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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

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International action on aircraft hijackings

The ITF has called upon all its affiliates to press their governments for the taking of immediate steps, both nationally and internationally through the United Nations, against the crime of aircraft hijacking, and for the introduction of world-wide sanctions against any government protecting hijackers or detaining crew members or passengers of any nationality following a hijacking.

In its message to affiliates, the ITF states inter alia that "this is no longer a problem which concerns only civil aviation personnel and their unions; any member of the ITF who uses civil aircraft as a passenger could now unwittingly find himself involved in a hijacking or a resultant air accident". On the latter point, it emphasizes that "in view of the constantly growing number of hijacking incidents, it is inevitable that sooner or later one of them will develop into a major air disaster".

In the United Nations Assembly, the Dutch Foreign Minister, Dr. J. Luns, has given notice that his Government is to ask that the question of hijacking be included in the Assembly's agenda. Ten other countries are supporting a draft resolution which will deal not only with the question of the return of hijacked aircraft but also the punishment of the hijackers. The countries concerned are: Belgium, Luxembourg, Canada, New Zealand, Lesotho, Malagasy, the Philippines, Argentina, Dominica and Ecuador.

In his statement, Dr. Luns said that "the practice of hijacking as well as the practice not to liberate at once all passengers in a way comparable to piracy on the high seas is not only reprehensible in itself but also endangering air traffic".

The ITF has written to Dr. Luns welcoming this initiative and offering any support possible for the proposals.

Meeting of ILO Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference

An ILO Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference, designed to frame conclusions for consideration by the Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference to be held next year was held in Genoa from 15 to 26 September. The Conference was

preceded on 12 and 13 September by a meeting, also held in Genoa, of the ITF Seafarers' Section, which was concerned principally with discussions on the agenda items to be dealt with at the ILO Conference.

ITF representatives also played a prominent rôle in the Seafarers' Group at the ILO Conference. J.S. Thore (Swedish Seamen's Union) was elected Vice-Chairman of the Conference, and Capt. D.S. Tennant (UK and Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section), F. Giorgi (Italy) and C.G. Blyth (ITF General Secretary) were elected as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Seafarers' Group. On the Conference's Steering Committee, the ITF affiliates accounted for the four titular members and three of the substitute members, while representatives from ITF affiliates also held practically all the titular seats on the six Technical Committees set up by the Conference.

Proposed Conclusions were drawn up by the Technical Committees on the six agenda items under discussion by the Conference: Crew Accommodation; International Minimum Wage for Able Seamen; Employment Problems arising from Technical Developments on Board Ship; the Prevention of Occupational Accidents to Seafarers; Vocational Training; and Seafarers' Welfare on Board and in Port. These Conclusions, which have been circulated by the ITF to all seafarers' affiliates, will form the basis of discussion at the 1970 Conference.

New agreements concluded for flag-of-convenience ships

A number of new agreements covering flag-of-convenience vessels have been concluded during recent weeks as the result of ITF action.

On 5 September an ITF agreement was reached by the Swedish Seamen's Union for the Panamanian "Capitao Bismarck" without the need for boycott action. The vessel had been discharging flowers of sulphur in the port of Gruvön.

Negotiations concerning the Liberian "Pelagos" were begun in Gothenburg on 9 September following boycott action lasting only half an hour by the Swedish Seamen's and Transport Workers' Unions. An agreement was reached which brought the crew's wages and conditions up to British National Maritime Board standards, the difference in wages being paid out to the crew whilst the vessel was still in Sweden.

Action was taken by the Swedish Seamen's Union against the Somali-flag ship "Silver Swan" on 18 September in the port of Karlshamn. As a result, dues were paid for enrolment of the crew members in the ITF Special Seafarers' Section. The master, however, stated that he required authorization from the owner before bringing the crew's wages up to the requisite standard. A further watch is being kept on the vessel, now on its way to Hong Kong for repairs, to ensure that this is done.

The Panamanian "Eagle II" was boycotted in Malmö, on 29 September by the Swedish Transport Workers' Union and an agreement concluded.

An ITF agreement has also been concluded for the Liberian-flag "Blue Dolphin" as the result of a voluntary approach by Geneva agents for the owner. A renewal agreement was also signed for the Liberian "Swan" through the Swiss Transport Workers' Union.

Through the German Transport Workers' Union, an ITF agreement has also been reached covering Liberian flag-ships operated by Transworld Carriers Inc. (Bahamas). In addition, a collective agreement between the union and Transworld Carriers establishing the pay and conditions of German crew members serving aboard the Company's vessels has been concluded.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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Liberia's flag-of-convenience takes to the air

Liberia -- the country in which the world's largest flag-of-convenience merchant fleet is registered -- is now making the same facilities available to airline companies. The government has granted a concession to an air charter company registered in Monrovia and operated by Gatx Boothe Finance AG. The latter company has offices in Zurich (Switzerland), but is owned by a combination of Gatx Inc. in the United States and certain European interests.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Reorganisation of deck officer training

The Merchant Navy Training Board has approved the complete reorganisation of deck officer training as proposed by the report of its Deck Officers' Section. The reorganisation extends from pre-sea training to the master's certificate course.

All candidates for deck officer cadetships will take part in compulsory sandwich courses lasting for a total of 36 weeks. Before sitting the second mate's certificate examination, candidates may be required to undertake a four-week training course. A 26-week course will be compulsory for all wishing to proceed to the first mate's certificate. A similar course will be followed prior to the master's certificate examinations.

The Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) - an ITF affiliate - helped produce the report. As early as 1963, the MNAOA had urged that the standards for certificates of competency should be raised. It has also asked that there should be adequate financial assistance for all students attending compulsory courses, and that the revised courses for the first mate's and master's certificates should not be introduced until the new requirements for cadet officers have been in force for some time.

NETHERLANDS
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Major Dutch shipping companies may merge

A number of major Dutch shipping companies hope to merge to form one of the biggest shipping groups in Europe. The three lines involved, the Netherlands Steamship Company, Royal Rotterdam Lloyd and Royal Inter-Ocean Lines controlled 194 ships totalling over 2 million tons d.w. at the end of 1968.

SWEDEN
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Reducing accidents at sea

Gunnar Karlsson, who will take over from Johan Thore as President of the ITF-affiliated Swedish Seamen's Union when the latter retires next year, has commented on the findings of a recent official investigation into accidents at sea. This indicates that in 1967 alone there were 1,071 such accidents, of which three involved fatalities.

One of the most important contributory factors in such accidents, said Karlsson, is undoubtedly the excessive working week demanded of seamen. In theory, seamen are subject to the same restrictions on their working hours -- 42½ per week -- as apply to workers ashore. However, they are also required to be on watch for a further 13½ hours, together with an additional allowance on an overall annual basis for overtime. A shipmaster has in fact the power to require seamen to work anything up to a 74-hour week.

Karlsson also drew attention to another problem touched upon by the committee in its report. By law, all Swedish vessels with more than 25 crew members are supposed to have a safety committee consisting of representatives of both the crew and the owner. On smaller vessel, a safety officer replaces the committee. In practice, states Karlsson, it has often proved impossible to persuade the master -- acting as representative of the owner -- to participate in the work of the committees.

Practical accident prevention measures also appeared to be practically non-existent. Ultra-modern vessels carried outmoded equipment dating from the days of sail and inspection of equipment was lax. A bosun's chair crashing down on the deck was the cause of a fatal accident during 1967. This could have been avoided if there had been a proper inspection of the splicing beforehand.

UNITED STATES

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Exact fare buses

An exact fare plan negotiated by the Transport Workers' Union of America - an ITF affiliate - came into effect on New York buses on 31 August. Under the plan, passengers must make sure that they have the exact fare before boarding transit vehicles. All fares are deposited in a strong box bolted to the bus floor. This can only be opened by authorized personnel. In 1968, there was a steep rise in the number of attacks upon bus drivers motivated by robbery. It is to protect the driver against such acts of violence and relieve him of the irksome duty of collecting fares that the scheme is being introduced. Drivers will now be able to devote their entire attention to the serious business of driving the bus.

When the union first raised the issue, management tried to delay its implementation. The installation of strong boxes would, they claimed, cost some \$3 million. The union countered that the lives of its members should not have any price tag attached to them. The TWU has already found the exact fare plan to be successful in other areas where it pioneered its introduction. Transit locals which have not yet adopted the scheme are being encouraged to do so in the best interest of their members.

TRADE UNIONS

UNITED STATES

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Employers circumvent container agreements, says Gleason

Speaking in London recently, Thomas W. Gleason, President of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) - an ITF affiliate - warned that American dock workers might soon find themselves with their feet under the bargaining table, although their current contract had two more years to run.

The US had still a long way to go before it solved all its container problems. Management had found ways to circumvent the rules laboriously hammered out by both sides of industry during long weeks of bargaining and this was just the sort of issue which was likely to lead to strike action.

Gleason saw a clear need in the US for fully uniform conditions of work, pay and benefits for all dockers in Atlantic and Gulf ports. This would prevent employers seeking a further competitive edge by taking advantage of contracts which were not standard for all ports. The ILA would have a vital part to play in negotiating such contracts for all ports with all employers at one and the same time.

It was never too late, he went on to say, for management to invite the unions to come and see for themselves what might cause the labour problems of tomorrow. He envisaged a series of world-wide meetings of unions and employers on the mechanisation of cargo handling. These could be attended by representatives of the makers and designers of mechanised handling gear. Such an approach would help towards much earlier social acceptance of technological change.

Transport Workers' Union calls for repeal of unfair law

Delegates attending the recent 13th Convention of the Transport Workers' Union of America (an ITF affiliate) have called for a special session of the New York state legislature to repeal the Taylor Law which, the union maintains, encroaches upon the rights of public service employees. A resolution adopted by the convention labels the law as harsh and repressive, as it deprives public service workers of the right to organise and bargain collectively through representatives chosen by themselves. The union is pressing that public service workers be granted the same freedom to settle their disputes as that enjoyed by employees in private industry.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

FRANCE

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French railways hit by strike

French railwaymen virtually paralysed the French railway system when they went on strike last month following the break-down of talks on drivers' pay and working conditions. The unions were asking for a 23 per cent. increase in the number of drivers, so that the 44.5-hour week granted them in principle last year could be implemented. The strike spread rapidly to other railway workers.

The French National Railways (SNCF) argued that with its present deficit it was unable to support the 2.75% increase in the overall wages bill involved.

The men started to go back to work when an agreement was reached with the SNCF reducing night work from 9½ hours to 8 hours and also reducing the hours when the men must remain in depots and stations although not actually on duty.

Strikers on the Metro in Paris ended their five-day stoppage when they were promised an improvement in rest-day provisions. Workers are to have two rest days in every six from 1 January 1972. To compensate for this, the daily working hours will be increased by five minutes between 1 January 1970 and 1 January 1972. To cover the intermediate period, workers will be awarded 8 extra rest-days at the beginning of 1970 and a further day at the beginning of 1971.

Age limit for stewardesses is raised

As reported briefly in the September issue of the ITF Newsletter (p.77), an agreement has been reached between the French Cabin Attendants' Union (SNPNC) - an ITF affiliate - and Air France.

The agreement covers three points, the most important of these being the revised and more flexible arrangement with regard to the retirement age for air hostesses. The pensionable age for flight staff has been for many years fixed by law at 50 for male and female crew members alike. Air France had, however, set an upper age limit for hostesses of 40. The SNPNC has now succeeded in raising the limit to 50, with an option for earlier retirement should the employee so wish. Hostesses may elect to continue flying to the age of 50 or they may take a permanent ground position until the age of 60. From the age of 50, the employee will be paid a pension under the flying staff scheme in addition to the ground staff salary. When she retires at 60, she will then be paid a second pension under the ground staff scheme.

The agreement also provides for an extra cabin attendant on certain European and Middle East flights; and the integration into the permanent staff of all seasonal staff at present employed by Air France.

GERMANY

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German railwaymen win assurance on pay improvements

At the second round of wage talks between the ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) and the German Federal Railways the union again put forward its demand for an increase of DM 100x) per month for all its 185,000 members, effective from 31 September.

The Federal Railways gave a firm assurance that it would make the railwaymen a firm offer immediately following their talks with the government. The men are expected to be awarded DM 300 which would cover the remaining three months of the year. The union has already made it clear that it will formulate more precise demands for 1970 at a later date.

Transport workers press for immediate pay increases

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union entered upon negotiations last month with the then Government for better pay and conditions for its 1.2 million members. The union is demanding an immediate monthly increase of DM 100 from 1 October. It would also like to see Saturday rest-days no longer being deducted from annual leave.

Further demands for 1970 would, the union said, be formulated when it was in a position to evaluate the trends of the closing months of 1969.

x) £1 - DM 9.60 at then rate of exchange

New agreement for dock workers

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OTV) has negotiated a new wage agreement for 30,000 port workers. Under the terms of this, shift rates are to be increased from DM 33.50 to DM 37 with effect from 1 November. This means an average increase in monthly rates of DM 100.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Aberdeen trawlermen set the pace

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union has proposed a basic rate of £21 per week for all fishermen. A union spokesman said that the settlement reached recently with the Aberdeen trawlermen on substantially increased rates of pay for fishermen operating from the port (reported in the September issue of the ITF Newsletter) had set a yardstick for the whole industry.

Two further ports, Hull and South Shields, are now pressing for increased rates on the basis of the Aberdeen award. The Hull trawlermen are asking for a 17s.9d. increase for all ratings from galley boy to bosun. Trawlermen in North Shields are reported to be claiming a basic daily rate of £3.

London airport staff black ground handling firm

Ground staff at London Airport are blacking an outside company -- the Canadian General Aviation Services -- which has been given a contract to operate ground handling facilities at the airport. At a meeting held on 8 September, they decided to continue the ban until the contract is withdrawn. The staff fear that redundancies will result from the new company's operations.

BOAC cabin staff may call protest strike

Airline stewardesses employed by British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) have threatened that they will take part in a 24-hour strike if the existing agreement governing the number of hours flown by cabin staff is broken again by the Corporation.

Award for railway shopmen

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) has successfully negotiated the second stage of a pay and efficiency agreement for railway shopmen. Under the terms of the agreement, the qualifying period for three weeks' annual leave will be three years in 1970, further reduced to one year as from 1 January 1971; holiday pay is to be based on the standard weekly rate, plus 1/6th of that rate; an element of further consolidation as proposed under stage one of the agreement is included in the new standard rates of pay; and trade union membership is to be made a condition of employment for all shopmen.

NORWAY

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Boycott against Norwegian coastal vessels using crews as dockers

At its recent Congress, the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Transport Workers' Union decided to implement a "negative boycott" against cargo vessels in the coastal trade if negotiations covering all vessels belonging to members of the Coastal Shipowners' Association cannot be successfully concluded.

The basic problem is that many of the approximately 1,000 vessels operated by members of the Association along Norway's coastline have been making use of their crew members to load or discharge cargo. Only where heavy or dirty cargoes are involved are regular dockers brought in.

If an acceptable agreement covering all ships and providing for the use of dockers cannot be negotiated, the current contract will not be renewed and members of the Transport Workers' Union will only handle vessels if they make use of approved ship's brokers or forwarding agents who have signed an agreement with the union or who follow the existing contracts covering cargo-handling in the port in which the ship is being discharged or loaded.

SWEDEN

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New collective agreement reached between cabin attendants and SAS

A new collective agreement acceptable to all SAS cabin attendants was reached between the Swedish cabin attendants' union, Handelstjänstemannaförbundet - an ITF affiliate - and SAS only an hour before a strike scheduled for 20 September was due to come into effect (see ITF Newsletter No. 9, p.80).

Improved benefits under the terms of the agreement include: off-duty periods at home-base increased from 42 to 45 hours per week; leave taken during the summer months increased from 14 to 18 days; a 20.6% pay increase spread over a three-year period; and other benefits such as increased flight pay for stewards and stewardesses effective 1 January, 1971.

UNITED STATES

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IAM wins through in protracted dispute

The International Association of Machinists - an ITF affiliate - has at last won through in its protracted struggle with National Airlines. An appeal court has now ruled that National Airlines must reinstate IAM members locked out by them in January of this year following a dispute. (See August Newsletter, p. 61)

IAM Vice-President, W.W. Winpisinger, commenting on the decision, said:

"For the first time an employer in contract negotiations violating procedures of the act (the Railway Labor Act which regulates contract bargaining on airlines and railroads) has been told that he cannot victimize his employees and get away with it.

"This is a great victory for the locked-out IAM members, for the thousands of members of the IAM and other unions who have been contributing to their support, and for the IAM itself."

The court ruling charges National with acting "too hastily" in dismissing IAM members. Although the issue of back-pay and other benefits due to employees have yet to be dealt with, the union's counsel holds that the reinstatement implies back-pay for all to the reinstatement date.

Since the dispute National has been flying on reduced schedules and with light passenger loads.

Rail managements threaten lockout

All but one of the United States railway managements -- the exception being the Penn Central Railroad -- have threatened to close down their networks and lock out their workers if rail shopcraft unions proceed with a strike against six railways scheduled for the beginning of October. The unions have been negotiating with management to secure increases for shopcraft workers who, they point out, are paid 50 cents to \$1.50 an hour less than comparable skilled workers in other industries. The strike threat, made against only six of the companies affected, is designed to break a negotiations deadlock which has lasted since June, when the employers refused to meet with the unions. The union efforts to achieve wage parity for their rail members have, however, been continuing for nearly a year.

PERSONALIA

A.E. Lyon, a member of the ITF Executive Board for 14 years and executive secretary of the RLEA from 1945 to 1962, has retired from his last post as labour member of the Railroad Retirement Board. He is to be succeeded on the board by Neil P. Speirs, assistant president of the UTU.

Frank T. Durkin, who is at present Secretary of the Flight Safety Committee of the MNAOA, has been elected Chairman of the MNAOA. Durkin first joined the association in 1952 and was elected to the Council in 1967.

Captain Michael E. Bodiam, who was last year elected to the Council of the MNAOA, is the new Vice-Chairman.

Manuel Muino, has been elected General Secretary of the Spanish UGT in exile. He replaces Pascual Tomas who has retired.

Tore Ellingsbø, has been elected chairman of the Norwegian ships' engineers' union.

Thomas W. Gleason, President of the ITF-affiliated US International Longshoremen's Association, has been elected as a Vice-President of the AFL-CIO at the latter's recent Convention.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS
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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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