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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

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ITF Dockers' Section Conference

Rotterdam, 11 and 12 April 1972

The ITF Dockers' Section Conference held in Rotterdam on 11 and 12 April was dominated by the issues of containerization and other new methods of cargo-handling, the repercussions of which have been felt, or are about to be, in almost every port of any importance throughout the world.

Much of the Conference was devoted to considering what position the workers' representatives should take at the ILO General Conference in June 1972, where a special item on the agenda will concern the Social Repercussions of New Methods of Cargo Handling (Docks). The discussion at the ILO will be based on conclusions drawn up by the ILO after consultation with the ILO's member states and originating from a Tripartite Technical Meeting on Dock Labour held in April 1969. The Dockers' Section Conference examined these conclusions in detail and arrived unanimously at a series of proposals on both the form and content of the international instruments which, in their view, the conclusions should produce.

The Conference went on to consider the basic content of collective agreements governing dock work in the light of technical change. It adopted broad guidelines in the shape of a Model International Agreement to which affiliated dockers' unions would seek to conform, on the understanding that the guidelines represented minimum standards and that better standards already applied would not be affected in any way. Specifically the guidelines include a normal working week of five days and no more than eight hours per day (no more than ten, including overtime); special rates for work on Saturdays and Sundays; a recommended minimum gang of eighteen men on container work; the establishment of special and jointly administered funds, financed by levies on container traffic and devoted to the benefit of all dockers; the reservation of container handling work to dockworkers; and the provision of regular full-time employment for all dockers.

Finally, the Conference gave its unanimous endorsement to the resolution on crews of convenience adopted by the ITF Fair Practices Committee in January.

The Conference was attended by forty representatives from seventeen countries. A full report is to be sent eventually to all dockers' affiliates.

ITF unions discuss Icelandic fishing rights

Representatives of fishermen in Iceland, Great Britain and Germany met at ITF HQ on 27 March to discuss Iceland's plans to extend its national fishing limits from 12 to 50 miles from 1 September this year. Jon Sigurdsson (Icelandic Seamen's and Fishermen's Union), Jack Jones and Dave Shenton (British Transport & General Workers' Union) and Fritz Annerl (German Transport & Public Service Workers' Union) came together at the invitation of ITF General Secretary, Charles Blyth. In an exchange of views on the proposed 50-mile limit, concern was expressed at the potential threat posed to employment opportunities of British and German fishermen who have traditionally worked the Icelandic grounds, while recognizing Iceland's wish to protect an industry which plays a crucial role in the country's economy.

The ITF and the unions concerned afterwards stated that they were convinced that mutual agreement was preferable to unilateral action as a method of setting fishing limits, and agreed that the workers' representatives from the three countries should meet again in Iceland on 11 and 12 May to explore further the possibility of widening and advancing these talks.

Greenland plans 50-mile limit

The Greenland parliament has voted for an extension of its fishing limits from 12 to 50 miles. It is expected that Denmark will discuss the proposal with other nations which fish in Greenland's waters, i.e. Norway, United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal and Iceland.

LATIN AMERICA

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Second ITF Latin American Civil Aviation Conference

From 20 to 24 March, the ITF's civil aviation affiliates in Latin America met in a conference to consider the many problems they had in common. This was the second conference of its kind and took place in Bogotá with forty-two participants drawn from twenty unions in ten countries. The main items on the agenda concerned working conditions, pay and operational hazards; trade union organization and international solidarity; working conditions in multi-national enterprises and Latin American economic integration. The conference was under the general direction of the Director of the ITF's Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Medardo Gomero, in collaboration with the ITF's Colombian civil aviation affiliates and Eduardo Vanegas, President of the Colombian Transport Workers' Federation. A detailed report on the conference and the various recommendations it made will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

INDONESIA

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ITF Seminar for Railwaymen

The ITF conducted a seminar in Bandung for its Indonesian affiliates from 7 to 11 March, most of the participants being drawn from the Railwaymen's Union (PBKA). The subjects covered included the rôle of transportation and of trade unions in economic development; Indonesian labour law; labour problems in state-owned enterprises; trade union rights; and the rôle and functions of the ITF. The lecturers were drawn from the PBKA, the Management of the Indonesian Railways and from the ITF in the person of Donald U'ren, the ITF's Asian Representative, who planned and conducted the seminar in collaboration with the Indonesian affiliates.

Particular stress was laid throughout the discussions on the freedom of workers to exercise their rights in accordance with the principles laid down in ILO Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. This theme had particular relevance in view of proposals emanating from the Indonesian government to group all public servants in an organization which would have a disturbing resemblance to the "vertical trade unionism" practised in Spain. This organization would be dominated by government nominees and would eliminate unions such as the PBKA which have held true to the principles and practices of genuine trade unionism.

NAMIBIA (S.W. AFRICA)

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Over 200 Ovambos under arrest

Under emergency regulations introduced following the massive strike of contract workers in Namibia, 213 people have been detained. This figure was given by the South African Minister of Police in reply to a question by Mrs. Helen Suzman, Progressive member of parliament.

An independent report on the situation in Namibia by Mr. John Kane-Berman of the South African Institute of Race Relations has sharply criticized labour conditions in the territory. It cites cases of workers being provided with concrete beds in their living compounds, being separated from their families for as much as two-thirds of their married life and of wage rates as low as 7 cents an hour (3½ pence). Regarding the changes made in the contract labour system as a result of the strike, Mr. Kane-Berman says: "Whatever the improvements in the contract system, wages remain low and the black worker virtually powerless. He is subject to pass laws, permits and influx controls. He cannot form a trade union. He is denied the right to sell his labour in a competitive market The worker's welfare is thus almost entirely dependent on the goodwill of his employer. Hitherto, this has been conspicuously absent."

NORTHERN IRELAND

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British government's initiative

The UK government has announced the suspension of the Northern Ireland government and Parliament for one year, to be replaced by direct rule from Westminster, and a gradual end to internment without trial. The new Minister for Northern Ireland, Mr. William Whitelaw, is to attempt to bring together community leaders in the hope of finding a means of bringing about a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The ITF welcomes this decision as a step in the right direction - albeit long-delayed - and urges that internment be speedily brought to an end so that real progress can be made towards a reconciliation between the majority and minority communities. The Federation regrets the action of trade unionists who responded to the strike call by the extremist Vanguard movement in protest against the initiative and appeals for a constructive approach to reconciliation by all elements of the N. Ireland community.

RHODESIA

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Sanctions-busting and continued repression of Africans

Members of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association at Burnside, New Orleans, refused on 20 March to handle the first consignment of Rhodesian chrome ore imported to the United States in violation of UN sanctions. However, the cargo was eventually unloaded by non-ILA labour. A second shipload was unloaded on 4 April. The UN is investigating the breaking of its embargo, but the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee has now voted to reimpose the ban on chrome imports.

Ironically, the US government has almost simultaneously secured its first conviction against two companies for breaking sanctions against Rhodesia by arranging for the building and operation of a chemical fertiliser plant at Que Que and the shipment of ammonia for the plant via Mozambique.

Meanwhile the Smith regime continues to enforce apartheid regulations in violation of its agreement with the UK government on the conduct of the settlement negotiations. About 5,000 African township dwellers on the outskirts of Salisbury are being forced back to their remote tribal lands by the demolition of their shanty village. In the Stapleford area of Rhodesia, near the Mozambique border, 2,000 Africans have left their homes because of uncertainty over what is to happen to them since Stapleford has been designated a "white" area. It is also reported that the government has begun to remove Africans from ancestral lands, again violating the agreement that no such action would be taken while the test of acceptability of the settlement was in progress.

Finally, the Smith regime has banned the issue of membership cards by the African National Council because it is claimed that the cards would be used as "weapons of intimidation". The ANC has stated its conviction that the action is intended to prevent it from organizing the Africans and that further obstructions will be put in its way; however, the ANC would go on organizing peacefully and without violence and will get its revenue from donations, social functions and the sale of literature.

SPAIN

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International protest at attacks on Spanish workers

Appalled at the brutal killing of two strikers by the Spanish police and at other repressive measures taken by the authorities in Spanish shipyards, trade unionists all over the world have been quick to act in support of their Spanish brothers. In the state-owned Bazan shipyards in El Ferrol, two workers were killed and 36 seriously injured on 9 March when police opened fire on a group demonstrating against the imposition of a so-called collective agreement signed by the government-controlled sindicatos. Later 20 workers were arrested, the shipyards were placed under military control and the strikers were ordered back to work on threat of court martial.

The ICFTU has lodged a complaint with the ILO at this latest attack on the workers by the Spanish government, and a week's boycott of Spanish vessels from 23 to 30 March was called by the ITF and the International Metalworkers' Federation in ports and shipyards in many countries.

TRADE UNIONS

SCANDINAVIA

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Joint organization for trade unions

Representatives of the trade union movements in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden agreed in principle at a recent meeting in Oslo to establish a joint organization, headquartered in Stockholm, to deal with common problems. An Executive Committee is to be set up composed of two representatives from each country, who will elect a Chairman from among themselves. A general conference is to be held at least twice a year at which each country is to be represented by four delegates, and affiliation fees will be at the rate of 10 öre (Sw.) per member per year which, on present membership, will amount to about Sw. Kr. 500,000 a year. The Icelandic national centre is to be invited to join the new organization.

The joint body will deal with matters such as: job and income security; improvement of the environment; increasing the influence of the trade unions in economic matters; working out common positions with regard to European and international trade union affairs; multinational companies and international organizations.

GHANA
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Railwaymen's Conference

The Ghana Railway and Port Workers' Union held an Extraordinary Delegates Conference in Sekondi on 18 and 19 March. The Conference adopted a new constitution, aimed at giving a greater rôle to the union's branches and sectional interests, and decided to press ahead with the campaign to strengthen its organization at rank-and-file level. Attempts have been made over the past year with the encouragement of the former government to split the union both sectionally and regionally, but for the most part those problems have now been resolved and the Conference voted unanimously to re-elect its General Secretary, A.E. Forson. A number of resolutions were adopted on matters such as promotion, social security, retirement pensions and rent allowances; and a special resolution expressed gratitude to the ITF for its assistance during the difficult times through which the union had passed.

GREAT BRITAIN
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T & GWU fined under new Industrial Relations Act

The ITF-affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union has been fined £55,000 for breaches of an order made by the National Industrial Relations Court requiring Liverpool dockers to cease blacking container lorries in support of claims that all packing and unloading of containers should be carried out in the docks by registered dockworkers. In accordance with TUC policy on the Industrial Relations Act, the union took no part in the court's proceedings when the transport company brought a charge of an unfair industrial practice.

When the blacking of its lorries continued after the court had issued an interim order that it should end, the company returned with a charge of contempt, and it was this which gave rise to the first fine (£5000), to which £50,000 was added when the blacking continued.

The union has until 4 May to decide whether to pay the fine or to leave it to the court to issue a sequestration order, which would permit the fine to be recovered from the union's assets. Two more firms have since obtained restraining orders against blacking of their lorries, and contempt charges arising out of these are being processed. The possibility also exists of the union being required to pay compensation to any firms which have suffered loss as a result of the industrial action.

This is the first major test of the new Industrial Relations Act and of the trade union movement's policy of non-cooperation.

Seamen's Union suspended from TUC

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen has been suspended from the TUC for violation of the latter's policy of non-cooperation in the application of the Industrial Relations Act. The NUS has remained registered under the Act, and has applied in cooperation with the Shipping Federation to the National Industrial Relations Court for an approved closed shop in the shipping industry; both these actions are ruled out under TUC policy. The NUS maintains that it has a special case for using the machinery of the new Act to legalize the closed shop since this protection is necessary for the union's survival in an industry where casual rather than permanent employment is still the rule.

The TUC Congress in September will decide whether the NUS is to be expelled.

Drive to organize shore-based shipping workers

Two ITF-affiliated unions - the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs - are to cooperate in organizing 50,000 shore-based staffs in the shipping industry. The two unions each have a limited number of members at present, and have agreed to work together for recruitment, negotiations and other activities.

NEW ZEALAND

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Wage and price freeze imposed

"Firm restraints" have been imposed by the New Zealand government on wages, prices, dividends and profits for the purpose of halting inflation. The wage freeze means that unions will have to obtain approval for any increases negotiated and this will be granted only where increased productivity will obviate the need for higher prices. Instead of individual pay awards, there will be a general cost-of-living adjustment in October. The trade unions have stated their opposition to the plan as an attack on the right to collective bargaining.

SWEDEN

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Plans to limit right to strike

The Swedish government is planning legislation to limit the right to strike of central and local government employees, to be introduced if agreement cannot be reached on voluntary limitations by collective bargaining. The government argues

that the public has the right to demand that important community services be maintained and means must therefore be found to avoid conflicts which threaten the public interest. When public employees obtained the right to strike in 1965, it had been thought that sufficient safeguards existed to prevent damaging strikes, but in the government's view the conflicts of 1971 demonstrated that this was not so.

UNITED STATES

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Unions leave Pay Board

The majority decision last month by the US government's Pay Board to cut from 26.6% to 14.9% the pay settlement negotiated recently by the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union for West Coast dockers triggered the resignation of four of the five labour members of the Board, following a long period of dissatisfaction with the manner of its operation. The resignation of the three AFL-CIO members - Meany, Abel (Steelworkers) and Smith (Machinists) - was quickly followed by that of Woodcock (Auto Workers).

(AFL-CIO President Meany has also resigned from the National Commission on Productivity,)

President Nixon thereupon changed the tripartite constitution of the Board to that of a unified "public interest" body, its members appointed directly by the Administration.

Meanwhile, a decision is now awaited on the fate of the settlements for Atlantic and Gulf Coast dockers negotiated by the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association, which also have to be considered by the Pay Board.

Unions attack compulsory arbitration Bill

US trade unions, especially those organizing transport workers, are making a concerted attack on legislation currently before Congress - the Crippling Strikes Prevention Act - which would introduce compulsory arbitration of disputes involving workers in the transport industries: railwaymen, longshoremen, airline workers, seafarers and road transport workers. This requirement would be coupled with a prohibition on strike action by these groups.

The AFL-CIO has described the proposals as an attack on free collective bargaining, which substitutes a forced settlement in which an arbitration panel selected by the government would choose between "final offers" made by employers and unions. The offer selected - which could not be altered in any way - would then become the contract.

Airlines ordered to cut anti-strike aid

An examiner for the Civil Aeronautics Board has ordered the major US airlines to cut back on the growing sums of money they have been paying out from a fund used for mutual aid when one of them is struck. The payments must now be limited to 25% of the struck airline's normal operating costs, as against the 50% which the airlines agreed among themselves to cover.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

BELGIUM

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New hours for removal workers; pay increases for taxi drivers

Legal effect has recently been given to improvements negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union on behalf of its members in the removal industry and for taxi drivers.

The official 43-hour week has now been introduced for removal workers; the maximum duty day is set at 13 hours (for those on a 5 day working week) and at 12 hours (5½ day week); maximum weekly duty hours are 63. For international journeys, this weekly maximum is replaced by 152 hours over a 15-day period, which must also include 3 rest days. Maximum driving time is 9 hours in any 24 hour period. A daily rest period of at least 10 hours is prescribed, plus 2 rest days per week (5 day week). The agreement also provides a minimum daily guaranteed wage and improved overtime payments.

For taxi drivers, the following pay agreement now applies: a) for those paid on a percentage-of-takings system: 25% of takings after deduction of VAT, i.e. 94.34% of gross takings; b) for those on a fixed pay system, daily minimum guaranteed wage: 220 B.Fr.; c) for those on a pay system combining a) and b), daily minimum guarantee of 220 B.Fr. (In Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Charleroi and Liège, b) and c) are set at 230 B.Fr.) Overtime is at 20 B.Fr. per hour for those on system a); 35 B.Fr. per hour for those on b) and c).

FINLAND

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Navigating Officers' dispute; agreement for seamen

The ITF-affiliated Finnish Navigating Officers' Union have broken off negotiations with the shipowners for a new collective agreement covering foreign-trade vessels. The main reason for the breakdown was the shipowners' flat refusal to conclude a special agreement for passenger vessels, including car ferries, embodying inter alia provisions as regard officer relief systems

on a permanent basis, and to meet the Union's demand for an adjustment in the rates of pay for masters.

These issues apart, the Union had been prepared to accept pay increases for the new contract period within the framework of the central "pattern" agreement (which gives an average 8% pay increase), but the intransigent attitude of the owners left the Union no alternative but to give notice of strike action. This strike, limited to foreign-going passenger vessels, is scheduled to begin at 22.00 local time on 25 April unless a settlement is reached before then through mediation.

ITF affiliates have been requested to stand by in order to give assistance to the Finnish Union should a strike become necessary.

The ITF-affiliated Finnish Seamen's Union has reached agreement, effective 1 April 1972 for one year, covering seamen on foreign-trade vessels. The pay increases achieved are broadly within the pattern set in the central agreement, but account was taken of the special circumstances of seafarers and they have therefore received higher increases than shore workers. Basic pay goes up by percentages ranging from 7.65% to 14.25% and improvements have also been obtained in working hours and health provisions. Annual holiday pay is increased by 10%. The Union estimates the overall improvement at an average of 13%.

GERMANY
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Seamen reach agreement

Following its 36-hour warning strike, and as a result of its determination to take further militant action if necessary, the ITF-affiliated German Union of Transport and Public Service Workers obtained a settlement of its claims for seafarers substantially better than those proposed by the official mediator. The increases agreed by the shipowners, effective from 1 March to 31 December 1972, range from 4% to 11.7%, the higher percentages going to the lower paid categories, with minimum increases of 60 DM (for certificate holders and skilled categories), 30 DM for unskilled categories and 20 DM for boys. A bonus of 15% is payable for integrated general purpose crews; and a seafarers' pension scheme is to be introduced as soon as possible.

GREAT BRITAIN
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Major railway pay dispute: 14 days cooling off period ordered

The three British railway unions - the National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association, all ITF affiliates - rejected both the 11% "final offer" of the British Railways Board and a 12% settlement suggested by a mediator in last-minute talks before the start of an official work-to-rule

on 17 April. The unions also refused to submit their claim to arbitration since they believe that recent statements by government spokesmen would be certain to prejudice the impartiality of any tribunal. The work-to-rule caused widespread disruption and the National Industrial Relations Court has granted a government application for a 14-day cooling-off period during which the railwaymen are to return to "normal working". In line with TUC policy, the three railway unions did not attend the court hearing, but felt obliged to comply with the order for a return to normal work.

In separate negotiations, the unions have obtained substantial improvements in resettlement payments and a guarantee against redundancy dismissals. Staff with five years' service or more would not in future be made compulsorily redundant provided that they were prepared to move to alternative work offered to them. There is an agreed definition of what is "suitable alternative work". To encourage staff to move to vacancies elsewhere, improved lodging, disturbance and travelling allowances are being considered, together with assistance in house purchase and sale. New mobility payments will be recommended to encourage staff to move.

For those who accept voluntary redundancy, improved resettlement arrangements are to be made; these will take the form of lump sum payments, the amount of which is subject to further discussions, and better pensions.

Merchant Navy pay and hours disputes

No concrete progress has yet been registered in negotiations between the British Shipping Federation and the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen and the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association on claims for pay increases and - for officers - improvements in hours of work. Both unions have rejected as insufficient pay offers made by the employers. (For claims, see Newsletter No. 2, 1972, page 26.)

INDIA

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New agreement for foreign trades officers

The ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of India, which organizes merchant navy deck and engine-room officers, has secured a new agreement with shipowners in the overseas trades which is effective retroactively to 1 January 1972. The agreement provides for pay increases of over 45%: the new starting rate for masters is 1,975 Rupees and for chief engineers 1,875, rising to a maximum of 3,385 Rupees after 14 years. Also provided are increased payments for short-hand manning; leave entitlement of four months after eight months' service (based on a 44-hour working week) or cash compensation at the rate of 8 days per month for masters, chief engineers, radio officers and pursers, 10 days per month for chief officers and 2nd engineers and 12 days per month for other categories; leave

entitlement is also earned while an officer is on leave, e.g. if a man is on leave for 6 months he will on his return be credited with two months' leave; if he is in hospital for 6 months he will receive 60 days' leave credit.

Further benefits include a 10% provident fund, a gratuity scheme providing from 15 to 20 months' pay for 15 to 20 years' service pro rata, and one month's bonus pay per annum.

An agreement for officers in the home trades has yet to be concluded.

JAPAN

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Seamen begin industrial action

Following the failure of negotiations on pay claims submitted by the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union, the union conducted a strike ballot among its 80,000 members in which over 90% voted for industrial action. With effect from 14 April seamen in port refused to perform night work (between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m.) on ocean-going cargo liners and oil tankers in port. Seamen on coastal liners, tankers and cement carriers joined the partial strike on 15 April and from 18 April the union began to prevent the departure of ocean-going cargo vessels and oil tankers from about 50 ports. The action is due to continue until 5 May. The ITF has requested its affiliates to support the struggle of their Japanese colleagues.

NETHERLANDS

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New contract for Martinair employees

The ITF-affiliated Netherlands Transport Workers' Union has negotiated a new contract for employees of Martinair, effective 1 January 1972.

Salaries are increased by 3% (a cost-of-living increase of 1.3% was granted at the end of 1971). The holiday bonus, payable in June, is increased from 6% to 6.8% of annual salary, with a minimum of 870 fl. for employees aged 23 and over. (An adjustment is made at the end of the year to take account of any cost-of-living salary increases granted during the year.)

Holiday entitlement is increased by one day on basic entitlement and that for those with 3, 6 and 9 years' service.

Working hours for the summer season (beginning in April) are reduced from an average of 41½ hours to 40½ hours per week, for those working shifts; others for whom this reduction is not possible will work an average 41½ hour week in the summer season and 39½ hours in the winter season. These reductions in hours also bring a corresponding increase in overtime rates (hourly rate calculated as 1/175th of a month's salary instead of 1/185th as previously).

NORWAY
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Agreement reached on national "pattern" increase

After several days' mediation, the Norwegian national centre LO and the employers' federation reached agreement on 9 April on the national pattern wage increases to be applied during 1972 and 1973, thus averting a strike announced for 10 April of 140,000 workers whose contracts expired at the end of March. The pattern agreement provides for an overall increase of 5.6%, in the form of rises of 35 øre per hour this year, 20 øre per hour next year and special increases for lower paid workers of up to 45 øre per hour in 1972.

It has also been agreed that sick leave waiting time (period before full benefit is payable) is to be reduced from 6 to 3 days with a hoped-for further reduction to 1 day from the beginning of 1974. Progress is to be made towards eliminating the differences in fringe benefits for wages and salaries staff. The LO has asked the government to impose price controls to protect the value of these improvements.

Individual unions are now starting direct negotiations with employers within the above framework. The Norwegian Transport Workers' Union has said that it is not satisfied that the increases are sufficient to compensate for reductions in the value of real earnings, and that the special increase for low paid workers in the transport industry - 30 øre per hour - is unsatisfactory. The Seamen's Union is officially outside the scope of the pattern agreement, but expects that its negotiations will be influenced by it. Talks on a new contract for the home trades began on 18 April.

SWEDEN
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Redundancy among taxi drivers

Taxi drivers in Stockholm and other Swedish cities are uneasy at the number of recent dismissals on economy grounds. The employers claim that, since the introduction of the latest pay agreement, effective 1 January, and despite fare increases of 12%, they can no longer afford to employ so many drivers and many owners are reverting to driving themselves. The pay agreement provided that two-thirds of taxi drivers' pay should be in the form of fixed salary (as against one-third previously), the remainder to be composed of a proportion of takings.

UNITED STATES
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Machinists on strike against Alitalia

The ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists has been on strike against Alitalia in the United States since 4 March in support of contract renewal claims. The ITF has advised other civil aviation affiliates of the dispute and requested them to exert all possible pressure to bring the company to terms.

Two Emergency Boards set up in rail disputes

Two ITF-affiliated US railway unions - the Sheet Metal Workers and the United Transportation Union - have protested against the President's action on 31 March in setting up Emergency Boards to report on their disputes, thus postponing any industrial action for 60 days.

The Sheet Metal Workers submitted pay and work rules claims to the nation's railroads 16 months ago, but no progress was made either in direct negotiations or in mediation attempts up to 1 April when the Union became free to strike. However, the Union had no immediate plans to take industrial action and it is this fact which caused it to object to the establishment of an Emergency Board.

The United Transportation Union is in dispute with the Penn Central railroad over the company's plans to introduce drastic cuts in operations and staffing. When Penn Central gave notice in mid-March that it would lay off 6,000 brakemen and conductors on 1 April, the UTU threatened strike action, but the redundancy notices were withdrawn before the deadline and the Union considers that the matter could have been settled by negotiation without the need for Emergency Board procedures. Penn Central is in severe financial difficulties which the Union claims are due to gross mismanagement; the Union has recommended that the government should take over the company to ensure its continued operation as a viable service.

NMU reaches East and Gulf Coast agreement

The ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union has reached agreement with East and Gulf Coast tanker and dry-cargo shipowners on a new three-year contract effective when the current contract expires on 15 June.

The agreement provides for three annual 5% increases in basic pay and overtime rates; an able seaman's current basic pay is \$529 per month, and overtime (payable after 8 hours per day or 5 days per week) \$4.27 per hour. Additional 5% increases this year and next are to be applied to basic pay and overtime for seamen working aboard automated cargo vessels.

Other features of the agreement are improved vacations and vacation pay and better pension arrangements. Those currently in the pension scheme and who have 20 or more years of qualifying service on 31 December 1972 will continue to be eligible to retire at any age on a \$250 pension. For those with less than 20 years' service at that date, a minimum retiring age of 55 will be applied, with pensions payable as follows:

- Effective 16 June 1972, \$150 at age 55 with 15 years' service;
- Effective 1 January 1973, \$250 at age 55 with 20 years' service;
- \$300 at age 55 with 25 years' service, which must include two years after 16 June 1972.

A Standing Committee consisting of equal numbers of representatives of the Union and the companies is established for the purpose of resolving grievances and questions of contract interpretation prior to arbitration.

NEWS IN BRIEF

At a recent meeting in Geneva, the international committee of unions organizing employees of the Wagons-Lits Company expressed its concern at the threat to security of employment posed by a pool agreement entered into by European national railway companies for the provision of restaurant and sleeping car facilities. This question gave rise to a 24-hour protest strike by French Wagons-Lits employees on 10/11 March.

The Belgian government has introduced legislation providing that pensions payable to deck officers and pilots will be based on the total salary - basic pay and variable allowances - instead of on the basic pay alone as at present.

Air traffic controllers at London's Heathrow Airport are considering a "withdrawal of goodwill" campaign if no progress is made towards settlement of their dispute over staffing for the summer season; the controllers fear a staff shortage during the peak period.

Pilots of British European Airways are working to rule in protest against delays in settling their dispute over pay and conditions. The first stage of the work-to-rule went into operation at the beginning of April and the second more intensive stage on 15 April. BEA has threatened to dismiss pilots who "make it impossible to provide a satisfactory service to passengers." One pilot who refused a flight on the grounds that it would take him beyond his duty time limit has been reduced in rank.

Engineering and maintenance staff at London's Heathrow Airport, together with air stewards and stewardesses, have voted to hold a one-day stoppage on 28 April in support of a 15% pay claim.

Dock workers in Tripoli, Libya, obtained a 10% pay increase after striking for four days - the first major strike in the country since the military régime took power.

Maintenance workers of El Al Israel Airlines went on unofficial strike on 10 April in support of pay claims; when they were ordered back to work under emergency regulations, and after the imposition of heavy fines on the strike leaders, other ground staff stopped work in sympathy while the mechanics returned to work but operated a go-slow. The dispute ended on 13 April when the government instructed El Al to freeze its operations.

Alitalia Airlines services have been severely disrupted during the first half of April as a result of a series of staggered strikes by various categories of ground staff in support of pay claims. A further strike - of 24 hours - took place on 20 April.

PERSONALIA

Otto Brenner, President of the German Metalworkers' Union and of the International Metalworkers' Federation, died on 15 April, at age 64. Otto Brenner was active in the German trade union movement from 1920 and was a leading figure in the postwar reconstruction of Germany's labour movement after 1945.

Olaf Karling, President of the Norwegian Seamen's Union, retired from office on reaching his 65th birthday on 26 March. Bro. Karling can look back on a long period of trade union activity, having joined the cooks and stewards' union in 1925 and being elected to his first union post shortly afterwards. He took part in the negotiations which led in 1933 to the amalgamation of several organizations to form the Seamen's Union and continued to be active as a lay member until 1937 when he took his first full time job as union representative in Antwerp. In 1950 he joined the Oslo headquarters staff as organizing secretary, and became President in 1966. Bro. Karling is well known to the ITF's maritime section and has been a member of the ITF Executive Board. On behalf of all his friends and colleagues in the International we wish him a long and happy retirement. Bro. Karling is succeeded by Henrik Aasarød.

Heribert Maier, Head of the ICFTU Economic, Social and Political Department, has been appointed Assistant General Secretary by the ICFTU Executive Board.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS
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| ITF Executive Board | - | Valletta, 3-5 May 1972 |
| ITF Fishermen's Section
Subcommittee on Safety of
Fishermen and Fishing Vessels | - | Oslo, 19-20 June 1972 |
| ITF Asian Airline Workers'
Conference | - | Tokyo, August 1972
(dates to be confirmed) |

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

ICFTU MAY DAY MANIFESTO 1972

Workers of the world !

On May Day this year, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions calls upon you to dedicate yourselves anew to the struggle for justice and dignity for the working man. In this fight, we must join together and link our forces beyond the frontiers to help the weak and the oppressed.

Those who oppose us are not bound by national borders - we must face them internationally with our ideals and our solidarity. We reject the standards based on selfishness, on greed, on the exploitation of others. Not for us the motto: "every man for himself". More and more clearly have our young people shown where they make their choice; they are joining our struggle for a new society in which we all feel we belong - a society in which justice, brotherhood and social values are paramount, not wealth, luxury and privilege, nor one submitted to a coercive and oppressive bureaucracy. The forces of capitalism are strong, those of state capitalism stronger, but we are determined to push them back step by step until we have conquered the workers' right to shape a new and fairer world.

On May Day this year, we proclaim industrial democracy as our aim; the right for the working people to have a say in decisions which directly affect their livelihood. The roads to this goal are many, the obstacles numerous. But the unions are determined to make industrial democracy a reality; they claim a voice at enterprise level, at the national level and at the international level. Your efforts will be needed to make these demands effective.

We have to face other tremendous challenges: political oppression and dictatorship; the flouting of human and trade union rights; racial subjugation as practised in various parts of the world and especially by Southern Africa's minority regimes in their own countries and in Namibia; the gap between rich and poor, between classes or nations; the urgent claims of the Third World; the need for a stable peace and disarmament. These challenges and the response of the free trade union movement will be the main theme of the Tenth World Congress of the ICFTU this summer. This is where we shall work out our programme and state our claims.

We know that these demands will meet with resistance from employers, from governments, from vested interests. Our fight will be hard, it will require sacrifices. To increase our strength, we must organize the unorganized. If you are a member of a free trade union, remember this day those who won this right for you; if you are living under tyranny and struggling for this right, remember that the ICFTU will stand by you. International solidarity means that we must help each other - let this be our slogan on May Day !