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No. 4

April 1973

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

EUROPE

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Working party on European Organization within the ITF

A meeting of the European members of the ITF Executive Board, together with one representative each from Ireland and Denmark and three representatives of the Committee of ITF Unions in the EC (the "Brussels Committee") was held in London on 1 and 2 March in accordance with the Recommendation of the ITF Conference of European Organizations held in Salzburg in October last year. The task of the meeting was to examine the various proposals which had been made and to formulate proposals on the creation of machinery within the Federation to represent and safeguard the interests of all European affiliates.

During the course of discussions differences of approach became apparent which it was not possible to resolve into an agreed proposal in the time available. Summing up at the end of the meeting, the General Secretary indicated that there were three possibilities: 1) the appointment of an ITF liaison man in Brussels and policies for Europe to be determined within the ITF Sections; 2) the expansion of the Brussels Committee; and 3) the creation of an ITF regional organization for Europe as a whole. He drew the Working Party's attention to the fact that they had unanimously agreed at Salzburg that the final decision would have to await the 1974 Congress. The work of the Brussels Committee would have to continue and, in the meantime, the Secretariat could prepare documents outlining the viewpoints expressed at this meeting for discussion at Congress.

The Working Party agreed to this approach and also agreed that it would not be appropriate in these circumstances to call a Conference of European Affiliates in the first half of 1973 as had been envisaged in the Salzburg Recommendation.

SOUTH AFRICA

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Moves to improve conditions of African employees of foreign firms

Following the disclosure of starvation wages being paid to African employees of British firms in South Africa (see Newsletter No.3, 1973, page 29), moves are being made to put pressure on these companies to bring pay rates at least up to the so-called subsistence level. The British Labour Party has obtained a

parliamentary inquiry into the situation, and the United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association, which commissioned the wages report, is expected to recommend companies to raise wages at least to subsistence level. In addition, the British TUC is accepting the invitation of the Trade Union Council of South Africa to send a delegation to investigate the situation on the spot.

In the USA, a Bill has been introduced in Congress to legislate against about 320 American companies known to pay African workers in South Africa less than the subsistence wage.

TRANSPORT

EUROPE

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Agreement on anti-hijacking measures

The terrorism sub-committee of the Council of Europe Assembly, at a meeting in Paris on 22 March at which the ITF was represented, agreed that Europe must take joint action immediately against hijacking and sabotage of aircraft, without waiting for world-wide agreement.

It deplored that out of 88 countries which signed the Hague Convention against hijacking, only 44 have ratified it, and that no effective UN action had been taken. The sub-committee is to present proposals to the Council of Europe Assembly in May on joint European transport and police action to intensify airport security; that all countries should consider hijacking a criminal and not a political offence; that attempts should be made to obtain bilateral agreements with Libya, Algeria and other Arab states similar to that recently signed between the United States and Cuba; that penal codes in Europe regarding hijackers should be harmonized.

In a statement to the meeting, the ITF emphasized its view that all governments should immediately ratify and implement existing international conventions; promote the adoption of an international convention on enforcement measures and sanctions; and tighten security measures at all airports through security committees on which the trade unions are represented.

TRADE UNIONS

GREAT BRITAIN

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May Day demonstrations as start of national campaign

The British Trades Union Congress is calling for a "Day of National Protest and Stoppage" on May Day in protest against the government's counter-inflation measures. Widespread stoppages are expected throughout industry and the demonstration will be the opening shot in a continuing nation-wide campaign of demonstrations, information and publicity for fair policies on prices, pensions and pay. In addition, the TUC is planning to assist workers taking industrial action against Phase Two of the government's policy, even if this action conflicts with the law. Support may take the form of publicizing the union's case; making representations to the government or to the employer; organizing financial support; or securing support from other unions in the form of not crossing picket lines, withdrawing associated groups of workers or blacklisting goods and services.

SOUTH AFRICA

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African Transport Workers' Union founded

In Johannesburg on 2 February 1973 the Transport and Allied Workers' Union was established. This inaugural meeting was the result of many months of hard organizational work by the PUTCO bus drivers following their successful struggle for improved wages and conditions in May last year. Union membership is open to workers of all races in the transport industry. Over 350 drivers joined the union at this first meeting.

SPAIN

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ILO endorses complaint against Spanish government

On 3 March the ILO Governing Body approved the report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association upholding a complaint by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions against the Spanish government. The Governing Body pointed out that it was contrary to ILO principles to ban workers' organizations which are constituted outside trade union organizations recognized by law, and declared that penalizing workers on account of their membership of such organizations was contrary to the principle that workers should be free to join organizations of their choice without previous authorization. Several members of the Workers' Group addressing the meeting denounced the continuing violation of trade union rights and civil liberties in Spain and urged the ILO Director-General to make representations to the Spanish Government.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

BELGIUM

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New contract claims for inland navigation workers

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union has prepared claims for a new contract to take effect following the expiry of the old one on 1 April 1973. These claims include:

- A flat-rate wage increase of 6,000 francs for all employees in inland, Rhine and tank navigation;
- Introduction of an end-of-year bonus equivalent to a 13th month's pay;
- Introduction of a special bonus of 600 fr. per month for all personnel who have obtained an official radar certificate;
- Raising of the notice periods in accordance with seniority, going up to 9 months' notice after 15 years' service.

CANADA

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Flight Attendants settle dispute with Wardair

A strike against Wardair by members of the ITF-affiliated Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Association which began on 16 January this year ended two months later with agreement on all the issues in dispute except that concerning the length of the duty day which has been referred to arbitration. In advising the ITF of the settlement, CALFAA said: "We are grateful for your assistance and the solidarity of the unions on your side of the Atlantic. It was that solidarity which enabled us to bring Wardair to the bargaining table."

This settlement gives Wardair employees collective conditions of service for the first time, to run from 1 April 1972 to 31 March 1974.

Below are some examples of the improvements made:

Minimum guaranteed pay: increased from basic 30 hours' flight pay to 65 hour pay guarantee. Minimum rate up from \$363.00 to \$492.70, maximum from \$516.65 to \$694.85.

Flight time limitation: (None previously) Summer quarters - 255 hours; Winter quarters - 240 hours; with credits for vacation, deadheading, etc. to count towards the limitation.

Duty Time limitation: (None previously) To be established by binding arbitration.

Guaranteed days off: (None previously) 26 per quarter.

Minimum Rest Periods: (None previously) Home Base: 24 hours; Away from home base: At/near airport: 9 hours; Away from airport: 10 hours.

Additional pay elements: (None previously) Language premium; Payment for service to passengers on the ground, Public Relations assignments.

DENMARK
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Mediation proposal put to vote in Danish general strike

Following the failure of mediation attempts (see ITF Newsletter No. 3, page 32), a general strike of workers in Denmark, spearheaded by certain key groups of transport workers belonging to the ITF-affiliated Danish Transport & General Workers' Union, began on 21 March. A week later, new mediation efforts resulted in a proposed settlement which is being put to the vote of trade union members throughout the country. The proposal gives equal pay for women; the 40 hour week (reduced from the present 41 3/4 hours) by December 1975; half-yearly cost-of-living adjustments for all workers at the rate of 40 øre per hour for every 3 point rise in the index; and other benefits including extra holiday for shift workers. The proposal thus meets most of the unions' claims and is therefore expected to be accepted. If so, its provisions will become effective on 10 April. However, the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union has recommended its members to reject the proposal, on the grounds that it does not meet the union's claims to a sufficient extent, particularly with regard to pay increases and holiday pay.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Railway unions reject pay offer

The three ITF-affiliated British railway workers' unions - the National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association - have rejected a pay offer by the British Rail Board which conformed to the norm of £1 per week plus 4% set by the government in Phase Two of its incomes policy. The unions' claims will now be submitted to the Railway Staff National Tribunal, for which an independent Chairman has to be appointed.

ASLEF, the footplatemen's union, has called off its industrial action - work-to-rule and one-day stoppages - on receiving assurances from British Rail that the claim for restructuring of its members' wage scales could be negotiated alongside the general pay claim of the three unions.

Officers' salaries lower than most of Europe

In presenting their claim for improved pay and conditions to the British Shipping Federation, the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association emphasized that for UK officers the overall basic salaries and conditions, related to hours of duty, were substantially inferior to those enjoyed by officers in most European countries. Indeed, the basic rates of pay for junior officers were the lowest basic rates in the whole of British industry. The Association argued that, as shipping was international in character, government measures to check domestic inflation could not be applicable to the industry, particularly since the restrictions apparently did not apply to foreign crews of British vessels.

Apart from pay, the major claim which the MNAOA is making is for a reduction in hours to an average of 40 per week. It was stressed that this demand was not made with the intention of increasing overtime earnings, but to effect a genuine cut in the excessive hours at present worked.

Officers' Association opposes Hong Kong flag plan

The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association has protested in the strongest possible terms to the British Department of Trade and Industry at proposals being discussed between the government and shipping representatives from Hong Kong that Hong Kong should be allowed to become a separate port of registry and that arrangements should be made which would permit various dispensations from UK standards for safety equipment, crew accommodation, manning requirements, etc. At present Hong Kong registry is subject to British regulations identical to those applied to UK registration.

The MNAOA considers that such a move would be tantamount to establishing a flag of convenience registry in Hong Kong.

ICELAND
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Fishermen's dispute settled

A dispute between the ITF-affiliated Seamen's Federation and the Icelandic trawler owners, which began in October last year, was finally settled on 11 March, 1973. Instrumental in achieving the agreement was a strike of engineers, second mates and radio officers on deep-sea trawlers which began four days before the settlement.

Under the new contract monthly pay is increased by 27% and the share of the catch by 12% - a satisfactory result from the union's point of view. Other improvements were also gained in general conditions.

INDIA
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Pay rise for Indian seamen

Representatives of Indian and foreign shipowners employing Indian seamen have signed a new agreement with the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seafarers of India (under the auspices of the British National Maritime Board) granting an 8.33% bonus to seamen with effect from 1 March 1973, in addition to a flat rise of Rs. 50 in the basic wages of all categories. Rationalization of wages has given an additional increase of Rs. 10 and a further increase of Rs. 10 will be given with effect from 1 November 1973.

Other benefits include an increase in overtime compensation by paise 25 per hour, subsistence allowance increased by Rs. 1 and 10 years as the qualifying period for gratuity instead of 15 years as previously.

The minimum monthly wage of an Indian seaman will now be Rs. 340 from 1 November, and the maximum Rs. 600. The agreement runs to the end of October 1974.

NETHERLANDS

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Tentative agreement reached for Martinair employees

Proposed terms of an agreement for 1973 for employees of the Netherlands airline Martinair are being put to the membership by the ITF-affiliated Netherlands Transport Workers' Union. The main provisions of the agreement are:

Pay increase from 1 January 1973 by 3% plus 1% in anticipation of price index rises, with a minimum increase of 13 Guilders per % per month for those over 23 and heads of family under that age. Further cost-of-living adjustments are to be made on 1 April and 1 October 1973.

Holiday bonus, payable in June, is increased from 6.8% to 7%, with a minimum amount of 1,000 guilders for those over 23 and heads of family under that age.

Annual leave is increased by two days, and workers over age 55 receive a further extra day's leave. Working hours are brought down to 40 per week (from 40.5) with effect from 1 April, and the formula for calculating the hourly rate is thus increased from 1/175th of monthly pay to 1/173rd.

SWEDEN

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Preliminary agreement reached for SAS employees

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Commercial Employees' Union has negotiated a preliminary agreement which would give SAS ground staff a pay increase of 110 kr. per month. The agreement also contains a provision under which 0.25% of the wage bill would be placed in a special fund aimed at creating greater job security. A bonus of 40 kr. would be given to those born before 1949 earning less than 2,300 kr. together with a 3% bonus for all women employees.

TUNISIA

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Substantial improvements obtained by Tunisian railwaymen

Under the terms of a settlement concluded between the ITF-affiliated National Railwaymen's Federation of Tunisia and the management of the Tunisian Railways, a general restructuring of all employees in service on 31 December 1965 has been agreed, effective from 1 July 1972. This will result in considerable improvements in wage rates for all staff.

Other claims have also been granted:

- raising of allowance paid to former auxiliary employees laid off on reaching the age limit or because of physical incapacity;
- first class travel facilities for employees in the higher grades;
- limit of auxiliary period to two years' continuous service.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belgian air traffic controllers have resumed their work-to-rule in support of improved pay and conditions, following the failure of negotiations.

Canadian non-operating railway employees' unions have resumed negotiations with the employers, at the request of the Minister of Labour. Talks on behalf of workshopmen are also continuing with the help of the government mediator.

The Danish Engineer Officers' Association celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its foundation by a dinner on 2 April. This was attended on behalf of the ITF by Knut Hadrup of the Swedish Ships' Engineers' Association, and he presented the union with an ITF plaque.

Finnish bus and lorry drivers staged a one-day stoppage on 19 March in protest against the opposition of the conservative majority in parliament to a proposed change in the law which would guarantee 10 hours' rest every 24 hours and a maximum of 11 hours' driving time in each 24 hours.

The strike of French air traffic controllers was suspended on 20 March pending the outcome of negotiations. However, more trouble may arise from disciplinary measures involving the dismissal of seven controllers, among them several union leaders, and the downgrading of five more.

British portworkers in the enclosed London docks have struck (unofficially) in protest against the employers' action in sending some men home for refusing to work in accordance with flexibility provisions in the agreement. (See Newsletter no.3, 1973, page, 41.)

British seamen are in dispute with British Rail over their claim for increased pay for handling freight lorry traffic on board car and train ferries operating across the English Channel.

British cabin crew employed by BOAC struck for three hours on 5 April in support of their claim for a month's notice of their working roster.

Italian seamen employed by the public company Finmare staged a second series of staggered strikes during the second half of March in support of contract claims.

Japanese seamen are voting whether to strike in support of claims for wage increases following the failure of the shipowners to make a satisfactory offer.

Netherlands road transport workers benefit from a reduction in their working week from 43 to 42 hours with effect from 1 April 1973.

PERSONALIA

Héctor Aguilar Echeverría, President of the Colombia National Union of Avianca Workers from 1945 to 1949, died on 16 February 1973. He was 60. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Colombian Workers' Confederation.

Peter Eklo, Secretary of the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union, celebrates his sixtieth birthday on 16 April 1973.

Arthur R. Gibbons, former executive secretary of the Canadian Railway Labour Association, has been appointed Director of the Conciliation and Arbitration Branch of the Canadian Department of Labour.

Ernest Jentgen, who was active all his working life in the Luxembourg railway trade union and cooperative movement, died last month in his 83rd year.

Abdelkerim Mahfoudh, Assistant General Secretary of the Union of Retired Railwaymen in Tunisia, and former member of the Executive of the National Railwaymen's Federation, died on 7 March 1973.

Bernt Uula, former Secretary of the Finnish Seamen's Union, died on 29 March 1973. He was 61. He had retired from his post in the union on grounds of ill health earlier in the year. Since 1964 he had been chairman of the union's fishermen's section, and was well known to many in the ITF.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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ATLAS Group Meeting	- London, 12 April 1973
KSSU Group Meeting	- London, 13 April 1973
Asian Seamen's Conference	- Singapore, 7-9 May 1973
Allied Industries and Services Section Conference	- London, 8 May, 1973
ITF Management Committee	- Innsbruck, 6 June 1973
ITF Executive Board	- Innsbruck, 6 - 8 June 1973

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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ICFTU MAY DAY MANIFESTO 1973

May Day is a joyful occasion for all of us, but at the same time a challenge. We are called upon to rise above our everyday preoccupations, to take stock of our achievements and to think what our movement really stands for.

Wherever we are, whatever our jobs may be, we pursue the same great common aim: to achieve a new and fairer order of society, a better world in which all workers will be free from oppression and exploitation, free from the threat of war, unemployment and poverty, free to live in healthy surroundings and human dignity, able to choose their careers freely, to earn an adequate living, to have sufficient leisure for other activities and to participate fully in the political, social and cultural life of their community and nation.

There is no country in the world where the workers enjoy all these blessings, though in some countries the trade unions have come very much nearer to such goals than in others. But this is a worldwide task: it can only be tackled in that spirit of international solidarity which we invoke at all times and especially on May Day. That is why the workers need an International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, a strong and united international free trade union movement where all regions, all organisations and all members fully pull their weight.

The objectives which our movement has set itself cannot all be reached at once: we can only hope to advance if at any given time we concentrate our efforts in certain fields. We have to decide which tasks are most urgent and most likely to be accomplished successfully. At present the free trade union movement is paying particular attention to the need to curb the abuse of power by big multinational societies which represent some of the worst features of capitalism: by their financial and business transactions they constantly threaten the monetary and economic stability of whole regions and thus affect the workers' livelihood, while in developing countries they are apt to practise a particularly dangerous form of neo-colonialism, achieving high profits by paying starvation wages and suppressing trade union rights, often aided and abetted by governments. In confronting these firms with the organised strength of the workers and in pressing for an international control of their activities we are thus fighting at the same time for a better economic order, for the workers' rights and for industrial democracy.

The trade unions' fight for world peace has entered a new phase with the ceasefire in Vietnam. Our movement has to press everywhere for genuine universal disarmament and for the development of a peace economy. Stronger efforts than ever before are

also needed to make sure that governments establish an effective control over the trade in arms. Stopping the flow of armaments would considerably reduce the danger of new conflicts flaring up; cutting the supply of arms to autocratic governments would deprive such rulers of the means to maintain their hated regimes by force; funds now spent on such pernicious hardware could be used for the real benefit of the countries and the working classes, indeed of mankind as a whole: the world needs tractors, not tanks - not napalm, but penicillin.

It is equally important for the sake of world peace to prevent acts of individual violence, but this must be done in a positive way. There are far too many human beings in our world who have every right to feel aggrieved - the masses of the unemployed in so many countries, oppressed racial groups in Southern Africa, uprooted men and women eating out their hearts in refugee camps or simply migrant workers treated as pariahs by the rich industrial societies of their host countries ! The continued existence of such wrongs is a standing reproach to all of us.

Workers of the world ! Help the ICFTU to fight for the underprivileged everywhere, to secure for them the right and the material means to participate as equals in the May Days of the future.

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ITF AFFILIATES' ACTIONS AGAINST FLAG OF CONVENIENCE VESSELS

Among recent actions by ITF seafarers' and dockers' affiliates against flag-of-convenience and crew-of-convenience vessels are the following:

In Denmark, the Mates' Union had the Cyprus-flag BUNGSBORG arrested for non-payment of wages to its crew. The vessel was subsequently sold.

In Finland, ITF agreements have been signed for the Somalia-flag BREDSTEDT and the Cyprus-flag REDSKY.

In Canada the non-Greek crew of the Greek-flag DORA PAPALIOS were given assistance resulting in the successful solution of difficulties which they were experiencing over their contracts of employment.

In Sweden among the ITF agreements obtained have been those for the Liberian-flag ANTILLA; Panamanian-flag LOTUS and HOLMA; Cyprus-flag CRETAN HOPE and STIMON. Here, too, action was taken to secure to the South African crew of the UK-flag CLAN ROBERTSON an acceptable rate of pay; this vessel was later held up in the United Kingdom, where eventually agreement was reached between the ITF and the owners, Union Castle, that wages would be raised to the UK rate and that in principle this would also apply to the owner's other four ships employing South African crew members.

Also in the United Kingdom, union action secured arrears of wages to crew members on the Cyprus-flag DIMITRAKIS, Liberian-flag GAY FORTUNE and Cyprus-flag ILKON TAK. In addition, the Liberian-flag HAMBURGER DOM was held up until an ITF agreement was signed.

Affiliates are once again reminded to keep an eye open for vessels under ITF-agreement (a list of all these was circulated by ITF headquarters recently to all seafarers' and dockers' affiliates) and to make sure that the agreement is being observed.