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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

GREAT BRITAIN

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ITF appeals for solidarity with Hull trawlermen

The three-week old strike of trawlermen operating from the port of Hull continues (see ITF Newsletter No. 2, p. 18). The fishermen, members of the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union, are demanding improved pay and 100% union membership amongst those working in the fishing industry in Hull.

At the time the strike commenced there were just over five hundred unemployed fishermen in Hull and district and as men signed off ships to join the strike the employers recruited scab labour from amongst the unemployed. By this means, they were able to man 27 strike-breaking ships which are now at sea while the remainder, some 65 ships, are still held in port.

The ITF has now issued a circular to North European unions informing them of the background to the dispute and asking them to give what support they can in the way of denying bunkering and landing facilities to these 27 vessels which were expected to be seeking such facilities on the Continent in the near future. It was pointed out that if the employers took advantage of any facilities on the Continent this would be a severe threat to the success of the Hull strike.

TRANSPORT

FRANCE

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Merger of French shipping companies engaged in Rhine navigation

Three major French shipping companies engaged in Rhine navigation -- Sanara, Le Rhin/Lloyd Rhenan and the French Rhine Navigation Company (SFNR) -- have merged to form a new group to be known as Unitrafe. In its turn, Unitrafe has joined with the General Rhine Navigation Company (CGNR) in a new company, the French Rhine Navigation Company (CFNR). The CFNR is in overall control of the French Rhine fleet.

LIBYA

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Libya joins IMCO

The Libyan Arab Republic has now become a member of IMCO, giving IMCO 71 member-states.

SWITZERLAND

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Unique apprenticeship scheme for road transport workers

Switzerland is the first country in the world to introduce an apprenticeship scheme for drivers of heavy goods vehicles. The first candidates began their period of training in February and if they are successful in their final examinations, which take place in three years' time, will be awarded a certificate of competency as drivers of heavy goods vehicles.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

FRANCE

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French railwaymen win significant gains from new agreement

A new one-year contract for French railwaymen was signed on 23 February by representatives of the French National Railways (SNCF) and the French unions organizing railway workers, including the ITF-affiliated Railwaymen's Federation (FO) and the Railway Salaried Staff Federation (FAC). In addition to a salary increase of 1% payable from 1 January, the agreement provides for an allocation of 6.5% of the total salary bill to be distributed among SNCF employees so as to give an increase of 6% over the year, with a guarantee of an increase of 2.1% in purchasing power. This clause is an application of the principle of the "double sliding scale", an objective for which the FO has been striving for many years. Other benefits include: a guaranteed minimum of 11 Sunday rest-days per year, excluding those rest-days awarded by the collective agreement; and a reduction in the working week of 1 hour in June 1970 and a further reduction of half an hour in November 1970, thus meeting union demands for a reduction in working hours of 1½ hours in 1970.

GERMANY
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German transport workers' union submits its proposals on heavy vehicle ban

The German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has submitted to the German Minister of Transport its suggestions regarding the proposed ban on heavy lorries on certain weekends during the peak holiday period (see ITF Newsletter No. 4, 1969, p. 29).

The union recommends that the proposed ban on nine holiday weekends should begin at 7.00 hours on Saturday and end at 22.00 on Sunday, with the possibility of an extension to the early hours of Monday morning should this prove necessary. It would also like to see the ban extended to all major roads so that heavy lorries would not be diverted on to roads unsuitable for heavy traffic. A general ban would benefit holiday traffic which would then be able to use the entire road network and this would make a major contribution to road safety by easing congestion. A proposal to ban heavy goods vehicles on three Fridays between 15.00 and 22.00 hours was, however, considered unwise. This would adversely affect road haulage drivers who might well find it impossible to return to base before the ban was reimposed at 7.00 the following morning.

GREAT BRITAIN
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Seamen reject pay offer

The British National Union of Seamen, an ITF affiliate, has turned down an offer of an overall 15.3 per cent pay increase made by the British Shipping Federation last month.

In submitting its claim to the National Maritime Board in January, the union had asked for increases which would bring the earnings of seafarers into line with those of workers ashore (see ITF Newsletter No. 1, p. 6). The present offer is felt by the union to fall far short of this objective.

Speaking at a press conference on 19 February, the General Secretary of the NUS, Bill Hogarth, rejected the offer as "quite inadequate" and said that he hoped that the Federation would come up with a better offer when the two sides next met on 25 March. Meanwhile, he was prepared to listen to any reasonable offer.

One area of disagreement between the two sides concerns the question of overtime. The union has asked that separate consideration should be given to overtime earnings as a considerable number of union members worked little or no overtime and would not benefit so much from a settlement based on average earnings.

Britain's merchant navy officers seek far-reaching changes in pay and working conditions

In a claim submitted to the National Maritime Board last month, the ITF-affiliated British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association called for far-reaching changes in the pay and working conditions of merchant navy officers. The Association is seeking a complete and radical restructuring of existing pay and leave scales, a new wage structure incorporating a consolidated weekly wage, replacing the present basic rate for a forty-hour week, and a system of compensatory payments for hours worked in excess of this limit. It also suggests that the Board should bear in mind the increasing size of ships and the extra responsibility which handling the larger vessels inevitably entails. As an investigation of the claim is likely to take some time, the Association has proposed that an immediate increase in basic rates should be negotiated in the intervening period. Agreement has already been reached in principle with the shipowners that the demands should be dealt with by a small joint working party which would report back to the Board at intervals.

Busmen win substantial pay increases

The ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union last month negotiated a 9% increase in basic rates of pay for some 70,000 municipal busmen. The basic rate for drivers goes up to £15 17s per week, conductors receiving £15 12s per week. This represents an increase of £1.6s.

A further claim submitted by the T&GWU on behalf of Britain's 98,000 company busmen has produced an offer of just over 12 per cent, which gives company busmen wages parity with municipal crews.

A separate claim has been lodged by the union for bus drivers and conductors employed by London Transport. In addition, bus crews in the capital are seeking a reduction in working hours from 40 to 37½ hours per week.

ITALY
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Crews of Italian cargo vessels benefit from outstanding new agreements

28,000 seafarers manning privately-owned Italian cargo vessels benefit from two outstanding new agreements reached by the ITF-affiliated Italian Seamen's Union (FILM) and representatives of the private shipowners. Both agreements apply to cargo vessels, one to vessels over 3,000 grt. and the other to ocean-going vessels over 500 and under 3,000 tons. Included in the benefits are:

an increase in basic monthly rates; a staged reduction in weekly hours from 44 to 40 hours, to be achieved by July 1971; a 16% rise in overtime rates; and an increase in the special indemnity for officers from L 1,500 to L 4,000 per month, according to rank and length of service at sea. Allowing for the increase in basic monthly rates and the shorter working hours (mentioned above) and also for a saving on certain other items of salary, the monthly earnings of an AB go up by L 25,000 to L 27,000 per month and those of a 1st mate by L 38,000 to L 43,000 per month.

An important innovation is the official recognition accorded by the agreement to union delegates of each union represented on board up to a maximum of three union delegates per union on the largest vessels. Ships' delegates have the right of representing members of the union before the master in all matters pertaining to the application of the collective agreement and they are also entitled to special short leave with pay (not more than 8 hours per month) to enable them to deal with union business in port. The new agreements came into effect at the beginning of 1970 and run for two years. (L1,510 = £1).

SWEDEN

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Scandinavian airline personnel oppose move to Copenhagen

The ITF affiliated Swedish Commercial Workers' Union (HTF) which organizes SAS cabin staff is to seek negotiations with SAS on its plans to make Copenhagen the sole base from which to draw cabin crew for extra-European services. Its bases in Oslo and Stockholm would then be used for domestic and European flights. The company regards these moves as rational and sound commercial practice but the union feels they should be discussed first in view of the social and other implications.

Shorter working week in sight for Swedish seafarers

The Swedish Transport Minister Bengt Norling has put forward a bill providing for the staged introduction of the 40-hour working week for Swedish seafarers. Hours of work would be reduced to 41.5 before 1972, then to 41 hours in that year and the forty-hour week would take effect from the beginning of 1973.

UNITED STATES

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US government steps in and bars rail strike

Talks to settle the dispute over a new two-year contract for four US railroad shopcraft unions have been deadlocked since the deal was rejected by members of one of the unions, the sheet metal workers (see ITF Newsletter No. 1, p. 7). The sheet metal workers originally turned down the settlement because they feared that revised rules covering the assignment of jobs

which the settlement introduced would permit a limited crossing of craft lines.

In an effort to force a settlement of the 16-month old dispute the unions declared that they would strike all major railroads with effect from 5 March.

The situation took a dramatic turn when President Nixon intervened and asked Congress to give him the necessary authority to impose the earlier tentative agreement as this had been accepted by a majority of the unions. AFL-CIO President George Meany telegraphed the House of Representatives and the Senate, voicing the Federation's opposition to this plan on the grounds that "it is a compulsory settlement which would force employees to work under conditions which are not acceptable to them". He went on to reiterate the AFL-CIO belief that "the government must not ever be permitted to set the terms of collective bargaining agreements in private industry. To do so would be to deny workers their fundamental right as free men".

Nixon's proposal was rejected by the House of Representatives which then passed a measure voting that any strike action should be delayed for a period of 37 days.

Meanwhile, the dispute remains unsettled and the unions are looking for a way out of the impasse.

New health benefits for US railwaymen

Nearly one million railway workers in North America will receive substantially improved health and welfare benefits following an agreement reached between representatives of 18 unions organizing railway employees and members of all the major US railroads.

The costs of the new health and welfare plan, which came into effect on 1 March, will be borne entirely by the carriers. Under the agreement, maximum surgical benefits for one operation rise from \$420 under the old plan to \$550; coverage costs for radiation therapy and X-rays are increased by one-third; and there is improved coverage for emergency treatment. A further improvement is the provision of guaranteed life insurance for retired railwaymen.

Three ITF-affiliated unions -- the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, the United Transportation Union and the Maintenance of Way Employees -- were members of the unions' negotiating team.

ERRATUM

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Masters' union strike against US Lines

An item appearing in our December Newsletter (p. 108) states that the US International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots -- an ITF affiliate -- had successfully negotiated

contracts for ships' captains, a goal for which it had been striving for 15 years. The union has since written to us to point out that it has in fact acted as the collective bargaining representative for masters of most vessels belonging to the American merchant marine for many years. There remained, however, a few isolated companies with which the masters had always concluded individual contracts and it was these companies with which the union has been concerned. In recent years, all companies, with the exception of the United States Lines mentioned in the earlier item, have come under the union's collective bargaining contract. The successful strike against US Lines was called by the organization in response to a request by the masters employed by the company that it recognise the masters' union as the collective bargaining agent.

We apologise to the union for our misunderstanding of the situation.

PERSONALIA

We regret to announce the passing, following a heart attack, of Brother Jacobus H. Oldenbroek, General Secretary of the ITF from 1943 until he was appointed the first General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in 1950. Brother Oldenbroek died on 7 March at the age of 72.

Brother Oldenbroek spent nearly thirty years of his long life in the service of the ITF. He joined us in 1921, as Secretary to the then General Secretary Edo Fimmen, with whom he worked closely until the latter's death in 1942. Oldenbroek was made Assistant General Secretary in 1938 and when Fimmen died he took over the post of Acting General Secretary, a difficult post indeed at this time of world crisis. When he was confirmed in his post by the first post-war Congress Brother Oldenbroek was able to develop those policies which had seen the ITF, largely thanks to himself, safely through the war years.

Brother Oldenbroek continued his life of service to the trade union movement when he left the ITF to become General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in 1950, a post which he held for ten years. With his death, the international trade union movement has lost a great leader.

Johan S. Thore, the colourful leader of the Swedish seamen, died on 24 February. His death was sudden - he died of a heart attack in the early hours of the morning - and came as a terrible shock to all his friends in the ITF. He was nearly 65 years old and was still on active service with his union at the time of his death, although he was due to retire later this year, his successor, Gunnar Karlsson, already having been appointed at the last congress.

Born into a family of seafarers, Johan Thore followed the trade of his father and went to sea in 1926. His capabilities were soon realized by the union who snapped him up in 1932. By 1941 he was sent to New York where he was given the very difficult and responsible job of looking after the interests of Swedish seamen who were cut off from their home ports by the war at sea. He later became Vice President and Treasurer of the union and, in early 1957, was elected President after the legendary seamen's leader Jerker Svensson. In July of the same year he was to take charge of the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation as General Secretary, thus being able to drain off some of his effervescent energy for use in strengthening solidarity among seamen, dockers and road transport workers. Thore's greatness and importance to the Swedish seamen can only be appreciated if one considers that already in 1961 - almost 10 years before he was due to retire - he was to receive the Union's Gold Badge for invaluable services to seamen and this was unprecedented in that no active seamen's union official had previously been awarded this badge. Thore received it mainly for his highly successful efforts to create welfare facilities for seamen.

In the international field his interests were again those of the welfare and safety of seafarers. Under the ITF banner he took an early initiative in fighting the evils of flags-of-convenience to rid the oceans of rust-buckets and substandard wages. Although not a politician as such, he was firmly against oppression in all its forms and his concern for people really came to the fore at the last ITF Congress where he vigorously opposed any soft line with the Greek colonels. Thore was a member of the ITF Seafarers' Section Committee and of its Committee on revision of the International Seafarers Charter. He has also represented the seafarers on the Welfare Fund Sub-Committee and represented seafarers interests on many occasions in ILO and IMCO.

His work on behalf of seamen everywhere and within the ITF in particular carried the hall-mark of true grit, efficiency, honesty and foresight.

The ITF was represented at his funeral in Gothenburg on 5 March by its General Secretary, Charles Blyth, to mark the tributes of Seafarers throughout the world to a stalwart champion of their cause.

Robert Bratschi, ITF President from 1950-1954 and a former President of the ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union, has been awarded an honorary doctorate of political science by the university of Basle. Brother Bratschi has been for many years a prominent Swiss parliamentarian. At the degree ceremony, tribute was paid to Bratschi's outstanding services to trade unionism and to the rail transport industry, and to his work in promoting early Swiss social legislation.

R.W. Buckton, has been appointed Acting General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated British Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) following the death of Albert Griffiths.

D.K. Pullen has been temporarily appointed Acting Assistant General Secretary of ASLEF.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS
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| Flight Engineers' Technical Committee Meeting | - London, 23-24 March 1970 |
| Dockers' Meeting | - Rotterdam, 6-7 April 1970 |
| Executive Board | - Brissago, Switzerland
3-4 June 1970 |
| Road Transport Section Sub-Committee Meeting | - Zurich, 8-10 June 1970 |
| Fishermen's Section Meeting | - Bremerhafen, 15-16 June
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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RECENT AIRLINE ATTACKS LEAD TO URGENT DISCUSSIONS ON AIR SAFETY

The civilized world was stunned to learn on 21 February that a Swissair Coronado jet bound for Tel-Aviv had crashed, shortly after an explosion on board, with the loss of 47 lives. The news of the disaster came only hours after an explosion in the mail compartment of an Austrian Airlines Caravelle carrying mail for Israel had forced the aircraft to return to Frankfurt. On this occasion, none of the 33 passengers suffered any injury.

On 22 February, the ITF cabled the Secretary General of the United Nations calling for an immediate tripartite international meeting of all those with a direct interest in the safety of aviation in order to discuss urgently the ever-worsening situation in regard to attacks on civil aircraft and their occupants, as well as to devise measures to prevent and deter such attacks.

On 27 February, the ITF held an emergency meeting of its civil aviation affiliates in London which was attended by representatives from Austria, France, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, Switzerland, Scandinavia, United Kingdom and the United States of America, with observers from IFALPA and the ICFTU.

The meeting adopted a statement, the text of which is attached, calling for urgent action on the problem of attacks on, and interference with, aircraft and outlining the measures, both short and long term, which had to be taken so that airports, aircraft and civil aviation facilities and the lives of those using or employed in them might be sufficiently protected.

Summoning a civil aviation safety conference for 25 February in Stuttgart, the President of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union, Heinz Kluncker, said that, in the interests of international civil aviation and of civil employees in particular, it was essential that immediate and coordinated measures be taken to ensure the safety of civil aviation operations.

The conference recommendations were submitted to a meeting of the union executive and formed the basis of a resolution which declared that all states engaged in civil aviation:

- a) should ratify and implement the ICAO Tokyo Convention;
- b) should declare any unlawful interference in the safe operation of civil aircraft an offence against international law, to be punished accordingly; and

- c) should cooperate in preventing attacks on civil aircraft, the safety of civil aviation operations being placed before the demands of national and regional competition.

The union also called for the setting up of a permanent civil aviation safety committee in the Federal Republic, this to be composed of representatives of all federal and private interests, together with workers' representatives. The main function of such a committee would be to coordinate safety measures and to create the requisite authorities for their implementation.

Included in the decisions of the European Civil Aviation Conference which met in Paris in the first week of March was a recommendation urging the institution of airport security committees in all 19 member states consisting of "representatives of the airport administration, police, immigration, customs and postal authorities, air carriers and freight forwarders, and other bodies concerned." In a statement issued in connection with the ECAC meeting, the ITF welcomed the recommendation which was very much in line with its own policy in favour of tripartite national aviation safety committees and hoped that it would also be followed by countries outside the European continent. It went on to state that trade unions organizing airport employees should be represented as a right on the proposed committees in view of the direct concern which they had for safeguarding the lives of both their own members and the passengers whom they served.

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Statement adopted by an emergency meeting of ITF affiliated
Civil Aviation Unions, London, 27 February 1970

Attacks on, and interference with, aircraft by politically motivated groups have reached intolerable proportions. The interests of civil aviation employees, airline passengers and the general public demand that urgent measures should be taken both in the short and long term, so as to protect all concerned from death and injury.

In the short term stringent precautions must be taken so that airports, aircraft and civil aviation facilities and those using or employed in them are protected against attack or interference. Passengers, cargo and baggage, in particular, must be rigorously searched whenever there is cause to believe that life and property are threatened and access to aircraft or airports must be barred to any persons likely to act in a manner dangerous to others. Mail and cargo of a suspect nature must also be safely segregated. These precautions must be the subject of full consultation with the unions concerned and enforced at the earliest opportunity, for example on the making of reservations or acceptance of mail, cargo or baggage, and should be re-enforced at each subsequent stage in a journey or shipment.

The costs, delays and inconvenience that these measures will inevitably entail are deplorable but must be borne as an inevitable penalty of the paramount necessity to protect life. Furthermore, since no employee can possibly be asked to place himself or herself at more risk than would normally be met, and provided the measures outlined above have not been taken, affiliated unions are recommended to advise their members that they may refuse to carry out any duties which they fear would expose them unduly to danger and shall receive the unions' full

protection against any sanctions their employers might seek to apply as a result of such a refusal.

At national level, civil aviation safety committees must be established composed of representatives of all the authorities, employers and workers concerned which shall devise and implement all necessary safety measures.

At international level, it is imperative that the United Nations should immediately convene a world conference of representatives of governments, civil aviation employees and employers and international organizations concerned in civil aviation which would have as its first aim the adoption of a binding declaration from all concerned that unlawful interference of any kind, and for any cause, in the peaceful operation of civil aircraft shall constitute an international crime which every state shall solemnly contract never to condone and shall undertake to try to prevent with all the means at its disposal. This declaration should be made with a minimum of formality and procedural trappings but should nonetheless have the full force of the most mandatory international law. Furthermore, since no government or organization can reasonably withhold its support from such a declaration, nor fail to implement it, any government or organization declining to do so should be judged to have placed itself in a position as to warrant the immediate and complete withdrawal of all services, benefits or privileges provided by airlines and international bodies or agencies, whether governmental or non-governmental.

If it proves impossible to convene the international conference for which the ITF has called, the ITF shall itself convene a conference to which it will invite its affiliated unions and all governments and international organizations and agencies with an interest in promoting a solution to the present situation. At that conference consideration will be given to whatever direct action is practicable on the part of the world trade union movement.

In the longer term, the appropriate international bodies must draw up international instruments making attacks on or interference with civil aircraft an offence against international law and specifying the most severe penalties for those that perpetrate them. In this regard, the ITF has already made representations to ICAO on the content and form that such instruments should take. Furthermore the ITF claims the right to representation at the ECAC/ICAO Conference on air safety due to be held on 3 March and at all other ICAO meetings at which air safety will be discussed.

The affiliated civil aviation unions of the ITF represented at this meeting state their firm intention to carry out the actions contained in this statement and to support each other in doing so.