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No. 9

September 1969

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Statement by the ITF on Hijacking of TWA Boeing 707 to Damascus

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

The hijacking of the Transworld Airlines Boeing to Damascus

A Transworld Airlines Boeing 707 on a scheduled flight from Rome to Athens was hijacked on 30 August and diverted to Damascus. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine immediately claimed responsibility for the hijacking. Minutes after the aircraft landed at Damascus airport, there was an explosion which completely destroyed the nose of the aircraft and the pilot's cabin. The passengers and crew were detained at the airport. All but two passengers, Israeli citizens, have since been released. Efforts to secure the release of the two men are being pursued.

On 3 September, a statement was issued by the ITF and is reproduced as a supplement to this Newsletter. The ITF Management Committee, at its Meeting on 7 September, endorsed the General Secretary's actions and agreed that the ITF should continue its efforts to persuade international organizations and governments to take action to prevent the crime of hijacking.

On 8 September, the Secretary General of ICAO cabled to say that the Legal Sub Committee of the ICAO would be meeting on 23 September. He was hopeful that there would be an early and satisfactory conclusion of its work.

ITALY

Italian dockers union extends help to young Greek runaway

The Greek cargo vessel Theoris put in to the port of Genoa (Italy) on 21 August and was immediately boarded by the Greek Consul as the crew were suspected of having had access to "subversive" literature. The Consul made it adequately clear to the crew that if there was any "renegade" among its number he would be punished by a stiff gaol sentence.

This warning frightened one of the youngest crew members, the 18-year-old deckhand, Panagiotis Stamakis, who was worried what might happen to him when he returned to Greece. Some time later he was allowed on shore on leave, where he contacted two Greeks in exile. Stamakis subsequently decided not to return to his country and his two fellow-countrymen went back to the ship on his behalf to collect his passport and personal belongings. The Master said that he was unable to do anything without first getting in touch with the Greek Consul, as the youth had not given notice of his intention.

The Master's decision was communicated to the ITF-affiliated seamen's and dockers' unions, which had been following developments closely. Dockers in the port immediately decided to stop working the the cargo to put pressure on both the Master and the Greek Consul. After some hesitation, the youth's passport was eventually handed over to the Italian police authorities. Union members then continued to work the cargo.

SWEDEN

Congress of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union

The quadrennial congress of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union was held in Stockholm from 10-15 August. The Acting President of the union, Hans Ericson, was elected to the post of President and the Acting Secretary, Sture Jönson, to that of Secretary of the union.

A full report of the congress will appear in the next issue of the ITF Journal.

TRANSPORT

AUSTRIA

Socialist opposition suggests alternative transport policy for Austria

The opposition Austrian Socialist Party recently held a transport policy conference in Vienna. In a paper presented by Fritz Prechtl of the ITF-affiliated Austrian Railwaymen's Union, the Government's transport policy was attacked as being based on an outdated free market economy, and profits-orientated. Moreover, a lack of progressive transport planning, on the part of the party in power, had led to unhealthy competition between the various modes of public transport, and the Austrian Federal Railways had found themselves at a particular disadvantage. Now was the time for Austria to abandon the notion that the railways (and other public transport services) must operate at a profit, derived from fares. The railways should be helped back on their feet and enabled to operate competitively once again by the establishment of a central traffic authority for this and all other modes of public transport. This would be responsible for transport planning and the investment of public money.

UNITED STATES

Education project for 2,000 rail workers

A pilot project launched by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare in conjunction with the ITF-affiliated

Railway Labor Executives' Association and railroad management should give some 2,000 under-privileged employees of the seven railroads in the Chicago area the opportunity to enjoy the basic education which for one reason or another they have missed. A state grant of \$1 million will provide the funds for a 14-month education course; management will make available the facilities for training; and labor and management jointly will select trainees. George E. Leighty, RLEA chairman, has expressed the union's satisfaction in being able to cooperate in this "humane undertaking". "Because of this program," he said, "these men and women will be fitted with basic skills and knowledge that may help them get and hold better jobs, improve their feeling of economic security and raise their self-esteem."

Still no success in fireman-manning dispute

A joint effort by the ITF-affiliated United Transportation Union and the railroads has failed to bring a settlement of the protracted fireman-manning dispute. The former locomotive firemen and enginemen's union, now part of the UTU, has been pressing for the restoration of firemen (helpers) eliminated in 1963. UTU President, Charles Luna, has made it known that he "respectfully declines" arbitration. He has repeatedly stressed the importance of proper manning from a safety point of view.

TRADE UNIONS

ARGENTINA

General strike in Argentina

Workers in Argentina staged a one-day nation-wide strike on 27 August in support of their demands for wage increases and as a protest against the continued detention of many of their leaders under the state of siege imposed after the strike of 30 May. Industry was brought to a virtual halt by the strike.

GREAT BRITAIN

Call for equal pay now

The Trades Union Congress now being held in Portsmouth has passed without opposition a motion calling upon the British Government to act immediately on the principle of equal pay for equal work, in other words it was asked to implement equal pay for women. The proposal was put before Congress by Frank Cousins, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union. The union has long championed this cause. Cousins told Congress that he was far from satisfied by the Government's promise, as outlined in the Prime Minister's address to the Congress,

that equal pay would be brought about in stages, as the economic situation did not permit of any other solution. This, Mr. Cousins insisted, was no answer. "We are giving notice", he said, "that we have tolerated this for too long. I ask for your support to remove this anomaly on behalf of all those people involved."

GREECE

ICFTU evidence on violation of trade union rights in Greece before ILO Commission of Inquiry

Extensive evidence of blatant violation of trade union rights by the Greek military junta has been submitted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to the International Labour Office in Geneva. The ILO Commission of Inquiry had been set up at the request of representatives of ICFTU-affiliated organizations at the 1968 session of the International Labour Conference.

Immediately after seizing power in April 1967, the ICFTU reports, the Greek military regime suspended vital human and trade union rights clauses of the Greek constitution and declared a state of emergency. On this basis, the regime proceeded with the dissolution of a great number of trade unions, the deposing of properly elected trade union officials and the arrests of many trade unionists. Evidence shows that local military governors were responsible for deposing a considerable number of members of governing bodies of Labour Centres, federations and local branches of trade unions. In other instances, pressure was brought to bear to compel the resignation of properly elected trade union officials. These people were then replaced by others sponsored by the military authorities.

Trade union meetings are subject to police and army control. Information supplied to the police enables them to arbitrarily exclude delegates from trade union congresses and to cancel the candidature of such delegates for trade union office. No trade union organization is allowed to publish a trade union paper or even to issue a circular or statement without previous permission. Despite assertions of the military junta to the contrary, trade unionists continue to be held for offences directly related to their trade union activities. Employers are now empowered to determine the time that trade union officials may devote to their trade union duties. The right to strike has been rendered virtually inoperative.

The ICFTU submits that the decrees on trade unions promulgated by the Greek military regime on 10 May 1969 are incompatible with the letter and the spirit of ILO Conventions. These decrees enable the authorities to consider any trade union activity as subversive and to disband unions and depose their officers. 600 or more trade union officials have been dismissed on the basis of the decrees.

The Confederation further submits that on the basis of its evidence it is established beyond doubt that ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 are not being observed by the Greek government and that the essential guarantees provided for in these Conventions are being gravely violated by the Greek Government.

SWEDEN

Swedish Seamen's Congress condemns flag-of-convenience shipping

The Congress of the Swedish Seamen's Union meeting recently urged that a vigorous campaign be launched against flag-of-convenience shipping. President Johan S. Thore, stressing his own union's long-standing connection with the ITF, advocated a blockade aimed at keeping well away from Swedish ports all flag-of-convenience ships and other ships which had not signed agreements with the ITF. The Swedish Minister of Trade, Gunnar Lange, in his address, spoke of the undesirable effects that flag-of-convenience ships, undercutting in the matter of wages etc., had on the competitiveness of the industry. It would be to the interests of all, he said, if international shipping was in a position to compete freely and on equal terms.

It was announced at the Congress that the President of the union, Johan S. Thore, would be retiring in September 1970 and that he would be succeeded by Gunnar Karlsson. The General Secretary, Ernst Råberg, will also be retiring and his position will be filled by Gustav Klang.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

FRANCE

French cabin attendants win major victory

Following prolonged discussions with Air France, the French Cabin Attendants' Union (SNPNC) has won a major victory by getting all their demands accepted by the management. The main points of the agreement signed by the SNPNC are: provision for additional cabin attendants on all short-haul flights (B 727 and Caravelle); the lifting of the age limit on hostesses for flying duties; an arrangement whereby the seasonal staff now working with Air France are to be taken into the permanent staff in 1970. There are to be further negotiations regarding the future recruitment of seasonal staff. (Details will be published in the next issue).

GERMANY

New agreements for deep-sea and herring fishermen

Following protracted negotiations, the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union has signed two new agreements for:

1) Deep-sea fishermen

Under the terms of the agreement which takes effect from 1 July, captains and members of the crew of deep-sea fishing vessels (with the exception of factory ships) enjoy certain improved benefits. Members of the crew of fresh fish boats will in future receive between 5-15% more of the catch than at present; basic rates for the captain are DM 1,700*; guaranteed rates for crew members have been increased by 8 per cent; pay in port by 10%; insurance for personal belongings and equipment has been brought into line with the requirements laid down by the German maritime regulations; and the travel allowance for journeys over eight hours is increased from DM 16.50 to DM 20. The two parties have agreed to resume negotiations on new rates for factory ships.

2) Herring fishermen

The agreement, effective from 1 June, provides for improvements for the captain and the crew of herring fishing vessels. The guaranteed rate for captains is increased from DM 1,200 to DM 1,600; overtime rates go up 12%; the share in the net proceeds of auctions is increased by 20% for crew members and 10% for captains; and rates for stand-by duties in port and those for loading and unloading are all 15% higher.

* DM 9.60 = £1

GREAT BRITAIN

New deal for busmen

Company busmen in England, Scotland and Wales have welcomed a new wage deal providing for increases in basic pay, longer holidays and larger holiday bonuses. Increases in pay will bring the rates for a top driver to £14.9.10 a week and for a conductor to £14.3.1. Operators of one-man double-deck buses will receive a bonus of 25% instead of the present 22.5%. The new rates will take effect from the middle of September. Three weeks' holiday with pay will be introduced for all with seven years' service and above. This year's holiday bonus will be increased from £2 to £2.10.0. and next year it will be further increased to £2.18.0. for those with up to 7 years' service, and to £4.7.0. for those with over seven years' service.

Aberdeen trawlermen accept peace offer

Aberdeen trawlermen have accepted the peace settlement offered by the Aberdeen Fishing Vessel Owners' Association after a 10-week strike. The 1,000 trawlermen involved in the dispute had been officially backed in their demands by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union. The men have won their claim for a basic rate of £3 per day for deckhands, an increase of 17s.9d. on the present rate. They will also be awarded a tonnage bonus based on the amount of fish landed. There is the possibility that the men will in future refuse to work with non-union labour.

GREAT BRITAIN

Rail pay talks

The ITF-affiliated Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) has accepted the offer made by British Rail after recent pay negotiations. The full increase is 8%, when improvements in pay and conditions are taken into account. Drivers with 30 years' service will receive "established status" giving them three weeks' annual leave and better sickness pay.

Unique union agreement

A unique agreement giving the union the right to inspect company accounts in the event of disputes has been signed by a Norfolk road haulage company, part of a London-based group, and officials of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union.

Commenting on this new form of agreement, a union spokesman said: "This is a major breakthrough in industrial relations. It brings the union a big step nearer proper workers' participation in running the industry in which they are employed."

JAPAN

AJSU negotiates improved benefits

The ITF-affiliated All Japan Seamen's Union has negotiated an agreement which will improve conditions on ocean-going vessels. The agreement is back-dated to the beginning of April and is valid for one year. It includes the following clauses: improved allowances for the master and the chief engineer and an improved daily navigation allowance; an allowance of 15% of the basic wage for voyages outside Japan due to last for at least six months, the allowance to be paid even if the Company requires the vessel to return before the end of this six-month period; and additional paid leave of one working day for each month of service aboard.

NETHERLANDS

Increases for Dutch seafarers

After negotiations lasting two years, the Dutch Seafarers' Union (Federatie van Werknemersorganisaties in de Zeevaart), an ITF affiliate, has reached an agreement with the Dutch shipowners' association. In the deep-sea trade wages will cease to be related to the tonnage of the vessel, the same wages being paid from 1 May 1969 for all vessels over 2,000 grt.; and officers' and ratings' wages are to go up by at least 7%. The results have been based on a job evaluation

study carried out in the Dutch shipping industry. Its recommendations will be introduced in three stages, namely May 1969, January 1970 and January 1971.

While no agreement could be reached with regard to the introduction of a job evaluation study for coasters, officers and ratings serving aboard such ships will receive a 7% rise in pay.

SOUTH AFRICA

South African fishermen reach deadlock in wages dispute

The ITF has declared its solidarity with the affiliated South African Trawler and Line Fishermen's Union in its protracted wages dispute. The union's wage agreement expired at the end of February, since when its negotiations have been deadlocked and conciliation unsuccessful. A company proposal to make a review of wages conditional on the acceptance of reduced manning was rejected by the union. The dispute has now gone to arbitration.

SWEDEN

Swedish union issues strike warning against SAS

Negotiations for an agreement on pay and hours of work for SAS cabin attendants finally broke down last month in Stockholm. At a meeting on 3 September, the cabin attendants' union, Handelstjänstemannaförbundet - an ITF affiliate - issued a strike warning for September 20.

PERSONALIA

V.V. Giri, the ex-president of the All India Railwaymen's Federation - an ITF affiliate - has been elected President of India. Now 75 years old, President Giri was one of the founder members of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) which was formed in 1920 and twice its President. He was also President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation for many years. After India's independence, he became Minister for Labour, but later resigned. He then served as Governor of various states in India and in 1967 he was elected Vice-President of India.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Seafarers' Section Conference	Genoa, 12-13 September 1969
Allied Section Committee Meeting	London, 14-15 October 1969
Railwaymen's Section Conference	Mexico, 11-14 November 1969
Executive Board	Mexico, 18-19 November 1969

Civil Aviation Section Committee
Meeting

Utrecht, 2-4 December 1969

Road Transport Workers' Section
Safety Sub-Committee Meeting

London, 17-19 December 1969

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

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STATEMENT BY THE ITF ON HIJACKING OF TWA BOEING 707 TO DAMASCUS

The hijacking of the TWA Boeing 707 to Damascus on 30 August underlines once again the urgent need for the governments of the world to take immediate action to ensure that hijacking and other forms of attack against civil aircraft are universally outlawed and punished by the severest possible penalties. It adds new point to the efforts now being made within the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to frame and secure world-wide ratification of an instrument making the hijacking of aircraft an internationally-accepted penal offence -- efforts which have the full support of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), which includes more than 150,000 civil aviation personnel among its 6½ million members.

The fact that this most recent hijacking, like that of the EL AL Boeing in July 1968, has been given headline publicity in the world press because of its close connection with the explosive situation in the Middle East should not obscure the fact that it is only one of a series of such crimes committed against civil aircraft in recent months. A number of these incidents have been given only brief coverage by news media, although each and every one has created a situation of actual or potential danger for the civil aviation personnel and passengers who were innocently involved in them.

Singling out just a few of the 50-odd cases which have occurred during the past year alone, we would mention the hijacking of an Ethiopian Airlines aircraft to Khartoum; the placing of a time-bomb by the self-styled Eritrean Liberation Front in an Ethiopian aircraft which exploded while the latter was at Frankfurt airport, injuring several women cleaners; the hijacking of an Olympic Airlines aeroplane to Albania and of a United Arab Republic aircraft to Saudi Arabia; and the attempted hijacking to Cuba of a Colombian domestic flight which resulted in a gun battle between troops and hijackers at Cartagena Airport in which two people were killed and several wounded.

All of these examples and the many others which could be cited (including some which are known to have been prevented by prompt police action in certain European countries) show very clearly that the civil aircraft of any country can become the targets of hijackers, whether the latter be individuals with real or imagined grievances or members of fanatical political groups utilizing terrorist methods to secure free international publicity for their cause.

The International Transport Workers' Federation believes that the real responsibility for taking action to contain and reduce the threat of these criminally irresponsible acts against civil air transport lies with governments. It has already urged the International Civil Aviation Organization and governments to take measures along the following lines:

- (a) the designation of hijacking and other unlawful acts against aircraft as a penal offence against the international community;
- (b) the early introduction of extremely heavy national penalties for such crimes;
- (c) the immediate return by governments of any aircraft, together with all their crew members and passengers, which may be forcibly diverted to their national territory;
- (d) the extradition to the State of Registry of the aircraft of those involved in any hijacking;
- (e) the ending by all governments of any open or tacit support for terrorist organizations engaging in attacks on civil aircraft, since such support -- for whatever reasons it may be given -- inevitably involves the condoning of acts of theft, kidnapping, violence, manslaughter or murder.

Although no legal measures can prevent action by determined and fanatical hijackers, the introduction of really strong deterrents, implemented universally and with the utmost rigour, by governments would nevertheless go a long way towards reducing the present flood of crimes against civil aircraft to a minimum. Governments should therefore act without delay to achieve this end.

Despite the fact that civil aviation workers recognize that this is essentially a problem which must be tackled by governments, their patience in the face of continued threats to their own safety and that of their passengers is not inexhaustible. The present situation will therefore be reviewed later this week by the ITF's Management Committee in order to determine whether any further steps will be taken by the Federation and the civil aviation personnel which it represents to secure quick action against the air pirates.

London, 3 September 1969