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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

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ITF Standing Committee on Cruise Ships meets in Bermuda

The ITF Standing Committee on Cruise Ships met in Bermuda on 17 and 18 February 1981 to review the implementation of ITF policy on cruise ships under flags of convenience and on the employment of catering concessionaire crews. Affiliates from unions in Antigua, Bermuda, Curaçao, Denmark, Dominica, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Italy, Norway, St. Lucia, Trinidad, United Kingdom and the United States were represented. At the end of the meeting, members were co-opted on to the Committee from Bermuda and Trinidad and Tobago (with Curaçao as alternate member) as well as from Greece.

The Standing Committee reviewed information supplied by affiliates, partly as the result of on-the-spot investigations, and decided on a number of measures designed to improve the overall position of catering concessionaire crews. The Committee was of the view that there were certain fundamental rights that these crews should enjoy along with all other seafarers, including that of belonging to a trade union and of benefiting from the provisions of ILO instruments covering workers in the maritime industry. They should further have an undisputed right to such conditions as might be negotiated between their trade union representatives and the ship's owner or operator and be entitled to equality of treatment with other seafarers.

The principal recommendation of the meeting was that the ITF Secretariat should formulate an ITF agreement especially adapted to cruise ships and with a section dealing with catering concessionaire crews. It should then approach owners and operators of cruise ships flying flags of convenience with a view to securing acceptance of the standards laid down.

Back-up action to be taken by ITF seafarer affiliates was also recommended, with unions in countries of beneficial ownership being requested to contact f-o-c owners from their respective countries in an effort to secure agreements at least on a par with the ITF collective agreement. Affiliates from traditional maritime nations should, meanwhile, be prepared to persuade owners operating under their national flag to enter into agreements in respect of crews whose conditions were not the subject of an agreement with the bona fide national unions concerned.

The meeting further recommended that the ITF should undertake a survey of the conditions applicable to all crews serving in cruise ships. It expressed its appreciation of the valuable contribution that the newly-established Caribbean Maritime and Aviation Council could make to such a survey by supplying the ITF Secretariat with details of standards currently being applied on ships operating in the area, and also recorded its

understanding of the need to provide jobs for Caribbean seafarers, especially on such ships as derived their profits largely from their Caribbean operations.

Flight Deck Technical Committee urges action on flight deck design on new generation aircraft

Most of the time of the meeting of the ITF Flight Deck Technical Committee held in London on 10 February -- its first since our Miami Congress -- was devoted to a discussion of flight deck design and crew complement on the A310 manufactured by Airbus Industrie and other new aircraft types being developed by Boeing and the most effective way of bringing the views of the ITF and its aviation affiliates on the safety aspects involved to the notice of both governments and civil aviation administrations. It was decided that the ITF should write to the International Labour Office drawing its attention to the discrepancy between the Conclusions on Environmental Health and Safety in Aviation adopted at the December 1977 ILO Tripartite Technical Meeting on Aviation and what has happened in practice so far as the A310 is concerned, stressing the fact that this represented a clear breach of a commitment freely entered into by airline employers and governments that workers should be consulted at the design stage of, inter alia, flight deck layout.

The relevant passage of the Conclusions reads:

"To be most effective, preventive measures should start at the design stage -- of aircraft, flight deck layout and working areas for cabin staff --- as well as at the construction stage of airport buildings, and the planning and layout of all working areas. To this end, ergonomic principles based on the results of recent scientific research in this field, should be more widely introduced. The workers' views on matters affecting their occupational health and safety should be considered among the many factors which have to be taken into account."

All ITF affiliates organizing aviation workers have since been circularized and asked to use the letter as a framework for similar approaches to their respective governments and civil aviation administrations, emphasizing that the commercial considerations behind the new cockpit layout designed for use by two pilots only run counter to the public interest and that the overriding consideration must be to ensure the maximum safety and operating efficiency that nothing less than a three-man crew in an appropriately modified cockpit (i.e. incorporating a conventional sideways-facing flight engineer panel) can provide on wide-bodied aircraft.

The meeting paid tribute to the efforts of the French flight deck unions - the pilots and, more especially, the flight engineers - who had now won acceptance, against considerable odds, for a three-man flight deck on the Air France A310, and to current attempts by the Dutch flight engineers to get the Airbus certified for an additional flight crew member, which now seemed to be making real headway.

The Committee further discussed recent developments within the International Civil Aviation Organization with regard to the air transport of hazardous cargoes and agreed to ask the Civil Aviation Section to set up an ITF Working Group on the subject with members from the following categories -- ground handling, ground operations personnel, pilots, flight engineers and cabin crew -- to review the ICAO draft recommendations.

In a unanimous vote, Jack Wahle (Flight Engineers' International Association, United States) and Roger Bricknell (Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association, Great Britain) were elected chairman and vice-chairman respectively of the Committee.

Steering Committee discusses needs of long-distance lorry drivers

The Steering Committee of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section held its latest meeting in Zürich on 18 February. The Committee dealt first of all with the question of weights and dimensions of road vehicles, with particular reference to current developments within the EEC. It was decided that because it was essentially a matter of coordinating the different national practices affiliates had an especially important rôle to play in monitoring the harmonization work of the EEC Commission and other international institutions in this area. Social security provision for drivers travelling abroad was the subject of extensive discussions, and the Committee suggested that the ITF Secretariat should undertake a survey of existing bilateral agreements on the subject with a view to establishing their strengths and weaknesses and deciding on appropriate action in areas not already covered. The Committee welcomed recent moves by the ITF to give more help and advice to drivers on the road and proposed that the German and Austrian road transport unions should investigate the possibilities of opening an office or advice centre on their common border -- on the lines of the newly-opened office in Irún^{x)} -- to offer assistance to the very large number of drivers using this frontier. The Committee further suggested that individual member unions should investigate the feasibility of establishing contact with drivers using passenger ferries and asked them to report their findings to the Secretariat.

x) see also ITF Newsletter No. 12, 1980, page 114

GREECE
=====

Greek Shipping Minister authorizes bilateral crewing agreements

On 29 December - three days prior to Greece becoming a member of the EEC - the Greek Minister of Shipping signed a decree authorizing Greek shipowners to conclude bilateral crewing agreements with seamen's unions in developing nations.

The effect of the Greek ministerial decree is as follows:

1. Only Greek seafarers will be entitled to the full benefits of the Greek collective agreement and Greek owners are free to negotiate wage rates for non-domiciled seafarers with foreign unions and/or governments on the understanding that any such wage rates agreed should not fall below locally paid wages or the wages paid under similar arrangements to foreigners aboard other maritime countries' ships.
2. Unqualified foreign seafarers will be repatriated and replaced by qualified Greek seafarers as and when the latter become available.
3. Greek owners will pay contributions into social security funds established in the countries of origin of the non-domiciled seafarers thus recruited.
4. NAT (Greek social security contributions) will not be levied on foreign seafarers, nor will those seafarers benefit from NAT at all.
5. Greek owners will pay US\$30 per man per month into a special foreign exchange account for exclusive use for the welfare and protection of Greek seafarers and their families.

The above arrangements - applicable to ships above 1,500 DWT - are valid for a period of 18 months and can be extended for another 18-month period by ministerial decision.

The Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation intends to challenge the legality of the ministerial decree in the Greek courts and, in the meantime, has asked the ITF and its affiliates to protest at the decision which was taken without proper consultation of the union.

The ITF Secretariat has already met Greek shipowning interests to explain ITF policy on bilateral crewing agreements and the consequences of any action designed to circumvent that policy, and seafarer affiliates have been requested to lodge a formal protest with the Greek Minister of Shipping, deploring a decision which will lead to increased discrimination against non-Greek seafarers.

TRANSPORT

UNITED STATES
=====

Presidential Task Force to review safety of proposed two-
man cockpit

The new US Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis has announced that a Presidential Task Force is to be appointed to look into the crew complement question on the new generation of US-manufactured aircraft. The task force, which is to make its report within 120 days of being constituted, will undertake an extensive study to determine whether these aircraft can be flown as safely with two cockpit members as with three.

The news represents a clear victory for US aviation unions - principally the Air Line Pilots' Association and the ITF-affiliated Flight Engineers' International Association - which are now preparing their case for presentation to the body. Plans for a national suspension of airline services by ALPA pilots on 2 March have now been dropped.

TRADE UNIONS

GUATEMALA
=====

Coca Cola boycott ends

The International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) has called off its international boycott of the products of the multinational soft drinks company Coca Cola now that the latter has concluded a collective agreement with the local plant union in Guatemala - the final step in a series of measures undertaken to resolve a lengthy labour conflict^x), which cost at least ten lives, and to meet all union demands.

Prior to signing the agreement, Coca Cola had already taken action to fulfil its promise to the IUF that it would restore normal labour relations at the plant. All the previous management personnel had been removed and replaced with personnel acceptable to the union, the "yellow" employees' association had been disbanded, and national and military police removed from the premises. Arrangements had been made for sacked workers to be reinstated and for compensation to be paid to the families of workers who lost their lives during the dispute.

The three-year collective contract is backdated to 2 February 1980 - the renewal date of the previous agreement - and provides for a staged 56% increase to the lowest-paid workers. The management has further agreed to recognize the union as the workers' representative and has undertaken not to discourage anyone from joining. It has also granted it all the usual facilities - including the check-off of dues, time-off for officials on union business, and a union office on the premises. Office holders will also enjoy protection against dismissal.

x) see ITF Newsletter No. 9, 1980, page 86 for earlier details

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA
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Strike of Qantas cabin and ground staffs

Qantas cabin crew organized in the ITF-affiliated Flight Stewards' Association came out on strike earlier this month after failing to reach agreement with the carrier, which was seeking to operate its new B 747 SP aircraft -- then shortly due to come into service principally on the Sydney-Wellington route -- with a crew complement that the union felt was not adequate. The Australian Council of Trade Unions declared the new B 747 SP service black and ground staff who refused to handle the aircraft as a result were suspended by the company; this led to a walkout by other ground staff. Affiliates were informed of flights that Qantas has managed to get away from Sydney and were asked for their assistance.

The cabin crew have now returned to work following an arbitration decision that suspended stewards be reinstated, while the latest information we have is that a mediated settlement of the ground staff strike is being sought.

DENMARK
=====

Ships' officers withdraw collective notice served on owners

Following further negotiations in late January with the Danish Shipowners' Association, the three ships' officers' unions, the Deck Officers' Association, the Engineers' Union and the Radio Officers' Union - all ITF affiliates - have withdrawn the collective notice served^{x)} on behalf of 2,300 of their members working on Danish ships. Talks on changes in the collective agreements covering the three organizations began on 15 February

and details of their eventual outcome will be reported in the Newsletter in due course.

The owners have agreed principally that the period of service on board ship which gives entitlement to free repatriation should be reduced to 5 months for all officers signing off after 1 April 1981 and that the period of shore leave should be increased from 4 to 6 weeks. All officers terminating their service before that date will be subject to the current six-month rule, and the owners will retain the right to require an officer to serve up to one month over the five months after that date if it would be cheaper or more reasonable for the company to repatriate the officer from a port reached during that time. Talks on further reducing the qualifying period for home leave have been set for 1 September 1982.

The other major improvement reached is a formula restoring the eroded differential between the pay of ratings and officers. In future, the starting salary for the most junior officer will be set at a rate suitably higher than the fixed monthly rate, including allowances (but excluding overtime and seniority payments, where appropriate), of the most highly-paid rating category. The salaries of all remaining officers would be determined in accordance with similar principles, rising according to seniority and generally such as to reflect training, qualifications and the degree of responsibility exercised on board. Finally, it has been agreed that the officers' collective agreements should be revised with a view to eliminating the various allowances currently being paid.

x) see ITF Newsletter No. 12, 1980, page 115 for further details

GREAT BRITAIN

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Interim pay award ends seafarers' selective strike campaign

The ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen called off its 5-week selective strike campaign^{x)} on 12 February after accepting the owners' interim pay offer and agreeing conditions for a return to work. Under the pay award, effective from 2 January, the basic pay of an AB goes up from £64 to £70, the hourly overtime rate Mondays - Saturdays is increased to £2.03 and to £2.44 on Sundays (i.e. a new rate of time and a half for all hours worked on that day). The offer is worth 12 per cent in all, equivalent to an earlier offer, which was subsequently withdrawn by the owners.

Two outstanding claims - notably for time and a half for weekly overtime and double pay for overtime at weekends and Public Holidays and for consolidation of Efficient Service Pay for the purposes of calculating overtime rates and leave

pay - have been referred to a three-man arbitration panel (comprising an independent chairman plus one owners' and one union representative), whose decision will be binding on both parties.

As part of the settlement, the General Council of British Shipping has also undertaken to:

- (a) reinstate at company expense and with pay, all former crew members within a reasonable time without loss of service, seniority or entitlements related thereto;
- (b) count the days a crew member spent in dispute whilst on crew agreement towards his leave-earning entitlement;
- (c) to restore full pay, unemployment benefit or sickness benefit to union members who were put off pay or benefits during the dispute in respect of the periods concerned, and
- (d) not to take action against individual shipping companies which negotiated separate agreements with the NUS during the dispute. In particular, Canadian Pacific, which resigned from GCBS membership after concluding a separate deal with the NUS, will not be hampered from re-joining the employers' association.

Once again, the NUS has asked us to convey to affiliates its heartfelt thanks for the magnificent response to its calls for solidarity.

Meanwhile, unions representing Britain's 36,000 merchant navy officers and cadets have rejected an offer of a 12 per cent increase in earnings or 10 per cent on pay plus an extra five days' leave backdated to 1 November 1980 (the anniversary of the previous settlement).

x) see January issue, page 4 for strike details

New agreements for staff of Thomas Cook and Thomson Holidays

The ITF-affiliated Transport Salaried Staffs' Association has recently negotiated a new settlement for its members employed by Thomas Cook. This includes: salaries raised on 1 November 1980 by 11½% for all grades, with staff in the lower salary ranges receiving an additional 3½% to restore lost purchasing power; 1-2 days' additional annual leave for 291 staff, within a range of 20-25 days according to grade and length of service; an improvement in London weighting, bringing the Inner London allowance to £1,050 (previously £815) and the Outer London rate to £444 (previously £345). At the same time, considerable

improvements have been made in the benefits payable under the superannuation scheme.

The TSSA has also informed us of a 15 per cent pay rise for provincial staff with Thomson Holidays, to take effect on 1 April 1981. Inner London staff will receive a 20 per cent increase.

IRISH REPUBLIC

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Oil tanker drivers' strike hits petrol supplies

Oil tanker drivers in the Irish Republic -- members of the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union -- have been on strike since midnight on 20 February after reaching an impasse with the employers on productivity increases. As we went to press, the strike had spread to involve workers of the Esso company and virtually all oil and petrol supplies were affected. The oil companies have met to discuss a letter from the Minister of Labour urging them to re-open direct negotiations without pre-conditions in an effort to break the deadlock, and according to the latest news have agreed to new talks with the union, although on what basis is still unclear.

NEW ZEALAND

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Ground engineers' strike ends

Ground engineers^{x)} at Auckland Airport struck Air New Zealand towards the end of February in a dispute over levels of pay in the North Island. Shortly after the strike began, a number of union members on official picket duty were arrested and charged with trespass in a restricted area. Most were released on bail but a few - including the union president - who refused bail were detained. This led to island-wide sympathy strikes by transport and other workers demanding their release.

Normal working was resumed a week later when the remaining pickets were freed after signing bail bonds and being remanded for a period of one month. The New Zealand Federation of Labour has already taken up the matter of the right to picket with the government. The ITF had earlier cabled the Minister of Labour deploring the arrest of trade unionists on picket duty. Talks on the engineers' pay claim have now been resumed and we hope to be able to include details of a settlement in the next issue of the Newsletter.

x) members of the ITF-affiliated New Zealand Engineering, Coachbuilding, Aircraft, Motor and Related Trades Industrial Union of Workers.

SWEDEN

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Engineer officers' strike averted

The Swedish Engineer Officers Union -- now an autonomous affiliate of the ITF-affiliated Supervisors' Union (SALF) -- reached agreement last month with the Swedish Shipowners' Association on salaries and other conditions of employment for the union's seagoing membership. Strike notices effective 16 January 1981 were thereby cancelled. The settlement provides for a 10 per cent salary increase backdated to 1 August 1980 as well as improvements in the rules governing overtime compensation. Actual overtime rates are increased from 1/120 to 1/116 of the monthly rate for weekdays and from 1/75 to 1/72 for Sundays and Public Holidays, with engineer officers working overtime during periods which do not immediately follow on normal working hours receiving minimum compensation of 1½ hours. Compensatory leave will be granted as follows: 1.2 hours per overtime hour worked on Mondays - Fridays and Saturdays (until 4 p.m.) and 2 hours per hour worked at all other times.

A significant feature of the agreement is a clause which will give greater employment guarantees to older workers after 1 July next.

STOP PRESS

Labour Court to intervene in Irish petrol strike

The strike of oil tanker drivers in the Irish Republic^{x)} took an unexpected turn when the Labour Court, exercising powers conferred on it under the Industrial Relations Act, announced its intention of intervening to promote a speedy settlement. Union reaction to the Court's intervention, which is unprecedented, is not yet known.

x) see page 20 of this issue

NEWS IN BRIEF

The International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations have resumed talks aimed at getting safe conduct for 70 vessels blocked in the Shatt al Arab waterway by the Gulf conflict between Iran and Iraq.

Australian airport technicians resumed normal working on 8 January after four weeks of industrial action on receiving satisfactory assurances from the employers on levels of pay.

Representatives of British Airways ground staff have decided not to take further industrial action^{x)} over their pay claim before the next meeting with the National Joint Council for Civil Air Transport on 9 March.

x) see January issue, page 7, for news of 24-hour strike

The ITF-affiliated Norwegian Metal Workers' Union celebrated its 90th anniversary on 28 February. We offer our heartiest congratulations and every good wish for the future.

Portugal: merchant navy engineer officers staged a three-day strike towards the end of February in support of demands for more pay, improved conditions and better pensions.

Spanish air traffic controllers called off a three-day work to rule in late January after the government agreed to re-open contract negotiations. The action had been called to back demands for a pay increase of 27,000 pesetas per month.

Ground staff of the Spanish national airline Iberia called off a series of short stoppages, which began on 2 February after the company agreed to make an improved 11 per cent pay offer.

ERRATUM

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A typing error unfortunately slipped into a Personalia item in the last issue of the Newsletter. Kare Kristoffersen was of course formerly vice-president of the Norwegian Seamen's Union. The union's president is Henrik Aasarød, who is member of the ITF Executive Board. We apologize to all concerned.

OBITUARY

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Ruben Levin, editor and manager of Labor (the national newspaper published by 14 major US transport unions), died on 29 January 1981, aged 78. Brother Levin's newspaper career spanned over half a century and he received many awards and honours over the years, including the prestigious Eugene V. Debs award in 1975.

PERSONALIA

We offer our heartiest congratulations to former ITF President Robert Bratschi, who celebrated his 90th birthday on 6 February. Brother Bratschi is without doubt the most outstanding figure in the Swiss labour movement this century. The list of positions he held during his active working life is impressive. They include the presidencies of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation, the Swiss Public Service Workers' Federation and the ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union. He is furthermore a former member and past president of the Swiss parliament, as well as a former member of the local parliament of Berne canton, and holds an honorary doctorate of the University of Basle. He has enormous energies and such varied talents that a leading Swiss newspaper was once prompted to call him "a democrat of alarming proportions". Brother Bratschi was ITF President from 1950 to 1954, having previously served with distinction on our Executive Committee. He also helped rebuild the ITF after the ravages of the Second World War and opened the founding Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Raymond Deseau, Permanent Secretary of the French Flight Engineers' Union (SNOMAC), has recently retired after a union career spanning over forty years. An active aviation trade unionist all his working life, he helped found SNOMAC as a separate category union and initiated its affiliation to the ITF and later to the FEIA. During his years with SNOMAC, he has occupied a variety of responsible positions, including those of President, General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary. Brother Deseau has occupied a prominent position within the ITF Civil Aviation Section for many years and served with distinction as both a flight deck member of our Section Committee and as representative of his country on the Flight Deck Technical Committee, in both of which capacities his technical expertise obtained in a long career as an Air France f/e was very much in evidence. He has also been a strong campaigner for the rights of civil aviation workers, both within the ILO and the EEC and within the flight engineers' own European regional organization - EFEO - whose foundation he helped bring about.

ITF Executive Board member Yves Lequoy, who is General Secretary of the French Transport and Public Service Workers' Federation, has been made a member of the French Legion of Honour, in recognition of the distinguished services he has rendered to his country. We extend our most sincere congratulations on this high honour.

Frank Drozak, President of the Seafarers' International Union of North America, has been elected to the Executive Board of the New York State AFL-CIO.

Fintan Kennedy retired last month from the presidency of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. He is succeeded by John F. Carroll, who becomes the union's new General President.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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ITF Executive Board	- Zürich 17-18 March 1981
African Railwaymen's Conference	- Nairobi, 30 March-4 April '81
Travel Bureau Section Sub-Committee	- Stockholm, 19-20 May 1981
KSSU/ATLAS Committees	- Zürich, 2-3 June 1981

S T O P P R E S S

Qantas ground staff return to work (see page 17)

We have just learned that Qantas ground staff have voted for a return to work.

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING FURTHER
INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM IN THIS
NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT ON REQUEST
FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE I.T.F.

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