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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

ITF regrets lack of progress at UNCTAD "open register" meeting

The ITF was represented at the Second Session of UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Preparatory Group on Conditions for Registration of Ships, which took place in Geneva towards the end of 1982, by A. Selander, ITF Assistant General Secretary, B. Laughton, Secretary of the Special Seafarers' Department, and L. Barnes, General Secretary of the National Union of Seafarers (Bombay), India. ITF Seafarer affiliates from Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United States also attended. The meeting adopted a composite text covering manning of ships, the rôle of flag countries in the management of shipowning companies and vessels, equity participation in capital, bareboat charters and identification and accountability. While there was general agreement on the need for ensuring a "genuine link" between a vessel and the flag it flies the developing and developed nations' views differed as to what the elements of the link should be and whether it should be achieved through mandatory or voluntary measures. Alternative draft texts will now be prepared for an International Agreement to be adopted by a Plenipotentiary Conference, which will probably be held some time in 1984. The ITF spokesman at the meeting expressed deep disappointment at the lack of progress made at this particular Session and reiterated the ITF's resolute opposition to the open-registry system. He also roundly condemned the developed nations for their filibustering tactics in opposing further definition of what should constitute a "genuine link".

ASIA

Technological change main theme at ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Dockers' Conference

Representatives from seventeen port workers' unions took part in the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Dockers' Conference held in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) from 24 to 27 January 1983. The Conference was opened by the Deputy Minister of Labour and went on to a detailed study of the effects of technological change and new methods in the Asia/Pacific ports industry. The discussions were based on an ITF questionnaire which had also formed the basis for the ITF Dockers' Section Conference in October 1982 and the African Regional Dockers' Conference in December. The Conference also included a general discussion on technological change which was led by a panel of Malaysian experts.

The discussions ended with the unanimous adoption of conclusions which noted that, whilst the degree of technological change varied from country to country, there had been a substantial reduction in the port labour force overall and that this trend could produce social tensions in a region where, in some countries, there was already massive unemployment. However, the unions recognised that there was a need to adopt advanced technologies if the developing countries were not to lag too far behind the industrialised countries. The ITF was asked to urge governments in the region to set up tripartite committees at all levels so as to ensure consultation on the adverse effects of technological changes. The ITF's assistance was also sought in persuading governments to ratify and observe the relevant ILO and IMO international instruments.

TRANSPORT

EUROPE

EEC common fisheries policy now a reality

After negotiations lasting several years, agreement was finally reached in January on a common fisheries policy (CFP) for all the ten member states of the European Community. The common policy - only the second such in the history of the EEC - enters into immediate effect and will remain in force initially for twenty years, with minor adjustments being made as necessary.

The CFP sets a total allowable catch (TAC) based on scientific estimates of fish stocks in Community waters, which extend up to 200 miles from the Community coastline. This is then divided up into quotas, with EEC member countries being awarded a proportion according to the particular needs of the different regions of the Community, the notion of historic fishing rights and the potential loss of fish catches in third country waters. Access (i.e. fishing rights) has been agreed by drawing two bands six and twelve miles out from the coastline of member states; in the first of these fishing boats of the coastal nation have exclusive fishing rights, while in the second band vessels of the coastal nation and a limited number of vessels from nations with historic rights in clearly defined areas share exclusive rights. Outside these two bands, Community waters are open to all, except for the Shetland and Orkneys 'boxes' where, in order to conserve fish stocks, access will be restricted to British fishing vessels and a limited number of boats from other Community countries.

Individual member states of the Community will be responsible for ensuring that the new fishing rules are observed, although a Community 'police force' will be set up with the right to make spot-checks on boats and catches to encourage compliance. A new marketing system is also being introduced with the aim of improving sales and distribution, and an annual grant from the Community budget will help the Ten to modernise their fishing fleets and port facilities.

GREAT BRITAIN

NUS outlines rescue plan for UK merchant fleet

In *British Shipping: Heading for the Rocks - a Rescue Plan from the National Union of Seamen* published in December the union outlines an alternative strategy for halting the decline in the UK merchant fleet.

Central to the NUS plan is the establishment of a national shipping company, initially with ownership and control of Sealink UK, to carry government and nationalised industry cargo. At a later date, the position of the company would be strengthened by bringing into public ownership, first other ferry companies and later leading operators of North Sea offshore supply vessels. This move would be accompanied by the introduction of a series of protectionist and preservation measures in place of the free trade philosophy to which the Conservative government and the Department of Trade's Shipping Policy Division obstinately subscribe at a time when more and more maritime nations are taking steps to protect their fleets and world shipping generally is moving away from free to managed trade. Unless urgent and decisive action on these lines is taken it is the union's view that the national merchant fleet could shrink to less than 200 vessels of 6 million tonnes by the year 2000.

The recommendations contained in the union report include:

- the dismantling of the Department of Trade's Shipping Policy Division and the transfer of responsibility for the shipping industry to the Department of Transport, which would have its own junior minister;
- the introduction of cabotage and UK-flag only operations in the UK sector of the North Sea;
- legislative and fiscal control on the transfer of ships to foreign flags;
- subsidies to be made dependent on a commitment from operators to maintain certain vessels under the UK flag;
- companies receiving subsidies to be the beneficial owners of vessels and subject to majority ownership and control by UK citizens;
- British shipyards to be used as a priority for new buildings and conversions; and

- the inclusion of representatives of the recognised maritime unions on the board of the new national shipping corporation.

In the closing words of the study:

"Only by taking these steps can there be a future for a substantial, efficient and competitive UK fleet, serving the needs of Britain and its people."

TRADE UNIONS

EUROPE

ETUC demands urgent action on jobs

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) launched an international campaign against unemployment with an inaugural rally in Brussels on 11 February, which was attended by thousands of trade unionists from all over Europe. Addressing the rally, ETUC General Secretary Mathias Hinterscheid attacked those in power for ignoring union warnings of the likely effects on employment levels of prevailing economic doctrines and said that the ETUC would wage a tireless campaign to stamp out the evil of unemployment. The ETUC jobs programme calls for: increased investment in the public sector, a reduction in working hours, protection of the purchasing power of wages, job creation schemes, and greater industrial democracy. Those attending the rally were urged to support these demands through their unions and to keep up the pressure on governments and employers to pursue policies and make investment decisions that would aid economic recovery and promote full employment.

POLAND

ILO upholds ICFTU complaint against government of Poland

At its most recent session, the ILO Governing Body adopted the report of the Committee of Freedom of Association on the ICFTU complaint against the government of Poland.

In its report, the Committee deplored the fact that certain key provisions of the new labour relations legislation adopted by the Polish parliament in October 1982 did not conform to ILO principles on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The Committee also expressed its concern at the large number of trade unionists who were still detained and urged their release, as well as calling on the Polish government to grant an amnesty to workers sentenced for "actions of a trade union character". With regard to the "declaration of loyalty" that workers had been forced to make, the Committee adjudged this

to be a "serious interference by the public authorities in the workers' free choice of their organisations and a form of anti-trade union discrimination".

The Committee report also included a call for lifting of martial law and this was met (but only partially) when martial law was officially suspended on 31 December 1982. At about the same time, however, a number of repressive laws or amendments were made in areas closely related to labour relations. Punishments for "law breakers" or those disseminating publications or films the authorities disapproved of were sharply increased and summary trials remain an option open to the régime against "political activists" who could well be strike leaders. Meanwhile, on the government's own admission, the new "unions" have so far found almost no favour with Polish workers.

The ICFTU, which lodged the original complaint with the ILO, has welcomed the suspension of martial law, while linking this to a call for the removal of all the repressive measures against Polish workers, full respect for human rights and freedoms and the reinstatement of Solidarity. It has also urged its affiliated organisations to continue and intensify pressure and action in support of the free, independent and self-governing trade union movement in Poland until such time as these demands have been met. Additionally, it has called on governments through their diplomatic representatives to request action on the human and trade union rights situation in Poland and to make economic assistance and credit to the country conditional on full respect for human, civil and trade union freedoms.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

DENMARK

New rates of pay for road haulage drivers

The ITF-affiliated Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (SiD) has negotiated a new two-year pay agreement on behalf of 20,000 road haulage drivers working for companies belonging to the Danish Hauliers' Association. Under the agreement, hourly rates will be increased by 3.10 kr on 1 March 1983 and by a further 2.50 kr on 1 March 1984, taking the rate to 56 kr. Improvements have also been obtained in respect of certain allowances.

GERMANY

Higher pay for dock workers

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has negotiated a new one-year pay agreement for

the country's dock workers, under which basic rates will be increased by 2.25% this month and by a further 3% in October. A lump-sum payment of DM 65 has also been made in lieu of backdating for January.

GREAT BRITAIN

Harwich ratings agree conditions for manning new passenger ferry

In a union ballot, Harwich-based members of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen have voted by an overwhelming majority to accept conditions for manning the new Sealink passenger ferry, the 14,368 grt PRINSESSAN BIRGITTA, which will now be introduced in June on the Harwich-Hook of Holland route as a replacement for the two smaller ferries Sealink previously operated on the route. NUS negotiators have persuaded Sealink to make an improved offer on leave and time off for the crew of the new ship and to agree to higher redundancy payments for ratings who will lose their jobs when the two old vessels are taken out of service.

Union consent to the introduction of the PRINSESSAN BIRGITTA has lifted the threat of closure that has been hanging over the loss-making Harwich-Hook link for the past year.

7 per cent pay increase for Conoco and Total tanker drivers

A new pay and productivity deal negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union gives 280 tanker drivers employed by the oil company Conoco a 7% increase on basic rates from 21 February. Also agreed were: a productivity bonus, the introduction of the 37½ hour week and improvements in pensions.

Total tanker drivers have also accepted a 7.05% pay rise, bringing their basic rate to £121.50.

ISRAEL

El Al strike ends

The four-month-old dispute between El Al and Histadrut^{*} was brought to a successful conclusion last month with the signing of a new agreement and the resumption of passenger flights which had been grounded since September of last year. The negotiations with the company were long and complicated and at one stage Histadrut had to take legal action when El Al appointed a temporary receiver with the aim of winding up the company. Eventually, however, a solution was reached that gave the workers their jobs back with the old company. The question of staff cut-backs and other disputed issues will be dealt with shortly in further negotiations between the management, Histadrut and the newly-formed overall El Al staff committee set up to represent all workers in the company.

ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Ken Golding has already conveyed to aviation affiliates Histadrut's sincere thanks for the splendid solidarity shown to El Al workers during this protracted and complicated dispute.

* see ITF Newsletter No. 10, 1982 page 114

UNITED STATES

IAM fights transfer of members' jobs to non-union firms

Ignoring union requests for further negotiations, Qantas Airways has transferred to local non-union firms the work previously performed by members of the US International Association of Machinists (IAM) at San Francisco and Honolulu Airports.* 232 jobs have been lost in this way. The IAM is now seeking redress through the courts with the aim of getting its members restored to their jobs. It is also seeking to get the courts to order Qantas to resume collective bargaining.

In response to the union's appeal for international support, ITF aviation affiliates have expressed their concern at the US job losses to Qantas' Deputy Chief Executive in Sydney. Protests have also been lodged with Australian diplomatic representatives in a number of countries.

* see page 7 of last issue

NEWS IN BRIEF

Colombia: The management of the state-owned port company Colpuertos has now agreed to resume negotiations with the dockers' unions on improved working conditions. The breakdown of talks prompted a 24-hour protest strike last month (see page 8 of last issue).

Great Britain: Hire-and-reward drivers employed by member companies of the Road Haulage Association have accepted pay rises ranging from 3% to 5.7% in this year's pay round.

Great Britain: Southampton docker members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union have been awarded a 6 per cent pay rise for 1983.

A flat-rate increase of £6 per week has been negotiated by the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Seamen for ratings on Cunard Line's two UK-flag cruise liners (the QE2 and the Cunard Countess). Other improvements include: seniority pay of £3 per week for ratings with over five years' continuous service with the company and an increase in the local leave allowance from £150 to £250.

Allowances paid to Dutch road haulage drivers were increased by 1.93% on 1 January in line with recent movements in the prices index. The maximum accommodation allowance for consecutive 24-hour periods went up from 59.40 to 62.70 guilders.

Norwegian ships' engineers struck briefly earlier this month in protest at new Shipping Ministry regulations that would permit unmanned engine-rooms on passenger ferries under certain circumstances.

Portuguese railwaymen and Lisbon public transport workers have both staged protest strikes over government attempts to limit pay rises to seventeen per cent this year.

OBITUARY

Lord Citrine, General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress from 1926 to 1946, died on 22 January, aged 95.

PERSONALIA

Peet Mol, Chairman of the Inland Navigation Section of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union (FNV) since 1963, retired at the beginning of this month. A full-time official of the Transport Workers' Union and its predecessors for the past 47 years, Mol has made a significant contribution towards improving the conditions of transport workers in his native Holland, while as chairman since 1974 of the ITF Inland Navigation Section he has been a tireless worker on behalf of inland navigation workers worldwide and will continue to represent their interests until his successor is elected at the Madrid Congress in October.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf attended the ceremony held for Mol on 4 February to pay tribute to the work of an old and dear friend of the ITF and to present him with a retirement gift.

Michalis Zenzefyllis has been elected General Secretary of the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) in succession to Emmanuel Saftis, who retired in December. Zenzefyllis was previously Vice-President of the Pan-Hellenic Union of Masters and Mates.

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
Flight Deck Technical Committee - Paris 24-25 May 1983

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