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Meeting of ITF Board, Paris 28-29 May

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

### ITF agreement for Liberian ship after British boycott threat

The US owners of the Liberian-flag ship, *Kathy Hope Maline*, were compelled to clear up numerous grievances and to sign a new ITF custodian agreement for the 25-man crew (of mixed nationality, under Greek officers) following the threat of a boycott by the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union.

When the vessel came in to port at Salford, Manchester, to discharge a cargo of grain in mid-May, the ITF were informed of a number of crew grievances, and sent Seafarers' Section Assistant T. Wood to investigate. The main complaints were: no pay for 5 months; low wages of \$60-100 for crew members; poor food consisting only of bread, potatoes and macaroni; shower and toilets blocked and out of order; inadequate heating; no wage allotment system to crew-members' families. The ITF Blue Certificates for the ship had expired in June 1968, and a subsequent agreement concluded with the Greek seafarers' union had no validity, since the union is suspended from the ITF.

After several days' hard negotiations, during which Brother Wood was assisted by officials from the National Union of Seamen, the owners agreed to apply the terms of the collective agreement, pay the crew's back-pay, repatriate five crew members who had been aboard for over 18 months, fumigate the store rooms and take on fresh food, repair the toilets, send the former Master back to Greece, and pay back contributions to the ITF Seafarers' Welfare Fund. Only after all the grievances had been cleared up was a new ITF Blue Certificate issued for the vessel. The owner also agreed to conclude an agreement for another ship, the *John Crosby*, undergoing repairs in Hamburg.

### ITF condemns treatment of South African dock workers

The General Secretary of the ITF, Charles Blyth, has written to the Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa strongly condemning the arbitrary dismissal and eviction from their homes of dock workers who had taken part in spontaneous strike action in protest at the low level of their wages. The letter urges that all port and dock workers in the Republic be afforded the fundamental democratic right of forming free trade unions.

These should be allowed to take whatever form the workers decided and should be free, in accordance with international instruments such as Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organization, to negotiate with the employers on pay, working conditions, security of employment, etc. The letter goes on to point out that it is basic to the beliefs of the ITF that no discrimination be made on the grounds of colour. Many of the workers involved in the dispute were Africans. Although the Republic professed to be an advanced society, it still allows what amounts to virtual serfdom. This is an area in which considerable improvements could be made, thus doing the international reputation of South Africa and its economy untold good.

### ITF General Secretary accuses Liberian authorities of disregard for safety

In a letter to the London Times of 17 May, the General Secretary of the ITF, Charles Blyth, expressed disquiet at the apparent lack of concern shown by 'flag of convenience' countries, notably Liberia, for the safety of members of the crews of ships under their flag. In the 20 years of the existence of the fleet, Liberian ships have been involved in numerous accidents at sea in which perhaps hundreds of seamen have lost their lives. Only two inquiries, however, have been initiated by the Liberian Government in all this time; and these into the Torrey Canyon and Ocean Eagle disasters where not lives but oil pollution was involved. Do the Liberian authorities then rate the oil menace, important as it is, more highly than the lives of seafarers? The General Secretary argues that the number of accidents to Liberian owned ships will continue to increase if pressure is not brought to bear on Liberia to control effectively the ships under her command. He goes on to point out that Liberia has no adequate regulations governing manning; many ships, with the exception of those owned by the major oil companies, being seriously undermanned. International standards for the examination of masters' and officers' licences are evaded.

The letter concludes with a plea for an impartial inquiry into the loss of the 21-year-old *Ithaca Island* with all hands in the Atlantic last October and further into the explosion aboard and the sinking of the tanker *Circe* in the Mediterranean in 1967 with the loss of all but one of her 39-man crew.

## TRANSPORT

### Mauritius

#### Mauritius joins ILO

Mauritius has now become a member of the International Labour Organization, bringing ILO membership to a total of 121 countries.

### United States

#### US Senate approves Tokyo convention

The US Senate has approved ratification of the 1963 ICAO Tokyo Convention covering offences and certain other acts committed on board aircraft on international flights.

## TRADE UNIONS

### Australia

#### Labour unrest in Australia after arrest of trade union leader

During recent weeks, the Australian continent has been crippled by a wave of strikes resulting from the imprisonment of Clarence O'Shea of the Victoria Tramways Union after he had refused to pay fines imposed on his union under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Mr. O'Shea was released after his fines had been paid for him by a public-spirited benefactor, but this came too late to curb the rising tide of opposition to the penal clauses of the Act. The Act gives employers the power to obtain court injunctions against strikers who break formal wage agreements. The strikes have since been upheld by the powerful Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). The announcement that the Council is to meet the Federal Government to seek the repeal of the penal clauses followed a statement in Parliament that the total abolition of these clauses was completely unacceptable to the Government. The Government has since adopted a more conciliatory attitude and has given an undertaking to reconsider its position. Meanwhile, the ACTU has instructed unions with fines outstanding under the Act not to pay pending the outcome of the talks. In the event of any undue delay or break-down in the negotiations the Council is to call an executive meeting to decide what effective action it could take to achieve its policy.

### Great Britain

#### Jack Jones attacks "lie campaign" against British unions

Mr. Jack Jones, General Secretary-elect of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union, was given a standing ovation

at the end of his speech to the annual conference of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen held in Porthcawl during May. He accused the Government of a deliberate 'lie campaign' against the unions in connection with the proposed legislation on industrial relations. Leading politicians were talking as if the unions were brigands extracting unjust demands from the employers. He stressed that the right to withdraw labour was a basic characteristic of a free country and that it was impossible to separate collective bargaining from this right in the manner that the Government was proposing by the introduction of penalties for workers involved in industrial disputes. Never in the history of the trade union movement, he said, had there been such a degree of unity as there was today. Every effort would be made at the Special Congress of the TUC in June to maintain and extend the field of effective collective bargaining. Otherwise, there was a danger that the unions might have to descend to collective begging.

### United States

#### California grape dispute - bogus union opposes farm workers (see ITF Journal Vol 29 No. 1)

Officers of a bogus union set up to undermine the efforts of the AFL-CIO United Farm Workers Organizing Committee to gain union rights for workers in the California grape industry have admitted that their activities were financed by the grape growers who have consistently resisted all attempts on the part of the workers to improve working conditions. The Guimarra Corporation, largest of the grape-growing concerns, is reported to have denied charges that it has given money to the bogus union and declared itself ready to fight the case in court.

## SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

### Canada

#### Air Canada maintenance staff end month-old strike

The Air Canada fleet was grounded for a month as a result of a strike by 6,300 maintenance workers, members of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists (see Newsletter No. 5, p. 42). The men agreed to call off the strike when the company offered a 16 per cent wage increase spread over 26 months.

The foregoing represent the main improvements negotiated jointly by the four unions. Further improvements were negotiated on an individual union basis. For example, in the case of radio officers, minimum monthly rates have been increased by 208 Kr\* from 1 April, 1969 and will be increased by a further 2 per cent from 1 April, 1970. The tonnage allowance goes up by 5-15 Kr and will be counted as a regular salary element, as is already the case for navigating and engineer officers and will, for example, be included in the calculation of overtime payments and those made for days off which are worked.

\* Danish Kroner 17.93 - £1

### Danish Seamen postpone strike

In accordance with the decision of the conciliation officer, the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union has postponed its planned strike for a period of 14 days. The union is involved in a dispute with a number of ferry companies.

### Great Britain

#### Ship's officers face a difficult future

Speaking at the general meeting of the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, Mr. D.S. Tennant General Secretary of the association, said that, as a result of the greater productivity of the industry, ships' officers might, in the future, be compelled to accept jobs in other types of ships or trades, possibly with the parent company. He said that it would be short-sighted not to admit that employment and promotion prospects might suffer, but he believed that careful planning would go a long way towards minimising the effects of rationalisation.

In this connection two issues had to be tackled vigorously. 'One', he said, 'is already in hand, namely a reduction in the retirement age, and the other, yet to be undertaken, is an assessment of future manpower requirements both in quality and quantity.'

#### New agreement for trawler fishermen operating from the port of Hull

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union has recently negotiated a

### Cyprus

#### 24-hour strike in Cyprus

Porters and aircraft handlers at Nicosia International Airport, Cyprus called a 24-hour strike on 16 May in support of claims for higher wages made on behalf of the aviation workers and other government employees. The airport staff are members of the ITF-affiliated Cyprus Airways' Employees' Trade Union.

### Denmark

#### New agreement for Danish seafarers

Four ITF-affiliated unions representing Danish navigating, engineer and radio officers as well as catering personnel have reached agreement with the Danish shipowners' association on conditions of work and remuneration. The agreement establishes a realistic basic wage with increases pegged directly to the cost of living, wages rising by 3 per cent for each 3 point rise in the price index; a reduction in weekly working hours of 4hr; and changes in the overtime rates. With effect from 1 April, 1969, the ceiling for overtime will be raised by 10 per cent, and from 1 September 1970, the ceiling will be entirely removed. The tonnage bonus will be included in the calculation of overtime rates. Weekday overtime continues to be calculated at 125 per cent of the hourly rate but overtime on Sundays goes up to 160 per cent of this rate.

new agreement for all trawler fishermen operating from the port of Hull. This came into effect on 1 April. The agreement comprises: a new schedule of minimum earnings for wet and freezer trawler fishermen; and a basic scale of pay for both categories. Higher rates of pay and tonnage rates for freezer trawler fishermen are to be assessed on the basis of one trip on a freezer trawler being considered as the equivalent of two trips on a wet fish vessel. Similar agreements are currently being negotiated in Fleetwood, Aberdeen, Grimsby and Granton and these are expected to follow the same pattern as the Hull agreement.

## Japan

### Strike of All-Japan Seamen's Union

49,000 members of the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union went on strike on 5 May in support of a wage claim (see Newsletter No. 5, p. 42). All arriving ocean-going ships, excluding passenger liners, were held up for a period of 12 days and the handling of their cargo was suspended. Talks between the union and the shipowners were arranged by the Central Maritime Labour Relations Committee and an agreement has now been reached on a wage increase and additional paid holidays. Details of the agreement will be published when they reach the ITF.

## Malta

### Strike follows lay-off of Maltese bus workers

Members of the Port and Industry Section of the ITF-affiliated General Workers' Union called a strike of all public transport employees when the bus owners' organization, the General Transport Union, laid off staff without giving prior notice of dismissal. The bus owners claimed that the bus companies would be faced with a financial crisis if they were compelled to observe the working conditions for drivers, conductors and inspectors laid down in the recent Wages Order

of the Wages Council. Bus services returned to normal on May 9 after agreements had been concluded between the Government and the GTU and between the GTU and the Port and Industry Section of the GWU. Under the terms of the Government/GTU settlement, the bus owners undertook to resume normal services and to implement the clauses of the new Wages Order. It was agreed that a study committee of three Government and three GTU representatives would study the present financial situation of the bus companies. According to the GTU/GWU agreement, all the workers who were laid off will be reinstated; no worker will suffer any loss in wages or working conditions as a result of or for the period of the stoppage; and negotiations with the GTU will be resumed without prejudice.

## United States

### NMU passenger-freighter agreement provides 33% package of gains

After nearly eight weeks of negotiations, in which the ITF affiliated National Maritime Union of America, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA) and the American Radio Association (ARA) worked together with unprecedented unity, a new 3 year passenger-freighter agreement was reached with American operators giving increases which total 33%.

The gains were headed by base pay increases of 6%-6%-6% which means better than 19% base pay rise by the end of the second year of the contract. In addition, straight overtime is to be increased in stages to full time-and-a-half rate, which is estimated to mean an average increase in monthly pay of at least \$200 per man. Vacations will be increased during the contract period to 10 days vacation for every 30 days worked. This will be in addition to the 4 extra days for every 30 provided for work on containerships. The agreement also gives major increases in pension and welfare protection, together with an increase of 15 cents in shipowners' contributions to the NMU Automation Fund. The agreement has been evaluated by the NMU as the biggest package of contract gains in American maritime history and the NMU membership is voting this week on ratification.

## PERSONALIA

R.C. Coutts, ITF Director of Regional Affairs from September 1957 - May 1958 and subsequently President of the American Train Dispatchers Association, has died at the age of 69. He had

been on leave from the association, of which he had been a member since 1926 and Vice-President since 1947, while in charge of regional affairs. Brother Coutts had also been

frequently nominated by his union Labor Member of the US National Railroad Adjustment Board, the body which decides all claims and grievances throughout the US railroad industry. The General Secretary has written to the association expressing his regret at the loss of such an active trade union leader.

Captain R.A.A. Wilson, master of the Iranian freighter Cyrus 11 (see ITF Journal No. 2,

1969), has died as the result of injuries received in a car crash. Captain Wilson had been negotiating to take over the command of a British ship and had also been trying to settle his own and the crew's claims in respect of the owners, who had been compelled to sell the vessel to meet their debts, when it put in at Durban (South Africa) on a return trip from the Persian Gulf. The ITF helped repatriate the crew, and arranged for legal representation.

### Forthcoming Meetings

Railwaymen's Section  
Committee                      London, 29-30 July 1969

Seafarers' Section  
Conference                      Genoa, 12-13 September 1969

Allied Section  
Committee Meeting                      London, October 1969

Executive Board                      Mexico, November 1969

## SUPPLEMENT

### Meeting of ITF Board, Paris, 28-29 May

The ITF Executive Board met in Paris at the headquarters of the Force Ouvriere Trade Union Confederation on 28 and 29 May 1969. The meeting was chaired by ITF President Hans Duby. French affiliates provided generous hospitality for members of the Executive Board and arranged a visit to three railway stations in Paris.

### ITF activities

The Executive Board reviewed the activities of the ITF over the period since its last meeting, and approved a full programme of forthcoming meetings, including the Railwaymen's Section Conference in Mexico, and the Seafarers' Section Conference in Genoa in September, immediately before the ILO Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference. The meeting reviewed ITF regional activities and agreed that the emphasis in this field should be on educational and training projects. On the matter of the boycott of California table grapes, it was agreed to support consumer boycotts of these grapes, in line with the request of the AFL-CIO United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee. The meeting further endorsed ITF activities with regard to other international organizations such as the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (CEMT) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Action taken by the Secretariat in support of a number of industrial disputes involving affiliated unions was approved.

### Situation in Greece

It was agreed to ask the General Secretary to keep the situation under close review and that the General Secretary should consult the Executive Board immediately it seemed possible to take any practical steps to bring pressure on the Greek military junta.

### Situation in the Middle East

It was agreed that the Management Committee

should keep the Middle East situation under review, and to adopt the following resolution:

This meeting of the ITF Executive Board, held in Paris from 28 to 29 May 1969,

Having further considered the situation in the Middle East,

ENDORSES unreservedly the statement adopted by the Management Committee at its meeting on 20 February 1969 condemning any acts of violence against civil aircraft;

IS ALARMED at the prospect that outrages of the kind that have been committed against aircraft may well be perpetrated against other forms of transport;

REQUESTS the General Secretary, in consultation with the Management Committee, to take prompt and appropriate action in the interests of the ITF and its affiliates should the need arise; and

CALLS once more for the negotiation of a durable peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours so that the workers of those countries may devote themselves to their social and economic advancement free from fear and harassment.

### Applications for affiliation

It was agreed to accept the applications of the following unions, subject to completion of formalities: Asociacion de Empleados Ferroviarios Red Norte-FF.CC. del Estado (Chile); Union de Motoristas, Obreros, Tecnicos y Administrativos de la Administracion Nacional de Puertos (Uruguay); Sindicato de Obreros y Empleados de CODESA (Uruguay); Sindicato Autonomo del Omnibus Salto (Uruguay); Penang Port Workers' Union; and the Sindicato de Trabajadores de Agencias Maritimas, Oficios Varios de Nicaragua.

The Board was informed that the Sindicato de la Industria Portuaria de El Salvador had now completed the formalities necessary to the formal acceptance of its application.