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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

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ITF deplores labour relations of Northwest Airlines

Following discussions among delegates attending the ITF Asian Civil Aviation Workers' Conference in Japan earlier this month the ITF issued a press statement expressing alarm at the deplorable labour relations record of the international carrier Northwest Airlines -- a record which the ITF feels is rapidly becoming a matter for international concern.

The statement points out that in 1970 it took Northwest six months to settle a strike with the ITF-affiliated US Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks for parity of pay and conditions with employees of other carriers. It goes on to say that Northwest seems equally determined to hold out against the union organizing its employees in Japan, which has been unable to obtain wages and conditions of service comparable with those granted to the employees of both Japanese and foreign carriers operating from that country. In the US, the statement continues, Northwest is currently involved in a strike of American pilots and has laid off thousands of workers, particularly in North America and Japan. Northwest is also expected shortly to become involved in a dispute with another US affiliate of the ITF, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, after taking an obstinate stand on IAM contract demands.

"It can be no coincidence", the statement sums up, "that Northwest's troubles are various but continuous. It has employed strike-breakers at every opportunity and often in circumstances which are suspect, to say the least, as far as Japanese laws are concerned. Its attitudes generally to labour relations are belligerent and unyielding, and of course it makes the maximum use of the Mutual Aid Pact<sup>x</sup> to sustain the company in the course of its battles. It seems to be oblivious to its responsibilities to the travelling public."

The ITF has contacted all its civil aviation affiliates with members employed by Northwest and has asked them to keep the ITF continuously and fully informed of any substantial problems they have with the airline. It is hoped that such information will enable unions to be of mutual assistance in the event of future disputes.

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<sup>x</sup>The Mutual Aid Pact is an anti-strike "Insurance Programme" arrangement whereby airline companies in the United States agree to subsidize any participating airline struck by its employees.

Back pay for the crews of two flag-of-convenience vessels

Thanks to the prompt intervention of British NUS officials and the support of T & GWU members, the crews of two flag-of-convenience vessels have sailed from the UK a lot happier and a lot better off than when they arrived. The vessels concerned, the STAR CLIPPER and the BELLE MICHAELS, both registered in Liberia, were covered by ITF agreements which the owners had made no attempt to observe.

The STAR CLIPPER (owned by the Buchanan Shipping Company of Monrovia and managed by the Blandford Shipping Co., London) was visited at Tilbury on 21 August by NUS London Office official Bob Fleming. He had been asked to investigate complaints received at the ITF Secretariat that the ITF agreement signed in Sweden in April 1972 and specifying British National Maritime Board rates and conditions was not being observed. When it became obvious that no quick solution was going to be reached, sixteen of the nineteen Philippine crew members walked off the ship and picketed the main dock gates for five days in support of their claims. Food and accommodation were provided for them by the NUS and the ITF. Once again, members of the T & GWU supported the seamen by refusing to operate the locks and to provide tug boat services. On the afternoon of 25 August, the owners finally agreed to abide by the agreement and £3,800 in back pay was handed over, leaving the difference in overtime to be settled by the end of September. The ship sailed on 26 August for Brake (W. Germany) and Antwerp, where she will be checked again by ITF affiliates.

At the request of the ITF Secretariat, NUS Branch Secretary Derek Tedder visited the BELLE MICHAELS (owners First Delta Shipping Inc., London manager Ofer Shipping Ltd.) at Avonmouth on 31 August to see if the ITF Agreement signed in London on 31 January 1972 had been implemented in accordance with the assurances received from the owner following previous checks carried out in Manchester (UK) and Belldune (Canada). As suspected, the ITF agreement was not being observed. Initial approaches to the managers by the ITF did not result in any positive moves, and so the support of the lockkeepers, T & GWU members, was enlisted. Brother Tedder finally reached agreement with the owners' representatives on the evening of 1 September, when more than £1,600 in back pay was paid out. Affiliated organizations in the vessel's next ports of call are being alerted to ensure that the ITF agreement continues to be applied.

Swedish Seamen's Union signs Custodian agreement for flag-of-convenience vessels during August.

Officials of the Swedish Seamen's Union all over Sweden have had a busy month signing ITF Custodian agreements for the following vessels:

PHILLIPS TEXAS, BELGIAN EXPRESS, HAMBURG, all Liberian flag;  
GARDENIA, SEELAND, GOTLAND, UTHORN, FLEURTJE, all Cyprus flag;  
and EDISA, Panamanian flag.

COLOMBIA

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ITF appeals for solidarity with Colombian civil aviation unions

On 26 June, the ITF's three civil aviation affiliates in Colombia -- the Avianca Workers' Union (SINTRAVA), the Avianca Mechanics' Union (ACMA) and the Avianca Cabin Staff Union (ACAV) -- began negotiations with the state-owned Avianca airline on improvements in their collective agreement. The Airline management refused to concede any of the unions' claims and subsequently broke off negotiations altogether. In an effort to force the employers back to the negotiating table, the unions began a go-slow action on 4 August. Avianca then accused the unions of "subversion" and "sabotage" and the leaders of the unions were reminded that Colombian law forbids strikes in state-owned enterprises. On 16 August, it was learnt that the Colombian government had annulled legal recognition of the three unions and had frozen their funds.

In a letter addressed to the Director-General of the International Labour Organization, the ITF protested vigorously against the steps taken by the Colombian government. The letter said that the ITF could not accept that the Colombian government had any justification for action which amounted to the attempted elimination of three unions. The letter concluded with a formal request that the government's action, which the ITF deemed to be in gross violation of ILO Conventions 87 (on Freedom of Association) and 98 (on the Right to Bargain), should be placed before the Committee on Freedom of Association as a matter of urgency.

ITF General Secretary Charles Blyth has cabled the Colombian President condemning the action taken against the AVIANCA unions and urging him to intervene and restore the three unions to full legality. The ITF has also asked its civil aviation unions to address similar protest messages to the Colombian authorities.

Meanwhile, the ITF's affiliates in Latin and North America began "blacking" services operated by Avianca on 25 August and ITF affiliates in Europe are being requested to lend their support.

TRANSPORT

DENMARK

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Engineer Officers seek new manning regulations

The ITF-affiliated Danish Engineer Officers' Association is asking the government to introduce new manning regulations which exclude any possibility of dispensations. The existing law, dating from 1964, permits dispensations with the result that at present the merchant fleet is sailing with 10% unqualified engineer officers. Such a

situation, in the Association's opinion, undermines the safety standards which the government is pledged to maintain. For the owners, too, it is of doubtful advantage to allow unqualified men to take care of their ships' engines: the annual cost of repairing the damage caused because of servicing by unqualified crew members runs to many millions of kroner - far more than the cost of employing qualified men in the first place.

ICELAND

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International Court rules against Iceland's 50-mile fishing limit

On 17 August, the International Court of Justice at The Hague granted Britain and West Germany their request for an interim injunction preventing Iceland from extending its fishing limits until the Court takes a final decision in the case later this year. In its ruling, the Court said that Iceland should refrain from taking any measures against UK and West Germany vessels fishing outside the 12-mile limit after 1 September. Having regard to the need for the conservation of fish stocks off Iceland, the Court imposed a limit in the annual catch of 170,000 metric tons for UK registered trawlers and of 120,000 metric tons in the case of trawlers of West German registry, the limits to remain in force for a period of one year or until the Court's final ruling in respect of Iceland's fishing limits. The Court further instructed both countries to supply the Icelandic government with information on the arrangements made for the regulation of catches in the Icelandic area.

UNITED KINGDOM

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New certificate proposals opposed by MN officers

The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association has again voiced its disapproval of proposals by the British Department of Trade and Industry for a new certificate structure. The Association, commenting on a new consultative document issued in July, says that the proposals are essentially the same as those published in January (see ITF Newsletter No. 2, page 21), and the same objections therefore apply to them. Talks are to be held between the DTI and both sides of the industry on the document up to 31 October, whereupon a final legislative draft will be prepared; the new regulations would then be expected to go into effect in about a year's time.

TRADE UNIONS

AUSTRIA

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Austrian railwaymen's leader hands over workers' homes

On 28 July, Fritz Precht, ITF president and president of the ITF-affiliated Austrian Railwaymen's Union, formally handed over 79 workers' homes in a suburb of Vienna to Austrian railwaymen's

families. In his address, Bro. Prechtl pointed out that in the past twenty years a total of 15,716 homes had been built for railwaymen, largely on a cooperative basis. He added that 1,349 homes would be built this year and a further 3,453 were at the planning stage. Brother Prechtl said that this represented a significant contribution on the part of the railwaymen's union towards meeting the housing needs of Austria's railwaymen.

GREAT BRITAIN

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TUC passes on transport union's complaint on container judgement

The British Trades Union Congress is to forward to the Lord Chancellor a complaint from the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union concerning the manner in which the Law Lords reached their decision in the case involving the "blacking" of container lorries by docker members of the union in the port of Liverpool. (The Law Lords ruled that the union was to be held responsible for the actions of its shop stewards and must therefore pay the £55,000 fines imposed by the NIRC<sup>x</sup>.) In a letter to the TUC, the T & GWU had complained of the haste in which the Lords' decision was taken and of the interpretations of industrial practice contained in the judgement. Meanwhile, the TUC is writing to all affiliated unions advising them of the implications of the Lords' decision and instructing them to examine their rules on the subject of shop stewards.

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<sup>x</sup>See ITF Newsletter No. 8, p. 109

INDONESIA

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Indonesian public service workers' unions face serious threat to their autonomy

The Indonesian government is planning to wind up all unions in the public sector and to incorporate them in KORPRI, a government organization, which, at every level, will be run by Indonesian government officials or by persons appointed by the government. This move on the part of the Indonesian authorities is viewed with concern by the ITF, as it will forcibly deprive unions which have previously been responsible for the organization of workers in the state-owned road transport, railway, port and civil aviation industries of any say in the direction of their own affairs, in direct contravention of the basic trade union principles of freedom of association and of the right to organize in trade unions enshrined in ILO Conventions 87 and 98. The ITF has protested to the Indonesian government and hopes that the latter will bow to the weight of world opinion and allow the unions to continue to function independently.

PORTUGAL

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ICFTU expresses sympathy with imprisoned trade union leader on death of his wife

Otto Kersten, on behalf of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, has extended his deep and sincere sympathy to Daniel Cabrita, the imprisoned general secretary of the Lisbon Bank Employees' Union, following the suicide of his wife Helena Rita on 2 August. The cable reads:

"The international free trade union movement is deeply shocked about the tragic death of your wife, Helena Rita. On behalf of the ICFTU, let me express our deepest grief and sympathy. Free workers throughout the world will remember your wife who stood steadfastly by your side in your brave struggle for the ideals of free and democratic trade unionism."

It will be remembered that Daniel Cabrita, who was arrested on 30 June 1971, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment earlier this year for subversive activities<sup>x</sup>. The ICFTU, which sent an observer to attend the trial, protested against the sentence and subsequently submitted a complaint against Portugal to the ILO. Mrs. Cabrita continued the campaign to obtain the release of her husband, undaunted by the pressures exerted on her by the Portuguese regime, until her untimely death.

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<sup>x</sup>See Newsletter No. 2, p. 23

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

DENMARK

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Most coastal owners will negotiate; strike on against remainder

As a result of pressure, both national and international, from the union side and intervention by the state mediator, the majority of shipping companies belonging to the association of small shipowners - which represents 80% of the coastal fleet - have now agreed to negotiate collective agreements with the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union for the seafarers employed in their vessels.

However, a number of owners are still refusing to negotiate and the Seamen's Union has therefore, after postponing its earlier strike deadline to give the mediator an opportunity to make proposals, called a strike against these owners with effect from midnight on 1 September. Solidarity action by members of the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation becomes effective on 4 September, and all ITF affiliates are being requested to join the blockade. A list of ships affected has already been circulated.

Greenland radio officers' dispute for arbitration

The ITF-affiliated Danish Radio Officers' Association and the Danish Ministry for Greenland have agreed to submit to voluntary arbitration the dispute between them concerning the right of the Association to issue a collective strike notice on behalf of its members. The Ministry had disputed this right, despite the Association's having received letters of authority from its members, on the grounds that no formal agreement exists between the Ministry and the Association on bargaining procedures and industrial action; the Ministry therefore claims that all Association members must give individual notice of termination of employment before a strike can take place.

Before accepting that the dispute should go to arbitration, the Association obtained assurances from the Ministry that (a) the intending strikers would be allowed to remain in their accommodation provided that the rent is paid by the Association during the strike; (b) the strikers would be allowed to remain in Greenland; and (c) the strikers would be reemployed in their previous positions and no victimization would take place.

In view of the above, the Association postponed the strike, originally scheduled for 1 August, until 31 October. In the meantime, the embargo on radio positions in Greenland continues in force, and ITF radio officer affiliates are requested to advise their members accordingly. (The reason for the intended strike action is failure to reach agreement on renewed contracts for radio officers and Radio Sonde personnel and new contracts for telecommunications technicians stationed in Greenland.)

GREAT BRITAIN

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Dock strike ends, but unofficial container picketing continues

The British national dock strike was called off on 16 August following the acceptance by dockworkers' delegates of further improvements in job security provisions negotiated by the Jones/Aldington Committee. Normal working resumed on 21 August after rank and file dockers' meetings at ports throughout the country had also voted to accept the proposals. International solidarity action was called off on 16 August.

The agreement contains the following points:

1. The Temporary Unattached Register of dockworkers is to be abolished by 29 September, by which time those currently on the register should have been reallocated to permanent employers.
2. Firms are to be subsidized from a special fund through the Dock Labour Board to assist in meeting extra costs.



3. Retention of the National Dock Labour Board.
4. No compulsory redundancy.
5. An inquiry into unregistered ports is to be held which could lead to some closures and the extension of the area of control of some major registered ports.
6. All port authorities to put pressure on container groupage firms to employ registered dockworkers at docks rates and conditions.
7. Sanctions to be applied to firms which do not comply with point 6, in the form of higher port charges.
8. Port authorities to develop warehousing and other activities employing registered dockworkers.
9. Voluntary severance pay, effective for five months from 4 September, for registered dockworkers who are unfit, or over 55, as follows:

<u>Years of service</u>	<u>£</u>
5	2,400
10	2,800
15	3,200
20	3,600
25 and over	4,000

10. The Aldington/Jones Committee to continue and give immediate priority to: more job opportunities; pensions; and retraining.

Despite the agreed return to work, unofficial picketing of container depots is continuing, notably at Midland Cold Store in London.

#### NORWAY

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#### Seamen's union seeks home leave after 6 months

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union is seeking a change in maritime legislation which would give seafarers in the foreign trades the right to a free trip home after 6 months' service (instead of after 9 months as at present). The union claims that this would not only afford a necessary improvement in the lot of seafarers and their families, who are often separated for as much as 11 months at a time because present law permits a two-month extension, but would also aid recruitment to the merchant service.

The proposal is expected to be placed before the Norwegian parliament during the autumn.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australian dockers belonging to the ITF-affiliated Waterside Workers' Federation have concluded their boycott of French vessels following the end of France's nuclear tests in the Pacific. Actions against Spanish vessels are continuing in protest against the victimization of trade unionists in Spain.

The Australian national carrier Qantas is to allow air stewardesses to continue service with the airline after marriage.

Ground staff with Australia's two domestic carriers, Trans Australia Airlines and Ansett, returned to work at midnight on 2 August after a week-long stoppage which halted almost all of the country's internal airline services. A spokesman for the Transport Worker's Union to which the men belong said that they had voted to accept a wage rise of A\$4 per week. It is understood that the ground staff union is to hold further talks on pay with the airlines.

Bangladesh has joined the International Labour Organization, bringing the total membership of the ILO to 123 States.

A bill which has been introduced in the Chilean parliament is designed to give all Chilean workers salary increases on 1 October equivalent to the rise in the cost-of-living between 1 January and 30 September 1972. The bill represents an attempt to reverse previous government policy, under which salaries have been adjusted at the beginning of each year prior to increases in prices.

Italy's 215,000 railwaymen staged a one-day strike from 21.00 hrs on 2 August. The strike had been called by Italy's three main trade union federations to press the railwaymen's demands for improved pay, including a monthly across-the-board rise of 15,000 lire, a better career structure, an end to casual labour, an increase in the labour force and greater government investment in the railway system. The strike, which paralyzed the entire Italian rail network, also affected ferries operated by the Italian state railways. Later in the month, the railway unions decided to postpone a further nationwide strike, originally due to begin at 21.00 hrs on 23 August, until 4 September. A union statement said that some progress had been made on the railwaymen's claims.

Netherlands port employers have agreed to meet the demand of the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union for an interim 2% pay increase. The increase was agreed first for Rotterdam dockers and later, after unofficial strikes which the union was on the point of making official, for Amsterdam.

PERSONALIA

Wim Hulsker, a secretary in the Dutch Transport Workers' Union and president of its dockers' section, is to leave the NBV later this year in order to take up the post of administrative director of the Dockers' Training Centre in Renesse on 1 October. Brother Hulsker has been a prominent personality in the union for many years and was largely responsible for bringing about major improvements in the pay and conditions of dockers in the Netherlands. He has also made a significant contribution to the work of the ITF, having held the post of vice-chairman of the Dockers' Section since 1962, and more recently as vice-chairman of the Fishermen's Section.

Joe Borg, president of the Malta General Workers' Union from 1955 to 1961, died on 1 August.

Max Schönenberger, former central secretary of the Swiss Transport Workers' Union, died on 13 July. He was 61.

Talmage E. Simpkins has been elected executive director of the AFL-CIO Maritime Committee in succession to Hoyt S. Haddock, who retired on 30 June.

A.A. Dowdell has been appointed federal secretary of the Flight Stewards' Association of Australia. He succeeds T.J. Hore, who resigned earlier this year.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS  
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- ITF Management Committee - Nuremberg, 16 September 1972
- International Cabin Attendants' Conference - Dublin, 26-27 September 1972
- ITF Civil Aviation Section Conference - Dublin, 28-29 September 1972
- Conference of ITF European Affiliates - Salzburg, 9-10 October 1972
- ITF Road Transport Section Committee - Villingen, 12-13 October 1972
- ITF Management Committee - London, 30 October 1972
- ITF Executive Board - London, 30-31 October 1972
- ITF Latin American Conference of Seamen and Dockers - Lima, 6-10 November 1972
- ITF Radio Officers' Conference - Geneva, 16 November 1972
- ITF Seafarers' Section Conference preparatory to ILO Joint Maritime Commission - Geneva, 17-18 November 1972

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