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NEWS

EUROPEAN MERCHANT SHIPPING: TOWARDS A COMMON MARITIME TRANSPORT POLICY

A press conference was held in London on 9 September to introduce a new ITF publication 'European Merchant Shipping: Towards a Common Maritime Transport Policy'.

The report contains the ITF's carefully researched alternatives to the maritime policy proposals drawn up earlier this year by the European Commission. These proposals - with their emphasis on free trade and the need to reduce manning costs - in the ITF's view read more like an epitaph to a once thriving industry than a prescription for recovery. The decline in the merchant fleets of the nine EEC maritime nations and their shrinking share of world tonnage has now reached crisis proportions, the report points out. If European shipping is to have any future, it is vital that the correct decisions are taken both by the Community as a whole and by individual member states. For although merchant shipping is of key importance to the Community's economy, investment in shipping has declined significantly in recent years, raising very real fears for the long-term viability of the few ships that are likely to remain under Community flag.

The ITF believes that the Community document has completely failed to tackle the many and complex problems the industry faces. The Commission clearly believes that if European shipping cannot compete with low-cost fleets elsewhere, the EC countries should abandon their fleet altogether so that the Community's user industries can obtain shipping services at the lowest possible cost.

From the tone of the Community document it is clear that the Commission believes that the shipping industry's main problem is wage costs. They seem unaware that changes in crewing levels, work practices, technology and exchange rates mean that crew costs per unit have fallen considerably for most Community flag vessels. Indeed, for some ships in the Community crew costs represent as little as five per cent of total costs. The Commission concentrates its entire attention on this problem without appreciating that quite small reductions in fuel costs or interest rates could quickly eliminate the comparative advantages currently enjoyed by flag of convenience ships over Community vessels. Simple changes in the tax treatment of seafarers on Community vessels would equally help to reduce total labour costs without any effect on wage levels.

In focusing attention on these areas the ITF document argues that the Commission is ignoring important developments that will revolutionise the merchant shipping industry in the next few years. It also examines the question of safety where European Community ships have a record far better than the f-o-c and Far Eastern flags to which Community trade is being lost. It is totally unacceptable, it concludes, that the lives and safety of European seafarers should be put at risk in the interests of marginally lower freight costs to Community industry.

The ITF report concludes with a call for practical intervention measures that would secure a firm future for the fleets of all nine EEC maritime countries, and lists ten key policy proposals on which we believe the Commission should base its regulatory work:-

- 1 Planning the management of cargo movements in a way which benefits Europe's merchant shipping.
- 2 Examining the strategic relationship between shipping, shipbuilding and other industries.

- 3 Introducing a European scrap and build policy to provide new ships of the highest standards built in European shipyards.
- 4 Improving the financing arrangements so as to compete with the fiscal advantages offered by non-Community shipyards and to non-Community owners.
- 5 Offsetting the fiscal advantages of FOC countries.
- 6 Imposing strict social regulations on minimum rest, leave and time off for European seafarers on a similar basis to those already in existence for drivers.
- 7 Coordinating Community research on crewing and new technologies.
- 8 Harmonising living and working conditions on board ship.
- 9 Improving the effectiveness of port state control.
- 10 Introducing the concept of coastal state control.

Copies of the report have been widely distributed to members of the Economic and Social Committee study group which is examining the Commission's proposals as well as to the relevant members of the European parliament, seafarers' trade unions and other interested organisations throughout the Community.

Copies of the report, which was compiled for the ITF by the research officers of the UK unions the National Union of Seamen (NUS) and the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers (NUMAST), are available on request from the ITF.

ITF: RAIL SECTION DEMANDS INVESTMENT IN MODERN RAILWAY NETWORK

The Railwaymen's Section Conference of the ITF which took place in Nuremberg, FRG from 17 to 19 September concluded with calls for governments and public authorities to devote a much greater proportion of transport expenditure to the building of a modern railway network. The Conference, which brought together 120 delegates from railway unions in 25 countries from Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, concentrated particular attention on the increasing attacks being launched by conservative governments on railway systems in favour of the uncontrolled development of road transport. Not only was this policy producing savage cuts in railwaymen's jobs, the conference was told, but it was destroying passenger and freight services, increasing pollution and congestion particularly in the cities, and increasing the hazards to road users as a result of the increasing carriage of dangerous goods. The Conference noted the success of the ITF "Euro Train" which toured Europe in April this year and agreed that a similar exercise might be mounted again if necessary as part of the ITF's campaign to promote the railways. Other subjects discussed during the conference included the use of new technologies (where a report will be prepared in time for the next ITF Congress) and the advantages of using cost-benefit analysis rather than financial methods as a means of arriving at decisions to invest in transport infrastructure.

The conference unanimously approved the decision of the ITF Executive Board that Piet Potums (CGSP, Belgium) should act as Section Chairman until the next ITF Congress in 1986 following the appointment of the former chairman, Jeannot Schneider (CFL, Luxembourg) as head of his country's Railway Administration.

Colleague Schneider attended the Conference as a guest and delivered a fraternal address to the delegates. Delegates at the opening session were also addressed by the Mayor of Nuremberg and Ernst Haar, President of the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) which, together with the ÖTV, was host to the Conference.

Resolutions adopted by the Conference included one on 'strengthening the position of the railways' which demanded higher priority for rail transport as well as the elimination of all rules which place rail at a disadvantage vis a vis roads; one calling on governments to provide railway administrations with adequate financial resources to ensure essential investment; and one opposing all efforts at privatising railway systems. On this question the Conference was addressed by representatives of Kokuro (the Japanese Railway Union) which reported on the recent plans adopted by the Japanese government to privatise Japan National Railways (JNR) and split it into six regional groupings. Delegates declared their full solidarity with the Japanese unions and with all other ITF affiliates fighting privatisation. Discussion also took place on the question of unemployment which was recognised as a major social and economic evil and which should be fought both by economic expansion and by reductions in working time, and on railway safety where the conference emphasised the dangers which increasing financial pressures were putting on safety standards. During the course of the 3 day meeting delegates were also addressed by the Regional Director of the German Federal Railways (DB) about their 150th Anniversary, and took part in an excursion by steam-hauled train to the historic town of Bayreuth.

AIR SAFETY: ITF PINPOINTS SAFETY LESSONS FROM MANCHESTER AIRPORT TRAGEDY

In a statement issued to the press following the fire tragedy at Manchester International Airport in August, the ITF highlighted the need for an urgent review of internationally agreed evacuation procedures and reiterated its demand for the introduction of an international cabin crew licence to ensure the same high safety standards in all passenger aircraft. Pointing out that but for the skill exercised by British Airtours highly-trained cabin crew during the emergency evacuation the death toll (55 persons died, among them two stewardesses) would have been far higher, the ITF statement drew attention to the fact that many of the exits of the Boeing 737 were unuseable and that the high seating density on charter aircraft made evacuation even more difficult. This incident clearly showed the folly of blocking off exits on other aircraft types such as the much larger Boeing 747 to allow room to put in more passenger seats. The statement concluded by noting the trend in some parts of the world towards replacing striking cabin attendants with managers, clerical staff and even students in an attempt to keep aircraft flying during industrial action. The Manchester disaster showed, it stressed, the dangers involved in the use of unqualified cabin staff who would be unlikely to be able to cope with the speed and skill necessary to minimize casualties.

The issue of 747 seats has been raised by the ITF on a number of occasions both with ICAO and the American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In a letter to the ITF on August 23, FAA Administrator Donald Engen indicated that, although the approval given to Boeing to remove the over-wing exits was compatible with existing regulations, he believed that it was time "for a rigorous reassessment" of the regulations themselves.

The various issues raised by this and other recent accidents were discussed at a Technical Review Conference called by the FAA in Seattle early in September. The Vice-Chairman of the ITF's Cabin Crew Technical Committee Larry LeBlanc (CALFAA, Canada) represented the ITF at this meeting and presented a full report to the ITF Civil Aviation Section Conference in Stockholm.

SOUTH AFRICA: ICFTU STEPS UP PRESSURE

In the face of the continuing state of emergency in South Africa and further detentions of trade unionists, the ICFTU convened a high-level emergency meeting in Brussels on 22 August to discuss the international trade union response. General Secretary Harold Lewis represented the ITF.

The meeting agreed on concerted action to persuade industrialised country governments to impose economic sanctions against South Africa until the state of emergency is withdrawn, all political and trade union prisoners are released, and a dialogue is opened between the government and the genuine representatives of the black population. The US and British governments were specifically urged to reconsider their veto which had prevented the adoption by the United Nations of full economic sanctions against South Africa.

The ICFTU meeting repeated its demand for a UN Conference of Oil Transporting and Oil Producing Countries to help with the enforcement of the UN oil and arms embargoes. Governments were also urged to establish an international register on which shipowners would be obliged to record full details of all voyages and cargoes carried to South Africa, and to make it an offence punishable by substantial and deterrent penalties for ships of their flags to carry oil to, or destined for, South Africa.

Turning to trade union action, the meeting agreed that the ICFTU and the ITFs should, it urged, promote industrial action against South Africa that would harass the government into making acceptable political concessions. Consumer boycotts of South African goods in solidarity with boycotts already being carried out in the Republic by black workers with the backing of the independent black trade unions were also called for, together with continuing measures against multinationals which exploit the apartheid system in their operations within South Africa.

The meeting strongly reaffirmed the ICFTU's full support for the independent black trade union movement in South Africa and its efforts to defend black working people and to give them an effective voice in decisions affecting their interests. It was agreed to launch an international postcard campaign to show solidarity with detained trade unionists and to declare full support for the National Union of Mineworkers in its dispute with the Chamber of Mines.

The ITF General Secretary contacted all affiliates immediately after the meeting calling on them to give priority to the harassment of the South African regime and action by member unions of the ITF against South African aircraft and shipping is already being planned in a number of countries in response to this call.

The ITF also appealed to all affiliates, in response to a request from the Miners' International Federation (MIF), to halt the movement of South African coal during the miners' dispute. The strike was suspended after two days in the face of widespread intimidation against strikers.

Civil Aviation

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS ITF VIEW ON DEREGULATION OF CIVIL AVIATION

In an important development affecting European civil aviation, the European Parliament, meeting in Strasbourg from 9-13 September, supported the view of European civil aviation unions organised in the ITF that deregulation of civil aviation in the European Community would not be in the interests either of workers or users of air transport.

This view was contained in a resolution drawn up by the Transport Committee of the Parliament in response to the EC Commission's "Second Memorandum" on civil aviation and to two proposed Regulations: one on bilateral agreements; and one on airlines and competition policy.

The ITF has consistently warned against repeating the experiences of deregulation in the United States in Europe. Yet this was the essential objective of the Commission's proposals. During the consideration by the Parliament's Transport Committee of this question, expert testimony was provided by Bernie Beyertt, ITF Civil Aviation Secretary and by William Scheri of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers from the USA.

The resolution adopted by the Parliament stressed that "it would not be possible or desirable to transfer to the European Community the deregulation of air transport as practised on the internal market of the United States since 1978". This was partly because the economic and political structures involved were completely different, but also because the US experience showed a number of damaging effects which would not be consistent with the objectives laid down in the Rome Treaty. Amongst these were:

- deregulation would bring disadvantages for peripheral, under-developed or crisis ridden industries as far as transport is concerned;
- large scale social conflicts with employees have arisen as a result of deregulation in the US and should be avoided in the EC;
- the member states of the EC have an interest in the survival of national airlines and would not permit them to be driven out of the market as has been the case in the US.

In its proposals to the Commission the Parliament concentrated instead on the positive role which the Community could play in the development of civil aviation in Europe. It called for gradual reforms of the present system while retaining its basic structure and focused on achieving specific aims such as: improving the range of services; ensuring that tariffs are attractive to customers while providing a fair return on investment; safeguarding reasonable operating conditions for efficient airlines; safeguarding social peace and the development of employment in the industry; improving air safety; reducing pollution; making more efficient use of energy; and ensuring the integration of air transport with the other transport modes.

The only way to achieve these objectives, the Parliament stressed, was by retaining the present system of bilateral agreements between national governments. The Commission should neither replace this system with a total free-for-all, nor set up a new European regulatory bureaucracy in its place, it concluded.

The responsible Commissioner, Stanley Clinton Davis, indicated during the Parliament debate, that the Commission was looking at its civil aviation policy and that steps would be taken to establish a joint committee for civil aviation in the near future, a step which the ITF has warmly welcomed.

Seafarers

MARITIME SAFETY: FISHERMEN'S AND RADIO OFFICERS' PROBLEMS DOMINATE IMO TRAINING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee on standards of training and watchkeeping of the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee held its 18th session in London from 9-13 September 1985. Representatives of ITF fishermen and seafarer affiliates in Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Greece, India, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United States were in attendance, either as members of their respective national delegations or as ITF/ICFTU observers.

On watchkeeping, the ITF representatives drew attention to the decision by the German government to give dispensation to some ships from the requirement to post a lookout at night - (Newsletter 6/7, 1985, page 45) in stark contravention to the provisions of the IMO Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW). The ITF was asked to raise the matter directly with the Maritime Safety Committee since the training sub-committee was not competent to deal with this issue.

The ITF radio officer representatives were particularly active on the agenda item "Operator functions in the future global maritime distress and safety system (FGMDSS)" on which they had submitted three papers to the IMO through the ITF secretariat. The sub-committee session produced draft minimum knowledge and practical requirements for the FGMDSS class 1 and 2 technical certificates as well as a draft recommendation on minimum knowledge requirements for the FGMDSS operator's general certificate. The ITF spokesman on radiocommunications (K Murphy) told the Sub-Committee that the FGMDSS operator should hold both operating and technical qualifications. On other "radio" issues the ITF believed that it would be wrong to consider amendments to existing international instruments until tests and verification of FGMDSS equipment had been completed and the equipment was available. For the time being, appropriate provisions for operating and technical qualifications should be retained both in the ITU Radio Regulations and the 1974 SOLAS Convention. The ITF argued further than any proposed amendments to Articles 55 and 56 of the ITU Radio Regulations should be accepted on the assumption that principal operators are capable of maintaining FGMDSS equipment at sea.

Turning to matters related to the fishing industry the Sub-Committee prepared draft resolutions for submission to the IMO Assembly on (a) basic principles to be observed in keeping an engineering watch on fishing vessels and (b) minimum requirements for certification of chief and second engineer officers on fishing vessels of 750 kw or more propulsion power.

On Mobile Offshore Drilling Units, the Sub-Committee recommended that its future work programme include an item entitled "Additional training and qualifications of officers and crews of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODU's) and other mobile offshore units" and set a target completion date of 1988.

The Sub-Committee also invited the MSC to authorize it to discuss the fatigue factor in manning and safety at its next session.

SAFETY AT SEA: DANGERS TO STOWAWAYS RAISED AT SEAFARERS' WELFARE COMMITTEE

The dangers to stowaways at sea highlighted by the recent conviction of a Greek ship's master for throwing 11 Kenyan and Somali stowaways overboard off the Somali coast, was raised by the ITF at the session in Geneva of the International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare (ICSW) on September 20. The Committee, which is made up of representatives of seafarers' and shipowners' organisations, government welfare services and voluntary agencies, takes place under the auspices of the ILO, and is concerned with coordinating seafarers' welfare projects. The ITF was represented at the meeting and at its Presidium the previous day by Assistant General Secretary, Ake Selander. On the request of the ITF, which has always taken a strong position on the need to protect the lives of stowaways, the Committee agreed to discuss the question of their safety at its next meeting, taking account of the fact that an International Convention dating from 1957 dealing with stowaways has not received sufficient ratifications to come into force.

During its session the ICSW also discussed restrictions placed on the movement of seafarers in various countries, especially problems experienced with the immigration authorities; and the question of free or cheap ship to shore communications for seafarers. On this latter question the shipowners were unwilling to accept the general principle of free ship to shore calls but were prepared to consider paying for calls relating to domestic emergencies. A paper submitted by the International Shipping Federation (ISF) on Seafarers' Welfare in the 1980s and 1990s was submitted for discussion but detailed consideration of it and other papers on the same subject was deferred until the next meeting, by which time a paper on seafarers' welfare for the ILO's Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference will have been published. The precise future status of the ICSW is still under discussion since the ILO believes that it is unable to integrate it fully into its own structure. The next meeting, scheduled for February 1986, will therefore include a review of the Committee's rules and future composition.

ITF: PANAMA URGED TO HOLD PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO UNEXPLAINED LOSS OF ARCTIC CAREER

The Panamanian-registered vessel Arctic Career, owned and operated by Prompt Ship of Hong Kong, was lost in late June in the South Atlantic during a voyage from Brazil to Indonesia with a cargo of iron ore. 15 Filipino and 12 Hong Kong seafarers lost their lives when the ship went down; despite an extensive sea search by South Africa no trace of the vessel has been found.

Earlier this month, the ITF contacted the Panamanian authorities urging that a full-scale public investigation be held into the casualty in order to establish the reasons for the loss of the vessel and to make recommendations that might avert a similar tragedy in the future. In its communication, the ITF pointed out that a decision to hold such an enquiry would do a great deal to improve the image of Panama as a responsible registry and would be welcomed by the world shipping community. Panama should follow the lead of other open registry states which regularly hold such investigations, thereby fulfilling their obligations under the industry's international regulatory machinery.

It would appear from the Panamanian response that there is little chance of such an investigation taking place. While admitting that it has a responsibility to conduct investigations into casualties affecting its vessels, Panama seems to think that it has already done enough by setting up a working group to look into

the disturbing incidence of vessel losses involving bulk and log and timber carriers and asking the IMO Maritime Safety Committee to further investigate this question.

The ITF sees these moves as a first step but would still like to see a full investigation being held into the specific circumstances of this particular tragedy, as would the ITF unions with members involved, the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild of Hong Kong and the Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines, who have also been in touch with the maritime administration to this effect. It is the very least that the dependants of those who so tragically lost their lives when the ship foundered have a right to expect.

ITF PROTESTS AT VIOLATION OF WATCHKEEPING CONVENTION

In response to a complaint by the ITF's German affiliate OeTV (see Newsletter 6/7, page 45), about the elimination of the night watch on certain German ships, Assistant General Secretary, Ake Selander on 28 August addressed a letter to C P Srivastava, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation in London charging the government of the Federal Republic with violating the terms of the 1978 IMO Convention on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW). Trials currently under way in Germany which dispense with the night look out are, Selander pointed out, a serious reduction in safety at sea. The ITF fully supports the complaint already submitted by the OTV to the German government, he concluded, and asks IMO to intervene also with the government to see that the terms of the convention are fully met.

DENMARK: PERMANENT WAR RISK INSURANCE SCHEME INTRODUCED

The ITF's six seafarer affiliates in Denmark last month signed a permanent war risk insurance agreement with the Danish shipowners' association for members in the overseas trade. Under the agreement, which has now entered into force, the spouse of a seafarer killed in an act of war, terrorism or piracy will receive compensation of 800,000 Dkr (US\$ 81,255), with an additional 400,000 Dkr for each dependant child under the age of 18. In the event of disability rendering the injured person unfit for further sea service compensation of up to 800,000 kr will be payable in the most serious cases. The agreement covers all seafarers sailing in vessels belonging to member companies of the Association, regardless of whether the company concerned has previously entered into a war risk bonus agreement for a particular area.

JAPAN: SEAMEN'S UNION SEEKS TO SAFEGUARD JOBS WITH SANKO LINE

Following the financial collapse last month of the Japanese Sanko Line - the world's largest shipping group - the All-Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) is attempting to safeguard as many of its members' jobs as possible by taking action to get the company back on its feet. At the request of our affiliate, the ITF has asked its seafarer affiliates to assist by paying visits to the crews of the seven Sanko vessels with JSU members on board that are currently under detention in Antwerp, Durban, Le Havre, Port Elizabeth, Singapore and Tampa. ITF seafarer affiliates and inspectors have also been requested to supply the Secretariat with full details of other Sanko-owned ships flying flags of convenience or other flags and with non-Japanese seafarers on board that have been arrested or had similar action taken against them in other ports.

The Sanko group operates a fleet of over two hundred and fifty tankers and bulk carriers, either owned or chartered in, a large proportion of which operate under foreign flags, chiefly those of Panama and Liberia. Nearly two and a half thousand JSU-organised seafarers work on vessels owned by Sanko and its subsidiary companies and associates. For years, the JSU has been pressing the Japanese government to adopt a sound shipping policy that would give these seafarers a secure future.

General

INTERNATIONAL: UNION ACTION ON HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES DEMANDED

In response to growing concern amongst trade unionists and the general public about the dangers posed by the production and transport of hazardous substances, a meeting took place in Geneva on 10-11 September to review current regulations and to consider what trade unions might do to improve safety measures. The meeting was organised by the ICFTU and brought together representatives of interested International Trade Secretariats as well as health and safety specialists from a number of national trade union centres. The meeting examined in detail the report of the ICFTU-ICEF mission to Bhopal (Newsletter August 1985) which had called for stricter safety standards on the construction, operation and siting of chemical plants. It also looked at the work going on in a number of international organisations to provide detailed information on hazardous substances which may be useful, amongst others, to trade unionists employed at plants manufacturing or using them. A special tripartite expert meeting on major hazards in industry is scheduled for later this year.

The ITF was represented at the meeting by Research Secretary David Cockroft. He stressed the need for close cooperation between the ILO, the various chemical safety programmes of the UN and the international organisations responsible for regulating the safe transport of goods such as the IMO, ICAO, UIC and UN Economic Commission for Europe. As a result of the meeting, discussions are now taking place between the ITF and the Chemical Workers' International (ICEF) with a view to producing joint material on the regulations which exist, how to use them, and the principles which should underly the safe handling of dangerous chemicals.

INTERNATIONAL: INDEFINITE BAN ON SEA DUMPING OF NUCLEAR WASTE AGREED

In a move warmly welcomed by the ITF and its affiliates the London Dumping Convention, meeting at IMO headquarters in September 1985, voted in favour of an indefinite ban on the dumping of nuclear waste at sea. While the resolution is not legally binding public opinion is now so strongly against sea dumping that it seems unlikely that even the nations that support dumping will violate it. The responsibility of proving that dumping nuclear waste at sea is safe now rests firmly with its supporters who will have to come up with very convincing evidence to enable the ban to be lifted.

POLAND: INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT RENEWS SUPPORT FOR SOLIDARNOSC

August 1985 saw the 5th anniversary of the signing of the Gdansk agreements which marked the setting up of the Polish 'Solidarnosc', the first free, independent and self-governing trade union organisation ever in a Communist country. To mark the occasion, the ICFTU, in collaboration with the World Confederation of Labour and the European Trade Union Confederation, held a press conference in Brussels to express continuing support for an organisation which despite the considerable obstacles put in its way by the government still remains the organisation most genuinely reflecting the aspirations of Polish workers.

In a press statement, the three trade union organisations pledged their backing for Solidarnosc and Polish workers fighting for respect of their rights and aspirations and in defence of their legitimate interests despite continued harassment and imprisonment of Solidarnosc activists. Strong condemnation was expressed of the actions of the government which has consistently but unsuccessfully attempted to silence Solidarity. It was to the great credit of ordinary Polish workers and their trade union leaders that Solidarnosc had successfully withstood this onslaught and was today as strong as ever, the three organisations concluded.

Union News

CANADA: GROUND STAFF UNION MERGES WITH AUTOMOBILE WORKERS

The ITF-affiliated Canadian Air Line Employees' Association with members in a wide range of ground staff categories has decided to merge with the United Automobile Workers, Canada, which recently split from the UAW in the United States. Former CALEA members now belong to the National Amalgamated Local Union of Airline Workers, UAW.

SWEDEN: SF CONGRESS ENDS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PROTEST MARCH

The ITF-affiliated Swedish State Employees' Union (SF), which includes railwaymen in its membership, held its 4th ordinary Congress from 13 to 19 August in Stockholm. President Fritz Prechtel and Railwaymen's Section Secretary Graham Brothers represented the ITF. The leaders of the German and Swiss railwaymen's unions were also present as fraternal observers. The congress undertook a broadly-based review of the SF's structure, defended its pay policy for state employees and put its weight behind a call for increased government investment in the public sector, including the railways. A fierce attack was also launched against those factions that were advocating the splitting up and sale to private interests of certain parts of the public sector.

On the final day of the Congress, all the delegates left the Congress hall to march to the South African legation, with union flags flying and bearing banners calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and an end to the trials of UDF supporters. Once arrived before the legation, union president Curt Persson read out a statement urging the introduction of equal rights for all South Africans that had been adopted unanimously by the Congress earlier in the week. This message was relayed by loudspeaker to the diplomatic representatives within the building. A petition with 500,000 signatures was also placed in the legation's letter box, wrapped in a black mourning band, marking the start of a series of actions by Swedish unionists against the Republic's apartheid regime in the coming weeks.

The strength of commitment shown by delegates attending the Congress to the wider international union movement was also reflected in the decision taken to establish the post of International Secretary.

Recent Pay Settlements

Austria - funicular railways, 4% (subject to a minimum of 500 schillings) backdated to 1 May; Danube navigation, officers 3.5% and ratings 5.5% from 1 July; Great Britain - London Transport busmen, 4.9%; Sweden - international road haulage drivers, 5% on pay and allowances from 15 May; United States - New York bus and subway workers, 18% over life of three-year contract.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Finnish seafarers on ships other than in European waters are to be allowed one free telephone call home a month, while recently reduced weekend telephone charge rates in Finland will enable seafarers generally to keep in regular touch with their families at reasonable cost. Seafarers' unions have long been pressing for cheaper 'phone calls for members when at sea and the ILO has repeatedly urged action to facilitate this.

British driver-only train dispute (see page 55 of last issue): following a narrow vote of union members against strike action, British Rail has reinstated those guards dismissed after taking industrial action, and talks on the introduction of driver-only operation on certain freight and passenger routes have now started with the two unions concerned.

The ITF has sent a message of congratulations to the Norwegian Seamen's Union on the occasion of its 75th anniversary being celebrated this month.

The US Supreme Court has ruled that Western Airlines acted illegally in compelling flight engineers to retire at 60. Compensation claims are now expected from flight engineers compulsorily retired on reaching the previous age limit.

Personalia

Pentti Kesseli and Heikki Hyttiäinen have been elected President and General Secretary respectively of the Finnish Railwaymen's Union.

Bill Morris has been appointed Deputy General Secretary designate of the British Transport and General Workers' Union. Bill, who has been the T and G's passenger services national secretary since 1979, is a member of the Urban Transport Committee of the ITF and a deputy on the Committee of the Road Transport Workers' Section. He will succeed Alex Kitson when the latter retires next year. Kitson has been a leading member of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section for many years and is also the ITF's longest-serving lay auditor.

Tenho Olin was elected President of the Finnish Union of Technical Staff at the union's recent Congress.

Shun-ichi Yamazaki is the new President of the Japanese National Railway Workers' Union (KOKURO).

Forthcoming Meetings

Radio Officers' Meeting - London 12 October 1985
Management Committee - London 15 October 1985
Executive Board - London 15-16 October 1985
Urban Transport Meeting and Rally - Strasbourg 17-18 October 1985
Road Transport Workers' Section Conference - Rome 6-8 November 1985