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No. 11

November 1982

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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ITF Executive Board meets in Bremen

At the invitation of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV), the ITF Executive Board met in Bremen on 19 and 20 October 1982. A meeting of the Management Committee of the ITF also took place in Bremen on 18 October.

As already reported in last month's issue of the Newsletter,\* the Board discussed the situation in Poland and decided to call on affiliates to boycott Polish ships, aircraft and cargoes on 10 November. It also asked them to take such measures as they could to register their total rejection of the régime's anti-trade union policies and actions.

The Board dealt at some length with the serious dispute between its affiliate, the General Workers' Union of South Africa and South African Transport Services (SATS)\*\* and went on to adopt a statement of support for the union. It also authorized the General Secretary to take whatever action he felt appropriate to enlist the aid of the ITF's affiliates for the South African dockers.

The Board unanimously condemned the lock-out of El Al workers and the management's plans to close the airline and sell it off to private interests. It called on the airline's management to accept a fair settlement of all outstanding issues by negotiation and declared that the ITF would regard the closure and subsequent sale of the airline as a direct attack on the trade union rights and working conditions of El Al's workers. The General Secretary was asked to take all appropriate measures, in consultation with the ITF's affiliates in Israel, to frustrate any such move.

The Board endorsed the position the General Secretary had taken with regard to the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas, and noted with great satisfaction that armed hostilities in the South Atlantic had now ceased. It expressed the hope that a peaceful solution to the dispute between Great Britain and Argentina would soon be reached.

Lengthy consideration was given to the report on the ITF's activities since the Board last met in March, including reports on three section conferences (those of road transport workers, seafarers and travel bureau staff). ITF Regional Representatives Ben Udogwu and Medardo Gomero attended the meeting to report on activities in Africa and Latin America respectively. The

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\* see page 114

\*\* reported in Supplements to the issues of January, March, May, June, August, September and October.

ITF's Asian Representative Mohammad Hoda was unable to attend as he was in the Far East, but the Board received a report of his programme of activities, including a detailed report on the Asia/Pacific Regional Conference held in New Delhi from 2 to 5 March.

The Board approved the Financial Report for 1981, as well as the draft budgets for 1983 for the General Fund and the Edo Fimmen Account-Regional Activities. It also agreed to propose certain constitutional changes of an administrative nature to the 1983 Madrid Congress.

Finally, the Board approved applications for affiliation subject to the satisfactory completion of any remaining formalities from seventeen unions in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Finland, The Gambia, Japan, Nigeria, the Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Thailand, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

#### INTERNATIONAL

##### Dockers' Section Conference discusses effects of automation and mechanization of cargo handling

A Conference of the ITF Dockers' Section attended by almost fifty delegates from unions in over twenty countries (and two ILO observers) was held in London on 26 and 27 October to discuss the results of a survey of present and potential effects of automation and mechanization of cargo handling which had been compiled by the ITF Secretariat from information prepared by affiliates. This showed that there had been a significant reduction over recent years in the waterfront labour force in many countries and that forms of automation were already being applied which would further endanger job opportunities in the industry. The survey pinpointed a number of serious safety problems arising from the introduction of new technologies, and also established that governments were not always doing all that they might to protect and improve conditions and security of employment of dock workers.

Against this background, the meeting decided to call for action by the ITF and its docker affiliates to ensure that those governments that had not already done so ratified ILO (Dock Work) Convention Nos. 137 of 1973 and 152 of 1979 and agreed to follow their supporting Recommendations.

In order that the ITF Secretariat might be enabled to build up an adequate fund of information at ITF headquarters on the operational and safety aspects of new methods and equipment, all the docker affiliates represented at the Conference undertook to keep the Secretariat advised of any new technology introduced,

as well as to keep it informed of all successes achieved in modifying equipment for safer operation and of successful challenges to the use of items of equipment on safety grounds.

The ITF agreed that it would bring to the attention of the International Maritime Organisation and the ILO certain safety problems associated with the use of containers, and that it would also seek amendment of the International Convention for Safe Containers to provide for adequate and regular testing of containers, particularly after structural repairs.

Finally, the ITF was requested to prepare before the next Section Conference a general statement of intent in relation to the waterfront industry with a view to its adoption and endorsement by the ITF Madrid Congress and its later presentation to the ILO.

#### ITF holds second urban transport meeting

A second meeting of ITF rail and road transport unions organising workers in urban transport was held in London on 16 and 17 November 1982, under the chairmanship of Victor Schiwoff of the Swiss Public Service Workers' Union (VPOD). Detailed reports on the situation of urban transport in the countries represented had been prepared for submission to the meeting and will be used by the Secretariat as the basis of an international survey for presentation to the 1983 Madrid Congress. A lecture by Dr. Tony Ridley, Managing Director (Railways) of London Transport, on the problems currently facing London Transport gave rise to a detailed discussion on the principles that should govern fares policy. The Secretariat was also asked to investigate the possibility of holding an urban transport day each year.

#### POLAND

##### ITF boycotts Polish transport in support of Solidarity

The ITF's worldwide boycott of Polish 'planes, ships and cargoes went ahead as planned on 10 November, the second anniversary of the legal recognition of Solidarity, adding to those limited protests that Polish workers were free to make themselves on that day to voice their support for the outlawed Solidarity independent trade union. Several aircraft operated by the Polish carrier LOT were stopped by aviation affiliates in Europe, while in Austria the Chopin express which runs between Vienna and Warsaw was halted for several hours following action by our affiliates there. Reports are still coming in from unions further afield in response to our request for details of their participation in the day of international protest, but it is known that many ITF affiliates have joined trade unionists the world over in renewing their representations to Polish diplomatic representatives, calling for an end to martial law and the freeing of detainees, and in

support of the right of Polish workers to belong to the union of their choice.

Meanwhile, the ITF has warmly welcomed the release from detention after eleven months of Lech Walesa, who was fêted by his fellow Poles on his return to the family flat in Gdansk, where he was reunited with his wife and children.

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TRANSPORT

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INTERNATIONAL

IMO World Maritime University opens its doors next year

In July 1983, the International Maritime Organisation's World Maritime University - housed in the former Merchant Marine Academy in Malmö, Sweden - will open its doors to its first year's intake of 100 students. The aim of the university is to provide specialized training for maritime administrators, surveyors and inspectors, accident investigators, maritime lecturers and others holding key posts in the maritime administrations of the developing nations - groups for which few training opportunities have existed hitherto. Students will embark on degree courses lasting either one or two years and there are plans to offer short specialised and refresher courses at a future date. Most of the training will take place in Malmö, although the students will also visit other European centres. IMO Secretary-General C.P. Srivastava has described the project as an example of beneficial cooperation between developed and developing nations.

GREAT BRITAIN

Loss of bulk carrier NESAM highlights poor safety record of vessels under 1,600 grt

The sinking earlier this month off the Isles of Scilly of the 1,571 grt British-registered bulk carrier NESAM, with the loss of five lives, has prompted the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen to seek an urgent review of UK regulations and inspection procedures in respect of vessels under 1,600 tons gross. Ships of this size largely escape the stringent requirements of international safety regulations and according to the union have such a poor safety record that they are rapidly gaining a reputation as coffin ships. The NUS is also seeking a public inquiry into

the events leading up to the loss of the NESAM, as well as an investigation into the vessel's manning, its structural condition and the way in which it was managed.

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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FRANCE

Air Inter agrees to hire more pilots

Following a two-day protest strike last month by its flying personnel, Air Inter has now agreed to hire an extra twenty-three pilots and to enter into joint talks with its flying staff unions on duty hours. At the French request, aviation affiliates in various European countries were contacted and asked not to operate additional services in substitution of Air Inter flights for the duration of the stoppage.

GREAT BRITAIN

Officers and ratings receive improved offers on pay

Britain's 26,000 merchant seamen are being balloted on an improved pay offer made to National Union of Seamen negotiators on 2 November. The General Council of British Shipping is offering 5.6% on basic rates (raised by £4 to £78), plus improvements in medical severance pay and other benefits, bringing the total value to six per cent.

Merchant navy officers are also being asked by their unions whether they will accept the owners' revised offer of a 5.5% increase in pay.

If approved, the new officers' rates would come into effect from this month, while the ratings' settlement date is 2 January.

Harwich Sealink dispute over

Last month, Sealink UK agreed to accept a proposal put forward by the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen and already approved by its local Harwich membership that the working hours of ratings on ferries from the port to the Hook of Holland and Zeebrugge should be reduced by 14 hours per fortnight, at an estimated saving in labour costs of £450,000 per annum. It will be recalled that a national Sealink strike was called by the NUS at the beginning of August in support of the Harwich men, who were facing a Sealink threat to axe its loss-making

freight and passenger services out of the North Sea port if considerable cost savings were not effected.\*

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\* see ITF Newsletter No. 8, 1982, page 87 for full details.

#### Pay and productivity deal for Esso tanker drivers

The basic rate of Esso tanker drivers will rise from £2.84 to £4.20 per hour on 6 December under a pay and productivity deal negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union which provides for the introduction of new and more flexible working methods. The minimum earnings guarantee also goes up to £159.60 for 38 scheduled hours from the present level of £113.50 for 40 hours. Esso is the last major oil company to reach a productivity agreement with its drivers, whose rates of pay have fallen behind those of others in the industry.

#### Seven per cent pay increase for London Transport Tube staff

London Transport Tube staff have won a seven per cent pay increase backdated to April, a reduction in the work week to 38 hours and an extra day's annual leave following implementation of an arbitration award. Earlier in the year, the union side had rejected a five per cent pay offer.

### GREECE

#### Union warns of strike in cargo fleet

The ITF-affiliated Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) has given Greek shipowners until 24 November to make its members a positive offer on pay if an indefinite strike throughout the cargo fleet is to be avoided. Earlier this month, the owners replied to the union's wage claim for the 1982 contract round by proposing a twelve-month pay freeze. The seafarers' annual pay award was due from 1 October.

### NORWAY

#### Mediated settlement in overseas trade pay talks

With the assistance of an official mediator, the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union has successfully renewed its overseas trade agreement with the shipowners' association, just as a strike of certain key groups was due to take effect. Under the settlement, foreign-going ratings will receive an increase of 346 kr per month, backdated to 1 November, with an additional 242 kr per month from 1 May 1983. Radio operators, electricians and chief stewards will receive an extra 250 kr per month on 1 November.

A threatened strike by foreign-going officers on passenger vessels and North Sea supply boats was also narrowly averted some days later when their unions\* agreed to accept a mediated two-stage pay offer of 11.5% from 1 November, followed by a further 3% next May. Engineering officers have also won more annual leave and time-off.

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\* the Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association and the Ships' Engineers' Union (both ITF affiliates)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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EEC civil aviation unions have again expressed their frustration at being unable to deal properly with Community questions affecting their members' interests because the Commission regularly cancels or curtails meetings with their representatives. They have renewed their call for the creation without further delay of a joint committee on civil aviation with the necessary resources to enable it to discharge its responsibilities.

Belgian transport workers staged a 72-hour strike earlier this month in protest at government plans to reduce services and employment levels and to impose a cut in real earnings next year.

Air Canada has announced plans to cut 2,000 jobs before the end of this year, largely through natural wastage, early retirement and the introduction of work-sharing.

France: dockers, railwaymen and Paris transport workers all took strike action last month to demonstrate their opposition to further pay restrictions following the expiry of a four-month pay and prices freeze. The government is seeking to limit pay rises to 10 per cent for the whole of 1982 and to 8 per cent in 1983.

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has negotiated a 3.2% pay increase for ground service employees of Hapag-Lloyd Flug, effective 1 September 1982. A lump-sum payment of 225 DM will be made for the months of June to August in lieu of backdating.



All three British rail unions have agreed to enter into talks with British Rail on the productivity issues\* linked to payment of the six per cent award recommended for 1982 by the Railway Staffs National Tribunal.

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\* see ITF Newsletter No. 9 1982, page 101

Maritime officials in Honduras have cancelled the registration of five hundred vessels for unspecified "illegal acts" and have stated that in future all owners will be investigated before they are allowed to place tonnage on the Honduran registry.

Indian railwaymen are to receive a productivity bonus of 31 days' pay for the financial year 1981/2.

Irish Republic: a strike of workers at Dublin's deep-sea dock was called off on 10 November after a settlement was reached in conciliation talks at the Labour Ministry. The dockers were objecting to the abolition of fall-back pay and the dismissal of 30 checkers.

Netherlands: employees of five Rotterdam tugboat companies benefit from a new collective agreement negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Union (FNV) which provides for regular cost-of-living adjustments, an extra day's annual leave and more time off.

The ITF extends heartiest congratulations to the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union - the oldest railwaymen's union in Scandinavia - on the occasion of its 90th anniversary this month,

Peruvian dockers staged a one-day strike earlier this month in protest at the granting of a tug contract to a private sector company.

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OBITUARIES

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It is with regret that we have to announce the death on 17 November, following a brief illness, of Otto Kersten, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. He was 53. Kersten had led the ICFTU with distinction for the past ten years

and was held in high esteem internationally, not least for his work on behalf of the union movement in the developing world. Before coming to the ICFTU, he had worked for a number of years for the European trade union movement in Brussels, returning in 1965 to his native Germany where he directed the international activities of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), travelling widely and gaining a breadth of knowledge of the international workers' movement that few could equal.

Michael Mullen, General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, has died in Germany, following a heart attack. He was 63. Mullen was elected to his present post in 1969 after deciding not to seek re-election as a member of the Irish parliament in order to devote all his energies to his union career. In 1973, he was nominated as a member of the Upper House (Senate) and earlier this year he was elected on to the Executive Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Kumazo Nakachi, President of the All-Japan Seamen's Union from 1958 to 1966, died on 7 November, aged 77. Nakachi played a major rôle in the formation of the Japanese Federation of Labour (DOMEI) and served as its first President.

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PERSONALIA

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Moss Evans, General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union and a member of the ITF Executive Board, has been appointed to the Council of the independent conciliation service, ACAS.

Johnny Grönberg, President of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, was elected Vice-President of the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation at its biennial Congress last month.

Richard Müller, President of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB) since 1978, retired at the SGB Congress last month. He is succeeded by Fritz Reimann. Jean Clivaz, President of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union and Dr. Walter Renschler, General Secretary of the Swiss Public Service Workers' Union, have both been elected Vice-Presidents of the Confederation.

Don Nicholson, fifth National President of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, retired

at the Brotherhood's recent Halifax Convention. Nicholson started work for the CBRT&GW in 1959 after working for many years with the United Mine Workers, and was elected an Executive Vice-President in 1970. He assumed the presidency of the Brotherhood in 1976 on the retirement of Don Secord. In addition to being a member of the ITF Executive Board, Nicholson represents Canadian dockers on the Fair Practices Committee and is a member of the Seafarers' Section Committee. He has also served in the past on the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section Committee.

Jim Hunter was elected as the Brotherhood's new National President,

Alphonse Tonneaux retired last month from the presidency of the Railwaymen's Section of the Belgian Public Service Workers' Union. He is succeeded by René Tollet.

Piet Potums follows Tonneaux as chairman of the railwaymen's section of the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community.

Sidney Weighell announced last month his decision to resign from the general secretaryship of the British National Union of Railwaymen at the end of 1982. His successor will be elected in a union ballot. Weighell was elected to his present post in 1975 after serving for ten years as deputy to the then Sir Sidney (now Lord) Greene, whom he succeeded as a member of the ITF Executive Board. Weighell has been an influential figure in British trade union circles during the years in which he has led the NUR and his thoughtful contributions to the national debate on the future of the railways in Britain will be sadly missed.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Conference of ITF European Seafarers -  
aboard Silja Line ferry ..... 8 - 9 March 1983  
Management Committee - Salzburg ..... 14 March 1983  
Executive Board - Salzburg ..... 15 - 16 March 1983  
Fishermen's Section Social Policy  
Sub-Committee - Bremerhaven ..... 7 - 8 April 1983

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

OFFSHORE UNIONS HOLD MEETING IN OSLO

Around thirty delegates from ITF affiliated seafarer unions with members in the offshore industries of Australasia, Europe and North and South America met in Oslo on 5 and 6 October 1982 to discuss trade union organization, safety and health, training and recruitment as well as working conditions and social security of offshore industry personnel. The interim results of a pilot study by the ITF Secretariat were presented to the meeting and these revealed that in spite of considerable progress by the trade unions as regards maritime mobile offshore units\* under bona fide flags in certain areas of the world many problems remained to be solved in those areas and elsewhere.

At the end of their deliberations the delegates arrived at the following conclusions:

- "1. Every effort must be made to organize all workers on board maritime mobile offshore units flying both bona fide flags and flags of convenience and to this end the participating unions agree to cooperate fully to their mutual benefit. The absence of agreement among ITF affiliates concerning the manning of maritime mobile offshore units and the conditions of service which shall apply on board such units can only serve the interests of unscrupulous employers. Therefore, in seeking to arrive at agreement among themselves in potential areas of conflict the affiliates shall pay due attention to the conditions governing the operation of units under the flags of bona fide maritime nations and continental shelf states. It is imperative that maximum accommodation is afforded by either side in a potential conflict situation and that the ITF Secretariat is notified as early as possible in order that it may assist - by whatever means available including those provided under the ITF constitution - in the quest for a solution. In pursuing these objectives there is considerable merit in the establishment of inter-union liaison committees.
2. National and international safety standards must be improved and excessive strain on crews from whatever cause must be avoided. In pursuing these objectives the unions shall seek to ensure (a) that proper manning standards and crew relief systems are established and maintained in order to ensure that crews are not compelled to work excessively long hours and (b) that all other safety standards are actually enforced.

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\*"maritime mobile offshore units" shall include but not be limited to the following: semisubmersibles, jack-ups, drill ships, supply vessels and auxiliary craft

3. Job-related professional training leading to the issuance of certificates must be provided together with specific survival and safety training for all offshore workers. In this respect all governments must assume the overall responsibility.

4. The recruitment of workers to maritime mobile offshore units should be properly controlled by governments and/or maritime trade unions in order to avoid exploitation of such workers by fly-by-night manning agents.

5. To facilitate the achievement of the aims set out in paragraphs 1 - 4 above it is recommended that the ITF Secretariat should strongly consider (a) the drawing up of ITF collective agreements for flag of convenience shipping specially tailored to the requirements of the offshore industry and (b) the question of appropriate representation by the ITF and its affiliates at meetings of IMO where matters concerning maritime mobile offshore units are considered.

6. In view of the size and importance of the maritime side of the offshore industry it is recommended (a) that the ITF Seafarers' Section should appoint a standing committee to deal with problems relating specifically to maritime mobile offshore units and to develop relevant policies and (b) that an ad hoc steering group be convened to prepare for the appointment and terms of reference of such a committee in time for the next ITF Seafarers' Section Conference."

In conclusion the meeting welcomed the decision by the U.S. House of Representatives to defeat the Bill (No. HR4863) which was designed to deny foreign workers employed on board American-owned vessels the right to seek damages under American laws and invited affiliates to keep pressurizing the U.S. government and House of Representatives to forestall any attempt to revive the issue.