people a breathing space, free of any pressure, in which to digest and pass judgement on the agreement reported to have been reached in Moscow between the Russian and Czech Governments, by which the occupying forces would be withdrawn."

International safety code for fishermen

Expert consultants appointed by the ILO, IMCO, and FAO met in Geneva from September 4 to 13 to draw up the first part of a proposed international code of safe practice for skippers and crews of fishing vessels. It covers the navigational and occupational aspects of safety on board fishing vessels, such as safe practices on deck, in the engine room and during fishing operations, and shipboard emergency procedures. The ILO consultants on the workers' side were all from ITF-affiliated unions: R. Dekeyzer (Belgian Transport Workers, Chairman of the Fishermen's Section of the ITF), A.D. Shenton, (British Transport and General Workers' Union) and A. Skinner (Seafarers' International Union of North America) who were accompanied by J. Jakupsstovu (Faroe Islands), G. Nakano (Japan) and H. Wiemers (Germany) as technical advisers.

The first part of the Code will now go to the ILO Governing Body and IMCO Maritime Safety Committee for approval, after which it will be issued as soon as possible. Meanwhile the ILO, IMCO and FAO will continue work on the second part of the Code, which will deal with the constructional aspect of safety on board fishing vessels, and will be addressed to owners and builders.

The Code is the result of a resolution adopted at the initiative of the ITF group at a meeting of the ILO Committee on Conditions of Work in the Fishing Industry in 1962.

The General Secretary

The ITF General Secretary, Charles Blyth, represented the ITF at the Austrian Railwaymen's Union Congress in Vienna from 19-22 September, 1968.

TRANSPORT

CEYLON *****

Ceylon to establish its own merchant fleet

The Ceylon Minister of Trade has announced government approval for the establishment of a shipping corporation as a first step towards the setting up of a national merchant marine. The Ceylon Government will own 51 per cent of the shares. The corporation is expected to be functioning by 1 October 1969.

GREAT BRITAIN *****

T & G propose publicly-owned trawler fishing company

The ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union (T&GWU) has proposed that there should be one major publicly-owned trawler fishing company in Britain to act as a 'pacemaker' for greater safety and efficiency and to develop more modern fishing vessels and explore new fishing grounds.

U. S. A. *****

Absence of firemen major cause of increase in railway accidents

Statistics on railway accidents furnished by the US Department of Transportation and the Interstate Commerce Commission suggest that the absence of firemen on locomotives is the major contributing

factor in the significant increase in railway accidents in the United States. Train accidents in the first five months of 1968 have increased by 74.4% over the same period in 1963, the last in which a full complement of firemen was used. In 1963, during the last five months when firemen were employed on all diesel locomotives, there were 1,935 accidents; during the same period in 1968 there were 3,373. Neither are these figures freakish - the accident rate has been climbing steadily since 1963. Derailments have increased by 56.5% and the number of collisions has risen by 41.8%.

TRADE UNIONS

SCANDINAVIA

Nordic Railwaymen's Union - 50th Anniversary

The Nordic Railwaymen's Union (NJU) was founded in Gothenburg in August 1918. It was a product of the First World War, of the poverty and isolation, and of the need to re-establish international contacts. The first problem facing the union was wages - railwaymen's pay bearing no relation to the enormous rise in the cost of living during the War. When the Second World War broke out NJU's Headquarters were in Norway, but were moved to Sweden in April, 1940, when Norway was invaded. The NJU's present membership totals 100,000 from the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union, the Norwegian Locomotivemen's Union, the Swedish Railwaymen's Union, the Danish Railwaymen's Union, the Danish Locomotivemen's Union, the Finnish Railwaymen's Union and the Finnish Locomotivemen's Union.

U.S.A.

Four US railway unions to amalgamate

After nine months of deliberations, a tentative agreement to amalgamate has been reached between four ITF-affiliated operating railway union in the United States. The agreement has now to be approved by the rank and file members of the four unions, the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and the Switchmen's Union of North America. The new union will be know as the United Transportation Union and will have over 250,000 members.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

DENMARK

Women bus drivers in Denmark

Six women bus drivers have started work in Copenhagen and another 64 are undergoing similar training. The decision to employ female bus drivers was based on the good results obtained in Sweden, where women bus drivers have been a success, even in the big urban centres, where traffic is exceptionally dense.

GREAT BRITAIN

MNAOA negotiating better pay for "hovermen"

The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) has accused Seaspeed (British Rail Hovercraft Ltd.) of using delaying tactics to prevent negotiations over the pay of captains and officers on the new cross-Channel Mountbatten class (SR-N4) hovercraft. Recently, strike action unanimously agreed by the officers involved was averted only after a firm promise of early negotiations by the company. The MNAOA argues that cross-Channel hovercraft officers should receive a salary roughly equal to that of an ordinary cross-Channel ferry captain. Masters of British Rail ferries have a starting salary of over £3,000, whereas at present a SR-N4 hovercraft captain receives a starting salary of only £2,100.

Redundancy payments scheme for Maritime officers

A merchant navy redundancy payments scheme, agreed between the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) and the National Maritime Board, came into force on 5 August. Maximum redundancy payment under the scheme is £2,175 - £975 better than the £1,200 maximum under the Redundancy Payments Act applying to shore employees. The merchant navy scheme also allows for a maximum of 25 years service as against 20 under the Act and takes into account weekly earnings of £50 as against £40.

Pay and productivity agreement for British railwaymen

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) have accepted a pay and productivity deal with British Rail. The agreement affects 180,000 railwaymen and footplatemen and provides for increases ranging from 3% for the highest paid to 15% for the lowest paid grades. The NUR is confident that the elimination of about 5,300 jobs need not involve redundancies - they could be offset by the agreed reduction of overtime and rest-day working. Instead of the present 170 job titles, there will be only 35 job categories and 10 pay rates. A new 10-hour shift system has been agreed for certain departments and certain categories of workers will have a considerably wider range of duties than in the past.

ITALY

Strikes by Italian seamen

Italian seafarers' unions, including the ITF-affiliated FILM-CISL, representing seafarers in four state-owned shipping companies, have staged a series of strikes in protest against the employers' attempts to defer negotiations on a new contract. The strikes were sparked off when it became known that the companies were planning to reduce their fleets and failed to give assurances that this would not involve a loss of jobs. The unions are demanding a new hiring system, negotiations on crew complements, recognition by the companies of union shipboard representatives and a definition of grievance procedure, as well as improved shore leave and other fringe benefits.

NORWAY

First woman pilot trainee

SAS has accepted its first woman pilot trainee. She is 30-year old Miss Widerye and she was one of 54 candidates accepted for pilot training this year. She will start a three-month basic training course in October, followed by simulator and flight training and special courses adjusted to the type of aircraft to be flown. Miss Widerye will be the first woman in the Western world to fly a jet passenger plane.

LO proposes lower retirement age

The Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions (LO) has proposed to the Government that pensionable age be lowered from the present 70 years (men and women). It was pointed out that the retirement age for men and women in Denmark and Sweden is 67, but that a recently adopted ILO Convention stipulates 65 as the age for retirement. Only in six ILO member states is the retirement age higher than 65. The number of pensioners in Norway would increase by one third should pensionable age be lowered from 70 to 67.

U. S. A.

Possible ILA strike over containerization issue

The ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) will refuse to handle all containerized cargo after 30 September, unless agreement on a new contract can be reached before then. However, dockers will continue to handle conventional cargoes.

The union is asking for a full 52-weeks' guaranteed pay - 2,080 hours as against the present 1,600 hours, and demands that all containers should be loaded and unloaded by dockers in the port area. In particular the union is concerned over the developments of "land bridges" across the American continent, which permits containers to be transported via ship and rail between Japan and Europe, involving little or no handling by US dockers. The ILA is also demanding that dockers in other US ports should have the same annual pay guarantee as those in the port of New York.

No job limit for stewardesses

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has ruled that airlines who fire or ground stewardesses because they marry or pass an arbitrary age limit set by the company are violating the Civil Rights Act. This ruling follows a long and hard fight by ITF-affiliated U.S. unions organizing cabin staff personnel. American Airlines immediately agreed to drop all contract language limiting job rights of its women flight attendants and came to terms with the ITF-affiliated TWU after 10 months of deadlock negotiations.

PERSONALIA

Danish transport union elects new president

The Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (DASF) at its Congress in Copenhagen in early September, elected Anker Jørgensen to the post of president. Anker Jørgensen is 46 years old; he started out in the "traditional" way as an errand boy in Copenhagen, later attended night school and joined the trade union movement in 1947. In 1964 he became editor of the DASF house journal, and the same year was elected member of the Danish Parliament (Folketinget). Ejler Sønner was elected Vice-president of DASF.

Finnish Seamen's Union elects new president

Olav Keitele, who has been acting president of the Finnish Seamen's Union since the death of Nilo Wallari in August last year, was elected president at the union's congress in Helsinki in July. Keitele was born in 1926; he spent ten years at sea, first as an AB and later as Boatswain. He began working full-time for the union in 1953 where he rapidly advanced to the post of vice-president.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

ITF Executive Board	- London	4-6 November 1968
Civil Aviation Section Committee	- London	4 December 1968

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