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WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF WISHING THE SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL OUR READERS

No. 12

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Meeting of the ITF Executive Board, Mexico City, 18 November 1969

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

Railwaymen's Section Conference - Mexico City, 11-15 November 1969

The ITF Railwaymen's Section were the guests of the Mexican Railwaymen's Union (STFRM) for their Section Conference held from 11 to 15 November in Mexico City. The Conference was attended by 93 delegates from 29 unions in 23 countries.

In addition to the report of the Section Secretary, the two main items on the agenda were Transport Policy and the Problems of Latin American Railwaymen. The Conference adopted resolutions dealing with:

Transport Policy; the Establishment of a Sub-Committee on Transport Policy; Rail Safety; Mexican Railwaymen's Problems; the Defence of Democracy; Persecution of Latin American Trade Unionists; and Costa Rican Railways.

A full report on the Conference will appear in the next issue of the ITF Journal.

Greece withdraws from the Council of Europe

Greece has announced her withdrawal from the Council of Europe. The decision followed an address by the Greek Foreign Minister Pipinelis before the Council of Ministers meeting in Paris on 12 December. In his speech, Pipinelis outlined the history of Greek political instability and pleaded for more time for the Greek colonels. When the Council of Ministers - which in June granted Greece a further period of six months in which to introduce the first steps towards a measure of liberalisation - pressed the minister to give a firm assurance of an eventual return to a more representative form of government, he prevaricated and then surprised the assembly by announcing the Greek withdrawal.

After some discussion, it was finally agreed to note the withdrawal of Greece from the 18-nation Council, recording that the military junta had seriously violated Article 3 of the Constitution under which member countries of the Council agree to accept the rule of law and to allow human rights and other fundamental freedoms to their citizens. In particular, the Greek Government stands accused of the use of torture against political opponents.

During the week preceding the meeting, the attitude of Council members towards the Greek junta had been hardening and if Greece had not taken the unprecedented step of voluntary withdrawal from the Council there would in all probability have been sufficient votes cast to force her suspension. Eleven countries had already tabled a motion calling for the suspension of Greece until satisfactory progress had been made in the normalisation of the political situation in the country.

In a statement to the Greek nation three days after the withdrawal of his country from the Council of Europe, the Greek Premier George Papadopoulos stated quite categorically that there could be no return to democracy in Greece until the regime had achieved its social, economic and cultural programme.

GREAT BRITAIN
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Tilbury ban stays despite threats of move to continent

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union is to maintain its ban on operations at the Tilbury container berth, despite threats by Overseas Containers Ltd., the British container consortium using the terminal, to transfer its Tilbury traffic to the port of Antwerp on a more permanent basis. The Tilbury ban has been in force since the berth was completed in March of this year. T&GWU General Secretary Jack Jones has stated that the ban will not be lifted before the start of a further round of negotiations to improve wages and working conditions generally in the Port of London.

The ITF was approached for its support and ITF General Secretary Charles Blyth immediately contacted the ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB) informing them of the background to the dispute and requesting the dockers not to undermine the position of the British union by handling the diverted container traffic. A similar approach was made to the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Union (NBV).

Union leaders from the Belgian and Dutch unions took part in an ITF-sponsored meeting with officials of the British Transport and General Workers' Union in London on 2 December at the end of which the following statement was issued:-

"The Belgian and Dutch representatives were informed of the present state of negotiations between the British Transport & General Workers' Union and the London port employers with regard to wages and conditions in the Port of London.

In particular, consideration was given to a statement by the Chairman of O.C.L. that this Container consortium was contemplating permanent removal of its container terminal from Tilbury to Antwerp.

The Belgian and Dutch representatives agreed that their union would resist any such permanent transfer. It was also agreed that representatives of the unions concerned would meet again immediately there was any attempt to carry out such a transfer."

The meeting of the ITF Dockers' Section Committee which is to be held in Bremen 19 - 20 January 1970 will discuss the implications of cargo containerization for dock workers.

National Airlines flight to London is boycotted

As the result of a request from the ITF for international assistance to locked-out National Airlines mechanics and other maintenance employees organized by the ITF-affiliated US International Association of Machinists (IAM),^{x)} a press demonstration flight to London by a National DC-8 aircraft designed to boost its proposed new service between Miami and London next year was refused refuelling and servicing facilities by British aviation unions -- including the ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs.

The aircraft arrived in London from Miami on 28 November and was immobilized at Heathrow Airport until 3 December as a result of the British unions' refusal to handle her. During the night of 3 December, however, the company succeeded in having the aircraft refuelled by using management personnel for this purpose.

The British unions -- members of the National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport -- have since cabled National Airlines urging that the latter should now start direct talks with the IAM. They have made it clear that the new service between Miami and London, due to commence on 2 January next, will be considered "black" in line with recommendations made by the ITF, unless the company reconsiders its hitherto intransigent attitude.

In a message to the ITF's General Secretary, the IAM President, Floyd Smith, said:

"We extend to you and through you to National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport our deep appreciation and the heartfelt thanks of over 1,000 IAM members locked out by National Airlines for your full measure of support in the struggle of our membership seeking justice. We know that your continuous support will hasten a just settlement on behalf of Machinist membership in the USA".

x) See also Newsletters Nos. 8 and 10.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL
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ILO social security agreement for Rhine boatmen

The ILO social security agreement for Rhine boatmen will come into force on 1 February 1970 following its ratification by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The agreement updates an earlier accord of 1950

and guarantees some 45,000 Rhine boatmen and their families the protection of the national legislation of a single country against all social security risks.

This will ensure that conflicts between national laws are avoided.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Airline pilots express concern at the extensive use of "point-source" aids

Speaking at a recent symposium of the British Air Line Pilots' Association, its chairman, Captain Laurie Taylor, expressed the growing concern of airline pilots at the extensive use of "point-source" navigation aids rather than "area coverage" systems which offered a more acceptable level of air safety. Use of the "point-source" beacon system, he said, meant that more and more aircraft were being squeezed into limited capacity canals. Descending and climbing aircraft were channelled over the same radio beacons, flight paths were allowed to cross in terminal areas and aircraft were required to fly as close as possible along radio beacon defined tracks. To relieve the situation, ground-based radar was being employed to such an extent that it was eroding the control of the pilot over his own aircraft.

TRADE UNIONS

SWITZERLAND

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Swiss railwaymen's union fifty years old

The ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The celebrations were held in Berne where the union was founded on 30 November 1919. The founding of the union marked the turning point in efforts to form a single union to represent the interests of the many categories employed in the railway industry.

The ITF was represented at the celebrations by its General Secretary, Charles Blyth. An article on the union's Jubilee will appear in the next quarter's issue of the ITF Journal.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

=====

ILO launches attack on unemployment in Africa

Delegates from 37 African countries attending an ILO conference in Accra, Ghana from 8 to 19 December will be asked to approve

a Jobs and Skills Programme which the ILO has drawn up with the assistance of African governments, employers' and workers' organizations and international and regional organizations. The programme will form part of the ILO's World Employment Programme which was launched earlier this year with the aim of helping countries create additional productive employment.

BELGIUM
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Belgian railwaymen call off planned strike

The ITF-affiliated Railwaymen's Sector of the Belgian General Public Services Centre called off a strike scheduled for 4 December when it received a firm assurance from the Belgian Railways that the agreement reached between it and the union in 1968 would be implemented. The terms of the agreement include certain improved benefits for disabled employees; improved compensation for accidents incurred in the course of duty; new social security measures, with particular reference to sickness benefits; and the introduction of bonus payments for work outside normal hours of duty. The union has stressed that if these provisions are not implemented before 15 December it will be compelled to reconsider strike action.

FINLAND
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Finnish Seamen's Union seeks improvements for Finnish Coastguard

The junior officers and men of the Finnish Coastguard joined the ITF-affiliated Finnish Seamen's Union in 1968 as a separate section with its own board. During this period, the coastguards' union structure has been reorganized and negotiations have begun with the treasury with a view to improving working conditions for coastguards.

FRANCE
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French cabin attendants stage first of a series of strikes

Two thousand members of the French Cabin Attendants' Union (SNPNC) - an ITF affiliate - held the first of a series of strikes on 2 December. The union is protesting against the French Government's proposal to replace State licensing of cabin attendants by an airline licensing system. The union plans to stage further strikes until the Government decision is reversed. The first completely disrupted flights by the three airline companies, UTA, Air France and Air Inter.

In a telegram to the French Minister of Transport M. Mondon (despatched prior to the strike), the ITF General Secretary Charles Blyth called upon the Minister to reconsider his position on this "proposed retrograde step" in the interests of national and international airline safety. ITF unions, he stated, had long considered State-controlled licensing of cabin personnel necessary if the highest standards of professional qualifications and airline safety were to be maintained. Any action taken by the SNPNC would have the full backing of the ITF and its affiliated unions.

The union has since announced that it is planning a further strike for 11 December. Meanwhile, talks between the union and the French Minister of Transport are still continuing.

GERMANY
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OeTV signs 1970 agreement for German seafarers

The German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union has signed a 1970 wages agreement on behalf of Germany's 45,000 seafarers. This follows an interim settlement covering the last three months of 1969 (see Newsletter No. 11, p. 97). The terms of the new agreement include: a 12% increase for all ratings; a supplementary increase for all catering staff; the introduction of standard pay for the deep-sea trade; higher rates for captains and senior officers, home-trade captains and officers receiving increases of between 12 and 25 per cent. The new agreement expires at the end of 1970.

GREAT BRITAIN
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New pay deal for airline workers

The ITF-affiliated Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs has negotiated a wide-ranging agreement for 3,000 of its supervisory engineers and technicians employed by the British Overseas Airways Corporation and British European Airways. The deal provides for increases of up to £8 per week back-dated to 1 September, with the promise of two further £2-per-week rises within the next two years. The deal is important for the airlines as it involves the acceptance of revised working practices allowing for more labour flexibility between supervisory and inspection staff.

Transport workers' union opposes lowering of minimum age for bus drivers

In the interests of road safety, the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union is to oppose a Government proposal to reduce from 21 to 18 the minimum age for bus drivers. The union holds that younger bus drivers do not have the necessary experience to make them safe drivers.

MALTA

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Port workers strike in Malta

Port workers at Valletta (Malta) - members of the ITF-affiliated General Workers' Union - went on strike on 20 November when the port authorities refused to suspend their ban on the handling of roll-on/roll-off ships at the port. The ban had been imposed because port workers had insisted on full manning scales and tariffs being applied for all such work. The strike was called off when an assurance was given that there would be immediate negotiations on the conditions applying to the importation of goods by the roll-on/roll-off system.

SWITZERLAND

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Swissair workers win improved conditions of work

The ITF-affiliated Swiss Public Service Workers' Union (VPOD) has negotiated a new collective agreement for its 6,300 members employed by Swissair. The new agreement provides for : a 3% cost-of-living increase; an additional 77 francs^x per month as an increase in real wages for all Swissair employees; a new basic minimum salary of 811.15 francs (previously 715 francs) per month; an increase in the monthly compensation for regular hours of work to 45 francs (formerly 30 francs), with effect from 1 January 1970; and four weeks' annual leave for employees who have reached the age of 40 or who have at least 20 years' service with the company.

x) Swiss Francs 10.50 = £1

UNITED STATES

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Major rail strike averted

The threat of a national US rail strike was averted when agreement was reached between a consortium of four shopcraft unions and the railroad management on the terms of a new contract covering a joint membership of some 48,000. Details of the settlement will not be available until it has been ratified by rank-and-file union members.

William W. Winpisinger, Vice President of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists, has acted throughout as negotiating chairman for the four unions - Machinists, Sheet Metal Workers, Electricians, Boilermakers and Blacksmiths.

As early as October of 1968, the unions had begun negotiations for a one-year settlement providing for a 10 per cent increase in basic rates and an extra 20 cents per hour for skilled workers. These awards would, the unions felt, bring

the shopmen into line with rates paid for similar work in other industries. Local negotiations failed, however, and those at a national level proved equally unsuccessful.

The unions then decided to stage a series of selective strikes to draw attention to their plight. The first of these was scheduled for 4 October 1969 and would have affected 6 different railroads. But the Government intervened declaring an emergency, thus using their statutory powers to delay the strike for a further sixty days. An Emergency Board was appointed to make recommendations for a settlement of the dispute.

TWU cabin staff members in dispute with Northwest Airline

The ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America has postponed a threatened strike, set for 9 December, against Northwest Airline pending mediation board meetings on the dispute, which stems from the company's failure to negotiate fairly on a new contract for its stewards and stewardesses. The TWU has been trying to negotiate improvements in wages, hospitalization provisions, pensions and other benefits since the end of January.

Prior to the strike threat, the TWU had on 26 November organised large-scale demonstrations in support of its case in Seattle, Minneapolis, Washington and Honolulu. Since Northwest operates services to cities in the Far East as well as in the United States, the TWU also requested international support from the ITF for its proposed strike. The ITF contacted affiliates in both Japan and the Philippines for this purpose.

Ships' captains win contracts

A two-day strike by members of the ITF-affiliated US International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots against United States Lines has won the union a goal for which it has been fighting for 15 years, the negotiation of contracts to cover ships' captains.

PERSONALIA

Tord Bratt, head of the Maritime Branch of the International Labour Organization, is to retire at the end of this year after 26 years' service. Bratt has headed the maritime branch since 1953.

Willi Richter, a former president of the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) and a founder member of the ICFTU of which he was for many years a vice-president, recently celebrated his 75th birthday.

Henrikki Rislakki has been elected executive head of the Finnish Ships Officers' Union.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Road Transport Workers' Section
Safety Sub-Committee Meeting

Postponed

Dockers' Section Committee Meeting

Bremen, 19-20 January 1970

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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STATEMENT BY THE ITF ON THE RELEASE OF THE TWO ISRAELI PASSENGERS
DETAINED IN DAMASCUS

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), while welcoming the release of the two Israeli passengers detained by Syria since the hijacking of the Transworld Airlines Boeing 707 to Damascus on 30 August, deplors the fact that innocent airline passengers are used as pawns in political conflicts and in particular that certain governments employ criminal actions for their own political ends.

The disturbing increase in the number of hijacking offences during 1969 has caused the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to intensify its efforts to secure wide-spread ratification of an instrument making the hijacking of aircraft a major penal offence. An important step in this direction was taken when the instrument, the so-called 1963 Tokyo Convention, entered into force on 4 December among the twelve ICAO member states by which it had been ratified at that date. The Convention provides for the return of hijacked aircraft to their lawful owners and the earliest practicable release of their passengers and crew.

The Legal Sub-Committee of ICAO has now completed its work on the text of a further draft convention dealing specifically with hijacking and providing for more stringent penalties for this crime. This draft convention will next be submitted to the Legal Committee for ratification. If approved by the Committee, ICAO will undoubtedly press vigorously for its acceptance by all governments.

The ITF and its civil aviation membership of over 150,000 civil aviation personnel fully supports both ICAO measures to combat hijacking and expresses the hope that they will quickly gain the approval of the international community, thus ensuring that all such acts of aggression against the innocent public are universally outlawed.

MEETING OF THE ITF EXECUTIVE BOARD, MEXICO CITY, 18 NOVEMBER 1969

The ITF Executive Board met in Mexico City on 18 November 1969. The meeting was chaired by ITF President Hans Düby.

ITF ACTIVITIES

The Board has for some time been considering intensifying the ITF's work at European level and has now agreed that a conference of European affiliates should take place in the second half of 1970 in Brussels. The conference itself would decide whether such meetings were to be held on a regular basis.

J.R. Baiden, General Secretary of the Maritime and Dockworkers' Union of Ghana, was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy for a Board member for Africa created by the withdrawal of the former member J. Kotey (also from Ghana).

The General Secretary, Charles Blyth, apprised the Board of the steps that were being taken to secure the release of the two Israeli passengers detained since the hijacking of the Transworld Airlines Boeing 707 to Damascus on 30 August. The Board endorsed his actions and authorized him to continue his efforts.

With regard to the recent flood disasters in Tunisia, it was agreed that a circular should be sent to all affiliates urging them to support individual national appeals for funds for the relief of those who had suffered.

REQUESTS FOR AFFILIATION

The following applications for affiliation were accepted subject to the completion of any remaining formalities:

- Sindicato Gremial de Pilotos Automovilistas (El Salvador)
- Asociación de Oficiales de Marina Mercante Nacional al Servicio de la Compañía Peruana de Vapores, Sociedad Anónima (Peru)
- Federación Industrial de Trabajadores del Transporte (FITT) (Panama)
- Asociación Sindical "Oficiales de Maquinas de la Marina Mercante Nacional" (Mexico)
- Japanese Airline Workers' Union (ZENRO)
- Japan Airline Cabin Attendants' Union (KYAKUJO).

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Executive Board should be held on 3 and 4 June, 1970. It was also agreed that the dates for the 1971 Congress of the ITF should be from 28 July to 6 August, preceded by a meeting of the Executive Board on 26 and 27 July.

A detailed account of the Board's meeting will, as usual, be sent to affiliated organizations.