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No. 5

May 1975

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL
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Meeting of ITF Travel Bureau Section Committee

A meeting was held of the ITF Travel Bureau Section Committee in London on 8 April 1975. It was attended by ten representatives from eight member unions; K. Haussig of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union took the chair. (The Section was renamed at last year's Congress when it was felt that the Allied Section had been composed of too many small groups of workers.)

In the introductory discussion it was recalled that the Section had a year in which to show that it had a purpose to serve and that it was worth continuing. With this in mind, the delegates exchanged information about the degree of organisation, the potential membership and the problems of travel bureau employees and agreed that the ITF could indeed make a substantial contribution towards improving the conditions of what was in many countries a disorganised and under-represented industry.

In particular, details were presented of a planned organisation campaign by the US Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks which would require the collaboration of other ITF affiliates if it were to be fully effective in covering employees of multinational travel companies.

The meeting adopted a timetable for Section action in three phases, as follows:

Phase 1 : May, June, July 1975

- (a) ITF seeks observer status with the World Tourism Organisation and establishes contact with the World Association of Travel Agencies and the Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Associations and reports to affiliates;
- (b) ITF surveys existing legislation dealing with regulations for the travel trade, licensing of staff and training of staff;
- (c) Affiliates submit to the ITF their proposals for organizing travel employees, using the ITF identification, for ITF approval and circulation to affiliates.

Phase 2 : August 1975 - January 1976

- (a) Affiliates commence organising campaign, reporting monthly to the ITF Secretariat;
- (b) ITF reports to affiliates on its legislative survey;
- (c) ITF coordinates efforts of support between the unions;
- (d) ITF drafts model agreement;
- (e) In October 1975 the ITF holds another Section Committee meeting or a Seminar to review the programme, discuss problems in general and the model agreement.

Phase 3 : February - June 1976

Continuation with the revised programme and the holding of another Section meeting sometime in this period to consider boycott action, should this prove necessary.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
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EEC Railwaymen's Unions meet in Brussels

On 28 and 29 April 1975 a meeting was held in Brussels of representatives of railway trade unions from all nine Member States of the European Economic Community. The ITF was represented by members of the "Brussels Committee" and the Section Secretary, Johan Hauf.

The meeting adopted a joint stand concerning

- the furtherance of a transport policy within the EEC which would be in the general interest;
- the creation of conditions which would enable railwaymen to meet realistic economic and social responsibilities;
- the achievement of real social progress for the employees of railway undertakings.

With respect to the establishment of a European Railway Authority it was considered that this should not be so framed as to serve as support for the erroneously conceived Community transport policy which could be set against the interests of the trade unions. The meeting therefore demanded effective participation of railwaymen's unions in the work of all relevant Community bodies as well as within the "Group of Nine" of the UIC.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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New multinational shipping line proposed

A new multinational shipping line is being planned by seventeen countries bordering the Caribbean. The line, which would be jointly owned and operated by all the member countries, is a move to counter the advance of developed shipping nations into the Latin America/Caribbean ocean transport trade and is expected to engage in marine transport among the countries of the region for the present. The inaugural conference of Ministers to found the company is planned for early May, in San Jose, Costa Rica.

GREAT BRITAIN

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More protection for bus crews

Legislation has been introduced in the British parliament to give the police more powers to deal with violence on buses and coaches. This follows discussions between the Home Secretary, the Minister of Transport, London Transport management and leaders of the transport unions involved, in particular the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union. The campaign for greater protection was given impetus by the death of a London bus conductor in February after a dispute with passengers. In addition, London Transport are installing warning devices progressively in all their buses.

TRADE UNIONS

GREAT BRITAIN

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Union absolved from compensation liability on appeal

The ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union has been absolved from the need to pay compensation to the Canadian firm General Aviation Services (UK) Ltd. The Appeal Court has allowed, with costs, an appeal by the union against a decision of the now defunct National Industrial Relations Court in November 1973. This ruled that the union was responsible for its members' action in taking industrial action at Heathrow Airport against the employment of General Aviation Services for loading, baggage handling and other ground services, resulting in the company being forced out of business at the airport. The union would have been liable to pay £2m. in compensation.

The Appeal Court found that the union had repeatedly advised its members not to take direct action in the dispute and could not be held in any way responsible for its result. The company has been given leave to appeal to the House of Lords (highest court of appeal).

SPAIN
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First of May demonstrations

Workers' demonstrations in Spain on 1 May were once again the occasion for a show of violent repression on the part of the Franco police state. In Barcelona Camilo Ruedo, aged 28, a metal worker, was shot and gravely wounded by police while distributing UGT leaflets; and in Vigo a worker was killed by the Civil Guard.

In Madrid, a procession to the grave of Pablo Iglesias, founder of the Spanish Socialist Labour Party, was met by a large force of police and dispersed with great savagery - many were wounded and more than 100 arrested.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CANADA
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Dockworkers may defy imposition of mediation proposals

Dock workers in the St. Lawrence ports of Montreal, Quebec City and Trois Rivières went on strike on 31 March following the rejection by their union - the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association - of conciliation proposals (see Newsletter No. 4, 1975, page 29). The government has brought in legislation to make the proposed settlement mandatory, but many dockers are expected to defy the order to return to work, since they consider that the job security provisions are unsatisfactory.

DENMARK
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New pay rates for seafarers

With effect from 1 March 1975, the following monthly wage rates apply for Danish seafarers covered by the agreements between the shipowners' federation and the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union and the Firemen's Union (these include cost-of-living allowances):

	3-watch system	2-watch system	Overtime per half-hour	
			Weekdays	Sun/Hols
Boatswain, pumpman	4280.96 kr.	4869.96	15.47	19.80
Able seaman	4050.96	4639.96	14.64	18.73
Ord. Seaman	3267.49	3844.99	11.81	15.11
Jun. seaman over 18 yrs	2207.26	2540.26	7.97	10.21
Jun. seaman under 18 yrs	1613.41	1781.41	5.83	7.46
Deckboy	1595.88	1763.88	5.77	7.38
Donkeyman pumpman	4305.99		15.56	19.91
Fireman, motorman	4075.99		14.73	18.85
Unskilled fireman motorman	3216.79		11.62	14.87

Seniority bonus (per month): for able seamen and above, ranging from 325 kr. after one year to 130 kr. after 10 years; for motormen and above, from 130 kr. to 325 kr.

Tanker bonus (per month): 13% of basic pay plus seniority bonus.

FRANCE
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French aviation strikes over redundancies

The ITF-affiliated French Public Service and Transport Workers' Union FO has called a strike, effective from 23 April, for an indefinite period, of its members employed by Air Canada-France, in protest against the company's proposals to reduce staff by 50% (see Newsletter No. 4, 1975, page 31). ITF civil aviation affiliates are being asked for support and solidarity action.

GREAT BRITAIN
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Agreement on officers' pay

Agreement has been reached between the shipowners and the merchant navy officers' unions - including the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the Radio and Engineering Officers' Union - on new salaries giving increases totalling more than 30% with effect from 1 June 1975. Threshold payments are consolidated into basic pay rates and all rates are raised 21.2% above the 1974 levels. A further 9% is to be added to National Maritime Board 1974 rates on account of the reconstruction of the consolidated basic rate, and the cash equivalent of the NMB increases is to be added to company rates.

The final stage of the agreement to give one day off for every two days worked with effect from 1 June was confirmed. The actual amount of his leave entitlement which an officer may take at his option is to be increased from the present 162 days per year served to 174 days on 1 June 1975, and to 183 days on 1 December 1975.

Sub-committees are being set up to consider international comparison of officers' earnings; the rest period agreement; cadets' hours of work; and the merchant navy officers' pension fund. Both sides also accepted a commitment to enter into detailed discussions on a radical reconstruction of the officers' leave, pay and hours agreement with the intention of introducing it in 1976 provided that agreement is reached.

Seamen reject 30% offer

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen has turned down the offer of a 30% pay increase made by the shipowners and is determined to continue to press for its original demand for £40 for a 40-hour week. The present pay agreement expires on 2 July.

Dockers' settlements

5,000 dock workers in the enclosed London docks have voted to accept a pay rise of about 31% negotiated on their behalf by the ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union. This brings to an end a series of negotiations which began in November last year; the new rates will be backdated to 1 January 1975.

In the port of Liverpool, dockers have voted to accept a 22% pay increase, also negotiated by the Transport and General Workers' Union.

Railway pay claim for arbitration

All parties to the current railway pay dispute have agreed that it should be submitted for arbitration by the Railway Staff National Tribunal, following the breakdown of direct negotiations between the British Rail Board and the three ITF-affiliated railway unions - the National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association.

On the first day of the arbitration hearing, the management of British Rail stated that they were unable to improve at all on the final offer made during negotiations, i.e. 21.2%.

GREECE

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Strike by coastal seafarers settled

Following a hitch in the signature of an agreement between the owners of coastal passenger vessels and the ITF-affiliated Greek Seamen's Federation, crews of the ships involved went on strike but returned to work after the intervention of the Minister of Merchant Marine who supervised the signing of the agreement.

JAPAN

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Ocean-going seamen's pay agreement

The ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union has accepted an offer by the ocean-going shipowners to increase wages by 23,949 yen per month (14.6%). This follows the union's rejection of several earlier less favourable offers and its threatened strike action.

NETHERLANDS

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Agreement on Rhine and tanker navigation contract

Negotiations between the ITF-affiliated Netherlands Transport Workers' Federation and the Central Bureau for Rhine and Inland Navigation have resulted in an agreement covering workers engaged in Rhine and tanker navigation. With retroactive effect from 1 January 1975 (1 April 1975 for the reduction in working hours), the following improvements have been made in wages and conditions:

Wages: increase of 3.67% to compensate for cost-of-living increases during the second half of 1974; a lump-sum payment of 1½% of the wages received during the 2nd half of 1974; a real wage increase of 2% (plus a further 3% for captains).

Hours of work are reduced by one hour; this may be taken in the form of time off or extra pay.

Holiday bonus goes up from 7.6% to 8% and holiday entitlement for older workers is increased by 2 days (over the current 20-day entitlement) for those between age 55 and 59 and by 3 days for those aged 60 and over.

In addition, certain improvements have been agreed for those in tanker navigation with respect to travelling costs.

Negotiations with other employers are either under way or concluded and the results put out for membership approval.

PORTUGAL

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Unemployment benefit for Portuguese workers

The government has announced a scheme for the payment of unemployment benefit, amounting to two-thirds or one half of the national minimum wage for unemployed persons with or without family responsibilities respectively. (at present 2200 or 1650 escudos per month). The scheme, which came into effect on 1 April, applies both to members of trade unions and workers belonging to provident funds and also to all rural employees and workers who are unemployed by virtue of their attendance at occupational training courses. The scheme will run initially for six months, and will be reviewed after four months' operation.

There are three basic conditions for benefit: capacity to work, availability for work and involuntary unemployment. A claimant must apply to an Employment Centre, which will offer work "in accordance with his occupational qualifications and specified levels of remuneration".

SINGAPORE

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Split shifts for bus workers

The ITF-affiliated Singapore Industrial Labour Organisation has reached agreement with the Singapore Bus Service on the introduction of split shifts for bus workers in order to improve and provide more efficient and reliable bus services. Bus workers required to work the split shifts will receive an allowance of \$4.- per day and those required to work on their rest day will receive their usual rest day pay plus the split shift allowance.

SWEDEN

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General framework agreement reached on wages

Agreement has been reached between the Employers' Federation SAF and the national trade union centre LO on pay increases of 25.3% over two years (15% in 1975 and 10.3% in 1976), plus wages drift compensation of between 3 and 5% per contract year.

In detail, the agreement provides for an increase of 1.25 kr. per hour for all workers covered by LO agreements in 1975; those earning less than 20 kr. per hour receive a special low-paid workers' increase of 15% of the difference between that sum and their actual wages; for 1976 the general increase is 90 öre per hour, and the low-paid workers benefit from the same formula as in 1975. It is expected that the agreement will mean a real improvement in wages of about 3% this year; allowance has been made for adjustments to be negotiated during the life of the agreement if economic factors so require.

UNITED STATES

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Four rail unions vote on strike action

Four railway unions are conducting strike ballots of their membership following the breakdown of talks with the railway companies over new contracts. They are the Carmen, the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths, the Firemen and Oilers and the Electrical Workers. The companies have refused to make any substantial or significant changes in working conditions and there has been no satisfactory wage offer.

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks is counting the votes from its strike ballot conducted earlier. The Yardmasters' union has still to settle a number of minor points in its negotiations and has applied for assistance from the National Mediation Board. The Machinists have conducted a successful ratification vote on their agreement - similar to that arrived at by seven other unions (see Newsletter No. 2, 1975, page 13).

Airline clerks get agreement with Northwest

The ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks has concluded a new 18-month agreement for its 3,000 members employed by Northwest Airlines. This provides for average wage increases of 13.5%, and runs from 1 January 1975 to 30 June 1976. It also gives improved medical and dental benefits, higher pensions, a 10th paid holiday and an improved vacation schedule. In addition, contract language relating to seniority and job bidding procedures has been altered in order to eliminate any possibility of sex discrimination.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australian seamen, officers, engineers and tug and pilot crews struck for 48 hours on 29 and 30 April in support of claims for higher pay and longer holidays.

Austria has joined the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation, becoming its eighty-ninth member.

The Danish Seamen's Union has threatened strike action against the Øresund Steamship Company's railway ferry service between Malmö (Sweden) and Copenhagen. The seamen are seeking a special agreement with the company outside the terms of the general settlement reported on in Newsletter No. 4, 1975 (page 29).

A threatened strike by Finnish civil aviation workers was called off at the last minute when a satisfactory settlement of the union's claims was reached on 8 April. Details are awaited.

A dock strike in Finland was averted when the unions involved accepted a settlement proposed by the state mediator.

An unofficial strike of tanker drivers in Ireland ended on 27 April after 12 days when the men accepted the terms of a settlement proposed by the Labour Court.

With effect from 5 May, travellers on the Rotterdam (Netherlands) underground have been able to travel free of charge.

PERSONALIA

Dr. Walter Auerbach, who edited the ITF's magazine "Fascism" from 1933 to 1946 and was active in the fight against Nazism within the underground trade union movement in Germany, died recently following a heart attack. He was 63.

K.P. Kolah has been appointed Acting General Secretary of the Maritime Union of India following the death of J.D. Randeri.

Philipp Seibert, President of the German Railwaymen's Union and member of the ITF Executive Board, has been awarded the Grosse Bundesverdienstkreuz (Cross for Conspicuous Services to the Federal Republic) on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday celebrations.

Stig Wiebe, chief executive officer of the Swedish Ships' Officers' Association, is retiring in July on reaching pension age. He will be succeeded by Captain Karl Rude, at present chief negotiator for the Association.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ground Staff Committee | - London, 20-21 May 1975 |
| European Conference | - Postponed |
| Road Transport Steering
Committee | - Zurich, 19 June 1975 |

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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