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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ASIA

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Asian Regional Seminar for Labour Educators

The ITF and its affiliate, the American Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), joined together to sponsor an Asian Regional Seminar for Labour Educators in Singapore from 4 to 27 March 1971. Leaders of ITF unions in Ceylon, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore discussed in depth such subjects as trade union structure; adult teaching methods; public speaking; labour legislation; union organization and administration; labour economics; public relations; collective bargaining; the international trade union movement; and the planning of labour education programmes. The lecturers included Walter Williamson, the BRAC's Director of Research and Education; Jack F. Otero, the Director of the BRAC's International Affairs Department; Donald U'ren, the ITF's Asian Representative; Dr. M.A. Nawawi, Dr. D.H. Clark and Dr. P. Weldon of the University of Singapore; and N. Govindasamy and Chue Shui Hoong of the Singapore National Trade Union Congress. The seminar was also addressed by Singapore's Minister of Communications and Minister of Labour and by Devan Nair, Secretary General of the Singapore National Trade Union Congress. The aim of the seminar was to impart and develop practical teaching skills that could be applied to meet the Region's established needs for education in trade union techniques.

LIBERIA

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ITF doubts effectiveness of proposed Liberian maritime inspection service

The Liberian government has announced that it is about to establish a Maritime Inspection service in order to ensure that Liberian-flag vessels are at all times maintained to a satisfactory standard of seaworthiness and safety. The government has also indicated that the first two inspectors will be appointed at the ports of Rotterdam and Southampton within one month.

Although the ITF has been pressing for a number of years for the establishment of such a service, it has serious doubts about its effectiveness as it has been unable to obtain satisfactory assurances from the Liberian government as to the extent of the power and influence which the inspectors would have. The Federation feels that an inspection service of this kind can only be effective and valuable if the authority of the inspectors is sufficient to make it so.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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Fire Safety of Tankers discussed at 11th Session of the IMCO Sub-Committee on Fire Protection

The IMCO Sub-Committee on Fire Protection held its 11th Session in London from 26-30 April 1970. ITF affiliates represented on government delegations were the British National Union of Seamen (by Brother E. Roney) and the Norwegian Mates' Association (by Brother B. Sivertsen). A. Selander participated from the ITF Secretariat.

The items of business were fire test procedures, fire protection of cargo ships and fire safety measures for tankers, air-cushion vehicles, ocean data acquisition systems (ODAS), fishing vessels and containers, portable tanks and ships carrying containers.

The Ad Hoc group on fire test procedures agreed to pursue its study of the incombustibility test procedure, including the exchange of results of further experiments and the Sub-Committee stressed the importance of achieving an acceptable test procedure as soon as possible. The Ad Hoc group also discussed fire test procedures for materials used in air-cushion vehicles.

After a general discussion on the requirements for construction and equipment of new tankers, the Sub-Committee considered the fourth draft of an interim recommendation on the subject, recommended that the Maritime Safety Committee should approve the draft and forward it to the Assembly for adoption and decided that the subject should continue to appear on its agenda with a view to developing the recommendation further in the light of experience. The Sub-Committee further considered the International Oil Tanker and Terminal Safety Guide prepared by the International Oil Tanker Terminal Safety Group and in view of the bearing this guide has on the operational tanker safety, decided to invite the Maritime Safety Committee to recommend its use in conjunction with existing national requirements. On the question of explosion hazards of large tankers, the Sub-Committee drew the conclusion that as no conclusive reports on current investigations had been forthcoming it was unable to issue any recommendation on the matter. Certain governments were advocating the use of an inert gas system whilst others favoured deck foam systems or a combination of the two systems.

Concerning the fire protection of cargo ships, the Sub-Committee discussed the principles involved and a number of specific proposals to amend the relevant section of the SOLAS Convention (Chapter II, Regulation 54). The majority of the Sub-Committee

agreed that the tonnage limit of Regulation 54 should be reduced from 4,000 g.r.t to 500 g.r.t before any other amendments were recommended but that consideration should be given to such criteria as manning and accommodation in the drafting of amendments for discussion at the next session.

The Sub-Committee continued its discussion of provisional interim guidelines for air-cushion vehicles and approved a number of amendments and additions. Several delegations felt that there should be a common level of safety in respect of air-cushion vehicles, hydrofoil boats and other similar novel types of craft and the Maritime Safety Committee was asked to take the necessary steps to achieve this.

Finally, the Sub-Committee reached agreement on a Recommendation for Fire Safety Requirements for Manned ODAS and recommended that the Maritime Safety Committee should approve the same and forward it to UNESCO as being part of the documentation for the joint IMCO/UNESCO Conference on Legal Status of ODAS to be held in 1973.

The next session of the Fire Protection Sub-Committee is scheduled for 8-12 November 1971.

BELGIUM

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Case of Belgian air stewardess to go before the Court of Justice of the EEC

The Court of Justice of the European Economic Community has been asked for a ruling on the case of a stewardess with the Belgian airline Sabena. The stewardess has already appealed to the Belgian Council of State alleging discrimination by the airline against female employees in the sphere of salaries and pensions. Now the Council of State is to ask the Court to interpret the 'equal pay for equal work' clause of the Treaty of Rome and to decide whether air stewards and air stewardesses may be said to perform equal work and whether an airline company may fix different age limits for male and female cabin crew.

GREAT BRITAIN

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British MPs propose a 'charter of safety' for shipping vessels

The spate of shipping accidents in the English Channel in recent months, many of them involving considerable loss of life, has led a group of Labour MPs to suggest that the British government convene a conference with other channel countries for the purpose of drawing up a 'charter of safety' which, they say, should establish the Channel as 'European territorial water' governed by a compulsory two-way flow system for shipping. The MPs believe

that such a charter should include clauses compelling all tankers and vessels with dangerous cargoes to carry pilots and extending the present pilotage area. In addition, the charter should establish a priority system for the removal of wrecks which constitute a hazard to shipping and should lay down governmental surveillance and policing procedures. The MPs propose that all nations with shipping interests, especially those with tanker fleets, should be notified of the charter and encouraged to adopt its recommendations.

UNITED STATES

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American unions denounce proposal for compulsory arbitration in the transportation industry

The AFL-CIO has denounced the Nixon administration's proposed new labour law for the transportation industries as a plan for the 'nationalization of labour'. The bill would impose a new form of compulsory arbitration on four million workers in the airline, railroad, maritime, longshore and trucking industries. It would virtually repeal the present labour law governing collective bargaining in the railroad and airline industries -- the so-called Railway Labour Act -- while adding new clauses, including compulsory arbitration, to the much-disliked Taft-Hartley Act. The AFL-CIO has declared its firm opposition to any proposal for compulsory arbitration of contract terms in private industry and has made it known that it regards a law which would compel employees in such industries to work on terms that are imposed on them by the government as 'a violation of the basic principles of democracy'.

US rail unions seek to delay takeover of passenger services

The AFL-CIO Railroad Employees' Department, together with 17 railroad unions -- including the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, the Congress of Railway Unions and the United Transportation Union (all ITF affiliates) -- have launched a vigorous action in the US courts to delay the take-over of 184 nationwide passenger routes in May by the newly-formed National Rail Passenger Corporation (Amtrak). The unions charge that if this semi-public corporation were to come into being the number of US passenger services would be cut by half leaving many cities without rail links and some 16,000 railroad workers would lose their jobs without adequate provision for compensation. The department and the unions are urging the court to rule that the contracts signed by Amtrak and 19 railroads are null and void and that the railroads should not discontinue passenger services until valid contracts are entered into.

US court orders airline to employ male cabin attendants

The US Appeals Court has ordered Pan American World Airways to stop discriminating against the employment of men as cabin attendants. The court found that Pan American had violated the equal pay provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act in denying a man employment as a cabin attendant on the grounds of sex. The ruling reversed an earlier lower court decision upholding the airline in its policy of not employing men as cabin attendants.

TRADE UNIONS

INTERNATIONAL
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ICFTU conference will discuss world economic problems

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions is to hold a Free Trade Union World Economic Conference in Geneva from 24 to 26 June 1971. The Conference, which will bring together trade union leaders, economists and financial experts from five continents for a fundamental examination of world economic problems from the trade union point of view, will discuss subjects including: inflation and employment; multinational companies; the human environment; and the Second Development Decade of the United Nations.

GREAT BRITAIN
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British seamen end merger talks

A proposal that the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Seamen (NUS) should merge with Britain's largest union, the Transport and General Workers' Union (also an ITF affiliate), was defeated at the NUS annual conference this month. The talks, which have been taking place between the leaders of the two unions during the past year, will now be called off.

ITALY
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Italian airline pilots stage 12-hour protest strike

Members of the Italian National Association of Civil Aviation Pilots (ANPAC) staged a world-wide 12-hour strike on 29 April over the alleged failure of the national carrier Alitalia to provide adequate job guarantees for Italy's 1,000 pilots. The strike followed the dismissal of a pilot under what the union considers unfair circumstances.

JAPAN

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Japan ratifies ILO minimum-wage conventions

Japan has completed formal ratification of two ILO Conventions (No. 26 of 1928 and No. 131 of 1970) designed to protect workers from unduly low wages. Both conventions provide for the establishment of minimum wage-fixing machinery in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

SOUTH AFRICA

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ILO publishes report into discrimination in employment in South Africa

The ILO has recently published a report on discrimination in employment in South Africa. The report is intended to be a major ILO contribution to the observance of the International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Its findings will be submitted to the 1971 session of the International Labour Conference, which meets in Geneva next month.

The report says that South African employers have voiced many criticisms of the harmful effects of apartheid on industry and business, particularly because the apartheid system ignores the contribution which Africans can make to the economy, and urges employers and unions alike to adopt measures to improve the employment conditions of Africans. Such action, it argues could be taken within the framework of existing law. Measures taken by employers could include occupational advancement and training for Africans, better wages and other benefits, and consultation with African staff. The trade union movement could make a significant contribution by bargaining on behalf of unrepresented African workers; not opposing the removal of occupational barriers; encouraging members to train Africans for more responsible work; campaigning for the recognition of African unions; and helping African workers to form their own unions. The report also stresses the importance of regular consultation between workers of all races in trade union matters.

The report notes that increasing inroads into job reservations for white workers have been made because of the shortage of skilled manpower in South Africa. Examples are quoted of jobs being taken over temporarily by Africans on the railways and in the postal services. Despite the official government doctrine of separate development for whites and Africans, the report concludes that the trend will be increasingly towards the economic integration of all the races living in South Africa.

SWEDEN

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Swedish Transport Workers' Union is concerned about faulty speedometers in heavy goods vehicles

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union has written to the Swedish government pointing out that speedometers in some heavy goods vehicles are faulty. The union letter follows a complaint from a union branch that an incorrect reading on his speedometer led one of their driver-members unwittingly to break the speed limit. The union is convinced that this is not an isolated case and has therefore requested the government that speedometers should be checked when vehicles are overhauled to prevent any recurrence of such incidents.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA

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Australian marine stewards return to work

The 21-day-old strike of Australian marine stewards belonging to the ITF-affiliated Federated Marine Stewards' and Pantrymen's Association is over^x. The strike was called off on 4 May following a call for a return to work from the president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The shipowners have agreed to talks on the stewards' pay claim. The stewards, who work on Australian passenger and cargo vessels, are demanding parity of earnings with stewards aboard tankers.

^xSee ITF Newsletter No. 4, p.38

CANADA

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Conciliation board to look into St. Lawrence Seaway dispute

A conciliation board is to be appointed to look into a wages dispute between the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the ITF-affiliated Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers. The union, 1,300 of whose members are employed by the authority, is pressing for pay increases of 8.8 per cent in each year of a two-year contract. The authority has made the union a substantially lower offer.

GREAT BRITAIN
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New agreement for British flight engineers with BOAC

Details of an interim agreement reached between BOAC and the ITF-affiliated British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) on behalf of flight engineers on the B 747 have now reached us. The new agreement gives the union a satisfactory settlement of the dispute concerning B 747 pay which led to the grounding in April of the new jumbo jet service operating between Britain and the US (see ITF Newsletter No. 4, p.40). It provides for an improved salary scale for flight engineers with a top rate of £5,350 per year (an increase of £550) and for the payment of the following allowances: telephone allowance; special allowance; scheduling allowance; and supervisory allowance. The two sides are also to make a joint approach to the Department of Employment and Productivity to request the setting up of an inquiry to look into the pay structure of BOAC flight engineers.

In addition, the union and the airline have both agreed to look into current scheduling and rostering and pensions arrangements with a view to recommending improvements in the present system.

British seamen accept 16 per cent pay offer

Members of the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Seamen (NUS) have accepted the 16 per cent pay offer made to the union by the shipowners' panel on the National Maritime Board at the end of April (see ITF Newsletter No. 4, p. 45 for details of offer). The new rates will apply from 2 July.

However, the union is to press for a further pay deal. At the NUS annual conference, union delegates unanimously approved a motion instructing the NUS negotiating committee to aim for 'a substantial increase'.

Pay award for British marine pilots

Britain's 1,700 marine pilots -- members of the marine pilotage branch of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union and the United Kingdom Pilots' Association -- have been awarded an eight per cent pay increase. The award is in settlement of the pilots' claim for improved fringe benefits and is backdated to 1 January 1971. The pilots' annual pay talks are due to begin shortly.

Britain's radio officers to consider 16 per cent pay offer

The executive of the ITF-affiliated British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union (REOU) is to consider an improved offer made to the union by the National Maritime Board in response to the REOU pay claim. If accepted, the pay offer will come into effect on

1 June and give the radio officers the following benefits:

- a 12½% rise in basic pay;
- an extra sixteen days' supplementary leave for Section A officers (Section A officers are officers who do not have fixed working hours);
- a 12½% rise in the certificate allowance for officers holding a first class PMG general certificate or a radar maintenance certificate;
- the introduction of an electronics allowance of £12 per month subject to "certain qualifications";
- a rise in the amount of optional leave from 72 days to 120 days.

JAPAN

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Japanese coastal shipping workers call off strike

25,000 coastal shipping workers belonging to the All-Japan Seamen's Union (an ITF affiliate) have called off their 13-day-old strike. The union said that the men had agreed to accept the management's offer of a pay increase of ¥ 10,474^x per month. The strike tied up coastal shipping vessels in most Japanese ports.

Japan's ocean-going seamen were awarded a 14.4 per cent pay rise in April (see ITF Newsletter No. 4, p.42).

^xJapanese ¥ 870 = £1.

NORWAY

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Norway considers paid holidays for fishermen

A proposal is to be put before the Norwegian parliament that fishermen should have the right to annual paid holidays. According to the proposal, annual leave for fishermen would be financed by deductions from earnings during the year.

SCANDINAVIA

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HTF will not allow cabin attendants to work on Aeroflot planes

Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) have been informed by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (HTF), which represents cabin staff throughout SAS, that the union will not allow its pursers and air stewardesses with the company to fly on planes belonging to the Russian airline Aeroflot. SAS had planned an exchange of cabin

staff with Aeroflot over the Siberian section of the scheduled service which SAS hopes to inaugurate shortly between Scandinavia and Tokyo via the so-called polar route. The HTF told SAS that it had been unable to gain assurances from the Russian organization representing Aeroflot cabin personnel that Scandinavian cabin attendants on Aeroflot planes would not be required to work longer hours than stipulated in their agreement with SAS.

ERRATUM

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Strike of Bermuda marine pilots

We apologise to members of the ITF-affiliated Bermuda Industrial Union for an inaccurate report on the strike of Bermuda marine pilots, which appeared in the April issue of the ITF Newsletter (p.39). The industrial action taken by the marine pilots against the Marine and Ports Department of the Bermuda government in fact lasted just over nine weeks and not one week as stated. We omitted to mention that the marine pilots were supported in their strike by bus operators and maintenance employees, dockworkers and employees of leading garages and trucking companies, who took part in sympathy actions. The strike was finally settled to the union's satisfaction only after protracted negotiations.

PERSONALIA

Johan Buquet, a former secretary in the one-time Dutch Seamen's Union and an official who played an active rôle in the present Dutch Seafarers' Federation, died on 2 May at the age of 62. He will be sadly missed by his many friends in the ITF Seafarers' Section.

A.W. Korbijn, former secretary of the road transport workers' section of the Dutch Transport Workers' Federation (NBV), celebrated his 65th birthday on 10 May.

Thor Sónstebj, former treasurer of the Norwegian Seamen's Union, celebrates his 65th birthday on 19 May.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Road Transport Workers' Section	
Sub-Committee Meeting	- Stuttgart, 26-27 May 1971
Executive Board Meeting	- Vienna, 26-27 July 1971
ITF Congr�ss	- Vienna, 28 July - 6 August '71

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