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Supplement: Copy of letter to Prime Minister of Malaysia from
ITF General Secretary - 5 April 1979

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ITF Executive Board condemns anti-union governments

The ITF Executive Board held its first meeting of this year in London on 20 and 21 March.

The Board expressed its condemnation and anger at the actions of the Malaysian Government^{x)} which, last month, arrested the ITF's Asian Regional Representative, Donald U'ren, together with a number of officers and members of the ITF-affiliated Airlines Employees' Union (AEU), and deported ITF Assistant General Secretary, Johann Hauf, following a strike organized by AEU employees of the Malaysian Airlines System (MAS). The General Secretary reported that a formal complaint had been submitted to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association against the government of Malaysia and that the Committee had been urged to invoke the special procedures it employs in such instances as a matter of great urgency. The Board took note of this and also of action being taken in both the industrial and diplomatic spheres to secure the release of U'ren and his fellow detainees, and adopted the following resolution on the situation:

"This meeting of the ITF Executive Board, held in London on 20 and 21 March 1979,

"HAVING CONSIDERED a report on the arrest and detention of the ITF's Asian Representative, Donald U'ren, in Penang (Malaysia) on 15 February 1979 and on the industrial dispute between the Airlines Employees' Union and the Malaysian Airlines System (MAS) which formed the background to his victimization;

"HAVING NOTED that almost five weeks later, the government of Malaysia has failed to notify the ITF of its action and has not even acknowledged the repeated requests from the ITF, made both directly and through its diplomatic representatives, for information on (a) Donald U'ren's whereabouts; (b) his state of health; and (c) what he is alleged to have done; and

"HAVING NOTED FURTHER that the government has likewise refused to acknowledge the General Secretary's repeated request that a representative of the ITF should be allowed entry to Malaysia for discussions with all the parties involved;

"CONDEMNS the arrest and detention of Donald U'ren and other trades unionists as a violation of their civil rights and as a blatant breach of the standards of conduct accepted by any government claiming to be democratic;

"CALLS FOR their immediate release; and, to that end

^{x)} *Malaysian: See Supplement to this issue of the Newsletter situation*

"INSTRUCTS the General Secretary to mobilize the resources of the ITF and its affiliates to exert the maximum pressure on the government of Malaysia in any and every way they can both at national level and internationally, including action through bodies such as the ICFTU and ILO."

The Board also discussed further action to obtain the release of ITF Executive Board member Abderrazak Ayoub, one of a number of Tunisian trade union leaders sentenced to long terms of imprisonment last year in a government show-trial, and heard reports on how the ITF and its affiliates were assisting the families of victimized transport trade unionists.

The persecution of trade unionists and the restrictions placed on both trade union and civil rights in Chile and Nicaragua were also the object of considerable attention by the ITF Board, which decided to call upon ITF affiliates to boycott transport to and from those two countries. It summarized its position in the following resolution:

"This meeting of the ITF Executive Board,

Having regard to the continued failure of the Chilean and Nicaraguan régimes to concede full civil and trade union rights,

Resolves to call upon the affiliates of the ITF to institute a boycott of transport to and from Chile and Nicaragua.

For such an action to be effective, it must be fully supported, both practically and morally, by the national trade union centres and be properly coordinated with those centres and other ITUs."

The General Secretary, Harold Lewis, reported on the acceptance of the ITF's application for membership of the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Communities (the Brussels Committee) and on the creation of liaison machinery between that Committee and the European Committee of the ITF. The European Transport Liaison Committee set up as a result is to apply to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) for recognition as one of its "Industry committees".

The Board also approved a draft ITF policy on multinational corporations drawn up by the ITF Secretariat.

Ben Kok of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union (NVV) was co-opted to the Board to replace the late Simon Barendregt.

New affiliations to the ITF formally approved by the Board, subject to the satisfactory completion of any remaining formalities, were:-

Fédération générale des transports et de l'équipement (CFDT),
(France):

Unión de Marineros y Fogoneros del Pacífico (CROM)
de Manzanilla (Mexico);

Sindicato de Tripulantes Marinos Mercantes del Consorcio
Naviero Peruano S.A. (Peru);

Sindicato Josefino de Trabajadores (Guatemala);

Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Transportes
Marítimos, Fluviais e Aéreos (Brazil);

Federação dos Sindicatos do Mar (Portugal);

Marine Transport Workers' Union of Thailand.

INTERNATIONAL

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Fair Practices Committee moves to make ITF f-o-c campaign still more effective

A meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee -- the joint body of seafarers' and dockers' affiliates responsible for overseeing the Federation's campaign against flags and crews of convenience -- took place in London on 22 and 23 March.

In reviewing activity in this field since its last meeting, the Committee noted with satisfaction that, during 1978, a total of 1520 f-o-c- ships were covered by ITF agreements, whilst a further 200 agreements have been reached this year. During 1978, too, almost US\$11,000,000 was recovered in back pay for seafarers on such ships, plus a further US\$701,671 up to mid-February 1979. It also noted that a number of new ITF ship inspectors had been appointed during the period under review, including those in Portugal, Spain, Iceland, and the UK. Inspectors are now active in eighteen countries. Crews have also been assisted by affiliates and fraternal organizations on an ad hoc basis in a number of other countries.

The Committee also heard reports on the victimization of seafarers claiming their rights under ITF agreements by certain Asian governments (notably India and the Philippines) or their agencies, and discussed ways of countering this situation which frequently arose from owners' deliberate cheating, despite charterers' requirements for crews to be employed on union agreements acceptable to the ITF.

It also considered legal actions in which the ITF and its affiliates have been involved in pursuance of the flag-of-convenience campaign and noted that various owners' organizations were stepping up their public relations efforts in the hope of counteracting the success of the ITF campaign and the favourable public response it received.

The report to the Committee on the Seafarers' International Welfare, Protection and Assistance Fund showed that in 1978 grants totalling £330,000 had been made, or funds committed, and that applications for a further £ 230,000 are now under consideration by the Welfare Fund Sub-Committee.

The Committee had before it the conclusions of a small sub-committee (consisting of the two Co-Chairmen and the General Secretary) which it had set up last year to consider the future activity of the campaign. In these, the sub-committee stressed the need to intensify the campaign, with particular attention being paid to:

- (i) appropriate action to counter moves by owners and some governments, particularly in the Third World, to nullify agreements secured by the ITF for their crews;
- (ii) the development of trade union activity and organization among f-o-c and c-o-c crews;
- (iii) the need for national seafarers' unions in developed countries to exercise proper control over the standards of all seafarers working on their national-flag vessels; and
- (iv) the maintenance of continuing pressure on governments in developed countries to prevent "flagging out".

At the conclusion of a wide-ranging discussion on future activity, the FPC decided to establish a more broadly-based sub-committee of dockers' and seafarers' representatives (plus the Co-Chairmen and General Secretary) for the purpose of examining all aspects of the flag-of-convenience campaign and crews of convenience and to carry on the work begun by the 1978 sub-committee. The enlarged sub-committee will report back to the 1980 meeting of the Fair Practices Committee.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Bro. C.H. Fitzgibbon (Dockers' Co-Chairman). The Seafarers' Co-Chairman, Bro. K. Mols Sørensen, was unable to attend owing to his union being involved in negotiations at the time of the meeting.

ASIA

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Asian Regional Conference for Road Transport Workers held in Penang

Penang, Malaysia was the venue for a five-day Asian Regional Conference for Road Transport Workers held in mid-February and attended by representatives of unions in Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Pakistan and Malaysia. Discussions centred on recent developments within the ILO regarding the revision of ILO Convention No. 57 on Hours of Work and Rest Periods in Road Transport, in the course of which ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf, who led the discussions, promised delegates that future Section policy on the subject would take due account of the views of Asian affiliates advanced at the meeting. Delegates also exchanged detailed information on the state of the road transport industry in their respective countries.

Region's railwaymen discuss problems of technological change and transport policy

The problems created for railwaymen as the result of technological change in the industry and the subordinate rôle unfortunately only too often assigned to the railways in the transport plans of many governments were two of the major topics for discussion at an ITF Asian Regional Conference for Railwaymen, which took place in New Delhi in the third week of February and was attended by members of railwaymen's unions from five Asian countries as well as from Australia. Also of considerable interest to the participants was the report delivered to the meeting by ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf on the work of the Railwaymen's Section in recent years to improve working conditions generally and this gave rise to lively discussions between delegates. Individual participants also informed the conference of the situation on the railways in their respective countries.

Asian Transport Policy Seminar is an outstanding success

In a busy month, ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf also chaired a Transport Policy Seminar -- the first of its kind -- organized by the ITF in Penang for its Asian affiliates and other interested trade union organizations in the Region. The Seminar was remarkable in that it brought together unions from nine countries with members in many different sectors of the transport industry, namely road transport, the railways, shipping and the docks. ITF Asian Representative Donald U'ren assisted with the detailed documentation for the Seminar, as well as acting as its secretary; he also lectured to participants on the aims and objectives of the ITF and spoke of the rôle of the trade unions in present-day society.

The items on the agenda included urban transport planning, transport policy and the infrastructure, the coordination of transport policy, and the regional railways. The meeting divided up into working groups, which drew up a set of conclusions on each of these items and then presented their findings to a full session for its approval.

TUNISIA
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ILO publishes interim report on complaint against government of Tunisia

The ILO Governing Body meeting on 27 February - 2 March approved an interim report submitted by its Committee on Freedom of Association on the ICFTU complaint against the government of Tunisia regarding its handling of the general strike on 26 January 1978. The ILO report indicates that the official Tunisian reply is at variance with the version of the facts submitted by the complainant and that it will not be accepted without further corroborative evidence. The Tunisian authorities have also been asked to keep the ILO informed of any further trials of trade unionists which may take place and to report any new developments in the situation of the imprisoned union leaders. The ILO hints that any acts of clemency on the part of the Tunisian authorities might well contribute towards a lessening of the feelings of bitterness of Tunisian trade unionists, who have been deprived of the majority of their most effective leaders.

TRANSPORT

GREAT BRITAIN

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British government agrees to phase in tachograph

The British government announced earlier this month that it would implement the Common Market regulation requiring the installation of the tachograph in lorry cabs^{x)}. Consultations will be held with the Commission on the timing of the introduction, as well as with employers' and trade union organizations.

x)

see ITF Newsletter No. 2, 1979, page 21

Ships' officers seek curb on foreign take-overs

Alarmed at the run-down of the British merchant fleet, the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association is urging MPs on the House of Commons standing committee currently scrutinizing the Merchant Shipping Bill to support a clause which would permit the Secretary of State for Trade to prevent control of a UK shipping company from passing to a non-resident concern if he considered this change to be contrary to British interests.

The two major opposition parties, as well as the General Council of British Shipping are opposing the clause.

UNITED STATES

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Air traffic controllers oppose proposed rule change

The US Professional Air Traffic Controllers' Organization^{x)} is opposing FAA plans to amend the present Aviation Safety Reporting System so as no longer to exempt from punitive sanctions a member of a flight deck crew who reports a near miss and is subsequently established to have violated FAA regulations. The union's president stresses that it is vital all such incidents be reported as they help pinpoint problems and could avert possible future tragedies.

x) affiliated to the ITF through the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRIA

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Higher pay for road haulage drivers

Following difficult negotiations, the ITF-affiliated Austrian Transport Workers' Union (HTV) has concluded a new agreement for haulage drivers, effective 2 January 1979, which gives them a pay increase of four per cent plus ten Austrian schillings a week. End-of-year and holiday bonuses have also been improved.

BELGIUM

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Improvements for public service bus drivers

Following an agreement concluded between the employers and the busmen's section of the ITF-affiliated Belgian Public Service Workers' Union, bus drivers in the public service receive, with effect from 1 February 1979, hourly rates ranging from 170.63 to 206.77 B frs depending on length of service; rates for Sunday, holiday and rest-day working go from 341.26 to 413.54 B frs and the hourly rate for work performed after 20.00 and before 06.00 is in the range 197.05 - 233.19 B frs.

CANADA

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New contract for non-operating rail staff

Negotiators for 56,000 non-operating staff on Canada's railways reached tentative agreement at the end of February on a new three-year contract, which has now been submitted to rank and file union members throughout Canada for ratification. The agreement confers pay increases of 67 cents and 59 cents per hour in the first and second contract years respectively, plus an increase of 8% in the third year. A cost-of-living increase of 1 cent per hour for each .03% rise in the consumer price index, triggered when the index exceeds a certain figure (8% in 1979, 6.5% in 1980, and 6.8% in 1981) will also be applied. This will be paid in a lump-sum at the end of each year, with the entire sum being consolidated into basic rates on the expiry of the contract. Other improvements include: 5 weeks' leave after 23 (reducing to 22) years' service and 4 weeks after 13 (reducing to 12) years' service; an extra general holiday in the second contract year; fully paid dental and drug plans by the end of 1979 and 1980 respectively; and an extra five cents an hour shift differential in 1979.

The Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers and the Canadian division of the Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks (both ITF affiliates) were represented in the negotiations, as also were the Brotherhoods of Railroad Signalmen and of Maintenance of Way Employees and the United Telegraph Workers.

DENMARK

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Government acts to avoid widespread strikes

The Danish coalition government has hurried legislation through the Folketing (parliament) enforcing a two-year extension of current collective agreements for one and a half million public and private sector workers, thereby averting a strike of transport, dock and power station workers called by the Trade Union Confederation (LO) from 30 March and the employers' threatened lockout of 250,000 industrial workers. The settlement provides for a wage adjustment in private industry of 7.5% in 1979, followed by a 6.5% increase in 1980. A cost-of-living allowance of 60 öre per hour, payable in March and September, will be paid for each three percentage point rise in the index. Annual leave will also be increased gradually from four to five weeks and the guaranteed minimum wage, currently 31.60 kr, will be increased by 1.20 kr in each contract year. A similar, although slightly less generous, settlement will apply to public service workers.

Travel agencies agree to enter into talks on collective agreement

Under a threat from the ITF-affiliated Danish Salaried Employees' Union that it would prevent the clients of the travel agency Tjaereborg from taking their Easter package holidays, the company, after initially refusing, has at last agreed to enter into negotiations with a view to concluding the first-ever collective agreement for travel couriers, who now form a separate section within the union (see ITF Newsletter No. 1, 1979, page 4).

Probably influenced by Tjaereborg's decision, a second major Danish travel firm, Spies Rejser, has also agreed to hold talks with the union on working conditions and rates of pay.

Higher pay for haulage workers

A new two-year collective agreement for 12,500 road haulage drivers employed by companies belonging to the Danish Haulage Employers' Confederation has been negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (SID). Rates will be increased by 2.50 kr per hour on 1 March 1979 and by a further 1 krone on the same date in 1980; seniority bonuses and other allowances have also been increased.

A separate agreement has been concluded on behalf of drivers of removal vans, who will receive total increases of 4.50 kr per hour.

FRANCE

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Railwaymen strike over government plans for industry

Railwaymen throughout France, including members of ITF affiliates, staged a 36-hour strike beginning in the evening of 6 March to draw public attention to their disquiet at government plans for the French railways over the next four years, which were due for consideration

by the railway board during the period of the strike. In particular, the railwaymen fear substantial cutbacks in rail staff and further cuts in an already much truncated rail network. The government has given the railways until the end of 1982 to wipe out its annual deficit, which is bound to have serious effects on the level of service offered.

GERMANY
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Railwaymen set pay targets

The ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) is seeking a 6.5% salary increase plus 400 DM holiday pay in this month's pay talks. The current pay agreement was terminated at the end of February.

GREAT BRITAIN
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Arbitration tribunal recommends five per cent pay rise for train drivers

The National Rail Staffs Tribunal, which has been looking at the train drivers' claim for a special responsibility bonus, has recommended that all train drivers, with the exception of those on shunting duties, should receive a five per cent extra payment (equivalent to £3.14 per week for drivers working five non-shunting shifts). The bonus would be paid on top of any basic rate increase agreed in the current pay round.

The award has been welcomed by the ITF-affiliated Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), the main drivers' union, while the National Union of Railwaymen (also affiliated) has reserved comment until it has had chance to consider the implications of the tribunal's report in full.

Busmen threaten one-day national strike

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union is to seek the authority of its members in the National Bus Company for a 24-hour drivers' strike following the Department of Transport's rejection of its claim for an independent pay inquiry (see ITF Newsletter No. 2, 1979, page 24). A six per cent pay offer made to TGWU negotiators at the beginning of this month has already been rejected.

It is expected that the one-day strike, which is likely to be followed by further stoppages, will be supported by drivers, conductors and depôt workers employed by the municipal bus companies and the passenger transport executives.

Southampton and Hull dockers accept pay and productivity deals

Dockers in the port of Southampton last month accepted a pay deal, backdated to the beginning of the year, which gives them a five per cent increase in basic pay, plus an additional amount for increased

productivity. Overtime rates have been improved in return for the dockers' consent to specific changes in working practices and the employers have also agreed to raise their contributions to the retirement gratuity fund.

In separate negotiations, the British Transport Docks Board and the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union have agreed new working arrangements, which will cut the turn-round time of container vessels.

A few weeks later, dockers in the port of Hull accepted the employers' latest offer, under which they will receive an extra £6 per week, improved overtime payments and more pay for increased productivity, in return for their agreement to an extension of working hours by 30 minutes each week.

Offshore supply officers reluctantly accept revised pay offer

A slightly improved pay offer made by the National Maritime Board's supply boat committee to ships' officers employed in the offshore supply industry has been accepted by the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, albeit reluctantly, following an undertaking from the owners that the one-year agreement will be totally revised when it comes up for renewal in November and a membership vote against industrial action. The current deal gives the men a 10 per cent increase in pay, excluding the productivity element in last year's settlement, bringing the annual salary of a mate/second engineer officer to £6,519 plus allowances. Allowances have also been increased by ten per cent, with the exception of the anchor handling allowance, which goes up by 25%.

INDIA - Merchant Navy Officers renew strike action

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Merchant navy officers on board Indian-flag ships in Bombay and Calcutta struck for the second time^{x)} for some days earlier this month in an attempt to prevent the enactment of the Merchant Shipping (Second Amendment) Bill, which prohibits them from seeking employment on foreign-flag vessels for at least four years after graduation and obliges them to accept whatever employment is offered them by the government in the interim period.

The authorities maintain that they have had to take this action because the drift abroad of large numbers of trained officers year after year has created an acute shortage of officers on vessels of the national flag.

x) see also ITF Newsletter No. 2, 1979, page 24

NEWS IN BRIEF

Port of London dockers organized in the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union have rejected the employers' nine per cent pay offer.

Thousands of Irish workers joined a 24-hour strike on 20 March culminating in mass rallies in Dublin and other major cities to demand income tax reforms, particularly of the PAYE (Pay as You Earn) system. A second massive strike and demonstration on May Day is planned unless significant concessions are made by the government before then.

Alitalia has reached agreement with Italian cabin crew unions on the terms of a new collective contract after a strike which halted most of its flights for just over a month. The agreement has still to be ratified in a cabin staff vote.

The Libyan government has announced that it intends to extradite airline hijackers and left-wing extremists held in Libya to their home countries.

The governments of Nepal and the Republic of Djibouti have deposited instruments of acceptance of the IMCO Convention with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. IMCO now has one hundred and eleven full members and one associate member.

Ground personnel employed by the Spanish national airline Iberia ended a work-to-rule on 22 February after reaching agreement with the management on salary increases of fourteen per cent (subject to a minimum of 5,000 pesetas a month for low-paid workers). Pay talks start shortly for the airline's flying staff.

Spanish air traffic controllers called off a two-week-old work to rule on 14 February after reaching a settlement with the government of their grievances.

3,500 Zambian railway workers are currently on strike demanding more pay.

OBITUARY

Magnus Anker Bakke, treasurer of the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union since 1955, died on 7 December 1978, aged 65, following a long illness. Brother Bakke served for many years on the Committee of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section.

PERSONALIA

Carmel S. Consiglio, Assistant General Secretary of the Malta General Workers' Union since January 1978, has been appointed GWU International Secretary.

Fritz Müller, editor of the magazine of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union, celebrated his 60th birthday on 28 February.

John O'Connell, vice-president of the Transport Workers' Union of America for the past nine years, retired at the beginning of 1979.

J.A. ("Eddie") Pelletier, national vice-president of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers since 1969, has retired early on health grounds. He is succeeded by Jim Hunter.

Kaare Sandegren, head of the International department of the Norwegian Trade Union Confederation (LO) and former deputy general secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, celebrated his 50th birthday on 18 March.

Philipp Seibert retires this month, at 64, on health grounds after twenty years as president of the German Railwaymen's Union. Brother Seibert has served the ITF both as a member of our Executive Board from 1958 until our last Congress and as president of the Brussels Committee, which he now leaves. He was also a Social Democratic deputy in the German parliament from 1961 to 1976. At the union's extraordinary congress held in Munich earlier this month Ernst Haar, previously parliamentary secretary of state in the German Ministry of Transport, was elected as the union's new president. Brother Haar, who is 54, is a former GdED regional official.

Piet van Keulen, vice-president of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union and chairman of its Dockers' Section, has been nominated as NVV president in succession to the late Simon Barendregt. Brother van Keulen is a member of the Committee of the ITF Dockers' Section.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS
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- 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
