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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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INTERNATIONAL

ITF Fair Practices Committee holds 1984 meeting

The customary annual meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee was held in London on 21 and 22 June, attended by 79 delegates, advisers and observers from 51 unions in 34 countries.

A revised text of the ITF Collective Agreement incorporating amendments and proposals from the Sub-Committee on the Revision of the Collective Agreement was adopted by the FPC after certain additional amendments suggested by the sub-committee at a meeting on the previous day had been noted. It was agreed that work on the revision of the collective agreement should continue on the understanding that it would be finalised in time for the 1985 meeting of the FPC.

It was further agreed by the meeting that the terms of reference of the sub-committee on the revision of the collective agreement should be extended to include the vetting of non-standard ITF collective agreements. For this purpose, it was felt that the sub-committee should have two additional members, and the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) and the British representatives of the FPC were invited to submit their nominations to the sub-committee, which it was decided should meet twice yearly.

The recommended ITF standards to be applied to cruise ships operating under flags of convenience which had been drawn up by a working party appointed by the ITF Seafarers' Section Standing Committee on Cruise Ships were brought to the attention of the Fair Practices Committee and subsequently approved, as were the supplementary guidelines for cruise ships proposed by the working party. A resolution adopted by the Standing Committee urging the appointment of ITF Cruise Ship Inspectors in Miami and the Caribbean area to monitor these standards was also endorsed by the FPC.

Those aspects of the work of the ITF Seafarers' Section Standing Committee on Mobile Maritime Offshore Units that had a bearing on the work of the FPC were drawn to the notice of the Committee which agreed that the standing committee should continue with its task of elaborating an ITF Collective Agreement for the Offshore Industry.

The possible revision of ITF policy on bareboat chartered f-o-c ships was touched upon by the meeting which decided that the Maritime Policy Committee of the ITF's Seafarers' Section should be asked to deal with the matter at its next meeting. It was also decided that this committee should examine the special circumstances which might mitigate the use of flags of convenience by certain owners.

The Committee again dealt with a request from the Singapore maritime affiliates that their country should be removed from the list of countries considered to be offering f-o-c facilities. The matter was discussed in some detail and it was decided that Singapore should remain on the ITF's list, but that a meeting should be sought with representatives of the Singapore government to discuss the matter.

A number of resolutions were adopted or endorsed by the meeting, including a resolution on the employment of non-domiciled seafarers at rates of pay lower than the flag rate (certain amendments were made to this resolution to meet the objections raised by Asian unions represented at the meeting). Also approved were two resolutions emanating from the recent meeting of the Asian Seafarers' Regional Committee, one calling on affiliates to persuade their governments and national delegations to the forthcoming conference of plenipotentiaries to support efforts to achieve the transformation of open registries into normal registries, the other urging the ITF to launch a campaign aimed at persuading maritime nations to incorporate in their merchant shipping legislation clauses safeguarding seafarers' wages and other entitlements in the event of an owner defaulting on his obligations (this latter resolution now goes to the Seafarers' Section for further consideration).

#### ITF urges governments to provide financial support for UN Fund for torture victims

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly established the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, which receives voluntary contributions for distribution, through approved channels, as humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of torture and their relatives. To date, the Fund has received contributions and pledges of financial support from 13 countries\* but more money is clearly needed if the UN is to be able to support the many valuable projects already in operation or being planned in many parts of the world for the aid of torture victims.

Aware of the importance of legal and financial aid in securing the safe release and resettlement of victims of torture as well as of the need of its victims for sensitive and frequently highly specialised medical care, the ITF appeals to all affiliates to urge their governments to support the Fund, which could provide a vital source of hope for those - many of them trade unionists and human rights workers - who have been subjected to torture. The need for assistance already exceeds the capacity of the Fund to respond and calls upon it are likely to grow as its existence becomes more widely known.

\* Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland.

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#### TRANSPORT

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#### INTERNATIONAL

#### IMO training convention enters into force

One of the most important Conventions adopted by the International Maritime Organization in recent years - the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping - came into effect at the end of April following its ratification by 33 maritime nations with a combined fleet of 66.5% of world tonnage. The entry into force of the Convention is particularly timely as the IMO is focusing attention on seafarers' training this year and sees the STCW Convention and the newly-opened World Maritime University as representing the way to raise standards and help make the world's seas safer.

SPAIN

Air traffic control system to be modernized

The Spanish Civil Aviation Authority has announced details of a five-year programme of modernisation of the country's atc system that will make it one of the most advanced in Europe. Flight handling at all the main airports is to be automated and additional money will be made available to install new route and approach radars at airports. Two serious accidents at Madrid airport late last year led to widespread concern about air safety over Spain which has one of the highest volumes of air traffic in Europe.

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TRADE UNIONS

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DENMARK

Two rail unions merge

The ITF-affiliated Danish Private Railway Workers' Union (Dansk Privatbaneforbund) merged in June with the larger Danish Railwaymen's Union (Dansk Jernbaneforbund) - also affiliated. The proposed merger was unanimously approved by an extraordinary delegate meeting of the Private Railway Workers' Union last October and was endorsed by the Railwaymen's Union executive later that same month, with a recommendation to its Congress to vote in favour of the merger. The former union's members are now represented within the depôt personnel section of the Dansk Jernbaneforbund.

This month has also seen the merger of another private railwaymen's union, the Danish Locomotivemen's Union (Dansk Lokomotivmands Forbund), with the Danish Locomotivemen's Association (Dansk Lokomotivmands Forening) - both are affiliates of the ITF. The interests of footplate staff working for private railways are taken care of by a new Section within the locomotivemen's association.

POLAND

ILO Commission of Inquiry finds government of Poland guilty of contravening Conventions nos 87 and 98

The three-man independent Commission of Inquiry which was set up in June 1983 by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to investigate complaints against the government of Poland has just published its report. This finds the government guilty of contravening ILO Conventions no 87 on freedom of association and protection of the right to organise and no 98 on the right to organise and collective bargaining, both of which were ratified by Poland in 1957.

Although the Polish authorities refused to cooperate with the inquiry, and thus failed to meet their obligations under the ILO Constitution, the Commission systematically took into consideration official information either published or supplied by the government to other ILO bodies, as well as various legislative texts and other official and public documents. Much valuable evidence was also given to the Commission, during the hearing of witnesses, by members of Solidarity who were no longer resident in Poland, as well as by representatives of a number of governments and of international employers' and workers' organisations - including the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The Commission concluded that the measures taken by the Polish government following the declaration of martial law - first the suspension and then the dissolution of the Solidarity trade unions - had infringed the guarantees provided by Convention no 87 by denying trade unionists in Poland the right to belong to the trade unions that had been freely and lawfully set up since 1980 and thereby depriving them of the opportunity of joining an organisation of their own choosing.

The Commission said it could find no concrete evidence to support the Polish government's contention that the Solidarity members who had been interned in the months following the declaration of martial law had been guilty as alleged of political offences. Indeed, as most of the national and much of the regional leadership of Solidarity had been imprisoned, the Commission found it hard to believe that they could all have undertaken activities likely to undermine the security or defence of the state. The belief was therefore justified, the Commission concluded, that in violation of the Convention one of the aims of the government in depriving trade unionists of their liberty had been to suppress and prevent the activities and development of a free union movement in Poland.

Other actions of the Polish government which infringed the right, as enshrined in Convention no 87, of workers to organise their activities included the absolute prohibition on strikes, a serious restriction, in the Commission's view; and the ban on the printing and distribution of trade union publications, the right to free expression of worker opinion through its own press being generally regarded as one of the essential elements of trade union freedom.

As regarded the new unions set up by the government of Poland, the Commission found that, while they had acquired some degree of representativity, large numbers of workers continued to give their confidence to Solidarity and even to belong to it, despite the risks and difficulties this entailed. It was the opinion of the Commission that the present situation did not offer workers the possibility of joining organisations of their own choice as required by Convention no 87.

While the Commission found it impossible to affirm on the basis of the information received that all the dismissals of workers from their jobs constituted acts of anti-union discrimination, the large number of active leaders and members of Solidarity affected showed that, in many of the cases, the trade union activities of the persons concerned must have been the decisive factor in the dismissals. The Commission's conclusion was that the protection afforded to workers against acts of anti-union discrimination was insufficient under martial law to meet the requirements of ILO Convention no 98.

The Commission also found that the standard minimum rules for treatment of prisoners had not always been observed in Poland during martial law, while recent evidence suggested that ill-treatment of detainees was still continuing. The detailed information furnished to the Commission on the large number of active and rank-and-file trade unionists who had died during strikes and demonstrations had also led it to conclude that rights connected with the life and security of the person were violated in Poland while martial law was in force. In particular, there was no indication, according to the information available to the Commission, that the deaths of trade unionists had been the subject of thorough and impartial inquiry.

In the light of these findings and with a view to action to remedy the unsatisfactory application of Conventions no 87 and 98, the Commission listed the measures which it recommended the Polish government should now take in order to ensure respect in law and in practice for basic civil liberties, notably: the discontinuing of legal proceedings against trade union leaders and the release of persons sentenced for trade union activities such as participation in strikes and demonstrations or the distribution of publications; the holding of independent and impartial inquiries into the deaths of trade unionists in strikes and demonstrations and the dismissals of trade union leaders and active union members; and the amending of the current laws and regulations governing trade union activity in Poland to ensure the full and clear recognition of the basic rights of workers under ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

The Commission recognised that the effective application of the ILO's Conventions on freedom of association also depended to a large extent on the relations established between workers, employers and the public authorities and on the climate of freedom, dialogue and mutual respect in which those relations were conducted. As one of the Polish government's first measures it therefore called for the initiation of free and unprejudiced exchanges of views between the public authorities and the representatives of the various trade union trends that had arisen at various dates in the country in recent years, with a view to restoring the harmony and agreement necessary for the resumption of trade union activity based on the standards of the ILO Conventions. Such harmony was also essential for the effective recovery of economic activity in Poland and a normalisation of the general conditions of life in the country. The Commission also urged the trade unions to make a parallel effort to restore national understanding, devoting their entire efforts to the operation of a normal trade union system and helping, by their action, to bring the country out of its present difficulties.

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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AUSTRALIA

Improvements to dockers' early retirement scheme in new contract

Negotiations on the 1984/6 national contract\* for dockers represented in the ITF-affiliated Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia have now been successfully concluded. Major improvements have been achieved in the early retirement scheme following the arbitration hearings - the qualifying age will be reduced from 62 to 60 from 1 September 1984 for dockers on the 'A' register and the scheme will be extended from January next to include all Federation members. The principle of no compulsory redundancy, also now covering the WWF's entire membership for the first time, has been reaffirmed in the new contract, while retirement benefits generally have been increased by 15 per cent.

Meanwhile, the rates of pay of dockers have been raised in line with a separate decision of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Wages and allowances have been increased by 4.1% to give the following enhanced weekly rates for members in the permanent ports: ordinary waterside worker - A\$ 329 (an increase of A\$ 13); mobile crane and forklift truck driver - A\$ 341.40 (up A\$ 13.40); and top terminal rate - A\$ 352.70 (up A\$ 13.90). In the casual ports, the hourly rate for

\* see also page 55 of last edition of the Newsletter

ordinary waterside workers rises by 40.78 cents to A\$ 10.36, with forklift truck drivers receiving an improved rate of A\$ 10.70 (an increase of 42.14 cents an hour). The guaranteed minimum wage per four-week period has also been increased from A\$ 1,170 to A\$ 1,206. The new rates were paid from 19 April for permanent and from 12 April for casual employees.

Cost-of-living award for ratings

New rates of pay have come into operation for Australian ratings covered by the Maritime Industry Seagoing Award following application of a 4.1% cost-of-living award. Examples of the new annual aggregate wage from 6 April 1984 are as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>
	OVERSEAS CONTAINERS & RO-RO VESSELS	COASTAL CONTAINERS & RO-RO VESSELS
bosun	A\$ 27,429	A\$ 27,599
donkeyman	26,497	26,573
AB	25,270	25,084
greaser	25,270	24,166
OS	-----	22,033

  

	<u>Group 3</u>	<u>Group 4</u>
	TANKERS	ALL OTHER VESSELS
bosun	A\$ 29,693 (30,584)*	A\$ 27,377
donkeyman	28,021	26,313
AB	27,250 (28,068)*	24,914
greaser	26,456	23,968
OS	23,416 (24,119)*	21,903

\* overseas tanker rate where applicable

GERMANY

Mediated agreement for dockers

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) and the port employers have accepted the mediator's proposals for a new collective agreement covering the country's dock workers. Pay will not be increased until 1 January 1985 when basic rates and allowances will rise by 3.8% and annual leave pay will also rise from 500 to 600 DM from the same date.



The union's demand for a reduction in working time has been met by an agreement to increase the number of paid days off for dockers over 55 years by two days in 1984 and seven days in 1985, while most younger dockers will benefit from a total of six extra days spread over two years. The employers have also agreed that dockers should not be asked to take pay in lieu of the extra time off or to carry any of the days they have earned over into the next year. From this year, dockers with over two years' service who are not yet entitled to 30 days' annual leave will receive an extra day's holiday and from 1988 all dockers will have a right to 30 days' annual leave after completing two years' service. Dockers who work night shifts are now entitled to one free day under the agreement for each thirty night shifts worked and dockers over 55 may ask to be relieved from night work if they so wish.

## GREAT BRITAIN

### Pay deal for British Rail staff

The three British Rail unions\* have accepted a pay offer of 4.9% for most grades (lower-paid staff are to receive increases of 5.6%). The new rates will be paid from the unions' joint settlement date of 16 April, the first time for some years that the union side has been able to achieve prompt implementation of the annual pay award. British Rail has at last conceded that the productivity issues on which agreement has not yet been possible should be dealt with separately from pay and further negotiations will take place with the Board on these matters in due course. Additionally, it has been agreed that BR staff should receive one extra day's annual leave on a rostered basis from Christmas 1985, with the possibility of the extra day being brought forward one year to Christmas 1984 should the Board's financial position allow.

\* the National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association - for earlier details of the pay negotiations see ITF Newsletter No 4, page 42.

### Peace formula ends national dock strike

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) called a national ports strike in Great Britain from midnight on 9 July after certain port employers had allowed outside contractors to perform dockers' work, thus breaking a national agreement which requires that dock work can only be carried out by registered dockers in the main ports.

The strike ended on 21 July when a national dockers' conference of the Union accepted a peace formula arrived at after long negotiations between union officials and the port employers.

The formula reaffirms the obligation on employers to use only registered dockers in ports covered by the British National Dock Labour Scheme. Where there is a necessity in special cases to use non-registered labour, the employer can only do so after he gets clearance from the local Dock Labour Board, which is made up of union and employer representatives.

The union regards the settlement as a victory in that it will serve as a warning to both the employers and the British government that the dockers are ready to fight for the continued protection which the National Dock Labour Scheme offers. In the course of the dispute, the government was obliged to give public assurances that it did not intend to end or change the Scheme and the employers have been served with a telling warning that any future attempts to breach or evade the Scheme's provisions will be met with the strongest resistance.

There was an immediate response to the ITF's request for international solidarity but the settlement came before practical steps needed to be applied, particularly since the strike was so total in Britain itself that the scope for the diversion of cargoes or ships was minimal.

#### Extra £10 per week for offshore supply boat crews

Over five hundred union members on North Sea supply boats have won average increases of £10 per week under a 6.3% pay deal reached by the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen with six companies federated to the General Council of British Shipping. New weekly rates, effective 1 July, range from £162.33 for a seaman grade II to £181.43 for a chief petty officer. Other improvements include: a reduction in tours of duty from 42 to 35 days; and the introduction of a £1 seniority payment for each year of company service up to a maximum of six years.

Separate negotiations will now take place for a further three hundred NUS members on supply boats belonging to non-federated companies.

#### NORWAY

##### State sector pay strike referred to compulsory arbitration

State employees belonging to four separate unions staged their first-ever joint strike in late May after mediation talks on claims in connection with the current pay round had failed in the face of the unwillingness of the government to amend an unsatisfactory offer. The unions were unable to accept the 5.9% general pay rise offered because it would have involved a further loss of purchasing power for its members, while the proposed increases in allowances were rejected as inequitable as they had been so framed as to lead to a widening of differentials (workers on the lowest scale would have received just over 2,000 kr and those in the highest grade in excess of 9,000 kr). The government had also completely failed to meet the unions' demand that state sector pay should not be allowed to fall yet further behind that of other Norwegian workers. The strike was called off after six days when the government, faced by an escalation that would have halted train services, closed down airports and paralysed municipal transport, announced that the dispute was to be referred to compulsory arbitration.

The arbitration board has now been constituted and has heard its first submissions. It is expected to announce its recommendations for a settlement in the second week of August.

### Ferry talks satisfactorily concluded

A dispute involving some four hundred deck officers on Norwegian coastal ferry and cargo vessels, which led to a brief strike, ended on 4 July when the men's union, the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association, and the shipowners' association accepted the mediator's proposals for a settlement. Improvements achieved in the current contract round include: a general pay increase of 1% backdated to 1 April, plus a further 4% from 1 October; an increase of 3 kr in the daily victualling allowance; and more work breaks. It has further been agreed that negotiations should take place on the officers' main claim for extra compensation for work performed between 17.00 and 06.00 and that any eventual decision of the parties should form the basis of the 1986 negotiations.

The two other seafarers' organisations involved in the ferry talks - the Norwegian Seamen's Union and the Engineers' Union (both ITF affiliates) - have also agreed to a mediated settlement of their claims and have withdrawn the strike notices previously issued. At the time of writing, union members were being balloted and precise details were not available.

### Higher rates on drilling and contractors' vessels

A new pay agreement, effective 1 April 1984 for two years, has been signed by the ITF's two Norwegian officers' affiliates, the Navigating Officers' Association and the Engineers' Union, on behalf of their members on drilling and contractors' vessels operating in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea. A general increase of 500 kr took effect on 1 April, together with increases of 100 kr per month for hydraulics engineers, technical assistants and dp operators and 250 kr per month for engine- and control-room operators. The safety leader's rate has also been brought into line with that of the sub-sea engineer, while the 8% special allowance paid to technical and stability supervisors will in future be calculated on a more favourable basis than hitherto (as a percentage of base pay plus cost-of-living allowance and not just of base pay). The two sides have agreed that talks will be reopened before next April with a view to agreeing a pay rise for the second year of the agreement.

In separate negotiations, the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union has reached a similar agreement giving its members on these vessels a general increase of 500 kr, plus an extra 250 kr per month for maintenance and derrick assistants and deckhands.

### Higher pay for crews of trawlers

The ITF's three Norwegian seafarer\* affiliates have reached agreement with the Norwegian Trawler Owners' Association on new rates of pay for their members on vessels owned by companies belonging to the Association. Rates have been increased by five per cent, with a minimum of 150 kr. The victualling allowance also goes up from 31.15 kr to 34.50 kr.

\* the Norwegian Seamen's Union, the Navigating Officers' Association and the Engineers' Union.

SWEDEN

8 per cent pay increases for SAS ground service employees

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union has concluded a new collective agreement on behalf of 1,150 ground service employees (excluding certificated mechanics) of the Scandinavian airline SAS. Monthly salaries have been increased by between 500 and 800 kr according to grade from the beginning of June, bringing the average monthly rate to 7,020 kr. In lieu of retro-activity, 3.50 öre per hour will be paid for each hour worked during the period 1 January - 31 May. A new method of remunerating stand-by duty has also been introduced. The deal is estimated to be worth 8 per cent over the year.

Meanwhile, the Transport Workers' Union has concluded a single agreement establishing common conditions of service for all certificated mechanics in Sweden. Previously, mechanics had been covered by two agreements, one for those employed by SAS and Linjeflyg, the other for employees of the smaller airlines operating in Sweden.

Pay agreement for taxi drivers signed

The Swedish government's decision late last month to end its price freeze has enabled the taxi owners to put their signature to the 1984 pay agreement for taxi drivers, which had been concluded in late May. (The owners' association had maintained that it could not pay the agreed increases unless it were permitted to put up prices, which, with a pay freeze, would have involved a special dispensation.) The agreement gives taxi drivers organised in the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union a three-staged increase: 1.50 kr per hour from 1 January, 10 öre per hour plus 2 öre per kilometre from 1 October and 70 öre an hour from 30 December. In total, the increases are worth between 7 and 8 per cent on 1983 rates.

Overseas pay rate details

We are now in a position to give details of the new Swedish ratings' overseas trade agreement referred to in the last issue of the Newsletter (page 58). The revised monthly salary ranges, effective 1 May 1984, are as follows:

Dry cargo ships

group 1 6,067 - 6,438 kr

group 2 3,697 - 6,067 kr

Oil tankers

group 1 6,329 - 6,729 kr

group 2 3,825 - 6,310 kr

The pay of ratings aboard ferry vessels has also been increased, giving salary ranges (from 1 May) of: 6,067 - 6,438 kr (group 1); 5,488 - 6,179 kr (group 2); and 3,975 - 6,179 kr (group 3).

All groups will receive a further salary adjustment of 104 kr on 1 October.

UNITED STATES

Court backs dockers on containerised cargo rules

The ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) won a major victory in May in its protracted legal battle to protect its members' rights to handle containerised cargoes when the 4th US Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia upheld a National Labour Relations Board decision backing the rules, which give ILA members the right to load and unload all containerised cargo within a radius of 50 miles of Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports where the ILA has a contract with shipping management groups. The appeals court had been hearing nine separate appeals against the NLRB decision. In ruling unanimously against the companies concerned, the court declared there was substantial evidence to support the NLRB finding that the primary purpose of the container handling rules was to preserve work threatened by containerisation rather than to acquire new work previously performed away from the piers by non-union labour.

Tanker and dry cargo agreements renewed

The ITF-affiliated National Maritime Union (NMU) has concluded a new three-year agreement with operators of deep-sea cargo vessels which continues the pay, fringe benefits and general conditions of employment contained in the expiring contract. Adverse industry conditions have precluded any immediate pay increases, although the employers have agreed that levels of pay and fringe benefits may be reviewed once after 16 June 1985 with the possibility of improvements should the situation have eased by that time.

A similar agreement, again with a reopener clause, has been negotiated by our affiliate with most tanker owners (four owners have not agreed to the extension of the existing tanker agreement and have been given a month from the settlement date to review their position). The NMU has successfully fought off attempts by the tanker owners to impose wage cuts in the 1984/6 tanker contract.

Both agreements entered into effect on 16 June 1984.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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The Austrian Transport and Commercial Workers' Union (HTV) celebrated its 80th anniversary in June. We extend warmest congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Austria: the minimum leave entitlement of public service workers has been raised from 24 to 26 days, while that of older workers (those with at least 25 years' reckonable service) goes up from 32 to 34 days. The changes came into effect at the beginning of April.

Since we last reported (page 59 of last Newsletter) sixteen more coasters have been brought under agreement by the ITF-affiliated Danish Ships' Catering Personnel Association. Eleven companies have still to sign collective agreements with our affiliate for all or part of their coastal fleet.

France: the principal railwaymen's unions (including a number of ITF affiliates) called a strike on 24 May on the entire rail network in furtherance of a dispute with management over the application of the 35-hour week to the railway industry. Management's offer of a 3.75% pay rise for 1984 has also been rejected as insufficient to keep abreast of inflation.

Flight deck crews employed by Air Inter - France's major domestic airline - staged a two-day strike earlier this month demanding improvements in the company's pilot training programme.

Great Britain: cross-Channel ferry services were hit on 30 and 31 May as members of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen staged industrial action in protest at the government's planned sale of British Rail's Sealink ferries.

Great Britain: Southampton dockers have been awarded a five per cent pay increase backdated to 1 January, producing a new weekly rate of £123.38 for 1984.

Great Britain: unions representing London Transport Underground operating staff have accepted an improved pay offer of 4.95% backdated to the settlement date of 16 April.

The Solomon Islands have been admitted to membership of the International Labour Organisation after formally accepting the obligations of the ILO Constitution. The ILO now has 151 member states.

Spanish seafarers organised in the UGT Transport Workers' Federation walked off their ships on 23/24 June to back demands for shorter working hours.

The ITF offers hearty congratulations to the Transport Workers' Union of America which is celebrating its golden jubilee this year.

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OBITUARY

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Erik Olsen, former chairman of the transport group of the Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (SiD), has died aged 60. Olsen was appointed chairman of the group in 1977 but had to resign after only six months in the post for health reasons.

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PERSONALIA

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Piet Diepeveen of the Dutch Road Transport Workers' Union (Dienstenbonden FNV) took early retirement at the beginning of July after a career with the union spanning almost thirty-five years. Brother Diepeveen is a former member of the Committee of the ITF Travel Bureau Section.

Enzo Friso has been appointed Assistant General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The post has been vacant since the previous Assistant General Secretary John Vanderveken became ICFTU General Secretary on the death of Otto Kersten. An Italian, Friso has worked at the ICFTU Secretariat since 1970 after previously serving in the Middle East and Indonesia. He has been responsible for some years for relations with the ITSs and has travelled widely in his capacity as head of the department covering the Americas, Europe and the Middle East.

José Vera Gómez, General Secretary of the Venezuelan Transport Workers' Federation (FEDETRANSPORTE), has been elected to the Venezuelan parliament.

Lars Jansson of the Swedish Seamen's Union celebrated his 50th birthday on 8 June. We extend warm congratulations to Lars who has been an ITF Ship Inspector for many years now and has played an important part in furthering the objectives of the f-o-c campaign in Sweden.

Israel Kessar has been elected Secretary-General of the General Federation of Labour in Israel (Histadrut) following the retirement after eleven years in office, of Yerucham Meshel. Brother Kessar has been Histadrut Assistant General Secretary since 1977.

Neil Milligan will take over as Assistant General Secretary of the British Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) when Don Pullen retires in December. Brother Milligan currently represents the union's members on the Southern Region of British Rail and London Transport.

Ron Todd has been elected as the next General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union. As General Secretary-designate he will work together for the next twelve months with the present General Secretary, Moss Evans, who announced some months ago that he will be taking early retirement in July 1985. Brother Todd was previously the TGWU's National Organiser.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Marine Pilotage Committee - Copenhagen ..... 20-21 August 1984

Seafarers' Section Conference - Geneva (preparatory to ILO  
Joint Maritime Commission) ..... 17-18 September 1984

Ground Staff Technical Committee - Amsterdam ..... 2 October 1984

ATLAS/KSSU Committee - Amsterdam ..... 3-4 October 1984

Management Committee - Innsbruck ..... 16 October 1984

Executive Board - Innsbruck ..... 16-17 October 1984

Urban Transport Committee - Luxembourg ..... 4-5 December 1984

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



"New Continental" - Safety Last! (part 2)

We make no apologies for returning in this issue to the Continental story\* to inform our readers of the serious safety violations involving the company's pilots that the newly-affiliated US Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) has listed as having occurred since the autumn of 1983, some of which it is still in the process of verifying, others that have been substantiated following thorough investigation. They represent a sorry saga of misjudgement on the part of pilots who seem ill-equipped to cope with the complexities of flying in the crowded skies of today when even a minor error can have catastrophic results for aircraft, passengers and crew alike.

At the root of the poor performance of Continental's pilots today are the hiring and promotion policies of the airline post re-organisation. Pilots willing to cross picket lines last autumn to fly for the airline have been rapidly promoted, so that it is quite common to find a Continental employee who was flying as a second officer prior to the pilots' strike flying today as captain, in at least one instance without even the class one medical certificate required by the regulations. Staff shortages have also meant that Continental has been prepared to hire pilots with no previous airline experience (over 70% of new hires fell into this category, according to one reliable source; some had logged less than 1,000 hours' flying time, others had virtually no experience on jet aircraft), while new hires with airline experience have included pilots who had been dismissed by their former employer for incompetence or FAA violations and fines and some who had even crashed aircraft! Moreover, Continental is known to have taken on its payroll pilots with convictions for a variety of offences, including drug addiction, child molestation, tax evasion and assault; some had already served their sentences, others were free on bail pending appeal against sentence. When this deplorable state of affairs was drawn to Continental's attention on a current affairs programme on nationwide television recently, the company disclaimed all knowledge, but significantly fired or suspended over 80 of its newly-hired pilots shortly after the programme went out.

As early as last December, the accident investigation department of ALPA submitted an alarming list of safety violations within Continental, which it was seeking to verify, to the Federal Aviation Administration Flight Standards Department for further investigation. Regrettably, the number of incidents has not diminished since then and by late June over one hundred and fifty such incidents had been reported to the federal agency. So disturbed was ALPA by the situation that it appeared before a House of Representatives Sub-Committee last month accusing the FAA of 'covering up' safety violations by failing to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation into the union's complaints and by reacting tardily to union requests for atc tapes to be made available for evaluation by its safety experts. ALPA's stance was backed up by a representative of the Union of Flight Attendants, which organises Continental's cabin crew personnel, who said that the FAA had also not yet examined the serious charges brought against Continental by her union.

Continental's negligent approach to air safety is perhaps best illustrated by the sad tale of the bent B 727 that simply went on flying after it had sustained substantial damage to the rear fuselage area following a very heavy landing at LaGuardia airport at the end of last year. For three days after the accident -

\* See also Supplement to ITF Newsletter No 5 of May 1984

which was neither logged nor reported to the FAA, according to our sources - the aircraft continued to operate routine passenger-carrying services until (on 1 January) a controller at LaGuardia asked the flight crew: "are you going to fly that bird with wrinkles in the fuselage like that?" The crew, wisely, decided to ground the aircraft and it was taken to an American Airlines hangar where for the next three days Continental mechanics are reported to have carried out extensive repairs. Word of these events leaked out to ALPA and the union immediately notified the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and, after some delay, the NTSB Chairman ordered the aircraft impounded for inspection by itself and the FAA. Continental, apparently anxious to escape their joint clutches, obtained reluctant verbal approval from Boeing for the aircraft to be ferried across America to Los Angeles for further repairs and followed this up by obtaining permission over the telephone from the FAA principal inspector in Los Angeles to make the flight. There is little doubt that had Continental taken the rather more straightforward course of seeking the approval of the local FAA office in New York for the flight, it would have sent someone out to inspect the aircraft and permission would presumably have been refused. As it was, to get the 'plane to Los Angeles Continental had to apply an external metal patch to keep the tail on the aircraft and had also to make internal repairs to the fuselage. Details of the damage and subsequent repair were kept secret from the FAA and the NTSB. While this incident reflects poorly on Continental, criticism can also reasonably be voiced of both the safety agencies - for had they taken a more close interest they would surely not have permitted the aircraft to be flown to Los Angeles in such a condition.

But, as we have already indicated, this incident was only one of the many which have so worried a former NTSB member that he has said he would not fly Continental unless there was no other alternative.

Many of the incidents have involved mistakes made by pilots when taking off or landing, ie at those points of any flight where the exercise of considerable skill is called for. Typical are incidents in which Continental pilots have either exceeded or undershot their assigned altitude when coming in to land; on one occasion, the pilot exceeded the assigned altitude by 3,000 ft, ignoring requests to expedite his descent to 29,000 ft, resulting in a near miss. In another incident, a company pilot on a visual approach overshot the final approach course by 1½ miles, forcing another aircraft to execute a 360° turn to regain safe separation. Again, a pilot flying into New Orleans last November manoeuvred to a holding pattern at 4,000 ft instead of 6,000 ft, with the result that the pilot holding at 4,000 ft had to act swiftly to avert a collision (both 'planes came within seconds of colliding!). There was also a reported incident in which a Continental 'plane and an aircraft of another airline were on the same flight path to the same runway when the Continental aircraft overtook the second 'plane, which had to steer out of the way to avoid a collision. Potential collision situations have also occurred when Continental jets have flown across other aircraft approach paths and cut across aircraft on final approach to a different runway.

There was even one case of a Continental pilot almost landing at the wrong airport! - having been cleared to land at Los Angeles International Airport, he overflew and attempted a landing at a small airport just south of the town, forcing a DC-10 to alter its flight path. Residents of suburbs close to airports have also been put at risk by some of the mistakes made by Continental pilots - an aircraft approaching Cleveland Hopkins International Airport was 800 ft below

its proper altitude, the minimum safe altitude warning sounded in the control tower and the tower had to alert the pilot to the fact that he was off course and rapidly approaching a built-up area of downtown Cleveland. Even Continental Chairman Frank Lorenzo has not escaped the odd scare - he was on a Continental flight into Denver which landed on a 75-ft wide, snow-covered taxiway. The pilot of the DC-9 on which he was a passenger was a second officer who had just been promoted captain.

Disregard of basic safety considerations has been no less noticeable on take-off. Incidents have been reported of Continental flights taking off without clearance, or in below minimum conditions (such as in dense fog). Weather conditions in the States were particularly bad last winter, with heavy snow and record low temperatures, but that did not deter Continental - a flight took off from Cleveland International Airport in December after Continental ground personnel had brushed an inch of snow off the wings with a broom (other 'planes were using the more conventional glycol anti-freeze!). Other Continental aircraft have spilt fuel on the ramp, skidded off the taxiway, hit snow ploughs, taken off with defective navigation lights and in one instance an aircraft started up its engines with the fuel truck still hooked up and pumping fuel, creating a potentially lethal fire hazard.

Latest reports indicate that Continental is now set to break even or even show a slight profit when its results are announced. One can only ask - at what tremendous cost in terms of air safety?

Arbitration award brings tremendous victory for Black South African bus drivers

Towards the end of last year, negotiations broke down between one of the largest bus companies in South Africa, PUTCO, and two of the ITF's Black affiliates, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU) and the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), who had succeeded in gaining recognition as joint bargaining agents for PUTCO workers. The main business of PUTCO, a privately-owned company, is operating buses from the various Black townships (mainly in the Transvaal) to the urban centres (Johannesburg in particular) where the Black workers have their jobs but are not allowed to live. PUTCO has been granted a monopoly of this operation by the South African government - which controls the fares that PUTCO charges and subsidizes the company if it fails to make a prescribed level of profit from the fares it lays down. Bus drivers in South Africa work under tremendous pressures - buses are overcrowded, time schedules are extremely tight, roads in the townships are bad (very often untarred and unmarked by road-signs) and the condition of the buses is generally poor.

The company took the position that it could not afford to pay what the unions were asking for. The collective agreement provides for the arbitration of grievances, either internally or through the Industrial Court, and the parties eventually opted for the Industrial Court. (This Court was established a few years ago as part of the government's effort to give a more liberal look to the labour laws as they affected Black workers. Many observers suspected that the move was purely cosmetic but to everyone's surprise - and the government's and employers' growing consternation - the Court has acted with considerable independence and has handed down a number of judgements which have been very favourable to the Black workers' unions.) The unions' counsel took specialist advice which satisfied him that the company almost certainly had the money to pay, but the unions' second argument was of course that even if the company could not meet justified demands, the workers should not be those to suffer the consequences of an under-financed operation.

On 27 June 1984, the Judge handed down the arbitration decision that all workers would receive a 15.5% increase backdated to 1 January 1984 and to be paid with interest of 3% - leaving a period of six months unaccounted for. The TGWU and TAWU immediately commenced negotiations with the company regarding this period and eventually settled two days later on a 6.75% increase for the period July to December 1983, to be paid with interest of 9%.

The unions' success can be measured against the employers' final offer when negotiations broke down of four to five per cent, plus their insistence that they were unable to pay anything more. The case has had tremendous significance on two counts: first, that the employers have been forced by the Court to disclose information of the most comprehensive and intimate kind; and, secondly, that the plea of "inability to pay" has been spectacularly rejected - something which South African unions in the service industries particularly will be able to seize on to increase their bargaining strength in the future.

The outcome was hailed enthusiastically by the unions' members, many of whom had keenly followed the case all through, attending whenever their shifts allowed. On the day of the award itself, about three hundred and fifty workers packed the Court and broke into speech-making and song at the conclusion of the proceedings.