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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

ITF Executive Board meets in Eastbourne

The ITF Executive Board met at the T&GWU centre in Eastbourne on 15 and 16 March 1977. ITF President Fritz Prechtel was in the chair.

Arising from a report on activities since the last meeting, the Board discussed a number of issues connected with the participation of some of the ITF's affiliates in international seminars or meetings that were not organized by the ITF.

The Board recognized that all the ITF's affiliates were autonomous and their right to send representatives to whatever meetings they chose was not in question. Attention was drawn in the discussions, however, to occasions when, as an outcome of recent meetings, approaches were later made on behalf of the participants to bodies such as the ILO with which the ITF has long enjoyed recognition as the international spokesman of transport workers' interests. The Board took the view that action of that kind inevitably trespassed, however unintentionally, on the ITF's prerogatives and could detract from the strong influence which the ITF had established over the years with these bodies.

The Board therefore decided to instruct the General Secretary to advise affiliates that where they were involved in meetings or seminars outside the ITF, their representatives at these should be properly briefed on ITF policies relating to the subject or subjects under discussion and should veto or oppose any action which could diminish or infringe upon the authority of the ITF.

After considering the situation arising from the General Secretary's decision not to seek re-election at the 32nd ITF Congress, the Board unanimously agreed to recommend to Congress that Harold Lewis, the present assistant general secretary, should be elected as his successor.

The General Secretary reported in detail on the case of the Globtik Venus (see item elsewhere in this Newsletter). The Board subsequently adopted a statement congratulating the British and French unions on their splendid solidarity, while condemning the methods used by Globtik Tankers to frustrate the Filipino crew's industrial action. (A copy of the statement is attached as a supplement to this issue of the ITF Newsletter.)

A number of applications for affiliation from unions in Fiji, Greece, New Zealand, Singapore and Spain were provisionally accepted subject to the completion of any remaining formalities.

D. Nicholson, national president of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, was co-opted to the Board to replace D. Secord, who had resigned at the last meeting on reaching the age of retirement. It was further agreed that the General Secretary should present an ITF Gold Badge to Ward Cassiers, former president of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union and until recently a member of the Board, on the occasion of the ceremony marking his retirement from the BTB.

The next meeting of the Board will be held in Dublin on 19 and 20 July immediately prior to the 32nd Congress of the ITF.

INTERNATIONAL

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ITF Fair Practices Committee reviews progress of flag-of-convenience campaign

This year's meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee was held in London on 15 and 16 February 1977. It was attended by 47 members, advisers and ITF Inspectors from 18 countries and 28 observers, including the ITF Regional Representatives, from a further eight countries. C.H. Fitzgibbon, Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, was in the chair.

The meeting noted the report on activities for the previous twelve months, which recorded the steady progress made in pursuing the ITF campaign against flag-and crew-of-convenience ships. At 7 February 1977, a total of 990 vessels were covered by agreements acceptable under ITF policy, of which approximately 290 had been boycotted or were faced with the immediate threat of boycott action. 2.96 million pounds sterling in back pay had been recovered for crews of flag-and crew-of-convenience vessels during 1976. In all, 152 ships had been dealt with, some on several occasions.

The meeting took a number of decisions concerning the future conduct of the campaign. It called upon all maritime affiliates to make more men available to act as ITF Inspectors and asked the General Secretary to approach appropriate affiliates directly in order to increase the number of Inspectors and obtain a wider geographical representation. Affiliates were urged once again to raise the problem of flags of convenience within their national trade union centres and to seek the support of workers in ancillary trades. They were also urged to make representations to their governments for early ratification of the ILO Convention on Minimum Standards in Merchant Ships, adopted in October 1976, and implementation of the complementary Recommendation's guidelines. The meeting rejected proposals to modify ITF Policy from the Greek Seamen's Federation, PNO, concerning the acceptance of the Greek collective agreement covering crews on Greek-owned flag-of-convenience ships, and from the Indian seafarers' unions which sought to have the total cost of a crew as a criterion for acceptance, rather than the individual rates of pay.

The Committee amended the list of flag-of-convenience countries adopted by the ITF to read as follows:

Liberia.	Bahamas	Lebanon
Panama	Bermuda	Cayman Islands
Singapore	Netherland Antilles	Oman
Cyprus	Malta	Seychelles

Grants from the Seafarers' International Assistance, Welfare and Protection Fund totalling £426,373 were approved. The meeting also decided that all shipowners should be required to make contributions to the fund thereby formally rescinding a decision of 1966 which had relaxed that obligation under certain circumstances.

The meeting greatly regretted that the appalling casualty record of the flag-of-convenience and Greek fleets had shown no signs of improving in 1976. The Liverpool Underwriters' Association, in its annual report, had pointed out that whereas these fleets represented about 30% of world tonnage, they accounted for 74.62% of world tonnage lost during the year. Even Liberia, as the best of the bunch, had recorded loss ratio figures appreciably worse than the world average -- 0.49% as against 0.33%. The report also commented:- "... the figure of 52 losses sustained by one flag, Panama, in the year must constitute a melancholy record". In the light of these latter casualty figures, delegates felt that the recent announcement by the Panamanian government that it was planning to set up a world-wide ship inspection service had a hollow ring indeed. The Panamanian authorities should show that they were serious by setting up, for the first time ever, let it be noted, official public inquiries into some of the country's more recent casualties, such as the 24-year-old tanker GRAND ZENITH which disappeared with all 38 hands in December and the 34-year-old bulk carrier SYLVIA L. OSSA which had disappeared in October with 37 crew members.

CANARY ISLANDS

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ITF loses two good friends in Tenerife air disaster

We deeply regret to have to bring you the sad news that the ITF lost two good friends in the terrible air disaster which claimed over five hundred and fifty lives at Los Rodeos Airport, Tenerife on 27 March. Among the crew of the ill-fated KLM jumbo jet, on which there were no survivors, were Willy Schreuder of the Dutch Flight Engineers' Association and W. Zonneveld of the Cabin Attendants' Union. Brother Schreuder had been a member of the Flight Deck Technical Committee of the ITF Civil Aviation Section for a number of years and will be well known to many of those who were involved in the work of the Section. Brother Zonneveld has attended a number of ITF meetings of cabin attendants.

On learning of the disaster, the ITF sent cables of sympathy to its cabin and flight crew unions in the Netherlands and the United States expressing its profound sense of shock at the magnitude of the disaster and offering sincere condolences to all those bereaved by the crash.

INDIA
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Fernandes wins election to parliament

Following the landslide victory in the recent Indian general election of the combined opposition parties and the banishing into political limbo of the Congress Party that had ruled India since independence, George Fernandes has been released from gaol and the charges of sedition against him have been withdrawn. Although still in prison and unable to campaign, Fernandes was elected to parliament by a majority of 300,000 votes and has since accepted the post of Minister of Communications.

The new government has also announced that it intends to reinstate all those railway employees who were dismissed following the 1974 railwaymen's strike -- a move which the ITF has welcomed wholeheartedly on behalf of its long-time affiliate, the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, whose members were involved in the action.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL
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ILO Meeting of Experts drafts Code of Practice on Accident Prevention

An ILO Meeting of Experts was held in Geneva from 25 January to 2 February 1977 and succeeded, in the time available, in finalizing the text of a Code of Practice on Accident Prevention on Board Ships at Sea and in Ports, despite certain delays in connection with the preparation of the draft code. Among the experts representing the seafarers' side at the meeting were N-B Andersson (Swedish Seamen's Union) and R. Spruhan (British National Union of Seamen). The ITF Seafarers' Section Secretary, Ake Selander, and D. Seaman (Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, UK) attended as advisers. The business was conducted in a competent and down-to-earth manner by the Chairman, N.A. DiArchangel (United States). The Code, which is the first all-embracing guide of its kind, includes sections dealing with safe access to ships; use and upkeep of ropes, slings and chains; anchoring and mooring operations; working on deck and in the engine-room; electrical equipment; catering and hotel services; safety in accommodation; life-saving and fire appliances; tankers and combination carriers; sanitation; and special-type vessels (including roll-on/roll-off vessels and ferries).

Quite apart from the framework of the Code, the meeting also proposed that the ILO, together with the other international agencies concerned, should investigate the need to adopt standards relating to the standardization of equipment layout and operating techniques.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Government to abolish Road Haulage Wages Council

The British government has announced its intention of abolishing the Road Haulage Wages Council, which for over thirty years has fixed minimum wage rates and terms and conditions of employment for road haulage workers. In so doing, the government has accepted the recommendation of its Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service that the Council is no longer necessary for the purpose of maintaining a reasonable standard of pay in the road haulage industry, as the majority of workers are covered by voluntary agreements and the present bargaining powers of the unions are sufficient to achieve an adequate level of pay.

Busmen fear for jobs following public spending cuts

In anticipation of the long-awaited government white paper setting out its transport policy objectives, the ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union has launched a publicity campaign with the aim of persuading the government to restore recent cuts in the revenue support and bus replacement grants. The union says that some 6,000 jobs are at risk from the cuts that have already been announced and more would be lost if further cuts were to take place. The union also fears that many services will be abandoned in rural areas. Busmen in many areas of the country will stop work for the day on 21 April in protest at this threat to their livelihood and it is possible that this could develop into a national stoppage, although the union has not called one at this stage.

UNITED STATES

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Seafarers' leader advocates use of US-flag vessels for oil transportation

Paul Hall, president of the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' International Union of North America, has urged the Senate committee investigating three separate maritime disasters involving Liberian-flag oil tankers in US waters to look again at the whole basis of the nation's oil transportation system, which he regards as "inherently deficient" and "woefully inadequate to protect the marine environment and the American people". He points out that only 4 per cent of the oil transported to the United States is carried aboard US-flag ships, the remainder being carried by foreign-built, -registered and -manned vessels, which escape any effective controls. While the use of US-flag vessels, he says, would not eliminate the risk of future pollution accidents such as those involving the Argo Merchant, the Sansinena and the Olympic Games -- the subject of the current investigation -- it would

give the US a large measure of control and influence over the carriage of oil, thereby minimizing the environmental risks. It would also be feasible to enforce meaningful ship operational safety standards.

TRADE UNIONS

GERMANY

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More seafarers join the OeTV

The seafarers' section of the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union continues to attract more ex-members of the Salaried Employees' Union (DAG). 277 former DAG seafarers have joined the OeTV in the past eight weeks in addition to 824 previously unorganized captains and crew members. Membership of the section (which includes fishermen) now stands at over 17,000.

Fritz Wirsing, the former full-time DAG official for the port of Hamburg, has also left the union and resumed his sea-going officer career.

Last year, the OeTV recorded its highest membership figures ever. Some 5,150 new members joined the union in the course of 1976, bringing total membership to 1,063,675.

NORWAY

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Own union for workers in the offshore oil industry

A decision was taken at the end of January to set up a special union, affiliated to the national centre LO, for workers in the Norwegian offshore oil industry. The union will represent workers on the fixed production platforms in the North Sea, employees of the Oil Board and the Norwegian national oil corporation, as well as workers in oil refineries and petrochemical plants. It is estimated that it will have an initial strength of between 700 and 1,000 members, who will come from the Seamen's Union (an ITF affiliate) and the chemical workers and salaried employees' unions. It will also take in those workers who have not yet joined one of these unions, in expectation of the establishment of an industry union. The LO has set aside 200,000 kr to help the new union get on its feet.

The Seamen's Union will continue to organize workers on mobile oil platforms and supply vessels, while the metal workers will take care of the interests of land-based personnel.

SOUTH AFRICA

US multinationals' charter for black workers in South Africa

A dozen US multinational corporations operating in South Africa have declared their support for a set of six principles designed to promote equal employment rights for black workers and minority groups in the Republic. The six-point plan is understood to call for:

- equal pay for equal work;
- an end to segregation of work-places and eating facilities;
- equal and fair employment practices for all workers;
- a development training programme to enable more black workers to take up supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical posts;
- an increase in the number of black workers in management and supervisory positions;
- improvements in the quality of life for blacks in the non-work areas of housing, transport, schooling, recreation and health.

Regrettably, the charter makes no mention of the desirability of ending the practice of reserving certain occupations for whites only -- so-called job reservation -- nor have the corporations agreed to recognize black unions as negotiating partners.

SPAIN

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New labour law encounters union opposition

The new labour law passed last month by the Spanish parliament, the Cortes, has been roundly criticized by the ITF's Spanish affiliate, the Federation of Transport Workers of the UGT, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions on the grounds that it does not set out to dismantle the vertical, government-controlled labour organizations established under the Franco dictatorship. Indeed, these organizations are entrusted with the task of participating in its development. While welcoming the fact that the right to organize has at last been recognized in law, the ICFTU points out that the law does not conform to the ILO principles and standards only recently ratified by the Spanish government. There is still a long way to go before the establishment of full trade union freedom in Spain.

The new legislation grants public service workers for the first time a limited legal right of strike action. However, politically-motivated strikes remain illegal, as does strike action undertaken while a collective agreement is still in force. The authorities will also be allowed to intervene to restore essential services; and employers will be entitled to institute a lock-out of workers threatening violence or staging an illegal sit-in.

UNITED STATES

TWU gains more airline dispatchers

Representation rights for airline dispatchers on Aloha, North West Orient and Ozark Airlines have been transferred to the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America following the disbanding of the US Airline Dispatchers' Association on 15 March. Dispatchers with Hawaiian Airlines and Air California are also expected to apply for membership of the TWU, which now organizes virtually all the dispatchers on the nation's airlines.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

DENMARK

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Seamen's union opposes foreign registration

The ITF-affiliated Danish Seamen's Union has registered a strong objection to the decision of one of the country's leading ship-building and engineering companies Burmeister and Wain to register its new ships under the British rather than the Danish flag. The Union is concerned at the effects this move will have on jobs and also fears that the company may be planning to further cut costs by using low-paid Asian labour.

FINLAND

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Radio officers issue strike notice

The ITF-affiliated Finnish Radio Officers' Union has given notice of strike action by its members on Finnish merchant vessels, beginning at 17.00 on 21 April, if negotiations on a new collective agreement are not brought to a successful conclusion before that date. The strike will apply to all vessels in ports in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland, as well as vessels arriving in these ports after that date.

FRANCE

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Strike of inland boatmen on Seine and Rhône

Inland boatmen on the Seine and the Rhône -- members of the ITF-affiliated French Federation of Port and Allied Workers FO -- have called an indefinite strike. The strike was precipitated when the Soflumar management, in clear contravention of the Labour Code, dismissed 15 boatmen and demoted 11 others without

prior consultation of employee bodies. For the boatmen, whose pay and working conditions stand in considerable need of improvement, this illegal action was very much the final straw, and they are now seeking to push through a number of demands, including those for an improvement in their low levels of income; a working day not exceeding 12 hours, with at least two daily rest periods of six consecutive hours; application of the principle of one day on board, one day ashore; increased annual leave; weekly rest days; and observance of the regulations protecting workers under 18 years of age.

To date, the employers have refused to enter into negotiations leading to a collective agreement and even to meet the official mediator.

GERMANY
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Seafarers win agreement on pay

Under pressure from the ITF-affiliated Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV), German shipowners have now agreed to endorse a mediated pay settlement which gives captains and ratings a 6.9 per cent pay increase for this year, subject to a minimum of DM 100 per month for bosuns, pumpmen, carpenters and comparable grades and a minimum of DM 92 per month for other grades such as certificated ABs, stokers, etc. The agreement expires on 31 December 1977.

GREAT BRITAIN
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Pay deal for railwaymen

The executive committee of the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Railwaymen has accepted the Railway Board's stage 2 pay offer of a 5% pay increase (subject to a minimum of £2.50 and a maximum of £4 per week), to apply from 25 April 1977. The supplement will be used for calculating redundancy and severance pay and, in due course, for pension purposes.

The NUR has agreed to a joint working party being set up to look into the possibility of effecting substantial improvements in redundancy and resettlement arrangements and the sick pay schemes and has urged that any changes that are recommended should take effect from the same date as the pay deal.

Merchant navy officers reject pay offer

Leaders of Britain's merchant navy officers have rejected the shipowners' stage 2 pay offer of up to £4 per week made in response to a claim for substantial improvements in both pay and fringe benefits. The officers, whose current agreement dates from June 1976, will probably await details of the next stage of

government incomes policy, which is expected to allow for greater flexibility, before taking further action on their demands. Meanwhile, the employers have agreed to refer two items -- captive time and rest period arrangements -- to a joint sub-committee for further consideration.

The ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union are represented in the negotiations.

GREECE
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New agreement for crews of ocean-going vessels

Earlier this month, the ITF-affiliated Greek Seamen's Federation (PNO) signed a new collective agreement on behalf of crews of ocean-going vessels of 4,500 dwt and above. Under the contract, which runs for 18 months, basic rates are increased by 19% back-dated to the beginning of this year, with provision for a further 9 per cent increase on 1 January 1978. Overtime will be calculated at 1/8 of 1/27 of the basic rate and the victualling allowance for both officers and ratings goes up to £1.50 (the privileged rate of exchange being fixed at Dr 71 to the £1).

The most significant improvement from the union point of view is the reduction from 25 to 22 years in the time which a seaman must spend at sea before he is entitled to a full pension, a move which should improve recruitment to the industry. It seems likely that the scheme will be financed by an increase in the contributions seafarers and employers are obliged to make to the industry's pension fund.

IRISH REPUBLIC
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Busmen lend support to new traffic management scheme

Representatives of Dublin's busmen's unions (which include the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union) have reached agreement with the CIE management on the introduction of a new vehicle monitoring system, thus averting a threatened strike from 3 April. The new computerised system, which will be introduced gradually over a period of two years, will enable CIE control staff to pinpoint the exact location of each of the city's buses and will also provide information on passenger numbers. Preliminary trials have shown that it should help to eliminate 'bunching' and minimize delays.

The bus drivers will receive a single payment of £80 (£40 for conductors) in return for their co-operation with the scheme; and a key clause in the agreement with CIE foresees the possibility of further productivity increases once the system has been introduced.

Agreement has yet to be obtained from the rank and file, who will be balloted in the coming weeks with a recommendation for acceptance.

MALTA

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Better conditions for Malta-Gozo ferry service workers

The ITF-affiliated Malta General Workers' Union last month negotiated greatly improved pay and conditions for employees of the ferry service linking Malta and the neighbouring island of Gozo. The agreement grants a 40-hour, 5-day week to ferry service workers, as well as salary improvements and double pay for work on Sundays.

NETHERLANDS

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Dockers and seafarers return to work

The strikes which had paralyzed Dutch ports for the greater part of last month^x) were called off on 25 February when talks between dockers' leaders from the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Federation NVV/NKV and the port employers ended in agreement. The dockers' key demands -- for a continuation of the wage indexation system and a rise in real incomes -- have been met, with the employers agreeing to pay a 2.5 per cent cost-of-living rise and a 1.8 per cent real wage increase, backdated to 1 January. Further cost-of-living adjustments will be made in the course of the year; and a 30 guilder rise granted in November of last year will be consolidated into basic rates.

A number of other improvements have also been achieved, notably in transport allowances, which are increased to 61.16 guilders weekly; and a reduction of 0.2% in the premiums to the Social Fund, with the employers withdrawing from management of the fund. The voluntary early retirement scheme will now begin at age 63 (previously 64), thanks to a promise of financial support from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The ITF-affiliated Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ), whose members had also been on strike, has reached satisfactory settlements for seafarers in both the coastal and deep-sea trades. Like the dockers, the seafarers have won approval for the continuation of wage indexation with adjustments being made on 30 April and 1 November 1977 and again on 30 April 1978 (without prejudice to further pay settlements for that year) for the preceding six months. These will benefit the lower-paid as a minimum sum of 185 guilders is payable for each percentage point rise in the index. The new salary rates (effective 1 January 1977) range from 1,467.90 guilders (starting rate) to 5,200.20 guilders for officers in the highest salary classification after 10 years' service.

Other improvements in conditions include: the 30 guilders rise granted last November consolidated into basic rates from 1 January; holiday entitlement for older workers (scheme begins five years before retirement) of two extra days rising by one day per year to six days one year before retirement (1 extra day rising to 5 days in the coastal trade); holiday allowance raised from 7.5% to 8% of annual income, plus victualling allowance,

subject to a minimum of 1,728 guilders (1,719 in the coastal trade); and paid study leave for officers extended by one month. In addition, the shipowners have undertaken to report all their vacancies to the Rotterdam office of the labour exchange for the shipping industry. They have also agreed to keep the FWZ informed of investment decisions which might affect the structure of companies and hence of employment opportunities for seafarers.

Both unions have asked the ITF to convey to their fellow affiliates their warm thanks for the solidarity extended during the strike.

x) see ITF Newsletter No. 1/2 of 1977, page 10.

Better pay and conditions for road haulage workers

After long and arduous negotiations, the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Federation NVV/NKV has succeeded in negotiating a new two-year agreement for workers in the road haulage industry. In common with other Dutch workers, wage indexation will continue throughout 1977; and a 1.64 real wage increase has also been obtained. Most of the other improvements provided for in the agreement will not come into effect until the beginning of next year: these include increases in pensions and refinements in the calculation of pay and expenses (it is intended that the reduction in the expenses paid to drivers who have a sleeping cab in their vehicles should cease by this date). An industry council has also been set up with far-reaching powers, including the overseeing of collective agreements.

New agreement on pay for KLM ground staff

The Civil Aviation Section of the ITF-affiliated Dutch Transport Workers' Federation NVV/NKV recently signed a new pay agreement for 1977 on behalf of KLM ground staff. This provides, inter alia, for a general wage increase of 1% on 1 January 1977; a 2.5% cost-of-living increase (covering the period April to October 1976) also payable on 1 January, with provision for an automatic cost-of-living escalator for 1977; holiday allowance of 7.7 per cent of annual income, subject to a minimum of fl 1,700 (an improvement of fl 225) and a 2.8 per cent Christmas bonus (previously 2 per cent).

NORWAY

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Higher pay for officers in the overseas trade

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association and the Ships' Engineers' Union have accepted mediation proposals for officers in the foreign trade. Common to both agreements are: an increase of 3.5 per cent plus 87 kr on basic rates, with appropriate improvements in overtime rates; two-watch allowance increased by 15 per cent to 992 and 798 kr per month respectively; holiday allowance of 55 kr. per month of service; victualling allowance increased to 24.50 kr; effects insured for 9,000 kr (previously 7,000 kr). Both agreements are valid until 31 October 1978.

Examples of the new rates of basic pay (based on tonnage and length of service) are as follows:

Chief mate: 5,037 kr to 6,807 kr on dry cargo vessels; 5,228 kr to 7,101 kr for tanker service; 5,037 to 6,540 kr on passenger vessels.

1st mate: 4,698 kr to 5,816 kr (dry cargo vessels); 4,872 kr to 6,052 kr (tanker service); 4,698 to 5,618 kr (passenger vessels).

Chief engineer: 7,517 to 10,515 kr on dry cargo vessels; 7,814 to 10,971 kr for tanker service; 7,287 kr to 9,628 kr on passenger vessels.

1st engineer: 4,934 kr to 6,060 kr (dry cargo vessels); 5,123 kr to 6,302 kr (tanker service); 4,897 kr to 5,605 kr (passenger vessels).

Pay agreement for foreign-going ratings

Some 22,000 seamen in the foreign trade benefit substantially from an agreement negotiated recently on their behalf by the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union. Like the officers, they receive an increase on basic rates of 3.5 per cent plus 87 kr, effective 1 November 1976. The new agreement gives able seamen's rates as follows:

Dry cargo vessels under 2,000 grt and passenger vessels: basic monthly rate 3,735 kr (hourly overtime rate 26.50 kr) rising to 4,323 kr (hourly overtime rate 30.65 kr) after 8 years; tankers under 2,000 grt: 3,863 kr (27.40) rising to 4,455 kr (31.60); dry cargo vessels over 2,000 grt: 3,899 (27.65) rising to 4,492 (31.85); tankers over 2,000 grt: 4,031 (28.60) rising to 4,630 (32.85).

Weekly working hours are also reduced from 40 to 38, to be taken in the form of longer annual leave. This will have the effect of giving the seamen concerned 17 extra days each year, thus enabling them to take three months' leave after six months on board.

SINGAPORE

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Local shipping companies ordered to make back payments

Following an unsuccessful legal challenge, the owners of 65 local shipping companies have been ordered by the Singapore Labour Ministry to implement the wage recommendations made in mid-1974 by a three-man board of inquiry into the pay and conditions of members of the ITF-affiliated Singapore Organisation of Seamen. Almost 2,000 seamen will benefit from a total payout of S\$ 2 million. To date, 19 companies have deposited all the monies due with the National Maritime Board, which will oversee the payments. Back payment of basic wages is expected to continue until June, when payment of leave, overtime and other bonuses due to the seamen will commence.

Singapore-based foreign shipping lines have already implemented the award.

SWEDEN

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SAS cabin attendants' contract talks continue

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (HTF), which represents SAS cabin attendants in Denmark and Norway as well as in Sweden, has withdrawn strike notice against the airline -- scheduled for 06.00 on 13 April -- following the appointment of an official mediator in connection with the 1977 round of contract talks. SAS had been insisting that the current collective agreement be extended into 1977, whereas the HTF is seeking to obtain a number of improvements, including: increased security of employment within SAS; an increase in the number of pursers; improvements to the regulations on annual leave; changes in the 'parent' leave arrangements for Danish and Norwegian cabin attendants to bring them into line with cabin attendants in Sweden; changes in the regulations concerning subsistence allowances, and improved severance payments. In addition, the union is demanding higher pay for its members and the introduction of an agreement detailing the arrangements to be made for cabin attendants who are grounded by the airline.

Prior to the withdrawal of strike notice, an International Conference of Cabin Attendants, held under ITF auspices in London at the end of March, had adopted a resolution of support for their Scandinavian colleagues in their decision to take industrial action.

UNITED STATES

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East coast dockers call off strike

US dockers belonging to the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association came out on strike on 14 April in the first major East Coast stoppage for some six years. Earlier, negotiations with the employers on a new three-year contract to replace the one suspended in February had broken down on the question of compensation for the loss of a container job protection agreement declared "illegal" by the Supreme Court two months ago. Selective action was taken against seven (three domestic and four foreign) container shippers. The action was called off after five days. Negotiations will now continue on the container handling dispute and union claims for higher wages and shorter working hours.

Improvements for flight attendants with American Airlines

Under an agreement entered into by the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America last year, flight attendants with American Airlines benefit from a number of improvements in pay with

effect from 2 March, namely: base pay increased by between \$20 and \$34 on domestic flights and \$25 and \$37 in international service; overtime compensation (after 67 hours) increased from 33 to 51 cents per hour; shorter hours with no loss of pay; and 25 cents for each hour flown between 18.00 and 06.00. Reserve flight attendants are also guaranteed four hours incentive pay. Further improvements are already in operation (these date from 1 January) and include a meal allowance of 85 cents per hour (rising to 90 cents from 1 January 1978), the highest rate in the industry, and guaranteed flight time pay of 4 1/2 hours.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ansett Airlines flights out of Sydney Airport were affected earlier this month by a strike of airport clerks belonging to the ITF-affiliated Federated Clerks' Union of Australia, who were demanding higher pensions and cheaper concessional fares.

Belgian workers have joined together in a Common Front to oppose the austerity measures imposed by the government in mid-February. Beginning on the 25th, workers have staged a series of general strikes in two different provinces each week, as well as selected 24-hour strikes in some sectors. The action was called off on 9 March.

Alitalia staff at London's Heathrow Airport staged a 24-hour strike on 6 March in protest against a proposed redundancy plan. All flights from London to Italy were cancelled for the day.

Earlier this month, the British government published the Merchant Shipping (Safety Convention) Bill, which, when approved, will have the effect of giving UK ratification to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea of 1974.

A special delegate conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions meeting in Dublin on 22 February ratified the 1977 National Wages Agreement. The 14-month agreement will give increases of between £4 and £8.26 per week in two phases of 2.5% plus £1. per week. Earlier, the country's major unions had voted overwhelmingly in favour of acceptance of the award.

CIE proposals for the introduction of one-man operated buses in Dublin have been rejected by the busmen's section of the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

Aircraft supervisors working for the Irish airline Aer Lingus returned to work on 16 March following a five-day strike when it was agreed that their claim for a £3 per week differential payment should be examined by the Labour Court. Aer Lingus has agreed to implement the Court's findings, which largely upheld the men's case. In line with these recommendations, the supervisors will now receive a basic pay increase and their dual function allowance will be retained as a separate element. The overall pay structure will also be reviewed.

Flights by Pakistan International Airlines were delayed from 18 April as the result of a go-slow by members of the ITF-affiliated Pakistan Flight Engineers' and Navigators' Association, who are objecting to the terms of a government-imposed wage award.

On 6 April, dockers in the port of Lisbon ended a 48-hour-old go-slow and associated overtime ban, which had been called by their union in support of salary increases of 40 per cent. (Portuguese workers are limited by government decree to salary increases not exceeding 15 per cent.)

A bitter ten-year struggle between the US Teamsters' Union and the United Farm Workers for representation of farm workers in California and the adjoining state of Arizona has ended with the signing of an agreement on representation rights. In future, the UFW, which is led by Cesar Chavez, will have jurisdiction over field workers, while the Teamsters will organize workers in the commercial packing sheds. As current field worker contracts expire, the Teamsters will withdraw, keeping only a few of the contracts negotiated prior to 1970.

PERSONALIA

Tor Aspengren, chairman of the Norwegian trade union centre LO, celebrated his 60th birthday on 1 February. Aspengren was president of the Norwegian Metal Workers' Union from 1958 to 1965.

Moss Evans has been elected General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union. He will succeed Jack Jones who retires on 29 March 1978. Moss Evans, who is currently national organizer of the union, first became a full-time official at the age of 29. He is 51.

Len Forden, former president of the British Transport and General Workers' Union and chairman of the union's executive council on his retirement in 1976, died on 5 March, following a heart attack, at the age of 66. Brother Forden will be known to many in the ITF, having attended a number of our Congresses.

Ray Gunter, Minister of Labour in the Wilson government from 1964 to 1968 and then briefly Minister of Power, died on 12 April, aged 67. After leaving school, Gunter became a railway clerk and joined the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (then known as the Railway Clerks) when he was 16. In the mid-fifties, he held the post of TSSA treasurer followed by that of president. Ray Gunter was a member of the TSSA delegation to the ITF's 1956 Vienna Congress, at which he was elected a lay auditor of the Federation.

Johann Hatje, vice-president for many years of the German Railway-men's Union, died on 18 January, aged 87.

Olaf Karling, former president of the Norwegian Seamen's Union and ex-member of the ITF Executive Board, celebrated his 70th birthday on 26 March.

Erkki Koivisto, Director of Activities of the Finnish Radio Officers' Union until his retirement last year, has been created a State Counsellor for Social Affairs by the President of Finland.

B. Jul Larsen, chairman of the Danish Commercial Workers' Union, has retired after 30 years of union service. His successor is Hans Jørgen Jensen.

Syd Tierney has been elected president of the British Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers in succession to Jim Hughes. Brother Tierney is a Labour Member of Parliament.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Flight Deck Technical Committee - Zürich, 28-29 April 1977

ITF 32nd Congress - Dublin, 21-29 July 1977

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

ICFTU MAY DAY MANIFESTO 1977

This May Day, the workers have every reason to feel grave concern about world economic and political developments. The much-heralded general recovery has largely failed to materialise. While inflation has slowed down in a number of countries, unemployment everywhere has decreased only marginally or has even risen and world poverty is on the increase. Particularly worrying is the helplessness of most governments. Without any definite programme of their own, they take half-baked measures to counter what can no longer be described as a mere crisis. They are only too willing to heed the advice of so-called experts, who are trying to sort out the mess with methods which have long since been proved ineffective and even dangerous. Moreover, the economic difficulties have political consequences. An atmosphere of emergency breeds extremism and narrow, aggressive nationalism on the one hand, and repressive policies and terror on the other.

During this period, however, the strength and unity of the free trade union movement have been maintained in a most impressive way. Almost always, our affiliates have, despite bitter resistance and hostility, stood their ground and they have succeeded in safeguarding their gains and protecting working people from the worst effects of the recession. Wherever they have been able to negotiate with sympathetic governments, they have proved their responsible concern for the common good. In countries ruled by dictatorial regimes, the trade unions are often the only, or the strongest, centres of resistance and the guarantors of a better future.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has, over the past few years, increasingly developed its own ideas and proposals for dealing with the economic emergency and easing political friction and tensions in the world. Its affiliates are endeavouring to get these suggestions adopted while the ICFTU itself is striving to call the international organisations' attention to its plans. We have, moreover, always consistently and actively supported all the agreements and programmes adopted by international organisations with the aim of stimulating the world economy, narrowing the gap between rich and poor countries and safeguarding peace. However, we believe that serious consideration should be given to coordinating all these individual measures in one great worldwide programme. Just as, after the Second World War, a large-scale financial and technical programme enabled the countries of Europe to rebuild their devastated national economies, so we are now thinking of a similar, but even more extensive, plan covering the whole world and simultaneously tackling production, trade and currency problems.

Steps would have to be taken to ensure that the developing countries could exploit their natural resources, expand both their agricultural and their industrial production and create efficient home markets. The industrialised countries, on the other hand, must be in a position to carry through the far-reaching adaptations which are essential to a new world economic

order. The finance for such a programme could be raised by pooling the resources of the existing international credit agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The technical side of things should be dealt with through the machinery, and with the experience, of the ILO, the OECD, UNCTAD and GATT.

A bold plan, but by no means a utopian one. While it cannot be denied that there would be technical difficulties to be overcome before it became a reality, these should not prove insuperable, provided that the will is there. The ICFTU therefore calls on its affiliates to press, through their governments, for the major intergovernmental bodies to examine how this suggestion could be implemented. The success of any such programme will, however, depend on whether, and to what extent, national governments are willing and able to use such a chance in a responsible manner, on whether they are prepared to cast aside national prejudices and take part in an international venture which is in the interests of every country, and indeed of all mankind. Evidently, the trade unions of the world would then also be faced with a tremendous task. We are sure that they are well able to meet such a challenge.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions is convinced that things must develop along these lines (and the sooner the better) if chaos is to be avoided. How much more will have to go wrong before the politicians concerned are ready for such an idea? We, at any rate, will not cease to call for reasons, in the interests of greater social justice and for the sake of world peace. We shall constantly strive to push developments in this direction.

In the meantime, however, the present state of the world faces us with very concrete tasks. As always, we must continue to combat injustice and oppression wherever we find them, and to help the victims. In recent months, we have used new methods, with growing success, in our fight against what is surely the greatest blot on the record of this century - racism. All over the world, we support democratic forces which resist diatatorship in their countries and seek to establish or protect democracy. Above all, we strive with all our might to have human and trade union rights both recognised and respected. We are struggling for a free, peaceful world in which everyone is sure of a living. These three objectives are inseparable. Each is necessary to the others. It is in this spirit that, this May Day, we call to the world with our old, but never obsolete, battle-cry: Forward with the ICFTU for Bread, Peace and Freedom.

ITF DOCKERS' SECTION MEETS IN LONDON

Representatives from the ITF's dockers' unions in seventeen countries met in London on 17 February at a Conference of the ITF's Dockers' Section. Charles Fitzgibbon of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, Chairman of the Dockers' Section, took the chair.

Their first business was to conduct an exhaustive exchange of information and views on the question of security of employment, a subject of increasing relevance as a consequence both of the introduction of new techniques of cargo-handling and of the effects of the world-wide economic recession. The discussion served to underline that, with rare exceptions, employment in the port industry had generally declined over recent years and in many instances was expected to continue to do so for some time to come.

The Conference noted that the ITF had already conducted a limited survey on security of employment in the port industry and decided that the survey should be continued and broadened, the aim being to present the results to the Dockers' Section Conference due to be held in conjunction with the ITF's Dublin Congress.

The Conference then turned to the matter of the revision of ILO Convention no. 32 concerning Protection against Accidents (Dockers). This Convention dates from 1932 and its revision to bring it into line with modern conditions and practices has long been pressed by the ITF. The ILO has now decided to make the revision of the Convention and the adoption of a supporting Recommendation an item on the agenda of the 1978 ILO General Conference and the ITF Dockers' Conference decided on the composition of a working group which would assist the ITF Secretariat in preparing detailed proposals to be submitted on behalf of the workers' representatives at the ILO. A draft Convention and Recommendation will be placed before the Dockers' Section Conference in Dublin.

The Conference was informed of the revision of the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Dock Work which had been completed at an ILO Meeting of Experts in January 1976, all three workers' experts being drawn from ITF affiliates. It decided to record the Conference's dismay and disappointment at the delay in the publication of the new Code and instructed the Secretariat forcibly to make the Conference's feelings known to the ILO.

Finally, the Conference unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

1. FITTING OF MAN LIFTS TO CONTAINER CRANES

This Conference resolves to call on the ITF and its affiliates to develop a programme designed to achieve the fitting of powered man lifts to all container type cranes or any other cranes on which the access ladders are of similar length.

Conference points out that such powered man lifts should be fitted at the construction stage in all new construction and should be fitted to all other constructions when involved in overhaul.

Conference declares that the fitting of powered man lifts would reduce fatigue on drivers and make maintenance easier, safer and more efficient.

2. DECK CRANE ACCESS LADDERS

This Conference resolves to call on the ITF and its affiliates to require shipping companies to ensure that deck cranes are fitted with access ladders which are safe and which by the provision of hoops or similar fittings would prevent operators from falling from the immediate platform of the crane should they lose their footing whilst gaining access to a crane cabin.

3. NOISE POLLUTION

This Conference resolves to call on the ITF and its affiliates to develop a programme on noise pollution with a view to seeking:

- (a) reduction in the incidence of work noise at source by requiring in new shipbuildings the installation of winches, cranes and ventilation systems, etc., which do not produce excess noise;
- (b) the insulation or re-insulation of all control cabins and all winch and crane housings where noise is generated by the various machinery in operation to power the winches and cranes;
- (c) the introduction of education programmes, where not at present existing, to provide an awareness of noise dangers amongst dockers;
- (d) the provision of the best and most efficient ear muffs available for dock workers exposed to noise;
- (e) the employment of relief men where noise above safe levels obtains;
- (f) the introduction where it does not now exist of compensation for noise-induced disability;
- (g) the support of the ILO for these objectives and their investigation of the problem of determining a maximum noise tolerance exposure level which ensures that damage to hearing will not take place at the workplace.

THE CASE OF THE GLOBTIK VENUS

Thanks to the worldwide publicity given to the scandal of the GLOBTIK VENUS, it is only necessary to report briefly here on the events that took place. The whole affair has served to demonstrate once again the implacable opposition of the seafarers and maritime workers represented by ITF-affiliated unions and fraternal organizations to substandard operations in the shipping industry and the associated disregard of international standards, whether covering safety of life at sea, technical matters, pay and social conditions or anti-pollution measures, and above all to the intimidatory actions of those owners against the men they seek to exploit.

Every week, new cases come to light of unscrupulous owners cheating the charterers of their vessels as well as the men employed on them by either not entering into union agreements acceptable under ITF policy or by failing to fulfil their obligations under those agreements. Charterers would be well advised to remember the old maxim 'Let the buyer beware'.

Following a complaint from the Filipino crew members aboard the GLOBTIK VENUS, then flying the Bahamas flag, regarding pay and conditions on board, the ITF kept a watch on the vessel and when it entered the Teesside port of Middlesbrough in late January of this year, Jim Woods of the British National Union of Seamen, acting as an ITF Inspector, went on board to investigate. His attempts to conclude an agreement for the ship and to recover back pay due to the crew proved unsuccessful and, despite boycott action by British unions, the vessel slipped out of port without the aid of tugs or pilots.

Shortly afterwards, the GLOBTIK VENUS docked in the French port of Le Havre, where immediate action in support of the crew was taken by the French maritime unions who had already been alerted by the ITF to the tanker's likely arrival. It was at this stage of events that Globtik Tankers announced its intention of transferring the vessel to the British flag. A new British crew was supplied and went on board. However, when they were informed by the Filipino crew of the existence of an industrial dispute on board, they agreed to leave.

Globtik Tankers, determined to "teach the unions a lesson," recruited a boarding party of scabs from among unemployed men in the South Humberside fishing port of Grimsby to take over the ship by force, if necessary. Alarmed at these developments, the new British master and the French unions sought and obtained assurances from the French authorities that the so-called "security crew" would not be allowed on board.

The assurances proved to be worthless and, in the early hours of 2 March, the boarding party stormed on to the Venus, shrieking and brandishing fire axes and other weapons, although this was scarcely necessary, as the crew offered no resistance. The captain registered his objections to the forcible take-over of his ship, but was ignored.

Outraged by these strong-arm tactics, the ITF immediately convened a press conference at its London headquarters, at which leading officials of its three British maritime affiliates -- the National Union of Seamen, the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union -- declared that they would take every legal means open to them to ensure that the crew's just claims were met. Globtik Tankers were also warned that the dispute could easily spread to the three other tankers in its fleet. The NUS and the ITF each despatched a representative to Le Havre to join the MNAOA official already there.

Meanwhile, the company was busy recruiting a non-union crew -- the British unions having declared that they would refuse to supply a further crew to the vessel -- while abortive attempts were made to discharge the tanker's cargo of oil. The Filipino crew had already been escorted off the vessel in great haste by the boarding party and put on a plane for Manila.

After declaring that there was no possibility of further negotiations, Ravi Tikkoo, Globtik's chairman, unexpectedly called the ITF and representatives of the British maritime unions to a meeting at his London headquarters on Wednesday 9 March. The talks proved successful and a brief joint statement was issued on their conclusion announcing that the dispute was at an end. The ITF is glad to be able to announce that a substantial settlement was effected, which went a long way towards meeting the crew's original claims.

Since that date, extensive repairs have been carried out to the GLOBTIK VENUS in order to bring it up to the standards required of British-registered vessels. The ship herself eventually sailed from Le Havre on 14 April and resumed normal trading.

ITF Executive Board statement on the case of the GLOBTIK VENUS

The following statement on the case of the GLOBTIK VENUS was adopted by the ITF Executive Board on the occasion of its last meeting:

"At its meeting on 15 and 16 March 1977 the Executive Board of the ITF received a full report on the case of the GLOBTIK VENUS.

"The Board warmly congratulated the British and French unions on their actions which eventually made possible the negotiation of a satisfactory settlement of the Filipino seafarers' claims in the difficult circumstances created by the company. The unions' determined and resourceful stand set standards of international solidarity of the highest order.

"The Board felt it has also to say in unmistakable terms that the employment of thugs by Globtik Tankers in an attempt to frustrate the Filipino seamen's industrial action was utterly shameful.

"The day is long past when unions could be intimidated in this way and the outcome of the GLOBTIK VENUS case will serve to show any shipowner who might be tempted to try similar tactics that he will meet the ITF's implacable resistance."