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BEST WISHES FOR
CHRISTMAS AND THE
NEW YEAR TO ALL
READERS

No. 12

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NEWS

CHILE: INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT CALLS FOR "SOLIDARITY WEEK"

In view of the deteriorating situation in Chile which has now been under repressive military dictatorship for more than twelve years and where some of the main trade union leaders are still in prison, the ICFTU Committee for the Defence of human and trade union rights in Latin America at its meeting in Brussels on 14 November decided to organise an "International Week of Solidarity against dictatorship in Chile and in solidarity with the free trade union movement". Following the meeting, in which ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis participated, the ICFTU has, in consultation with the Chilean trade unions, decided to fix this week of solidarity from 27 January to 2 February 1986. The ICFTU has requested national trade union centres and international trade secretariats throughout the world to organise a campaign prior to this week to inform public opinion in general and workers in particular about the situation in Chile and to carry out activities during the week such as: organising demonstrations outside the Chilean Embassies in each country; meeting national Ministers of Foreign Affairs to express concern about the situation in Chile; holding press conference with the participation of senior trade union figures; organising public meetings; sending telegrams of support to the Chilean trade union movement; and examining - according to the situation in each country - the real possibilities for organising a boycott on one of the days during the solidarity week of Chilean consumer products; of transport of products and passengers to and from Chile; and of communications and industrial goods.

The situation in Chile remains extremely serious. A number of leaders of the CNS - the main trade union centre, including its president Manuel Bustos - remain in prison. Although the continuing strike by Chile dockers (Newsletter 11) is seriously disrupting the normal flow of traffic into and out of the country's ports, the employers are still refusing to open negotiations with the dockers union COMACH on its demands for a living wage and improved employment regulations. Eighteen trade unionists who were demonstrating in the centre of Santiago in support of the strike - including nine leading officials of the principal maritime unions COMACH and CONGEMAR - were detained late in November but released following protests to the Minister of Labour. Around the world ITF affiliated maritime unions have been sending messages to the Chilean government requesting it to bring the dispute to a speedy and satisfactory solution, and the lifting of the government decreed suspension of port workers' trade union rights.

SOUTH AFRICA: UNIFIED UNION CENTRE CHALLENGES APARTHEID

A clear challenge to the South African Government to begin to dismantle the Apartheid system was laid down at the inaugural Congress of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) held in Durban on 30 November. COSATU brings together unions representing some 500,000 members which were previously independent or affiliated to FOSATU, and includes a number of ITF affiliates. The newly-elected President, Elija Barayi, speaking at the Congress demanded the abolition of the pass laws governing movement of the black population within six months and backed a policy of foreign disinvestment in South Africa. ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis sent a message of support to Cyril Rhamposa (NUM) who convened the Congress, wishing it every success. Although two 'black consciousness' union centres CUSA and AZCTU remain outside the new organisation, COSATU, which adopted a non-racial constitution, is now clearly by far the most representative voice of the independent trade union movement in South Africa.

On 9 December, the South African government announced that treason charges against twelve prominent members of the United Democratic Front (UDF) would be dropped after a seven month trial in Pietermaritzberg which has been widely condemned by the international trade union movement. Treason charges are still, however, being maintained against four senior officials of the South African Allied Workers' Union, a fact which brought a strong protest from the ICFTU. The ICFTU also strongly criticised the decision of the European Community Council of Ministers at a meeting on 3 December to revise the EC Code of Conduct for businesses operating in South Africa without giving it any real 'teeth' in the form of an enforcement clause or tripartite monitoring machinery, calling it "an alibi for continuing investment in South Africa".

TUNISIA: UNION/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS IMPROVE

Following a period of five months during which the Tunisian trade union movement has been in a state of constant conflict with the government and during which the offices of the union have been taken over by "local committees" acting on the orders of the government, the situation in the country began to improve in early December. Following mounting international protests against the suppression of trade union rights by the Tunisian government including a protest by ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis against the arrest of Transport Union General Secretary Abdesselem Jrad, a meeting took place in early December between the Labour Minister and the Executive Committee of the UGTT, the national centre to which ITF members are affiliated. At the end of this meeting a joint statement was issued agreeing to normalise trade union activities in all parts of the country under the leadership of the UGTT Executive; to the release of all imprisoned trade unionists (still around 100); the reinstatement of workers dismissed for trade union activities; and the opening of frank and responsible negotiations between union and government on the issues which provoked the crisis, notably the question of wage increases. As part of the package agreed with the government, veteran Tunisian trade union leader Habib Achour was replaced in his function as UGTT General Secretary by Sadok Allouche, who was previously responsible within the Federation for international relations.

UK-FRANCE: DECISION ON CHANNEL LINK EXPECTED IN JANUARY

Following a decision in principle by the British and French governments to proceed with the construction of a 'fixed link' (tunnel and/or bridge) across the English Channel, four consortia have put forward plans of various types for the approval of the governments. A final decision is expected to be taken early in 1986 on the relative merits of the different schemes which are:

The Channel Tunnel Group (CTG's) scheme costed at £2.6 bn for a twin bore undersea tunnel to carry through rail services and to transport cars and lorries by means of a rail shuttle.

The Eurobridge scheme costed at £5.24 bn which would involve a 12 lane motorway on a suspension bridge about 70 m above sea level together with a single bore rail tunnel.

The Euroroute combination tunnel and bridge costed at £5 bn which would provide a road link for cars and lorries with a single bore rail tunnel.

The Channel Expressway scheme backed by the owners of the Sealink ferry company and costed at £2.5 bn which would involve separate road and rail tunnels.

The ferry operators, backed by seafarers' trade unions, are arguing that the demand for cross channel transport can be better and more cheaply met by an expansion of the current ferry services. Railway unions in Britain and France are broadly in favour of the construction of a fixed link provided that it makes adequate provision for rail connections. The future of the link is further complicated by the fact that the UK government insists that it should be entirely financed by private sector interests. The impact on employment within and outside the transport industry of the various schemes remains to be assessed.

Inland Transport

ITF: AFRICAN RAILWAYMEN STRESS NEED FOR GREATER COOPERATION

The urgent need for closer cooperation between the different national railway undertakings in Africa was one of the issues highlighted in the conclusions of the ITF African Railwaymen's Conference which took place in Abidjan, Ivory Coast from 25 to 29 November. The Conference, which was attended by 27 trade unionists from 9 African countries, was chaired by Brother Kléban Kone, General Secretary of the host union 'Syndicat des Cheminots Abidjan-Niger'. In the course of a discussion on the state of the railways in Africa, delegates to the conference expressed concern over the standard of training for technical staff who were often not adequately equipped to deal with the complexity of imported railway equipment. They suggested that greater cooperation between railway undertakings would, amongst other things, improve self reliance and reduce African railways' dependence on imports of expensive technology. The Conference recommended that the International Union of Railways (IUC) should provide assistance on technology appropriate to operating conditions in Africa.

The Conference also discussed the key question of trade union rights for railway workers. It underlined the importance of constructive discussions between railway unions, managements and government as a means of resolving disputes and reaffirmed its support for the ITF's previously adopted policy on trade union rights for railway workers. During the course of the meeting a resolution was adopted expressing concern about restrictive policies and reductions in benefits being planned by the management of the Regie des Chemins de Fer Abidjan-Niger which had been reported to the Conference by the host union.

The ITF was represented at the Conference by Ben Udogwu, Regional Representative and Graham Brothers, Railwaymen's Section Secretary. Ben Sharman from the US International Association of Machinists (IAM) which assisted with the organisation of the Conference was also present.

BANGLADESH: ITF PROTESTS AT JAILING OF INLAND WATERWAY WORKERS

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis has protested in the strongest terms to General Ershad, Martial Law Administrator of Bangladesh about the imprisonment from 4 to 10 November of 100 inland waterway workers' members of the ITF-affiliated Bangladesh Noujan Sramik Federation who took strike action following the breakdown of negotiations between the union and the employers' association. Among those jailed was Brother Protap Uddin Ahmed, member of the ITF Inland Navigation Section Committee. The strike closed down all passenger and cargo services on Bangladesh's inland waterways. Following pressure exerted by the union the jailed workers were released on 10 November and the dispute was referred to the Inland Water Transport (Employment Regulation) Board, a tripartite body. In his letter of protest Harold Lewis described the government's action in imprisoning the striking workers as 'inexcusable' and called on it to take action to compensate the workers for loss of liberty.

EUROPE: INLAND NAVIGATION UNIONS DISCUSS RHINE MANNING PROPOSALS

Proposals from the Central Rhine Commission (ZKR) to modify the regulations governing manning levels on Rhine shipping were discussed at a meeting of ITF Inland Navigation unions from countries bordering the Rhine plus Belgium in Dusseldorf on 4-5 December. The discussions at the meeting focussed on the harmonisation of working conditions and the need to improve safety standards on which a unanimous policy was adopted, which emphasised the important contribution which improvements in training could make to safety. Particular emphasis was placed by the union on the question of skippers' duty times and it was agreed to propose that vessels should be allowed to operate up to 18 hours per day only if they have two properly licensed skippers. Manning regulations will be on the agenda of the next tripartite consultative conference held by the ZKR in 1986.

FRANCE: RAILWAY UNION HOLDS 'EUROPEAN TRANSPORT DAY'

At the invitation of the French Railwaymen's Federation (FO) representatives of railwaymen's unions from seven European countries attended a "European Transport Day" held in Toulouse on 15 October. Speakers included the Mayor of Toulouse, Helmut Ries from the European Commission, Louis Buonaccorsi, former General Secretary of the union and now technical adviser to the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community, and André Bergeron, General Secretary of the FO Confederation. The meeting discussed the problems facing the European transport sector, with particular emphasis on the railways. It noted in particular the success of the ITF's 'Euro Train' which had been an important factor in strengthening solidarity amongst railway workers in Europe.

Civil Aviation

UNITED STATES: ALPA FORMS AIR SAFETY BODY

This month sees the launch of an independent non profit-making foundation set up by the ITF-affiliated Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) with the aim of promoting air safety. The new body - the Aviation Research and Education Foundation - will use funds made available to it by all sectors of the industry as well as by private benefactors to educate the public into an increased awareness of the factors influencing the safety of civil air transport and to conduct an extensive programme of research which it is hoped will play a key role in reducing the severity and number of incidents and accidents and improving pilot health. It will organise seminars and issue publications to promote its work and grants will also be made to other groups which share its overall aims. The Board of Directors includes leading experts in the fields of aviation medicine and airline safety as well as ALPA's immediate past President John J O'Donnell, its current President Captain Henry A Duffy, and other top ALPA officials.

UNITED STATES: JOB GUARANTEES IN PANAM MERGER

In a \$750m transfer of assets United Airlines has acquired the Pacific Division of Pan American. The deal, which has been approved by the US Government, involves the transfer of Pan Am's Pacific division and all its international routes to United as a going concern. Pan Am will continue to operate between the US mainland and Hawaii and via the Atlantic to India and Pakistan. Its other destinations in Asia

and the Pacific will now be operated by United. As part of the deal, United has agreed to use its best efforts to hire the 2700 employees which it is estimated will be necessary to run the transferred services. These break down into 410 pilots and flight engineers; 1202 flight attendants; 100 supervisors and all Pan Am's non US payroll ground personnel. The agreement does not, however, provide for the hiring of Pan Am's US based ground employees. Should United not live up to the agreement, it will be required to compensate Pan Am for the cost of severance for the employees concerned.

Fishermen

EC: FISHERIES JOINT COMMITTEE

The session of the EC Joint Committee for Fisheries which took place in Brussels on 10 December 1985 concentrated its attention on a draft programme of harmonization of social conditions in the fishing industry. Despite the attempts of the employers to delay the adoption of the programme, the efforts of the fishermen's trade unions were rewarded with a majority decision in favour of adoption of the programme by 21 votes in favour to 13 against. The main objections came from the representatives of the inshore fishing industry.

The programme contains proposals on the analysis of benefits, social charges and operating conditions in the sea fishing sector with a view to the adoption of harmonization measures; the possibility of a common approach on the ratification of and compliance with ILO Convention No. 114 concerning fishermen's articles of agreement; the progressive adoption of compulsory rest periods; the adoption of national guarantees on earnings and assistance with training or retraining; the desirability of adopting retirement policy at Community level, and the establishment of a register of collective agreements in the fisheries sector and the promotion by the EC Commission of the drawing up of collective agreements. The Joint Committee elected Guy Hanno from the ITF's French affiliate, the FGTE-CFDT, as its Chairman for the next two years. Ake Selander, ITF Assistant General Secretary, attended the session on behalf of the ITF Secretariat.

Seafarers

FOCS: VANUATU REDUCES SHIP REGISTRATION FEES

In a bid to attract more tonnage to its flag, one of the world's newest f-o-c registries - the tiny Pacific island state of Vanuatu - has recently reduced ship registration fees by thirty per cent. The tariffs offered by Vanuatu to ship-owners are now substantially lower than those offered by the two leading convenience registries of Liberia and Panama.

BELGIUM: LAW ON REDUNDANCIES AMENDED TO INCLUDE MARITIME WORKERS

Belgian law on collective redundancies is to be amended to bring it into line with European legislation following criticism from the European Court of Justice. For the first time, dockers, shipyard workers, fishermen and merchant seafarers - groups which were previously excluded - will be brought within its provisions and the law will cover workers in all sectors of the economy. To comply with the law, employers planning collective redundancies must give written notice and reasons for the dismissals to workforce representatives and the local branch of the national employment office.

Travel Bureaux

WORLD TOURISM BODY HOLDS ASSEMBLY MEETING

The 6th General Assembly meeting of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) took place in Sofia, Bulgaria from 17-26 September 1985. The WTO is a body grouping together governments and specialised international organisations in the field of tourism. The ITF is an affiliate member because many of its unions organise workers within the tourist industries. WTO's objectives, which were discussed at the Assembly meeting, include promoting tourism worldwide and providing technical cooperation to the tourist industries of developing countries. The interests of workers in the tourist industries are not, as yet, adequately represented in the work of the organisation and ITF Travel Bureau Secretary Bernie Beyertt, who attended the assembly on behalf of the ITF, wrote, following the meeting, to the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) suggesting that the IUF also participate in WTO's activities. Among resolutions adopted by the Sofia meeting were ones on new technology; frontier formalities; and the status of overseas tourism representatives.

General

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DRAFTS DATA PRIVACY GUIDELINES

International trade union guidelines on the protection of employees against the abuse by employers of computerised personnel files and personnel information systems were drafted by an international conference held in Geneva on 28-29 November. The Conference was organised by the white collar international FIET and attended by representatives of a number of other International Trade Secretariats. The ITF was represented by Research Secretary David Sockroft. The meeting heard descriptions of the increasing use of computerised systems to collect, process and store information on individual employees. In some cases information from many different sources could now be collated together in a way which was impossible using manual personnel files. This raised serious problems for the personal privacy of the employee and in some cases such data was being used for disciplinary purposes or even to hinder trade union organising activities. Of even greater concern was the growing use by employers of automatic systems for collecting information on the work speeds, error rates, rest pauses etc of individual employees.

This was also open to abuse and, when used for example in conjunction with incentive payment schemes, also resulted in greatly increased stress at the workplace. The Conference agreed a provisional set of trade union guidelines based on the six generally accepted principles relating to data privacy: the principle of fairness; the principle of accuracy; the principle of purpose specification; the principle of openness; the principle of individual access; and the principle of security. Following the meeting the Research Department has consulted ITF affiliates on their experiences of problems related to data security. The ILO and other international organisations are now being invited to adopt international standards on the protection of workers against the abuse of data held on them by their employers.

ILO PUBLISHES NEW TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Recent developments in the field of new technology and the response of trade unions, governments and employers to it are summarised in a recent ILO publication called "Technological Change the Tripartite Response". The volume, based on selected extracts from the ILO's quarterly Social and Labour Bulletin, brings together in-depth studies on how employment may change in the future, the repercussions of technology on selected sectors and the major provisions of collective agreements over issues such as data privacy, health and safety, and skill training. It also looks at some of the effects of new technologies on developing countries. Copies of the report are available from national ILO sales agents or direct from the ILO, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

OECD LOOKS AT LIBERALISING SERVICES

As part of the general trend towards liberalisation and deregulation of trade, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Paris based industrialised country body, has begun an investigation into the opportunities for further liberalising the service industries in OECD member states. Studies on a number of specific service sectors including financial services, audio visual services and maritime transport have begun and examinations of other sectors, including air transport, are planned in the near future. The purpose of these studies is to identify 'obstacles' to complete liberalisation with a view to their eventual removal. This process is also important in view of the increasing pressure from the States and other industrialised countries to include trade in services within the regulatory framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). On 12 December in Paris the OECD body charged with liberalisation in services (the Committee on Invisible Transactions) held its first ever consultation with the Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD (TUAC). During the consultations, at which the ITF was represented by Research Secretary David Cockrott, reference was made to the special position of maritime transport. While seafarers' unions were in favour of fair competition in maritime transport, the union representatives pointed out, no moves towards greater liberalisation could be accepted without effective steps to phase out flag of convenience shipping which was itself a major factor distorting international trade in maritime transport services and contributing to the exploitation of seafarers as well as to the continuation of substandard training and safety levels. The ITF specifically requested the OECD to hold detailed consultations with its seafarer affiliates before making any specific proposals about maritime transport, and to reject any move towards US style deregulation in civil aviation.

MALAYSIA: NEW NATIONAL CENTRE TO BE FORMED

A new national centre is taking shape in Malaysia as plans are put into effect for the reconstitution of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC). The new organisation is aimed at representing workers in all sectors, including those not presently organised, who will be encouraged to form unions and affiliate to the new national body. The creation of associations of rural workers will also be promoted. The present national federation which groups workers in the public and civil service (CUEPACS) has agreed that its member unions should join the new national centre, although CUEPACS will continue to represent those workers separately where necessary. The new organisation is to have a new title and a revised constitution is currently being worked out between representatives of the MTUC and CUEPACS whose organisations have both formally agreed to the merger.

Regions

ITF ASIA/PACIFIC REGIONAL COMMITTEE DENOUNCES PRIVATISATION

The third meeting of the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Committee met in Bali, Indonesia, from 4 to 6 December and was attended by 31 representatives from 21 unions in 15 Asian and Pacific countries. The Committee is made up of national representatives from every country in the region where the ITF has affiliates, together with the members of the Executive Board from the region, the General Secretary and the Asian Regional Secretary, M S Hoda. E Masuda of the ITF Japanese Office also attended.

A special feature of the meeting was a review of industrial relations and trade union rights in the transport industry, arising from which the meeting unanimously adopted a resolution expressing concern at the tendency to privatize transport undertakings such as airlines, shipping companies, railways and road transport undertakings. The resolution viewed privatisation as being in the interest of neither the general public nor the employees; it was rather a weapon devised to weaken trade union rights, lower the standard of working conditions and transfer national assets from public ownership to the hands of a few investors.

The meeting also approved a report on activities in the region over the previous year and a programme of future activities. K Doi (Japan) was re-elected Chairman of the Committee and M Fleming (Australia) and J Haryantho (Indonesia) as Vice Chairmen.

Recent Pay Settlements

Great Britain - Esso Tanker drivers, 5.4%.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dockers at Rotterdam's Europoort iron ore terminal - members of the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Union (FNV) - have been delaying the discharge of ore carriers since late November in a dispute over the financing of a new rostering scheme agreed for 1986. Dockers' affiliates in Belgium and West Germany have been contacted and asked not to handle any cargoes diverted as a result of the action in Holland.

Several resolutions dealing with international issues were adopted by the 15th National Convention of the Israeli trade union centre Histadrut held last month, notably on world peace, international worker solidarity, fraternal relations with the free trade union movement and condemning terror and racism. Also passed was a special resolution on pledging Histadrut's support for international trade union efforts aimed at bringing an end to the abhorrent apartheid system in South Africa.

Obituaries

Anton Peham, General Secretary of the Austrian Transport and Commercial Workers' Union from 1965 to 1971, died on 15 October aged 74. Peham was active within the ITF for many years, serving as a member of the Committee of both the Road Transport and Inland Navigation Workers' Sections and also as his union's deputy on the Committee of the Dockers' Section.

Börje Hammargren, editor for the past ten years of the Swedish Navigating Officers' Association's magazine Nautisk Tidskrift, died on 18 November, aged 61.

Personalia

Heinz Kluncker, retired from the presidency of the Public Services International (PSI) at its 23rd World Congress held in Caracas in November. In recognition of his service over many years to the International, Kluncker, who is also a former Vice-President of the ITF, was elected Honorary President. He is succeeded as PSI President by Victor Gotbaum, (AFSCME, United States).

Umraomal Purohit, President of the ITF affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF), has been elected Vice-President of APRO - the Asia/Pacific Regional Organisation of the ICFTU.

Forthcoming Meetings

- Seafarers' Section Maritime Policy Committee - Copenhagen 7-8 January 1986
- Indian Civil Aviation Health and Safety Seminar - Delhi 13-15 January 1986
- All India ITF Affiliates' Conference - Delhi 17-18 January 1986
- Road Transport Workers' Section Working Group on Frontier
Problems - Kiefersfelden 13-14 February 1986
- ITF Asian Seafarers' Regional Committee - Sydney 19-21 February 1986
- Railway Sub-Committee on Transport Policy - Brussels 4-5 March 1986
- Management Committee - Nairobi 18 March 1986
- Executive Board - Nairobi 18-19 March 1986
- ITF Seafarers' Section Standing Committee on Maritime Mobile
Offshore Units - Venice 23 March 1986
- Seafarers' Section Conference - Venice 24-26 March 1986
- Railwaymen's Section New Technology Working Group - Paris 22-23 April 1986
- Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Conference - Tokyo 19-23 May 1986
- Road Transport Steering Committee - London 21-22 May 1986
- Fair Practices Committee - London 3-4 June 1986
- Dockers' Section Conference - London 5-6 June 1986
- 35th ITF Congress - Luxembourg 31 July - 8 August 1986