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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

SOUTH AFRICA

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ITF General Secretary condemns arrest of Cape Town union officials

On 29 May, South African police arrested Diana Cooper, an organizer for the Western Province General Workers' Union, and on the following day the union's Secretary, David Lewis. The union, which was on the point of seeking affiliation with the ITF, organizes black workers in the Cape area, including the Cape Town dockers. An account of the union's activities and of the difficulties faced by it in organizing the dockers was given in a supplement to ITF Newsletter No. 2 of February.

In a cable to the South African Prime Minister, Mr. Botha, the ITF's General Secretary, Harold Lewis, has protested at the arrests (no charges have yet been made, although government spokesmen have referred to the union officials allegedly organizing "illegal" strikes). He emphasized that such arbitrary acts "do irreparable harm to your country's standing and make a mockery of your Government's stated intentions to permit trade union activity to all South Africans, regardless of race". Lewis strongly urged immediate release of the union officials and settlement of all outstanding issues by negotiations with the workers' chosen representatives.

ITF affiliates throughout the world are expected to make similar protests and representations to South African diplomatic missions in their countries.

TRADE UNIONS

INTERNATIONAL

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IMF claims worldwide attack on unions in industrialized countries

Introducing a report entitled "Trade Unions under attack" discussed at the Federation's central committee meeting held in London during June, Eugen Loderer, President of the International Metalworkers' Federation, drew attention to signs of a concerted onslaught by both employers and governments against trade union rights in industrialized countries. Instances cited by Loderer included the lock-out tactics employed by Swedish employers in imitation of similar tactics used earlier by German employers; the attacks on long-established union rights implicit in the British Conservative Government's new draft Employment Act; and the increasing use by employers in France and the German Federal Republic of the courts to attack union rights.

DENMARK

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Engine room personnel to merge with metal workers

At a special Congress held in Copenhagen in May, the ITF-affiliated Danish Engine Crew Union formally decided to merge with the Danish Metal Workers' Union (also affiliated). All the practical arrangements are expected to be complete in time for the merger to take effect from the beginning of next year, when a new independent union section - Metal Søfart (Metal - Shipping) - will be formed, serving members of the former engine crew union working in both the coastal and overseas trade and on the oil platforms, as well as all sea-going members of the Metal Workers' Union.

GREAT BRITAIN

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British Seamen's Union adamant in opposition to concessionaire Crews

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen (NUS) has rejected a claim by the Chairman of P and O that its policy is hampering investment in new cruise ships. The policy in question is the union's firm opposition to the use of concessionaire crews on such ships.

A union spokesman said that "we have resisted and will continue to resist the introduction of concessionaire crews". It would mean, he went on, "taking jobs away from UK nationals and transferring them to low-paid people who are not necessarily organized in trade unions. They are unprotected and frequently, according to our information, are subject to quite arbitrary action on the part of their immediate employer".

NORWAY

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Norwegian national centre seeks changes in law on boycott actions

The Norwegian Trade Union Federation (LO) has asked the Government to set up a working party as soon as possible to draft changes in the existing Boycott Law, which applies inter alia to actions taken by Norwegian unions in support of foreign labour disputes.

The LO has called for urgent action on the law, last revised in 1947, because it no longer applies to present-day conditions. In recent years, Norwegian unions have been increasingly involved in sympathetic actions in support of workers outside Norway, including the crews of flag-of-convenience vessels. A recent

case concerning the Liberian-flag "Nawala" resulted in unions being ordered to pay large-scale compensation to the vessel's owner, a judgment which is now being appealed.

Among matters which the LO would like looked at by the proposed working party would be changes in the giving of notice in case of boycott action; in the application of existing stipulations to international solidarity actions (including penalty clauses); as well as guarantees of freedom of organization and political expression in labour disputes.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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Salvage association attributes "dramatic rise" in shipboard fires and tanker explosions to inadequately trained crews

The Salvage Association, which has undertaken a month-long investigation into what it describes as a "dramatic rise" in the number of shipboard fires and explosions on tankers and combination carriers over 100,000 dwt tons -- 37 serious casualties leading to substantial damage or total loss were recorded in the period 1 January 1979 to April 1980, more than in the whole of the previous five-year period -- has traced most of the incidents back to inadequate crew training, while conceding that pressures to meet commercial deadlines also played their part. Only too frequently, crews - and sometimes terminal staff -- failed to appreciate the full requirements of safe operation on vessels fitted with inert gas systems. The data available, the study underlines, again shows the vital importance of proper and continuing crew training.

GERMANY

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OeTV "black book" reveals widespread abuses in private-transport

During the last two years, the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has been operating a system of mobile union offices throughout the Federal Republic to service employees in the private road haulage and passenger transport sectors. The information which has been given to union secretaries by long-haul drivers, bus and coach drivers, and workers employed by freight forwarding agencies has revealed extensive avoidance of provisions on social conditions, safety and working hour limitations.

The results of this work has now been published in an OeTV "black book", which makes horrifying reading. In it, the union also calls on legitimate operators to dissociate themselves from the black sheep in the privately-owned transport sector, and on employer associations to expel the offenders.

One major point to emerge from the OeTV's survey is that no more than 3 per cent of drivers actually benefit from the legal maximum of 60 hours' working time per week (48 hours driving time plus up to 12 hours for loading and maintenance, vehicle safety checks, etc.). It was, in fact, found that 17% of drivers worked for more than 70 hours; a huge 49% in excess of 80 hours, 17% more than 90 hours, and 14% more than 100.

There are also widespread evasions of pay standards. The OeTV found that 80 per cent of drivers received between DM300 and DM1,000 less than the monthly rates laid down in agreements, and in extreme cases up to almost DM1,500 less. Despite the fact that legislation prohibits remuneration based on the amount of goods carried or distance driven, employers provide financial incentives for driving faster, overloading vehicles, or ignoring road safety provisions. According to testimony by drivers, operators undertake to pay fines imposed for overloading or exceeding speed limits. Other employers offer double daily allowances to drivers operating without co-drivers on runs where this would otherwise be required.

The situation in the tourist coach sector is, if anything, worse than in road haulage, with competition being fought out at the expense of the employee. The small core of regular drivers is pressurized by the employer practice of using cheap temporary labour, paid cash in hand to evade taxes and social security contributions.

In a statement on the situation revealed by the survey, the OeTV Vice-President, Siegfried Merten (who is also a member of the ITF Executive Board) warns that over-tired drivers are a threat to both themselves and other road users. He also points out that the stress involved in such driving strongly endangers health, and can also lead to driver disqualification and premature invalidity. It is then that the drivers concerned have a rude awakening when they find that sick pay, unemployment pay, and pension rates are based on taxable earnings, with subsistence allowances and bonuses discounted.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA
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New agreement ratified by Australian waterside workers

Following membership ratification of the new contract reached for 1980 (effective 5 May last), the ITF-affiliated Australian Water-

side Workers' Federation has announced details of the improvements won.

All weekly rates will be increased by \$4.80. An ordinary waterside worker now receives \$220.10; a mobile crane and forklift truck operator \$229.50; and those on the top terminal rate \$237.00 per week, respectively. The guaranteed minimum wage per four-week period goes up from \$784 to \$804. A number of payments are also now payable in addition to the normal guarantee. These include: extra rates for damaged, difficult or obnoxious cargoes, dangerous conditions etc.; specialist rates, including mechanical operator and deckman differentials and those applying to these two ratings when working on containers; meal money (which goes up from \$3.75 to \$4.15, with higher rates in Darwin and the north-western ports); laundry allowance (now doubled to \$5.50 per week); telephone allowance (\$2.40 per week); sustenance amounts payable to men on interport mobile transfer, as well as annual leave and long service leave payments.

Paid sick leave goes up from eight to ten days per year, effective 1 July 1980. In addition, five accrued days per year will now operate across the board as from 1 July, except in certain ports where this is dependent on working Saturday and Sunday. The resettlement allowance for men who transfer under redundancy circumstances is now \$2,356 (was \$1,970) for a married man, and \$610 (\$510) for a single man. The daily travelling allowance for such men and their wives is fixed at \$7.50 each, and \$5.60 for each dependent child.

DENMARK

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Danish ship's officers to give notice en masse

The three ITF-affiliated Danish merchant marine officers' unions -- representing engineer officers, radio officers, and navigating officers -- have called on their members to give six months' notice effective 1 April 1981 in protest against the refusal of the Ship-owners' Association to enter into negotiations concerning their problems.

A major cause of resentment among the officers is that, as a result of what they describe as political intervention in past negotiations, they have fallen behind in relation to ratings. A.C. Hansen, President of the Engineer Officers' Union, points out that whereas in 1973 a third engineer was paid 7% more than a donkeyman, in 1980 the situation has been exactly reversed with the 7% differential now in favour of the donkeyman. Mols Sørensen, President of the Navigating Officers' Union (who is also Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section), says that the three unions have not made any concrete claim, the negotiations which they are seeking being designed to make sure that the officers do not fall even further behind than at present.

Danish engineers blast Sterling support for two-man crew

Spokesman for flight engineers employed by Sterling Airways, Per Fallentin, has reacted angrily to a statement by Sterling director Anders Helgstrand, claiming that a two-man flight deck crew is safer than a three-man crew. The company - largest charter airline in the world and wholly owned by the Danish-based multinational Tjaereborg Travel - has new aircraft on order designed for two-man operation.

Per Fallentin of the ITF-affiliated Salaried Staffs' Union commented that "so far as we are concerned, there is no doubt about it -- we believe that safety will be endangered if the airline companies get their way".

What has particularly incensed Sterling engineers about Helgstrand's statement, made in an interview with the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, is his claim that a third cockpit crew member is just a disturbing element and interferes with the other operating crew members because, in Helgstrand's own words, "he has nothing sensible to do". He even went on to claim that there were cases in which the third crew member (a pilot) had been the real cause of air accidents "which would hardly have taken place if there had only been two".

GERMANY

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Six weeks' leave for British Airways ground staff under new basic agreement

The new four-year basic agreement negotiated by the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) for British Airways ground staff in the Federal Republic provides for staged improvements in annual leave, which will give all employees six weeks' leave by 1983. Extra leave for night duty is also improved, 1 additional day's leave being granted for the following periods of night duty: 1980: 18 nights; 1981: 17 nights; 1982: 16 nights; 1983: 15 nights. Employees required to change shifts at short notice will continue to receive their previous shift allowance, unless the allowance for the new shift worked is higher than for the shift originally rostered. Employees may not now be fired after completing 17 years' service and on completion of 22 years' service they may no longer be transferred to a different job.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Twenty per cent rise for London Tube men

The ITF's three British railwaymen's affiliates - the NUR, ASLEF and the TSSA - have accepted a 20 per cent pay offer made by London Transport to their 23,000 members who work on the capital's Tube network. The deal gives the following new weekly rates (old

rates in brackets): railman £62.68 (£52.23); motorman £93.26 (£77.72); automatic train operator £107.30 (£89.42).

New pay deal for Mobil tanker drivers

A new pay agreement negotiated by the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union for 525 Mobil tanker drivers and depot workers brings their basic rate to £105 per week. The drivers, whose settlement date has been moved to May, had already been made interim payments of £6 per week in both July and November of last year, followed by a topping up increase at the beginning of 1980. The union is expected to use the new Mobil rate, which is substantially higher than that of the employees of the other major oil companies, as a base for negotiations in the next contract round later this year.

GREECE
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Greek ship engineers set rolling strikes for July

The Panhellenic Union of Merchant Marine Engineers (PEMEM), a member-union of the ITF-affiliated Panhellenic Seamen's Union, is to call its members out on 48-hour strikes during July, with the strikes beginning once individual ships reach port.

The threatened stoppages are in support of a claim that various allowances paid to them should be consolidated in basic pay. The union points out that, at present, rates are between 30 and 40% below those of engineers in other developed countries. In addition, the separation of allowances from basic pay is prejudicial to both pension and leave arrangements. A further claim is that the present period of duty aboard ship before repatriation -- nine months as against 3-4 months in other European countries -- should be reduced to six months.

During June, representatives of the union visited the ITF and European seafarers' unions to seek support for their action. Although an official request for this will be necessary from the Panhellenic Seamen's Union, Assistant General Secretary Ake Selander said that he could see no reason why this should not be given. He commented: "I think they are despairing and quite rightly so. On many occasions the ITF has criticized the conditions on Greek ships. I think they have reason for complaint".

INDIA
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Railwaymen receive first annual productivity bonus

The ITF-affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation has successfully prosecuted its case for the introduction of an annual bonus for the country's railwaymen. Under the terms of its agreement with the Railway Board, all regular employees earning up to Rs 1,600 per month (as well as casual workers meeting certain criteria) have already received a first bonus of 15 days' pay. The bonus is based on the increase in goods and passenger

traffic generated each year and the next payment (covering the period 1 April 1979 to 31 March 1980) falls due in October. Other public service unions - notably those organizing civil aviation workers - are now expected to press for similar payments to be made to their members.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
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Aer Lingus craftsmen take strike action

Craftsmen employed by the Irish national airline Aer Lingus and organized in ten unions -- including the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union -- have been on strike since 30 May in support of their demands for an improved wage settlement. The stoppage has severely disrupted Aer Lingus services.

The craftsmen -- employed on aircraft maintenance -- are calling for an increase of Punt 11.50 a week backdated to July of last year as against the offer made by the airline of Punt 4, backdated to January. At the time of writing, there was little sign of an early end to the dispute.

JAPAN
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Provisional agreement reached on new contracts for maritime workers

The ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union (AJSU) informs us that it has now concluded negotiations with the Japanese shipowners on new collective agreements covering its members in both the merchant marine and fishing fleet.

The new agreements, which are scheduled to run from 1 April last, provide inter alia for an average wages increase of Yen 10,700 or 5.51%. It was expected that these would be ratified at meetings of the union committees for fisheries, coastal and foreign trade vessels which were due to be held towards the end of May.

SWEDEN
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Higher pay for dock workers

Swedish dock workers belonging to the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union will receive a ten per cent pay increase from 1 July under a new one-year pay agreement concluded with the Independent Port Employers' Association at the beginning of June. Pay will be further increased on 1 January 1981, giving a new monthly rate of 6,050 kr.

UNITED STATES
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Big gains in new US longshoremen's agreement

Agreement has been reached on a new contract for 50,000 Atlantic and Gulf Coast dockers organized in the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) four months before the present contract was due to expire. The current hourly rate of \$10.40 will now go up by a further \$1.20 for each of the three years during which the contract runs.

The employers have also agreed to increase their current contribution of \$1.50 per man per hour to the ILA welfare funds by a further 50 cents spread over the three years (17.17 and 16 cents). Employer pension contributions -- now \$2.25 an hour -- will similarly go up an annual amount of 25 cents per hour in each of the three years. Insurance coverage and guaranteed annual income will be the subject of local negotiations in individual ports -- expected to be completed in another two months. The issue of longshoremen's job protection in the face of containerization will be taken up again once a pending US Supreme Court judgment on the question has been issued.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Argentinian seafarers have staged a 12-hour protest strike following the promulgation of legislation permitting foreign seafarers to be hired for the national merchant marine. The unions blame the shortage of Argentinian seafarers - given by the government as the reason behind the new law - on low pay. The strike halted the movement of ships and prevented the loading and unloading of cargo at most ports.

The Danish national centre LO is supporting protests by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (SID) and the Danish Local Government Employees' Union against proposed large-scale cuts by the Copenhagen Public Transport Enterprise (HT). The Danish LO points out that these will not only have serious effects on employment, but will have equally serious social consequences, particularly for pensioners and for commuters employed on shift work who are dependent on public transport.

The Danish High Court has overruled a judgment by a lower court, on appeal by the ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union, which found that shipping companies were not bound to employ female seafarers if ships did not provide separate facilities for men and women. The High Court judgement says that the Equal Treatment Law applies to the merchant marine and rejects the separate

facilities argument. Female seafarers, it found, had to be treated in the same way as their male colleagues, unless a dispensation from the Law had been sought and obtained. The lower court (landsret) had earlier established that dangerous circumstances for women in particular ports was not a sufficient reason for refusing to hire them, and had also found that, if necessary, a dispensation from the Law should have been sought by the offending company.

The ITF-affiliated French Airline Pilots' Association (SNPL) has decided in principle to take strike action against the charter company Euralair because it is proposing to operate its Boeing 737s (on order) without a Flight Engineer. No date has yet been fixed for the strike. (See also Newsletter No. 3 of March for details (p.34) of earlier action on this issue by the ITF-affiliated French Flight Engineers' Association (SNOMAC).

Cleaners at the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, who had been on strike since 11 May in protest at their low pay rates, ended their stoppage on 14 June after the ITF-affiliated French Transport Workers' Federation (FGTE/CFDT) had negotiated a new agreement bringing their monthly wage up to Fr.2,800. The action had a very close parallel with the recent strike by Paris Métro cleaners.

Great Britain: Mersey dockers have won a 13 per cent pay rise, backdated to 26 April 1980.

Dockers in the port of Fort-de-France on the Caribbean island of Martinique have been on strike for the past two weeks. Plans for a container port, which it is claimed will cause unemployment, are at the root of the dispute. Lorry drivers on the island are also currently striking over pay.

Portuguese dock workers have been operating a ban on overtime working in support of their contract demands, which has caused considerable chaos in the country's ports.

The ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists, on strike against the United States commuter airline ALTAIR since 13 April, has requested international help in preventing the use of foreign technicians to service the company's aircraft.

PERSONALIA

Franz Eichinger, president of the German Federal Railways, celebrated his 60th birthday on 29 May. Brother Eichinger was formerly Vice-President of the German Railwaymen's Union and a deputy member on the Committee of the ITF Railwaymen's Section.

Bertil Gustavsson has been elected as President of the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union in succession to Hans Ericson and Anders Eriksson takes over as Vice-President. The two new officers will constitute the union's management committee, together with Johnny Grönberg.

Fintan Kennedy, president of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, retires next January after 42 years' service with the union, including twelve years as its president.

Pentti Mattila has been elected as the new President of the ITF-affiliated Finnish Engineer Officers' Union.

Jackson Moore, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated British United Road Transport Union, has been made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the latest UK Honours List.

Kaj Palm has been elected as new President of the ITF-affiliated Swedish Navigating Officers' Union (Fartygsbefälsförening) in succession to Karl Birgander, who will continue to act as Chairman of the union's foreign-going section and as a member of its Management Committee.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS
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| International Conference on Seafarers' Welfare | - London 1-2 July 1980 |
| Ad hoc Working Group on Catering Concessionaire Crews in Cruise Ships | - Oslo 3-4 July 1980 |
| ITF 33rd Congress | - Miami, 17-25 July 1980 |

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING FURTHER
INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM IN THIS
NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT ON REQUEST
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