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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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INTERNATIONAL

Ground Staff Technical Committee meets in Amsterdam

A meeting of the Ground Staff Technical Committee of the ITF Civil Aviation Section was held in Amsterdam on 2 October, attended by representatives of unions in Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. Hans-Bernhardt Beyertt, ITF Civil Aviation Section Secretary, represented the Secretariat.

V Toso (Italy) was elected to serve as the Committee's new Chairman in succession to J Collier (Great Britain) who has been assigned to other duties within his union, and J Kerrigan (USA) was reconfirmed as Vice-Chairman.

Among the topics discussed by the meeting were: health problems associated with work on visual display units; deregulation and privatisation, with reports on the effects of deregulation in the US on airline industry employees, the trade union response to moves towards deregulation in Canada, and the run-up to the privatisation of British Airways; and EEC aviation policy. The increasing use of part-time and seasonal labour in the aviation industry was deplored and it was decided that this question should feature on the agenda of the next full conference of the Section.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Dutch host unions for their splendid hospitality.

ATLAS and KSSU unions call for closer inter-union cooperation

Union officials representing employees of the various member airlines of the two European groupings ATLAS and KSSU attended a meeting in Amsterdam on 3 and 4 October at which they pledged themselves to cooperate more closely on matters affecting their joint interests. It was further decided that the ITF should continue to produce surveys on working conditions within the two groupings and that these should be updated at regular intervals. Also raised at the meeting were the effects of the increased use of computers on levels of employment in the aviation industry and certain safety problems which it was agreed should be examined further at the Section Conference in 1985.

A representative of the French flight engineers' union reported on a serious dispute that had arisen between Air Afrique (an airline jointly operated by ten African countries, all former French colonies) and its French and African cockpit crews, who had been on strike since 11 September and were now locked out by the airline. Many strikers had received dismissal notices, further exacerbating an already tense situation. The meeting endorsed the resolution jointly adopted by the French pilots' and flight engineers' unions (and supported by other French unions), stressing the determination of the French and African employees of Air Afrique to defend their right to union representation and to have their pay and conditions regulated by collective agreement.

Once again, at the close of the meeting, delegates expressed their warm thanks to the Dutch aviation affiliates of the ITF for helping make their brief stay in Holland such a pleasant one.

ARGENTINA

Commission on 'disappearances' hands over its report to President Alfonsín

Following a nine-month inquiry, the Presidential Commission charged with investigating the fate of Argentinians who disappeared during the period of military rule has handed over 50,000 pages of detailed evidence and testimony to President Raúl Alfonsín. "We are convinced that the military dictatorship brought about the greatest and most savage tragedy in Argentine history", the President of the Commission, the writer Ernesto Sábato, told the President in a solemn hand-over ceremony at Government House last month.

The commission's report contains precise descriptions of the atrocities allegedly committed by the military, based on testimony from relatives of missing persons, former detainees who survived incarceration and torture, and some military officers. It implicates hundreds of military officers in appalling human rights abuses and reveals a network of 340 concentration camps through which the 'disappeared' passed before being executed.

The commission says it has clear evidence that almost 9,000 persons were forcibly kidnapped, tortured and secretly killed in the so-called 'dirty war' against 'subversive' elements, although Committee members agree with human rights groups that the real figure must be far higher as many families were understandably reluctant to report abductions for fear of the consequences.

The military were evidently prepared to go to considerable lengths to destroy evidence of their alleged participation in these terrible crimes, burning documents and even demolishing buildings that had housed prisoners of the military regime. Members of the Commission were also threatened with violence by some of the officers they questioned, few of whom showed any signs of remorse for their alleged involvement in the state machinery that had sent thousands of their fellow countrymen to their deaths.

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TRANSPORT  
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AUSTRIA

Support won for Austrian plan to transfer transit traffic from the road to the rails

Following a top-level meeting with directors of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) in Vienna at the beginning of September, leading officials in the railway administrations of the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Yugoslavia expressed their willingness to cooperate with the plans of the Austrian government for transferring the bulk of its transit traffic from the roads to the rails over the next ten years.\* A first positive step has been taken with the opening of a new 'transit corridor' between Graz in Austria and Regensburg in southern Germany, using freight waggons leased from the Swiss Federal Railways which are to be replaced by new 'piggyback' waggons in the autumn of 1985. Details have also been revealed of four more 'corridors' that will be opened in either 1985 or 1986, providing a direct link between towns in southern Germany and destinations in Italy and Yugoslavia. The ÖBB has undertaken to provide all the additional rolling stock needed for the initial phase (1985/6) of the first half of the programme, leaving the longer-term investment decisions to be made by the railway companies in all four countries to a later stage.

\* see ITF Newsletter No. 8, 1984, page 77 for full details

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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BELGIUM

Strikes at Sabena

Cabin attendants working for Sabena struck the carrier twice in September, angered by the company's decision - against the advice of its crew complement committee - to reduce the number of cabin attendants on its European B 737 routes following the introduction of the new business class that has replaced the former 1st class section. Other crew grievances concern delays in negotiating a new collective agreement for the category, the lack of adequate job safeguards (there is particular objection to Sabena's growing practice of 'dry leasing' aircraft to foreign countries), and the company's failure to draw up a seniority list of its flight attendants as requested.

In separate action, Sabena pilots and flight engineers walked out earlier this month in a 'dry leasing' protest.

GERMANY

Pay offer averts strike at Hapag-Lloyd Aviation

Faced by an overwhelming vote of its ground and flying staff employees for strike action in support of a pay claim, Hapag-Lloyd Aviation has agreed to pay a 3.3% salary increase from 1 June and to improve holiday pay by DM 120.

In three rounds of negotiations with the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) the company had refused to make a firm offer on pay, insisting that its employees should agree to a two-year pay freeze in return for a limited measure of job security. The OeTV refused to accept that Hapag-Lloyd Aviation workers should be the only airline staff not to receive a pay increase for 1984 and proceeded to a strike ballot.

GREAT BRITAIN

5.5% pay increase for Thomas Cook staff

Staff employed by Thomas Cook have won a 5.5% rise in basic pay from 1 November 1984 under a new agreement concluded by the ITF-affiliated Transport Salaried Staffs' Association. Improvements have also been obtained in respect of London Weighting, with the Inner London allowance increased from £1,375 to £1,440 and the Outer London allowance raised to £597 (from £570). The profit-sharing scheme has been further refined to give employees a larger percentage share in the event of group trading profits exceeding certain targets in the current financial year, and the company has also agreed to changes in the method used for calculating pension entitlements.

It has been decided that a joint working party should be set up to look into working hours.

Two-year pay deal for registered dockers employed by Port of London Authority

Negotiators from the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union have hammered out the first two-year pay deal for registered dock workers employed by the Port of London Authority producing pay increases of 2.5% this year and 5% for 1985. The agreement, reached after months of negotiations with the port employers, is backdated to 1 January.

7% pay deal for P and O cruise ship ratings

A 7% pay deal, effective from 1 September, has been concluded by the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seamen for ratings on P and O's fleet of seven passenger cruise ships. The local leave allowance also goes up to £300 and an extended tour compensation payment is being introduced for a trial twelve-month period.

SPAIN

New social and economic pact is signed

A new social and economic pact was signed earlier this month between the government, the employers' federation and the Socialist General Workers' Union (UGT). The agreement, which will govern salaries for the next two years; sets pay guidelines of between 5.5% and 7.5% for 1985 and of between 4.5% and 6.5% for 1986, in line with government inflation targets. The accord also includes a number of measures aimed at stimulating private investment so as to create more jobs and is thus broadly similar in outline to other pacts signed in previous years.

UNITED STATES

Presidential board ruled out in Continental dispute

Draft legislation aimed at setting up a presidential board to review the continuing strike of Continental's pilots and make recommendations for a settlement failed earlier this month following intense lobbying of Congress by Continental's supporters.

Review boards have proved a useful tool in the past for resolving major strikes and safety disputes in the US aviation industry and organised labour has on more than one occasion accepted the findings of such a board even when they were not entirely in its favour. In the Continental case, the ITF-affiliated Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) had voluntarily agreed in advance to abide by the board's recommendations, even though the terms under which it was to have been constituted would have meant that the company could not be ordered to reinstate the collective agreement that existed prior to the strike or to displace any of its present employees. Nor would any of the court decisions in the Continental dispute, most of them in the airline's favour, have been affected.

ALPA is now asking why Continental so feared a public review of its labour relations policies that it organised an expensive lobbying exercise with a view to frustrating an independent investigation of the serious and long-standing dispute with its pilots which it has proved impossible to resolve by any other means.

### United Airlines pilots vote for strike action

Pilots with United Airlines have voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action to back union demands in connection with the renewal of the collective contract. Negotiations commenced in February and have been continuing with the assistance of a federal mediator since June; although some progress has been made the two sides remain far apart on major issues such as pay, conditions and pensions. The ITF-affiliated Air Line Pilots' Association is resisting attempts by United to wrest further concessions from its members, arguing that the productivity clauses included in the present contract signed in 1981 have contributed greatly to the airline's continuing profitability. United pilots voluntarily agreed to defer a 6% pay rise due in April 1983 and cannot be expected to forgo further increases, the union adds.

If the strike goes ahead it could close down United, the largest airline in the United States, during the busy Christmas holiday season.

### Officers' unions seek ITF support over recognition dispute

Two US unions organising ships' officers (both ITF-affiliated) are in dispute with a major tugboat company Interstate Ocean Transport (IOT), which is owned by the conglomerate Sonat Marine Inc. The company is seeking to deny officers on its tugs and barges - who have been represented for years by the Seafarers' International Union of North America (SIUNA) and the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA) - the continued right to belong to a union on the grounds that they are supervisory personnel and hence under federal law have no automatic right of union membership. SIUNA and MEBA are taking the company to court over the recognition issue and meanwhile have sought the support of union-organised crews aboard tankers transporting oil to the United States in the event of strike action there for a boycott of lighterage facilities owned or operated by Sonat Marine and its IOT subsidiary at Big Stone Anchorage at the mouth of the Delaware River.

### Machinists' union wins pay improvements for United Airlines mechanics

Some 14,500 mechanics and other ground staff employees of United Airlines have won pay increases totalling 12.5% after ratifying a new three-year agreement negotiated on their behalf by the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. The contract provides for five pay adjustments of: 3.7% back-dated to 1 November 1983, 0.9% from 1 July 1984; 2.1% from 1 November 1984; and 2.9% on 1 November 1985 and 1 September 1986. Other improvements relate to pensions benefits and severance pay.

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#### NEWS IN BRIEF

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Biman Bangladesh Airlines pilots have won increases in pay and benefits of 44.5% following an 18-day strike (see also page 94 of last issue).

The French parliament has now formally adopted legislation giving air traffic controllers a limited right of strike action.\* In the days preceding discussion of the bill in the national assembly, controllers staged sporadic action at a number of control centres and airports to protest at clauses obliging controllers to maintain a minimum level of service during strikes.

\* see also ITF Newsletter No. 1, 1984, page 5

Ground staff of the French airline UTA at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport have been delaying flights in support of a pay demand.

Ground staff employees of British Airways based in West Germany are to move to a 38½ hour week with effect from 1 April 1985.

The General Council of British Shipping has warned that the number of officer cadets currently recruited each year must be doubled if the industry is not to face an acute shortage of trained officers by the end of the decade.

The ITF-affiliated British Transport and General Workers' Union has negotiated a new agreement at the east coast port of Felixstowe setting a basic weekly rate for dockers in the range of £105.24 - £124.44.

United States: pay increases of 12.5% spread over three years have been won for cabin crew with Piedmont Airlines by the ITF-affiliated Association of Flight Attendants.

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OBITUARY

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Gunnar Osvald, President of the Swedish Navigating Officers' Association from the mid-1930s to the mid-40s, has died, aged 83.

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PERSONALIA

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The ITF extends hearty congratulations to Bishop Desmond Tutu, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1984.

Yves Lequoy, General Secretary of the French Transport and Public Service Workers' Federation and member of the ITF Executive Board, has been elected to the French Economic and Social Council.

Börje Hammargren, editor of the magazine published by the Swedish Navigating Officers' Association, celebrated his 60th birthday on 9 September.

Sam McCluskie, Assistant General Secretary/Treasurer of the British National Union of Seamen, has been elected Treasurer of the British Labour Party.



Martti Paakkinen, President of the Finnish Marine Pilots' Union, was 50 on 28 September.

Leif Thue was elected as the new President of the Norwegian Railwaymen's Union at its Congress earlier this month in succession to Sverre Kortvedt, who is retiring. The union's new Vice-President, replacing Thue, is Torgrim Elsrud. Sigurd Kvilekval, the union's chief treasurer, also retired during the Congress and is succeeded by Harald Sjom. Brothers Kortvedt and Kvilekval have both been active for a number of years within the ITF Railwaymen's Section, Kortvedt as his country's representative on the Section Committee and Kvilekval as a member of the Sub-Committee on Working Conditions of Railway Staff.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Railwaymen's Section Committee - London ..... 8-9 November 1984  
Road Transport Workers' Section Committee - London ..... 15-16 November 1984  
Inland Navigation Section Committee - Strasbourg ..... 22-23 November 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

ILO JOINT MARITIME COMMISSION AGREES AGENDA FOR PREPARATORY TECHNICAL MARITIME CONFERENCE AND MARITIME SESSION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

The 24th session of the ILO Joint Maritime Commission (JMC) was held in Geneva from 20 until 28 September 1984 and was preceded by a special conference of the ITF Seafarers' Section. In spite of considerable differences of opinion between the seafarer and shipowner representatives on certain issues under debate the present JMC session - unlike the previous one - resulted in sufficient agreement between the parties to arrive at full agendas for the forthcoming Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference - scheduled for early 1986 - and Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference - scheduled for early 1987. Thus the participants agreed to recommend the following items for the agendas of those conferences : seafarers' welfare at sea and in port; social security protection for seafarers including those serving in ships flying flags other than those of their own country; health protection and medical care for seafarers; the Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (N° 147), mechanism for incorporating new Conventions in the appendix; and revision of the Repatriation of Seamen Convention, 1926 (N° 23), and of the Repatriation (Ships' Masters and Apprentices) Recommendation, 1926 (N° 27).

An additional agenda item at the Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference will be the Report of the Director-General of the ILO and in this connection the JMC recommended that the report should include inter alia the following items: information concerning efforts by the ILO to promote ratification and application of Convention N° 147; information concerning port state inspections and details of deficiencies by flag; and information on unlawful detention of seafarers.

On two substantive agenda items the seafarers and shipowners failed to reach agreement. The shipowners refused not unexpectedly to agree to discuss the employment conditions of seafarers serving in ships flying flags other than those of their own country (including flags of convenience), partly out of fear that the seafarers would again pursue the issue of flag rates for non-domiciled seafarers. The Seafarers on the other hand did not wish to revise the Placing of Seamen Convention, 1920 (N° 9) at the peril of giving credence to fee-charging recruitment agencies. Also, the shipowners could not agree to the inclusion of fishermen in the agenda item dealing with medical care.

With regard to ILO Convention N° 147 (Minimum Standards in Merchant Ships) the ILO Governing Body was asked to urge member states to implement its provisions and the ILO Director-General was asked to continue to monitor the Convention and to give details on a regular basis of port state inspections, to publicise the need for vessel inspections by both flag and port states including on a regional basis, to ensure that maximum attention and the resources of the International Labour Office are devoted to the promotion of more widespread ratification of the Convention, and to undertake a survey of law and practice in regard to matters dealt with in the Convention so that the JMC might more accurately judge whether revision of the Convention is necessary or desirable.

With regard to the ILO Wages, Hours of Work and Manning (Sea) Recommendation, 1958 (N° 109) the JMC considered that the present wage figures of US\$276 or £115 should remain unaltered for the time being given the fact that fluctuations in exchange rates have been playing havoc with the present formula used to determine the wage figures and recognised the Seafarers' wish to devise a new formula and the Shipowners' scepticism towards any new formula. The ILO Director-General was asked to determine the feasibility of an alternative formula and to give consideration to the establishment of a bipartite wage committee to meet between JMC sessions to update the minimum wage rates.

Under any other business a number of seafarer-sponsored resolutions were adopted. In a resolution concerning the carrying of radioactive nuclear cargo the ILO Governing Body was asked to call on the international shipping community to ensure that full and up-to-date information concerning the intended voyages of ships carrying such cargoes were made available to all concerned and to ask the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to develop their regulations for the transportation of radioactive material, including regulations governing the ship type, packaging and stowage of such materials, and to develop a code of practice in this respect.

Another resolution dealt with the unlawful detention of seafarers abroad and the JMC urged that the ILO Director-General be requested to examine the possibility of the appropriate UN body adopting an instrument which would oblige a state detaining a seafarer or a ship immediately to inform the flag state and the state of nationality of the seafarer and, if interned, allow consular officials immediate access and to deal with the matter expeditiously under the due process of law and to inform both the aforesaid states of such developments as they occur.

A third resolution concerned occupational safety and working conditions on board maritime mobile offshore units and the JMC considered that the ILO should give attention to the problems of personnel working aboard maritime mobile offshore units bearing in mind the growing numbers of specialised mobile units and appliances used in the offshore industry. It asked that the ILO Director-General be instructed to undertake a study in liaison with the IMO to determine which mobile units are classified as ships and based on such a study to convene a tripartite meeting of experts on "Occupational safety and health and working conditions on board maritime mobile offshore units".

On the question of war risk areas and the safety of life of seafarers the ship-owners were not prepared to discuss such items as notification of seafarers prior to voyages destined to war risk areas, provision of facility for immediately signing off, entitlement to repatriation at shipowner's expense, and guaranteed continuity of employment and wages following a refusal to sail into such areas as in their view these were matters for collective bargaining. However, the JMC adopted a resolution which expressed deep concern regarding increasing international tensions and the resulting incidents which are threatening the lives of seafarers in different parts of the world and which are a flagrant violation of international rules concerning freedom of navigation, and strongly condemned any actions of violence, including attacks on civilian ships and mining of ports and shipping lanes, which are threatening safety of lives at sea and international shipping, and called on all governments to make every effort to find peaceful solutions to conflicts that are threatening the lives of seafarers.

The seafarers had also submitted a draft resolution suggesting that the ILO should establish in the Caribbean a programme of vocational and safety training for ships' ratings, particularly those of the catering department but the shipowners could not support the draft resolution on the grounds that "it discriminated in training and employment opportunities aboard ship in favour of seafarers from a particular area of the world". Their argument appears to be covering up their real concern - labour at its cheapest irrespective of trading area - like a see-through négligé! The seafarers intend to pursue this issue through other means, possibly within the framework of the ILO.

On the agreed agenda item for the Preparatory Maritime Technical Conference and Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference entitled "Social security protection for seafarers including those serving in ships flying flags other than those of their own country" the shipowners managed to obliterate the reference in the title "(including flags of convenience)". This "nifty" intervention by the shipowners prompted the seafarers to re-state their position vis-à-vis f-o-c shipping and the seafarers' group adopted on its own initiative the resolution reproduced as an Annex to this report.

A copy of this resolution has since been forwarded to the heads of the ILO and IMO as well as to the OECD.

K. Mols Sørensen, ITF Seafarers' Section Chairman, was elected spokesman of the Seafarers Group of the JMC and Åke Selander, ITF Assistant General Secretary, acted as Secretary to the Seafarers Group. The seafarer regular and deputy JMC members and their advisers - numbering close on sixty persons - were drawn from the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United States and USSR.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GENUINE LINK BETWEEN A SHIP AND THE  
FLAG STATE

The Seafarers' Group at the 24th session of the ILO Joint Maritime Commission,  
meeting in Geneva from 20 until 28 September 1984;

NOTING the position taken by the Shipowners' Group of total opposition to any  
discussions whatsoever of the subject of flags of convenience within the frame-  
work of the International Labour Organisation;

NOTING FURTHER that in spite of efforts by both the ILO and IMO to rectify the  
shortcomings of certain flags of convenience registries as regards their labour  
and maritime legislation, the working conditions on board and safety records of  
vessels flying the flags of those registries are still appalling;

CONSIDERING that these problems can only be solved through the establishment of  
a genuine link between a ship and the flag State;

SUPPORTS therefore fully the attempts at UNCTAD to establish such a genuine link  
in the form of mandatory rules governing the identification, registration,  
management, manning, accountability, equity participation and bareboat charters,  
and condemns the entrenched position taken by the B-group and the flag-of-  
convenience countries at the recent UN Conference on the Registration of Ships  
and urges the OECD and flag-of-convenience countries to reconsider their present  
rigid position.



ITF Offshore Working Group meets in London

The combined working group set up by the first meeting of the ITF Seafarers' Section Standing Committee on Maritime Mobile Offshore Units (held in Hongkong on 5 and 6 April) met for the first time on 11 and 12 September in London. The agenda comprised: ITF Collective Agreements for the Offshore Industry; ITF manning scales for the offshore industry; ITF offshore safety and training programme; and the ILO and the offshore industry.

The working group - which was composed of representatives of seafarer affiliates in Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and United States - outlined proposals for ITF requirements as regards manning of maritime mobile offshore units and training and qualifications of the personnel employed in these units. Furthermore, the group drafted an adapted version of the ITF Collective Agreement for application to offshore vessels which will be submitted to the ITF Fair Practices Committee for approval. The next meeting of the working group is likely to be held towards the end of February next year. In the meantime a small inter-sessional reference group will work on refinements to the manning and training requirements. The working group was chaired by Åke Selander, ITF Assistant General Secretary.