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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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INTERNATIONAL

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ITF welcomes UNCTAD decision on action against flags of convenience

A Special Session of the UNCTAD Committee on Shipping, held in Geneva from 27 May to 5 June 1981, adopted a resolution recommending that "the present régime of open registries (flags of convenience) be gradually and progressively transformed into normal registries by a process of tightening the conditions under which open registry countries retain or accept vessels on their registers so that they will be capable of identifying owners and operators and making them accountable for all shipping operations including the maintenance of standards and the welfare of their crews."

The resolution went on to spell out the programme of meetings and conferences by which its recommendation could be implemented.

The resolution was proposed by the developing countries and opposed by most of the industrialized countries of Europe and North America, and Liberia. Panama announced that it would not participate in the vote. France, Belgium and Turkey abstained.

A number of ITF seafarer affiliates succeeded in having representatives included in the national delegations to the Committee meeting. Others formed part of the ITF's own delegation. It was generally acknowledged that the active trade union presence and influence had a large bearing on the result.

The ITF issued a Press Release warmly welcoming the UNCTAD decision to take action against flags of convenience. The text of the Press Release is reproduced as a supplement to this issue of the Newsletter.

ITF Inland Navigation Section meets in Antwerp

A meeting of the ITF Inland Navigation Section was held on 8 May in Antwerp, at which discussions centred on the present position in respect of the proposed changes in manning regulations on the Rhine being undertaken within the Central Rhine Commission. Misgivings were expressed that the regulations should be changed at all, but given that there have to be changes, it was decided that, following the next Commission meeting later this month, the ITF should work out a detailed position paper on the proposals, which are at variance with ITF policy on the subject, including its policy on women workers on the Rhine.

The meeting also said farewell to Brother Louis Eggers of the host union, the Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB), who was retiring after being actively associated with the work of the Section since the end of the last war. ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf thanked Brother Eggers warmly for his valuable work in the international field and wished him a long and happy retirement.

Travel Bureau Workers' Section Sub-committee meeting, Stockholm, 19 and 20 May 1981

A meeting of the above Sub-committee was held in Stockholm under the chairmanship of Lars Hellman (HTF Sweden; Section Chairman). Those attending were N. Ozaki (Kanko-roren, Japan; Section Vice-Chairman), accompanied by A. Yasuda, Vice-president of the same union; C.A. Lyons (TSSA, UK); Charles Coleman (BRAC, US) and the Section Secretary, Ken Golding.

One of the major items dealt with concerned preparations for the first-ever consultation by travel trade employees' unions with the OECD Tourism Committee. This is scheduled to take place in Paris on 2 July next, with the trade union side (OECD-TUAC) representing both the ITF and the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF). The meeting approved the draft text of a submission to the OECD Tourism Committee, and appointed Lars Hellman to act as ITF spokesman at the meeting with it.

The Sub-committee also finalized plans for the holding of the next Travel Bureau Workers' Conference in Stockholm from 14-16 June 1982; discussed closer cooperation with the ITF Civil Aviation Section and with the IUF; relations with the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and with the ILO, which has established a new Industrial Committee concerned with hotels, catering and tourism.

Other questions dealt with include the impact of new technology on travel trade employment; organizational progress in the United States and Canada; Sweden; Japan and the United Kingdom and noted with satisfaction that the Finnish Travel Bureau Workers' Union had now applied for ITF affiliation. In a review of Section activity, the Sub-committee found that good progress had been made on achieving the aims set in the Section Working and Action Programmes.

EUROPE  
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Meeting of ATLAS/KSSU Committees, Zürich, 2 and 3 June 1981

A meeting of the above committees representing ITF-affiliated unions from the two European airline groupings was held in Zürich on 2 and 3 June under the chairmanship of Victor Schiwoff

of the Swiss Public Service Workers' Union (VPOD), which acted as host to the meeting. It was attended by delegates from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The meeting discussed and approved the results of an ITF survey of conditions in KSSU airlines, and decided to continue with a similar survey of ATLAS airlines, with the eventual aim of harmonizing certain aspects of grouping working conditions. It also considered details of the new KSSU agreement, valid for the next five years, and its implications for unions in the KSSU grouping, as well as guidelines for future action by KSSU and ATLAS affiliates on decisions taken at grouping level. Follow-up action by affiliates on the conclusions reached earlier this year by the OECD Committee on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises concerning the airline grouping case was also discussed.

The meeting adopted a resolution condemning the decision by Swissair to order the A310 Airbus with a forward-facing two-man flight deck and calling upon the company to rescind this and to follow the lead given by Air France in ordering a sideways-facing three-man cockpit (the text of the resolution is attached as a supplement to this issue of the Newsletter). The meeting further heard reports from VPOD representatives and the Section Secretary on a meeting which they had had with Swissair management on 1 June, at which they had impressed on the company the strong feelings of ITF affiliates both on the subject of the A310 decision and the lack of consultation on KSSU group decisions.

Other subjects dealt with at the meeting included attempts by Sabena and other grouping members to reduce existing conditions and benefits, and the ITF Civil Aviation Section's opposition to EEC proposals on the introduction of inter-regional air services between EEC Member-States, proposals which were described as US-style deregulation by the back door.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman and the host-union for the excellent arrangements it had made for the meeting.

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TRANSPORT

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GERMANY  
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Union advocates closure of open registries

In a recently-published memorandum, the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) argues that the many evils associated with the operation of vessels under

free flags - the poor pay and conditions of seafarers, declining safety standards and increased marine pollution - could be stamped out once and for all by closing all open registries and placing a sizeable proportion of the ships thus freed under the flags of developing countries.

The memorandum suggests that the Western industrialized nations, who own most f-o-c tonnage, should form joint venture companies with the developing nations to operate their ships. Freight rates should reflect those charged by the industrialized nations and any savings made could then be paid into joint venture companies, gradually building up the developing countries' capital share. The crews, it is suggested, should come principally from the flag state and be given the right to join trade unions and to press their economic demands through them.

The OeTV sees its proposal as an effective counter to the recent lobbying by various interest groups in the Federal Republic in favour of the continuation of flag-of-convenience operation. It would be a "fair" way of solving the existing problems and one that could only benefit the industry. Otherwise, the union can only see a future in which the proportion of world trade carried in flag-of-convenience tonnage continues to grow. Increasingly, open registry vessels would be competing with vessels from other convenience registries, tightening the screw - wage levels would sink lower and lower and safety standards would decline even further. The system whereby the Western industrialized nations carry more cargo than is equitable would be perpetuated and the developing nations would be locked out of the industry for ever, unable to participate on even terms.

As long as its demands remain unfulfilled, the OeTV urges ITF affiliates to continue to pursue with vigour the campaign against the many injustices that the flag-of-convenience system inevitably brings in its train.

GREAT BRITAIN

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NUS reports on "unacceptable face of shipping"

To coincide with the debate on the question at the maritime Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, the National Union of Seamen has produced a report on flags of convenience, subtitled "the unacceptable face of shipping". The report summarizes the NUS's views on flag of convenience shipping, with special reference to its negative effects on the UK, the area it knows best. Copies of the report are available from the NUS at the following address:

National Union of Seamen,  
Maritime House,  
Old Town,  
Clapham - London SW4 0JP

It costs £1 per copy.

UNITED STATES

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Deregulation threatens jobs at United Airlines

United Airlines has announced that it will be laying off an unspecified number of employees in the next few months to make the airline "more competitive in the deregulated environment". United already has about 2,800 employees on leave of absence.

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TRADE UNIONS

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EUROPE

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TUAC outlines its alternative strategy for economic recovery

The 66th Plenary Session of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development held in Paris on 21 and 22 May 1981 adopted a statement which will be submitted to the OECD Ministerial Council's annual meeting later this month.

The statement accuses Western governments, as they approach the seven-nation Ottawa summit conference in Canada in July, of having given up all hope of any real recovery in their economies and of continuing to pursue restrictive policies which will mean that there will be 30 million without jobs in the OECD area by early 1982, threatening, in TUAC's view, the very fabric of society. In fact, policy planners and makers are increasingly using the word "recovery" to describe a state where unemployment remains stable but at higher levels than before, where inflation is some ten per cent and economic growth between one and two per cent.

The TUAC statement calls for alternative policies that will promote full employment, price stability, investment and adequate growth. In particular, TUAC advocates: active employment and labour market policies, including job creation programmes; a reduction in working time, without loss of income, as a social measure to improve the quality of working life and as a means of creating more jobs; the fighting of inflation through an attack on its main underlying factors, e.g. high interest rates, overdependence on imported oil, obsolescence of the productive capacity, defective income distribution and unemployment itself; and the stimulation of new investment, especially in the energy, public transport and construction sectors. In addition, it is advocated that the oil importing countries - both developed and developing - should negotiate with the oil exporting countries to ensure an orderly functioning of the industry, while reducing their over-dependence on oil and pursuing energy policies that cover conservation, exploration and research into alternative

sources of energy and pay due regard to the employment potential offered. TUAC is also concerned that the developed world should not use the economic recession as an excuse for a retreat into purely domestically-oriented economic policies, but should materially assist developing nations in well-targeted development policies that offer real possibilities for global economic growth.

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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FRANCE  
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Flying Tiger Line's Paris-based ground staff on strike

The local ground staff of Flying Tiger Line at Charles de Gaulle Airport - members of the ITF-affiliated French Public Service and Transport Workers' Federation - began an indefinite strike on 23 May following the airline's point-blank refusal to negotiate on their claims, which concern the lifting of a seven-day suspension of an employee and an end to the situation in which there is serious undermanning, with the result that long overtime hours are being demanded - particularly in the maintenance and traffic departments - without proper regard for working hour legislation, while at the same time three employees have been dismissed for "financial reasons". Blackleg labour is being used in an attempt to break the strike and the collective dismissal of the entire staff was threatened following the strike declaration. The ITF has already sent a protest cable to the airline and, at the request of our French affiliate, ITF civil aviation unions have been contacted and asked to do likewise.

Seamen suspend joint strike campaign

French merchant seamen have temporarily suspended their joint strike campaign<sup>x)</sup> following a meeting between their joint union committee and the new Minister for the Sea appointed by President Mitterand. The ministry has issued a press communiqué calling for serious negotiations between the government, shipowners and unions to define a policy which would raise seamen's pensions on a step by step basis. The government is understood to want the first stage to come into effect without delay and to be aware of the need to pay special attention to the lowest paid.

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x) see ITF Newsletter No. 4, page 44 and No. 5, page 53  
for earlier details



GERMANY

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Lufthansa talks concluded

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) has now concluded new basic and pay agreements for its 20,000 ground staff members with Lufthansa, Lufthansa Service GmbH and Condor. Under these agreements, basic rates of pay will be increased by between 3.9% and 5.2%, backdated to 1 February; shift workers will receive 2 to 4 extra days' annual leave; and there will be a staged improvement in annual leave to six weeks for all in 1983.

The settlement was reached with the assistance of a mediator after earlier talks had broken down (see page 54 of last issue).

Improved pay offer for railwaymen and road transport workers

In the sixth round of contract negotiations, the ITF-affiliated German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) and the Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) have succeeded in obtaining an improved offer for their memberships. Under the new twelve-month pay agreement, incomes are improved by 4.3 per cent with effect from 1 May 1981. 120 DM will also be paid for both the months of March and April.

GREAT BRITAIN

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P&O plans to sell reefer vessels meet with union opposition

Plans by the P&O shipping line to sell four reefer vessels, which would then be chartered back for operation with foreign crews, have met with opposition from the ITF's British seafarer affiliates, the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the National Union of Seamen, whose members' jobs are at stake. Following separate meetings with the two unions, P&O later agreed temporarily to withdraw its sale plans in return for "urgent" talks on cost-cutting measures that would enable it to continue to operate the vessels under the British flag with British crews. This change in the company's attitude was welcomed by the NUS, and the union said that it would call off its planned industrial action scheduled for the weekend of 13/14 June, the original projected sale date. The MNAOA at first turned down the company's offer, but later agreed to call off its strike action - this began on 8 June and involved officers refusing to oversee the discharge of cargo from bulk cargo division vessels in port - after the company, in further talks, undertook not to proceed with the sale for three months and meanwhile to give the officers' union details of the economics of operation under direct ownership.

The four ships involved - the Wild Curlew, the Wild Cormorant, the Wild Mallard and the Wild Marlin - are part of an eight-ship P&O holding in a joint venture with the Danish company Lauritzen. Two other "Wild" reefers were sold to Greek interests last year and this was accepted by the unions on the understanding that the sale would secure other jobs in the company.

GREECE  
=====

Olympic ground staff strike still firm

The series of four-day strikes by Greek aviation technicians' unions at the Olympic Airways maintenance base in Athens, which began on 8 May, is still continuing. The strikes began after Olympic refused to meet Greek aviation unions to discuss the company's poor financial position and union claims of mismanagement. It then made an unacceptable wage offer (of 8%, less than a third of the cost-of-living rise for 1980 alone), with a deadline for acceptance of only sixteen days. When the unions made it clear that such a deadline could not be met, the company went to arbitration -- a procedure which makes it impossible to strike on the issues in dispute.

The Federation of Greek Aviation Unions therefore called out its technicians' unions in support of demands for a dialogue with the company on its financial situation and administration. Other members of the Federation are not able legally to take sympathetic action, but are giving the technicians' unions strong moral support.

Olympic in the meantime has set up a stooge union for senior technicians -- so far without much success in attracting members -- and has either dismissed, transferred, or threatened to dismiss striking technicians. Some union officials were also briefly arrested at one point. The Federation of Aviation Unions is now refusing any negotiations with the company unless these sanctions are withdrawn.

Olympic has been attempting to get its aircraft overhauled in other countries, but a number of aviation unions outside Greece are refusing to handle them, for example at Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Zürich, Paris CDG and New York, JFK. Promises of support have also been received from Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland and Spain (see also page 77).

PHILIPPINES  
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New contract signed with Philippine Airlines

The ITF-affiliated Philippine Air Lines Employees' Association (PALEA) has informed us that a new collective contract<sup>x</sup> for its members with Philippine Airlines was satisfactorily concluded on 19 May. The PALEA President has asked us to convey

his thanks to all ITF civil aviation affiliates who contacted the airline urging that it re-open negotiations after the union had submitted new and modest claims.

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x) see also page 56 of last issue

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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We are pleased to be able to inform you that the English-language study into the working environment of SAS cabin staff, which was the subject of an article published in ITF Panorama<sup>x)</sup> last year, has now been finalized and may be obtained free of charge from SAS at the following address:

Scandinavian Airlines System  
161 87 Stockholm-Bromma  
SWEDEN

The report is entitled: Cabin Attendants' Working Environment; A questionnaire study by Rebecca Mills Orring and Olov Östberg of the Department of Human Work Sciences, Lulea, Sweden.

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x) see ITF Panorama Vol. 2, No. 3 of 1980 - Swedes study airline cabin staff working environment

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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Australian merchant navy officers and ratings staged a campaign of rolling 24-hour stoppages last month in support of demands for the introduction of a two-crew duty system for all ships with Australian crews. A second round of stoppages began towards the end of the month after further negotiations with the owners failed to make any real headway.

Danish air traffic controllers called off their work to rule<sup>x)</sup> on 29 May after the Transport Minister agreed to appoint a committee to look into working conditions at Copenhagen's Kastrup airport.

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x) see page 59 of last issue

Finnish air traffic controllers struck briefly on 28 May to back their demands for the early conclusion of a new collective contract.

Great Britain : dockers in the port of Bristol have accepted a rise of £10 per week on basic rates (see also page 60 of last issue).

British Airways engineers have accepted a pay deal giving them an immediate 8 per cent on basic rates, a 12 per cent rise in shift premiums from November, and an increase in London Weighting of approximately 16 per cent.

Air traffic controllers in Great Britain are continuing their half-day rolling strikes<sup>x)</sup>. Talks between the unions and the Civil Service Minister on the pay award for this year and methods of deciding civil service pay in the future began late last month, but broke up shortly afterwards without making any progress.

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x) see also page 59 of last issue

The ITF-affiliated Greek Flight Engineers' Association has written to the Greek Transport Minister urging that he refuse to allow carriers to fly the DC-9 into Greek airspace until a full investigation has been undertaken by the US Federal Aviation Administration into recent reports of internal fuel leaks and of cracks appearing in the wings and engines of the aircraft.

The Nigerian Labour Congress called its members out on a general strike for two days last month. The action ended after ministry talks resulted in an undertaking that the National Assembly would be urged to pass legislation setting a new monthly minimum wage within 30 days. Allowances would also be raised to improve overall earnings.

The government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has deposited an instrument of acceptance of the IMCO Convention with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. IMCO now has one hundred and twenty one full members and one associate member.

Zimbabwe has notified its adherence to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and has thus become a contracting state of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Total ICAO membership is now 147 states.

IN MEMORIAM

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Robert Bratschi

It is with deep regret that we must announce the death of former ITF President Robert Bratschi in the night of 23 to 24 May, at the age of 90.

Robert Bratschi was one of the giants of the Swiss labour movement this century. He served his country outstandingly, both as a prominent trade unionist and as a social democrat, fighting in the Swiss parliament the lengthy and ultimately successful battle to ensure that the Swiss working man took his proper place in society.

In a long and distinguished union career, Robert Bratschi served for over thirty years as president of the Swiss Federation of Public Service Workers' Unions and as president of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation for nearly twenty years. At the time of his death, he was honorary president of both workers' organizations, a distinction conferred on him in gratitude for his many valued services over the years. In 1920, Bratschi was appointed general secretary of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) - barely a year after its creation - and in the years that followed he built up the unified railwaymen's union that he had helped found into one of the most respected unions in Switzerland today. Brother Bratschi took over as union president in 1946 and left the union at the end of 1953 to become managing director of Switzerland's most important private railway company, the Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon line, a post that has traditionally been held by a socialist or a trade unionist. He finally retired in 1962.

Robert Bratschi was a member of the Swiss national parliament for almost half a century and also a member of the local parliament of Berne canton, which enabled him to play an active part at both the national and local cantonal level in the political life of his country. In 1970, in recognition of his many notable achievements in public life, he was awarded an honorary doctorate of the University of Basle.

We in the ITF remember Robert Bratschi as the highly-esteemed and much-loved President who led the Federation in the early 1950s and began that distinguished tradition that his successor as SEV President, Hans Düby, was to continue some ten years later when he assumed our highest office. His passing will be deeply regretted, but his espousal of the workers' cause - especially that of "his" beloved railwaymen - will ensure that he lives on in our hearts as one of Switzerland's most eminent citizens.

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OBITUARIES

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Karl Kirchner, Vice-President of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union from 1965 to 1974, died on 22 April, at the age of 67.

Sir Vincent Tewson, former General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress and one of the founder members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, has died, in his early eighties. Sir Vincent held the position of ICFTU President from 1951 to 1953.

Otto Totland, President of the Norwegian Commercial Employees' Union (HK) from 1964 until his retirement in the autumn of 1980, died on 21 May, aged only 67.

Knut Wrenby, editor of the union magazine published by the Swedish Transport Workers' Union for sixteen years until he retired in 1963, has died, aged 81.

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PERSONALIA

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The late Paul Hall, former President of the Seafarers' International Union of North America, has been named the 1981 recipient of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award. The award is given annually by the United Seamen's Service for outstanding contributions to the American merchant marine. This is the first time it has been awarded posthumously.

Jan Balstad, Vice-President of the Norwegian Metal Workers' Union, has been elected a secretary of the Norwegian Trade Union Confederation (LO).

Jean Clivaz was elected President of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) at its Congress in Interlaken last month. Brother Clivaz is currently secretary of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB), having previously served in the SEV first as secretary and later as editor of the French language magazine "Le Cheminot".

The outgoing President is Werner Meier, who succeeded Hans Düby in 1972. Brother Meier, in addition to his duties in the railwaymen's union, has served as President of the Swiss Federation of Public Service Workers' Unions and as a member of the Executive of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB) and Vice-President of the Board of Management of the Swiss Federal Railways. He is an MP and active in local government, and was a member of the ITF Executive Board from 1971 until he relinquished that post at our Miami Congress last summer. The ITF sends him best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to Heinz Frieser and Hubert Vomberg, Vice-presidents of the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED), who have recently celebrated their 60th birthdays. Heinz Frieser, who has been a member of the ITF Executive Board since 1977, was also awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz (Cross for Conspicuous Services to the Federal Republic) on the occasion of his birthday.

Fred van Leeuwen has been appointed acting General Secretary of the International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions, a post he will hold until the Federation's next World Congress. He succeeds André Braconier, who died at the beginning of this year.

Arun Kumar Moitra has resigned from the presidency of the National Union of Seamen of India and has been succeeded by Subrata Mukherjee, vice-president of INTUC.

Willy van Zuylen, President of the Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ) since 1967, retires in the early autumn. Brother van Zuylen has been a member of the ITF Seafarers' Section Committee and the Fair Practices Committee since the mid-sixties and has also served as the Dutch deputy member on the ITF General Council. He is succeeded on these two committees from this June by Kees Roodenburg, FWZ General Secretary.

STOP PRESS  
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Flying Tiger Line's Paris-based ground staff strike (see page 69 of this issue)

We have just learned that the strike by ground staff of Flying Tiger Line at Paris-Charles de Gaulle is now over. Full details of the settlement will be given in the next issue of the ITF Newsletter.

Olympic ground staff strike (page 71)

As we went to press, we were informed that the Olympic ground staff strike has been suspended to allow discussions to take place. Further details will be given in our next issue.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS  
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ITF Asian Seafarers' Regional Committee	- Tokyo, 15-17 June 1981
Fishermen's Section Conference	- Reykjavik, 26-28 August 1981
Cabin Crew Technical Committee	- Madrid, 8-9 September 1981
Civil Aviation Section Conference (including Ground Staff Technical Committee meeting on 24 November 1981)	- Malta, 24-27 November 1981

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