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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INDIA

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ITF concerned at reports of detentions in India

The ITF has asked the Indian Government whether it is true that three prominent leaders of ITF affiliates have been arrested under the present state of emergency. They are George Fernandes and Priya Gupta of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) and K. A. Khan of the Transport and Dock Workers' Union in Bombay. Reports of their arrest reached the ITF recently but since the names of detainees have not been officially released and the news media are strictly censored, it has been impossible to have the reports confirmed.

CHILE

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ILO report on trade union situation

A Commission named by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to investigate charges of violation of freedom of association in Chile has presented its report. It says that steps should be taken by the Chilean government to put an end to serious infringements of the principles of freedom of association and to ensure respect for civil liberties which are essential to the exercise of trade union rights.

The Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission was appointed after the ILO had received complaints from trade union organisations about alleged infringement of trade union rights in Chile, and after the Chilean government consented that complaints should be referred to such a commission.

With regard to the dissolution of the central organisation of workers (CUT) and measures affecting other unions, the report found that these actions by the government were not in conformity with the principles of freedom of association, whatever the undesirable aspects of the increasing politicisation of the trade unions under the previous regime may have been; it was up to the workers, says the report, to decide whether their leaders represented them loyally.

On the allegations concerning the death or execution of trade union officials the report states: "It is an established fact that many trade union officials or former officials died or were executed since 11 September 1973. It appears from the information supplied and the evidence that they died either by execution, with or without trial, ... or as a result of torture inflicted upon them or in other circumstances". The Commission has drawn up a (non-exhaustive) list of 110 persons alleged to have been killed or executed. As regards trade union leaders condemned by the military courts, the Commission notes the summary character of the proceedings, the absence of adequate guarantees for the defence of the accused, the non-existence of any right of appeal and other violations of basic human rights. "In the absence of elementary safeguards and in the absence of any information from the Government concerning the reasons for most of the deaths, the Commission considers that the Government has failed to prove that these deaths took place for reasons other than that these persons were trade unionists or that they exercised trade union activities".

The Commission also drew up a list, similarly non-exhaustive, of 120 persons who had been arrested, and the report remarks on the disappearance, in some cases without trace, of arrested persons, and on the ill-treatment to which trade union officials have been subjected. It found that trade union officials are open to victimisation and this is "likely to create a feeling of insecurity and even of fear which cannot fail to affect the exercise of trade union rights". The Commission thus found that a large number of trade union leaders had been eliminated through their death, execution, detention, dismissal, resignation from their jobs or from their trade union office or prohibition from holding such office, or they have gone into exile or disappeared. In addition, trade union activities have been placed under considerable restrictions: elections are prohibited; meetings must be notified to the police and be purely for information purposes or confined to discussion of internal matters; collective bargaining is banned and the right to strike is non-existent. The Commission concludes that all these trade union rights should be restored and the union permitted to function normally.

The ILO Governing Body has noted the report with grave concern, and has called upon Chile not only to adopt new trade union legislation in line with ILO principles but also to ensure respect for the civil liberties essential for the exercise of trade union rights. It has also called upon the Chilean government to submit a progress report on action taken to put its recommendations into effect, for consideration at the Governing Body's meeting in November.

TRADE UNIONS

UNITED STATES

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Railway Clerks conference resolutions on international matters

The ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, at its recent Convention, adopted a number of resolutions on international themes. Among them was a decision in favour of continued affiliation with and active participation in the ITF; a call for efforts through the AFL-CIO and the ITF to regulate the activities of multinational corporations and conglomerates; a resolution encouraging BRAC participation in International Women's Year activities; and support for action through the ITF in pursuit of restoring civil liberties and trade union rights in Chile.

TRANSPORT

FINLAND

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Proposed legislation for improved shipboard safety at work

The Finnish government has submitted legislation to parliament which would extend the present regulations concerning shipboard safety precautions to icebreakers, life-saving vessels, vessels equipped with dredging equipment, police, customs and frontier patrol vessels.

NORWAY

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New shipping legislation adopted by parliament

The Norwegian parliament has adopted new shipping legislation in line with recommendations made by the seafarers' unions. Among the new provisions are changes in the minimum age for going to sea: this will now be 16 for boys and 18 for girls; in addition, notice of termination of employment is raised from 7 days to one month for ratings (though this may be reduced by collective agreement); further, a free trip home is now allowed to seafarers with less than 6 months' service when a ship is due to begin a foreign trip; otherwise, the qualifying period of service for a free trip home has been reduced from 9 to 6 months with effect from 1 January 1974.

SWEDEN

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Study of working conditions in transport industry

Two joint bodies have been set up by agreement between the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union and the Swedish Employers' Federation to investigate the conditions of work and the occupational environment of the country's 75,000 transport workers. The Committee will have a general supervisory and informational role covering the whole of the transport sector. The Chairman (for both bodies) is to be an employers' representative and the Vice-Chairman Hans Ericson, President of the Transport Workers' Union.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

BELGIUM

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Improvements for road transport groups

The ITF-affiliated transport workers' group of the Belgian Public Service Workers' Union has negotiated improvements for the following sections of its membership:

Public service bus workers - basic pay is increased by 2% with effect from 1 June 1975, based on increases in the cost-of-living index during April and May; the increase also applies to one-man operation and other allowances. New pay rates range from 108.94 BFr per hour to 133.30 BFr per hour for drivers, according to length of service, with hourly rates for work on Sundays and Public Holidays ranging from 217.88 to 266.60 and for work performed between 2100 hours and 0600 hours from 119.83 to 146.64 BFr.

Removal workers - the working week is to be reduced from 41 to 40 hours with effect from 1 January 1976 with a corresponding increase in the hourly rate of pay; an end-of-year bonus (first step towards the 13th month's salary) is to be discussed in October 1975; clothing allowance is increased from 1 June 1975 from 150 to 175 BFr; further discussions are to be held on employer contribution to travelling costs.

Road haulage workers - a new agreement has been signed, effective from 1 May 1975 to 30 April 1976. With effect from 1 January 1976, the working week is reduced from 41 to 40 hours (91 to 89 hours per 15 days in international transport) without loss of pay. Hourly pay rates are increased in two stages, the first at 1 July 1975 and the second at 1 January 1976 (the latter including adjustment for the shorter working week); the current cost-of-living index formula remains in effect. Improvements have also been obtained in subsistence and clothing allowances, annual leave (an additional 6 days in 1975 with corresponding increase in holiday pay), travelling costs, end-of-year bonus, sick pay and termination pay.

FRANCE
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Air Canada-France dispute concluded

The ITF-affiliated French Transport & Public Service Workers' Union FO has reported the conclusion of its dispute with Air Canada-France by means of an agreement reached on 30 May 1975, which ended the strike (see Newsletter No. 5, 1975, page 43).

The terms of the settlement are as follows:

1. The plan to sub-contract the cargo operations has been abandoned, subject to two staff cuts and the transfer of accounting to Paris;
2. Agreement between Air Canada and UTA concerning equivalent status and pay for 18 staff members transferred from Air Canada to UTA.
3. In its reorganisation programme, Air Canada has (a) transferred 7 employees abroad at its own cost, to be employed on local pay and conditions; (b) kept a maximum of 8 surplus posts for up to 2 years during which time the occupants of these posts will be given priority in applying for vacancies and new posts.
- 4) Air Canada guarantees that days absent on strike will not be counted adversely when calculating holiday pay or 13th and 14th months' pay.
- 5) Air Canada undertakes not to take any reprisals against staff because of the strike.
- 6) Any staff who resign or are declared redundant because of the reorganisation measures will receive a termination allowance.
- 7) Days on strike will not be paid, but the losses in pay will be staggered over 7 months up to 30 December 1975.

Work resumed on 2 June 1975, following the acceptance of the settlement by the staff concerned.

GERMANY

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Higher wages for deep-sea fishermen

The ITF-affiliated German Union of Transport and Public Service Workers has negotiated new pay agreements with the German Deep-Sea Fishing Association for circa 4000 crew members and skippers. The new agreements apply from 1 June 1975 to 31 May 1976 and provide an overall increase in income for the men of about 7%.

For fresh fishing vessels, the trip, port and guaranteed pay rates are increased, as are overtime rates; for factory ships, increases have been obtained in production bonuses, pay while in port and overtime pay.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Railwaymen's dispute settled

Following the acceptance of an improved pay offer made by British Rail during negotiations on the claim by the ITF-affiliated National Union of Railwaymen, the threatened national railway strike, due to begin on 23 June, was called off. The NUR had earlier rejected the increase awarded by the National Railway Staff Tribunal, and all three railway unions - the NUR, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association - participated in the renewed negotiations which followed the strike call. The final settlement was for 30%:- of this, 27.5% is applicable from 28 April 1975, and 2.5% from August 1975. The increase includes current threshold (cost-of-living) payments which are now consolidated into basic pay.

Seamen's pay arbitration award rejected

An arbitration board, set up at the joint request of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen and the General Council of British Shipping to arbitrate on the union's pay claim has awarded an increase of 37.3%. This has been rejected by the Union's executive.

LUXEMBOURG

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New agreement for road transport workers

The ITF-affiliated Luxembourg Federation of Railwaymen and Road Transport Workers has recently negotiated a new collective agreement on behalf of its road haulage members (drivers and mechanics). The main features of the agreement are:

Working hours: spreadover working hours (i.e. driving time plus loading and unloading time and any other time spent in the service of the employer) maximum 19 hours per day (64 hours per week) for a vehicle equipped with sleeping facilities in one-man operation; these hours may be extended to 20 per day and 80 per week with two drivers, reduced to 19 per day (70 per week) where there are no sleeping facilities.

Rest periods: Daily rest time must consist of 12 consecutive hours, although this may be reduced to 11 in certain circumstances. The daily rest time may be reduced to 9 hours twice a week if this rest period is spent at the place where the vehicle is based, or to 8 hours twice a week if this period is spent away from base. One rest period per week must be of 24 hours plus one day-time rest period. By way of exception 10 duty periods may be worked between two periodical rest days but 52 rest days must be granted in a year (not counting Public Holidays). Any break of 30 minutes or more during which the driver is free of all duties counts as rest time.

Pay: For drivers, depending on licence class and length of service, pay (including the latest cost-of-living adjustment) ranges from 16,830 Fr. to 31,529 Fr. For mechanics, depending on qualifications and length of service, it goes from 14,603 Fr. to 21,012 Fr.

NETHERLANDS
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Agreement reached for seafarers

The ITF-affiliated Netherlands Seafarers' Federation reports the successful conclusion of an agreement following difficult negotiations with the shipowners. The main points of the settlement are as follows:-

A study is to be commenced shortly of a proposed new wages structure to be introduced by May 1976. In addition, another main claim of the union, i.e. for major increases in pay for the lower-paid groups, has been met by an award of 9.1% to lower paid ratings. Higher ranking ratings receive 6.3% and so on, down to a minimum rise of 1½%. These increases are applied on top of cost-of-living adjustments up to date (calculated on a continuing basis at six-monthly intervals).

Holiday allowance is increased from 7 to 7½% of annual pay plus food allowance, subject to a minimum of 1,425 guilders, which again benefits the lower paid. In the catering department, overtime in port on Saturdays and Sundays, some of which was previously compensated at 75% and 100% extra respectively, will now qualify for normal overtime rates, i.e. 150% and 200%. Various improvements have been negotiated for the higher ranking officers with respect to health insurance and pension costs, and it has been agreed that radio officers shall have similar accommodation on board to other officers of equal rank.

The 40-hour, 5-day week came into effect on 1 May 1975 (negotiated last year). This means a considerable increase in the amount of compensatory time off since each Saturday and Sunday is to be compensated by one full working day.

The above improvements apply to the liner, general and short-sea trades and to tugs, salvage and supply vessels. Separate negotiations have led to a similar agreement for seafarers serving aboard most tankers and negotiations for the coastal trades are pending.

PORTUGAL

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Strike of fishermen ends

A strike of 800 fishermen at the port of Peniche, which had begun on 20 March, ended two months later when a new collective agreement was reached. Under this, the fishermen will receive 42% of the catch if this is less than 100,000, 44% if it is between 100,000 and 200,000, and 46% if it exceeds 200,000 escudos. In addition the fishermen will receive 70 escudos per trip. These conditions represent a significant improvement over the previous percentages. Provision has also been made for each vessel's crew to elect a trade union representative.

SWEDEN

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A dispute between Scandinavian Airlines System and the ITF-affiliated Swedish Commercial Workers' Union which organises SAS cabin attendants, which threatened to produce strike action on 20 June following the breakdown of negotiations, was settled satisfactorily just in time to avert the stoppage. The settlement includes a pay increase of 23%; improved incremental scales for stewards, despite the restricted opportunities for promotion to purser; a guaranteed free weekend (Saturday and Sunday) each month. A similar agreement has been reached for SAS cabin staff in Denmark. (SAS cabin attendants in Norway belong to the Swedish Union).

UNITED STATES

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New wages agreement for seafarers

The ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union has negotiated a new contract for its members employed by operators belonging to the Maritime Service Committee and the Tanker Service Committee (dry cargo and tanker vessels working out of Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports). The contract provides an immediate 12½% increase.

from 15 June 1975, with additional 5% increases in each of the two following years. These percentages are on top of cost-of-living adjustments.

The ITF-affiliated Seafarers' International Union has also negotiated a similar three-year contract with the American Maritime Association.

Dockers settle container dispute

The ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association has resolved a two-month dispute with the North Atlantic port employers by means of an agreement on rules for handling ocean cargoes moving in containers.

Basically, the new rules require that "steamship hauled" containers loaded or unloaded within 50 miles of one of the six ports affected must involve the work of ILA members.

FLAG OF CONVENIENCE CAMPAIGN NEWS

The ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union, at its Congress held on 26 and 27 June 1975, unanimously adopted a programme of intensified support for the ITF's flag-of-convenience campaign. The Congress was addressed on this subject by the ITF representative, Brian Laughton, and the relevant part of the policy adopted reads as follows:-

"Despite the vigorous action conducted by the ITF, the menace of flags of convenience, which enable the shipowners concerned to avoid both their social and fiscal obligations to bona fide maritime nations, continues to increase so that today there are more than 6000 vessels registered under "cheap flags".

"The crews aboard these flag-of-convenience vessels are not only severely exploited but the flag-of-convenience fleet also constitutes a real threat, by reason of its unfair competitive advantages, to the maintenance and improvement of wages and working conditions for seafarers in bona fide maritime nations.

"These flag-of-convenience ships represent a danger at sea and in port because of the lower qualifications of their crews and the reduced navigational safety of the vessels themselves ...

"Congress therefore decides that the social position of seafarers must be considerably improved; that measures must be taken by the authorities to ensure that the Belgian fleet is increased and that tanker vessels in particular are brought under the national flag; and that the campaign conducted by the ITF against flag-of-convenience vessels should be supported unreservedly to an intensified degree".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Canadian dock workers in Montreal, Quebec and Trois Rivières went on strike again on 30 May, but returned on 6 June after their leaders were threatened with heavy fines and imprisonment on contempt of court charges. The men are still dissatisfied with job security arrangements imposed by legislation during April.

Bus workers in Copenhagen, Denmark, have been on strike recently for higher pay and are threatening further industrial action if no satisfactory settlement is reached by 1 August.

The Danish Ships' Firemen's Union has changed its name to the Danish Engine Crew Union.

The Indonesian Seamen's Union and the Foreign Shipowners' and Employers' Associations have concluded an agreement raising the minimum pay of Indonesian seamen working aboard foreign vessels to between US \$140.31 and 148.78 per month, effective 1 January 1975.

US pilots employed by Trans World Airlines have agreed to accept a 2% pay rise instead of 4% in return for a company undertaking that 135 pilots who were to be made redundant will be kept on.

PERSONALIA

Antonio Jose Abimerhi has succeeded Gallardo as General Secretary of the Mexican Union of Aeronautical Radio Employees.

Bo Carlson, formerly of the Swedish trade union centre LO and for several years head of the ICFTU Asian Trade Union College in New Delhi, died during May.

A. Daems has retired as General Secretary of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union and is succeeded by E. Baudet.

Adolph Kummernuss, President of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union from 1949 to 1964, celebrated his 80th birthday on 23 June.

E. Greve Petersen, Chairman of the Danish Locomotivemen's Union, celebrated his 60th birthday on 19 June.

Cesário Melgarejo, President of the Argentine Railwaymen's Union "La Fraternidad", has been appointed President of the Argentine Railway Company (Empresa Ferrocarriles Argentinos).

Stig Wiebe, Executive Director of the Swedish Ships' Officers' Union since 1963, retired on 1 July. He is succeeded by Karl Rude.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Sub-Committee on Working Conditions of Travelling Staff	-	Harrogate, 18 August 1975
Railwaymen's Section Conference	-	Harrogate, 19-22 August 1975
Executive Board	-	London, 6-7 October 1975

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING
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IN THIS NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT
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OF THE ITF