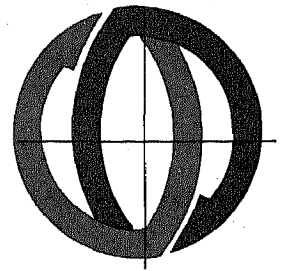


INFORMATIONS : NOTICIAS

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NACHRICHTEN : NYHETER



MARCH 1989



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UNIONS AND PUBLIC UNITE AGAINST LORENZO:

STRIKE SHUTS DOWN EASTERN AIRLINES

The long expected showdown between union buster Frank Lorenzo and the US Machinists' Union, representing ground staff, began at one minute after midnight on 4 March when IAM members walked off the job in what is by far and away the most serious American industrial dispute of recent years.

Minutes before the strike deadline, Lorenzo had made a last ditch attempt to escape a head-on clash which had been pending ever since negotiations began in September 1987 but he was roundly rebuffed.

From the start the strike was solid and within two days Eastern — the USA's seventh largest carrier which had been operating 1,040 flights on a typical day — had been reduced to operating a handful of flights and was forced to lay off thousands of workers. As strike hit baggage piled up, passengers scrambled to find seats on other airlines.

The IAM said it had rarely seen such an outpouring of public and union support, both from other workers at Eastern — notably its flying staff — and from the wider labour movement spearheaded by the national trade union centre the AFL-CIO which urged Americans not to fly Eastern.

The IAM had clearly been right in thinking that fierce public dislike of Lorenzo who has come to personify all that is wrong with corporate America would be a powerful weapon in their armoury.

"Nothing could unite the labour movement like Lorenzo", said one IAM Eastern official.

Lorenzo's biggest mistake in planning his strategy was to underestimate the depth of support of the company's pilots. By refusing to cross IAM picket lines, the pilots, members of the ITF affiliated Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) closed the airline down. As one ALPA official said of his members: "no one is flying or thinking about flying until this is settled for good".

The courts threw out Lorenzo's legal attempts to stop the solidarity action by arguing that the pilots had not observed their own thirty day "cooling off" period and were therefore conducting an 'illegal strike' at Eastern.

Despite desperate attempts to pretend that Eastern was still working (like offering single tickets from New York to Boston for \$12) Lorenzo quickly realized he had no chance of winning. On 9 March he filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 just as he had in the earlier strike at Continental Airlines which he then turned into a non union airline with the lowest labour costs of any major airline. The difference is that this time, as a result of new legislation passed by Congress as a result of the

Continued on page 2

MASS ARRESTS IN KOREAN SUBWAY STRIKE (8)

...Union presents re-organisation plan

Continued from page 1

Continental strike, Chapter 11 protection no longer gives him the right to tear up all his existing union contracts.

Hours before the bankruptcy petition, Lorenzo was still busy divesting himself of Eastern's assets, selling eight of the airline's Philadelphia gates and two Canadian routes to USAir.

If he thought his troubles would end there he was sadly mistaken. On March 9 the IAM declared that it was spreading the strike to cover Texas Air Corporation's other main subsidiary Continental. Continental pilots and other workers were, it declared, performing the jobs of striking Eastern employees, making Continental a legitimate target under US law.

Having suffered a rebuff at Continental once, the IAM had prepared its strategy very carefully this time. As union President William Winpisinger put it: "We meticulously prepared for this eventuality on this carrier".

As Lorenzo looks around for possible buyers, the unions at Eastern are reported to be busy trying to put together a bid for Eastern (minus the shuttle) with Carl Icahn and New Jersey trucking magnate Arthur E Imperatore at a reputed price of slightly over \$300 million.

Meanwhile, they are looking to the courts asking them to limit Lorenzo's freedom of action during the breathing space that the bankruptcy petition undoubtedly gives him.

Well in advance of the strike the IAM, with the help of a Washington based lawyer and financial strategist, had drawn up corporate reorganisation plans for Eastern that it plans to file in a federal New York bankruptcy court.

Lorenzo, his debts frozen for the next sixty days, is keeping tied lipped about his future plans for Eastern.

The debacle at Eastern has wider implications and could add to calls for a measure of re-regulation to be introduced in the industry. The new Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner has already set up a task force to look at effects of airline deregulation and is known to be concerned that the loss of



Striking Eastern Pilots in Miami

Eastern would decrease competition in an industry where nine major carriers already control ninety per cent of domestic market.

One of the first actions of the IAM on declaring the strike against Eastern was to ask ITF aviation unions for international solidarity action. Three weeks before the March deadline an ITF circular told unions in countries served by Eastern to stand by to support the Machinists Union. At the request of IAM General Vice-President (and ITF Executive Board member) John Peterpaul, messages of protest from ITF affiliates worldwide have been directed to US President George Bush asking him to intervene in the dispute. The request for

solidarity action was later extended to Continental Airlines, a company with an even more extensive international route network than Eastern. The ITF has also taken action in response to reports that flight crews and ground staff from Latin America were being flown to Miami in an attempt to break the strike.



General Secretary: **Harold Lewis**

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A 'calm show of force' in Brazil

Brazilian workers staged a successful general strike on March 14 and 15 in protest at the government's latest economic austerity package.

The general strike was called by the Central Workers' Union (CUT) and the Central Workers' Federation (CGT), Brazil's two largest labour federations, following the introduction of the government's "Summer Plan" in January (see ITF News January 1989).

According to the unions, the strike was most successful in the Northeast and Rio de Janeiro where participation by transport and bank workers was almost total.

In São Paulo, the most industrialized region in the country, the unions paralysed the activities in the automobile, chemical and public transport sectors. Most shops and banks were also closed.

The stoppage was called to protest the severe wage losses caused by the government's new emergency economic plan issued on January 15. The plan established wage and price control in order to fight a projected inflation rate of almost 3000 per cent in 1989. The inflation rate in January was around 29 percent.

By leaking information about the plan during the week before announcing it, the government allowed the compa-

nies to increase their prices. The increase in some items, especially food, clothing, fuel and public transport ranged from fifty to one hundred per cent, while wages went up only twenty six per cent. The average wage losses vary according to different sectors, but the consensus among economists is that the losses range from thirty to forty per cent since January.

Both the government and the corporations agree that the workers have had great losses in their buying power and that a reassessment of the wage control

policy is needed. However, neither the government nor the management and the unions have been able to reach an agreement on how to make up for the losses. A last attempt to prevent the strike failed on Friday March 10, when a meeting between the labour minister and the union federations ended without any agreement.

The unions have hailed the strike as a peaceful victory for their first ever joint collaboration. CUT President Jair Meneguelli described the two day strike as "a calm show of force".

Poland agrees to restore trade union freedoms

In a major historical victory, the Polish authorities have agreed to the re-legalisation of Solidarnosc, a free press, the right to strike and demonstrate and the creation of a form of pluralistic democracy that would have been unthinkable in Eastern Europe just five years ago.

This agreement came on February 16, after detailed round table talks in Poland between the Solidarnosc trade union and representatives of Poland's

ruling Communist Party.

In addition to removing restrictions on the union, and allowing an independent press to emerge, the government has agreed to create a second chamber of the Polish Parliament which will be elected freely from competing candidates. The governing Polish Unified Workers' Party shall continue to have an automatic majority in the lower house.

'UNITY IN ACTION' FOR SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS

Over seven hundred delegates gathered in the University of the Witwatersrand in Braamfontein, South Africa on March 4 and 5 for a special Workers' Summit.

This special meeting gathered together rank and file delegates from the COSATU and NACTU union federations and the autonomous trade unions.

According to a special statement issued at the conclusion of the meeting "Spirits were very high and delegate after delegate emphasised the need for united worker action against the backdrop of increasing state repression and attacks from employers."

One specific target of the meeting was the government's repressive new trade union law — The amendments to the Labour Relations Act (see ITF

News May 1988, September 1988). The summit was united in its opposition to the new laws, and also pointed out that trade union rights are denied to "millions of of farm workers, domestic workers, public sector workers and forestry workers".

The Summit stressed that workers' unity in South Africa could best be achieved through "unity in action." To this end the meeting adopted a lengthy resolution denouncing the attacks on acquired workers' rights and outlining a campaign for basic trade union rights (the right to strike, the right not to be dismissed unfairly, the recognition by employers of majority unions in workplaces).

This campaign should also be linked to the living wage campaign and the

campaign for adequate social security coverage — known as a "living benefit" — for all South African workers.

Organisationally, the summit called for this campaign to be the theme of May Day rallies this year, and for workers to be balloted on its demands.

The summit also called for "further summits that would involve all forces that are fighting for the liberation of South Africa", and for an intensification of "our rejection of the present LRA through further protest actions."

Discussions between the union federations and the independent unions within the context of the summit will continue. The meeting was, according to the summit statement, "one of the most significant demonstrations of worker unity in our history."

TRANSPORT WORKERS AND 1992

Over 200 delegates from transport workers unions throughout Western Europe will gather in the *Bâtiment Jean Monnet* in Luxembourg next month for a special conference on the implications for transport of the European Community's creation of a single market by January 1, 1993.

Invitations to this special ITF conference have been issued to all European affiliates (including those in EFTA countries) and to all other transport workers' trade unions actively engaged in transport within the European Community.

The conference will be addressed by the new European Transport Commissioner Karel van Miert.

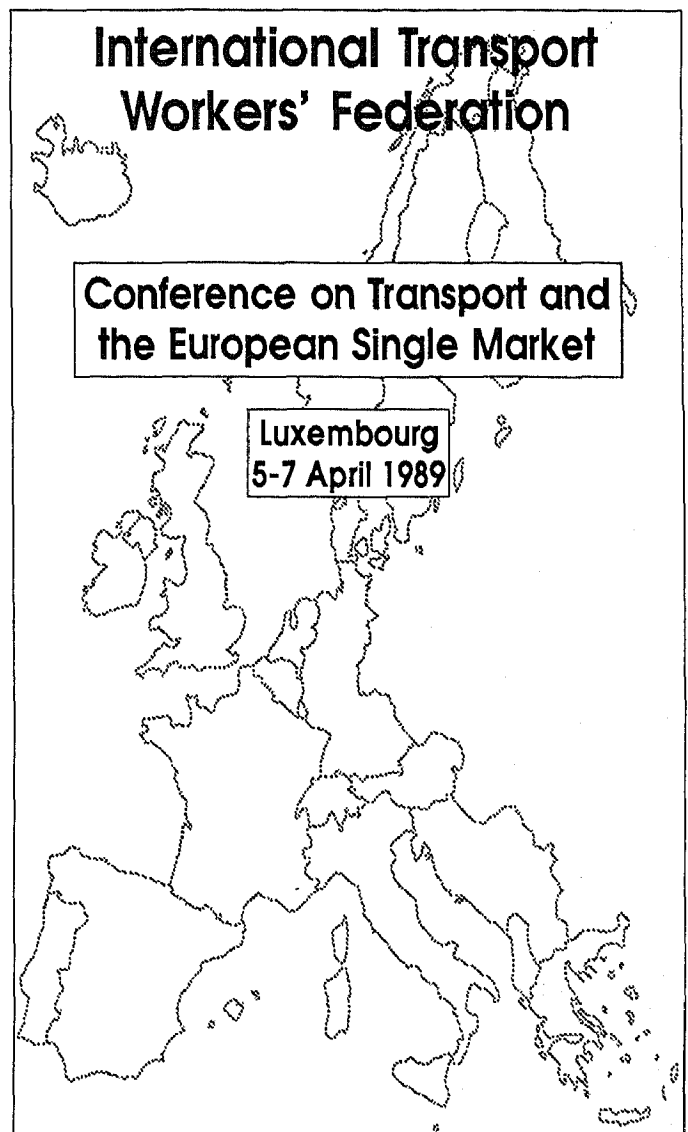
The transport sector is of critical importance to the European Community's future economic progress and to the quality of life in Europe. The 1957 Treaty of Rome listed the establishment of a Common Transport Policy as one of its most important objectives, alongside the creation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

And yet, 32 years later, the establishment of a Common Transport Policy remains an elusive goal. Transport workers' unions fear that, in the headlong flight to meet the self-imposed January 1, 1993 deadline, member states of the EC may agree to the elimination of all existing national transport regulations without having any suitable Community level replacement.

In the absence of a coherent policy, there are a host of specific proposals affecting road transport, railways, aviation, maritime transport, inland navigation and the ports which will be discussed at this conference.

The conference will draw up a trade union strategy for a co-ordinated response by European transport workers to the single market process. This policy will set the tone for future ITF European activities in the run up to 1993.

A full report on this new policy and the results of the conference will appear in next month's ITF News.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

21-22 March

5-7 April

11-12 April

22 -23 May

23 May

24 May

24-26 May

19-21 Sept.

Executive Board

Conference on Completion
of the European Market "1992"

FPC Sub-committee

Dockers' Meeting

Seafarers' Meeting

Joint Seafarers' & Dockers' Meeting

Fair Practices Committee

Railwaymen's Section Conference

Paris

Luxembourg
Genoa, Italy

London

London

London

London

Santander, Spain

Call for Philippines' gov't action on fleet standards

Substantially increased government support for the Philippines' large but increasingly dilapidated inter-island shipping fleet is recommended in the confidential report of the Presidential task force set up in the wake of the two maritime disasters involving ships of the Sulpico Line — the *Doña Paz* and *Doña Marilyn* — that claimed four and a half thousand lives.

A series of measures designed to encourage owners to buy new modern tonnage and improve existing vessels which are often old and in poor condition is proposed in the report which advocates changes in the level of duties and taxes and the introduction of a substantial measure of deregulation in the industry.

The report calls for the relaxing of import duties on ships, spare parts and safety and communications equipment as a positive incentive to owners to upgrade standards and acquire new tonnage. It also includes proposals for special tax exemptions and subsidised ship finance.

The importance to a country of over seven thousand islands of an extensive inter-island ferry network is recognised in a further proposal urging that the industry be treated for tax purposes on a par with essential utilities such as electricity supply.

The task force report was published as a private member's bill was being introduced in the Philippines parliament. The bill will step up penalties on ferry owners for violations of safety regulations.

The bill proposes that statutory compensation to relatives be doubled from 50,000 (US\$2,342) to 100,000 pesos in cases where a shipowner is proved to have been at fault and his negligence has resulted in passenger fatalities.

In a bid to stamp out the dangerous practice of overcrowding, the government has already introduced new rules requiring tickets to be issued to named passengers.

Owners who disobey the rules and continue to overload their ships could find themselves facing even larger compensation claims as the bill proposes a figure of 200,000 pesos for

relatives of passengers taken on board but not properly listed.

The drive to improve safety has not helped by the fact that the Philippines is losing some of its best seafarers to foreign owners. Manning agents are often to be seen canvassing experienced seafarers on the quayside, persuading them to sign contracts with foreign owners at far higher rates of pay.

In a bid to reverse the "skill drain", it is being suggested that a national seafarers' apprentice scheme be introduced with newly qualified seafarers being required to serve a number of years on inter-island ships and a further period on Philippines-owned international trading ships before they are eligible for foreign employment.

The association representing the inter-island owners said that they were in a situation where they they simply could not win. While they realised that better trained and more experienced crews could do much to help improve ship safety, any efforts they made to up-

grade seafarers' skills only meant that they lost these seafarers to the manning agents. Domestic owners just could not compete with the inducements the manning agents were able to offer.

The focus on safety has produced other developments, notably the setting up of a classification society — the Philippine Register of Shipping — to supervise ship construction and ensure the adherence of Filipino vessels to international safety conventions. In the absence of a Philippines-based classification society, all classification work until now has had to be carried out by foreign-based organisations.

The ITF-affiliated maritime union AMOSUP has been in the forefront of those pressing for urgent government attention to the appallingly lax safety standards on Filipino ferries. It will no doubt take the lead in urging the government to back these latest initiatives with firm and effective action to improve standards of maintenance and ship operation and encourage the necessary investment in new ships.

Inquiry demanded after chemical ship explosion

The British merchant navy officers' union NUMAST is calling for a thorough investigation into the explosion which devastated the Liberian-registered chemical tanker *Maasgusar* off Japan on 14 March.

The union will want to know why the automatic fire fighting system on the vessel was unable to cope with the fire when it first broke out. It is also concerned that the lifeboats which should have withstood fire were found badly burned close to the stricken ship.

There has been no sign of her 23 man crew, who are all feared dead. There were three British and one Irish officer on board and a Filipino crew.

The 39,723 dwt *Maasgusar*, owned by a subsidiary of Stolt Tankers and Terminals and on charter to the Dutch shipping company Nedlloyd, was en route from Houston to the Japanese

port of Yokohama and was carrying a cargo of nine different chemicals.

The five year old tanker was due shortly to put in to Yokohama for engine repairs when a gigantic explosion in the engine room rocked the ship and it exploded in flames.

The explosion must have occurred virtually without warning as the ship put out no distress message.

The fire aboard the tanker was so intense that fire fighting teams were unable to get near enough to douse the flames. It has been left to burn itself out.

The ship's cargo of chemicals is now leaking from a hole in its side and burning on the surface of the sea.

The Liberian authorities have already launched a preliminary inquiry but this is likely to be hampered by the lack of survivors.

Brazilian privatisation halted by Congress

Maritime unions in Brazil hope the state owned general cargo line Lloyd Brasileiro will have a more settled future now that Congress has thrown out government proposals for privatisation of the company along with the elimination of several ministries which were at the heart of its latest austerity package (see ITF News January 1989). The company's employees believe that with better management the company can be made viable and that its recent difficulties have been the result of too much government meddling in its affairs. There had been widespread concern in the country that if the company were to pass into private hands, ships flying foreign flags would increasingly move in on Brazilian cargoes (Lloyd Brasileiro currently carries one fifth of Brazil's exports). Plans are however going ahead for the winding up of the maritime regulatory agency Sunamam following Congressional approval.

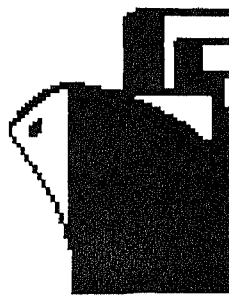
A long-standing union demand for the seafaring profession to be recognised as dangerous and unhealthy has been conceded by Greek coastal shipowners in the current pay round and other owners — such as those in the overseas trade — will now be under increased pressure to follow suit. Crews of coastal ships organised in the ITF-affiliated PNO will now receive an allowance in recognition of the hazards of the seafaring life as well as the 14% rise in wages and other allowances agreed with the owners. Meanwhile, PNO-led negotiations for ocean-going seafarers have run into difficulties.

Hong Kong's new register should open for business late next year if all goes according to plan. A steering group which has been looking at conditions under the new flag will present its initial report to the government shortly. The group's report will recommend registration costs similar to Liberia's and include advice to the government

on the level of tonnage charges and survey fees.

There is growing concern in India at the shortage of officers — a growing

The ITF's regular flag by flag roundup



problem in Asian countries — which has left many Indian ships without second or third officers and has even prevented some ships from putting to sea. Ship safety is being endangered to an unacceptable degree, says Leo Barnes, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI). Barnes blames the shortage (of about a thousand officers) on the lack of an effective training programme and the lure of higher paid jobs on foreign ships. As a way of easing the problem, he advocates that Indian officers should be encouraged to volunteer for 'secondment' to Indian ships for periods of three or four months during leave breaks from their foreign employers. Other ways of overcoming the present shortage include obliging officers to spend four years on Indian ships before being allowed to work abroad. According to this suggestion, they would have at some time to work a further three years on Indian ships but would be free to decide how to fit this additional service in to their career pattern. In a bid to stem the outflow of officers, the Indian government recently issued an order requiring foreign companies to obtain official permission before taking on officers from the sub-continent (see ITF News, February 1989). Owners are far from happy with the order and have sought talks with Indian maritime officials.

Leading Japanese owners say that they are ready to place orders for newbuildings provided they win official approval for the introduction of mixed crews of Japanese and foreign seafarers on their ships. MITSUI OSK Lines say that approval of mixed manning would lead to firm orders for two new VLCCs from Japanese yards while NYK, which has an active shipbuilding programme, has disclosed that it is considering similar orders for large tankers and that a final decision on a go ahead could well hinge on more flexible crewing arrangements.

A boycott of all the one hundred plus ships owned by Pakistan nationals which operate with foreign crews is threatened later this year by the ITF-affiliated Pakistan Seamen's Union unless the government takes steps to reduce the number of Pakistani seafarers without jobs. The union wants the government to lift the ban on private owners operating their ships under the Pakistan flag and to insist on Pakistani manning. The union says that it would also like to see the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation prevented from chartering in tonnage with foreign crews.

In a bid to increase the number of Swiss seafarers serving aboard Swiss flag ships, their pay is to be subsidised by a total of Swiss francs 20 million (\$12.6 million) over five years. The aim is to bring the percentage of Swiss nationals up from the present low of 18% to a target figure of 50% by the mid-1990s. To qualify, seafarers will have to serve a minimum of six months on a Swiss-flagged ship and be available for five years or more for call up to serve on Swiss vessels in times of crisis.

Continued on page 7

Backpay victory for Taiwanese crew

Twenty Taiwanese seafarers have received US\$310,000 as a backwages settlement for a claim that dates back to 1985.

The crew were then sailing on the Liberian flag *The Star Carrier* which was covered by an ITF agreement. However, the owners (in this case a

consortium of banks) cheated the crew and underpaid them.

The crew called in the ITF in September 1985, when an inspector visited their ship in Tilbury, England. With legal assistance from the ITF, the men sued the owners for US\$410,000 in stolen backwages.

Lengthy negotiations between the

consortium of banks and the ITF lawyers continued until February 1989, when the owners offered a payment of US\$310,000 plus legal expenses. Additionally, they agreed as a condition of the settlement that no measures would be taken to reclaim the money from the crewmembers. The 20 have happily accepted the offer.

Poison ship prepares to return to Austria

The long odyssey of the *Petersberg*, which has been trapped inside the Black Sea for the past nine months, is nearing its end. Austria is close to agreeing to allow the ship and its cargo (builder's

rubble from a disused chemical plant) to return to Vienna, its port of embarkation.

Austrian waste experts have already checked out the ship and confirmed

that it is still carrying its original cargo loaded in Vienna in May last year. Romanian fears that the cargo was radioactive led them and their Black Sea neighbours to ban the ship. These worries have however now been discounted by the experts who also say that neither is the deadly chemical dioxin on board as was feared.

Once Austria gives the go ahead the Romanians are expected to let the ship pass through the lower Danube on its return journey.

The whole affair has proved something of a nightmare for the ship's owners and the civil courts will be called on to decide who should pay the huge costs involved.

...CARNIVAL CONTRACT WITH ITALIAN YARD

Continued from page 6

The US cruise company Carnival Cruise Lines is close to signing a contract with the Italian yard Fincantieri for three new luxury cruise ships to be operated as part of Project Tiffany. Project Tiffany is a massive cruise liner deal involving CCL and a group led by the Swedish Ships' Officers'

Association (see ITF News, March/April 1988). When they are completed, the Project Tiffany ships will all fly the Swedish flag and carry Swedish crews recruited via a manning agency run by the Officers' Association. They will be owned by a Swedish consortium and CCL will operate them on a bareboat charter basis.

FISHERIES

UNION SECURES UNEMPLOYMENT PAY FOR NORWEGIAN FISHERMEN

Out of work Norwegian fishermen will receive unemployment pay for the first time this year thanks to an initiative launched by the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union.

The union has been concerned for some time at the plight of fishermen who have been laid off or lost their jobs as fishing has been cut back to protect fish stocks.

It was felt to be unfair that fishermen, unlike land-based workers, should not be able to fall back on state support when through no fault of their own they fell on hard times.

The union's campaign for equal treatment entered a new and decisive phase when its top officials held talks with

representatives of the Fishing and Finance Departments towards the end of last year.

At the talks, which were led by union President Edvin Ramsvik, Olav Bjørklund and ITF Fishermen's Section vice chairman Jan Skrede, the union outlined its demand for immediate attention to be given to this disadvantaged group.

These consultations were followed by talks with Fisheries Minister Bjarne Mørk Eidem who promised to do all that he could to help — provided the support was kept within the 1989 financial limits for the industry.

Delighted with this response, the Seamen's Union immediately con-

vened a meeting with its two fellow ITF officer affiliates and invited officials of the Norwegian Fishermen's Association to attend.

All four organisations agreed to cooperate to devise an interim solution for fishermen for 1989 for submission to the government.

Meanwhile, the funds have been made available that will permit payments to be made to the fishermen concerned as soon as the new arrangements are finalised.

But the battle is not over yet. The next step in the union campaign will be to achieve a permanent solution that will give income security to a group that has traditionally had less protection than other Norwegian workers.

Korean troops arrest thousands of subway strikers

Thousands of South Korean riot police stormed a bus depot in eastern Seoul on Thursday 16 March and arrested 2,334 striking underground workers.

The police intervention came on the first day of a strike by thousands of subway workers which had paralysed Seoul's subway system. The strikers, members of the Seoul Underground Workers' Union, are demanding the dismissal of the subway's chief executive for alleged bad faith in contract negotiations.

Police armoured trucks fired volleys

of tear gas and bulldozers knocked down the strikers' barricades as about 7,000 troopers dispersed and overpowered the strikers.

Most of the arrested strikers had been released by the next day, though some thirty union leaders are still being held and charges are being prepared against them.

These strong handed tactics were not unexpected in a capital that is well known for the violent tactics used by the riot police to quell dissent.

About 15,000 riot police are now

guarding subway stations to prevent further protests by strikers.

The subway strike has made life very difficult for commuters. The government has organised emergency transport, putting on about 10,000 extra buses and military vehicles, but these have been totally unable to cope with the three million Koreans who use the system each working day.

Meanwhile, some ITF-affiliated transport unions in Japan have sent messages of protest to the Korean authorities about the handling of the strike.

ITF Asia/Pacific inland transport meeting

The current problems facing inland transport workers in the region were at the heart of the discussions during the ITF Asia/Pacific Inland Transport Committee meeting held in Wodonga, Australia from 23 to 25 February.

Delegates from over thirty unions in nineteen countries throughout the region attended. They represented members employed in road, rail, inland navigation and the docks.

The ITF Secretariat was represented at the meeting by ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers and Asia/Pacific Secretary Mo Hoda.

A commitment to measures to improve the performance and efficiency of the **railways** in the region was made by the unions in the railwaymen's group.

The rail unions gave their backing to national campaigns for balanced transport policies which were a vital element in economic and social development and swung their support behind the ITF's international campaigning on the issue.

The rail group came out strongly against the trend towards privatisation, which was gaining hold in many countries in the region and was the inevitable outcome of unfair competition from other transport modes. Where privatisation did take place, this should not be at the expense of railway workers' conditions of service, it was stressed.

They also called for an end to the regular use of contract and casual labour and for assurances that when this could not be avoided contract workers would not be used to undermine the rail unions.

The report of the **road transport workers' group** drew attention to the low level of trade union organisation in the sector and called on the ITF to work for increased unionisation within the framework of the long-term education programme being conducted in the region.

Particular attention, it was stressed, should be given to bringing owner drivers into trade union membership.

The setting up of trade union health and safety committees at enterprise and national level was a further priority, with the group recommending that the committees be given industry funding and the powers to prohibit unsafe practices. The group urged governments to involve road transport unions in national safety education campaigns aimed at operators, workers and the general public.

Governments in the region were asked to observe the limits on working time and rest periods laid down in ILO instruments for the industry.

In a final recommendation, the group urged the promotion of public transport in urban areas as a vital factor in curbing environmental pollution.

The **dockers' group**, in its conclu-

sions, expressed serious concern at the effects on employment levels of developments such as containerisation and other modern methods of cargo handling as well as the introduction of computers which had led to staff cuts among office and administrative staff among others.

The rapid changes that were taking place in the industry underlined the need for the port authorities to develop retraining programmes to ensure that workers in the industry were not displaced but were assisted to acquire the necessary skills, the group agreed. Unions should be actively consulted before new working methods were introduced and should be involved in training schemes.

The dock unions were worried by the loss of a great deal of container work to inland ports where it was handled by unregistered casual labour and urged that these workers be brought on to the permanent register.

The ITF Dockers' Section was asked to devote special attention to the problems of dock workers in the region, with particular reference to problem areas such as long working hours; frequent switches between different tasks; inadequate training; the need for safe handling of dangerous cargoes; the absence of decent safety equipment; the introduction of self-unloading bulk ships; and the use of seafarers for unloading operations.

Victory for Dutch truckers' strike

Dutch truckers like other long distance drivers work unsocial hours and have become very angry that their employers have always refused to consider extra payments for working at night and in the early hours of the morning.

This injustice has rankled for many years. It came to a head in this year's negotiations when a bonus was demanded for work after eight at night and before six in the morning.

Along with the bonus claim, a realistic pay increase was sought and introduction of a stand-by allowance for drivers at home but subject to call-out

at any time. Notice of a strike was given for the end of January.

The employers' response came on 29 January as the drivers' strike started. They offered only a derisory one per cent pay increase.

The strength of feeling is clear from the fact that between one and a half and two thousand drivers heeded the strike call issued by their union, the *Vervoersbond FNV*. Fellow drivers in the Christian *CNV* transport union also joined the walkout.

The drivers were determined not to give in before they won a decent settle-

ment and on 10 February the employers caved in, making a new pay offer, worth 2 1/2 per cent in all, 1.5 per cent from 1 January and a further 1 per cent on 1 July. The employers also conceded the drivers' key demand, offering an unsocial hours bonus of 1 per cent of base pay payable every four weeks. Stand-by duty will now be compensated with 1.4 Guilders an hour up to a maximum of 32 guilders a day, a further major gain.

The offer was promptly accepted and normal working has now been resumed.

British Rail safety: broad review needed now

It is becoming increasingly difficult following three serious rail accidents in as many months for the British government to ignore growing pressure for a broad review of safety on British Rail.

Public anxiety, already awakened by the accident at Clapham disaster shortly before Christmas in which 34 people died (see *ITF News* November/December 1988), has been heightened by two further crashes only two days apart, both involving loss of life and many injuries.

The first of these occurred on Saturday 4 March when two London bound trains collided just outside the Surrey commuter station of Purley on the outskirts of London.

The first train which was running a few minutes late had just cleared the station and was moving to another line. This took it into the path of the second London-bound train. Three of the first train's coaches had completed the move on to the fast track when the second train rammed into the back of the fourth coach. Six coaches from the second train hurtled down a steep embankment just missing a row of suburban houses below.

Five people died in the accident and over ninety were injured.

In the second crash, on Monday March 6, a train driver and a passenger died and over fifty were injured when two electric suburban trains collided head on just east of the Scottish city of Glasgow.

The fact that this second accident happened on a stretch of 'reversible' line — where trains are allowed to travel in each direction along a single track — has raised questions about the safety of such track.

The internal BR inquiry will seek to establish how two trains travelling in opposite directions found themselves on the same section of track at the same time.

Both crashes happened during relatively slack off peak periods — Saturday afternoon and Monday lunchtime — otherwise the casualty toll, bad as it was, would inevitably have been far higher. The Glasgow trains were travelling at only 48 kph, another factor which helped reduce the number of deaths and injuries.

Internal BR inquiries are continuing into the crashes and the government has announced two separate public inquiries. The focus at both inquiries is likely to be on the BR signalling system which has come under increasing criticism following the defects shown up by the Clapham crash and drivers' reports of problems in the area of the two latest accidents.

One vital question the inquiries will have to address is to what extent safety has been compromised by the government's policy of starving the country's rail system of money in the runup to its intended privatisation.

The rail unions have complaining for some years that underinvestment in the railways is making it increasingly

impossible to run the network properly with due regard for the safety of both rail workers and passengers.

They and other pro rail groups have consistently argued the case for subsidies to be increased rather than cut back so that Britain has a modern safe rail system.

The technology needed to ensure safe rail operation is available but increasingly attempts at modernisation have come up against the cost factor. Financial pressures and dwindling operating subsidies mean that modernisation programmes have been substantially delayed and old systems are retained to save money even when they are known to pose potential dangers.

Other European countries have recognised the wisdom of proper levels of investment and are reaping the benefits while Britain is lagging further and further behind its continental neighbours.

The decision to hold public inquiries into all three accidents (the first is already underway) is welcome news indeed. But the exercise will be largely a waste of time unless the government is persuaded to step up the financing of Britain's creaking rail system from the public purse. There are few signs as yet of a change of heart.

Meanwhile, the rail unions will continue to campaign vigorously for an overall safety enquiry, which the government has refused.

Thatcher orders a not so fast underground rail link

The long running saga of the British rail link to the Channel Tunnel took another bizarre twist this month.

When the British and French governments agreed to build the rail tunnel, it was taken for granted — by everyone but the British government — that high speed tracks would be laid in Britain and France to connect the tunnel with London and Paris. In fact, high speed links between the French end of the tunnel and Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam are already scheduled to be built.

But the British government's legendary reluctance to invest in the railways led to a long drawn out charade whereby British Rail were permitted to commission a "feasibility study:" into building a new line. The idea of a rail link was accepted earlier this year by the government, but they refused to allocate any additional money to state owned BR to build it — telling the railway that it had to raise private finance to build the link.

Faced with the unenviable prospect of paying for the new line out of its dwindling budget (government subsidies to BR continue to decline), the

railway announced that it was studying three potential lines from London to the tunnel.

While the residents of Amiens in France are busy protesting at the fact that the French high speed link to the tunnel will bypass their town, residents of the prosperous densely populated county of Kent who live along the potential British routes protested against the link. The campaign against the link drew a great deal of support from within Thatcher's ruling Conservative party which normally has strong support from Kent voters.

These government supporters seem to have managed the unusual feat of convincing the government to intervene to order British Rail to build as much of the new line as possible underground.

On March 8, British Rail announced a new, revised plan for the link, with two thirds of the route running through tunnels. The overall running time of the "high speed" trains will only be 220 kph — while the comparable new line in France will operate at least at 320 kph.

Nor will this new line be ready if the Channel tunnel opens on time in 1993. BR had originally stated that the new link would open by 1995 or 1996, but, with all the new tunneling, they now estimate the year 2000 as the earliest opening date.

The new environmentally friendly line will cost BR £1.7 billion, up from their original estimate of £1.2 billion. BR estimates that 30 per cent of this total represents costs incurred because of environmental considerations.

But the newly environmentally aware Margaret Thatcher — who is reported to have personally issued the order to BR to tunnel through most of the route — has flatly refused to provide any public money for the new line, even to cover the environmental aspects saying that "users of the new line should pay for the full costs, including environmental costs."

A number of private construction groups who had originally stated an interest in building the new line are questioning whether it is now feasible to fund the link.

CIVIL AVIATION

Ageing aircraft modifications ordered

Recommendations for extensive repairs to older jet passenger aircraft are now with the US Federal Aviation Administration which is expected to act on them within the next few months.

The world fleet of ageing passenger jet aircraft has been causing concern for some time as more and more jets pass the upper age limit — 30 years — for which they were designed.

This concern led to the convening of a conference in Washington last year and the setting up of a number of task forces to look at the older jets and see what needed to be done to keep them flying safely.

The task force studying Boeing's early model 727s, 737s and 747s is the first to report and its detailed recommendations are now being studied by the FAA.

The group wants to see all aircraft progressively modified once they reach

a certain age — probably about 20 years — or have flown a certain number of flights. It also believes that the modifications should be carried out even if inspection reveals no defects.

The Boeing task force recommends 160 specific modifications in all to the three models it studied. These range from changing rivets in fuselage panels to the replacement of major aircraft parts.

The Boeing group says that the all owners of the older jets should be required to make the modifications by law through their relevant regulatory

agencies if necessary.

However, it points out that many of the world's airlines have already carried out a number of these modifications.

If the plans are approved 1,300 early Boeing models will be included in the maintenance programme.

Recommendations made by the groups looking at the other major world aircraft manufacturers — McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed, Airbus Industrie, British Aerospace and Fokker — will be forwarded to the FAA as they become available.

United investigation focuses on cargo door lock

The US National Transportation Safety Board investigation into how a huge hole was ripped out of the side of a United Airlines Boeing 747 en route from Honolulu to Auckland on February 24 (see ITF News, February 1989) has now focused on the jumbo's door latch mechanism. Accident investigators are analysing the few remaining parts of the locking mechanism for further clues as to exactly what happened.

A cargo door malfunction seems the most likely cause of the accident. One explanation may be that the door was only partly locked — a theory which would account for the force with which the door was torn off the aircraft. As the aircraft climbed through 22,000 ft

and was pressurized interior cabin pressure against a partly locked door could have caused it to burst open.

The cargo door involved in the accident had not been trouble free. Maintenance records reveal electrical and sealing problems in the two months before the accident and that it had to be manually closed more than once.

The missing door has been located by radar but its retrieval—in 5,125 metres of water — poses a problem.

Meanwhile, as an interim safety measure, United has ordered licensed mechanics to inspect the cargo doors on all its aircraft immediately before take off and after landing. The airline has already conducted a maintenance check on all cargo doors.

The US Federal Aviation Administration has also ordered that all door latches on older 747s be strengthened within 30 days.

The Honolulu accident had certain similarities with the incident last April when part of the roof of an Aloha Airlines Boeing 737 was ripped off in flight.

Once again, the cabin staff on the United jet were the heroes of the hour as they struggled against the odds to assist the terrified passengers sitting next to the gaping hole and others who had been hit by flying debris as the door ripped away.

They continued to carry out their duties, though many of them were themselves injured and the conditions were truly atrocious. There were tremendous winds coming from the hole in the aircraft fuselage and the noise levels were such that communication was only possible with the aid of a megaphone.

As the aircraft turned back for Honolulu they helped prepare passengers for an emergency landing. Fortunately all went well, the aircraft got down safely and the evacuation procedure went smoothly.

As with the Aloha incident, the actions of the cabin crew in coping with a very serious emergency bear out the ITF case for the introduction of an international licensing system for this category in the interests of passenger safety (see box).

ITF DEMANDS CREW LICENSING

In submissions to the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montréal the ITF has repeatedly called for an international standard of competency for the profession.

The ITF licensing proposal refers to the need for competent cabin staff to take authoritative leadership in the event of an emergency to prevent chaos and panic which could result in large loss of life.

Most airline passengers would probably be surprised to learn that cabin attendants have yet to win the same professional recognition as the flight deck crew who have traditionally been licensed.

We ask them to join with us in seeking the introduction without further delay of an international licensing standard as being in the interests of all who fly.

Sprinklers and smokehoods recommended

Automatic water sprinklers should be installed in aircraft cabins, light weight smokehoods should be introduced as soon as possible and closed circuit television should be available to give more visual information to flight deck crews.

These are the three key recommendations of the 259-page official report of the Air Accident Investigation Branch of the Department of Transport into the fire aboard a British Airtours 737 jet at Manchester airport on 22 August 1985 in which 55 people lost their lives.

The accident to the Manchester jet happened on take off for a holiday flight to the Greek island of Corfu.

A combustion can in the port engine failed after a welding repair. Part of the can was ejected from the engine, fracturing an underwing fuel access panel and causing a fire which quickly spread to the cabin above.

In the ensuing cabin fire, passengers were overcome by the smoke and toxic fumes given off by the cabin furnishings. Two cabin attendants — at the back of the aircraft — were among those killed.

The airport fire brigade was promptly on the scene but despite their best efforts the aircraft sustained extensive fire damage.

The fire fighters' task was made even

more difficult because the pilot — following the usual drill — had turned the plane 'upwind', fanning the flames.

The inquests into the deaths established that most of those who died, 48 out of the 55, died not from the effects of the fire but from breathing in the toxic cocktail of gases that soon built up in the cabin.

The evacuation of the aircraft was seriously hampered by the restricted access to the cabin exits and the malfunctioning of one of the emergency exit doors.

Most of the 31 safety recommenda-

Continued on page 12

...Manchester fire report praises crew

Continued from page 11

tions made in the report, one of the most thorough and detailed British aircraft accident investigations ever undertaken, relate to measures necessary to ensure that in future passengers are protected long enough against incapacitation to allow them to escape a burning aircraft.

The sheer size and cost of the investigation into the survivability aspects of the accident caused the delay in the publication of the report which comes some three and a half years after the original accident.

However, British airline passengers are already benefiting from most of the improvements that it recommends as the Civil Aviation Authority has introduced many of them as part of a continuing programme of safety improvements.

The investigation is also likely to benefit the aviation industry generally as many of its recommendations have widespread application and are likely to be adopted by the world aviation industry after further research.

One significant exception could be the recommendation on the mandatory provision of smokehoods.

While the British consumer movement and some other groups are very much in favour of their introduction, there are others, including several aviation authorities, who are not sure that they are necessarily the best answer to safe evacuation in the event of an aircraft fire.

However easy the hoods are to put on — and they would have to be pulled on over the head probably in the dark and in conditions of panic — there is bound to be resistance from many if not most passengers, not least children and the elderly or disabled.

While they would undoubtedly save some lives, the four types so far developed fail to come up to specification so at the very least it will be necessary to wait until a hood is developed — probably within the next two years — that would meet the exacting requirements.

A more effective improvement recommended in the Manchester report and one that would save more lives,

would be the introduction of sprinklers which would serve to damp down a fire before it took hold linked to other measures such as floor level escape path lighting to point the way to exits.

The UK Fire Services Training School is currently looking at water sprays and industry is developing a "water spear" that could be fired into a cabin to pump in water to douse fires. Research in this area is considered to be most promising.

Closed circuit TV would also be helpful as it would enable the pilot to get a picture of the extent of any fire. It could prove invaluable with an engine fire in a two engined aircraft in helping the pilot decide if the problem was severe enough to require the shutting down of an engine, as in the M1 crash (see *ITF News* January 1989).

Another important recommendation concerns improving access to emergency exits.

Increasingly, operators are under pressure to increase profits by fitting more seats into their aircraft. This means that there is less space next to exits as more aircraft seats are squeezed into the cabin. In extreme cases, such as the B 747s operated by British Airways and KLM, overwing exits are actually blocked up (reducing the number of exits from 10 to 8) to enable more passengers to be carried. These practices are thoroughly unsafe and the ITF has condemned them on a number of occasions.

In the Manchester accident, passengers encountered great difficulty in reaching the exits and it is for this reason that the report advocates removing the seats next to exits. It also recommends strengthening seats in the area of these exits so that they do not become dislodged, blocking the exits. Additionally, the report recommends that persons who are infirm or would be unable to activate the exits should not be seated next to them.

While the report recognises that the materials used in aircraft furnishings and in the wall and ceiling panels of aircraft have undoubtedly improved, it says that there is an urgent need for the introduction of new flammability stan-

dards to offer passengers greater protection against fires — this is an area in which the ITF has been actively campaigning for internationally imposed standards.

Other important sections of the report relate to the need for better engine inspection to spot potential faults (the engine involved in the Manchester fire had been inspected and repaired in November 1983 but failed before the next inspection was due) and for the strengthening of fuel tank access panels to ensure that in a similar accident the fuel tanks are not ruptured.

In the light of the actual circumstances of the Manchester fire the report also urges new cabin evacuation drills, improved escape chute mechanisms so that they do not jam exit doors, better cabin fire extinguishers, smoke detectors in toilets and an improved public address system.

With specific reference to cockpit safety drills, the report recommends revising drills for positioning aircraft in the event of a fire.

The report praises the prompt and brave action of the crew which saved the lives of a number of passengers while recommending that at least one experienced cabin crew member should be at each end of an aircraft. In the Manchester crash both of the stewardesses stationed at the back of the aircraft were inexperienced and in the words of the report were "faced with an impossible situation". Both young women died in the blazing aircraft as they assisted in the evacuation of the aircraft.

It is established ITF policy that all cabin staff should undergo a rigorous training programme leading to an internationally recognised professional qualification.

With such an international licensing system, British Airtours would not have been allowed to operate without properly qualified and experienced staff in the cabin.

This is in the interests of passengers and not least the attendants themselves who have a heavy burden of responsibility to bear for the safety of airline passengers (see box on previous page).

Evergreen Air to go ahead

This month sees the announcement of the birth of a new airline — Evergreen Air — and more changes in the pattern of international air freight.

After a long delay, the Taiwan government has at last given the shipping group Evergreen the go-ahead on its plans for a cargo and passenger airline (see *ITF News*, February 1989), initially linking a number of Far East destinations, including Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan. Evergreen announced only last month that it might have to pull out of its planned move into the airline business if the government did not act soon. Its threat seems to have paid off though development costs are likely to be far more than they would otherwise have been. Probably operating under the name Evergreen Airways, the company plans to move into the US in 1993 and into Europe two years after that. Tentative orders have already been placed with Boeing

for four 400 series jumbos with an option for three more. Further aircraft orders are likely from McDonnell Douglas and Airbus Industrie. Plans for staff training — cabin staff will undergo training in Japan and pilots and maintenance staff at separate facilities in the US — are well advanced. Evergreen Marine Corporation will hold a 30% stake in Evergreen Airways.

There are increased signs that the move towards a global network of door-to-door freight services is gaining momentum, with news this month of two major deals — Australian Ansett International Air Freight's joint venture with the Soviet carrier Aeroflot and Japan Air Lines' contract with the German national airline Lufthansa.

The JAL contract has been signed because of Japan's need for a European land distribution network for its

air cargo by the time the single European market comes into effect at the end of 1992. It has chosen to team up with Lufthansa because it already has long-standing joint operation agreements with the airline for air cargo services between the two countries. Similar deals with the airlines of the other European Community member nations are likely to follow.

Under the joint venture agreement between Ansett and Aeroflot each of the airlines will handle cargo for the other, though full details are yet to be revealed. It follows a similar agreement entered into by TNT Air Cargo (the Ansett parent company is half-owned by TNT) and the Hungarian airline Malev.

*The privately-owned Canadian airline Wardair, recently taken over by Pacific Western Airlines, has announced that 500 of its staff in the Toronto area are to lose their jobs in the next few months.

Support the Eastern workers

The US ITF affiliates, with full backing from their national centre, the AFL-CIO, are locked in a critical battle with Frank Lorenzo, who owns Eastern.

ITF affiliated unions are asked to give their full support to this strike and also to do whatever they legally can to support the consumer boycott against Lorenzo-owned Continental Airlines.

Boycott Continental!