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No. 11

November 1981

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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INTERNATIONAL

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ITF holds urban transport meeting in Zürich

A meeting of ITF railwaymen's and road transport workers' affiliates organizing workers in urban transport was held in Zürich on 5 and 6 November 1981 to prepare the ground for the ITF's work at ILO level on problems of urban transport, following the decision of the 1980 Inland Transport Committee session to pay this area closer attention. The meeting decided that a future unified policy on urban transport should centre on the definition of working time as "the time during which the employee is at the disposal of the employer". The two industrial sections represented at the meeting also expressed broad agreement on each other's transport policies and it is hoped to establish the formal framework that would enable further meetings of this kind to be held on a regular basis.

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TRANSPORT

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GERMANY

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Fusion of rail and post buses

For many years now, the German Federal Railways (DB) and the German Post Office have operated separate bus services, although both state undertakings have cooperated in a number of ways, notably by coordinating their timetables. Now the Federal government has decided that the two bus services should be combined, under the control of the German Federal Railways. The DB's new autonomous "railbus" division, sub-divided into 18 regions, will be headed up by an official, who will be directly responsible to the rail Board. To the 2,076 buses operated by the Federal Railways will be added 1,318 buses previously operated by the Post Office, as well as a large number of buses leased in from other bus operators. The two unions involved, the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) and the German Postal Employees' Union, have undertaken to ensure that the 2,600 bus drivers previously employed by the Post Office do not lose out in any way by the change of employer.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Union plan saves BA's Scottish routes

British Airways' loss-making internal Scottish routes - under threat of closure - have been saved by a cost-cutting trade union plan that will put them back in the black. The plan was drawn up by the unions in only five weeks and - subject to CAA approval - will be introduced in April. Savings will be effected by substituting 748s for Viscount aircraft, cutting staff by almost half and amalgamating several jobs, with pilots and cabin staff undertaking ground duties - including refuelling, passenger handling and aircraft documentation - at transit and turn-round stations in order to avoid uneconomic ground staff levels. A small relief team will be available to be deployed as necessary, although all other staff will be permanently based in Scotland. The unions have said that they can see no reason why the plan could not be applied to other unprofitable routes, notably from Gatwick to Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Bilbao.

SWITZERLAND

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Urban transport workers celebrate golden jubilee

The fiftieth anniversary of the urban transport workers' section of the ITF-affiliated Swiss Public Service Workers' Union (VPOD) was marked by a one-day event in Zürich on 20 November at which Heinrich Schmidt (German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union - OeTV) and ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf were the two guest speakers. Brother Schmidt delivered an address on shift work in urban transport and Brother Hauf lectured on transport policy and the history of the ITF.<sup>x)</sup>

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<sup>x)</sup> copies of these speeches (in German only) are available from the Secretariat on request

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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BELGIUM

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New rates of pay for inland navigation workers

New rates of pay came into effect on 1 November for inland navigation workers organized in the ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB), following application of

a cost-of-living increase. Skippers' rates of pay now range from 30,857 to 45,271 B frs, depending on size of vessel and type of navigation; all certificated mates receive 33,447 B frs, regardless of vessel size, and uncertificated mates a uniform rate of 32,320 B frs.

Able seamen now have a salary range of 27,591 to 30,857 B frs, depending on size of vessel and length of service, and ships' boys with more than one year's service get from 20,902 to 26,870 B frs.

New rates also came into operation on the same date for inland navigation workers in pushboat and continuous navigation. Captains now receive a monthly rate of 49,363 B frs (excluding allowances). The corresponding rates for 1st mates are 44,838 and for second mates 42,256 B frs. ABs are paid 38,376 B frs.

CANADA

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Wardair dispute settled

An agreement reached last month in new negotiations<sup>x)</sup> between the ITF-affiliated Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Association and the charter airline Wardair was subsequently ratified by the membership. Wardair's lockout of its CALFAA-organized cabin crews is now over and normal working was resumed on 4 November.

Our Canadian affiliate has expressed its appreciation of ITF support during this long and difficult dispute and the ITF has already passed on to all those aviation affiliates who offered solidarity CALFAA's appreciation of their assistance.

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x) see ITF Newsletter No. 10, page 121 for earlier news

CHILE

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ITF Executive Board expresses support for Chilean dockers

Chilean dockers' unions came out on strike last month in protest at a recent government decree stripping their members of rights they had enjoyed for many years, and thereby showed great courage in their defiance of a régime armed with enormous repressive powers.

The ITF Executive Board, meeting later that month, denounced the new labour laws in the strongest possible terms and declared its total support for the striking dockers. General Secretary Harold Lewis cabled their leader apprising him of the action he had already taken in the matter<sup>x</sup> and assuring him of the ITF's absolute solidarity. Affiliates were also informed by circular of the dockers' action and requested to send similar messages of encouragement, and those in a position to express their solidarity by action against Chilean transport or services were urged to do so by all means at their disposal.

The strike was eventually called off at the end of October, following intense pressure from the Chilean government. Meanwhile, the ITF has joined the ICFTU in lodging a formal complaint with the ILO on the grounds that the junta's decree, which provoked the strike, is in violation of ILO Conventions.

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x) see ITF Newsletter No. 10, 1981, page 113

COLOMBIA

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Seamen's strike ends

Members of the ITF Executive Board, at their regular October meeting, also expressed their wholehearted support for seafarers belonging to the ITF-affiliated Colombian Seamen's Union (UNIMAR), who had been on strike against the national shipping line Gran-colombiana since early July, seeking improvements in a new collective agreement.<sup>x</sup> UNIMAR's President Eduardo Vanegas, who is an ITF Vice-President, was present at the meeting.

Both sides were subsequently brought together through the good offices of the US International Longshoremen's Association, which had agreed to act as an intermediary, and normal working was resumed after the company gave assurances that it would not victimize seafarers who went on strike and that it would cancel all notices of dismissal. The remaining issues in dispute - including pay - will now be examined by an arbitration commission, which it is hoped will report shortly.

During the strike, ITF seafarer and docker affiliates supported UNIMAR by offering practical assistance to striking Gran-colombiana crews and approaches were made to the company and the Colombian government urging them to promote a satisfactory settlement.

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x) see ITF Newsletter No. 8, 1981, page 93 for earlier details

DENMARK

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New job exchanges for seafarers opened

In pursuance of a Congress decision, the ITF-affiliated Danish Metal Workers' Union is to open new hiring exchanges in four Danish ports for sea-going members of its Metal Søfart (Metal-Shipping) section. All union branch offices will be asked to inform Metal Søfart whenever sea-going members come in to report that they are out of a job. The union will then contact the exchanges so that they can be put in touch with new jobs with the minimum of delay.

GREAT BRITAIN

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Pay deal for officers and ratings

The ITF-affiliated British National Union of Seamen is recommending acceptance of a revised pay offer of six per cent on basic rates and twelve additional days' leave, taking the total leave entitlement from 72 to 84 days for each twelve months worked. The seamen's settlement date is 2 January 1982.

An improved pay offer of 7.7% from 1 November has also been made to unions representing the country's 33,000 merchant navy officers - including the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association and the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union (both ITF affiliates). Union leaders are expected formally to accept the deal, which also includes improved payments to officers retiring early on medical grounds and pay increases of between four and seven per cent (rising with the age of the student) for officer cadets.

Crews stage sit-in on P&O ferries

Ratings on the ULSTER QUEEN and ULSTER PRINCE are staging a sit-in on board in Liverpool's Princes Dock in protest at the closure, on 11 November, of P&O's loss-making Liverpool-Belfast ferry service -- the last sea route linking England and Northern Ireland. Officers on the two ferries, who also joined in the sit-in, have since accepted the company's improved redundancy terms.

On 23 November, the executive of the ratings' union, the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen, which had given full backing to its members' occupation of the two Ulster ferries, decided to stop all sailings of P&O vessels from British ports. It also issued a call for an indefinite blockade against all

freight and passenger shipping between the British mainland and Northern Ireland, effective midnight on 25 November. NUS General Secretary Jim Slater said he hoped that the government and P&O would now reconsider the union's request to keep the Liverpool-Belfast service open until a new operator for this vital sea route could be found.

The NUS has warned that all identifiable P&O cargoes will be blacked if attempts are made to switch them to other vessels to escape the effects of the union's action and that steps will be taken against shipments diverted through the Irish Republic. Those P&O ships that are strike-bound in British ports after the crews refused to sail in sympathy with their Liverpool colleagues will remain in port.

#### BLLENHEIM sit-in ends

The crew of the Fred Olsen Lines cruise ship BLENHEIM have ended their sit-in aboard the vessel in Plymouth<sup>x)</sup> after accepting improved redundancy terms. The vessel is now being refurbished in Germany before being handed over to its new owners for operation in the Caribbean under the Bahamian flag.

In a comment on the BLENHEIM case, the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen has said that the events of the past few weeks had served to heighten public awareness of the effect on jobs when vessels are sold abroad.

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see ITF Newsletter No. 10, 1981, page 116 for earlier details

GREENLAND

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#### Radio officer strike over

Radio officers, radio sonde personnel and telecommunications technicians stationed in Greenland, who belong to the ITF-affiliated Danish Radio Officers' Association, were compelled to abandon their four-month-old strike<sup>x)</sup> on 2 November after the Folketing (Danish parliament) - under pressure from the Ministry of Greenland - rushed through emergency legislation extending their 1979 collective contract to the end of March 1983.

The strikers, who had been seeking pay parity with their counterparts in Denmark, are very bitter that the long stoppage has brought no positive results; there have already been a number of resignations from the service and our affiliate has indicated that it will not cooperate in helping to fill the vacant positions. Pay increases of 3.7% backdated to 1 April 1981 and a further 1.8% from 1 April next have been granted, but these meagre rises will do little to improve the pay of

daily; night differential pay: 15% of hourly rate (previously 10%); overtime rate: goes up from 25 to 30 per cent; vacation and sick leave (on full pay): ranges from 12 working days after one year to 17 working days after 6 years. A group medical insurance plan is also to be established during the currency of the agreement and will be fully paid by the employer.

Still unresolved by this agreement and currently under separate negotiation is the question of the reinstatement of the nine local union officers who were "preventively suspended" in 1977 (see ITF Newsletter No. 4, 1981, page 41 for details of this and further background on the boycott of the Peninsula called by the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations in March of this year).

UNITED STATES

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ITF Executive Board supports striking air traffic controllers

At its meeting in Madrid, on 20 and 21 October, the ITF Executive Board adopted a statement deploring the action taken by the United States government against the Professional Air Traffic Controllers' Organization (PATCO) and the air traffic controllers organised in PATCO, who went on strike on 3 August.<sup>x)</sup> The Board statement condemned the dismissal of the strikers, the draconian legal actions against their representatives and the effective dissolution of their union. "Whatever the legal status of the dispute", the statement continued, "the United States government has set the worst possible example by bringing to bear the massive power of the state against a trade union seeking improvements in its members' pay and working conditions."

The statement went on to call on the US government, even at this late hour, to resume negotiations with the controllers' representatives so as to reach a peaceful, honourable settlement which would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the controllers and at the same time bring the United States the benefit of an efficient, safe system of air traffic control of which the controllers and the government alike could be proud.

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x) see ITF Newsletter No. 8, 1981, page 96 and No. 9, 1981, page 105 for details of the dispute

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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Great Britain: Officers on North Sea supply vessels owned by Stirling Shipping of Glasgow have received a 14 per cent pay rise, effective 1 November.



Israel: a 12-day-old strike by El Al employees ended on 16 November after the carrier withdrew redundancy notices served on 18 flight engineers. Airport workers also staged solidarity strikes in support of their colleagues.

A firemen's strike closed all Italian airports for seven hours on 26 October. The firemen are demanding the restructuring of fire brigades throughout Italy.

#### OBITUARIES

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Edward Mackenzie, former civil aviation officer of the British Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, died on 6 November, of a heart attack. Brother Mackenzie was an active member of the ITF Civil Aviation Section for many years, serving on its Committee and also as chairman of the Ground Staff Technical Committee. In 1980, ill health forced him to retire early from active trade union life.

D. Din-Gabisi, General Secretary of the Sierra Leone Transport, Agriculture and General Workers' Union, died on 23 September.

William Stacey, General Secretary of the Seamen's Union of Ireland, died on 12 November 1981, aged 55. Brother Stacey had been general secretary of the union since 1961, having previously served for four years as assistant general secretary.

#### PERSONALIA

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C.V. Devan Nair, President of the Singapore National Trades Union Congress, has been elected the 3rd President of the Republic of Singapore.

Frank Drozak was elected International President of the Seafarers' International Union of North America at SIUNA's 1981 Triennial Convention. Brother Drozak had previously been serving out the remaining term of the late SIUNA President Paul Hall, who died in June 1980.

Moss Evans has resumed his duties as General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union after a six months' illness. Initially, Brother Evans, who is a member of the ITF Executive Board, will undertake only light duties, but he hopes to be able to take on a full workload in the new year.

A.M. Garber has been appointed Acting General Secretary of the Sierra Leone Transport, Agriculture and General Workers' Union, in succession to D. Din-Gabisi, whose death is reported above.

Tom Jenkins, General Secretary of the British Transport Salaried Staffs' Association, will be retiring next year, on reaching his union's official age limit of 62.

Karl Nandrup Dahl, Legal Officer of the Norwegian Trade Union Confederation (LO), celebrated his 50th birthday on 1 October.

Captain E. Udby-Hansen, President of the Danish Ships' Officers' Association, retires on 1 January 1982. He will be succeeded by Captain A. Toft, who has served as the union's secretary since 1969.

LATE ITEM  
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Latest developments in P&O dispute (see page 129)

The NUS ban on P&O sailings and the associated blockade of freight and passenger shipping between Great Britain and Northern Ireland ended on 26 November after our affiliate was given assurances by the British government that a prospective operator existed for the Liverpool-Belfast ferry service. It is understood that a British shipowner is interested in reopening the route, that he will employ NUS ratings at union rates and that the ferries will fly the British flag.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS  
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Railwaymen Section Conference - Luxembourg, 23-25 February 1982

Road Transport Workers'  
Section Conference - Stockholm, 18-20 May 1982

ASIAN/PACIFIC CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE, MANILA, 19-23 October 1981

An Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Conference, sponsored by the ITF and supported by the US Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks and the Philippine Air Lines Employees' Association (PALEA), was held in Manila (Philippines) from 19 to 23 October 1981, attended by 51 participants from 13 countries. Co-Chairmen of the Conference were Mohammad Hoda, Secretary of the ITF's Australasian Region, and Mario Santos, PALEA President. The Philippine Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. Noriel, the President of the Philippines TUC, Mr. Mandoza, and ILO Regional Adviser on Labour Relations, Dr. C. Calderon, were among the speakers at the opening session, which was also addressed by Brothers Dinglasan (President of the Philippine Transport and General Workers' Organization) and Santos (of PALEA), for the host country.

The main theme before the Conference was the critical phase through which the airline industry is passing and the large-scale retrenchment and massive lay-offs that are taking place, particularly in the Asian countries. The meeting also expressed grave concern at the deteriorating industrial relations situation in many parts of the Region, and all the unions represented in Manila pledged themselves to support each other in fighting the growing threat to employment security in civil aviation.

The delegates discussed in depth the state of industrial relations in civil aviation in the various countries in the Region and the problems faced by the trade unions, with special reference to those operating in the aviation industry. There was an extremely valuable exchange of information on these two subjects, as well as on the questions on working conditions and occupational health and safety covered by the questionnaire sent out by the Secretariat prior to the meeting. All the information that has been gathered will now be collated and sent out to civil aviation affiliates in the Asian/Pacific area in due course.

Also adopted by the Conference were several resolutions on matters of special concern to unions in Asia and the Pacific, including: a strongly-worded resolution deploring the Pakistan government decision to ban all trade union activities in Pakistan International Airlines; and a resolution urging the ILO to review and improve its existing machinery with a view to speeding up ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions and Recommendations, especially key Conventions on trade union rights, and asking it to strengthen its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific so as to provide services to unions, employers and governments on the implementation and ratification of ILO Conventions and the adoption of ILO Recommendations and Conclusions, especially those referring to civil aviation matters. Two further resolutions censured Air New Zealand for unilaterally imposing a wage freeze

and called on it to enter into talks with its unions on its future structure; and condemned the planned use of the Pacific area for the further testing of nuclear devices and the disposal of nuclear wastes. The Conference expressed its sympathy with the peoples of New Caledonia and Tahiti in their struggle for self-determination, and decided to refer a resolution on this subject to the Asian Regional Conference early in the new year. A cable was also sent in the name of Conference respectfully asking the Indian Minister for Civil Aviation to intervene with Air India to revoke the suspension of trade union workers in Calcutta.

On the final day of the Conference, an Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Committee was elected, with members from the following countries: Australia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines and Singapore (observers from non-ITF unions in Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand were elected to join the Committee as observers). It was agreed that the Committee should meet at regular intervals to discuss problems facing civil aviation workers in the Region and to chalk out a programme to strengthen international solidarity and cooperation in the Asia/Pacific area. The first meeting of the Committee, which was held shortly before the conference ended, elected R. Doraiswamy (Singapore) as its chairman and Mario Santos (Philippines) and E.W.J. Ball (New Zealand) as its two Vice-Chairmen.

Delegates making their final statements to the closing session were agreed that the Conference had been very productive and that they had learned a great deal about conditions throughout the Region. Indeed, one cannot fail to be impressed by the obvious determination of all who took part in the Conference to defend their rights and by their eagerness to work together with others in the Region to ensure social justice for all civil aviation workers.

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