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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

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ITF Convenience flag actions

Recent actions by the ITF and its affiliated unions to prevent exploitation of crews on board flag-of-convenience vessels include the following:

The Israeli Merchant Navy Officers' Union stopped the Cyprus-flag ANNUNCIATION DAY in Haifa until an ITF agreement was signed.

The Liberian-flag BELLE MICHAELS was stopped on Teesside in Great Britain until back pay was obtained for the crew totalling about £10,000 owing on account of non-payment of the ITF rate due under an agreement signed earlier (this vessel had also been stopped in September last year at Avonmouth). Also in the United Kingdom, the Liberian-flag ILKON TAK was held up at Manchester for £2,226 in back pay discovered by the National Union of Seamen to be owing under an ITF agreement signed in Sweden in May 1972.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, the US National Maritime Union gave assistance to the crew of the Panamanian-flag MAINA who picketed the vessel for unpaid wages. The picket line was observed by the International Longshoremen's Association and the NMU got an attorney to have a lien placed on the vessel. The crew were later repatriated to their home countries, Argentina and Uruguay, as they had requested, with all monies due to them paid.

In New Zealand the Waterside Workers' Federation obtained wages for 17 Philippine crew members almost four times what they had been receiving, by holding up the Cyprus-flag ELNA.

EUROPE

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Dockers' and seafarers' representatives discuss joint Committee

Representatives of ITF-affiliated seafarers' and dockworkers' unions in the European Community met in Brussels on 19 and 20 March respectively to discuss the proposed establishment later in the year by the EC Commission of Joint Committees for Social Problems in the two industries. At the dockers' meeting were representatives from Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Ireland and Denmark; and at the seafarers' meeting were

delegates from Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Great Britain and Denmark; the ITF was represented at both meetings by Assistant General Secretary Harold Lewis and at the seafarers' meeting additionally by Seafarers' Section Secretary Ake Selander.

General feeling at the meetings was in favour of Joint Committees and it was proposed that in the interim work should begin on drawing up a list of points to be taken into account when making a comparative study of social conditions in the industry; on the preparation of a comprehensive study of special problems, with determination of priorities; and on drawing up a list of points for which comparative statistics should be prepared.

Employers for the ports and shipping industries also met - separately - to discuss the proposed Joint Committees. The former were not unanimous on the desirability of the proposal, but the shipowners accepted it on the understanding that the Committee would be advisory in nature and stated that they would be opposed to any negotiating rights (e.g. for a future European collective agreement) being given to the Committee.

Further talks are to be held, on a joint ad hoc basis between seafarers' and shipowners' representatives, and separately as regards dockworkers and port employers.

SOUTH AFRICA =====

Strike waves as government opposes wage increases for Africans

Increasing pressure for improvements in the starvation wages paid to African workers employed by foreign, particularly British, companies has provoked a reaction by the South African government. The Prime Minister has warned employers not to yield to overseas pressure to increase the wages of their workers, despite the fact that such rises as have been paid have been in most cases barely enough to bring the Africans up to subsistence level. The South African government has also indicated to Britain that it will not allow a visit by British MPs to investigate the situation of non-white employees of British firms. Meanwhile, the number of African workers on strike increases each day; some of these are demonstration stoppages in protest against the general wages situation; others are in direct support of pay claims and many of these have been successful. It seems likely that, even though the government remains persistent in its rejection of any idea of permitting African trade unions to operate freely, the pressure for improvement will become irresistible as African workers begin to feel the industrial power they have in their own hands. Official statistics have recently been issued which show how heavily the South African economy depends on its non-white labour force - the latter outnumbering whites by nearly four to one in mining, manufacturing, construction, electricity, transport and communications. The country's vulnerability to strikes will

surely be put to the test unless the ruling powers make some considerable concessions both in terms of pay and job reservation policy.

TRADE UNIONS

CANADA

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ICFTU appeals for release of jailed trade unionists

In a letter sent on 29 March to the Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec, the General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has appealed for the immediate release of the three Quebec trade union leaders, Louis Laberge, Marcel Pepin and Yvon Charbonneau, all of whom are now serving one-year prison sentences on contempt of court charges arising out of an injunction which nullified the right to strike of Quebec public employees in May 1972.

The trade unionists were sentenced in May last year and, pending their appeal, led negotiations which resulted soon afterwards in a successful settlement of the public service workers' dispute. Their sentences were however confirmed on appeal and they were imprisoned on 2 February 1973.

The ICFTU, in association with the World Confederation of Labour and the IFFTU, the teachers' international, is appealing both for amnesty for the three imprisoned men and for cancellation of exorbitant fines imposed on the unions. The IFFTU has in addition lodged a complaint against the government of Quebec with the International Labour Organization.

COLOMBIA

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ITF protests at failure to reinstate Avianca leaders

In a letter to the ILO Director General the ITF has added to its complaint against the Government of Colombia notification of the fact that, following the resolution by compulsory arbitration of most of the issues which gave rise to a strike by employees of the airline Avianca last year, fifteen trade union leaders have yet to be reinstated in their posts with the company. They were among the large number of Avianca workers dismissed when the strike began in August and have not been reinstated. The ITF is forced to conclude that it is their prominence in the trade unions which has marked them out for special treatment and submits that it is a straightforward case of victimiza-

tion on grounds of trade union activity. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association is requested to take this matter into consideration when it considers the ITF's complaint.

The ITF has also appealed to the President of Colombia to promote the reinstatement of the dismissed men in the interests of bringing about lasting industrial peace in Avianca.

FIJI
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National stoppage against Trade Disputes legislation

The Fiji Council of Trade Unions recently organized a 24-hour national protest strike against proposed industrial legislation which the Fiji government attempted to rush through parliament. The Trade Disputes Bill 1973 would make illegal any stoppage in an "essential industry" and give the Minister power to declare any other stoppage unlawful. It provides penalties of up to 12 months' prison and up to \$500 fine for any trade union officer or member in breach of the law.

GREAT BRITAIN
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May Day protest strikes

Millions of trade unionists joined strikes and demonstrations as part of the "Day of National Protest and Stoppage" called by the Trades Union Congress on May Day in protest against the government's wage restraint policies. Foremost amongst those joining the protest were transport workers, in particular train drivers and civil aviation workers. The former's action meant the cancellation of all passenger trains, resulting in many other workers having to stay home.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA
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Flight Engineers' negotiations

The ITF-affiliated Australasian Airline Flight Engineers' Association reports that it is in the process of discussing with the domestic operators the renewal of its contract which expired on 31 March 1973. The Association's main aim is to obtain a "bidding" system of scheduling for its members, with a minimum monthly guarantee of 65 credited hours' pay, this to replace the previous system under which a fixed annual salary was paid. Since the changeover to this entirely new pay system

is expected to take a considerable time to settle, an interim arrangement has been agreed under which an increase of 22.14% on current salaries is paid from 1 April 1973 and a further 5.88% from 1 April 1974. These increases are based on the ultimate aim of 65 credited hours a month, and give flight engineers 96.4% of copilot pay.

AUSTRIA

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Improvements for road haulage workers

The ITF-affiliated Commercial Transport Workers' Union has obtained a new agreement for road haulage workers, effective 30 April 1973, which provides improvements as follows:

Transport workers receive wage increases of 13%, drivers and chief warehousemen 15.65%. Considering increases in the cost of living since January 1972, this means real increases of 3% and 5.65% respectively.

In addition, the distance bonus is increased by 20% and the bonuses for strenuous and dangerous work by 50%.

BELGIUM

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Pay rises for public bus workers

The ITF-affiliated Bus Workers' Section of the Belgian Public Service Union has obtained pay increases for its members employed in the public bus services as follows: from 1 January 1973, a 2% cost-of-living increase calculated on the basis of the prices index; from 1 March, a 5.5% real increase on these rates, giving hourly rates ranging from 76.77 B.Fr. after one year's service to 90.70 B.Fr. after 30 years' service; the rate for work on Sundays, public holidays and rest days is double the above, and the night rate (between 21.00 h. and 0600 h.) ranges from 84.45 B.Fr. to 99.77 B.Fr. A further cost of living rise of 2% is expected to be applied from 1 April in view of the movement of the index during the early months of the year.

CANADA

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Improved pension schemes for all railwaymen

Agreement has been reached between Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways and the railway unions on major improvements to pension arrangements, one of the main demands of the employees' side in current contract revision negotiations (which are continuing on other points). The improvements, effective from 1 January 1973, range from an immediate increase of 9% to a long-term benefit of approximately 32%, without increase of employee contributions.

DENMARK

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Mediation proposals accepted, strike ends

Following the acceptance by a substantial majority of both trade unionists and employers of the mediation proposals for a settlement of the general contract dispute in Denmark, work resumed on 10 April. A summary of the settlement proposals was given in ITF Newsletter no. 4 of 1973, page 48.

New pay rates for catering union

The ITF-affiliated Danish Ships' Catering Union has negotiated new pay scales for its members with the Danish Shipowners' Association, effective 1 March 1973. The cost of living allowance and the seniority allowance are both increased by 12% over those applying in January 1971. Other improvements have been agreed in daily allowances and overtime rates.

FINLAND

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New agreement for ships' officers

After two months' negotiations, agreement has been reached between the shipowners and the ITF-affiliated Finnish Ships' Officers' Union on a new contract, effective for one year from 1 April 1973. The agreement provides increases in basic pay of 8.15% and in holiday pay of .50%. Other benefits include the following:

Periods of sickness on board ship will not reduce the working week;

A study group is to look into the question of compensation for Public Holidays;

Annual leave - all regular allowances are to be included for the purpose of calculating leave pay; subsistence allowance on leave is 16 Marks per day; Christmas Eve, Good Friday and Midsummer Night's Eve are not counted for leave purposes. Other fringe benefits include subsistence allowance of 25 Marks per day in Finland, 50 Marks per day abroad and 16 Marks per day during sick leave.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Railway unions accept new pay and conditions offer

The three ITF-affiliated railwaymen's unions - the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the National Union of Railwaymen and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association - have accepted the latest offer by British Rail of pay increases and improved fringe benefits. While the pay rises are within the government's norm for Phase Two of its wages policy, additional improvements have been obtained in the way of better pension arrangements and progress towards equal pay for women.

Seamen and officers get pay offers

ITF-affiliated British unions representing seamen, officers and radio officers have received offers from the British Shipping Federation in reply to their claims for pay and conditions improvements. The total cost of the offers is within the guidelines set by the government for Phase Two of its wages policy, i.e. £1 per week plus 4%, with in some cases higher increases going to the lower paid categories. The National Union of Seamen is expected to recommend acceptance of the offer to its members, while the two officers' unions are seeking further talks and adjustments. Details will be given when final settlements are reached.

National Union of Seamen members employed by British Rail on cross-Channel ferries have accepted an offer of increased pay amounting to approximately £6 per week.

IRELAND

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Improved shift pay for busmen recommended

The Irish Labour Court has recommended that a claim by bus workers' unions for improved shift pay arrangements is well-founded and that negotiations should resume between the unions and the management of CIE, the national transport company. Among the unions involved are two ITF affiliates, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Association of Transport Employees. Their claim was for time and one sixth for work done on rotating turns of duty.

ISRAEL

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Strike of Merchant Marine officers

Members of the ITF-affiliated Israeli Merchant Marine Officers' Union went on strike from 14 - 18 April in support of claims for improved pay and allowances. Agreement was reached on new wage scales for officers, but the finalization of the contract for masters and chief engineers is left to a later date.

JAPAN

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National transport stoppages for pay and strike right claims

The All Japan Council of Transport Workers' Unions organized a 72-hour general transport strike beginning on 27 April in support of its demands for:

- pay increases of about 20,000 yen per month;
- reduced working hours;
- improved pensions;
- restoration of right to strike for public service workers.

Among those involved were the ITF-affiliated National Railway Workers' Union, the National Railway Motive Power Union, the All-Japan Express Workers' Union and the Japan Federation of Municipal Transport Workers' Unions. This joint strike, which was also joined by other public service unions, was preceded by a two-day work-to-rule campaign by the two railway unions. Additionally, employees of the private railways, airline workers, taxi and truck drivers joined in the national stoppages. The ITF cabled its support and urged the Prime Minister to respond speedily and fairly to the transport workers' claims.

On 27 April it was reported that the government had made some concessions on the question of the right to strike, but at the time of writing no details are known and other claims remain to be settled.

Seamen win agreements

After commencing strike ballots, the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union reached agreements for its members in all sections before the expiration of the deadline of 18 April. Pay increases are as follows: for the foreign trades: 18,500 yen per month; for small coastal vessels: 17,556 yen per month; for large coastal vessels, 17,560 yen per month; and for large car ferries, 17,467 yen per month. Similar increases have also been obtained for fishing vessels. All these improvements went into effect on 1 April 1973.

NIGERIA

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Agreement for Elder Dempster employees

The ITF-affiliated Elder Dempster Agencies African Workers' Union has obtained agreement from the employers on three claims put forward recently:

Accident-free bonus of £1 per month for commercial vehicle and 10/- per month for saloon car drivers, effective 1 July 1972;

Training scheme for promotion of in-service personnel under which selected staff with potential will receive vocational training and no recruitment will be made from outside until full use has been made of those so trained;

Transport advances are to be made to all staff to enable them to purchase their own means of transport (motorcycles).

SWEDEN

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Committee to study flag transfers

In response to a request by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Seamen's Union, the Swedish government has set up a committee of experts to investigate "certain questions connected with the registration of Swedish-owned vessels under foreign flags". Among the committee's members will be Gunnar Karlsson of the Swedish Seamen's Union and Captain Karl Rude of the Swedish Ships' Officers' Union. The Minister of Transport, announcing the establishment of the inquiry, said that there were many different reasons why Swedish ships were registered under foreign flags, e.g. economic advantages due to less stringent manning and social requirements, lower safety standards and lower taxes. All these could lead to registration under flags of convenience and Sweden had a clear duty, together with other seafaring nations, to help stop the abuses which such practices could lead to.

UNITED STATES

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Agreement reached for 14 railway unions

The major railway companies and 14 rail unions have reached preliminary agreement (with final approval obtained in the case of the railway clerks and the locomotive engineers) on new 18-month contracts covering wages, pensions, and health and welfare arrangements. The improvements in pay and fringe benefits total over 10.7% over the life of the contract, which is to become effective on 1 July. The direct increase on pay is of 4%, the remainder being applied to other benefits. In addition, the railway companies agree to pay the costs of administering a national union contributions checkoff system.

Dispute on Bahamas air services

The ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers reports a dispute involving its members employed by Mackey International Airlines which operate from Florida to the Bahama Islands. The employees are striking in protest against the company's refusal to negotiate and mediate on contract renewals for stewardesses and ground staff. Items in dispute include the implementation of a union shop, wages, over-time and sick leave.

NEWS IN BRIEF

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Finance and General Purposes Committee has passed a strongly-worded resolution threatening world-wide strike action against French interests in protest against the French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

The ITF has sent a cheque for \$500 to its Regional Director for Latin America for assistance to affiliates affected by the Managua earthquake.

Belgian air traffic controllers and other airport workers have been operating work to rule actions in support of a pay and conditions claims.

Czechoslovakia has introduced new penal legislation which among other things provides for the death sentence for hijackers.

In France the FO Railwaymen's Federation celebrates its 25th anniversary on 27 June 1973; to mark the occasion the Federation will be presented with an ITF plaque.

Air traffic controllers in France, working to rule since the suspension of their strike on 20 March, may strike again unless a satisfactory settlement is reached. They are also still protesting against the disciplining of some union leaders.

British dockers in the enclosed London docks have now voted to accept the offer of a weekly pay rise of £2.60 and have ended their unofficial strike action and refusal to operate their flexible working agreement.

London busmen are being recommended to accept pay increases of over £2 per week, an offer which is in line with the government's pay policy. Provincial busmen have already voted to accept a similar offer.

Italian urban and suburban public transport workers staged short stoppages throughout the country on 10, 16 and 26 April.

Italian seafarers employed by the public company Finmare staged a third series of staggered strikes beginning on 9 April in support of contract claims.

In the Netherlands the employees of Martinair have voted to accept the preliminary contract negotiated on their behalf by the ITF-affiliated Netherlands Transport Workers' Union (see ITF Newsletter No. 4, 1973).

PERSONALIA

Sir Frederick Burrows, former President of the British National Union of Railwaymen, died on 23 April at the age of 85. He had been a member of the union's Executive from 1937 to 1939 and President during the war from 1942 to 1944. He later received a number of national and local government appointments.

Ezio Canonica has been elected as the new President of the Swiss Trade Union Federation. He replaces Ernst Wüthrich who has retired on reaching the age limit. Retiring vice-presidents Hans Düby and Georges Diacon are replaced by Richard Müller and André Ghelfi.

J.D. Hughes has been elected President of the British Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

Wim Kok has been elected President of the Netherlands Transport Workers' Union - he takes up the appointment in September this year.

Yves Leguoy has been elected Federal Secretary of the French FO Union of Transport Workers, succeeding Roger Lapeyre who is taking on new duties in the fields of trade union training and transport policy.

Tom Nelson is retiring from the position of senior Vice-President of the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation after active service to the union dating back to the 'thirties.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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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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ITF CIVIL AVIATION MEETINGS

Flight Engineers' Technical Committee (extended participation),
London, 21-22 March, 1973

The meeting was attended by 22 representatives from the USA, UK, France, Israel, Germany, Australia and Italy.

The major Agenda Item discussed was the Role of the Flight Engineer in Civil Air Transport. Delegates expressed their continuing and growing concern at the increasing threats to the specialist status of the flight engineer, from both the employers and the pilots. The meeting strongly reaffirmed previously adopted policies on crew complement calling for the flight engineer's position as an integral member of the flight crew to be recognized and multiple duties and multiple type qualifications.

On the matter of the service on behalf of flight engineers supplied by the ITF, the meeting requested the General Secretary to circularize all civil aviation affiliates asking them if they would be prepared to make a special contribution towards the cost of appointing a permanent ITF representative at the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal.

Discussing the use of cockpit voice recorders, the meeting went on record in favour of the mandatory carriage of this equipment in international operations, at the same time calling for contractual protection to ensure that recordings of flight deck conversations could not be used as the basis for disciplinary action against crew members.

On the subject of flight engineer licensing requirements, two comprehensive working papers by Brian Hampson of the British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association were discussed and it was agreed that they should form part of the report of the meeting.

Finally, it was agreed that ITF policies on flight time and duty time on safety and social grounds respectively should be updated in collaboration with other groups of aviation workers; and that preparations should be made for the forthcoming ILO tripartite meeting on civil aviation.

Meetings of ATLAS and KSSU Group Unions, London, 12 and 13
April, 1973 respectively

The meeting of ATLAS Group Unions was attended by 15 participants from Belgium, France, Germany and Italy; that of KSSU Group Unions was attended by 19 participants from Netherlands, Denmark, France, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Both meetings had virtually the same agenda.

The meetings noted the difficulties of obtaining information concerning the manner in which the companies within the groups were cooperating, and expressed serious concern at the attempts to bypass the trade unions and the lack of consultation on vital matters; this problem appeared to be worse within KSSU than ATLAS, but was something which should be energetically combatted by both union groups, through a programme of continuous exchange of information among themselves and with the ITP.

On the question of harmonization of working conditions, it was agreed that this was a highly desirable though complicated objective. As a first step, unions should inform each other of their plans when negotiating new agreements so that the possible effects on other groups could be determined. The ATLAS Group Unions agreed to evolve a Common Social Policy for eventual harmonization.

Joint consultation was also agreed to be necessary with regard to the interchange of airline staff and joint airline operations (affecting both cabin crews and ground staff).

On trade union solidarity, procedures and machinery are to be developed to prevent the airlines from being able to play off one group against another in a dispute situation.