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No. 1

January 1983

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

AFRICA

African dockers discuss effects of technological change

Dockers' unions from the Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo were represented at the ITF African Dockers' Conference held in Nairobi from 2 to 4 December 1982.

The Conference was devoted to an intensive examination of the effects of new technologies and methods on African port workers and its conclusions were summarized in a statement urging African ports authorities:

- "1. To undertake a thorough study and evaluation of the various available cargo handling technologies and methods with a view to ascertaining the type most suitable for African ports and to adopt cautiously and selectively only the appropriate and absolutely necessary forms of technology that would enhance productivity and job security; and
2. To take trade union views into consideration in the planning and introduction of new technologies and methods so as to minimize or remove the incidence of industrial disputes as well as to explore meaningful and satisfactory arrangements for redeployment of workers displaced by technological change."

The Conference also called upon African governments to ratify ILO Conventions 137 (1973) and 152 (1979) and to grant dockers full trade union rights in accordance with Conventions 87 and 98.

The International Association of Machinists (IAM) of North America sponsored the Conference and Ben Sharman, the IAM's International Representative, attended. The Conference arrangements were made by the ITF's African Representative, Ben Udogwu, in collaboration with the ITF's Kenyan affiliates. The ITF's General Secretary took the chair.

TRANSPORT

EUROPE

European parliament takes Council of Ministers to court over failure to adopt a common transport policy

In an unprecedented legal move, the European parliament - with the

backing of the EEC Commission - is to take the Council of Ministers to the European Court because of its alleged "failure to act" over the adoption of a common transport policy. In September, the parliament had given the Council two months - as required by the Treaty of Rome - to produce evidence of its intention to move towards a common transport policy. The Council was unable to satisfy the parliament within the time limit set that such was its urgent intention and the latter now feels that recourse to the law is the only way to prevent further delays in reaching a joint policy on transport among the ten member states of the Community.

FRANCE

French National Railways (SNCF) is fully nationalised

The French national railway company (SNCF) became a fully-nationalised undertaking on 1 January, forty-five years after it was first formed as a mixed undertaking in which the State assumed part-ownership of five large private railway companies. The SNCF's new statutes, drawn up by parliament last year in the context of new transport planning legislation, give complete ownership to the State, which previously held a 51% interest. One of the key benefits of total nationalisation will be the increased financial support that the deficit-laden company will now receive from the State. As part of an effort to make the railways more accountable, a rail user's representative has been given a seat on the SNCF Administrative Council and local authority consent will have to be obtained before any changes in services are implemented.

GREAT BRITAIN

North Sea ferry tragedy reawakens ro-ro safety debate

The British Shipping Minister has promised an urgent formal inquiry into the North Sea ferry disaster shortly before Christmas should the Department of Trade investigation ordered by the government show this to be necessary. The owners of the two vessels involved - Sealink, operator of the Speedlink Vanguard, and European Ferries, owners of the European Gateway - are conducting their own internal investigations. Six men from the European Gateway (four crewmen and two lorry drivers) were lost when the ro-ro ferries collided in rough seas but good visibility on 19 December two miles off the east coast port of Harwich. The Speedlink Vanguard made it back safely into port, while the European Gateway, which sustained considerable damage close to the waterline in the collision, quickly capsized and sank. She is now lying on her side in six metres of water on a sandbank and attempts are being made to right her.

The accident has awakened the ro-ro safety debate and it is being suggested that the design of the European Gateway could have contributed to her fate. By the very nature of their operation,

ro-ro vessels - with their through vehicle decks - cannot be compartmentalized by bulkheads in the manner of other cargo vessels and any damage, particularly amidships, can prove more than usually serious. Most ro-ro decks are located close to the waterline and this makes them particularly vulnerable to any sudden inrush of water. Heavy lorries and their cargoes carried on the deck can also pose a threat to vessel stability.

UNITED STATES

TWU supports domestic air fares regulation

The efforts of a US Senator to introduce amending legislation to regulate the fares of domestic air carriers have won the unqualified support of the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America which sees this as an essential first step towards restoring economic stability to an industry that has sustained serious damage as a direct result of deregulation. In support of its argument in favour of the reintroduction of fares controls, the union points to the bankruptcies that have accompanied the cut-throat fares wars of recent years and the pay cuts and layoffs forced on employees as airlines struggle to retain a competitive edge.

TRADE UNIONS

PAKISTAN

ILO calls on government of Pakistan to lift ban on trade union activity by PIA employees

At its November session, the ILO Governing Body adopted the conclusions of the Committee on Freedom of Association on the latest complaint lodged by the ITF against the government of Pakistan. The ILO has already on previous occasions condemned martial law regulation no. 52 banning trade union activity by employees of the PIA Corporation as a grave infringement of freedom of association. * It is disturbed that Pakistan rather than lifting should have extended the ban and has called on the government to revoke the regulation as soon as possible, as well as to reinstate or pay due compensation to all the workers dismissed as a result of their trade union activity.

*see ITF Newsletter No. 5, 1982 p. 52

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA

Waterside workers win pay improvements

The ITF-affiliated Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia has successfully concluded a six-month pay agreement, effective from 1 November 1982, which raises the weekly pay of an ordinary waterside worker by A\$ 10.95 to A\$ 302.95. It has also been agreed to review the new rates in April 1983 in the light of movements in the prices index since 1 July 1982 and that any increase awarded should be applied to the first pay period after 1 May. Other sample rates are: top terminal rate A\$ 324.80 (up \$ 11.90), mobile crane and forklift truck operator A\$ 314.50 (up \$ 11.40) and gearman (Sydney) A\$ 318.90 (up \$ 11.50).

AUSTRIA

Higher pay for rail and municipal workers

Agreement has been reached between the Austrian government and the four public service workers' unions - including the ITF-affiliated Austrian Railwaymen's Union and Municipal Employees' Union - on a new eleven-month pay agreement for 1983. This enters into effect on 1 February and provides for wage and salary increases of 5.1% for those in the lowest grades, tapering to 4.03% for the highest-paid, with similar increases in the pensions of retired workers. Additionally, all allowances will be raised by 4.42%, as will the flat-rate bonus paid to all public service workers, which goes up from 846 to 883 schillings.

CANADA

CALFAA wins reinstatement of unfairly dismissed flight attendants

Regular readers of the Newsletter will remember the protracted dispute in 1981 between the ITF-affiliated Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Association (CALFAA) and the charter company Wardair over the renewal of their collective agreement.* Although this was eventually settled in November of that year, subsequent events have shown that CALFAA's difficulties with the airline were by no means at an end. In the twelve months since then Wardair has dismissed 10 flight attendants and it has taken prompt intervention by their union in filing an unfair labour practice with the Canadian Labour Relations Board to get a total of eight exonerated and reinstated. (The two remaining cases have still to come before an arbitrator.) Six of the eight - who included CALFAA's First National Vice-President Max Jamernik - were given no reason for their dismissal and it is surely no coincidence that all six were strong union members actively involved in the 1981 contract negotiations with Wardair. Of the two remaining reinstated flight attendants, one was completely exonerated, resulting in the company

being required to pay over \$25,000 in back pay and interest; the other accepted one day's suspension instead of discharge the week before the arbitration hearing and was paid compensation of over \$8,000 by the employer.

While the sackings are serious enough in themselves, they are not the whole story. CALFAA has filed a total of 275 other grievances against Wardair since January 1982 and is currently involved in hearings before the Labour Relations Board over the company's attempt to remove the in-charge position. The union is also concerned that the company should lay off and recall flight attendants without regard for seniority (probationaries have been recalled before permanent staff) and that it should regard two periods of sick leave within six months as grounds for disciplinary action.

*see July, August, September, October and November issues.

New contract for British Columbia longshoremen

Following difficult negotiations, the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union has finally reached agreement with the British Columbia Maritime Employers' Association on the details of a new three-year contract for its members in the province. Pay increases of 10.4% and 11.6% respectively apply in the first and second contract years, taking the base rate to \$15.53, with talks being re-opened at a later date on an appropriate increase for the third contract year. The union has also won retention against strong employer opposition of a contract clause giving longshoremen the sole right to unload containers for destinations within 80 km of the B.C. port of entry.

The settlement was preceded by a go-slow and employer lockout. In early November, the federal government adopted emergency legislation to end the lockout and set a deadline for a settlement, failing which an agreement in line with the national pay norms of six and five per cent would have been compulsorily imposed on the dockers. The deal was hammered out only two hours before the deadline was due to expire.

GERMANY

Seafarers win extra shore leave

A compromise formula worked out in late-night mediation sessions offering German seafarers a staged increase in shore leave* over the next three years has been formally approved by both the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) and the shipowners' association. Under the formula agreed to by the parties, shore leave will be increased by 1 day per month spent on board from 1 March 1983 and by a further half-day per month on 1 September 1983 and 1 March 1984. On 1 January 1985, a new system for calculating the shore leave entitlement will come into effect and Sundays falling in a shore-leave period will no longer count as part of that shore-leave period. The currency of the

basic agreement has been extended by three years from 1 January 1983, while the previous seafarers' pay agreement will remain in force to the end of 1983.

*for earlier details see ITF Newsletter No. 12, 1982, page 132

GREAT BRITAIN

2.5% pay increase for Thomas Cook staff

The ITF-affiliated Transport Salaried Staffs' Association has negotiated the following improvements for its members employed by Thomas Cook: a guaranteed 2.5% pay rise in basic pay from 1 March 1983 (plus a further percentage increase backdated to 1 May 1983, should the Group trading profit exceed certain levels); shorter working week of 36½ hours; increased annual leave entitlements for lower grades; and an undertaking that the performance related merit scheme will be re-introduced, provided payroll savings at December 1982 are sufficient to fund this.

Improvements have also been obtained in respect of London Weighting, with the Inner London allowance being increased from £1,142 to £1,267 per annum on 1 March and the Outer London allowance raised to £524 (from £486). If the Group trading profit reaches £5m, further adjustments in the London Weighting would bring these figures to £1,333 and £552 respectively, backdated to 1 May 1983.

Pay and productivity deal for Mobil tanker drivers

A new pay and productivity deal negotiated by the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union gives Mobil tanker drivers a new basic weekly rate of £155.32 from 1 January. This includes a productivity supplement of £29.45. The working week was also reduced by 2½ hours to 37½ hours on the same date.

PORTUGAL

TAP cabin crew talks fail to make progress

Following a recent communication from the Cabin Crew Union, the ITF has telexed the President of TAP-Air Portugal and the Portuguese Ministry of Transport to protest at the lack of progress made in direct negotiations between the airline and our affiliate on pay, career development, and cabin crew complement on the Lockheed Tristar and to call for an early settlement, as promised by the airline last year,* of these outstanding issues. ITF aviation affiliates have also been requested to make similar representations on behalf of the Portuguese union.

*see ITF Newsletter No. 7, 1982, page 80

UNITED STATES

IAM calls strike against Qantas

Lengthy contract negotiations between the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and the Australian airline Qantas have broken down over the company's refusal to reconsider its intention to abolish 250 jobs currently performed by IAM members and to give this work to an outside contractor. The union has called a strike from 6 February if no progress is made before then on the matter in dispute.

FLAG OF CONVENIENCE CAMPAIGN NEWS

Crew to sell bulker to meet back pay claim

As a result of a court ruling obtained by the ITF, ownership of the Panamanian-registered Zoodohos has passed to her 28-man crew, who were owed back pay of £181,591 when the vessel's operating company ceased trading and abandoned them and the 22-year-old vessel last November in the Dutch port of Flushing. The Dutch courts had earlier insisted that the vessel be put up for sale at a public auction to raise the cash to meet the crew's outstanding claim, but this failed to produce a high enough bid. The crew is hoping that it will be able to get a better price for the vessel and it is understood that an offer is at present under active consideration.

The crew of the Zoodohos are victims of what is becoming an increasingly popular tactic on the part of shipowners. Faced by low second-hand ship values, owners are disowning uneconomic ships once substantial arrears have built up and are leaving the crews to fend for themselves, often far from home. The ITF is angry that owners should feel that they can simply walk away from their responsibilities towards men they have hired.

It is fortunate for the crew of the Zoodohos that the Dutch social services are always willing to provide food and other essential supplies to distressed crews. Regrettably, this generosity has only led to a rise in the number of such ships abandoned in Holland.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Argentina: a two-day strike in December by dockers at the port of Buenos Aires has led to their being granted a 22% increase in basic rates.

Dockers in Colombia's five major ports staged a 24-hour protest strike earlier this month following the suspension of talks on improved working conditions.

Deck and engineering officers on Finnish icebreakers have returned to work following settlement of a pay strike.

Staff of Finland's national carrier Finnair struck briefly earlier this month against plans to tax their free and reduced-rate flight tickets.

British Airways is to make up to 2,000 senior staff redundant in the next three months.

Great Britain: European Ferries ratings have won implementation of the national 5.6% increase from 1 July plus a 3.5% increase, effective 1 January, following a strike that disrupted sailings from Southampton. The annual leave entitlement has also been increased by 11 days. The European Ferries pay talks are conducted independently of the national negotiations with the General Council of British Shipping.

Thousands of Greek workers joined in a 4-hour national protest strike on 19 January against the government's new incomes policy.

Italian air traffic controllers staged strike action last month to back a demand for improved conditions.

The ITF-affiliated St. Lucia Seamen's and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union has called off a go-slow at Port Castries after successfully negotiating a new pay agreement with the port employers.

The new Spanish Socialist government has announced that in future it will be represented in 12 of the 13 Committees of the International Labour Organisation. These include the Inland Transport Committee and the Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Committee of the ILO.

Thailand: Bangkok dockers called off a strike after the port employers and shipping firms agreed they would honour existing agreements on pay and benefits. A claim for increased shift pay was rejected.

A threatened strike against Trans World Airlines was called off by the US International Associations of Machinists last month after our affiliate concluded a tentative agreement on pay and conditions.

United States: Pan American World Airways and the ITF-affiliated Flight Engineers' International Association have reached tentative agreement on a two-year contract extending the current pay freeze to 1 January 1984, when a 5% pay increase comes into operation. A profit-sharing scheme was also agreed, with flight engineers receiving a 1% pay rise if net profits reach \$20 million.

The Transport Workers' Union of America (also affiliated) has reached agreement in principle with Pan American on the terms of a new contract for its members employed by the airline.

United States: the financially-troubled Eastern Airlines has announced plans to lay off 300 pilots in 1983.

OBITUARIES

Yakub M. Serang, Assistant General Secretary of the National Union of Seafarers of India, died on 16 December, at the age of only 49, following a heart attack. Serang had served as his country's deputy on the Committee of the ITF Seafarers' Section since 1974.

Lars Erik Aakre, Secretary of the Norwegian Seamen's Union, has died, aged only 35. A full-time union official since 1975, Aakre had won a considerable reputation as a skilled negotiator and talented lecturer at union-run study courses.

PERSONALIA

The 1982 George Meany Human Rights Award is shared by Dr. Neil Aggett, formerly Transvaal Regional Secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, and Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Minister of Kwa Zulu, for their advocacy of black rights in South Africa. Dr. Neil Aggett, who died in a prison cell in Johannesburg three months after his arrest for his trade union activities on behalf of black workers in the Republic, is honoured posthumously. The award was inaugurated in 1981 in memory of the late AFL-CIO President - the recipient in that year was the Polish independent trade union Solidarność.

Tom S. Bavin, President, and Stanley G. Correa, General Secretary, of the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers, retired at the IFPAAW's Fifth World Congress held last month. Börje Svensson (Sweden) was elected as the new IFPAAW President and José J. Vargas, former Assistant to the General Secretary, has taken over as General Secretary.

Alfred Kaufmann was elected General Secretary of the International Graphical Federation at its recent Congress. Kaufmann, previously IGF Assistant General Secretary, had been acting General Secretary since the death in June 1981 of Heinz Göke.

Louis Major, former General Secretary of the Belgian Trade Union Federation (FGTB) and Vice-President of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union, celebrated his 80th birthday on 20 December.

Emmanuel Saïtis, General Secretary of the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) since 1975, retired early for health reasons at the end of 1982. He represented Greece on the Committee of the

ITF Seafarers' Section and also served on the Fair Practices Committee. Yiannis Psarras has been appointed Interim General Secretary until a successor is elected at an extraordinary Congress of the union.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

FOO/Flight Despatcher Working Group - London 1-2 March 1983
Transport Policy Sub-Committee - Berne 3-4 March 1983
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
Fair Practices Committee - London 22-23 March 1983
Inspectors' Seminar - London 24-25 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