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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

TURKEY

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ITF denounces Turkish military coup

On 12 September, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis issued a statement denouncing the military coup which had usurped the democratic rights of the Turkish people. He said that the ITF would do all in its power to help its Turkish unions to protect their rights and safeguard their members' interests.

Two days later, the new military government ordered all employers involved in pay negotiations with their workers to increase wages by 70 per cent, with immediate effect. A military communiqué also ordered strikers back to work. At the time, more than 40,000 workers, including members of the ITF-affiliated Turkish Seafarers' Federation^{x)}, were on strike in various parts of the country. A further 100,000 had announced strike plans, which were postponed, again by government decree.

x) see ITF Newsletter No. 9, 1980, page 92 for details

TRANSPORT

EUROPE

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EEC Ministers reach agreement on conservation of fish stocks

In what is seen as an essential first step towards a common fisheries policy, EEC fisheries ministers meeting in Brussels have reached agreement on a package of measures to conserve fish stocks. The Nine have agreed to restrictions on mesh sizes and the use of certain types of fishing gear and have also ratified an Anglo-Danish compromise settlement on the "pout box" (an area off North-East Scotland where fishing for Norway pout to process into animal food is prohibited in order to preserve stocks of immature haddock and whiting). The next round of Ministerial talks will centre on more controversial issues such as catch quotas and the right of access to coastal fishing grounds which will have to be settled before any common fisheries policy can come into effect.

GERMANY

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Hamburg terminal operator imposes mandatory night shifts
on its employees

Faced with growing pressure from users to provide a round-the-clock service, the port of Hamburg's largest single terminal operator -- Hamburger Hafen- und Lagerhaus AG (HHLA) -- last month introduced mandatory night shift working for all its 420 employees. The men will now be required to work five consecutive night shifts once every seven weeks, where previously they only had to work one night shift per week, all other such shifts being performed on an entirely voluntary basis. The measure has met with fierce opposition from the company's workers, whose protests delayed its introduction by one week. Other Hamburg terminal operators are expected to follow HHLA's lead.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Union seeks national severance scheme for trawler fishermen

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union is to press the government to introduce a national redundancy and severance scheme for trawlermen who lose their jobs in the present depressed state of the fishing industry. The government will also be asked to start work immediately on the restructuring of the trawler fleet, plans for which were produced eighteen months ago but have not yet been acted on.

TRADE UNIONS

UNITED STATES

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Union merger plans

At its recent convention, the ITF-affiliated International Association of Masters, Mates and Pilots formally approved by acclamation the proposed merger with the American Radio Association (also an ITF affiliate). The merger plans will now be submitted to a ballot of radio officers, who are expected to give their unqualified consent.

A merger with the United Auto Workers is also under consideration by the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. If the plan is approved, the amalgamation would produce the largest single union in the United States.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CANADA

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CP Air agrees to liberalize its maternity provisions

Following a complaint to the Human Rights Commission, CP Air has agreed to allow its stewardesses to continue working until the 26th week of pregnancy. After her baby is born, a stewardess will be able to resume work whenever she feels ready. Previously, stewardesses had been obliged to stop work after 13 weeks of pregnancy and to remain on maternity leave until 17 weeks after the birth of the child.

The ITF-affiliated Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Association, which organizes the carrier's stewardesses, sees the new policy as an important first step towards the goal of allowing a pregnant stewardess, in consultation with her doctor, to decide when she wishes to cease work. Other Canadian airline companies -- notably Air Canada and the charter airline Wardair -- already have more liberal maternity provisions.

New contract for Great Lakes Airlines cabin attendants

After six months of difficult negotiations and a ten-day strike, the ITF-affiliated Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Association has won its best-ever contract for members with Great Lakes Airlines. The new settlement provides for an immediate 20 per cent hourly pay increase (8% on 1 April 1980; 12% on 1 August 1980), followed by a further 8 per cent on 1 August 1981. When compounded, the new rates will produce actual wage increases of between 31 and 36 per cent over the life of the contract, which runs from 1 April 1980 to 31 May 1982.

DENMARK

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Navigating officers receive pay increases

A new pay agreement has been signed on behalf of members of the ITF-affiliated Danish Navigating Officers' Association. The revised rates, effective 1 September 1980, range from 7,035 kr per month (basic pay plus cost-of-living allowance) to 10,560 kr for chief officers, depending on size of vessel and length of service; from 6,903 kr to 9,257 kr for first officers; and from 6,903 kr to 8,148 kr for second officers.

Overtime rates, inclusive of cost-of-living supplement, per half-hour range from 26.43 to 35.00 kr for chief officers and from 25.94 to 30.10 kr for 1st officers, depending on size of vessel. Second officers receive a uniform overtime rate of 25.94 kr. The corresponding rate for overtime performed on Sundays and Public Holidays are 33.55 -- 44.42 kr (chief officers); 32.92 - 38.20 kr (1st officers) and 32.92 kr for all second officers.

The two-watch allowance (vessels not exceeding 1,400 grt) is 202 kr per 24-hour period for chief officers and 183 kr for first officers. Subsistence allowance (also including cost-of-living supplement) during vacations, days off, sick leave and duty time on board at home port, where food is not provided, is 51.38 kr^{x)} per day, and during duty time on board other than at home port, the daily rate is 121.52 kr.^{x)}

x) these rates also apply to engineer and radio officers, whose new pay agreements are reported below

New pay agreement for engineer officers

A new pay agreement has been successfully concluded by the ITF-affiliated Danish Engineer Officers' Association. The new rates range from 9,642 kr to 15,287 kr per month for chief engineers depending on size of vessel and length of service; from 6,903 kr to 10,112 kr for 1st engineers; from 6,903 to 8,863 kr for 2nd engineers; and from 6,903 kr to 8,148 kr for 3rd engineers. Overtime rates, inclusive of cost-of-living supplement, per half hour are as follows: 1st engineer: 25.94 - 33.32 kr for weekdays and 32.92 - 42.28 kr for Sundays and Public Holidays; 2nd engineer: 25.94 - 28.62 kr and 32.92 - 36.33 kr; 3rd engineer: 25.94 kr (weekdays) and 32.92 kr (Sundays and Public Holidays).

Radio Officers' new pay rates

A new pay agreement, effective 1 September 1980, has been signed on behalf of members of the ITF-affiliated Danish Radio Officers' Association. The revised monthly rates (basic pay plus cost-of-living allowance) for the lowest and highest paid grades are given below. Figures in brackets refer respectively to half-hourly overtime rates on weekdays and on Sundays and Public Holidays.

<u>Under 5,000 grt.</u>	<u>5,000 - 6,500 grt</u>
6,558 (24.64/31.27)	6,686 (25.12/31.88)
9,258 (34.78/44.15)	9,386 (35.27/44.76)
<u>6,500 - 8,500 grt</u>	<u>Over 8,500 grt</u>
6,750 (25.36/32.19)	6,815 (25.61/32.50)
8,451 (35.51/45.07)	9,515 (35.75/45.37)

Ships' Catering personnel win more pay

New pay rates came into operation on 1 September 1980 for catering staff represented in the ITF-affiliated Danish Ships' Catering Personnel Association. The following salary ranges (basic pay plus cost-of-living allowance) apply: chief steward: 8,326 kr to 9,817 kr; cook: 6,160 kr to 6,525 kr; messman and stewardess: 5,332 kr to 5,596 kr. Overtime rates (per half hour) are 31.28 kr on weekdays and 39,71 kr on Sundays and Public Holidays for chief steward; 22.26 kr and 28.48 kr for cook; and 19.26 kr and 24.66 kr for messman and stewardess.

FRANCE

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Fishing dispute ends

A settlement has been reached in the French fishing dispute and normal working began on 18 September^x. The owners have agreed to maintain existing manning levels on trawlers and will spend the time between now and November working out the new manning arrangements they say are needed if the fleet is to be run efficiently.

^xsee ITF Newsletter No. 9, page 88 for full details of dispute

GERMANY

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Reichsbahn staff in West Berlin strike for free unions and higher pay

West German employees of the East German State Railways, the Reichsbahn, in West Berlin staged an eight-day strike towards the end of last month which at its height halted all non-military passenger and freight traffic between the city and West Germany. The workers, who are members of the East German Railroad Workers' Union, were following the Polish workers' lead in demanding a free trade union, higher pay and better social conditions. Strikebreakers were brought in by the Reichsbahn to operate a skeleton service between the two halves of the divided city and East German railway police with dogs were used forcibly to eject strikers from the railway installations they had occupied.

The railwaymen's union in West Germany, the GdED (an ITF affiliate), has expressed its solidarity with the West Berlin rail workers and is particularly concerned at the plight of those railwaymen who do not wish or are unable to continue serving with the Reichsbahn now that the strike is over. A top-level union meeting will take place in Berlin within the next few days to discuss the situation prior to negotiations with the Allied Powers, the Federal government and the Berlin Senate on the transfer of union representation of railwaymen in West Berlin to the GdED.



GHANA

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ITF unions offer support to striking Black Star Line officers

On 20 June, members of the ITF-affiliated Ghana Merchant Navy Officers' Association employed by the Black Star Line -- Ghana's national shipping company -- were dismissed after taking industrial action in support of demands for increases in basic and overtime pay, higher subsistence allowances, longer annual leave and an improved relieving system.

By early July, the Association had reached agreement on a return to work pending further negotiations on their claims. However, the talks were soon deadlocked when it became clear that the management was not prepared to offer any improvements. Our affiliate turned next to the country's Vice-President, who said that a Committee was to be set up to look into the conditions of all BSL employees. But before the Committee could begin its work the Ghanaian President announced on radio and television that the officers had again been dismissed.

The BSL management then proceeded to hire replacement officers from the Philippines, by-passing our local officer affiliate, which had complied with an ITF request not to allow its members to be supplied to the line. A meeting took place between the Association and the government on 20 August when the latter appeared to concede that the officers might have a case, but nothing has been heard from the government since then.

GREAT BRITAIN

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National dock strike averted

The threat of a British national dock strike from 22 September was lifted when a reconvened conference of dockers' representatives from the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union agreed to accept a peace formula in the dispute at the port of Liverpool, which threatened to undermine the job security of British dockers.

The strike call came after Liverpool port employers breached an eight-year-old agreement under which all registered dockers are allocated to regular employment with a specific employer, any reduction in the labour force being achieved by natural attrition or voluntary retirement in return for severance payments. The port's employers were refusing to absorb into the regular labour force 178 dockers employed by two local companies which were ending their dock operations. Instead, it was proposed that they be placed on the temporary unattached register (TUR), use of which - except for disciplinary reasons - had been outlawed since 1972. Under the strike threat, it was agreed that the Liverpool dockers would move to new jobs with a registered dock employer from the beginning of October, and an undertaking was given that port employers nationally would not resort again to use of the TUR as a means of enforcing redundancies at British ports.

While the strike was still in the balance, ITF docker affiliates were contacted and requested to advise their employers that they intended to take whatever solidarity action might prove necessary in support of their British colleagues.

Meanwhile, the British government has announced that severance payments to dockers leaving the industry voluntarily are to be increased by £2,000 to £10,500 and that an early retirement scheme for men over 60 is to be introduced.

New productivity deal for Mobil tanker drivers

A new productivity deal, which provides for an extra £16 per week in return for improvements in efficiency and a reduction in overtime working, has been negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union for Mobil tanker drivers. The productivity payment, which is non-pensionable, took effect from 6 October and will be used for the purposes of calculating overtime rates and shift pay. A further sum of up to £8 per week will also be paid for meeting specific productivity targets. The deal means that the current rate for a 40-hour week (including shift payments) of £123 will rise to £139, excluding the extra bonus payment.

Belfast dock strike ends

Dockers employed in the deep-sea section of the port of Belfast called off their six-week-old strike^x on 21 September after accepting management's offer to raise the daily rate to £23, a 30 per cent increase. However, the dockers are still insisting on a review of working conditions.

^xsee ITF Newsletter Nos. 8, page 74 and 9, page 88 for earlier details

SPAIN

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Higher pay for Guipuzcoa fishermen

Under threat of strike action, the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Federation of ELA-STV has succeeded in negotiating a new collective agreement for 900 fishermen in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa. An increase of eighteen per cent in rates of pay, seniority payments, allowances and bonuses has been agreed, together with a 65 pesetas working clothes and bedding allowance and a 25 pesetas wine allowance for each day at sea. In addition, the fishermen are now protected by a one million pesetas insurance policy against death or permanent incapacity from work-related accidents.

UNITED STATES

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Crews of inland waterway vessels on strike

A strike by 600 deckhands, cooks and engineers working on the tugs and barges of the American Commercial Barge Line Company -- one of America's largest inland waterway carriers, which operates on the Mississippi and its tributaries -- began on 14 July and still shows no signs of ending. The Seafarers' International Union of North America (an ITF affiliate) has charged the company with operating unfair labour practices and as yet our affiliate has been unable to obtain proper redress, despite recourse to the good offices of the National Labour Relations Board. A union appeal against an NLRB decision in the matter is currently pending.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian dockers staged a "demands week" last month to draw attention to the need to reach an early settlement in negotiations with the port employers for improvements in pay and working conditions.

Irish unions and employers have reached agreement on a new national understanding, to run for 15 months, which begins with a one-month pay pause, followed by increases of 8% plus £1 per week for the first eight months and a further seven per cent for the remaining months. The employers have agreed that should the retail price index rise by more than ten per cent between May 1980 and mid-February 1981 an upward adjustment in the amount due during the second phase would be considered.

Meanwhile, these are signs that an unofficial strike by Irish tanker drivers which has lasted several weeks and led to a petrol crisis in the country may be settled soon. The employers have now agreed to take part in mediation talks in line with proposals made by the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

Employees of Pan American World Airways in Italy staged a 24 hour strike earlier this month in protest at threatened dismissals arising from the company's plans indefinitely to suspend its New Rome service from 26 October. It is understood that Pan American has now dropped its plans to abandon the service, and will negotiate on the question.

Air New Zealand ground staff involved in a dispute over meal breaks have won the support of the airline's cabin crews, who staged a 30-hour strike at the beginning of October, halting all domestic and international services. The action was called off following the holding of talks with the ITF-affiliated Airline Stewards and Hostesses of New Zealand Industrial Union of Workers.

The Panamanian government has ordered twelve ships to be expelled from its registry after charging their owners with seriously violating international maritime safety regulations.

Portugal: the union representing TAP technical maintenance personnel called off a threatened indefinite strike from 24 September after reaching agreement with management. Earlier, the men had begun a work to rule and mounted a 24-hour strike in a dispute over higher salaries and the non-implementation of a collective agreement signed twelve months ago.

OBITUARIES

Karl Knutsen, general secretary of the Norwegian Ships' Engineers' Union since 1971, died in September, aged only 45. Brother Knutsen represented his union on a number of national bodies concerned with seafarers' welfare. He was a member of the Section Committee of the ITF Seafarers' Section and his international activities also included the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation, the Nordic Engineer Officers' Federation, IMCO and the ILO.

P.J. Larsen, secretary until his retirement for health reasons last February of the Danish Railwaymen's Union, died on 4 August 1980, aged 60. Brother Larsen had served his union in that capacity for eleven years, during which time he often attended ITF sectional meetings.

PERSONALIA

Walter Johnson, president of the British Transport Salaried Staffs' Association since 1977, has decided not to stand for office in next year's union elections. A Labour MP for ten years now, Brother Johnson has always steadfastly defended the rights of public transport workers. He served the ITF as a Lay Auditor from 1965 until our recent Miami Congress. Walter Johnson has already made it known that he does not intend to stand for election as an MP again.

Georg Larsen, president of the Danish Locomotivemen's Union, has retired early on health grounds.

Gerald Cooper, Liberian Commissioner for Maritime Affairs, announced his resignation last month. Although he gave no reasons for his decision, Mr. Cooper is known to have been made deeply unhappy by the handling of the Salem affair by the Liberian government.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Executive Board	- London	21-22 October 1980
Meeting on Rhine Manning Questions	- Utrecht	24-26 November 1980
Seafarers' Section Manning Committee	- Bremen	27-28 November 1980
Fair Practices Committee	- London	16-17 December 1980.

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STOP PRESS

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Situation of merchant seafarers in the Shatt Al Arab area

The following joint statement has been issued by the Chairmen of the Seafarers' and Shipowners' Groups respectively of the ILO Joint Maritime Commission (JMC), meeting in Geneva:

"We note with extreme concern reports in the press that merchant ships were attacked in the Shatt Al Arab area on Wednesday 8th October and that a number of crew members were killed and injured.

In the light of these reports we:

1. Draw attention to the neutral status of merchant ships registered in countries not involved in the hostilities;
2. Most strongly deplore the attacks reported and any hostile activities directed against neutral merchant ships;
3. Call on the Secretary General of the United Nations through the good offices of the International Labour Office, urgently to use his best endeavours within the means available to the United Nations, to impress on all parties concerned the need for immediate measures to be taken to preserve the safety of all neutral merchant ships and crews in the area in which the Iran/Iraqi hostility is continuing, and also the need to ensure that these essential principles are guaranteed as far as possible in all cases of hostility in the future."

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In addition, the General Secretary of the ITF, Harold Lewis, has called for the immediate evacuation of the crews of merchant vessels in the Shatt Al Arab area, and has drawn attention to the fact that foreign shore-based workers in the area have already been repatriated.