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NEWS

AVIATION SAFETY THREATENED BY DEREGULATION SAYS ITF CONFERENCE

The growing risks posed to aviation safety as a result of deregulation were highlighted at the meeting of the ITF's Civil Aviation Section which took place in Stockholm from 1 to 3 October. The Conference, which was attended by some 100 delegates from 49 unions in 26 countries, focused attention on three main factors affecting the civil aviation industry and those employed in it. The first was deregulation - the growing attempts by governments to replace the existing system of controls over international civil aviation by a competitive 'free for all' in which profitable services are retained and unprofitable ones scrapped, and in which the wages and working conditions of employees are cut to minimise costs. Many unions reported on moves under way to deregulate or "privatise" all or part of the airline industry, despite the enormous damage which deregulation had caused in the USA where it was introduced in 1978. Recognising that the idea of deregulation was popular in a number of countries, the conference agreed to concentrate an ITF campaign against the effects of deregulation including the bankruptcy of some airlines, the closure of services to smaller towns and rural areas, union busting, cuts in wages and working conditions, and, increasingly, compromises in aviation safety.

The second major topic considered by the delegates was that of new technologies. It was pointed out that the aviation industry was always at the forefront of technological change and that recent innovations in computerisation and communications technologies had already had an important impact in the industry. It was accepted that the ITF needed to develop further its policy making, research and information work on the various types of new technologies affecting civil aviation workers and the strategies which should be adopted to handle them. The question should, it was also agreed, be considered by the Executive Board of the ITF, since the introduction of new technologies affected all transport workers.

The third topic debated by the Conference was occupational safety and health and in particular aviation safety. The recent spate of airline disasters had, it was stressed, focused attention on aircraft safety and there were some serious problems to be considered. Special attention was drawn to the question of aircraft evacuation procedures. The decision of some airlines to block off two exit doors on their Boeing 747 airliners was strongly condemned and the Conference agreed to issue a joint statement with IFALPA on this point (see below).

Airlines were coming under increasing pressure because of deregulation and privatisation or even the threat of these developments to cut costs, the delegates emphasised. Maintenance costs, extra fuel consumed because of the additional weight of security equipment were all being examined with a view to costs. New technologies were being applied to reduce the labour force, cut costs and increase flying time. All these developments were negative not just as far as aviation workers were concerned, but also in the long run for passengers.

The three day conference, which was hosted by the three Swedish affiliates STF, HTF and SALF, was chaired by Bill Gill (Flight Engineers' International Association, USA). At the beginning of the meeting he announced his intention to retire from the chairmanship of the section and elections were therefore held for the posts of Chairman and Vice Chairman. The new section chairman, at least until the

ITF Congress in July 1986, will be Bill Scheri (IAM, United States) and the Vice Chairman will be Mick Martin (TGWU, Great Britain). ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis at the closing session of the conference paid tribute to the long service which Bill Gill had devoted to the work of the ITF Civil Aviation Section and wished him the best of luck in his future activities.

During the course of the three day meeting a resolution of support for the trade union movement in Tunisia, currently under severe attack from the government was adopted and forwarded to the ITF Executive Board. The Conference also adopted, in response to a request from the Air India Cabin Crew Association, a statement calling upon Air India to compensate the families of the crew members and other staff killed in the crash of the Air India 747 in June 1985 on the same basis as the families of other passengers.

70 BUSES CROSS STRASBOURG FOR URBAN TRANSPORT RALLY

Seventy buses from France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Great Britain and Switzerland together with nearly 1,500 urban transport workers took part in the joint ITF - Public Services International Urban Transport rally in Strasbourg on October 18. The buses and demonstrators set out from the Place de l'Etoile at 10 am and made their way slowly through the city's historic streets, arriving some two hours later outside the Palais de l'Europe, the headquarters of the Council of Europe and meeting place of the European Parliament. The demonstrators were then addressed by Gilbert Doriat (Fédération des Transports FO, France); Bill Morris (T & GWU, Great Britain) and Franz Holländer (ÖTV, FR Germany). The previous day a meeting took place between representatives of the unions taking part in the rally and the various international organisations concerned with public transport including the European Parliament and the International Union of Public Transport (UITP), as well as with Marcel Schlechter, Luxembourg's Transport Minister and current president of the European Council of Transport Ministers. The meeting, presided over by Victor Schiwoff (VPOD, Switzerland) impressed upon the international organisations the ITF's determination to defend public passenger transport services against the attacks being launched on them by public authorities in different European countries under the banner of deregulation and privatisation.



INTERNATIONAL: ITF CALLS FOR CONVENTION ON SHIP HIJACKING

The brutal terrorist hijacking earlier this month of the Italian cruise liner ACHILLE LAURO has led the ITF, which represents the vast majority of the world's seafarers, to call on the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the UN agency responsible for maritime affairs, to adopt a new international convention on ship hijacking on the lines of the Hague Convention which deals with unlawful seizure of civil aircraft.

Pointing out that the crew of the ACHILLE LAURO were members of its affiliates, an ITF press statement issued after the hijack had ended stated that this terrorist act has struck at the very heart of the Federation's membership. Seafarers' unions in the ITF, the statement stressed, had long realised that ships and offshore installations would one day become the target for terrorist attack and had called for effective action to prevent such incidents.

Pursuing its case for an international maritime convention the ITF said that uniform standards and practices were needed to safeguard international shipping against acts of unlawful interference such as hijackings or piracy, another significant problem of recent years. The new standard, the ITF said, should make provisions for adequate security procedures to be followed by shipowners, ship masters, other officers and crew, and port and flag state governments, and for effective machinery to bring the perpetrators of criminal acts against merchant ships to justice. The ITF Secretariat, in consultation with affiliates, will shortly be submitting specific proposals for consideration by the appropriate IMO body.

The ITF statement concluded with a call for the hijackers of the ACHILLE LAURO to be brought to trial in Italy, the flag state of the vessel, and for penalties similar to those provided in international law for acts of terrorism in civil aviation to be applied in this case.

TRANSPORT UNIONS RESPOND TO ITF CALL FOR ACTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

In response to the ITF call to its affiliates urging action against South Africa as a means of hastening changes in its abhorrent apartheid policy, transport unions around the world have been deciding on individual and joint action as part of the international trade union campaign of harassment of the Republic's economic interests initiated by the ICFTU.

In Scandinavia, the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation, presided over by ITF Executive Board member Henrik Aasarød of Norway, called on the governments of the Nordic countries to institute a total boycott of South Africa with the minimum of delay and urged that they develop a joint programme for dismantling all connections with South Africa. The Swedish Transport Workers' Union began a one-month boycott of all land, sea and air links with South Africa on 23 October, while transport and other unions organised under the umbrella of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) recently participated in a three-week long campaign against South Africa. In Norway, the Transport Workers' Union has begun a boycott of South African products at least until the end of the month and with the possibility of an extension to 1 February and the Seamen's Union has called on the Department of Trade to establish a register of ships trading with South Africa and to require owners to report full details of all cargoes carried and voyages made to South Africa. The union has also urged the government to support the building of ports and other infrastructure projects in the front line states that would serve to reduce their economic dependence on the Republic and for an international shipping boycott of South Africa organised through the

United Nations. In Finland, the Automobile and Transport Workers' Union has placed an indefinite ban on the handling of all South African imports and exports, including any moved by road to and from adjacent countries, with effect from 20 October and the Seamen's Union is planning similar action from 1 November, while in Denmark, the Transport and General Workers' Union (SiD) has called for national legislation outlawing the sale or transport of oil to South Africa from Denmark as well as for a ban on the transport of all goods to and from South Africa in Danish-owned vessels, including those flying flags of convenience.

A solidarity meeting was held on 21 September in Austria at which ITF President Fritz Prechtel stressed the importance of the trade union role in ending apartheid in South Africa, while in France the civil aviation section of the FO Public Service and Transport Workers' Federation reported its willingness to join other aviation unions in action against South African aircraft. In Italy, action by the three trade union centres has so far focused on a twenty-four hour suspension of all air and sea links with South Africa and letters of support by transport workers' unions for ITF affiliates in the Republic.

In North America, in addition to the continuing union-organised demonstrations outside South African embassies and legations, the Canadian International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) recently refused to unload a cargo of South African steel from the Nedlloyd Kingston in the port of Vancouver.

African unions have adopted numerous resolutions and statements expressing strong support for the independent unions in the Republic. In Asia, many unions have adopted similar expressions of solidarity and have joined in official protests to South African diplomatic representatives in their countries. In Australia, under the aegis of the Australian Congress of Trade Unions, unions have just staged a week-long series of actions, including bans on South African Airways flights and on shipping, postal and telephone communications.

Union conferences and meetings in many other countries have adopted strong statements of condemnation of the state of emergency and many have organised financial support for the independent unions in South Africa. Reports of additional union action against the Republic continue to arrive at ITF headquarters on a regular basis.

Inland Transport

BELGIUM: ON-THE-SPOT FINES INTRODUCED FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES

Under recent amendments to the traffic regulations in Belgium, police now have the power to demand on-the-spot fines (payable in a number of currencies) for traffic offences committed by drivers who are neither domiciled nor resident in the country. The fines are: 750 B frs in the case of 'ordinary' and 4,000 B frs in that of any of 14 'serious' offences. Drivers refusing to pay are obliged to lodge a deposit of either 1,500 or 6,000 B frs according to the seriousness of the offence to cover the eventual costs of the fine plus legal expenses arising from court proceedings to establish the guilt or innocence of the driver. Refusal to pay the deposit means that the driver's vehicle will be impounded and the driver given 96 hours in which to pay the deposit (plus storage charges) or face the confiscation of his vehicle. In the event of fines remaining unpaid 40 days after a driver is found guilty by the court the vehicle is sold and the balance of the sale price less deduction of fines, costs, charges etc paid over. All European road transport affiliates were informed of these changes in an ITF Circular.

SWITZERLAND: FEDERAL RAILWAYS IN BID TO ATTRACT MORE PASSENGERS

The Board of the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) has recently approved additional investment totalling 870 million Swiss francs to be used for modernising passenger facilities at stations and for the acquisition of more comfortable passenger coaches in a bid to encourage more people to switch from private transport to the railways. Already as part of the 'Rail 2000' initiative unveiled in the spring 6 billion S frs in new money has been set aside for a far-reaching programme of major improvements in passenger services and it is hoped that a further step will be taken this autumn with the introduction of a bargain-price monthly season ticket for rail users - one of the measures which the ITF-affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) believes to be most likely to attract new passengers.

Civil Aviation

INTERNATIONAL: ITF AND IFALPA CONDEMN BLOCKING OF 747 EMERGENCY EXITS

A statement issued jointly by the ITF and the pilots' international IFALPA on 10 October drew attention to the potential risks to airline passengers and crews following the decision of certain airlines to reduce the number of emergency exits on their B 747 aircraft. The statement welcomed the decision of Air France, in response to union protests, to cancel the modification of its 747 fleet and the undertaking given by SAS that it would not block the doors of its own B 747s or charter any modified aircraft from fellow KSSU partner KLM.

The statement pointed out that the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which had originally given permission for the sealing of the doors, has since also altered its stance and was now advising airlines against blocking them. The existing 90-second evacuation standard will be reviewed following an FAA technical conference last month. The ITF and IFALPA were both represented at this Conference and the statement expressed the hope that the measures that were decided upon would lead to rapid and mandatory improvements in the full range of aircraft safety standards.

In their statement, both organisations said they found it disturbing that while this review was taking place 747s should for purely commercial reasons be flying with less than the full number of emergency doors, the more so as the deleted doors were the most suitable for over-water evacuation. The elimination of the doors would also result in some passengers having to cover twice the distance to reach an exit in the event of an emergency evacuation, the statement added.

The ITF and IFALPA concluded their statement by warning passengers of the additional risks they face by choosing to fly in 747s with only eight doors and urging British Airways, KLM, Thai International and Cathay Pacific not to modify any aircraft added to their fleet and to convert modified aircraft back to ten-door operation.

INTERNATIONAL: SPOTLIGHT ON RAMP SAFETY

Airports and airlines worldwide are joining forces this November in a one-month campaign aimed at improving ramp safety by making ramp workers more aware of the dangers of injury and accident and encouraging compliance with safety signs and ramp markings. The forthcoming campaign, which is being conducted by the Airport

Associations Coordinating Council (AACC) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in cooperation with other international and local organisations, forms part of a series of actions and subsequent initiatives will focus attention on specific aspects of ramp operation such as operating lifting and aircraft loading equipment, prevention of foreign object damage to aircraft, driving techniques and accident reporting.

CANADA: PERMANENT JOB SECURITY WON AT CP AIR

Full-time employees of CP Air organised in the Canadian airline division of the ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks (BRAC) are guaranteed job security for life as part of an agreement concluded earlier this year. A list of names of employees in permanent positions at 7 July 1985 has been appended to the current contract and will be attached to all subsequent agreements as an appendix, ensuring that these employees will have jobs as long as CP Air flies. Having secured these vital safeguards for permanent staff members, BRAC has agreed to CP Air employing up to thirty per cent part-timers who will benefit for the first time from the introduction of a guaranteed minimum week, improved seniority rights and inclusion in the airline's pension scheme.

GREAT BRITAIN: BRITISH AIRWAYS URGED TO STOP OFFERING HOLIDAYS IN SUN CITY

The ITF was surprised and dismayed to find that at least one of the world's major airlines has failed to learn from the adverse publicity that the Scandinavian airline SAS received last autumn when it was revealed that it had been featuring Sun City, Bophuthatswana in its list of holiday destinations. For only this month the ITF was sent a set of BA brochures advertising various 'incentive destinations' in Africa, included among which was Sun City. In a protest letter to BA Chairman Lord King, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis reminded him of the union response in Scandinavia to the SAS' advertising of Sun City as a tourist attraction that had culminated in a prompt decision to withdraw Sun City as a holiday resort. The chairman was further reminded of the rigorous suppression of human and trade union rights in Bophuthatswana, one of the puppet 'homelands' created by South Africa as a cornerstone of apartheid. In view of the growing social tensions under the present emergency the chairman was informed that the ITF believed its advertising of South Africa at this time to be at the least insensitive and likely to be widely interpreted as a rebuff to all who were seeking to put an end to a regime which systematically discriminated against groups of its citizens on the basis of colour. As a state-owned airline, BA should bear in mind that no single government had recognised any of the homelands as being genuinely independent and that by endorsing Sun City it was giving encouragement and support to the policies of a government that was abhorrent to all civilised nations. Unions representing British Airways employees have also made vigorous protests along the same lines to the airline and it is hoped that this joint action by the ITF and its member unions will have the same result as the earlier three nation campaign against SAS - namely the withdrawal of the advertising of Sun City as a holiday destination.

JAPAN: CABIN ATTENDANTS' UNION CALLS FOR REVIEW OF JAL'S SAFETY RECORD

In the wake of the Japan Air Lines Boeing disaster, which killed 520 passengers and crew, the ITF-affiliated JAL Cabin Attendants' Union is demanding a review of the company's accident record and of the government's transport policy as well as a fair and scientific investigation into the crash.

There have been five other major accidents since 1972 involving JAL aircraft, each with many deaths. The union points out that the company's anti-union labour policy has created a division among its workforce and claims that excessive economies have endangered safety. Not only are all JAL pilots regarded as management personnel and therefore banned from joining a trade union, but the company has also regularly interfered in trade union affairs.

UNITED STATES: CONTINENTAL CHARGED WITH SERIOUS IRREGULARITIES IN PILOT TRAINING

The ITF-affiliated US Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) has filed a complaint with the Houston district court alleging serious irregularities in Continental Airlines' training and certification of pilots who were hired or upgraded in an attempt to break ALPA's strike against the union-busting airline. Inadequately trained and fraudulently certificated 'check airmen' were also used by Continental to certify the competency of these pilots, according to ALPA's deposition, which also charges Continental with making oral and written misrepresentations to the Federal Aviation Administration and other federal investigating authorities in order to conceal their actions.

Meanwhile, ALPA members have voted to pay additional contributions to finance the two-year-old strike against Continental and have agreed to a substantial increase in regular dues to set up a special union 'war chest' which will be used to fight other anti-labour actions by US airlines.

UNITED STATES: CONTINENTAL PARENT COMPANY FAILS IN BIDS FOR TWA AND FRONTIER

In late September 1985 Wall Street financier Carl Icahn finally won control of Trans World Airlines (TWA), thwarting a rival bid from Frank Lorenzo, chairman of the Texas Air Corporation. Texas Air is the parent company of Continental Airlines which filed for bankruptcy in the autumn of 1983 and reorganised as a low-cost carrier against fierce union opposition. The Icahn bid had the backing of two TWA unions, the pilots and the machinists, which have agreed to contract concessions in return for shares in the company and participation in a profit-sharing scheme. The formal merger was only approved within the last month but already Icahn has indicated that 1,000 management and non-union jobs are to go and that the pay of the remaining non-unionised employees will be cut. In early October it was also announced that another takeover bid by Texas Air, this time for US commuter company Frontier, had been beaten off with the assistance of the airline's unions, in favour of a bid by the People Express airline.

Seafarers

CANADA: SIU SIGNS UP FIRST RIG WORKERS

The first steps towards trade union organisation of workers in Canada's offshore industry have been taken with the Seafarers' Industrial Union of Canada's winning of bargaining rights for 60 workers on Petrocanada's SEDCO 710 drilling rig off St John's, Newfoundland, the first time that any Canadian union has managed to sign up an entire rig crew. Workers on other rigs in the area have been seeking SIU membership and more union recognition deals are expected shortly.

FRANCE: UNIONS ACT TO HALT FLAGGING OUT OF MERCHANT SHIPS

Officers and ratings on ships owned by the Worms Group have been staging a series of 72-hour strikes in protest at the sale of eight of the Group's vessels to foreign subsidiaries in order to transfer them to flags of convenience. The unions, which have indicated their willingness to discuss ways of reducing operating costs in order to safeguard the jobs of French seafarers, have since widened their protest action to include the entire national merchant fleet and crews are rallying to the maritime unions' call for work stoppages which it is hoped will persuade other French owners tempted to follow the Worms lead to retain their ships under the French flag. Urgent talks are being sought with the government in a bid to stem the decline in the French fleet which fell by 42 ships to a total of 314 in 1984 and could fall still further this year unless urgent action is taken.

GREAT BRITAIN: DUTCH SEAFARERS BACK CREWS OF "NORBRIT" SHIPS

Following a request in October from the ITF's two British affiliates NUMAST and the NUS, the ITF-affiliated seafarers' union in the Netherlands (FWZ) refused to man three ships due to be transferred from the British to the Dutch flag until agreement had been reached on compensation for the 57 British seafarers affected by the transfer. The three ships involved, the Norbrit Hope, the Norbrit Faith and the Selbydyke, are owned by North British Shipping, part of the Hull-based North British Maritime Group, and are due to be sold to a Dutch subsidiary of Norbrit. The pressure exerted by the Dutch seafarers was a major factor in bringing the company to the negotiating table where a satisfactory settlement was rapidly concluded.

GREAT BRITAIN: UNIONS MAKE PROGRESS IN OFFSHORE INDUSTRY

In a significant extension of trade union rights in the North Sea offshore oil industry, Shell Expro (the company which handles exploration and production for both Shell and Esso) has granted limited recognition to the ITF-affiliated Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) on five of its offshore platforms after a ballot of workers showed a clear majority in favour of the union. ASTMS now has representation rights for technicians on these rigs in respect of health and safety and disputes and grievance issues and is expected to achieve full negotiating rights soon.

Last month, the National Union of Seamen (also ITF-affiliated) launched a vigorous recruiting campaign aimed at doubling its current membership of about five thousand offshore workers. An initial success was chalked up in October with the decision of catering workers on a British Gas accommodation rig in Morecambe Bay in favour of NUS membership.

Another group recently organised by the NUS, North Sea divers, have just been awarded pay increases averaging 8.25% in the first renewal of their collective agreement. The ten diving companies with which the NUS negotiates have also agreed to the introduction of life insurance cover for divers and have undertaken to give employment priority to British nationals.

Recruitment efforts are also being stepped up by another ITF affiliate, the Transport and General Workers' Union from its Aberdeen base, with a notable recent success among roustabouts on Occidental Oil's Piper and Claymore field for whom the union now hopes to negotiate substantial improvements in conditions.

NETHERLANDS: SEAFARERS FIGHT PLANNED CUTS IN MANNING LEVELS

Dutch seafarers are launching a union campaign this autumn aimed at persuading the government not to go ahead with planned legislation reducing manning levels and standards of certification. According to their union, the ITF-affiliated Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ), as many as 2,500 jobs - a quarter of those in the industry - will be at risk if changes to existing regulations advocated by a working party of government officials and shipowners are implemented. The union was originally represented on the working party but withdrew in protest at the proposals. Although full details of the proposed amendments have not been made public they are understood to set new crewing levels for cargo vessels between 4,000 and 10,000 grt so as to attract more ships of this size to the Dutch flag and to include a revision of manning standards on larger ships to bring them into line with some European and Far Eastern competitors which have traditionally employed far smaller crews. Union sources also indicate that cooks' jobs on vessels under 4,000 grt would disappear completely if the changes are implemented.

Dockers

PACIFIC: DOCKERS' UNIONS IN PACIFIC BASIN TO WORK MORE CLOSELY TOGETHER

Representatives of a number of major unions* organising dock workers in the Pacific Basin met in Sydney at the initiative of the Waterside Workers' Federation during the WWF's recent all ports conference to discuss the problems posed by the growing threat to effective trade unionism in the area. All four unions agreed that they should explore the possibilities of coordinated action aimed at countering the anti-union bias and pledged to offer each other all possible support and assistance. A further meeting is planned for next year in Japan.

* the All-Japan Dockworkers' Union, the US International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation were represented at these discussions with the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia and issued a joint communiqué on their conclusion.

General

INTERNATIONAL: NEW MINEWORKERS' GROUPING ATTEMPTS TO SPLIT UNION MOVEMENT

A new organisation claiming to represent mineworkers internationally held its founding conference in Paris on 21-22 September. Called the 'International Mineworkers' Organisation' the body is constituted almost entirely by the members of the former Communist controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) affiliated Trade Union International of Mineworkers, plus the British National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). The General Secretary of the 'new' organisation which will be based in Paris is the General Secretary of the former Mineworkers TUI which dissolved itself one day earlier and the President is the NUM's Arthur Scargill. The establishment of this new body has been strongly condemned by the International Trade Secretariat for the Mining Industry, the MIF, and by the ICFTU. In a circular to all affiliates and ITS's, the ICFTU points out that this move is a further attempt to undermine the international free trade union

movement. Attempts to persuade major democratic mineworkers' organisations with no international affiliation to join the new body have, according to the ICFTU, been completely unsuccessful. As well as drawing attention to the WFTU's domination of the 'IMO', the ICFTU circular also points out that it claims jurisdiction not only for mineworkers but also throughout the oil and energy sector, a move which could bring it into conflict both with the International Chemical Workers' Federation (ICEF) and (as far as offshore oil workers are concerned) with the ITF.

INTERNATIONAL: ICFTU CONDEMNS SUSPENSION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN NICARAGUA

The ICFTU, in a statement issued on 16 October, strongly condemned the suspension by the Nicaraguan government of fundamental trade union freedoms, including the right to strike, protest and hold meetings. The union statement recalled that similar measures had been taken by the Nicaraguan authorities in the past and that the ICFTU had had to intervene on several occasions to demand full respect for freedom of association in the country. The statement went on to regret that leaders of the ICFTU affiliate in Nicaragua (CUS) had been arrested in recent months and that its organisational activities were being severely impeded and mentioned in this connection the occupation of the union's premises in Managua by the police in 1984. The ICFTU has already drawn this latest violation of trade union rights by the Nicaraguan government to the attention of all governments of the countries in the CONTADORA group and has also called on its affiliates to lodge protests with the Nicaraguan authorities and to approach their respective governments requesting that they should intervene with the government of Nicaragua urging the immediate lifting of the measures restricting the exercise of fundamental trade union rights, including that of freedom of association.

OECD EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK PREDICTS SLOWER GROWTH, HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT

The annual 'Employment Outlook' published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris in September makes depressing reading. With a slowdown in economic growth in most industrialised countries noted in 1985, the report predicts a similar slowdown in employment growth. While the number of people employed will grow slightly in Europe and somewhat more in North America and Japan, "the rise will not be enough to match the continued growth in the labour force" the OECD points out. OECD unemployment may therefore, it suggests, resume its upward drift reaching 31½ million persons in the second half of 1986, and an unemployment rate of 8½ per cent, and European unemployment could reach a new post war high of over 11 per cent in the second half of 1986.

The unemployment crisis will continue to affect the young and the long-term unemployed particularly badly. While youth unemployment may stabilise in the USA, in Europe it is set to rise still further to around 23 per cent. Likewise there will be no real improvement in the numbers of long-term unemployed except perhaps in the USA and some Scandinavian countries. "Many of the people who entered unemployment during the last recession have remained trapped in unemployment ever since" the report stresses.

The title of the report 'Employment Growth, Flexibility and Job Security: A Challenge for All' reveals the underlying belief of the OECD that "flexibility", particularly in the labour market, is more important in solving the unemployment crisis than the expansion of demand and the adoption of positive labour market policies as consistently called for by the international trade union movement. This emphasis has been strongly criticised by TUAC (the Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD) which, in its commentary on the report, argues that the improvement of wages and living and working conditions is no longer being treated

as an objective of economic policy but merely as an impediment to job creation. The analysis contained in the OECD report, however, casts severe doubts on many of the recent 'conventional wisdoms' of conservative economic policy. While still arguing that real labour costs have been a factor in causing unemployment, the Outlook admits that since 1982 real labour costs in Europe have grown at an average rate of just under 1 per cent, or very close to the growth rate in the US which has had a better job creation record. In some European countries, indeed, real labour costs have been stable or even declined. The explanation for the poor employment performance of European countries since the second oil price shock in 1979-80 cannot therefore simply be attributed to labour cost developments. In a phrase sure to irritate a number of Western governments, the OECD concludes that "the non accommodating stance adopted by governments to fight inflation has undoubtedly been a factor (in the worsening unemployment situation)".

The report also attacks some other established theories about job creation. The evidence that small firms are important sources of job creation is very doubtful it points out, recommending that government policies should be directed more towards the establishment of new firms of any size rather than the support of existing small ones. It also rejects the argument that relative wage differences between growing and declining sectors are to blame for labour 'inflexibility', although it does argue that lower wages for young people can help boost youth employment. One of the most chilling figures quoted in the report concerns the 'target groups' for special employment measures. These measures, designed to improve the situation of the young and the long-term unemployed, are increasingly popular with governments as alternatives to economic measures designed to create new jobs. In fact, as the report makes clear, in many European countries and in Australia, young people and adults out of work for more than a year comprise between 60 and 80 per cent of total unemployment! Efforts to aid these groups can, therefore, only redistribute unemployment elsewhere.

The third area which the Outlook discusses is the question of employment security. Part of the recent wave of attacks on trade unions in Europe has focused on job security measures. These are, it is argued, creating rigidities in labour markets because employers need to be sure they can fire people easily before hiring them. The OECD report states that the evidence for whether improving the ability to hire or fire aids labour flexibility is 'uncertain'. In the long run, it concludes, such policies appear to have little impact on employment levels. The conclusion of the report is that a significant reduction in unemployment requires greater effort directed at finding the right mix of economic, labour market, social and educational policies and, in a phrase which will be strongly echoed by the international trade union movement, it suggests that "a more comprehensive and determined approach by governments is needed".

In addition to its general analysis of the current labour market situation, the 'Outlook' contains detailed information on short and medium-term developments, the labour market implications of international migration, employment in small and large firms, relative wages and industrial performance, and recurrent unemployment as well as a statistical annex. Published in English and French, it is available from OECD sales agents or to OECD Publications Office, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16.

Union News

NORWAY: ENGINEERS' CONFERENCE OPPOSES FLAGGING OUT OF NORWEGIAN SHIPS

The 29th Ordinary Congress of the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Engineers' Union held from 30 September to 2 October in Røros expressed serious concern at the growing tendency of Norwegian shipowners to flag out existing vessels and place new ones under convenience registries. The meeting urged the government to ensure the retention of a viable shipping trade under the Norwegian flag and demanded that a sizeable number of Norwegian nationals should still be employed even where Norwegian-owned ships were flagged out. The three-day conference also called on the government to fulfil its obligation to finance welfare service for seafarers in Norwegian ports which are currently supported mainly by shipowners and seafarers. In view of the shortcoming in the current training of ships' engineers the Congress also urged that a committee be set up to review training practices in both the merchant navy and the fishing industry, and called for action to bring the working hours of seafarers into line with those of workers ashore.

Malvin Horn retired at the Congress after twelve years as union president and chief engineer Torgeir Berget was elected as his successor. The ITF was represented at the Conference by Assistant General Secretary Ake Selander.

NEWS IN BRIEF

DENMARK: PERMANENT WAR RISK SCHEME (See page 72 of last issue)

The Danish Mates' Association has decided to provide additional disability cover of $\frac{1}{2}$ million kroner to its members in the overseas trade under the permanent war risk insurance agreement signed in August with the Danish Shipowners' Association. Members will now be entitled to up to 1.3 million kroner in the event of total disability, with appropriately revised figures for partial disability.

Members of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) have staged demonstrations in recent weeks in protest at plans to dispense with the lookout at night on German vessels*.

The All-Japan Seamen's Union is concerned that the receiver appointed to the Sanko Steamship Group** after its financial collapse has refused to pay wages and summer bonuses which were agreed before the bankruptcy and that he now plans to dismiss large numbers of Japanese seamen serving with Sanko. The union has been demanding that the government and major banks should establish a reconstruction plan for the company which would safeguard the jobs of its members.

* see also June/July and September issues of ITF Newsletter

** see also last issue of Newsletter

Obituaries

Sidi Khayam, General Secretary from 1978 to 1984 of the Nigeria Union of Seamen and River Transport Workers, has died after a protracted illness. Brother Khayam was also formerly General Secretary of the Amalgamated Dockworkers' and General Workers' Union.

Personalia

We extend warmest congratulations to ITF President Fritz Prechtl who celebrates twenty years as President of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union this month.

John Carroll, General President of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and ITGWU General Secretary Chris Kirwan have been elected Vice-President and Treasurer respectively of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Jim Levia, National Vice-President of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, retired at the union's convention in Toronto last month. Levia has served for some years on the committee of the ITF Fishermen's Section and is a former member of the Inland Navigation Section Committee. As a member of the Canadian national delegation, he also made a valuable contribution to the work of the ILO Inland Transport Committee at its recent session.

Forthcoming Meetings

Road Transport Workers' Section Conference - Rome 6-8 November 1985
African Railwaymen's Conference - Abidjan (Ivory Coast) . 25-29 November 1985
Asia/Pacific Regional Committee - Bali 4-7 December 1985
Seafarers' Section Maritime Policy Committee - Copenhagen .. 7-8 January 1986
Seafarers' Section Conference - Venice 24-26 March 1986