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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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ICFTU/ITS symposium on South Africa

ICFTU affiliated organizations and representatives of International Trade Secretariats met in Düsseldorf on 19 and 20 January to evaluate the ICFTU Programme of Action in support of the independent black trade union movement in South Africa, which had been drawn up by a special conference called by the ICFTU in November 1980. The ITF was represented by the General Secretary, Harold Lewis, and his Personal Assistant.

Since the 1980 conference, the membership of the emerging black trade union movement has increased from 70,000 to some 400,000. Employers have been forced to enter into serious collective bargaining with the emerging unions and some 400 collective agreements have been signed. However, as the independent black trade union movement grows in strength, so South Africa's repressive measures will undoubtedly escalate. Increasingly this repression is being carried out by proxy. Black trade unionists are arrested and subjected to other forms of harassment in the pseudo-independent bantustans to which they have been arbitrarily assigned. At the same time, influx control measures are being tightened as part of South Africa's grand design to exclude black workers from residence in its urban industrial areas.

To fight against these new attacks and to demonstrate the international free trade union movement's dedication to assisting the further development of the independent black trade union movement, the conference decided to recommend an updated Programme of Action to the ICFTU Executive Board. The main features are:

- (a) the maintenance and, if necessary, intensification of financial, technical, legal and relief aid, with special assistance programmes for black women workers who in South Africa are objects of a double discrimination on account of their colour and their sex;
- (b) support for organizational, recognition and collective bargaining campaigns;
- (c) the organization of an intensive information campaign to counter the South African régime's propaganda and so discourage potential emigrants;
- (d) active discouragement of sporting and cultural contacts with South Africa;
- (e) an international information campaign to publicize the achievements and problems of the independent trade union movement;
- (f) the stepping-up of economic pressure on the apartheid régime;

- (g) support for the front-line states in order to eliminate economic domination by South Africa and to end South Africa's military aggression against front-line States;
- (h) the pressuring of governments for the adoption of UN-imposed mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa in view of South Africa's failure to abide by UN Resolution 435 (1978) which decided on the early independence of Namibia through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the UN; and
- (i) the giving of maximum assistance to the Namibian workers in their struggle for human and trade union rights.

#### INTERNATIONAL

##### Amnesty International appeals for worldwide amnesty for all prisoners of conscience

Amnesty International's Appeal for a Universal Amnesty for All Prisoners of Conscience had already attracted over one and a quarter million signatures from people in all walks of life by the eve of Human Rights Day (8 December) when the Appeal text was formally handed over to the UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar at a special ceremony in New York. The handing over of the petition marked the beginning of a weekend of international action in support of the Appeal, which urges the release of all those who have been imprisoned for their political or religious beliefs, their colour or their ethnic origin, who have not used or advocated violence. It denounces the detention of such prisoners of conscience as a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Appeal was launched a year ago with the support of seven Nobel Peace Prize Winners and has been formally endorsed by the ITF, which has campaigned consistently over the years against human rights abuses, as well as by a great many other trade union organisations worldwide. But perhaps its greatest strength lies in the support of ordinary men and women who have signed it. It is hoped that many more signatures will have been gained by the time the Appeal is presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights which is currently in session.

#### ASIA/PACIFIC

##### Union leaders discuss problems facing inland transport workers in region

Inland transport workers in the ITF's Asia/Pacific Region held a highly successful conference in Tokyo towards the end of last month following which it was decided to set up an Inland Transport Committee on the same lines as the ones already existing for seafarers and civil aviation workers in the Region to deal with matters affecting workers in the railway, road transport, dock and inland navigation sections.

At the end of its deliberations the Conference adopted a set of conclusions on transport policy; technological change; privatisation and deregulation; and energy and transport. On transport policy, the unions represented at the Conference expressed their firm opposition to the privatisation of the main transport modes and called for the adoption of transport policies that would promote national economic growth and for trade union views to be taken into account at the formulation stage. In respect of technological change, the participants again stressed the need for trade union involvement at the planning stage and for care to be taken that the new technologies introduced into developing countries were appropriate to the special circumstances obtaining there. The delegates were of the view that as a condition for the acceptance of such changes unions should insist on a reduction in the amount of heavy manual labour, shorter working hours, more retraining opportunities, etc. The Conference also dealt in detail with the trend towards privatisation of the railways and the deregulation of the road haulage industry in a number of countries in the Region and concluded that the unions should combine forces to resist these developments which would have negative effects for both workers and transport users, as well as endangering road safety. On energy and transport, it was accepted that as conditions varied so widely from country to country in the Region, it was hard to lay down hard and fast recommendations, but that in general the aim should be to reduce dependence on oil and to develop energy-saving transport modes - such as the inland waterways in Bangladesh - best suited to national conditions.

The Conference also discussed in considerable detail preparations for the 11th session of the ILO Inland Transport Committee scheduled for January 1985. After listening to a lecture from K Yanagawa, Assistant Director of the ILO Tokyo Branch Office, on the activities of the ILO and the rôle of the trade unions, the union leaders represented at the Conference agreed to press their national governments to ratify and implement the various international standards that had been reached for the transport industry. They also agreed to play a more active part in the run-up to the next session of the Inland Transport Committee, which would be dealing with various current areas of concern of those employed in the industry.

## INDIA

### ITF holds seminars for rail and aviation union leaders

Towards the end of last year ITF Regional Secretary Mohammad Hoda organized two highly successful seminars for railwaymen in northern and southern India, with the attendance of around forty middle- and lower-ranking officials. This was followed by a civil aviation seminar for top union leaders which marked the launch of a three-year grass-roots education programme in the aviation sector in India.

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TRANSPORT

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GERMANY

OeTV concerned at decline of German fishing fleet

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has expressed serious concern at the decline of the German fishing fleet which has shrunk by two-thirds in the past four years from 66 vessels in 1978 to only 23 vessels today. The union points out that the 14 large factory ships in the fleet cannot fish in EEC waters and are dependent on the quotas set for third countries (notably Canada), while of the nine remaining fresh fish vessels six are now so old that they will have soon to be taken out of service.

In stark contrast to other EEC countries, which have invested large sums in restructuring their fishing fleets and are actively engaged on a programme of renewal, the Federal Republic is losing one ship after another. If Germany is to remain a fishing nation, the union warns, a fleet of small, modern fresh fish vessels is needed now. The union has strongly urged the federal government to act without further delay to save the industry and stop the decline in jobs. 1,600 fishermen are already out of work, it says, and the jobs of those who are left are far from safe.

UNITED STATES

Pension fund orders two container vessels

A corporation set up by the pension fund of the ITF-affiliated National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA) with the avowed intention of creating more jobs for US seafarers on national flag vessels has just placed an order for two fully cellular container vessels with a South Korean yard for delivery in August and November 1985. The corporation - First American Bulk Carrier Corporation - is now seeking to place long-term charters for the vessels, preferably with a US company, although foreign operation has not been ruled out. The vessels will provide jobs for a total of 42 American seafarers.

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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GERMANY

Union demands phasing out of open registries

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has written to members of the Transport Committee of the West German parliament urging that they should support efforts at the UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries in July to set internationally agreed standards for the registration of ships, efforts which, if successful, would lead ultimately to the phasing out of flags of convenience.

In its letter, the OeTV points out that almost 30% of the world's merchant fleet is now registered in convenience countries (led by Liberia and Panama), while roughly 40% of the West German fleet operates under f-o-cs. Committee members are reminded of the intolerable conditions that exist on these ships, the threat they pose to the safety of life at sea and of the international campaign being waged by maritime unions against this scourge. The letter recalls the decision taken by the Committee on Shipping of UNCTAD in 1981 that open registries should be gradually and progressively transformed into normal registries and hopes that the government will press for a decision at the forthcoming diplomatic conference that will make it progressively more difficult for owners to register their vessels under convenience flags.

Seafarers' pay talks break down

Pay negotiations being conducted by the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) on behalf of 22,000 merchant seamen have broken down and gone to mediation. Despite three contract rounds, the shipowners have yet to make a firm offer on pay to the union, which is seeking a 4.5% increase, with a minimum of DM 80 for certificated ratings (DM 60 for other crew members).

GREAT BRITAIN

15-month pay deal for Shell tanker drivers

A 15-month pay deal has been negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union on behalf of tanker drivers employed by Shell UK Oil. Under the new agreement, which came into effect on 21 November 1983, the basic rate will not be increased until 1 March next, when a 5.8% rise comes into effect. The holiday bonus and a £22 productivity bonus will also be consolidated into basic rates on the same date, giving a new driver 1 base rate of £151.50 per week.

The overnight subsistence allowance has been increased from £14.50 to £15.40, and London Weighting also goes up to £933 (Inner London) and £462 (Outer London). These and other changes to allowances came into operation on 21 November last.

#### New regulations introduced on carriage of dangerous cargoes by road

An approved Code of Practice on the movement of dangerous cargoes by road in tankers or tanker containers has been recently introduced in Great Britain. The Code sets out the information that must be obtained by the operator before dangerous substances are conveyed; the precautions against fire and explosion to be observed by all persons engaged in the conveyance of dangerous substances; and details relating to the instruction and training of drivers. The Code further requires the driver to be provided with information in writing on the substance(s) he is carrying and to keep this available during conveyance. It prohibits the overfilling of tanks as well as insisting on the proper supervision of the cargo at all times, with particular reference to parking. Guidance is also given on the loading and unloading of road tankers and the compatibility of multi-loads.

#### Officers' union objects to plans to relax certificate regulations

The ITF-affiliated British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) has reacted angrily to proposed changes in British certificate regulations - due to be introduced next month after only a brief consultation period - which it alleges would result in a lowering of safety standards and the carriage of fewer deck officers. The union's chief objection is to the relaxation of the standards required for junior officers, which it sees as a diminution of the standards that have traditionally applied to the profession. MNAOA General Secretary Eric Nevin said this made no sense at a time when large numbers of junior officers were waiting for promotion or were unemployed. Other union objections concern the proposals to allow more vessels in the near continental trade area to sail without a third deck officer and the projected increase from 800 to 1,000 tons in the general breakpoint at which it becomes necessary to carry a third deck officer.

#### Amended equal pay legislation still discriminates against women, TUC charges

TUC General Secretary Len Murray has written to the Conservative government warning that the amendments to the British equal pay legislation that came into force at the beginning of this year will not end discrimination against women. Murray says that the amendments are 'unnecessarily complex' and women bringing equal value claims before industrial tribunals will still find that employers are able to claim 'market forces' as a justification for paying men more than women, ie when specific male skills are in short supply employers may legitimately pay their male workers higher rates than female staff. The TUC is convinced that this will only reinforce the segregation of women into low-paid jobs rather than end inequality. It intends to watch the situation closely and renew its representations should the amended legislation prove unsatisfactory.



The government has spent the past eighteen months amending the 1970 Equal Pay Act to bring it into line with European legislation following criticisms from the European Court of Justice.

#### ITALY

##### Mechanics and aircraft inspectors in dispute with Alitalia over pay and allowances

Earlier this month, the ITF-affiliated Italian Civil Aviation Workers' Federation (FILAC) informed us that it was in dispute with Alitalia over the pay and allowances of its licensed mechanics and aircraft inspector members employed by the airline. At FILAC's request, the ITF immediately circularised its ground staff affiliates asking that they request their members not to perform any work normally done by the Italian mechanics involved in the dispute. Union members employed by other airline companies were also urged not to do additional work for Alitalia. Nor should any union member accept offers from Alitalia to work in Italy while the dispute was still in progress.

#### SPAIN

##### Failure of central pay talks leads to strikes in various transport sectors

Negotiations between Spanish employers and unions on a new national framework agreement for 1984 finally broke down last month after the employers refused to improve on an average 6.5% pay offer and for the first time since the pattern agreement was introduced five years ago Spanish unions will now have to seek sector-by-sector and company-by-company agreements without reference to national guidelines.

The ITF-affiliated UGT Transport Workers' Federation is among those unions taking nationwide industrial action in support of its claim for an eight per cent pay rise for its members this year and a series of strikes and go-slows has been called for the next couple of weeks in various transport sectors - notably civil aviation (Iberia and Aviaco), the rail network (Renfe and Feve) and urban transport, with strikes in Madrid and other major Spanish cities.

#### SWEDEN

##### 'Wage-earner' funds are introduced

The Swedish parliament recently adopted legislation to permit the introduction of collective 'wage-earner' funds from the beginning of 1984. Five regional funds are to be established as independent bodies within the framework of the existing pension fund system and will be financed through a tax on company profits and an additional payroll levy. They will be introduced during 1984 and should be fully operational by the beginning of 1985. The funds will be administered by a board comprising nine members, at least five of whom will be employee representatives. Board members will initially be appointed by the government, although an enquiry will

be commissioned into the most appropriate long-term arrangement for electing the boards of administration.

Each fund will receive approximately 400 million kroner each year for investment in Swedish industry. In addition to buying shares in public companies, the funds will be able to make loans to economic associations and purchase holdings in small and medium-sized companies. Each fund will be required to yield a real return of 3% on capital invested, to be paid annually to the pension disbursing boards of the national general pension fund, thereby safeguarding the future of the Swedish pension system and enabling it to provide improved pension benefits. The supply of new money will stop at the end of 1990 when other ways for developing economic democracy will be brought into play. Each year, the National Social Insurance Board and the National Audit Bureau will evaluate the activities of the funds.

The creation of the funds was originally proposed by the blue-collar union confederation (the LO) some years ago. The purpose behind the introduction of the funds was to supplement the LO's solidarity pay policy, counteract the concentration of wealth and consequently power implicit in the present structure of industry and to strengthen employee influence at the workplace through participation in ownership.

#### 1983 pay agreement for taxi drivers signed

Following long and difficult negotiations, the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union has just signed the 1983 pay agreement for its taxi driver membership. This gives the drivers a 6.7% pay increase from 1 November 1983, with salaries for the months of January to October being increased retroactively by 2.2%.

One of the main features of the new award is the doubling of the unsocial hours payment in respect of work performed on Sundays and Public Holidays - a long-standing union objective. Both union and employers say that they would like to see the custom of tipping dropped in favour of slightly higher charges for passengers. It has long been one of the taxi drivers' grievances that they are taxed on a notional sum they are deemed to have received in tips, regardless of the money they may actually have made in tips.

A working party is to be set up to look at the six different regional pay agreements currently in force with a view to concluding one central pay agreement applicable to all Swedish taxi drivers.

UNITED STATES

Ban on Continental Airlines flights in Australia

In support of the trade unions in dispute with Continental Airlines<sup>+</sup>, which include the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the Australian Council of Trade Unions imposed a 4-day ban on handling and refuelling Continental flights in Melbourne and Sydney, commencing at midnight on 18 February. Japanese civil aviation unions, including the ITF's affiliate the Japanese Confederation of Aviation Labour (KOKU DOMEI), have been organizing demonstrations in support of the US unions and have called for a consumer boycott of Continental and its subsidiary, Air Micronesia.

In the USA, airline unions and the AFL-CIO have been holding a series of demonstrations and pickets at the principal airports from which Continental Airlines is operating with strike-breaking labour.

East coast dockers win three-year master contract

The ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) has negotiated a new three-year pay and conditions agreement with port employers on the eastern seaboard of the United States. The contract takes effect on 8 February 1984 and runs to 30 September 1986. It replaces an earlier master contract<sup>++</sup> due to enter into force last October which was scrapped when the Federal Maritime Commission and a federal court challenged the union's container handling rules. A special 106-day stop-gap agreement set to expire on 15 January was extended by the union to allow negotiations to proceed unhindered until they could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

The major features of the award are understood to include pay increases of \$1 per hour in each of the contract years, the raising of annual guaranteed pay and leave pay, improved pension and welfare benefits and new strengthened rules governing the handling of containerhips and LASH vessels. Full details are, however, being withheld pending ratification of the contract by the rank and file in a formal ballot.

<sup>+</sup> see ITF Newsletter No. 9/10, 1983, page 86, No. 11, 1983, page 98 and No. 1, 1984, page 7 for earlier details of dispute.

<sup>++</sup> see ITF Newsletter No. 4, 1983, page 43 for details

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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Danish radio officers on fixed oil platforms in the North Sea - members of the ITF-affiliated Danish Radio Officers' Association - benefit from a new pay agreement giving them increases of 4.9% on monthly rates from 1 April.

A strike by members of the ITF-affiliated Finnish Radio Officers' Association on board icebreakers has been averted following the satisfactory settlement of a dispute over pay and working hours.

Germany: fears that the country's railbuses might be the first victims of government plans for the privatisation of the railways has led railbus drivers to stage spontaneous demonstrations of their support for this vital public amenity. The ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) has given its members its full backing in the knowledge that privatisation would lead to the drivers having to work longer hours for lower pay and to passengers being asked to pay more for a reduced level of service.

Great Britain: municipal busmen have rejected a three per cent pay offer.

Israel: railway workers were among other government workers who took strike action last month demanding pay increases to offset the record level of inflation.

Following the refusal of the CGIL trade union federation to join the Italian employers' federation and the two other trade union federations UIL and CISL in signing a voluntary agreement on pay restraint, the government has decided for the first time to impose its incomes policy by legislative decree. The effect of this will be that workers will only be compensated under the "scala mobile" wage indexation system for rises in the cost-of-living of up to ten per cent this year.

Mexican-based employees of the Dutch national airline KLM have won a fifty per cent pay increase following their first-ever strike.

Netherlands: all inland navigation workers may now take early retirement (from age 63) provided they have been employed in the industry for at least ten years and give their employer three months' notice of their intention to retire early. Those taking advantage of this option will receive 80% of pay, inclusive of certain fixed allowances and overtime pay.

Dockers in all major Peruvian ports staged a 24-hour strike on 10 February in support of a pay claim. The government is currently considering the dockers' union demand for a 30% increase on monthly rates.

Portugal is to ratify ILO Convention no. 127 on the maximum weight a worker may be allowed to carry.

Uruguayan workers staged a general strike on 18 January - the first in ten years - in protest at the economic policies of the military government. They were also seeking pay rises.

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OBITUARIES

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Erwin Altenburger, for many years Vice-President of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB), died on 7 February. Altenburger was elected Vice-President of the ÖGB at its first Congress and served in that post until his retirement in 1975.

Harry Dumarey, National Fisheries Officer of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB), died recently. He had served as his country's representative on the Committee of the ITF Fishermen's Section for the past twelve years.

Friedel Jahn, widow of Hans Jahn, the first President of the German Railwaymen's Union and ITF President from 1954 to 1958, died on 18 January. Her husband died in 1960.

D D Vasisht, General Secretary of the Northern Railwaymen's Union (a member-union of the ITF-affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation), died on 14 February. Brother Vasisht was also General Secretary of the Indian national centre Hind Mazdoor Sabha. He had served until recently as a deputy member for India of the ITF Railwaymen's Section Committee, a position to which he was first elected in 1971.

Bill Walshe, Director of Publications and Information of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers from 1970 to 1972, died on 18 November 1983.

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PERSONALIA

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Sune Ahlén has succeeded Lennart Forseback as General Secretary of the Nordic Trade Union Confederation (NFS).

Ove Björk of the Swedish Seamen's Union has just retired. He held a number of posts in the union, including that of education officer and was also acting President for a time. He is a former member of the Committee of the ITF Seafarers' Section.

Lauri Ihalainen has been elected the new Secretary of the Finnish Trade Union Confederation (SAK) in succession to Per-Erik Lundh, who is now President of the Finnish Metal Workers' Union.

Lars Erik Nicklasson retires as President of the Swedish State Employees' Union (SF) at the beginning of May and is succeeded by Curt Persson. The union's Vice-President Olof Olsson also retires on the same date, to be replaced by Nils Lindström.

Donald Opmeer retires from the presidency of the Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ) at the end of this month. Opmeer served as Vice-President of the FWZ from 1967 to 1981 when he took over as President on the retirement of W. Ch. van Zuylen. He is to be succeeded by Kees Roodenburg, formerly the union's General Secretary. Brother Roodenburg is a member of the ITF Seafarers' Section Committee and of the Fair Practices Committee.

Bjørn Sivertsen, General Secretary of the Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association, celebrated his 60th birthday on 14 January.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Working Party on Standards for Cruise Ships under  
Flags of Convenience - Oslo ..... 1-2 March 1984  
Management Committee - London ..... 20 March 1984  
Executive Board - London ..... 20-21 March 1984  
Standing Committee on Maritime Mobile Offshore  
Units - Hong Kong ..... 5-6 April 1984  
Asian Seafarers' Regional Committee - Taipei ..... 10-12 April 1984  
Cabin Crew Technical Committee - Lisbon ..... 9-11 May 1984