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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

Diplomatic conference approves the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation

At a diplomatic conference held in Montreal under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization from 8 to 23 September 1971, a Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (Anti-Sabotage) was drawn up in its final form and opened for signature. The Convention was approved by the Conference by an overwhelming majority and will come into force thirty days following the deposit of instruments of ratification by ten signatory states. This new international instrument treats sabotage as an internationally-recognised offence and makes it the obligation of contracting States to arrest offenders and arrange for their extradition or prosecution and to impose severe penalties.

In a press statement issued shortly after the Conference, the ITF welcomed the Convention as a step in the right direction, while stressing that the final draft to emerge from the Conference did not go far enough to meet the employees' point of view. In particular, the ITF deeply regretted the French decision not to sign the Convention, although all other major states had given it their signature. The ITF expressed the hope that the French government would reconsider its position in the light of public opinion.

The ITF was represented at the Conference in an observer capacity by its Civil Aviation Secretary Mohammed Hoda and by three observers from US-affiliated unions: Bill Gill Jr. and J. Wahle of the Flight Engineers' International Association and Roy Stewart of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

An article on the work of the conference will appear in the next issue of the ITF Journal.

ITF makes grant towards International Sports Weeks for Seamen

The ITF has made a grant of £2,500 to the Norwegian Government Seamen's Service as its contribution towards the International Sports Weeks for Seamen which the Service has organized in ports in Europe and North America in the course of 1971.

SPAIN

=====

International Federation of Building and Woodworkers condemns
brutal killing of Madrid construction worker

We have received from the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers a copy of a circular to IFBWW-affiliated unions informing them of the death on 13 September of the Madrid construction worker Pedro Patino, who was shot and killed by the Guardia Civil while distributing propaganda material to construction workers on strike for higher wages and free trade union rights. The circular points out that this is not the first time that the Guardia Civil has prevented Spanish workers from exercising their democratic rights in this brutal fashion -- three building workers were killed in Granada in similar circumstances only last year^x. The circular urges affiliated unions to give full details in their union publications of the cold-blooded murder of Patino and the suppression of trade union rights in Spain. It also recommends them to register their protest against the policies of the Franco regime by not taking holidays in that country.

In a letter to Wilfred Jenks, Director General of the International Labour Organization, IFBWW General Secretary John Löfblad has requested that the Committee on Freedom of Association review the situation of the trade union movement in Spain as a matter of urgency. Löfblad has also cabled the Spanish Minister of the Interior condemning the brutality of the Guardia Civil in its attempts to prevent Spanish construction workers from enjoying basic civil and human rights, which were considered a matter of course in every democratic country.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has also addressed a similar appeal to the ILO and has sent a cable of protest to the Spanish Minister of the Interior.

^xSee ITF Newsletter No. 8, 1970, p. 84

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

=====

Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft
comes into force

The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, which was drawn up under ICAO auspices at an international diplomatic conference in The Hague last December^x, came into force on 14 October following the deposit of instruments of ratification by the following States: Bulgaria; Costa Rica; Ecuador; the Gabonese Republic; Hungary; Israel; Japan; Norway; Sweden; Switzerland and the United States.

^xSee ITF Newsletter No. 12, 1970, p.129

Marine insurers press for international convention on inspection of containers

The International Union of Marine Insurance has urged the drawing up of an international convention providing for the annual inspection of containers. Speaking at the IUMI conference in Brussels last month, the chairman of the Union's container committee revealed that the Committee had conveyed to the United Nations Organization an official UIMI proposal that it include in the international convention for the safe intermodal transport of containers a requirement for inspection of containers at least once a year. The chairman added: "We think that a convention which will require the annual inspection will be an important step forward. However, this could be termed long-range planning and there is a need for continuing inspection now. Until such times as an international convention can be adopted, we must rely on the voluntary inspection of containers by shippers and others.

"Training shippers to do this ... would afford an excellent opportunity for this international organization to educate shippers and carriers in the many ways in which loss can be avoided by selecting the right containers for the job."

GERMANY
=====

OeTV calls for more funds for public transport

The vice-president of the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has called for a greater proportion of the Federal transport budget to be allocated to public transport. In a statement, Heinrich Jacobi pointed out that in 1970 the German Federal Republic spent 5 thousand million DM on building inter-city highways, while less than ten per cent of this sum (367 million DM) was available for developing urban transport. It was expected that this gap would widen even further in the next few years. And yet it was a commonplace that the real traffic problem lay not with long-distance transport but in the cities. The OeTV was of the opinion that the federal transport budget should be restructured to meet this need and that 2 thousand million DM should be devoted to urban transport in 1972. This would enable local authorities to offer better public transport services and yet peg fares.

UNITED STATES
=====

US airline introduces new screening system to deter hijackers

Eastern Airlines, the second-largest airline in the United States, has introduced a new screening system, which should prove more effective in detecting potential hijackers. The system is already in operation in Miami -- where there have been a number of hijacking attempts because of the proximity of the airport to Cuba.

With the new system, passengers walk to the aircraft through an aluminium door-frame containing a magnetometer. If a person carrying a significant amount of metal passes through the frame a nearby screen with a built-in outline of a human figure registers the presence of metal and also indicates on what part (or parts) of the body the metal is secreted. The system has the advantage of enabling all metal objects on the person to be investigated, as the exact location of each piece of metal is known. Previous systems only established the presence and not the location of metal, thus making it possible for an innocent object to be found while a weapon might go undetected.

TRADE UNIONS

ARGENTINA

=====

Argentinian workers stage twenty-four-hour general strike

Members of the Argentinian General Confederation of Labour staged a twenty-four-hour strike on 29 September. The stoppage paralysed the country's rail services and seriously disrupted other vital transport links. The Confederation is demanding increased salaries and improved pensions and family allowances for its members.

CANADA

=====

Canadian union renders assistance to crew of the Liberian-flag vessel 'Goldstone'

The Vancouver branch of the ITF-affiliated Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers recently rendered valuable assistance to members of the crew of the Liberian-flag vessel 'Goldstone', which had been diverted to the port as a consequence of the US west coast dock strike. The Spanish crew of the 'Goldstone', which normally operates a regular run between Mediterranean ports and a number of major ports on the western seaboard of the United States, had been instructed by the owners, Italian-Pacific Lines, to proceed with a consignment of cargo to India. The majority of crew members were unwilling to undertake such a voyage, which would have involved a prolonged period of absence from their home port of Barcelona, although they stood to lose their back pay and would have been held liable under their contract for the cost of flying out replacement crew members to Vancouver if they failed to accede to the company demand. The men were also protesting against their poor wages and conditions on shipboard, in particular the air conditioning system on the vessel, which would have been clearly inadequate in the heat of the Indian sub-continent.

On the advice of Tom McGrath of the CBRT&GW local in the port, the crew members of the 'Goldstone' staged a twenty-four hour work stoppage and threatened to take further action if a satisfactory settlement of their grievance was not reached. Following the intercession of the immigration officials at the port, the owners eventually capitulated and agreed to pay the men the back wages due to them. They also agreed to repatriate by air at company expense those members of the crew of the 'Goldstone', who did not wish to continue their service with the vessel and to fly out new crew members to Vancouver, likewise at their own expense.

FINLAND

=====

Finnish seafaring unions to work together more closely

At the initiative of the ITF-affiliated Finnish Ship Officers' Association, a meeting was held on 27 August in Helsinki, at which a decision was taken to establish a permanent central body on which all Finnish seafarers' organizations would be represented. The main purpose of the central body would be to coordinate the efforts of Finnish seafarers' unions in their negotiations with the shipowners and in their relations with the press. The new body would also facilitate the exchange of information between unions and would make it easier for seafaring problems to be dealt with more speedily and effectively.

GREAT BRITAIN

=====

British locomotivemen fear more redundancies

The ITF-affiliated Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is seriously concerned by the recent announcement of British Rail that its locomotive fleet is being reduced to meet 'current service requirements'. The union fears that the voluntary redundancies that it has already been necessary to negotiate among drivers in certain areas of the country will be followed by further redundancies as rail services are reduced. Accordingly, ASLEF General Secretary Ray Buckton has asked other leaders of unions organizing railwaymen to meet him in urgent talks with British Rail management with a view to obtaining a clear picture of the effects of these changes on future manpower requirements.

JAPAN

=====

Japanese Seamen's Union investigates safety standards of Japanese vessels

The ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union has conducted its own emergency investigation into the safety of large Japanese-built vessels after a government inquiry into the loss last year of two such vessels, the Bolivar Maru and the California Maru, failed

to establish with any degree of certainty the cause of the sinkings^x. A six-man team spent one month last year examining the structure of almost one hundred vessels. The investigation, the findings of which have recently been published, revealed a disturbing number of structural faults in the vessels in question and recommended that these and other similar vessels should be made subject to regular inspection and maintenance and that supplementary repairs should be effected, where these proved to be necessary. The findings also indicate that the present system of official inspection is inadequate to ensure the safety of navigation and should be improved as a matter of urgency.

^xSee ITF Newsletter No. 9, 1970, p. 104

SCANDINAVIA

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Nordic radio officers meet in Helsinki

The annual Nordic Radio Officers' Conference meeting in Helsinki last month examined existing conditions concerning the radio safety of life at sea and in this connection unanimously agreed to urge an early acceptance by the IMCO Maritime Safety Committee and the Nordic administrations of the amendments to the SOLAS Convention, which were adopted by the IMCO Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications earlier this year.^x After considering the rapid developments taking place in the electronics industry and their effects on the future employment of radio officers, the Conference also decided that the training of radio officers should be updated and kept under constant review.

^xSee supplement to ITF Newsletter No. 1, 1971

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

BELGIUM

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Belgian public transport workers receive cost-of-living increase

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Public Service Workers' Union has negotiated a two percent cost-of-living increase for public transport workers. The increase is backdated to 1 September 1971. In addition, working hours for public transport employees were reduced by 1 hr 30 mins to 41 hrs 30 mins with effect from the same date. The reduction of working hours, which has been made without loss of pay, is equivalent to a further salary increase of 3.61 per cent.

Details of the current collective agreement for Belgian public transport employees were given in the March issue of the ITF Newsletter (p. 24).

CANADA

New agreement is signed for IAM members with Air Canada

6,500 members of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers employed by Air Canada have ratified a new 25-month agreement providing for substantial improvements in pay and other benefits. The agreement was reached when the union staged short rotating strikes at Toronto and Montreal Airports after failing to make any headway in contract negotiations with the airline company. Under the terms of the agreement:

- all employees receive an 8% pay increase backdated to 1 March 1971, with provision for a further increase of 7% from 28 February 1972. In addition, employees who have already reached the top of their pay scale receive an extra \$7^x per month from 1 March and a further \$6 per month in February next year.
- top-rated aircraft mechanics get a basic hourly rate of \$5.10 (previously \$4.69), rising to \$5.49 next year. Other top-rated employees receive proportionate increases.
- carpenters and mechanics are paid a skilled trades adjustment of \$1.18 per hour, bringing their hourly rate to \$5.49 in 1972.
- a new dental insurance plan will be introduced in July 1972, with equal contributions being paid by Air Canada and company employees. (^xCan.\$2.47 = £1).

FIJI

====

Strike in Fiji leads to improved benefits for busmen

A strike by busmen belonging to the ITF-affiliated Fiji Transport Workers' Union was called off after a settlement was reached in conciliation sessions led by the Fiji Minister of Labour. Strike action was called against bus owners in various parts of Fiji after negotiations broke down on a union claim for increased pay and other benefits. The settlement gives bus drivers in Suva a new minimum hourly wage of 40 cents and those in the Western Division of Fiji a new minimum of 35 cents. There are similar increases for other workers in the industry. The strike had the full support of the Fiji Trades Union Congress.

At the request of the union, ITF General Secretary Charles Blyth cabled the government of the Fiji Islands during the strike urging it to use its influence to effect a just settlement of union claims.

FRANCE
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French ships' officers extend their campaign for higher salaries

Ships' officers belonging to the ITF-affiliated French Ships' Officers' Union (FO) have announced that they are to extend^x their campaign for improved salaries and working conditions. The union is currently operating sailing delays of four days on French vessels leaving port to back up its claim. The action, which was originally scheduled to last until the end of September, will now continue until 20 October, unless a satisfactory settlement is reached before that date.

^xFor further details see ITF Newsletter
Nos. 6, p. 74 and 7, p. 83

GREAT BRITAIN
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New deal for workers in London's enclosed docks

Dockers in London's enclosed docks -- most of whom are members of the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union -- have accepted the employers' offer of a 6 per cent increase in basic pay. Under the deal, the dockers receive a weekly increase of £1.50 backdated to 20 September, followed by an extra £0.75 per week from 3 January 1972.

The 6 per cent pay award is the first review of dockers earnings since the introduction in the port of the second stage of the Devlin modernization programme^x which gave the men a basic wage of £36.50 to £39 per week.

^xFor details of the earlier award see ITF
Newsletter No. 9, 1970, p. 101

British radio technicians impose overtime ban

At the beginning of October, shore-based radio technicians belonging to the ITF-affiliated Radio and Electronic Officers' Union (REOU) imposed an overtime ban at ports throughout Britain following the breakdown of talks on their pay claim with two electronics companies. Maintenance of radio, radar, echo sounders and other electronic equipment is affected by the ban, which was still continuing at time of going to press.

The existing agreement, which was signed in October of last year, gives the radio technicians annual earnings of between £1,276 and £1,887.

^xSee ITF Newsletter No. 11, 1970, p.126

Ground staffs in the UK demand better pay and conditions

The ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union has lodged a claim for a substantial improvement in pay and conditions on behalf of 7,000 non-technical ground staff (drivers, porters, baggage handlers etc.) employed by the major UK airlines and the British Airports Authority. The men are demanding substantial pay rises, improved shift and service pay, longer annual leave, and a reduction in the working week from 40 to 37½ hours.

MALTA
=====

Maltese public transport workers seek cost-of-living increase

The ITF-affiliated Malta General Workers' Union has submitted a claim for a 15s cost-of-living increase for public transport workers on the island.

UNITED STATES
=====

East and Gulf Coast longshoremen are on strike

Longshoremen on the East and Gulf Coasts, the men are members of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association, have been on strike since 1 October. The central issue in the dispute concerns an existing clause providing for a guaranteed annual income for dockers, which the owners are refusing to include in the new contract currently being negotiated. The income provision gives longshoremen a guaranteed wage for 2,080 hours per annum, regardless of the availability of work. The present contract expired on 30 September.

The dockers are also seeking improved hourly rates of pay and contract provisions regarding the handling of containers and LASH vessels.

PERSONALIA

A.H. Chesser has been elected as the second president of the North American United Transportation Union in succession to Charles Luna, who retires at the end of this year. Charles Luna has been made president emeritus in recognition of his services to the union.

J.R. Snyder succeeds A.H. Chesser as national legislative director of the United Transportation Union.

Thor Sønsteby, treasurer of the Norwegian Seamen's Union from 1933 until his retirement in 1966, died on 28 September. He was 65. Th. Sønsteby spent the war years in London, where he worked in close cooperation with the ITF and the British National Union of Seamen. After his return to Norway, Sønsteby continued his association with the ITF's work for seafarers as a member of the Committee of the Seafarers' Section. He was also a member of the Fair Practices Committee and a member of the Committee on Asian Seamen.

Leif Lerstad, general secretary of the Norwegian Mates' Association, has retired after nearly 30 years' service with the association. Brother Lerstad was appointed president in 1953 and has held his present post since 1958.

Percy R. Bengough, for many years one of the leading figures in the US International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and a prime mover in the formation of the Canadian Labour Congress, died in Vancouver on 10 August at the age of 89. Percy Bengough was president of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada from 1943 until his retirement in 1954, and in 1956 assisted in the creation of the Canadian Labour Congress out of a merger of the TLC and the Canadian Congress of Labour. At the time of his death, Bengough was honorary president of the CLC. He was also a founder member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Bruce Foster has been elected as a vice-president of the US Amalgamated Transit Union.

Hermann Leuenberger, a former president and presently honorary president of the Swiss Transport Workers' Union, is retiring after 32 years as a Swiss Federal Councillor.

Werner Meier, president-elect of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union, celebrated his 55th birthday on 1 October.

Fritz Rohrer, chairman of the general purposes and finance committee of the Swiss Public Service Workers' Union, died on 7 September at the age of 56.

The following have been elected on to the national executive of the Korean Railway Workers' Union: president, Myong-Hyon Cho; vice-presidents, Chong-Ki Lee, Yun Tae Suh, Jae-Kuk Kyun, Sung-Joon Kim; general secretary and director of international affairs, Hun-Ki Lee.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS
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ITF Fishermen's Section Working Party on Safety	-	Utrecht, 26-27 October 1971
Management Committee	-	London, 16 November 1971
Executive Board	-	London, 16-18 November 1971

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