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IN THIS ISSUE

Page

In Memoriam Paul Tofahrn

15

News and Views from the ITF

ITF Asian Representative Donald U'ren under arrest in Malaysia

16

ITF Ground Staff Committee meets in London

17

ITF Transport Policy Sub-Committee advocates inter-Section approach to current problems

17

Women transport workers attend third Latin American seminar

18

Details of "secret" Chilean junta letter made public

18

Transport

Underwriters' report lists record ship losses for 1978

19

Gendarmerie of the sea proposed to protect French coasts

19

Investigations launched into Betelgeuse disaster (France)

20

Britain loses tachograph battle

21

New Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen published (Great Britain)

21

Foreign fleets attract more British officers

22

Soviet shipping line faces sanctions under US Controlled Carriers Act

22

More air traffic controllers needed in US to ensure safety

22

Social and Industrial News

German seafarers win new agreement

23

Lufthansa flying staff stage warning strike (Germany)

23

British "hire and reward" drivers win pay fight

23

British train drivers suspend one-day national strikes

24

ASLEF's tube drivers and guards reject pay and productivity deal (Great Britain)

24

Union wants independent inquiry on busmen's pay in Great Britain

24

Indian merchant navy officers protest at government plans

24

Union locked in grave dispute with Malaysian airline

25

Norwegian seafarers in overseas trade win pay increases

25

Higher rates in near and distant trades (Sweden)

26

US union and employers unite to defend container stripping clause in collective contract

27

US rail clerks accept revised pattern agreement

27

United Airlines mechanics strike averted in US

28

	<u>Page</u>
<u>News in Brief</u>	28
<u>Obituaries</u>	29
<u>Personalia</u>	29
<u>Forthcoming Meetings</u>	29
<u>Supplement:</u> Malaysian government detains trades unionists (ITF Press Release)	

IN MEMORIAM PAUL TOFAHRN

Paul Tofahrn, who died in London following a heart attack on 7 February at the age of 78, was one of the last living links with the pre-war ITF. Assistant General Secretary of the ITF from 1943 until 1956, when he became General Secretary of the Public Services International (PSI), his direct association with the ITF went back to 1928 - the year in which he was appointed Assistant Secretary of our Railwaymen's Section. Before that, he had worked as a full-time organizer for the ITF-affiliated Belgian National Railwaymen's Union. In fact, he spent virtually the whole of his adult life in the service of the Labour Movement, either in his native Belgium or with the ITF and other International Trade Secretariats.

To everything he did during those long years he brought a thorough-going dedication to the workers' cause; considerable gifts as thinker, man of action, and pungent and vivid speaker and writer in several languages; as well as a very real personal charisma. Active in the ITF Railwaymen's and Road Transport Workers' Sections for many years, he was involved in most of the great industrial conflicts and political events of the pre-war period; volunteered to remain in Paris to keep contact with affiliates on the European continent once the Second World War forced the ITF to move to London; and thereafter, when Europe was over-run, broadcast regularly to transport workers in the occupied countries. In the post-war years, he threw himself with equal vigour into the task of helping to reconstruct the European transport trade union movement and to bring about a more orderly approach to transport policy questions.

In 1968, the year in which he retired as PSI General Secretary, he was presented with the ITF Gold Badge at our Wiesbaden Congress. Characteristically, when accepting this, he said that of all his former titles that of Assistant General Secretary of the ITF was the one he regarded most highly.

We express our sincere condolences to his family and to the PSI which, like ourselves, has lost a fine colleague and friend.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ITF Asian Representative under arrest in Malaysia

The ITF has protested vigorously at the arrest last week by the Malaysian government of Donald U'ren, the ITF's Asian Representative, and at the deportation from Malaysia of ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf, who was in Penang conducting seminars for the ITF's Asian affiliates. The two men stand accused of having helped foment a strike by members of the ITF-affiliated Airlines Employees' Union of Malaysia against the state airline, MAS^X - an allegation which has been vigorously rebutted by the ITF in London.

In a cable to the Prime Minister, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis has deplored the Malaysian government's fierce reaction to what was in essence a straightforward industrial dispute. The General Secretary stressed most forcibly that the two ITF officials had done absolutely nothing to worsen a situation entirely of the government's own making, in that it had refused to make a fair response to the MAS workers' modest contract claims. He therefore called on the Prime Minister to release Donald U'ren and the detained AEU officials immediately and to lift the threat to "de-register" (i.e., effectively dissolve) the union. Finally, he urged the government to get round the table with our affiliate to negotiate a just settlement, which would enable MAS to resume normal operations.

The ITF has also made strong representations to Malaysian embassy officials in London regarding the detention of Brother U'ren, a long-serving official of the Federation. In the course of his visit yesterday, the General Secretary asked the embassy to convey to the Malaysian government the ITF's request that it be told where U'ren was being held and what precisely he was alleged to have done.

Meanwhile, the ITF has expressed its thanks to the Malaysian TUC for the active support it is rendering the AEU at this most difficult time, and in particular for its efforts to secure the release of U'ren and other arrested trade unionists.

The full text of the Press Release issued by the ITF following the arrest of U'ren is attached as a supplement to this Newsletter.

x) full details of the background to this dispute are given on page 25 of this issue

INTERNATIONAL

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Ground Staff Committee meets in London

A meeting of the Ground Staff Committee of the ITF Civil Aviation Section was held in London from 23 to 25 January 1979. It began with the customary review of Section activities since the last Committee meeting two years ago and then went on to discuss ways in which the ITF could achieve better results for its members within the International Civil Aviation Organization. It was felt that the full Section Committee should fix the policy line to be taken and that the Section Chairman and Vice-Chairman should be consulted on all matters affecting ITF representation.

The meeting agreed to a suggestion from the Section Secretary M.S. Hoda that the ILO be asked to hold a symposium on the effects on job opportunities in civil aviation of increased automation and the widespread introduction of micro-electronics (chips) and computer technology and also endorsed his proposal that aviation affiliates be invited to submit their ideas for the humanization of the workplace. Due to lack of time, discussion on the effects on health of working with visual display units (VDUs) was held over until the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting expressed its regret that in Scandinavia pre-flight maintenance and technical checks on certain aircraft types were now being conducted by pilots rather than technically qualified personnel. It was agreed that the question should be referred to the full Section Conference in May but that meanwhile the Committee should adopt a statement reiterating existing ITF policy that in the interest of safety such work should always be undertaken by fully qualified technical personnel.

Preparations were undertaken for the forthcoming ILO meeting of experts, which would be discussing the problems of air traffic controllers. It was proposed that the ITF and the Public Services International (PSI) should organize a joint meeting on the day prior to the opening of the ILO meeting, in which workers' experts to the ILO meeting and other representatives of air traffic controllers should be invited to participate.

The meeting elected E. Mackenzie (Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, Great Britain) as Committee Chairman and H.B. Beyertt (German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union, OeTV) as Vice-Chairman.

ITF Transport Policy Sub-Committee advocates inter-Section approach to current problems

At their latest meeting, held on 29 and 30 January in Luxembourg, the members of the Transport Policy Sub-Committee of the ITF Railwaymen's Section agreed to press for a joint meeting of inland transport workers' unions to examine the effects on

transport workers in the West of the upswing in East/West traffic. It was also decided that the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section should be invited to assist in the preparation of a booklet on transport planning for the major conurbations.

LATIN AMERICA
=====

Women transport workers attend third regional seminar

Twenty-five women from eight countries in the Region took part in the third Latin American Seminar for Women Transport Workers held recently in Lima, Peru. The seminar discussed ways in which Latin American women could be encouraged to play a greater part in trade union activities as well as in other areas of life where they might have a positive effect on attitudes towards women and help build a less male-orientated society. Lecturers at the seminar included Hilda Ceballos, who is in charge of the women's department at the ITF's Lima Office, and preparations for it were undertaken by ITF Regional Director Medardo Gomeró, who has led the way in promoting trade union education for women transport workers in the Region. Brother Gomeró also lectured to the participants and addressed them during the closing session.

CHILE
=====

Details of "secret" Junta letter made public

Methods of ridding Chile's railway, airline, postal and telephone services of "unwanted" trade union officials are discussed in a letter stamped "secret", written last December by the Chilean Minister of Transport and Communications to his colleagues at the Ministry of the Interior, which has come into the possession of the Paris-based external committee of the Chilean trade union federation CUT. The ministerial letter suggests that Ernesto Vogel Rodríguez, president of the railwaymen's federation FIFCH, should be fired by order of President Pinochet himself, that four other officials should be "eliminated gradually, by means of the staff reductions being implemented by the enterprise" and that a woman trade union official should be dealt with when she returns from maternity leave.

CUT has forwarded copies of the letter to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and also to the ILO Director-General Francis Blanchard, together with a covering letter in which it accuses the Chilean régime, which is trying to acquire a liberalizing image, of duplicity.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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Underwriters' report lists record ship losses for 1978

The annual report of the Liverpool Underwriters' Association for 1978 registers record ship losses for the year. In all, the report lists 261 ships lost, aggregating 1.4 million gross tons. Again, ships flying certain flags of convenience accounted for a disproportionate number of losses -- Panama sustained 48 total losses, while Cyprus lost 25 of its flag ships. Most disturbing were the 74 Greek-registered ships lost during the year, aggregating 565,681 tons gross: "a melancholy record for any flag in a single year", says the association. Tanker and bulk/combination carriers accounted for 48% of all the tonnage lost, 23 of the 37 vessels lost being at least 15 years old, while losses from strandings, collisions and contact all increased following reductions in the previous year. By contrast, the number of Liberian ships lost showed a welcome reduction from previous years. Japan and South Korea, however, each sustained more losses than customary, although the tonnage involved was not large. An unusually high number of losses were also recorded under the heading "other casualties", mainly attributable to leakage. With few exceptions, the ships involved were 20 years old or more and registered under flags of convenience or in Greece.

FRANCE

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Gendarmerie of the sea proposed to protect coasts

The special parliamentary committee set up to investigate the circumstances of the wrecking of the Amoco Cadiz off the Finistère coast of France in March 1978 has recommended a modification of international maritime law to allow for the creation of special areas in the Channel and the Mediterranean in which coastal states would have increased powers over shipping, including that of stopping vessels which constitute a hazard to navigation. The committee further suggested that a corps of Coastguards (on the American model) -- "a gendarmerie of the sea" equipped with tugs, heavy helicopters and patrol ships and organized in intervention teams -- be created with responsibility for applying the new regulations on navigation in these areas.

The committee's report also suggested that the traffic separation scheme due to come into operation off Ushant at the beginning of 1979 should be extended throughout the length of the Channel to the Pas de Calais and that monitoring of the one-way system should take place through radar buoys from a central control station.

Further, it proposed the setting up of a European anti-pollution agency which would collate information on shipping accidents and methods of dealing with them in a central data bank. The agency, it is stated, should have at its disposal a corps of 600 specialists trained in tackling pollution problems, which could be sent rapidly to danger spots.

Lastly, the committee advocated the speedy ratification of the EEC convention on the qualifications of crews, a thorough-going reform of the system of sea rescue and the extension of international conventions on hydrocarbons to the transport of chemicals and radioactive substances.

Investigations launched into Betelgeuse disaster

The French government has already launched two parallel inquiries -- one technical under the aegis of the merchant navy authorities, the other administrative, reporting directly to the Minister of Transport -- into the tragic accident to the 121,430 dwt French tanker Betelgeuse, which was rocked by two explosions and subsequently sank with the loss of fifty lives off Whiddy Island in Bantry Bay (Irish Republic) on 8 January. The inquiries, which are expected to be protracted, will seek to establish whether responsibility for the accident can be attributed to negligence on the part of the captain and crew, the shipowner or Gulf Oil personnel (or faulty installations) at the Bantry Bay terminal. The investigations will be complicated by the fact that the disaster left no survivors, either among the vessel's crew or the shore personnel involved in piping the oil ashore to Whiddy Island. All findings will be made public.

The French seamen's union in Le Havre, the vessel's home port, had expressed concern about the condition of the tanker, which is owned and operated by a subsidiary of the Total Oil Corporation, even before the Bantry Bay disaster. In particular, a union official had complained that maintenance work aboard the Betelgeuse -- ten years old, too small for Total's present needs and therefore up for sale at the time of the accident -- was inadequate and that this had already led to the vessel being turned away from some ports. While in no way claiming to know the cause of the disaster, the union has pointed out that the Betelgeuse had just weathered a heavy storm and this could have had a disastrous effect on ill-maintained pipes and ducts.

The union's request to be allowed to take part in the inquiry (or at least to be granted observer status) has met with no response and it is now concentrating its efforts on winning proper compensation for the families of the 41 French seamen who went down with the ship. Total Oil has been asked to review the basis on which lump-sum payments to dependants are

calculated to give the families of the victims more cash now and on-going financial assistance has been sought for the widows and orphans. There were signs at the beginning of this month that Total might be prepared to grant these demands, at least in part.

A further possibility would be for the union to bring a civil action on behalf of the bereaved families -- this can be done under French law even before final responsibility has been established -- although a definite decision on this has yet to be taken.

In the Irish Republic itself, a full judicial inquiry open to the public will follow the preliminary inquiry into the disaster conducted by the Ministry of Transport and Tourism.

GREAT BRITAIN

=====

Britain loses tachograph battle

The European Court of Justice ruled earlier this month that Great Britain has broken EEC rules by failing to introduce the tachograph in British lorries and the government has been ordered to pay the costs of the action brought against it by the Commission. The government of the Irish Republic, which had also defied the EEC ruling, has successfully avoided court action by agreeing to phase in the tachograph over a longish period and it is possible that the British government may now decide to take the same course. Meanwhile, it is clear that any order demanding compulsory installation would be strenuously resisted by both sides of industry -- the owners are concerned by the cost (estimated at £100-150 millions for all lorries affected by the rule) and the lorry drivers themselves fear an invasion of their privacy from what has become known as the "spy in the cab". British lorries operating overseas are already fitted with tachographs.

New Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen published

A new Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen^{x)}, based on the recommendations of a steering committee which included representatives from both sides of industry, was published by the Marine Division of the Department of Trade last December. The Code contains several hundred provisions designed to create a working environment for merchant seafarers which is as safe as that of workers ashore, who enjoy the benefit of recent comprehensive health and safety legislation. Under the Merchant Shipping Bill, which has now reached the committee stage, the Secretary of State for Trade will have powers to make the Code's provisions mandatory, rather than merely advisory.

The Code deals with areas of general application such as hygiene, emergency procedures, entry to enclosed spaces and work aloft and outboard, as well as covering subjects of special

x) a revised version of the 1970 Code

interest to certain categories such as cargo handling, lifting appliances, working in galleys and machinery spaces, and operations relating specifically to tankers, bulk carriers and ferry vessels.

Foreign fleets attract more British officers

According to the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, almost 7,000 British merchant navy officers, attracted by the higher wages and superior conditions of service, are now employed on foreign-flag vessels -- mainly from Japan, Scandinavia, the Middle East and flag-of-convenience countries -- and the number is growing rapidly. A union spokesman said that the figures underlined once again the need for British shipowners to bring pay and conditions into line with those of our major competitors.

UNITED STATES
=====

Soviet shipping line faces sanctions under Controlled Carriers Act

The US Federal Maritime Commission voted last month to suspend tariffs on Baltic Shipping's cargoes for the US-Europe trades after the state-controlled Soviet shipping company refused to supply certain documents on its rate-fixing practices in the North Atlantic trades, which have been under investigation by the Commission since April 1978. Suspension of the tariffs could take effect after 75 days, and, while it would not prevent the company from trading into US ports, the action would leave it open to continuous fines for as long as it refuses to comply with the disclosure order made by the FMC under the powers conferred on it by the 1978 Controlled Carriers Act (see ITF Newsletter No. 1, 1979, page 4).

Elsewhere, the Soviet Union has reacted by threatening to cancel commercial agreements with foreign shipping lines if a new EEC scheme involving the monitoring of freight charges on routes from Europe to Central America and East Africa results in "discrimination against the Soviet flag". The scheme was introduced by the Common Market countries at the beginning of the year in response to allegations that Soviet lines were stealing freight business by undercutting.

More air traffic controllers needed to ensure safety

The Professional Air Traffic Controllers' Organization (PATCO)^{x)} has welcomed the Federal Aviation Administration's plans for improving safety at US airports but warned that they will be largely ineffective if they are not accompanied by a massive intake of new air traffic controllers and an associated training programme. President John F. Leyden estimates that two to three thousand more controllers are needed at the moment and that more qualified staff will have to be hired and trained before the new facilities can be introduced.

x) affiliated through the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association

PATCO also feels that, had the improvements been introduced earlier, last September's collision over San Diego airport -- one of the designated areas for upgrading -- with its tragic loss of 144 lives might well have been avoided.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

GERMANY

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Seafarers win new agreement

The German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has accepted mediation proposals^{x)} for a new pay agreement for seafarers. Under its terms, captains and ratings receive, in addition to basic pay, a sailing allowance of 171 DM per month. The union has also won its claim for members to be allowed to draw the "seaman's pension" at age 55. The new agreement is backdated to 1 December 1978 and runs for 13 months.

x) See also ITF Newsletter No. 11, 1978, page 139 and No. 1, 1979, page 6.

Lufthansa flying staff stage warning strike

Lufthansa's unwillingness to negotiate improved provisions on the temporary stationing of its flying staff led to a two-hour stoppage last month by members of the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV). Simultaneously, the short warning strike was used to draw public attention to the carrier's persistent refusal to sign an agreement guaranteeing security of employment and an improved promotion system to employees of its charter subsidiary Condor.

GREAT BRITAIN

=====

"Hire and reward" drivers win pay fight

The "hire and reward" drivers' strike^{x)}, which lasted for the greater part of last month, has now ended in almost total victory for our affiliates (the Transport and General Workers' Union and the United Road Transport Union). The dispute took a decisive turn when the Road Haulage Association agreed in advance that it would make a national offer based on the award of an arbitration panel ruling on rates for drivers in the South West of England. The three-man panel, on which the union nominee was Frank Cousins, former TGWU general secretary and ITF president, subsequently fixed a top rate of £64 for a 40-hour

x) see ITF Newsletter No. 1, 1979, page 6

week, only £1 short of the unions' target. The new offer was eventually accepted by the men in all regions of the RHA, with hauliers that had earlier settled below the new figure agreeing to raise drivers' pay to the arbitration level. Some hauliers had already conceded £65, and this rate will be unaffected by the slightly lower RHA offer.

Train drivers suspend one-day national strikes

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) has agreed to allow the National Rail Staffs Tribunal to arbitrate on its demand for a ten per cent productivity bonus^{x)} for all train drivers and has given assurances that there will be no further one-day national stoppages whilst the Tribunal is examining its case.

Meanwhile, all three British rail unions -- ASLEF, the National Union of Railwaymen and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (all ITF affiliates) -- have tabled a joint claim for "substantial" pay increases from 23 April. Preliminary negotiations have already taken place and BR's first formal offer, which is within the government guidelines, has been firmly rejected.

x) see ITF Newsletter No. 1, 1979, page 7, for further details

ASLEF's tube drivers and guards reject pay and productivity deal

ASLEF's tube train drivers and guards employed by London Transport on the city's underground network have rejected a five per cent pay offer plus a productivity deal. Further talks are to be held with LT management in the hope that a satisfactory settlement can be agreed.

Union wants independent inquiry into busmen's pay

Larry Smith, national busmen's secretary of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union, has suggested that the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service should conduct an independent inquiry into busmen's pay, both at local level and within the National Bus Company. He believed that, with the promise of an inquiry, drivers would be prepared to accept a five per cent interim increase in the current pay round, knowing that ACAS would be sure to recommend substantial improvements in their pay, which was now lagging behind that of other road transport drivers.

INDIA
=====

Merchant navy officers protest at government plans

In December, merchant navy officers in Bombay and Calcutta halted all ship movements for three days as a way of drawing attention to their extreme anger at government moves to limit the service

of newly-qualified Indian officers on board foreign-flag vessels to between four and seven years. The Indian government is also seeking powers to direct officers holding certificates of competency to a vessel of its own choice. Both measures are contained in a bill which has already been approved by the Lower House and is now before the Upper House of the Indian parliament.

At the request of the MUI, ITF Assistant General Secretary Ake Selander cabled the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai expressing the concern and amazement of the Seafarers' Section at the measures adopted in the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and pointing out that these were contrary to the spirit of ILO Instruments for seafarers, notably those relating to continuity of employment. The Prime Minister was respectfully urged to ask his government to abandon its efforts to seek approval in the Upper House for the proposed legislation.

MALAYSIA
=====

Union locked in grave dispute with Malaysian airline

The ITF-affiliated Airlines Employees' Union of Malaysia (AEU) is locked in a grave dispute with the government-owned Malaysian Airline System (MAS) following management's refusal to make any real effort to meet AEU demands for improvements in its ground staff members' pay so as to bring them up to the level of airline workers in comparable companies. Traffic, engineering, baggage and catering staff, angered by the management's low pay offer, spontaneously decided, with union backing, to withdraw their cooperation and refused to work overtime in support of their pay claim. Many domestic and some international flights were delayed or even cancelled as workers performed only their "normal duties" - the long hours they have to work being a bone of contention between them and the airline. MAS reacted by dismissing 123 of their number and replacing them with untrained and unqualified workers, who were paid more than the regular staff. Cabin crews on international routes, who have their own recent grievances against the MAS management, also joined their colleagues in refusing to meet overtime requirements.

The dispute escalated when the government subsequently intervened and threatened to de-register the union. This led to a total strike against MAS and the airline's subsequent decision to shut down services. A resumption of normal operations has not been made any the easier by the arrest of the ITF's Asian Representative Donald U'ren and the detention of AEU officials.

NORWAY
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Seafarers in overseas trade win pay increases

Improvements in the pay of officers and ratings in the overseas trade were negotiated recently by the ITF's Norwegian seafarer affiliates^{x)}. Effective 1 November 1978, rates were increased by -----

x) the Norwegian Seamen's Union, the Ships' Engineers' Union and the Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association

140 kr per month, with the promise of a salary review in the second contract year based on movements in the prices index. The parties have also agreed to set up a group life insurance scheme on the lines of that drawn up by the Norwegian employers' federation and the national trade union centre (LO).

SWEDEN

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Higher rates in near and distant trades

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Seamen's Union has reached agreement with the shipowners on the terms of a new nine-month contract for seafarers in both the near and distant trades. Examples of the new uniform monthly starting rates are as follows (figures in brackets refer to pay after 5 years' service):

FAR AND NEAR TRADES (effective 1 February 1979 - 31 October 1979)

Dry cargo ship

group 1 : 4,149 (4,519)
group 2 : 3,753 (4,123)
group 3 : 2,105 (4,066) Kr.

Oil tanker

group 1 : 4,411 (4,811)
group 2 : 3,995 (4,395)
group 3 : 2,233 (4,309) Kr.

N.B. The separate dry cargo and oil tanker rates for the near trade have been abolished.. The new rates apply to both the near and far trades.

group 1 : bosun, carpenter
1st electrician (rate
700 kr higher than
above tables)
1st ship's mechanic
storekeeper
cook steward (rate
700 kr higher than
above tables)
pumpman
cook

group 2 : electrician
ship's mechanic
donkeyman
1st motorman
group 3 : others within deck,
engine and catering
departments

Higher pay has also been won for seafarers aboard ferry vessels. Rates have been increased by 327 kr per month for most grades, giving a new monthly basic starting rate ranging from 2,562 kr (group 5) to 4,149 kr. (group 1). The corresponding rates for seafarers with five years' service are 4,178 kr and 4,519 kr.

UNITED STATES

Union and employers unite to defend container stripping clause
in collective contract

The ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the authorities in the port of New York have joined forces in an attempt to seek clarification from the United States Supreme Court of the container stripping clause in their collective contract, the validity of which has been successfully challenged by a New York trucking company in the federal district court, resulting in an injunction affecting the use of the rules being issued against the two parties to the contract. The federal court decision was subsequently upheld by the Labour Board, and a further challenge to the rules, this time from Virginia, which is also within the New York Shipping Association's jurisdiction, has already entered the courts. If, on this occasion, they find in favour of the rules -- as both union and employers hope -- the way will be clear to refer the issue to the Supreme Court; which has so far been denied.

The New York Shipping Association has said that it feels obliged to defend the integrity of its contract with the longshoremen, because the men's right to strip containers at the piers is being increasingly disputed by freight forwarders and others, who want to break down consolidated shipments on their own premises. The Association points out that if the contract is ultimately upheld, it, as an employer, will have the legal right to penalize companies not bringing consolidated work to the piers.

Rail clerks accept revised pattern agreement

A new 39-month rail contract was finally signed in mid-January by negotiators from the ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks (BRAC), the last but one union to settle with the nation's railroads after marathon bargaining sessions lasting well over a year. The contract, which is backdated to 1 January 1978, provides for increases of approximately 36%, made up of straight pay rises in cents per hour plus a set of guaranteed cost-of-living adjustments at regular intervals during the agreement's currency. In addition, each railwayman will receive back pay of \$1,000 (including \$100 for the first quarter of 1978). Improvements have been made to health and welfare benefits and the sick pay provisions of the contract and long-serving employees will be entitled for the first time to "personal days" off with pay (1 day per year for employees with 10 years service, 2 days over 20 years).

BRAC president Fred Kroll has hailed the new agreement --- a revised version of the pattern agreement accepted by 11 other unions at various times during 1978 -- as a "landmark achievement". Union members have been balloted for the first time ever, and, as expected, have endorsed the agreement overwhelmingly.

United Airlines mechanics' strike averted

A strike by United Airlines mechanics, ground-crew employees and food service workers was called off shortly before the 2 February deadline by the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers after it reached agreement with management on the provisions of a new contract for its 18,000 members working for America's largest airline. Details of the contract are being withheld until the tentative settlement has been formally ratified in a membership ballot.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Australia has reacted to last month's disaster involving the French tanker Betelgeuse in Bantry Bay (Irish Republic)^{x)} by stepping up safety checks on oil tankers visiting her ports. The seaworthiness of vessels and the qualifications of their crew are being checked at the first port of call and safety measures taken during loading and unloading are also being monitored.

x) see item elsewhere in this Newsletter

The governments of the Gambia and the People's Republic of Mozambique have each deposited an instrument of acceptance of the IMCO Convention with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. IMCO now has one hundred and nine full members and one associate member.

Air India ground staff belonging to the ITF-affiliated Air India Employees' Guild took strike action on 7 February to protest against an unfair settlement reached by the airline with a rival union representing a minority of its staff.

Spanish air traffic controllers are again working to rule in support of pay claims and demands for improved equipment and better working conditions.

Following last December's accident to the Andros Patria, Spanish fishermen are urging that all oil tankers be kept outside the country's 200-mile fishing limits. The Andros Patria, a Greek-flag tanker on charter to British Petroleum, was en route for Rotterdam with a cargo of Iranian light crude when heavy seas off the northern coast of Galicia, Spain caused a hull fracture. This was followed by an explosion and fire and the release of between 30,000 and 50,000 tons of oil from her ruptured tanks.

OBITUARIES

Roger Bodeau, former federal secretary of the French Railwaymen's Federation (FO), has died. Brother Bodeau helped rebuild the trade union movement in France after the war and was a founder member of the railwaymen's federation. He also edited the union paper "Rail Syndicaliste".

Arne Geijer, president of the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) from 1956 until 1973, died on 27 January, aged 68. Geier was president for ten years of the ICFTU and also represented workers' interests as a member of the Swedish parliament.

PERSONALIA

Max Arnold, former General Secretary of the Swiss Public Service Workers' Union (VPOD), celebrated his 70th birthday on 8 January 1979.

Jukka Heinonen, former president of the Finnish Engineer Officers' Union, was presented with the gold badge of the Finnish trade union centre at a ceremony held in the union's headquarters shortly before Christmas.

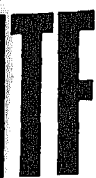
Louis Joye, vice-president of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union and chairman of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, celebrated his 60th birthday on 1 February.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

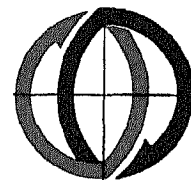
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|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Executive Board | - | London, 20-21 March 1979 |
| Fair Practices Committee | - | London, 22-23 March 1979 |
| ITF Ship Inspectors | - | London, 24 March 1979 |
| Railwaymen's Section Conference | - | London, 3-4 April 1979 |
| Road Transport Workers' Section Conference | - | Stuttgart, 24-26 April 1979 |
| International Conference of Cabin Crews | - | Paris, 28 May 1979 |
| Civil Aviation Section Conference | - | Paris, 29-31 May 1979 |

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



International Transport Workers' Federation
Fédération Internationale des Ouvriers du Transport
Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation
Federación Internacional de los Trabajadores del Transporte
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Press Release

Please address all communications to the General Secretary
and confine each letter to one subject only.

Our Ref.

Our Ref.

Date

19 February 1979

MALAYSIAN: GOVERNMENT DETAINS TRADES UNIONISTS

The Government of Malaysia has detained Donald U'ren, the ITF's Asian Representative. Four policemen arrested him on Thursday, 15 February, and nothing has been heard from him since. Johann Hauf, an Assistant General Secretary of the ITF, who was in Penang, Malaysia, conducting ITF seminars for Asian trades unionists, was deported the next day. Both U'ren (who is a Malaysian citizen) and Hauf are alleged to have helped foment the present strike by workers of the state airline, MAS. An unknown number of MAS workers are also reported to have been detained.

The General Secretary of the ITF, Harold Lewis, has today protested strongly against the government's actions. He said that it was deeply depressing that a government professing attachment to democratic ideals should react in this way to what in essence was a straightforward industrial dispute. Neither U'ren nor Hauf had done anything to worsen a situation which had arisen simply because the MAS workers despaired of getting a fair response from MAS to their genuinely modest claims for improvements in wages and other benefits after their collective agreement expired at the end of May 1978.

Their union, the Malaysian Airline Employees' Union, belongs to the ITF and, as is commonplace in such situations, had asked for the ITF's support. This it had been promised but in the event international support was unnecessary. The Government threatened to "de-register" (that is, effectively dissolve) the union for daring to condone a refusal by some workers to work overtime and this rapidly escalated the dispute to the point of a total strike and a shut-down of MAS's services.

P.T.O.

The government cannot lay this at the ITF's door. Locking up international trade union representatives or throwing them out of the country will solve nothing. At some point MAS will presumably want to resume its domestic and international operations. It will only be able to do so when it has come to reasonable terms with the workers who keep the airline flying.

Meanwhile, the ITF has called on the government to release Donald U'ren immediately and to get round the table with the union to work out a new and acceptable collective agreement.