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No. 5

May 1969

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

International Cabin Attendants' Conference and Seminar

See Supplement

ILO Tripartite Technical Meeting on Dock Labour

See Supplement

Swedish boycott wins custodian agreement for Chinese crew

Following a 12-hour boycott by ITF-affiliated Swedish unions, the owners of the Liberian-flag ship Oriental Clipper have signed the ITF custodian collective agreement for the ship's crew of 41, who with the exception of the officers, are of Chinese nationality.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

ICAO committee to investigate illegal interference with civil aviation

The permanent council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has decided to set up a committee to investigate complaints and incidents of hijacking and other "illegal interference" with international civil aviation. The council defined illegal interference as hijacking, sabotage or armed attack against civil aircraft. The committee will not, however, consider cases of illegal interference which have political implications or which involve it in controversies between member states.

AUSTRIA

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New Austrian railway law - a superfluous piece of legislation

A new Bill reorganizing the Austrian Federal Railways (OBB), passed by the Austrian parliament on 6 March, is described by the ITF-affiliated Austrian Railwaymen's Union as a superfluous piece of legislation which does nothing to alleviate the real problems of the railways. These can only be solved within the framework of a general transport policy, but, instead of dealing with basic problems, the government has pushed through this elaborate piece of window dressing which in fact makes few, if any, substantial changes.

Through its determined opposition to those sections of the government's original bill which were unacceptable to railwaymen, the union has succeeded in eliminating many of the government's original proposals, and in safeguarding the rights of railwaymen. Existing provisions for staff representation are to remain unaltered, and salary negotiations will continue to be carried out between the Railwaymen's and Public Service Workers' Unions and the Federal government. The government's original plan to make the OBB an autonomous corporation has been dropped, and the OBB will remain under government control.

GUATEMALA  
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Nationalization of railways in Guatemala

The Guatemalan government has finally nationalized the former International Railway Company of Central America, following a long strike of the ITF-affiliated SAMF (see Newsletters Nos. 2 and 4 1968) over payment of arrears in wages. The nationalized undertaking has been given the name Guatemala Railways (FEGUA). SAMF has issued a statement recalling the Guatemalan President's promise that railwaymen's rights would be respected, and that the present collective agreement would remain in force until reforms could be made for the benefit of railwaymen.

ITALY  
=====

Italian Government presents Bill for licensing of cabin staff

The Italian Government will shortly be submitting to Parliament a Bill for the licensing of civil aviation cabin staff. The Bill lays down that cabin attendants must have a licence issued by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation in order to carry out their duties in matters of first aid and emergency evacuation. Holders of licenses must be at least 18 years old; they must pass a medical examination every 2 years (every year after the age of 40); they must have completed at least 600 flying hours; and they must pass tests in emergency procedures in case of fire, emergency landing, ditching, etc., tests in the use of emergency equipment carried on board for the safety of passengers, and tests in first aid.

(State licensing of cabin attendants already exists in France, Mexico, Greece, Lebanon, Venezuela, Colombia, Madagascar and Algeria).

JAPAN  
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Fully computerized tanker on order

Japanese shipbuilders plan to build a 130,000 - ton tanker with the most advanced computerized controls in the world. The computer on board would be able to trace the movements of up to 10 ships in the vicinity, calculating their future courses and speed to avoid collisions. In addition to navigation, the computer would control automatic equipment in the engine-room, and programme the loading and unloading of cargo.

Construction would be subsidized by the Japanese government, and after construction experts from the shipbuilders and the computer company would be on board the tanker for a year to study the effect of computerization.

TRADE UNIONS

SPAIN

=====

ILO study group calls for trade union freedom in Spain

A study group set up by the ILO to examine the Spanish trade union movement has issued an interim report calling on the Spanish government to grant full freedom to the trade union movement. The group hopes to have its final report ready by the end of July.

Meanwhile it recommends that all posts of authority in the trade union movement, including the highest, should be filled by election; that the autonomy and equality of workers' and employers' unions should be assured; that all appointed union officials should be subject to the authority of elected officers; that unions should not be subject to direction or control by any political movement; and that freedom of expression and meeting should be guaranteed.

SWEDEN

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Swedish stewards' union to merge with ships' officers' union

On 1 January 1970, the ITF-affiliated Swedish Stewards' Union is to merge with the ITF-affiliated Ships Officers' Union, to form one of its sections.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CANADA

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Strike of Air Canada maintenance staff

6,300 members of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists employed by Air Canada went on strike on 21 April in support of claims for higher wages. Negotiations between Air Canada and the union have broken down.

DENMARK  
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New Danish agreement benefits low-paid workers

With a vote in favour of 63.1 per cent, the Danish trade unions (LO) have won a new two-year agreement for their members. Under the terms of this agreement, which came into force on 8 March 1969, the standard hourly rate is increased by 25 øre;+) and the minimum hourly wage by 73 øre. There are also new rates for women and workers under the age of 18. With the second stage, which will have effect from 1 March 1970, both these rates will be further increased by 15 øre. In September 1970, the 42½hr week will be cut slightly. The increase awarded to low-paid workers marks the first step towards an equitable wage structure. As a result of this measure, the number of members of the ITF-affiliated Dansk Arbejdsmands- og Specialarbejder Forbund (DASF) who earn less than 45 Kr a week is reduced from 90,000 to 25,000.

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+ ) Danish Kroner 17.93 = £1  
100 øre = 1 Danish Krone

Increase in war risk bonus for Danish ships sailing to Vietnam

Following the death of a Danish woman Radio Officer on board a vessel in the Mekong River, the Danish ship-owners' association has sanctioned a 175% increase in the war risk bonus for Danish ships sailing to Vietnam. The agreement came into force on 1 April. The increased rate takes effect immediately the ship comes within 60 nautical miles of the Vietnamese port of destination and ceases when the ship passes out of this radius on the return voyage. It must be paid for a minimum of 10 days at a minimum rate of 40Kr per day. Compensation in the event of death or incapacitation due to injury has been doubled, at 50,000 Kr with a further 20,000 Kr for each child under the age of 18.

Danish seamen protest at signing off of members in Far East

With the support of the Danish LO, the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union plans to take legal action against a Danish shipping company which has signed off Danish seafarers in the Far East, replacing them by cheap Chinese labour.

ICELAND  
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General strike in Iceland

A 2-day general strike was called on 10 and 11 April by the Federation of Labour Unions, in protest at the government's decision to drop the system of tying wages to the price index. The unions consider that living standards have dropped since the devaluation of the Icelandic kroner in November 1968.

ISRAEL

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Seamen's Welfare Authority set up in Israel

A tripartite Seamen's Welfare Authority has been set up in Israel by the Israeli government, shipowners and Seamen's Union. The Authority is to cater for the needs of Israeli and foreign seafarers calling at Israeli ports.

ITALY

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Italian railwaymen stage 24-hour strike

Italian railwaymen belonging to the ITF-affiliated railwaymen's unions STUF and SAUPI staged a 24-hour strike on 18 April in support of their demands for a new salary structure, higher pay, an improved health service, and trade union rights.

JAPAN

=====

Strike of Japanese seamen on ocean-going vessels

Following the breakdown of talks on a new collective agreement for seamen on ocean-going vessels, the ITF-affiliated All Japan Seamen's Union called a strike, beginning on 5 May, in support of its demands for a pay increase and additional leave days. Strike action has been approved in a poll of the union members concerned, and the first walk out, which is scheduled to last 7 days, is expected to affect some 1,100 vessels in 40 ports throughout Japan.

Meanwhile the strike of Japanese seamen operating coastal services (see Newsletter No. 4, p.36) has been suspended following a tentative agreement between the Central Executive Board of the All Japan Seamen's Union and the two shipowners' associations operating coastal services. Final acceptance of the shipowners' latest offer of a ¥6,400 pay increase<sup>+</sup>, plus 2 additional days' holiday this year and a further 2 in 1970, depends on a membership poll.

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+) 864 = US \$2.4 =

Japanese railwaymen criticize report on single manning

Two ITF-affiliated railwaymen's unions, the Japanese National Railway Workers' Union (Kokuru) and the National Motive Power Union (Doryokusha), have criticized the recommendation made by a panel of experts that Japanese National Railways diesel or electric engines be manned by a single engineer. The panel began its investigation after a series of protest strikes by the two unions (see Newsletter No. 10, 1968, p. 68), but the unions consider that it broke off investigations prematurely and failed to take into account data provided by the unions. The unions will therefore continue to oppose the implementation of the one-engineer system.

NORWAY  
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New agreement for Norwegian fishermen

Norwegian fishermen, members of the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union, have negotiated a new agreement. Provisions include: a wage increase of 10 per cent; an increase in the hourly overtime rate of between 1.5 and 2.0 Kr+); and improved social benefits.

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+) Norwegian Kroner 17.15 = £1

PAKISTAN  
=====

Pakistan railway union wins cost-of-living bonus

The ITF-affiliated Railway Mazdoor Union of Pakistan has placed its demands for improved pay and conditions before the government. Although most of these are still under consideration, the union has won a cost of living bonus for low-paid workers equal to 20 per cent of the basic rate of pay.

SOUTHERN YEMEN  
=====

People's Republic of Southern Yemen joins ILO

The People's Republic of Southern Yemen has become a member of the ILO, bringing membership to a total of 120 countries. The Government has announced that it will continue to be bound by 13 International Labour Conventions which were applicable to the former territory of Aden.

UNITED STATES  
=====

Settlement of US transport workers' dispute with PAN-AM

Only thirty minutes before their strike deadline of midnight, 17 April, the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America reached agreement with PAN-AM on a new contract for ground mechanics, port stewards and flight service employees. The settlement - which still has to be ratified by membership - gives increases of 25.5% in hourly pay rates; better shift differentials; and higher pension benefits, together with a number of other improvements for both ground staff and cabin attendants. Pay increases provided in the new contract settlement will be back-dated to 1 July 1968, applying also to retired or laid-off employees and those on medical leave.

US rail signalmen get 16% pay increase

Agreement between American railroads and the Brotherhood of Railroads Signalmen (which organizes signal maintenance personnel) was reached in mid-April, just in time to avert a strike. The agreement gives increases adding up to 16% for skilled signalmen over an 18-month period beginning 1 July 1968, and a 12% rise for semi-skilled signalmen. About 10,000 of the union's 13,000 members rate as skilled.

US Supreme Court ruling - stevedores may sue directly for damages

The US Supreme Court has ruled that stevedoring contractors may sue shipowners directly for injuries to men working on the docks. Previously, these companies were allowed to sue only in the name of the injured employee.

PERSONALIA

Philip Randolph, former President of the US Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and an outstanding leader in the American Civil Rights movement, celebrated his 80th birthday on 15 April. Probably the best known Negro labour leader in American history, Randolph retired as President of his union at the age of 78. Another great civil rights leader, Bayard Rustin, writes: "It is part of the greatness of A. Philip Randolph that throughout his 60 years as a leader of Negro Americans, he has maintained a total vision of the goal of freedom for his people and the means of achieving it."

Matthew Guinan, International President of the Transport Workers' Union of America, has been appointed a Vice President of the AFL-CIO. Guinan is a TWU pioneer who rose from rank and file activity to serve as an officer of the union at every level. He played a key role in bringing the 30,000-member Railroad Division into the TWU in 1954.

J. de Graaff and A.W. Korbijn, members of the Executive of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union (NBV), are going into retirement at the end of May.

CORRECTIONS

The number of employees on the Mexican Pacific Railways is 7 thousand, and not 7 million as stated in Newsletter No. 4, p. 33.

In some copies of Newsletter No. 4, p. 36., the initials ITF were erroneously inserted before the words Executive Committee (5th line). The item should read: Brother Degris will retain his seat on the ITF Executive Board ...



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Executive Board	Paris, 18-30 May 1969
Road Transport Workers' Section Committee	Villingen, Germany, 9-11 June 1969
ITF meeting on Danube Navigation	Vienna, 12-13 June 1969
Railwaymen's Section Committee	London, last week in July 1969
Seafarers' Section Conference	Genoa, 12-13 September 1969

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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SUPPLEMENT TO NEWSLETTER No. 5

ICFTU MESSAGE TO GREEK WORKERS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND  
ANNIVERSARY OF COUP D'ETAT

Harm G. Buiter, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, is calling upon affiliated organizations to urge their respective governments to renew their pressure in view of obtaining a return to democracy in Greece.

News of this latest action is contained in a message to Greek Workers from the ICFTU on the second anniversary of the coup d'etat of the Greek colonels, which falls on 21 April. "On this day", says the message, "we renew our pledge of solidarity with the oppressed Greek people and workers; our thoughts turn especially with deep sympathy to those persecuted for their democratic ideals. We particularly salute our friends grouped in the clandestine Greek democratic trade union movement (DEKE).

"We want to assure you that we will not allow pretended 'liberalisation' measures, proclaimed by the regime on 10 April, to shake our resolve. The workers of the free world will keep up their pressure until genuine democratic liberties are restored in Greece and until trade unions can function freely under the leaders chosen by its members. The ICFTU is continuing to do its part in the struggle for a return of democracy. Since the usurpation of power by the military clique, we have intervened in the intergovernmental bodies on your behalf. We have given full support to the move to suspend the Greek Government from membership in the Council of Europe as long as fundamental human and trade union rights continue to be violated. The ICFTU has also brought the question of trade union rights before the International Labour Organization which has now set up a Commission to enquire into the situation as regards trade union rights in Greece.

"The ICFTU considers that freedom is indivisible. To pretend that free trade unions can function in a country where there is no free press, no free speech, no free politics, no independent courts of justice and no freedom of assembly, is to pretend that a living arm can grow from a crippled body. Workers of Greece! The ICFTU is supporting your struggle for the release of all political and trade union prisoners, for free elections and free press, for the rebirth of a free and independent trade union movement and for a speedy return of democracy so that Greece may once again take its rightful place among free peoples."

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SUPPLEMENT TO NEWSLETTER No. 5

ITF CIVIL AVIATION SECTION INTERNATIONAL CABIN ATTENDANTS'  
CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR, Paris, 15-18 April, 1969

Problems of concern to Civil Aviation cabin staff and the flying public were discussed at a meeting of over 50 representatives of cabin staff unions from 16 countries who attended an International Civil Aviation Cabin Attendants' Conference and Seminar held in Paris from 15-18 April 1969.

The meeting, which was held under the chairmanship of Mr. John Cousins of the British Transport and General Workers' Union, stressed the importance of the cabin attendant's job, particularly in ensuring the safety of passengers in case of emergency. It was agreed that all cabin staff should receive proper instruction and practice in emergency procedures, and that official cabin attendants' licences should be issued by the state of registry of the aircraft in order to guarantee adequate standards. The meeting stressed that special training and licences will be required for the Boeing 747 when it comes into operation next year, since the evacuation of up to 490 passengers will call for special skills and qualities in cabin staff. It was agreed that cabin staff training for such aircraft must include not only practice with the complex equipment to be used but also instruction in crowd psychology to help develop those qualities which are essential in handling large numbers of people, especially under conditions likely to cause panic.

The meeting stressed the importance of having sufficient cabin crew on board all aircraft and recommended a ratio of one cabin attendant for every twenty passenger-seats (or a major portion thereof) as the minimum for present-day aircraft. For the B 747 it was agreed that the minimum ratio should be one to every 25 passenger-seats, plus a chief in-flight-purser, whose functions would be purely supervisory. This figure for the Boeing 747 was set bearing in mind the need to man all emergency exits, to ensure overall supervision of evacuation, and to man the small upper deck cabin.

The meeting agree that the maximum number of hours flown by cabin crew should be governed by state regulations on flight and duty time limitation, in common with those of flight-deck crew.

Specifically on the Boeing 747, the meeting made a number of demands concerning safety and stressed that any attempt by the airlines to economise on safety would be resolutely opposed. The aircraft must carry all the necessary emergency

SUPPLEMENT TO NEWSLETTER No. 5

ILO TRIPARTITE TECHNICAL MEETING ON DOCK LABOUR, Rotterdam, 14-25 April

The Meeting took place in Rotterdam from 14-25 April 1969. It consisted of seven government members, seven employers' members and seven workers' members, as well as a number of substitute members and observers. With the exception of the Indian member, the workers' members came from ITF affiliates (in Belgium, Colombia, Federal Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States).

The agenda comprised three items: (1) The social repercussions of the introduction of unit load systems, with special reference to regularization of employment and stabilization of earnings, (2) Vocational training and retraining of dockworkers, (3) Safety, health and welfare of dockworkers.

The Meeting adopted conclusions on the three agenda items, and requested that these, together with the Report on the Meeting, be transmitted by the ILO to Member States, with a view to appropriate distribution and urgent action. The Meeting further requested that the first of the three questions be considered for inclusion in the agenda of an early session of the International Labour Conference.

Social repercussions

The key passage states that "positive steps should be taken by all parties concerned to avert or minimise as far as possible reduction of the work force by appropriate measures without prejudice to the efficient conduct of dock work operations... Adequate provisions should be made to protect dockworkers in case of unavoidable reduction of the labour force." Another important passage states: "Regular full-time employment should be aimed at for all dockworkers. Until regular full-time employment is possible, guarantees of employment and/or income should be provided..."

Also important is the recommendation that "machinery should be set up in each country and/or port for assessing the probable impact of changes in cargo-handling methods", and that "those directly concerned with the movement of freight through ports, namely the organizations of port employers or operators, the workers' and other organizations concerned, should participate in such machinery". Another paragraph refers particularly to developing countries and recommends that these "aim at an intermediate technology which would make economical use of foreign exchange and be relatively labour-intensive through, for instance, increased palletization."

Emile Laflamme

We have just learned of the death on 8 May of Emile Laflamme who served as ITF Representative in Africa from 1961 to 1967, when he returned to his native USA, subsequently becoming ICFTU Representative in New York.

Starting his working life as an apprentice sheet metal worker, he practised his trade for many years in railway work-shops, taking an active part in his union, the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, of which he eventually became a full-time official. Always keenly interested in international affairs, his French-Canadian origin (he was in fact born and brought up in the USA) gave him the advantage, particularly useful in Africa, of being bi-lingual. His earthy manner, patent sincerity, and devotion to basic trade union principles soon won him the respect and affection of the Africans he served for almost seven years, and it was with great reluctance that they finally accepted his decision to return home when his health and that of his wife began to suffer from the strain of the unrelenting demands made on them by his duties.

His passing at the age of 59 will be felt sorely by the many devoted friends that he made in the ITF and their profound sympathy goes to Mrs. Laflamme and his family in their present sorrow.