



In case of reproduction, please mention source (ITF) · En cas de reproduction, veuillez mentionner la source (ITF) · Nachdruck bei Quellenangabe gestattet (ITF) · Var god ange källan vid eftertryck (ITF)

No. 5

May 1976

IN THIS ISSUE

Page

News and Views from the ITF

ITF organizes historic meeting on seafarers' welfare	44
Scandinavian boycott of flag-of-convenience vessels begins	44
Greek union protest against labour relations bill	45

Transport

British government outlines future transport strategy	45
Government acts to phase out substandard pay on British vessels	46
British radio officers' leader warns of possible danger to health from radio frequency radiation	47
US Railroad Aid Bill signed into law	47

Trade Unions

ICFTU says 'don't emigrate to South Africa'	48
---	----

Social and Industrial News

Pay rise for Austrian railwaymen	49
Settlement for Finnish foreign-going personnel	49
Finnish dockers return to work	50
Pay award to German railway workers favours the lower paid	50
British merchant navy officers reject pay offer	50
Japanese railway workers and seafarers call off strike action	51
Successful conclusion to negotiations for traffic personnel with Linjeflyg (Sweden)	51

<u>ITF Flag of Convenience Campaign</u>	51
---	----

<u>News in Brief</u>	52
----------------------	----

<u>Personalia</u>	52
-------------------	----

<u>Forthcoming meetings</u>	53
-----------------------------	----

- Supplements:
- 1) 30th Congress of the Spanish Unión General de Trabajadores, 15 - 18 April 1976
 - 2) ITF meetings discuss ships' manning and maritime qualifications
 - 3) Sub-standard ships very much at centre of IMCO debate
-

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

=====

ITF organizes historic meeting on seafarers' welfare

Over fifty representatives from a broad cross-section of national and international bodies active in the field of seafarers' welfare -- among them the ITF, the International Christian Maritime Organization (ICMA), the International Coordinating Council for United Services to Seamen (ICCUSS), the International Labour Office as well as various national and governmental welfare agencies, shipowners' associations and voluntary organizations -- met at ITF headquarters in London on 18 and 19 May 1976 to consider how to achieve maximum cooperation and utilization of resources in connection with welfare schemes for seafarers.

The conference established that there was considerable scope for cooperation on seafarers' welfare at local, regional and - in particular - international level. It was therefore agreed to set up a working group on which the ITF, the ISF, ICMA, and the ILO and certain national and governmental agencies and voluntary organizations operating internationally would be invited to be represented. The group will appoint its own Chairman and its Secretariat will be provided by the ITF.

The main task of the working group will be to consider the establishment of an international body (in the spirit of ILO recommendation No. 138 but not necessarily under ILO aegis) which would pursue the coordination and financing of seafarers' international welfare services and facilities where necessary. The working group will report back to and seek a mandate from its constituent organizations, as well as reporting subsequently to a new international conference to be convened within one year.

SCANDINAVIA

=====

Scandinavian boycott of flag-of-convenience vessels begins

Nordic unions belonging to the Scandinavian Transport Workers' Federation began their boycott of flag-of-convenience vessels on 1 May, with the result that all runaway flag vessels not covered by agreements acceptable to the ITF are being denied the usual port facilities for handling, towing, loading and unloading when they enter harbours in member countries of the Federation. As anticipated, the Danish employers' association is taking steps to contest in the courts the right of Danish unions to participate in the blockade - a move which our affiliates are rigorously opposing.

GREECE

=====

Union protest against labour relations bill

Thousands of Greek workers have been on strike since 24 May, while yet others, including employees of Olympic Airways, have been mobilized and thus forced to return to work as the Greek government begins debating its controversial labour relations bill. The unions, who are fighting to get the bill modified, maintain that the proposed legislation yields too much to employer interests, that its intention is to abolish hard-won union liberties, and that the amendments announced by the Minister of Labour on 26 May represent minor concessions not the fundamental changes that are necessary.

Top officials from ten International Trade Secretariats, including the ITF, who were holding their General Conference as the strikes got under way, have adopted the following resolution condemning the retaliatory measures taken by the Greek government to quell the protests:

"Leaders of International Trade Secretariats meeting today in Geneva at its General Conference and representing unions throughout the free world condemn the measures taken by your government to suppress protests against the draft trade union law. In particular, we denounce the mobilization of workers in order to prevent the protest action. This was an act of intimidation incompatible with democratic practices. We insist on the full protection of trade union freedoms and will steadfastly oppose their restriction."

Meanwhile, the ICFTU has announced that in view of the grave developments in Greece it is sending an emissary to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation. He will meet representatives of the unions and the authorities concerned in an effort to ensure full respect for trade union rights.

TRANSPORT

GREAT BRITAIN

=====

Government outlines future transport strategy

Last month, the British government published its long-awaited review "Transport Policy, a Consultative Document", which is intended to form the basis of a cohesive transport strategy for the future. The main thrust of the document is that Britain's transport system must be more closely integrated if there is to be a proper return on capital investment and if it is adequately to meet the needs of business and the travelling public.

To achieve the government's stated objective, it is suggested that: rail fares should be increased with a view to making the major passenger services viable in their own right, with the existing subsidies to rail freight being removed as soon as practicable; taxation on commercial vehicles should be related more closely to the resource and environmental costs they impose; more effective restraints should be imposed on private vehicles, with traffic management schemes, higher parking charges and local authority control over private parking being introduced in congested city centres; buses should perhaps receive higher subsidies than the railways as they are less expensive to run, with selective experiments being introduced involving the possible reorganization of the National Bus Company into more flexible local units and perhaps changes in the bus licensing system to allow private operators to run services without licences.

While reserving detailed comment on the document until they have had the opportunity to study it in more detail, the leaders of the three ITF rail unions, in a joint press communiqué, have declared that the document confirms their worst fears. The four-point statement regrets that the withdrawal of subsidies for rail passenger travel will have a calamitous effect on fares, already rising faster than the cost-of-living; that the lack of adequate investment will make rail travel increasingly unattractive and uncompetitive; that the government has failed to grasp the economic and environmental advantages of increasing the proportion of freight carried by rail; and that the rail network will not survive in its present form if the proposed changes are implemented.

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union has broadly welcomed the policy document, although it points out that it is still necessary to determine the exact level of subsidies to the bus industry—the key factor in the union's determination to maintain a social service to the millions of Britons who do not own cars. The union's general secretary Jack Jones is particularly disappointed that the government has rejected the idea of a national transport planning authority with responsibility for coordination and investment, as well as for the eventual evolution of a national transport budget allocated on the basis of need to each form of transport.

Government acts to phase out substandard pay on British vessels

Members of the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Seamen assembled in Sunderland for the union's biennial general meeting were informed by the Shipping Minister, Mr. Stanley Clinton Davis, that the British government is to set up a joint working party to look into the problems involved in phasing out the substandard rates paid to foreign, largely Asian, seafarers on British vessels. Mr. Davis explained that the British government felt this particular form of wage discrimination to be contrary to the spirit of non-discrimination underlying the government's intended legislation; it had therefore been proposed in the bill that the exemption clause allowing it to continue could be repealed by an Order in Council without need for special legislation. UK

shipowners would be put on notice that the exemption was intended to be purely temporary, and the government would ask them to work together with the maritime unions to ensure that "these distasteful practices" were abandoned at the earliest possible date.

The decision to set up the working party represents a significant victory for the NUS, which has been campaigning on the issue for many years and whose latest comments were published in the April issue of the ITF Newsletter.

Radio officers' leader warns of possible danger to health from radio frequency radiation

Kevin Murphy, general secretary of the ITF-affiliated British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union warned representatives from 47 countries attending a recent IMCO Conference on the Establishment of an International Maritime Satellite System of a possible health hazard to seafarers caused by radio frequency radiation from the ship's terminal satellite antenna. He said that theoretical calculations based on the known parameters of the Maristar ship terminals already fitted on a number of vessels that would shortly be working the MARISAT satellite had revealed that radio frequency power density within 5 metres of the antenna could be as much as 100 times greater than the recognized safety limit of 10 milliwatt per square centimetre (per six-minute exposure period) a finding which indicated that the permitted safety level would probably be exceeded up to a distance of at least 12 metres from the antenna. He therefore appealed to those countries which had announced their intention of carrying out tests between their ships and the Marisat satellite to include practical measurements of the radio frequency power density in their experimental programme. If these confirmed the theoretical calculations, the fitting of the antenna on the bridge deck or monkey island would be precluded and safety procedures would have to be instituted to safeguard the physical well-being of seafarers.

UNITED STATES

=====

Railroad aid bill is signed into law

On 5 February, President Ford signed into law the Railroad Aid Bill, thereby authorizing a total of \$6.4 billion (American) in federal aid to the ailing US railway industry. The new law provides the massive federal funding needed for the creation of the semi-public corporation known as ConRail that is to take over most of Penn Central and six other bankrupt railroads, as well as establishing a separate fund to reimburse the bankrupt carriers for payments made to protected employees. An additional federal guarantee is provided to fund their private pension plans.

The law further authorizes large-scale expenditure by the Department of Transportation on the promotion of high-speed inter-city services, notably between the cities of Washington, Boston and New York, in a major effort to relieve congestion in the heavily industrialized North East Corridor. At the same time, it makes it more difficult for railroads to abandon unprofitable branch lines, while granting aid to carriers to help them operate these lines or find suitable alternatives. Subsidies will also be available under the law to money-losing commuter lines, and rail companies will be able to borrow money until October 1977 to acquire or rehabilitate rail facilities and equipment.

Under the new law the railroads will enjoy substantially greater freedom than hitherto in fixing freight rates; and procedures, particularly those involving the consideration of mergers, will be speeded up. Communities and rail users will be protected by the creation of an Office of Rail Public Counsel, a consumer watch-dog which will represent their interests in proceedings of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the body which regulates this particular area of railroad activity.

The new law, which has had consistent union support in its long and difficult passage through the US legislature, has been hailed as the most important piece of legislation for decades.

Meanwhile, related legislation has been introduced in the State of Illinois, which will guarantee the continuation of rail freight service on 225 miles of Penn Central track not scheduled for take-over by ConRail. Under the national legislation, the state will also receive 100 per cent federal subsidies which it will be able to use for operating costs or rehabilitation of track.

TRADE UNIONS

SOUTH AFRICA

=====

ICFTU says 'don't emigrate to South Africa'

During the month of May, national trade union centres affiliated to the ICFTU are organizing a four-week concerted campaign with the aim of halting completely white emigration to South Africa. The centres are also being asked by the ICFTU to single out a number of companies investing in South Africa for trade union action during the campaign.

For the purposes of the campaign, the ICFTU has issued a leaflet which will be made available to shop stewards for distribution at the workplace. The leaflet points out that emigration to South Africa only worsens unemployment among

Africans, already running at an unacceptably high level, while buttressing the apartheid system which ensures that jobs are reserved for white South Africans and that the native African population is kept in subjugation.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRIA

=====

Pay rise for Austrian railwaymen

Acting in the interest of union members employed by the Austrian Federal Railways, a meeting of the central committee of the ITF-affiliated Austrian Railwaymen's Union has adopted a resolution approving the government's March pay offer to public service workers. Under the agreement, which meets the union demand for an 18-month agreement incorporating a two-stage salary rise, railwaymen will receive pay increases ranging from 6.5 to 10.5%, effective 1 July for the second half of 1976, with a further 1.5% being applied to all salaries on 1 January next for the remaining 12 months of the contract period.

FINLAND

=====

Settlement for foreign-going personnel

We are now able to bring full details of the settlement which brought to a successful conclusion the 12-day strike of officers and ratings on 53 foreign-going merchant vessels (see last issue of ITF Newsletter):

1. Compensatory leave

Effective 1 April 1976, all Finnish seafarers receive an additional 4 hours' leave for work performed at sea on Sundays and public holidays, with a further 2 hours being granted on the same date in 1977 and 1978 (total 8 hours).

These improvements effectively guarantee seafarers 10 free days for each month of service. A relieving system of 2:1 now obtains in the Finnish merchant fleet.

2. Time off in lieu of overtime

The Finnish Merchant Seafarers' Act, which comes into operation on 1 July next, grants the right to time off in lieu of pay for overtime. The following entitlement to time off (per hour's overtime) has therefore been written into the 1976 collective agreement: weekdays, 1.4 hours; Sundays and Public Holidays, 2 hours.

3. Unsocial hours

A working group under the chairmanship of the state mediator has been established to determine the question of special compensation for work performed between the hours of 18.00 and 06.00. The working group has been asked to report before the end of June and its findings will be discussed at the latest during the 1977 contract negotiations.

4. New pay rates (effective 1 April 1976) -- officer rates only were available at time of going to press

Captain (according to tonnage): 4772 - 5720; Chief mate: 2795 - 3346; 1st mate: 2389 - 2784; 2nd mate: 2274 - 2681 Fmk.

N.B.: Rates have been increased in line with the Finnish incomes restraint policy effective 1 February (i.e. by about 8 per cent). March salaries have also been increased retroactively by the same amount.

Dockers return to work

Finnish dockers belonging to the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union returned to work on 3 May following a month-old strike over the renewal of their collective contract. A new agreement now comes into operation in the ports providing for a 20% pay increase spread over two years, the introduction of two-shift working and improved pension benefits.

GERMANY
=====

Pay award to railway workers favours the lower paid

Wage increases of 5 per cent on basic rates with a minimum of 85 DM per month have been agreed between the ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) and the management of the German Federal Railways for 1976 following a breakdown in negotiations during which discussions were held in the main pay policy committee and the union's national executive. The union had hoped for a flat-rate increase, but feels that the percentage increase in conjunction with the minimum award represents an 'acceptable compromise' in that it fulfils the union's basic objective of helping to protect the incomes of the lower-paid against the inroads of inflation.

(Earlier details of the negotiations are given in the February and April issues of the ITF Newsletter.)

GREAT BRITAIN
=====

Merchant navy officers reject pay offer

Union leaders representing British merchant navy officers (including those organized in the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union) have rejected a pay offer made by the shipowners because

officers earning between £8, 189 and £8, 499 and most cadets would not receive the full £312 (the maximum allowed under the current pay restraint policy) claimed on behalf of all officers earning less than £8, 500 (no pay increase being currently permissible above this figure).

JAPAN

=====

Railway workers and seafarers call off strike action

A nationwide strike of railwaymen in both the state and private sectors ended after two days on 22 April. According to press reports, the private railway workers have accepted a mediation plan granting monthly pay increases of just over Y 12,000, while the state employees have expressed concern over the low level of the award. A few days later, Japanese seafarers belonging to the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union accepted a mediated settlement giving average increases of Y 15,500 per month, calling of their strike action.

Both groups had been seeking salary improvements following the expiry of contracts at the end of March.

SWEDEN

=====

Successful conclusion to negotiations for traffic personnel with Linjeflyg

In a further round of negotiations with the internal airline Linjeflyg, the ITF-affiliated Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (HTF) has won important concessions on its key demands for traffic assistants, cabin personnel and traffic assistants with combined ground and cabin duties. (For details of the earlier talks see ITF Newsletter No. 4, page 39). The airline has agreed to recognize the five-day week already in operation for most employees; grant compensatory leave for work performed on Sundays and public holidays (this means an average of 15 more free days annually for the categories mentioned); and to extend annual leave from 30 to 32 days. Linjeflyg has also undertaken to ensure that free days are better incorporated into the work schedule.

ITF FLAG OF CONVENIENCE CAMPAIGN

=====

Maritime unions in the port of St. Nazaire, in furtherance of the ITF campaign against flags of convenience, have succeeded in bringing the Cyprus-flag vessel ARIS TRADER under ITF agreement. The vessel was held when it attempted to slip out of port without assistance of tugs or pilots after essential repairs had been completed. The owners eventually agreed to pay ITF contributions on behalf of the Indian crew as well as to pay £27,486 in back pay and sufficient money to cover the repatriation expenses of those crew members who had left the vessel while it had been in the port.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Finnish airline pilots have approved a mediated settlement and called off their three-week-old strike.

Gabon has joined the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, becoming its ninety-fifth member.

British air traffic control assistants at London and Prestwick cancelled two twenty-four hour strikes scheduled for the Easter holiday period after it was agreed that negotiations with the Civil Aviation Authority on a 4-year-old pay restructuring claim should be allowed to continue during the current pay restraint policy.

A call for legislation limiting the number of hours worked by British air traffic controllers has been made by a medical adviser to the Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers. He told a recent conference on stress in air traffic controllers that while the Civil Aviation Authority imposed the highest standards at airports under its control conditions at many non-state airports were far from satisfactory. A confidential survey undertaken by the Guild had established that air traffic controllers at some non-state airports were required to work excessive hours, duty periods of 16 hours being not uncommon.

During April, Japanese dockers staged further strikes at ports throughout the country in support of demands for a minimum wage and the introduction of a pension scheme.

Norway has announced plans to introduce a 200-mile fishing limit later this year.

A ^{pay} demand by employees of foreign airlines in Greece, which led to a 48-hour strike at the end of April, has been referred to arbitration.

A US federal court judge has ruled that American Airlines is guilty of illegal discrimination against 300 air stewardesses employed before 1970, who were required to resign on pregnancy and were refused re-employment. The airline now becomes liable for back pay to the stewardesses concerned.

PERSONALIA

Former ITF President Roger Dekeyzer celebrates his 70th birthday on 18 June. We offer Brother Dekeyzer our heartiest congratulations.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

=====

Fishermen's Section Conference - Grimsby, 21-22 June 1976

Sub-Committee on Working
Conditions of Railway Staff - London, 22-23 June 1976

Seafarers' Section Conference - Aug/Sept. 1976 - venue undecided

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

-----ooo0ooo-----

30th CONGRESS OF THE SPANISH UNIÓN GENERAL DE TRABAJADORES,
15-18 APRIL 1976

"44 years ago the UGT celebrated its Seventeenth Congress in this same Madrid district of Cuatro Caminos, the last that our organization could hold inside the country; the following one, which had already been called for the summer of 1936, had to be postponed due to the military rebellion of 18 July which obliged all UGT militants to concentrate their resources in the struggle against the aggression directed at our people and, above all, at the working class. The dictatorship imposed as a consequence of that aggression has made it impossible, between 1939 and the present time, for the supreme body of our Unión General to meet again in Spain and our members have had to go abroad on 12 occasions to hold Congresses which, for so long, have ensured the democratic existence of the UGT." Opening the 30th Congress of the Unión General de Trabajadores de España in Madrid on 15 April, Nicolás Redondo, re-elected First National Secretary, continued "By their democratic decision that this 30th Congress should be held in Madrid, the UGT militants consciously and implacably resolved that we shall face openly a force which, today as yesterday, has at its command an enormous apparatus of repression; it is a step we have taken, nevertheless, mobilizing all the resources at our disposal but well aware of the risks involved; we have shouldered our responsibility as the vanguard of our working class, knowing that it was the duty of the UGT - and of no-one else - to make this step forward, not just for our own benefit but in order to open the way for all democratic organizations who represent the working class in our country."

Recalling the foundation of the UGT in 1888 and its members' activities as leaders of the revolutionary strikes in 1910 and 1917, their mobilization of the workers - leading to the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in 1931 - their victory in the Popular Front of 1936 and their fight to defend the legally constituted Republic between 1936 and 1939, Brother Redondo said that the UGT had joined and would join with other genuinely democratic organizations in order to achieve a democratic breakthrough.

The UGT had maintained a firm anti-fascist attitude in consistently denouncing the official, vertical, state-controlled, "trade union" movement established by Franco as a specific instrument to control, repress and institutionalize exploitation of the working class. The UGT had never even considered amending its policy of constant defiance of the vertical machinery. The interests of the working class could only be properly served by denouncing and destroying the fascist machinery. The proof of this was the growing offensive launched by the working class throughout the country, ignoring the official "trade union" structure. Even those sectors of the workers' movement which had felt that the official structure could be used to advantage had finally admitted that it was impossible to put it to use and change it from within and were gradually adopting the UGT's policy of total rejection.

Dealing with the current political situation in Spain, Brother Redondo said that the working class movement was sufficiently strong to defeat any alternative which did not meet its requirements. The working class movement, headed by the UGT, would not accept a rôle allocated to it by the bourgeoisie whose principal purpose, under the guise of reformist proposals, was to maintain themselves in power. The economic crisis of the capitalist system in Spain was borne by the working class, with nearly a million unemployed, many of whom received no benefits. The workers' reply had been a wave of demands supported by industrial action, unprecedented in the history of the Spanish dictatorship. The problem would remain serious as long as valid machinery enabling the true representatives of workers and owners to resolve industrial disputes did not exist. Only when trade union freedom was fully guaranteed could the workers nominate authentic representatives who could assume the responsibility of negotiating on their behalf. Any attempt to resolve the present social and labour crisis would require a complete break from the official "trade union" apparatus and the recognition by owners and the political authorities of the rights and functions of properly representative workers' organizations within a framework of unrestricted trade union freedom. In order to achieve this break, co-ordination of efforts and action between all union organizations was fundamental and, once trade union freedom was gained, would be a firm base for advancing towards the goal of trade union unity.

The UGT Executive Committee presented a report outlining the basic principles and aims of the union, together with its immediate programme of activities and its strategy for putting them into operation.

The programme of activities centres on a set of minimum objectives, designed to achieve a transformation of the structure of Spanish society by ending the monopoly of the ruling class and reorganizing the methods of work, of production and of the distribution of goods with the ultimate aim of replacing the existing capitalist society by a socialist society in which the exploitation of one person by another would disappear.

For the UGT, democratic planning and workers' control are the characteristic features of a new type of social relationship. It will support the formation of a socialist government which proposes to bring about these changes.

The strategy of the UGT in working for the implementation of its minimum programme consists in

- Rejecting any form of participation in the vertical "trade union" structure, the isolation of this structure, its eventual abolition and replacement by a democratic union movement.

- Supporting workers' assemblies and works committees in factories and other places of employment as instruments for achieving industrial democracy and workers' control.
- Developing its own Industrial Federations.
- Promoting unified platforms in conjunction with other authentic political and trade union mass movements on a more general level than that of individual places of work in order to lead the struggle against the fascist dictatorship and win the basic liberties leading to the attainment of a regime based on popular sovereignty.

The Congress was attended by over 700 delegates from the UGT's provincial sections and industrial federations. Among the 70 trade union representatives invited from abroad were Bro. Otto Kersten, General Secretary of the ICFTU, Bro. Per Carlson, General Secretary of the ETUC, Bro. Hans Matthoser, Minister of Technology of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Bro. H. Elgueta of CUT, Chile. 8 International Trade Secretariats were represented as well as the national centres of 15 countries. By a decision of the Congress, the closing session was addressed by representatives of Solidaridad de Obreros de Cataluna, Unión Sindical Obrera and Comisiones Obreras.

Speaking of the many years during which the UGT had been a valued affiliate of the ITF, of the assistance which the ITF had provided in the past and had undertaken to give to the UGT Federación de Transportes in the future, Bro. Blyth said the ITF had not only a right but an obligation to intervene on behalf of the people of a country where basic rights and liberties were being denied. The ITF did not wish to prejudice the economic development of Spain but was opposing the conclusion of commercial pacts between Spain and Common Market countries until such time as real democracy was restored in Spain. Whether or not the ITF would organize further industrial action depended entirely on the Spanish Government; the ITF would not hesitate to use its industrial strength in support of the struggle for democratic freedom.

ITF MEETINGS DISCUSS SHIPS' MANNING AND MARITIME QUALIFICATIONS

Representatives of ITF seafarer affiliates in Canada, Denmark, Finland, India, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States recently attended two meetings in Maryland, U.S.A. called by the ITF Seafarers' Section to prepare for subsequent IMCO meetings dealing with various aspects of seafarers' training and qualifications as well as to provide an outline for future action by affiliates in the area of manning. The ITF group (which included the Chairman and Secretary respectively of the ITF Seafarers' Section) took the opportunity of visiting several maritime training establishments - for officers as well as ratings - to gain a first-hand understanding of the American training methods and systems. Expert guidance was provided through the good offices of the National Maritime Union, American Radio Association, International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots, Seafarers' International Union and Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association.

The first meeting was held on 22 and 23 April in Baltimore where the delegates embarked on a close scrutiny of the agenda for the next session of IMCO's Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping, especially with regard to the articles envisaged for a proposed convention on crew training and certification (including various definitions and the conditions governing dispensations). Some considerable time was also spent on a draft paper concerned with the training of radio telephone operators (for submission to the radiocommunications sub-committee of IMCO) but in view of the comprehensive nature of the paper it was agreed to resume discussion at a further preparatory ITF meeting (scheduled for June in London).

The second meeting (at Easton/St. Michaels) was held at the request of the October 1975 ITF Seafarers' Section Conference to study various aspects of manning and to suggest what kind of action should be required from inter-governmental and other international agencies in the interests of all categories of seafarers. Realizing full well the magnitude of its task and working on the assumption that safe manning should be provided aboard all ships in relation to the work to be performed and that due cognizance should be taken of the environmental protection aspect the ITF Seafarers' Section Manning Committee made a modest start by concentrating on 3-watch ships above the lower limit of 1600 grt. as contained in most of the existing IMCO recommendations on training and watchkeeping standards. At the end of the meeting agreement was reached in principle on proposed manning scales for conventional ships. A further meeting will be held in London next July to consider other aspects of ships' manning prior to a report being submitted to the next Seafarers' Section Conference due to be held in August/September this year.

SUB-STANDARD SHIPS STILL VERY MUCH AT CENTRE OF IMCO DEBATE

The 34th session of IMCO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) was held from 3 to 7 May in London. ITF affiliates from Greece, United Kingdom and United States were represented either on their respective national delegations or on the ITF observer delegation, which also included the ITF Seafarers' Section Secretary, A.G. Selander. The Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section, K. Mols Sørensen, attended the session in his capacity as Chairman of the Joint IMCO/ILO Committee on Training.

As is customary the MSC considered, among other things, matters arising from reports submitted to it by its subsidiary bodies and in the course of the discussion of the report of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW) it agreed that IMCO assembly recommendations regarding watchkeeping, training and qualifications be appropriately notified to the 1978 Conference on Crew Training for final action. The MSC also asked its radiocommunications sub-committee to complete its brief on watchkeeping and training and qualifications of radio personnel in order that the results could be further processed by STW in time for the 1978 conference. With regard to the proposed Convention on Crew Training and Certification it was agreed that any amending conference be convened in association or consultation with the ILO and that it would not be possible for the convention to override existing instruments on the subjects included in its scope.

The MSC further agreed to list mandatory minimum manning requirements for future consideration (but not in its brief for the 1978 conference) and reiterated its request to administrations for more information on the subject. It also instructed the IMCO Secretariat to prepare for a review at the Autumn session of MSC this year of a previous proposal concerning mandatory minimum requirements for junior ratings forming part of a navigational watch.

With regard to the safety of fishing vessels the MSC approved a draft international convention on the safety of fishing vessels for circulation by the IMCO Secretariat to governments and other organizations which will be invited to participate in the International Conference to adopt the proposed convention which is scheduled to take place in March/April 1977.

In accordance with the recent IMCO Assembly resolution on "Procedures for the Control of Ships" the MSC set up an ad hoc group to develop further the criteria and guidelines for judging a ship to be sub-standard. As a result a document entitled "Sub-standard Ships Guidance on Control Procedures" was prepared for distribution among administrations. This document will be expanded at the next MSC session to take account of fire safety of passenger ships and machinery and electrical installations in particular. Also outstanding are the issues of how to deal with ships below convention

sizes and those registered in non-convention countries^x. The MSC further agreed on a new format of deficiency reports and that such reports should be repeated until flag state action is notified. In addition the MSC in response to an Assembly resolution recommended that administrations should inform IMCO of certain aspects of their investigations into major ship casualties in order to assist the further improvement of international safety standards. As a consequence the IMCO Secretariat would be listing serious casualties for the benefit of each session of the MSC. With regard to the proposal made by the ILO Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference regarding sub-standard ships the Committee provided guidance for the line to be taken by IMCO at the October 1976 Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference.

Following the submission of a paper by the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Shipowners' Federation describing certain problems which in their opinion could arise in connection with the coming into force of the 1969 Tonnage Measurement Convention the MSC proposed to set up an ad hoc group to deal with this matter at its next session. In particular it was suggested that it might be necessary to provide a clear definition of the term "tonnage" in any future international instruments.

Finally, the MSC endorsed the request that IMCO should arrange the third Conference on the Establishment of an International Maritime Satellite System from 1-3 September 1976 in London and towards the end of the session it was announced that the new International Collision Regulations would come into force in 12 months' time following the attainment of a sufficient number of ratifications.

x) SOLAS and Load Line Conventions