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~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
 ~ We take this opportunity of ~  
 ~ wishing every success in 1981 ~  
 ~ to ITF affiliates and other ~  
 ~ organizations fighting for the ~  
 ~ rights of workers. ~  
 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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INTERNATIONAL

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UGT/ITF frontier project to help long-distance lorry drivers

On 6 December, a frontier office owned and operated by the ITF-affiliated UGT Transport Workers' Federation, and supported by the ITF, was officially opened in Irun, Spain, close to the frontier with France. The office has been set up to advise and assist long-distance drivers, and part of this work will involve the recruitment of drivers into ITF-affiliated unions. Its opening was attended by road transport workers' representatives from Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden and Spain and observers from Argentina. There was also considerable Press response.

At a round-table discussion chaired by the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section Chairman, Kurt Haussig, means of supporting the Spanish union's efforts as actively as possible were considered, and an 18-point programme of services which could be offered by the office was drafted. Among these are road maps; road condition reports; currency exchange; advice and legal assistance on Customs and Excise problems; lists of recommended stopping-places, vehicle-repairers and spare-part depots, police stations and first-aid posts; breakdown assistance; details of union offices in Spain and other European countries, and other information material. Copies of a special ITF leaflet in five languages entitled "Help away from home" are also distributed by the office.

Participants in the discussions gave assurances that this idea would be followed up for the benefit of long-distance lorry drivers in their own countries, and positive steps to this end are being considered in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

Coercion of Filipino seamen over back-pay recovered on f-o-c ship

Recent action on behalf of a seaman by one of our Canadian affiliates in Vancouver brought to light the fact that crew members on the British (Hong Kong) flag Oriental Importer had been coerced into handing over back-pay recovered for them as the result of action against the ship by the ITF-affiliated New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) in March 1979. This was presumably the price for continued employment on that vessel and others managed in Hong Kong by Golden Peak Maritime Agencies Ltd. (C.Y. Tung) and manned in the Philippines by All

Oceans Maritime Agency Inc. The action in Vancouver concerned a sister-ship, the Pacific Reliance, on which the crew were living under unsanitary conditions and the vessel itself was found to be unsafe.

The matter has now been taken up within the Philippines National Maritime Board by our affiliate, the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union. The ITF is pressing, through the union, for the NSB Standard Format Agreement to include a clause guaranteeing the right to sign off an unseaworthy or unsanitary ship, and for the NMB to make it clear at its regular briefing sessions for Filipino crew members that they have a duty to report all substandard conditions to the Port State authorities and interested parties, such as maritime unions, and that there will be no penalties imposed on them for doing so.

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TRANSPORT

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UNITED STATES

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US-China cargo-sharing shipping pact signed

The AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department (MTD) reports that the US President has signed a historic shipping pact between the US and China. The bilateral agreement guarantees that the American-flag and Chinese merchant fleets will each carry one-third of all goods traded between the two countries. The remaining third will be open to competition from the fleets of other countries.

The MTD has long been urging that the United States enter into bilateral trading agreements as a just, equitable and effective method of revitalizing the American-flag merchant fleet and the maritime industry as a whole.

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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DENMARK

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Ships' Officers serve collective notice

As a result of inconclusive negotiations with the Danish Shipowners' Association over a period of some 6 months, the three ships' officers' unions, the Deck Officers' Association, Engineers' Union and Radio Officers' Union - all ITF affiliates -

have served notice on the Shipowners' Association on behalf of 2,300 of their members working on Danish ships. The notices of termination of employment will take effect from 1 April 1981 and at the first port of call thereafter the officers will be entitled to free repatriation. Under the Seaman's Act, 3 months' notice is required and the unions have given twice this period. Also from 1 April 1981, members will not accept jobs on ships belonging to companies which are members of the Shipowners' Association.

The unions had presented proposals for a reduction from 6 to 4 months in the length of the period of service on board ship which gives entitlement to free repatriation; the shipowners had offered 5 months, which the unions rejected. One of the main points at issue is the fact that the difference between officers' and ratings' earnings has diminished due to the effects of government incomes policy over recent years; the unions have claimed an increase of 22% on rates of pay plus a further amount for junior officers. The unions also stated that officers should have the right to choose whether they took cash payment or time off for overtime work and work on Sundays and public holidays, but no agreement was reached. The unions are also seeking changes in conditions on supply ships and in particular aim to achieve a system of one day's leave for each day on board ship, a proposal which the owners have so far refused to countenance.

FRANCE  
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Boulogne fishermen reject owners' proposals

Fishermen from the port of Boulogne have rejected proposals made by the owners for a new agreement which would have entailed a reduction in manning. During the summer a nine week strike by the fishermen had led to a blockade of most of the Channel ports. The fishing boat owners were seeking to reduce the crews of large trawlers from 21 to 18 fishermen and to cut the size of crews of smaller boats by one man. Although owners had offered assurances that reductions in manning would not lead to redundancies, the system of laying-off crew members in rotation on fall-back pay would have caused a loss of earnings. The proposals were rejected by 60% of the Boulogne fishermen.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY  
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German railmen win extra leave for stress conditions

The ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union has now been able to reach an agreement concerning special compensation for railwaymen working round the clock, i.e. those employed on shift work or on a rotational basis. The agreement was made possible by the withdrawal of an earlier demand by railway management that additional Winter leave given to permanent way men should no longer apply.

The agreement reached, applying to some 160,000 railmen, provides for from one to four additional days' leave, and is designed to compensate them for the extra stress of their working lives. Over and above this, workers over the age of 55 will receive one more day's leave as from 1982, and this will be extended to those over 50 as from 1983.

The agreement was announced by the German Railwaymen's Union on 24 November.

GREAT BRITAIN  
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#### Successful end to KLM ground staff dispute in London

A month-old strike by locally-employed KLM ground staff at London's Heathrow Airport, organized by the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Association of Scientific, Managerial and Technical Staff (both ITF-affiliated), was successfully ended on 24 November.

Originally, this involved a dispute over KLM's attempt to impose new winter rosters without agreement, but became further complicated due to the use of managerial staff on work normally performed by the strikers, and the threat by management to withdraw concessionary travel facilities for a period of six months as a sanction, once the strike was over.

Throughout the dispute, the ITF Secretariat was in constant touch with both the British unions and the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Unions (FNV Vervoersbonden) in efforts both to persuade management to withdraw its threatened sanctions and to secure a settlement. The ITF Secretariat also had talks to this end with the UK General Manager of KLM and a representative of KLM Head Office, who was specially flown over to London. The strike was finally settled to the satisfaction of both unions. A great deal of the credit for this must go to the Dutch Transport Workers' Unions, which played a major part in bringing about the settlement.

#### Rail unions threaten action over deteriorating situation

The National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, both ITF affiliates, are planning to launch industrial action in 1981 in order to draw attention to the deteriorating financial situation of British Rail and the need for greater investment in order to maintain services. The NUR has called for a further £50 million to be made available for BR investment in 1981, an increase in the government grant for socially necessary passenger services and an extension of government support for freight operations. Specific areas for investment should include further electrification, the Channel tunnel project and locomotive, carriage and wagon construction.

Adopting a resolution in favour of industrial action aimed at having proposed cuts in services abandoned and instead securing an increase in investment on the railways, the ASLE&F stated that it would not sit idly by while the British Railways Board demolished the railway industry. The ASLE&F believed that stronger management was required to bring about a change in government attitudes towards the railways. British Rail proposals for further closures and reductions in services could lead to the loss of 3,000 footplate men's jobs.

GREECE  
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New agreement for ocean-going cargo vessels

At the end of November, the ITF affiliated- Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) and the Union of Greek Shipowners reached agreement on new terms of employment for crews of ocean-going cargo ships over 4500 grt. The agreement takes effect from 1 October 1980 and is valid for one year.

Basic rates of pay are increased by 22% for officers, by 25% plus Drachmae 1500 for certificated ratings and by 10% for uncertificated ratings. The Sunday allowance is increased from 16% of basic pay to 18%. Free repatriation is now due after 6 months service on tankers and 7 months service on other cargo ships. Leave is increased by 5 days from 55 to 60 days per year of service. Other improvements concern long service allowance, increased overtime pay, subsistence allowance and additional pension benefits.

INDIA  
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Air India ground staff strike ends

We have been informed by the ITF-affiliated Air India Employees' Guild that their strike, which began in October as the result of the company's failure to pay an agreed productivity bonus, was called off on 24 November following personal intervention by the Minister for Civil Aviation. The news of the strike's end was delayed by a postal strike in India.

The Guild has asked us to thank all ITF-affiliated civil aviation unions for the support given during the dispute.

SINGAPORE  
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Airline pilots' dispute over duty time

Intervention by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, led to pilots members of the Singapore Airline Pilots' Association (Siapa) suspending industrial action against Singapore Airlines. The pilots were seeking a substantial increase in rates of pay over a three-year period as well as improvements in allowances. The

Prime Minister warned pilots that any crew standing down on an overseas flight would be presumed to be taking illegal industrial action and would be liable for dismissal.

One flight deck crew was dismissed by the airline after the crew had refused to extend their turn of duty beyond 26 hours. In normal scheduled service, Singapore Airlines requires its crews to perform flight duty periods of up to 16 hours. Six officials of Siapa are being accused before a court of starting industrial action without holding a secret ballot as required by law. The Association has also been ordered to show cause why it should not be deregistered as a trade union.

Singapore Airlines increased its profits in the financial year 1979-80 by 74% over the previous year. Siapa states that between 1972 and 1980 average wages in Singapore have increased by 73 per cent, while pilots' pay has increased by 15% over the same period.

SPAIN  
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#### Spanish dockers criticize Labour Board restructuring

The National Ports and Customs Federation of the UGT, an ITF affiliate, has criticised a Spanish Government decree of 29 October on the restructuring of the dock labour board as falling short of minimum standards of democracy. The Federation's criticism concerned in particular the provision which allows a port's technical director unilaterally to fix minimum manning levels for different operations. The federation also criticised the fact that the way would be open for port employers to engage untrained manpower if regular dock workers were unavailable. The UGT called on the Ministries concerned to get together with unions and port employers in order to come to an agreement.

SWEDEN  
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#### High lung cancer death rate among lorry drivers

A large-scale health investigation among professional drivers in Sweden shows that lorry drivers -- despite the fact that they smoke less than other groups -- have a higher than average death rate from lung cancer. Only 31% among this group were smokers, as compared with 58% for taxi drivers, 43% for driving instructors, and 40% for a comparable group of the Stockholm general public.

One of the industrial doctors involved in the investigation believes that the cause may be found in the lorry drivers breathing in diesel fumes and other exhaust gases during periods spent in city traffic jams. He believes that health checks on professional drivers should be carried out much more often, now that a number of professional illnesses have been detected among them. At present, the only such check takes place when drivers receive their driving licence at the age of 25.

Commercial vehicles represent about nine per cent of total traffic in Sweden, but are involved in 25% of all fatal accidents, mainly due to heavy traffic conditions.

The investigation also revealed that Swedish taxi-drivers suffer mainly from ear, nose and throat problems, followed by stomach and intestinal disorders, as well as those affecting the joints. Similar illnesses were reported among driving instructors, but bone damage and allergies were also common. More than half of the driving instructors (53%) said that their sickness absences were connected with their working environment, as against 37% of taxi-drivers.

The study will be continued to establish which professional illnesses (e.g. high blood pressure, nervous ailments and eye troubles) constitute particular traffic risks. It is also hoped to make recommendations on health check methodology.

#### Employment guarantees won for Saléns crew members

The long dispute between the Swedish Seamen's Union (an ITF affiliate) and the Saléns shipping company concerning flagging-out by the latter has now resulted in an agreement which provides employment guarantees for seamen currently employed on the company's vessels.

The agreement, which is being put to a ballot of the 713 crew members, is due to run until the end of 1984. Under it, the present labour force will be guaranteed employment, and if any further company vessels are sold their crew members will not be dismissed and the labour force can only be reduced through natural wastage.

During the last few years, Saléns has cut down its Swedish-flag fleet from 50 to 20 vessels. The company actually owns, either wholly or in part, or operates about 170 ships, the majority of which are under foreign flags. In an interview with the Swedish daily "Dagens Nyheter", the Seamen's Union President, Gunnar Karlsson, said of the new agreement: "We have finally put a brake on the many lost jobs on Saléns ships. Originally, we had about 1,500 members at Saléns. Today we have 713. Their employment is now safeguarded, and their total number can only be reduced through natural wastage, but not below 400."

Saléns have undertaken to maintain "an appreciable number" of its ships under the Swedish flag.



UNITED STATES

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Employers recognize dockers' right to strike over court container rulings

The ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association has made an agreement with the Atlantic and Gulf coast port employers under which the employers recognize the right of the union to take strike action if U.S. courts rule that the ILA does not have full rights to handle containers in the maritime trade. The agreement runs from 1 January 1981 to 1 October 1983.

For many years the ILA has been fighting to retain for its members work which has traditionally been done by them. Under the new agreement, the ILA will be able to strike if a port authority obtains a court order preventing application of the agreed container rules in its area. Further, if a shipping company diverts containers to a port where a court has banned exclusive ILA jurisdiction over container handling, then the company would have to pay \$500 per diverted container into that port's pension fund and an additional \$500 per container into local ILA welfare funds.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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The ITF-affiliated British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) has requested a meeting with the Nigerian High Commissioner in London concerning recent piracy incidents involving vessels at anchor off Lagos, due to long delays. The MNAOA is seeking protection for foreign vessels from the Nigerian authorities.

On the advice of their union British ratings members of the National Union of Seamen have rejected the General Council of British Shipping's "final" pay offer of a 10.5% increase. The result of the ballot was announced on 13 December and shipowners are likely to propose the reopening of negotiations in the near future.

A 48-hour strike at the beginning of December by Greek air traffic controllers in support of a pay claim led to the cancellation of a large number of domestic and international flights.

A work to rule by Air India Cabin Crew Association members ended on 17 November following a satisfactory settlement and assurances from Air India that there would be no victimisation of union members. The dispute arose over the decision by Air India to ground some cabin staff who claimed their minimum rest period after a tour of duty. The AICCA thanks all ITF affiliates who offered their solidarity and support during the dispute.

On 19 November, the ITF-affiliated Swiss Public Service Workers' Union (VPOD) celebrated its 75th anniversary. Our congratulations to our affiliate and best wishes for its future success.

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OBITUARIES

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ALF CHANDLER, former Administrative Officer of the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union, died on 12 November at the age of 83. He served the union for nearly forty years until his retirement in 1958.

Adolphe Graedel, who was General Secretary of our sister-ITS, the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) from 1954 to 1970, has died in Switzerland at the age of 78. He was a former National Secretary of the Swiss Metalworkers' Union and a member of the Swiss Parliament.

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PERSONALIA

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Emil Amft, Secretary to the Executive Board of the German Railwaymen's Union (an ITF affiliate) from 1959 until his retirement in June 1979, celebrated his 65th birthday on 31 October.

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LATE ITEM

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NORWAY

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Norwegian seamen to strike over Christmas?

As this issue of the ITF Newsletter was being finalized, there was still no indication that a settlement would be reached in the dispute between the Norwegian Shipowners' Associations and the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union (see Newsletter No. 11 of November) concerning a new agreement for foreign trade vessels. The Seamen's Union has rejected an offer of a 10.5% wage increase, as being far below the claims which it put forward. It also became apparent during the negotiations that the main demands of the shipowners are for increased possibilities of registering their ships abroad, or to use foreign crews on special rates and conditions, and for the ability to adjust manning scales, including the introduction of a two-watch system on larger vessels.

The Seamen's Union is now due to take strike action, failing agreement, as from 23 December. Initially the strike would affect passenger ships but other vessels would also become involved at intervals of one week. The shipowners have indicated that they would impose a retaliatory lock-out from the same date.

ITF maritime affiliates have been kept informed of developments in the dispute situation.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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European and N. American Civil Aviation affiliates	- London 13-15 January 1981
ITF Radio Officer meeting	- London 14-15 January 1981
ITF preparatory meeting on Seafarers' Training and Qualifications	- London 16 January 1981
Flight Deck Technical Committee	- London 10 February 1981
Road Transport Section Steering Committee	- Zurich 18-19 February 1981.

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INTENSIFICATION OF ITF FLAG-OF-CONVENIENCE CAMPAIGN

Plans by some major European shipowners to transfer more tonnage to flag-of-convenience registries prompted the ITF's European maritime affiliates to promote a week of intensified action from 17 to 23 November. Apart from the normal activity of securing ITF conditions for crews of ships not under an acceptable agreement and obtaining back-pay where agreements were not being complied with, the action was designed to improve observance of ILO and IMCO standards. It was also considered necessary to remind European governments of their obligations under the Hague Convention with respect to inspection of ships by port states.

A delegation of European seafarers' representatives from Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy and the ITF visited the European Parliament and held discussions with the Socialist Group of Members, with the EEC Transport Committee and with the Transport Commissioner in order to stress the need for concerted government action on the flag-of-convenience issue.

The ITF Fair Practices Committee met in London on 16 and 17 December and decided to co-ordinate a further week of intensified action on a world-wide basis prior to the May 1981 UNCTAD meeting. The Committee also decided that in considering whether a national agreement was the equivalent of the standard ITF agreement for F-o-C ships, quantifiable benefits such as sick pay, pensions and unemployment payments would be taken into account as well as manning and the type of ship. The Committee further decided that at its next meeting in May 1981 it would consider proposals for a revised ITF wage scale to be applied from 1 June 1981 with reference to national seafarers' wages in the countries where F-o-C ships are beneficially owned. The Committee deferred for the time being the subject of funding welfare benefits in Asian countries from the difference between national rates of pay and the standard ITF wage scale for flag-of-convenience ships.

The Committee took note of the important work being carried out within the UNCTAD Committee on Shipping into the whole question of the continued use of flags of convenience and the possibilities of phasing them out, and urged ITF seafarer affiliates to urgently seek consultation with their respective governments in the formulation of their national positions and, further, the inclusion of trade union advisers in the national delegations to the next meeting of the Committee on Shipping to be held in Geneva 27 May - 5 June 1981.