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SEPTEMBER DEADLINE FOR TALKS:

NEW NORWEGIAN REGISTER SET TO BE DECLARED 'FOC'

Foreign owned ships which are placed on the new Norwegian International Register (NIS) due to come into effect on 1 July will be treated by the ITF as flying a Flag of Convenience.

This decision was reached at the annual meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee (FPC) which took place in London on 9-10 June, which also decided to conduct a comprehensive review of the whole ITF campaign against flags of convenience.

The new register, already approved by the Norwegian Parliament, will allow owners to use the Norwegian flag without being subject to any restrictions as to nationality of owner, or nationality of crew. Unless changes are made, there will also be no guarantees of trade union rights or minimum pay or conditions for the crews of such ships.

In response to a request from Norwegian seafarers' unions, the FPC agreed not to take a final decision on the status of the NIS until September 1 this year, allowing extra time for negotiations between Norwegian shipowners and unions about negotiating rights, pay and conditions on board the ships flying the 'new' Norwegian flag. If a satisfactory agreement is not reached by that date, however, an emergency subcommittee meeting will be convened with the power to add the NIS registry to the ITF's list of Foc countries.

In line with existing ITF policy, however, *non Norwegian owned* ships which seek to use the register will be treated as Foc's and subject to action by ITF affiliates if they are not covered by acceptable agreements.

Review

The headlong rush by traditional maritime states to establish their own "offshore" flags, and the staggering decline in the tonnage under genuine national flags, were among the factors which led the FPC to agree to carry out a fundamental review of the 40 year old ITF campaign against flags of convenience. This review, which will be entrusted to the Seafarers' Section Maritime Policy Committee, will cover the whole range of ITF Foc activities, including the rights of unions in ownership countries to represent Foc crews, the criteria for issuing 'blue certificates', and the prospects for establishing a 'genuine link' between shipowner and flag by governmental action.

China

The FPC meeting heard a detailed report from an ITF delegation which visited China in early May. The purpose of the mission was to discuss with government, shipping companies and seafarers' organisations the growth in the use of Chinese seafarers on board flag of convenience ships. The results were generally positive and the ITF received assurances that there was no intention to flood the world shipping market with low cost crews. The sole purpose of putting crews on board Foc vessels, the Chinese representatives

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...Foc campaign review for next year's meeting

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stressed, was to provide them with training to make up the lack of qualified crews to man Chinese vessels.

One of the main complaints of ITF affiliates- that wages paid by owners never reach crew members or their families - was met with assurances that comprehensive social benefits are provided by the national shipping line COSCO. The Chairman of COSCO agreed to furnish the ITF with detailed information about these benefits. When this information is received, the ITF will then take a final decision about how Chinese crewed Foc ships should be treated by ITF affiliates.

Korea

FPC members also heard a report from an ITF mission to Korea in March. This followed widespread accusations of cheating by Korean manning agreements on ITF agreements signed by the Federation of Korean Seamen's Unions (FKSU). The ITF Congress in 1986 called on the union to approach the government to bring the manning agency system in Korea under proper control, with the aim of replacing it eventually with a union controlled hiring system for seafarers. Currently there are around 30,000 Koreans serving on Foc ships worldwide.

The mission reported that progress had been made in a number of areas. There is now a tripartite body responsible for overseeing recruitment, the Korean Association for Seafarers' Employment (KASE), and steps are under way to reduce the number of manning agencies from some 40 at present down to 10 and to cancel the licences of any which were found to be operating double wage accounts in an attempt to deceive ITF affiliates' inspectors.

A resolution adopted by the FPC recognised that the actions taken by the FKSU and the Korean government were a 'step in the right direction'. It urged maximum support for the FKSU to secure negotiating rights for all Korean seafarers and to end the present manning agent system entirely. It also called on the FKSU to implement a four point programme already agreed with the government and manning agencies to:

- stop applying for Blue Certificates for foreign owned vessels where the ITF affiliate concerned objects;
- stop manning agencies from concluding crewing contracts for vessels

which are 'flagged out' from other countries;

- stop agencies signing contracts containing ITF guarantee clauses or issuing material promising Blue certificates;

- refuse Blue certificates to any owners which have been caught operating double wage accounts.

Kuwaiti Tankers

In response to a request from the United States unions, the FPC adopted an emergency motion on the decision of the US government to reregister a number of Kuwaiti owned oil tankers under the US flag, in order to provide them with military protection in case of attack while in the Gulf region. Noting that the ships would continue to be operated with non US crews (with the exception of the master), the FPC took the view that this was the beginnings of the transformation of the US registry into a flag of convenience, and resolved to treat these tankers as Foc ships.

Cruise Ships

The Fair Practices meeting endorsed the recommendations reached by the ITF's Cruise Ship meeting in Bermuda

(ITF News May 1987) which established a range of acceptable wages for cruise ship crews in the Caribbean area. It also agreed to give serious consideration to assisting US unions with their organising drives against US cruise ship owners who operate out of Miami with Foc ships and foreign crews. The largest of these operators, Carnival Cruise Lines, was identified as a priority target.

New Foc

Following the receipt of clear evidence by the Secretariat that Antigua and Barbuda is offering facilities, the FPC agreed to add this island state to the ITF list of Foc countries.

Back Pay

The regular report from the ITF secretariat of the work carried out by affiliates on behalf of crews who are unpaid or underpaid by shipowners showed that in the period January 1986 to May 1987 a total of \$8.2m in backpay was collected on behalf of crews of 245 flag of convenience ships and \$883,000 was collected on behalf of the crews of 40 ships flying the flag of traditional maritime nations.

Tunisian union leader freed from prison

Veteran Tunisian labour leader Habib Achour, who has been in prison since January 1986 after being removed as General Secretary of the UGTT, the country's national union centre, was released and given a pardon by Tunisian state president Habib

Bourguiba in May.

The position of the various member unions in the UGTT, which has been under almost constant government attack since mid 1985, remains unclear

Important gains for ITF Asia/Pacific programme

Two further important steps in the ITF's five year Asia/Pacific educational programme were made recently.

In Papua New Guinea, transport unions in the docks, inland transport and civil aviation sectors have agreed to take an active part in the programme. At a meeting attended by Regional Secretary M S Hoda, ITF affiliates agreed to select a full time Education Officer to coordinate the programme in PNG.

The General Secretary of the PNG-TUC Lawrence Titimura has agreed to supervise the programme which will be based in TUC headquarters. ICFTU

local representative Harry Sandresekera will also play an active role in it.

Two more ITF Education Officers attended residential courses at the Clyde Cameron College in Wodonga Australia in February/March this year. They were Bro Prapai of Thailand and Bro Otaij of Indonesia. This period of training is an indispensable part of the 5 year programme. The Education officers have since been preparing programmes and materials for use at national level. M S Hoda visited both of them in May and discussed the programme's implementation with them.

Fiji coup: unions under attack

The aftermath of the military coup which overthrew the democratically elected government of Fiji on May 14 (ITF News May) still continues to affect the country's population and its trade union movement.

While the intervention of the island's Governor General shortly after the coup gave the impression that constitutional government had been restored, the situation is, according to a number of ITF affiliates in Fiji, very far from being normal.

Normal democratic rights, including trade union rights, remain suspended, and arrests of trade unionists by the military authorities are common. The President of the ITF affiliated Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA) Bro D P Singh and another FPSA official were held for questioning by soldiers for 4 hours on 12 June following a meeting of the union's National Council which the army said was illegal. A clerk at the union's office was arrested at home at 9.30 p.m. on the same day and the office keys taken from him so that the minutes of the meeting could be seized by military personnel. Other union leaders imprisoned for various periods since the coup include Air Pacific Employees Association President David Eyre and secretary Felix Anthony.

According to the FPSA "the army is in control here and the Governor General's authority is non-existent...trade unions are barred from holding meetings or engaging in any industrial action".

A number of possible changes in the constitution are reported to be under active discussion by the Governor General's 19 man Council of Advisers, which includes the coup leader Colonel Rabuka and a number of his supporters. All of them appear to move away from the principle of 'one man one vote' towards a system of representation which would guarantee certain government posts to people of Fijian racial origin.

As far as the international trade union movement is concerned, the main focus of attention has been the question of boycott action against planes and ships to and from Fiji. As reported in the last issue of ITF News, ITF affiliated maritime and aviation unions in Australia and New Zealand have, in response to requests from Fiji's trade unions, been taking action against cargo movements and passenger services to and from the

country. This action has been coordinated by the two countries' labour centres the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the New Zealand Federation of Labour (FOL).

Docker members of the Waterside Workers Federations of Australia and New Zealand imposed a total ban on cargo to and from Fiji immediately following the coup announcement. At the same time cabin crew unions refused to crew flights to Fiji other than those destined to pick up passengers wishing to leave.

Differing views amongst Fiji's union leaders about how to react to the Governor General's action has since confused the situation. At a special session of the Fiji Trade Union Council (FTUC) Executive held on 6 June a resolution strongly condemning the coup, calling for the full restoration of democratic rights and calling for the continuation of the boycott action by Australian and New Zealand unions was lost on the Chairman's casting vote after an 18-18 split in the voting. The validity of this decision is challenged by several ITF affiliates who point out that at least two members were prevented from voting because they were still under arrest!

Consultations between the FTUC, ACTU and NZFOL led to a decision on 1 June by dockers to lift the import ban for shipments of essential foodstuffs and medical supplies.

Following a joint meeting of the three national centres on 12 June a further partial relaxation was made for timber exports from Fiji to Western Australia. Reports received at ITF headquarters from Australian and New Zealand affiliates suggest, however, that the situation is deteriorating. Employers have begun to take advantage of the suspension of trade union rights to launch direct attacks on their employees' conditions.

Ivan Hodgson, General Secretary of the Transport Workers' Union of Australia reports that the management of Shell Oil have taken unilateral action against its employees including the reduction of wages by 5.5 per cent, a cut in sick leave from 15 to 10 days per year, and the elimination of all benefits negotiated outside the scope of the union's collective agreement. The TWU further expresses its concern that attempts are being made to reinstate regular tourist flights to Fiji. A further FTUC/ACTU/NZFOL meeting has been scheduled to take place 2 weeks after June 12, but the TWU has asked for the date of such a meeting to be brought forward and to involve all unions in the civil aviation sector.

The ITF has made clear its full support for its affiliates in Fiji and for the action taken by aviation and maritime unions in Australia and New Zealand in support of the immediate and full restoration of democratic and trade union rights in Fiji.

Fiji conflict 'not racial' says deposed minister

Joeli Kalou, Labour Minister in the deposed government of Dr Bavadra visited the ITF Headquarters on 22 June. He had accompanied Dr Bavadra on his visit the previous week to Buckingham Palace where the two constitutionally elected ministers had appealed for direct intervention by Queen Elizabeth as Head of State of Fiji to restore the democratic process.

Kalou, who comes from the Fiji Teachers' Union is still also a Vice President of the Fiji Trades Union Congress (new elections were scheduled this Summer to fill the post following his inclusion in the government). He spoke to ITF News

about the events leading up to the coup and his hopes for the restoration of democracy.

"I was just in Geneva at the annual session of the International Labour Conference" he says. "I should have been there as leader of the tripartite Fijian delegation but instead I had to hang around the coffee bars until the ICFU managed to include me in their delegation so that I could address the Workers' Group."

The previous Alliance government of Fiji had become more and more anti union in recent years, indeed this was the major reason why Kalou and other

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...Maintain the trade ban, says ex-Minister

Continued from page 3

FTUC leaders decided to found the Labour Party. In 1986 the government had refused to attend the Labour Conference - the annual meeting of the ILO - and one of Kalou's first acts in his short time as Labour Minister, was to reverse the decision not to send a delegation to the 1987 session.

Kalou's first priority is to correct the false impression given to the outside world that the motive for the coup was racial. A Fijian himself, he points out that his government was elected by a shift in Fijians' votes.

At least 10% of those voting for the Labour Party were of Fijian origin, rising to between 30 and 40% in the key constituencies which determined the result. The coup was, in fact, a determined effort of the richer classes - of both races - to prevent the election of a Labour government pledged to improve the situation of urban working people and the rural poor.

The sequence of events which followed the 14 May coup were, he believes, carefully arranged in advance by the Governor-General and the former Prime Minister who are both long established business colleagues. The 'coup' itself was very quickly replaced by a Council of Advisers pledged to bring forward proposals for a new constitution. Yet the military are still in reality controlling the situation.

Despite the fact that the country's senior judges have ruled that the whole process is unconstitutional, the Advisers have begun work on a new constitution and have said that a new Parliament will be elected unopposed in order to approve it. Kalou sees this as deeply worrying "opponents of the coup have now started a legal process to get the Supreme Court to rule the Governor General's action illegal" he says "but it remains to be seen whether the army will take any notice of such a decision".

The bans on trade with Fiji are, he

believes, the main weapon which the trade union movement has to bring about a return to democracy. He is deeply disappointed that the FTUC is not fully united in support of the bans and that they have been relaxed for foodstuffs.

"Only rich Fijians rely on imported food", he points out "the poor will continue to live as they always have from the land." Yet the embargo's imposed by Australian and New Zealand maritime workers have begun to bite. "People are finding life difficult as a result of the trade ban" he says "government revenues have fallen by more than 30% and there is talk of halving civil service salaries. Even people who supported the coup at the beginning are beginning to question the leadership now".

If there is not a rapid return to genuine democracy, however, he is seriously concerned that violence may break out.

"What I fear is not racial violence" he warns "but Fijian against Fijian."

Reinstatement victory for striking South African railway workers

The three month railway workers' strike against South African Transport Services ended in victory at the beginning of June when SATS agreed to reinstate all the 16,000 strikers who had previously been dismissed and to accept a number of key demands made by the railway workers' union the South Africa Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU).

The strike, which has had a major

impact on black railway workers' organisation, was met with repressive measures by the employer and systematic violence by the South African security forces.

Six strikers were shot dead in a number of incidents on April 22 (see ITF News April) and the headquarters of COSATU, the main union centre to which SARHWU belongs was repeatedly raided by police until it was made

unuseable by an expertly placed bomb blast.

SARHWU, which has been enormously strengthened by the display of solidarity shown during the strike, now has around 19,000 members. Under COSATU's single industry union policy it is currently in merger talks with the ITF affiliated Transport & General Workers' Union.

Organising South African dockers

Julius Matroos is secretary of the Port Elizabeth branch of the Transport & General Workers' Union. The branch also covers the neighbouring towns of East London and Grahamstown. In London recently for the meeting of the ITF's Dockers' Section, he spoke to ITF News about the current organising problems which he faces.

"One of the biggest problems is that organisers keep getting arrested" he says, recalling that the first response of employers to an organising drive is often to call in the police to detain troublemakers. Two T&G shop stewards who organised staff in the

University of Port Elizabeth were recently dealt with in this way.

Members of the union in the University, together with various other workers in the construction, paper and wood and metal industries are now in the process of being transferred to other COSATU unions as part of the 'industry union' policy. In recent months his branch has 'lost' more than 1000 out of its total membership of 2,500 in this way. The other side of the coin will be, hopefully, a new transport union formed out of the merger of the T&G and the Railway and Harbour Workers' Union

(SARHWU). A founding Congress for the new COSATU Transport Workers' Union is scheduled for 24-26 June in Durban. If SARHWU joins in then a new merged union of around 42,000 members will be created.

The COSATU policy gives the new union sole jurisdiction over the whole transport sector and also over workers in cleaning and security, industries which are dominated by a number of very anti-union multinationals like the UK based Pritchard Group. The T&G's current transport membership is mainly in trucking companies and

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Japanese unions form transport federation

Thirteen Japanese transport workers' unions met in Tokyo on 26 May and decided to set up a new national council for transport unions. The new Council will come into existence in October this year and will be known as KOUN-ROKYO.

Three unions, KOKURO KYAKUJO and All Japan Dockworkers' Unions did not attend the meeting since they have not yet taken a formal decision to participate in the Council. The

new body will be formed ahead of the proposed new Private Sector Trade Union Confederation scheduled to come into existence on 20 November, and will at first be a coordinating body with the objective of eventually becoming an umbrella organisation for all Japanese transport workers' unions. K Doi of the All Japan Seamens' Union (JSU) was unanimously elected chairman of the preparatory committee.

Malta unions attack gov't changes in workers' representation

Leaders of Malta's General Workers Union (GWU) have attacked a decision by the recently elected wing government to withdraw the right of worker directors to sit on the boards of state owned companies.

The first stage in this process is the removal of the worker director on the board of the county's energy production company Enemalta, in flagrant violation of an existing collective agreement with the union, but further action for example in Air Malta, is sure to follow. Angelo Fenech, GWU General Secretary in a statement issued on June 8 condemned the move and affirmed the GWU's intention to fight for the restoration of industrial democracy rights.

...South African docks

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the docks. The big organising targets are the transport workers employed by the giant state owned South African Transport Services (SATS) which runs the railways and South African Airways. SARHWU's victory in the railways is the first big step forward in organising SATS workers. "They have gained 16 to 17,000 members as a result of the strike" Matroos says, but despite their name they have no significant membership amongst dock workers. The next target is the aviation industry.

What are the prospects for creating a merged union between T&GWU and SAHRWU? "Well the SATS strike froze the negotiations which were going on" he says "and I only heard about the settlement while I was in London. We hope that they will participate fully in our June Congress"

OBITUARY

Amadu Kallay, former Assistant General Secretary of the Sierra Leone National Seamens' Union died on 9 May.

TRAVEL BUREAUX

TSSA campaigns against Pickfords

A campaign against British travel bureau company Pickfords has been launched by the ITF affiliated Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) in Great Britain. In October last year Pickfords unilaterally withdrew negotiating rights which the union has had since 1942. In a typical union busting move the company has set up a 'house union' which it

claims better represents its staff's views than the TSSA.

In response to a request from TSSA, the ITF has given an assurance that it will not use Pickfords for any of its travel arrangements. Other unions which use the company are asked by TSSA not to do so and to communicate their reasons to the company in writing.

FISHERIES

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY REORGANISES FISH MARKETING REGIME

The European Commission published new proposals in May for the reorganisation of the Community's fish marketing regime. The changes are necessary, it says, to take account of the special needs of the Spanish and Portuguese fishing industries.

The main innovation is to include, new species including picarel, conger, dab, horse mackerel, mullet, skate, bluefin and albacore tuna within the

scope of the Common Fisheries Policy. (CFP)

The huge increase in tuna landings since Spain and Portugal joined the Community means that new limits to the support scheme are necessary. Support cannot therefore exceed 10% of total catches of the newly added species. The changes are calculated to add only around £7 million to the cost of the CFP.

INLAND TRANSPORT

Latin American inland navigation needs stronger union presence

Improving the level of trade union organisation amongst workers in the inland waterways of Latin America was the main topic for discussion at the first ITF Latin American Inland Navigation Workers' Conference held in Paraná, Argentina from 11 to 14 May.

The conference was attended by 27 delegates from inland waterway unions in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. A Geeraerts, Chairman of the Inland Navigation Section, Manfred Rosenberg (ÖTV, Germany), and ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham

Brothers also participated, together with representatives from the ITF's regional office for Latin America in Lima, Peru.

The conference was chaired by Brio J Luciani, Argentine Engineer Officers' Union with Bro A Itman, Masters' and Mates' Union, Uruguay as Secretary and Bro J R da Silva, Amazonas Maritime and River Workers' Union, Brazil as Vice-Chairman. Bro L Etchezar, ITF Vice-President addressed the opening ceremony.

The four day meeting discussed a number of key economic and social

issues affecting inland boatmen in Latin American countries, including: the organisation of the inland navigation industry; interconnection of different inland waterway systems; intermodal transport; problems caused by hydro electric development; and the protection of inland navigation workers while abroad.

The Conference unanimously agreed that achieving a higher rate of trade union organisation amongst this group of workers was vital if their jobs were to be protected and their working conditions improved.

Train drivers win compensation battle

The UK train drivers' union ASLEF has finally won a four year legislative battle to achieve financial compensation for drivers who suffer from depression and mental stress after people commit suicide by throwing themselves in front of trains.

In the UK alone more than four

hundred drivers a year are involved in this type of incident and it is a problem which concerns drivers' unions in other countries too (see ITF News April 1987).

As a result of a change in the law for which the union has long been

lobbying, drivers will from now on be entitled to claim compensation from a special government fund which exists to make payments to victims of violent crimes. So far the law only applies to new cases. The union is still fighting to get it to apply to all outstanding cases.

Indian unions call for nationalisation

The Indian National Transport Workers' Federation has called for the total nationalisation of passenger transport in India.

In a press statement issued on May 9, INTWF General Secretary K S Verma demanded that the government of Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi

specify its attitude towards nationalisation in the transport industries.

The four Indian states which have so far nationalised all transport undertakings (Maharashtra, Gujarat, Hariyana and Andhra Pradesh have, the union argues, shown a remarkable progress and development in passenger transport.

The union has also demanded representation on a Committee established by the Indian government to bring in amendments to the country's Motor Transport Workers Act, and has requested that state governments be told to include workers' representatives in the governing body of state run transport undertakings.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

1-2 September
15-16 September

29-30 September

29-30 September

3-4 November

ITF/UIC Meeting
Rhine/Main/Danube
Working Group
Seafarers' Section
Conference
Road Transport
Section Committee
Executive Board Meeting

Paris
Nuremberg
Geneva
Zurich
London

CIVIL AVIATION

US controllers vote for union

Six years after PATCO was destroyed and 11,400 of its members fired by US President Ronald Reagan, US air traffic controllers have voted in favour of bargaining rights for a new union, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.

The new union, like its predecessor, is linked to the ITF affiliated Marine

Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA). The vote by more than 10,000 controllers on June 10 showed a majority in favour of the union of more than 2 to 1.

Traffic controllers in the USA have one of the most stressful jobs on earth. Staffing has never returned to its pre-1981 levels and airlines are

still subject to serious delays at peak periods because there are not enough controllers to handle the traffic. Despite the fact that the Transportation Department has claimed for years that the number of controllers is adequate, it was forced to announce, in early June that it needs to recruit 995 more controllers and supervisors next year at a total cost of \$51.5 million.

Alitalia crews aid South African union

All three ITF affiliates representing Alitalia employees delivered a letter to the company on June 19 informing it that Alitalia cabin crew would refuse to stay at the Kyalami Ranch Hotel near Johannesburg until a dispute between the hotel management and the South African Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union (HARWU) has been settled.

The Italian move was in response to a request from Dan Gallin, General Secretary of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF) to which the South African union is affiliated.

Alitalia and other foreign airlines have lucrative long term contracts with the Kyalami Ranch

which is a luxury hotel in a pleasant rural setting near Johannesburg airport. Other ITF cabin crew unions have been asked to make similar declarations to their managements.

During the course of the dispute, which is over illegal deductions from the employees' wages, 130 workers have been dismissed and two union organisers arrested.

FAA policy shift fears as Administrator Engen retires

The ITF affiliated Association of Flight Attendants has warned the US Congress that airlines may try to take advantage of the departure of FAA Administrator Donald Engen to slow down vitally needed improvements in air safety regulations

Mathew Finucane, AFA Director of Air Safety and Health in a letter to the Chairman of the House of Representatives Aviation Committee highlights several key areas where the FAA has agreed action to be necessary but where action "may be delayed or derailed by the industry": These include

Carry on Baggage

Cabin attendants have long been demanding strict limits on the amount of baggage allowed on board. Excessive amounts can present a major hazard in cases where the passenger cabin needs to be evacuated.

Maximum distance between door s

Following the furore about eliminating B747 over wing exits, the FAA drafted a rule providing a maximum safe distance of 60 ft between exits. This rule, which would make the removal of the 747 exits impossible, has not completed the FAA procedures and the AFA fears it will

be lost if Boeing pushes for an 8 exit 747.

Cabin material flammability

Airline representatives have been fighting a rearguard battle against new flammability standards due to take effect in 1990. Engen resisted pressure to delay or weaken this rule. The new Administrator may not be so firm.

Flight attendants during boarding

Current FAA rules allow aircraft boarding to take place with only one cabin attendant present, leaving them open to enormous risk in case of fire, terrorist attack or other emergency. New FAA rules are urgently needed to change this and were under consideration by Engen.

Flight Attendant Flight and Duty Time

A matter of crucial importance for flight attendant unions is the question of fatigue and duty times. Engen is on record as saying that legal rest requirements for flight attendants are an idea "whose time has come". In AFA's view, time may change very quickly.

Other question addressed in Finucane's letter include dynamic testing of aircraft seats, breathing apparatus

allowing flight attendants to put out in flight fires, the number of passengers per exit, and the compulsory carriage of life vests.

SAS/SABENA DEAL HITS TURBULENCE

Plans to merge the airline operations of Belgium's Sabena with SAS (ITF News May) seem to have hit a major snag. According to press reports negotiations stalled in mid-June because SAS management were unprepared to merge operations unless Sabena's non-airline interests (hotels etc.) were included in the deal.

Despite daily speculation in the press about these negotiations, the employees of both airlines have been kept virtually in the dark. ITF affiliates in Scandinavian and Belgium have already held one coordinating meeting, however, and further close contact will take place if it appears the merger idea takes off again.

SEAFARERS

JSU secures deal on re-deployment

Japanese shipowner organisations reached agreement with the ITF affiliated All Japan Seafarers' Union (JSU) in April to set up a temporary seafarers' re-employment centre.

The Employment Development Organisation, as the new centre will be called will reemploy seafarers who are made redundant from Japanese ships for a period of between 8 and 12 months during which time it will try to find them jobs either on board ship

or ashore.

Another clause in the agreement, reached after 6 months of strenuous negotiations over shipowner demands to cut 10,000 seafarers' jobs, provides for payments of up to 29 months' wages in additional retirement allowance for seafarers aged 50-51 who retire. Seafarers leaving existing companies and aged below 55 will also be granted 6 months paid leave to prepare for retirement.

Brittany Ferries dispute

The ITF affiliated French Seafarers' Federation CFDT has begun strike action and threatened to escalate it over proposals by Brittany Ferries to employ catering staff who are not qualified seafarers on board its ships.

Roger Deschamps, national secre-

tary of the union described a meeting with the Shipping Ministry on 5 June as a 'complete fiasco' and said that Brittany Ferries' plan presented a serious threat to passenger safety. A meeting of union delegates to discuss the issue was scheduled for 22 June.

Japanese experiment with 11 person crews

A Japanese experiment to man cargo ships with crews of eleven, virtually all of them officers, was launched in May.

The scheme called "Pioneer Ship" envisages crews consisting of a master, chief engineer and chief radio officer, one steward and seven watch officers/dual purpose crew. The distinction between deck and engine room officers will be eliminated in the programme and all officers except the three senior ones will be expected

to stand watches. The scheme is to be tested on containerships, bulk carriers and car carriers.

The Pioneer Ship is the fourth in a staged series of reduced crewing arrangements. Previous phases were known as A, B and C. New technical developments to be used on the Pioneer ships include (1) a remote controlled steering device; (2) improved waste oil disposal equipment; and (3) better cooking equipment to support the one steward arrangement.

US unions talk merger

Merger talks are underway between two ITF seafarers' unions in the United States. The two unions are the National Maritime Union (NMU) whose president Shannon Wall is Vice-Chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section, and District 1 of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA).

Discussions between NMU and the

other union representing unlicensed seafarers (ratings) the Seafarers' International Union have been called off for the moment.

The SIU has in the meantime formed a joint affiliate with District 2 of MEBA called the Seafarers' Maritime Union with the intention of organising foreign seafarers on US owned Foc vessels.

ÖTV denounces gov't plan for non-dom low pay

Germany's seafarers' union has reacted strongly to government proposals that foreign seafarers on German flag ships should be paid 'home country' rates of pay.

These proposals, floated by a Transport Ministry spokesman would breach article 3.3 of the German constitution as well as violating international agreements on ship nationality said ÖTV Board member Eike Eulen, describing the idea as a "monstrosity".



National shipping registries should be replaced with a single United Nations flag imposing a common framework of international rules and regulations. This was the message given to the annual meeting of the tanker operators organisation Intertanko by Knut Kloster, a leading Norwegian shipowner.

Citing the moves to create more and more "offshore registers" like the proposed NIS in Norway, Mr Kloster suggested that UN rules could be worked out covering all aspects of safety, pollution, classification, crewing levels, wages, social standards and maritime law. It would also make attacks on merchant shipping, like those being carried out in the Gulf, less likely.

DOCKERS

DOCKERS' MEETING TAKES STOCK OF WORLDWIDE JOB THREATS

Serious attacks throughout the world by port employers and governments on the union rights, jobs and established working conditions of dockworkers were reported at the meeting of the ITF Dockworkers' Section held in London on June 9.

The meeting, presided over by Dockers' Section Chairman John Connolly (TGWU, Great Britain) conducted a detailed review of the industrial relations scene facing dockers' unions in different parts of the world. A document prepared by Section Secretary David Cockroft identified the main issues over which disputes have occurred as: redundancies and reductions in gang sizes; employer demands for greater labour flexibility; or restructuring of port operations; or direct attacks on trade union rights.

DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

National reports from delegates to the meeting confirmed these trends, in Great Britain, John Connolly said that the employers were launching a sustained attack on the National Dock Labour Scheme which provided job and income security for dockworkers. While the number of registered dockers had fallen massively, there had been a 100% increase at ports, such as Felixstowe, outside the scheme. If the Conservative government was re-elected, he said, one of the next privatisation targets would be the ports.

A similar threat was report by G Gomes Castillo representing the Mexican unions. Port services, currently provided by workers co-operatives, were being transferred to private companies by government decree.

In Australia, Section Vice-Chairman Tas Bull of the WWF reported that a national enquiry was being carried out into the dock industry. There was a real prospect of a national dock strike taking place in July or August and ITF affiliates would be asked for solidarity.

From Japan Nakamura of the JSU gave an update on the campaign against the reintroduction of Sunday working in the ports. Although the port industry workers had not prevented this change, so far virtually no

employers had been prepared to pay the heavy penalty rates necessary to handle cargo on Sundays.

Large scale redundancies and reductions in gang sizes in India were reported by Kotwal of the Bombay Transport & Docks Union. A 10 per cent cut in gang sizes in Bombay had occurred and employers were challenging the existence tripartite Dock Labour Board in the Indian Supreme Court.

In the Netherlands, Kees Marges of Vervoersbond FNV summed up the progress made in the series of strikes which had taken place in Rotterdam and Amsterdam where the employers had torn up a comprehensive job security agreement and were demanding a further 250 job losses in the general cargo sector together with greater job flexibility. More strikes later in the Summer were expected.

In Brazil João Rocha reported on moves to privatise the ports and said that his union had been forced to concede cuts in gang sizes in the inland navigation sector.

In South Africa Julius Matroos of the T&GWU explained how port employers were using the threat of economic sanctions as an excuse for massive redundancies in the docks. Since the beginning of this year the union had done virtually nothing but negotiate one redundancy deal after another. The best they had achieved was a commitment to give redundant permanent dockworkers first preference for any new dock jobs that might be created.

In Nigeria J Abam said that not long ago there had been 30,000 dockworkers but work for only 12,000. The situation was complicated because the military government could do virtually anything it wished by issuing a decree. There would probably be a dock strike at the end of June, and ITF assistance would be needed.

In Germany Manfred Rosenberg stressed that 10,000 dockers had lost their jobs between 1974 and 1987. Employers were moving containers to distribution centres just outside the dock areas where they were filled and emptied by workers with much lower

wages. The German ports were heavily influenced by competition with those in Belgium and the Netherlands since German shippers could just as easily move goods into Germany by rail, road or inland waterway.

Francis Mungroo from Trinidad referred to a 12 per cent pay cut which his members had been forced to accept and a reduction in gang sizes being demanded by the employers in order to cut costs. 800 Trinidad dockworkers' jobs were at risk.

Teddy Gleason from the United States reported on the changes in the ILA's Master Contract. Despite heavy pressure from the employers organisations, wages for automated cargo handling remained at \$17/hr for the next two years and the would rise to \$18. In five ports in the South, however, a rate of \$14 had been agreed. A priority now was to reunite the union. Container gang sizes had been reduced, in the contract from 25 to 21. Much more serious was the increasing use by some shippers of non-union ports, particularly in Texas and Florida. Some of these ports hadn't handled cargo since the end of the last War.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The dockers' meeting held a detailed debate about the need to improve national laws protecting dockworkers' jobs and incomes. An ITF Secretariat document summarised the main provisions existing at national level and in particular looked at the existing definitions of "dock work" and "dockworker". The objective of dockers' unions was to retain the highest possible proportion of cargo handling work for permanent, registered dockworkers, it pointed out, suggesting that attention should be focused on the definition of cargo, the filling and emptying of containers (including so called distribution centres), the geographical extent of the port area and occupations included in the term 'dockworker'.

Rather than attempt a common international definition of these terms, the meeting agreed to draft a set of guideline which could be used by

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...International guidelines will be drafted

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unions to press for changes to national laws and collective agreements. A proposed set of guidelines will be presented to the next Dockers' Section Conference.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The meeting took a look at developments in wages and working conditions. It agreed to circulate a survey, prepare by the Secretariat to all Dockers' affiliates, and to publish

some of the information contained in it in the first issue of the ITF "Dockers' Bulletin". While appreciating the wide variations in national condition existing in different regions, it also authorised the Secretariat to draw up a draft Model Collective Agreement for Dockworkers.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

A report was made to the meeting of the successful Latin American Dockers' Conference which had taken place

in Tampico, Mexico in April 1987 and it agreed to recommend that similar conferences for Africa and the Caribbean regions should be held as soon as practicable.

CONFERENCE

The meeting decided to accept an invitation from the Vervoersbond FNV to hold the next Dockers' Section Conference of the ITF in Rotterdam in June 1988.

Seafarers pledge support to dockers

The vast majority of examples of solidarity action in support of Foc crews during the ITF's 40 year campaign have been taken by dockers' unions. Even though they are increasingly restricted by anti-union laws in many countries, ITF dockers' unions still frequently take boycott action against substandard ships.

In recent years, however, the dock-

ers' unions in many countries have become increasingly under attack by employers and governments. The ITF Fair Practices Committee meeting in June therefore, agreed to endorse a request from the Dockers' Section, to ITF seafarers' unions to take solidarity action in support of dockers' unions fighting to defend trade union rights, jobs and working conditions.

The FPC declared its full support for dockworkers' unions and called on seafarer affiliates to advise their members on board ships visiting ports in countries where a recognised dockers' union exists not to lash or unleash cargo or otherwise cooperate in the loading or unloading of those ships by dockworkers who are not members of such a union.

PEOPLE

Teddy Gleason, former ITF Vice-President and current Executive Board member has announced that he will not be seeking re-election at the forthcoming Convention of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in July.

Teddy has been President of the ILA for 25 years and has been in the docks industry for almost 75 years. In his period in office he has seen ILA members' jobs transformed from low paying dangerous back breaking work into one of the highest paying blue collar occupations in the United States.

A major breakthrough during his time as President was the conclusion of the Guaranteed Annual Income programme which assures ILA members a minimum wage whether work is available or not.

In addition to his ITF positions Gleason has, since 1969, been a Vice-President of the AFL-CIO and now serves as chairman of that organisation's International Affairs Committee.

Geoff Henman has been elected President of the British Transport Salaried Staffs Association in succession to Jim Mills who is retiring from the union.

Bob Cook is retiring after 21 years as President of the Canadian Merchant Service Guild.

Jack Dickinson, General Secretary of the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild has announced that he will be retiring from the union in October this year after 30 years in his present position.

Ted Farrow has left his position as General Secretary of the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild of Hong Kong and has been replaced by Capt W C Thomson.

We have recently been informed that Capt Emin Kul President of TDS, the Turkish Seafarers' Union was elected General Secretary of the 2 million strong Turkish national union centre Turk-Is at its convention in December last year.

Congratulations to Richard Dasbach, Assistant (International affairs) to the President of the Seafarers' International Union (SIU) of North America on his election, in November last year, to the legislature of the state of New Hampshire.

The new President of the Swiss railwaymen's union (SEV) is Charly Pasche.

Donald Engen administrator of the United States Federal Aviation Administration has announced that he is leaving the agency. President Reagan has nominated T Allen McArtor, a vice president of Federal Express, as his successor.

Jan Woltering of the Dutch Cabin Crew Association (VKC) retired from his union on June 4. He served for many years on the Civil Aviation Section Committee and since 1984 has been chairman of the section's Cabin Crew Technical Committee.