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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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MILITARY COUP IN FIJI:

ITF unions act on plea for help

ITF affiliates in Australia and New Zealand have taken the lead in exerting pressure for the restoration of democratic and trade union rights in Fiji following the military coup on 14 May.

The situation in Fiji was still very confused as ITF News went to press, with the constitutionally elected Labour Party Prime Minister released from detention but with the military coup leader Lt. Col Rabuka still apparently chairing an interim council of ministers.

The ITF Fiji Coordinating Committee, representing all affiliates on the island, sent an emergency telex message to ITF headquarters on May 17. The telex referred to the régime's suspension of the constitution and to its announcement that trade unions were to be declared unlawful.

The Fiji unions called on ITF affiliates to refuse to handle ships or aircraft bound to or from Fiji until normal democratic rights were restored.

After consultation with dockers' unions in Australia and New Zealand, through which 80% of Fiji's foreign trade passes, the ITF endorsed this call and asked all its affiliates in the region to do whatever possible to bring pressure to bear on the military regime.

A resolution supporting effective industrial action, including boycotts, was adopted by the Executive Council of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) meeting in Perth on May 18 and attended by ITF Executive Board member Tas Bull. Dockers in both Australia and New Zealand were reported to be refusing to handle Fiji cargoes in line with the Coordinating Committee's request, and Australian cabin crew were also reported as taking action against flights to and from the country.

An emergency meeting of all ITF Australian affiliates held on 22 May condemned the coup, called for the return of the elected government, and supported the action of transport unions against the military regime.

Contacts also took place between the ACTU and the New Zealand Federation of Labour on possible action, and ITF Asia/Pacific Secretary M S Hoda, already in Australia, was asked to participate in any regional trade union meetings to coordinate action which might be called.

Dr Bavadra, the elected Prime Minister is a former president of the ITF affiliated Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA). Mahendra Chaudhry, General Secretary of the FPSA and Finance Minister in the new government was also amongst those detained at the beginning of the crisis.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, in a statement issued on 18 May, warned the Fiji High Commission in London of the possible consequences for Fiji's trade and transport links if there is not an immediate return to full respect for democratic and trade union rights in the country.

MAY 1987

SEAFARERS

No massive manpower supply plan Chinese leaders tell ITF team

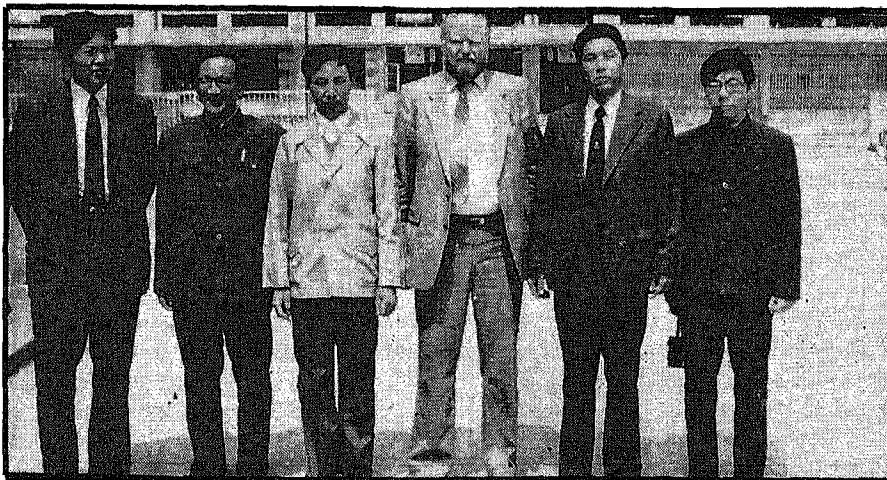
There are no plans to flood the world's merchant fleets with low cost seafarers from mainland China, an ITF delegation which visited the country early in May was assured.

The delegation, comprising Seafarers' Section Chairman K Mols Sørensen and Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander, visited the country from 26 April until 3 May. In *Beijing* it met the Vice-Minister of Communications and visited the offices of the All China Trade Union Federation, COSCO (one of the state owned shipping companies) and MASES the main state run manning agency.

In *Dalian* the delegation saw one of the main maritime colleges from which 3,500 deck and engine room officer students graduate each year. In *Shanghai* discussions were held with the city council, port authority, COSCO officials and the seafarers' and port workers' organisations.

Throughout the visit, the delegation was assured by the government that the sole purpose of supplying Chinese seafarers to work on foreign flag vessels was to ensure sufficient trained manpower for the Chinese merchant fleet in the future. Seafarers' training had been badly disrupted during the Cultural Revolution, officials claimed, and there was now an urgent need to train seafarers for China's expanding import and export trade.

The delegation was able, during the visit, to collect a mass of information on seafarers' wages and conditions as well as on the operation of the state-run shipping companies and manning agencies. Around 5000 Chinese seafarers are being recruited nationally for foreign flag service out of a total of 250,000 on Chinese flag ocean going and coastal shipping. In addition, however, around 1500 are being recruited directly by companies and agencies under provincial government control. The AFCTU agreed to cooperate with the ITF in dealing with any problems which might arise from the oversupply of Chinese seafarers on flag of convenience vessels.



Åke Selander with Mr. Feng, President of the Chinese Seamen's Union at the Dalian Maritime College which produces 3,500 officer graduates each year

The delegation was satisfied that the standard of training in the Chinese maritime colleges on the whole meets international requirements. It also

took the opportunity to enlist the support of the Chinese government for ITF efforts to stop attacks on merchant shipping the Gulf.

CAMPAIGN TO ORGANISE CARIBBEAN CRUISE SHIPS

Wage levels and working conditions on cruise ships came under close examination when the ITF Working Party on Standards for Cruise Ships met in Bermuda on 11 to 13 May.

After deciding that the standard ITF Cruise Ship Agreement did not need revising, the working party agreed to recommend that the pay rates negotiated by ITF affiliates in Indonesia, Italy, Norway and the Philippines should constitute the agreed range for the next twelve months.

The meeting stressed that under no circumstances should rates fall below the ILO recommended rate for an AB (\$276 per month), with the addition of overtime, tips, leave and other applicable bonuses.

The meeting urged ITF affiliates to devise new strategies for protecting the bargaining rights of seafarers on board cruise ships such as setting up union hiring halls or crewing agencies to counter the attempts being made by manning agents to bypass the trade unions.

The meeting asked the ITF to keep a watching brief on developments in the area of collective bargaining as well as to step up its contacts with cruise ship owners and representatives of the main registries concerned.

The ITF was also urged to consider the appointing of Foc Inspectors in the Caribbean and to go all out to help create more jobs for Caribbean seafarers.

Finally, the meeting gave its support for the efforts made by the Bermuda Industrial Union to improve the standing of the Bermudan flag.

The meeting, which was held at the headquarters of the Bermuda Industrial Union, was attended by delegates and observers from the Philippines, Norway, Italy, Great Britain, Barbados, Antigua, Grenada, Australia, Indonesia, Denmark, Curaçao, Bermuda and Trinidad and Tobago. Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander represented the ITF and Seafarers' Section Chairman K Mols Sørensen was in the chair.

"Urgent action needed to save Europe's fleet", Antwerp symposium warns shipping ministers

Firm agreement between politicians, seafarers' unions and shipowners on the existence of a crisis in Europe's merchant shipping industry but no consensus on what to do about it were the main results of a two day symposium in Antwerp on 5 and 6 May.

The symposium was sponsored by the European Commission and the Belgian Government. There were three major themes for discussion: "Keeping the EC Flag flying"; "Securing the future of Community shipping"; and "The Community's role in world shipping".

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis chaired the panel discussing the EC Flag. His summary of the debate highlighted the very different viewpoints of the various groups involved. Everyone recognised, he stressed, the strategic, employment, economic and trade reasons for maintaining a competitive fleet under EC member states' flags. Shipowners viewed open registries (FOCs) as 'a sometimes unavoidable remedy for survival', but seafarers opposed them because of inadequate social standards and frequent denial of trade union rights.

The newest development - that of the so called "offshore registries" which allow an EC state's flag to be retained but with different standards and conditions of registration was meeting with interest from shipowners but was viewed very much as a second best solution by seafarers.

participants also accepted that gross oversupply of ships worldwide had to be met by urgent measures to cut shipbuilding capacity and accelerate ship scrapping. There was also general support for a move away from the US dollar towards the European Currency Unit (ECU) for calculating

**... "keeping an open mind
on offshore flags" ...**

At present they were keeping an open mind on the question, he added, and any final judgement would depend primarily on the manning question.

One idea, proposed by Commission representatives - that of an EC Flag - did not receive a very enthusiastic reception. The maintenance of standards on board ship was, it was felt, a matter for national governments through ILO and IMO and not for the EC.

Key conclusions from the rest of the Symposium included support for special tax and social security arrangements for seafarers. Most

freight rates. The EC states could also, it was felt, help improve social and safety standards by stringent application of port state control, although seafarers' representatives pointed out that the best solution remains proper flag state control of conditions on board ship.

The second day of the symposium was attended by shipping ministers from the 12 EC member states, who met for an informal Council session afterwards.

In his closing speech, EC Transport Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis recalled the disastrous fall in the Community's merchant fleet by 40% since 1980, and the fact that today it represents only 19% of world tonnage. While it might be tempting to give short term competitive advantage to EC exporters by encouraging the use of low price shipping, he argued, the price of this in the longer term would be a high one.

There was therefore still a need for a coherent EC wide merchant shipping policy designed to reverse the decline. He emphasised the Commission's support for the Paris Memorandum on Port State Control (MOU), and announced the Commission's intention of setting up a working party with the ILO, MOU secretariat, shipowners and seafarers' unions to examine the problems in the way of the enforcement of ILO standards by port state inspectors.

The Symposium's closing session was also addressed by George Anastassopoulos, chairman of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament, Eduardo Peña Abizanda, Commission Director General for Transport, and by Herman de Croo, Belgian Transport Minister and President of the EC Transport Ministers' Council.

Belgian fleet plans flag switch to Luxembourg

Faced with the alternative of the flagging out of the entire deep sea fleet with the loss of all its seafarer members' jobs, the Belgian Transport Workers' Federation (BTB) has reluctantly agreed in principle to transfer Belgian flag ships to the Luxembourg shipping register, when it is established.

Since no such register exists yet, details of the agreement have not been finalised, but the two key demands of the seafarers' union - that Belgian manning is retained and that the seafarers' net wages are not reduced, have been conceded by the owners.

There has for many years been a close relationship between Belgium and Luxembourg, and the two countries have a long established economic and monetary union between them. It is reported that Belgian surveyors will continue to enforce international standards on board Luxembourg registered ships

and that Luxembourg will move to ratify all relevant ILO and IMO Conventions.

The agreement came after a tense period following plans by the national shipping line CMB to transfer several vessels to traditional flags of convenience which were met with a threat by BTB dockers' members to boycott such ships when they called at Belgian ports. The new deal, according to BTB Seafarers' Section Secretary Remy Van Kant, will benefit the shipowners by removing them from the expensive tax and social security arrangements which apply to Belgian employees, but will guarantee that the take home pay of the seafarers concerned does not suffer.

The question of the proposed Luxembourg register and other such "offshore" flags will be discussed at the meeting of the ITF's Fair Practices Committee on 9-10 June.

IMO backs ITF on night look-out

Support for the ITF's view that allowing the officer of the watch to act as the sole lookout at night was a breach of the Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) came from the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) which met in London from 27 April to 1 May.

The ruling came about as a result of a decision by the Norwegian government to authorise this system on an experimental basis for high technology ships, a move strongly criticised at the time by the ITF and a number of maritime country governments.

While accepting that the Norwegian action breached the STCW convention, however, the Committee let Norway off the hook by conceding that experiments in this field were necessary "if progress was not to be inhibited". Governments are being asked to submit ideas on how such experiments should be conducted for the next session of the Committee in April 1988.

The Committee also dealt with an issue of increasing concern to ITF seafarer affiliates, the "Fatigue Factor". The ITF representative stressed to the session the growing practice of allowing ships to sail with only a master and one deck officer sharing

navigational watches. This practice increased fatigue problems with consequent risks for the health of the workers and for maritime safety, he argued, and requested that the question of fatigue should be placed on the agenda of the joint IMO/ILO Committee on the Training of Seafarers.

A further issue discussed by the meeting was the function of the radio operator in the new Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

The ITF spokesman argued strongly that maintenance skills were implicit in the current radio officer's certificate as laid down by International Telecommunications Union (ITU) regulations. The Committee decided to adopt a flexible approach to the question of maintenance methods as the new satellite based system comes into operation.

Finally the Committee considered safety on Ro Ro ferries in the light of the *Herald of Free Enterprise* disaster, and agreed to consider developing higher safety standards for this class of vessel.

The ITF was represented at the MSC meeting by Sven-Erik Nylund, Secretary of the Finnish Ships' Officers' Union, assisted by Kevin Murphy, ITF Special Adviser on radiocommunications.

Seafarers force Spanish rethink on SGB ship sales

Dramatic action by striking seafarers in the southern Spanish container port of Algeciras has forced the government to review the future of the Sociedad Gestora de Buques (SGB).

The seafarers chained together two cargoships - the *Burgos* and the *Cimadevilla* at the entry to the main dock at Algeciras on the morning of 14 May, and made it clear that they would not lift their blockade until concessions were made by the government.

Following the personal intervention of Prime Minister Felipe González, talks on the future of the company are now due to take place within days. A US based Swedish pension fund and two Spanish shipowners - Artola and Gas Naval - are known to be interested in acquiring the bulk of SGB's 50 strong fleet.

SGB ships have been strikebound since 23 April when seafarer members of the FETT-UGT took action in a dispute aimed at preventing the company's remaining vessels from being sold off with the loss of yet more seafarers' jobs.

The SGB was created by the Spanish government in 1984 to manage ships when owners were unable to repay government construction loans.

In the three years since it was set up the SGB has disposed of 148 ships at low prices, mainly to foreign owners.

This year the government has

already given approval to the sale of a further 54 ships, thus reducing the Spanish fleet over the period by more than two hundred ships.

This programme of ship sales has led to the loss of 2,000 seafarers' jobs so far.

UGT proposals that the government set up a public or semi public company to operate the SGB's remaining ships met with no response, leaving it with no alternative to calling an all out strike.

A request by the FETT-UGT for support action has met with a good response from ITF affiliates in a number of countries as SGB vessels put into port. A representative from the National Maritime Union visited the *Escuby* in Newark, New Jersey and members of the longshoremen's union refused to work the ship. Local maritime unions in Gloucester, Massachusetts also offered their full assistance and agreed they would not cross picket lines on the *Luis Calvo*.

SGB ships previously bound for Australia have all been diverted since the strike began, no doubt because the company knew that vessels putting into Australian ports would not be handled by the waterside workers.

Affiliates have also sent messages of support for the UGT position to the Spanish Ministers of Transport and the Merchant Marine.

Dutch owners' solidarity cracks

The determination of Dutch seafarers to have a qualified cook on vessels under 4,000 grt is beginning to pay off.

The strike (see last issue of ITF News) is still continuing but a total of 19 companies have now settled with the Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ). This means that a ships' cook will now be carried on 125 ships in the short sea trades.

Even if they win on this occasion, the seafarers face another battle on manning levels as the government prepares the way for experiments with smaller crews.

The proposals have been criticized by FWZ official Ed Sarton who said the union could not accept the present plan. He feared that some older ships would be allowed to sail with smaller crews, compromising safety.

Singapore urged to act on piracy

The ITF has been asked - along with international shipowners' associations - for help in frustrating the alarming rise of attacks by armed pirates in recent weeks on merchant shipping off Singapore.

In telex messages, the Hong Kong Shipowners' Association has urged the ITF and the London based International Chamber of Shipping and the International Shipping Federation, to press the Singaporean authorities to

take more effective action.

Several ships of various nationalities have been boarded in international waters in the Straits of Singapore in recent weeks and cash and valuables stolen from the crew. Fortunately, there have been no injuries as seafarers have had no choice but to hand over money and personal possessions such as watches and radios to pirates armed with a frightful array of weapons, including knives,

machetes and even machine guns.

The attacks seem to follow a regular pattern, taking place mostly at night. Bands of pirates - believed to be Indonesians - sweep alongside in high powered canoes and throw ropes and clamber aboard with the help of grappling irons.

The fact that Singapore has taken effective action in the past leads the HKSA to believe that it will respond positively on this occasion to the association's request for the mounting of more security patrols in the area.

The Singaporean authorities have promised that they will do all they can but - given that the attacks occur in international waters - they feel they can do little at present other than urge owners and masters to take preventive steps such as posting watches.

Meanwhile the crews of ships using the Straits at night have been advised to make sure the vessel is well lit and that high pressure hoses are to hand with which to repel boarders.

US Lines quits shipping

Former round the world operator United States Lines has decided to close its remaining shipping operations.

The parent company of USL, Maclean Industries, filed for protection from its creditors under Chapter 11 of the US bankruptcy code last November (see story in December edition of ITF News).

However, USL's plans to sell its

Pacific and Latin American services have run into problems, as the company involved in the Latin American deal, Crowley Marine, has now pulled out, leaving the future of the proposed transfer of vessels and assets from the Pacific operation to Sea-Land in considerable doubt. USL is now looking for an alternative buyer, acceptable to its parent, certain creditors and the US bankruptcy court.

DOCKERS

Seafarers aid US 'union free ports' campaign

Dockers in the United States used to taking solidarity action on behalf of seafarers have found themselves on the receiving end for a change.

Members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) have been fighting an increasingly bitter battle against the use of non union labour to load and unload ships in ports in the South East of the US,

chiefly in Texas and Florida.

A series of requests from the ILA to the ITF for support from ships' crews entering these ports have met with considerable success. In March, swift telephone contact between the ILA co-ordinator John Sansone and Mario Guidi of FIT CISL in Italy led to crew members of the Italian flag *Fucinatore* respecting ILA picket lines at Fort

Lauderdale in Florida, and refusing to open hatches for non union labour. As a result of this action, the company involved was obliged to negotiate with the ILA and to hire ILA members to unload the ship's cargo. Similar requests have since been forwarded by the ITF to the crews of ships crewed by members of ITF affiliates.

Japan's ports halted by pay strike

Japan's nine biggest container ports were the target of a ten day strike last month by the country's 50,000 dockers - part of the annual pay offensive.

Major disruption was caused, with containers having to be double stacked, as striking pickets prevented the movement of boxes to and from the waterfront.

The strike was called by the

National Council of Harbour Workers' Unions in support of demands in this year's talks for higher pay, better pensions and improved job security.

The action - the longest dockers' strike in recent labour history - was called off after it was agreed that consultations would be held between the union, port employers, shipping companies and government agencies with a view to drawing up wage guidelines,

including sector by sector minimum rates, for future contract rounds. An ad hoc committee is also to be set up to review the working conditions of container terminal workers, with a view to protecting existing container jobs, while a second committee will consider the practicalities of cutting annual working hours and giving dockers longer holidays.

Latin American dockers set \$5 pay target



The employment crisis facing Latin American dockers came under close scrutiny at the 4th ITF Latin American Dockworkers' Conference held in Tampico, Mexico from 14 to 17 April.

Well over a hundred delegates from 42 unions attended the meeting, which was hosted by the ITF's local dockers' affiliate in Tampico, whose Director Gerardo Gómez Castillo chaired the proceedings. Jão Rocha of Brazil and Eduardo Rios of Chile were the conference vice chairmen.

The delegates discussed the threat to

jobs from recent developments, including moves towards privatisation in a number of countries and the increasing involvement of foreign multinationals in the industry.

Dockers in countries such as Chile, who before the advent of the Pinochet dictatorship had some of the best conditions had seen working hours rise and their pay rates plummet as a consequence of government action, while the civil war in El Salvador was causing dockers and other workers very grave difficulties.

Strikes in the industry were often

met with severe repression, with the army being called in or strikers being dismissed.

The Conference urged governments in the region to ratify the latest ILO instruments relating to dock work which it was felt would offer dockworkers an element of protection that they did not at present enjoy.

To counter these tendencies, the Conference urged the ITF Secretariat to draw up a model Collective Agreement for the region setting a minimum hourly wage of \$5 per hour or \$2 per tonne, regularly updated to allow for inflation, a major problem throughout the region. The agreement, the Conference stressed, should also restrict dock work to registered dock workers.

Latin American dock workers already take part in the ITF flag of convenience campaign in the area which they would like to see stepped up.

ITF inspectors, the conference agreed, could help dockers by checking that cargo handling equipment aboard Foc vessels met acceptable safety standards and that proper records of toxic or inflammable materials were carried on board.

On health and safety, the conference called on port authorities to respect the ILO standards reached for the industry and for proper training to be given in health and safety systems.

Special compensation was also urged for workers in high risk areas of the ports.

On human rights, the conference called for an immediate return to democratic rule in Chile and Paraguay.

The ITF was represented by Dockers' Section Secretary David Cockroft and Juan Fonseca and Elias Costilla from the ITF Lima Office.

Container settlement in Rotterdam: general cargo job threat remains

As expected, dockers working for the container handling companies ECT and Unitcentre in the port of Rotterdam have voted to accept the settlements negotiated on their behalf (see last issue of ITF News), bringing to an end talks in this sector.

In the general cargo sector, talks were resumed under a mediator after a six week gap but have ended inconclusively as both sides were unable to accept the conditions attached by the mediator to arbitration.

However, the union scored a success with the decision of the Amsterdam

court that the employers may not go ahead with 350 planned redundancies even after 7 May (the date cited in the first court judgment) because of their failure to observe the correct procedures.

Despite this setback, the employers' association remains adamant that there must be job losses, if necessary through forced dismissals, and is proposing to restart the necessary legal process. Further lightning strikes by members of the Vervoersbond FNV in defiance of jobs can thus not be ruled out later in the year.

PEOPLE

Mr Gopheshwar has been elected the new General Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress following the resignation of Kanti Mehta.

Charlie Turnock, Senior Assistant General Secretary of the British National Union of Railwaymen, retired in April.

Warmest congratulations go to Jean Clivaz, President of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV), who has been appointed General Director of the Swiss Postal and Telecommunications Authority (PTT). He takes up his new post at the beginning of October.

INLAND TRANSPORT

Australian unions query ski railway conditions

A new transport system has been developed in the snow field area of Mount Kosciusko, New South Wales, to provide public transport into the centre of the ski fields.

The system consists of a standard-gauge 1.5KV d.c electric rack railway running through a tunnel with a gradient of 1 in 8 (12.5%) over a distance of 8.5 kilometres.

The system is a fully rack railway, the traction drive being only connected to the rack pinion mechanism with the wheels of the train fitted with disc brakes only. The train is single-manned with Driver Only operation.

The Australian Railways' Union is currently negotiating a wage and conditions package for the driver and is

seeking information about pay rates in similar operations, perhaps in Europe. They are particularly keen to discover whether rates of pay for rack railway drivers are linked to those on conventional trains on main line passenger routes.

Please pass any information to Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers at ITF headquarters.

London busmen strike to defend jobs against privatisation threat

20,000 London busmen took strike action on Monday 11 May as part of a campaign by the Transport and General Workers' Union against privatisation of some London bus routes.

The choice presented workers on these routes is a stark one. Lose your job or accept pay cuts of between £30 and £50 a week and longer hours (43

as against 38) so that London Buses can retain routes put out for tender by undercutting private competitors, who are able to make use of cheap non-union labour.

The union is concerned at the obvious threat this poses to its members' working conditions and living standards.

As the result of government imposed changes, London Regional Transport services have been cut drastically over recent months so that it is increasingly difficult for people without cars to get around London, particularly on Sundays when services are pared to the bone.

Isle of Man clampdown on 'plates of convenience'

The Isle of Man government (already in the news for its rapidly growing shipping register) is taking firm action against road hauliers who register there to avoid operating restrictions and gain tax benefits, in effect displaying 'plates of convenience'.

The clampdown comes after recent police checks on vehicles on the UK

mainland showed that most vehicles carrying Manx number plates had never been anywhere near the island, while many others had out of date discs and incorrect permits.

Now the Tynwald - the island parliament - has decided that trucks registered in the Isle of Man must be used mainly on the island, otherwise their licences will not be renewed.

PAY DEALS

Japan - seafarers in deep sea trades, average 2.48% under an agreement valid to 31 March 1988. Typical increase ¥4,650.

Spain - ground staff and flight attendants with Iberia and Aviacos, 5.8%.

DETECTING WORKPLACE DISEASES

The World Health Organization (WHO) has just published a detailed 272 page study on the *Early Detection of Occupational Diseases*.

The book is intended as a guide for the use of all those responsible for ensuring the provision of occupational health services at the workplace on the early recognition, diagnosis and treatment of occupational diseases.

The WHO believes that the publication, which is intended to serve as a reference work and teaching aid, will

be of interest to a wide variety of specialists in this field.

Trade union officials involved in monitoring health hazards at the workplace should find it an invaluable tool for protecting the health of the workers they represent.

The publication, which costs US\$26.40 a copy, is available from WHO

1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland.

OBITUARY

Leonard Shakespeare, Auckland Area Secretary of the New Zealand Cooks' and Stewards' Industrial Union of Workers, died on 20 April.

CIVIL AVIATION

Australians aid French cabin crew in UTA strike

Solidarity action on 8 May by cabin crew members of the Australian of Flight Attendants' Association - at the briefest of notice - caused Qantas to withdraw plans to operate a strike-breaking service from Sydney to Noumea in place of a UTA flight grounded by a French cabin crew strike.

The union's prompt action came hard on the heels of a request from the French cabin staff union SNPNC to the ITF for international support of a long standing dispute among UTA's South Pacific cabin staff, who are seeking a new collective agreement giving them the same pay and

conditions as their French colleagues (see January 1987 issue of ITF News).

UTA cabin crews in Paris struck for twenty four hours on 8 May in support of colleagues stationed in Noumea and Tahiti who were taking strike action that week in support of their demands.

Air France pilots strike for better A 320 cockpit

Air France pilots struck on 13 and 14 May over equipment on the new short haul Airbus A-320 due to enter service with the airline next spring.

The pilots' union the ITF-affiliated SNPL says that Air France has refused its request for the installation of a 'head up' instrument display on cost grounds.

Meanwhile, French air traffic controllers have staged a series of stoppages over the last three weeks in support of demands that bonuses be included for the purposes of calculating pensions. The controllers are also seeking improvements in their career structure.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

8 June	Dockers' Meeting	London
9-10 June	Fair Practices Committee	London
15-16 June	Standing Cte. on Maritime Mobile Offshore Units	Rio de J. Brazil
16-18 June	Urban Transport Committee	Helsinki
15-16 Sept.	Rhine/Main/Danube Working Group	Nuremberg, Fed. Rep. Germany
22 Sept.	Seafarers' Section Conference	Geneva
24 Sept - 9 October	International Labour Conference - Maritime Session	Geneva
1-2 Dec.	Asia/Pacific Educators' Evaluation Seminar	Tokyo
3-5 Dec.	Asia/Pacific Regional Conference	Tokyo

SAS/Sabena ??

Despite mounting press speculation about plans for a full scale merger of the airline operations of SAS and Sabena, little hard information has so far been made available to the unions representing their employees.

Such a merger, supported by the managements of both companies as a necessary response to the growth of the US 'mega airlines', would obviously have profound effects on jobs and working conditions of their employees.

In an attempt to plan a joint trade union strategy in the event of a merger and to find out what is going on, close contacts have been established between the ITF and its affiliates in Belgium and Scandinavia.

As a first step, a meeting of cabin crew unions in the two airlines took place in Stockholm on 4-5 May at the invitation of the Swedish union HTF. Pio Albanesi, newly appointed Civil Aviation Secretary attended the meeting on behalf of the ITF.