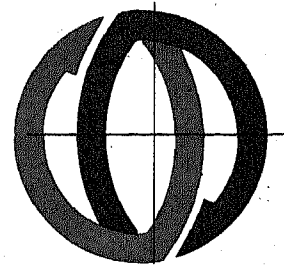


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CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS FLOWN HOME FROM FINLAND :**STRANDED CREW OF OLSEN
SHIP SCORE VICTORY**

After months of wrangling and accusations of bad faith, an agreement was finally signed on July 6 in Oslo giving compensation to more than a hundred Filipino seafarers left stranded without jobs or possessions in Helsinki by Norwegian cruise ship operator Fred Olsen.

Four hundred holidaymakers, both British and American, had to be flown home when the crew of the Filipino flag cruise ship *Black Prince* went on strike in the Finnish capital in May this year. The story of the *Black Prince* made headline news in Norway where millionaire Fredrik Olsen is a high profile shipowner.

The *Black Prince* case was important, not only because of the exploitation of the crew members, but because it represented the first action taken by an ITF union against a foreign-owned Philippine flag ship under bareboat charter. Such actions were made possible under ITF policy as a result of the decision of the Fair Practices Committee that such ships should generally be treated as flying a flag of convenience, a decision which was taken as the ship was tied up in Helsinki harbour.

The crew, all Filipinos, had been dissatisfied with conditions on the ship for some time and had communicated their problems to ITF headquarters in London. Knowing the reputation of the Finnish unions for supporting seafarers, when they arrived in Helsinki one of their first acts was to ask local FOC inspector Lauri Heinonen of the Finnish Seamen's Union for help. Their complaints centred on ill treatment, low pay and poor conditions on the ship.

Heinonen quickly secured the agreement of the Finnish unions to mount a blockade of the *Black Prince* but, under instructions from Olsen, the ship slipped its moorings secretly at dead of night on May 22 and headed out to sea. This was possible because the owner hired some 17 European officers and ratings in addition to a significant number of European officers who were already on board but designated as 'supernumeraries'. These included a "Cruise Commodore" who was, in reality, in command of the ship rather than the Filipino master. One of the main complaints of the Filipino crew members was that these 'supernumeraries' were paid far better and treated far better than they were. The Filipinos were there because a 100% Philippines crew is compulsory for registration under that country's flag. This callous act by the ship's owners left the Filipinos, who numbered over a hundred, with no more than the clothes they stood up in. Their luggage was still on board the ship, which was by then heading at speed for the Kiel Canal.

Getting away from Helsinki clearly gave the Olsen company a feeling that they had outwitted the ITF but their victory was short lived. ITF affiliates in the Nordic countries made it clear that the ship would face possible harassment by maritime unions wherever she called. On June 2, the Philippine marine authorities cancelled the ship's Philippine registration and imposed a fine of P200,000 on Vinta Maritime,

Continued on page 2

European aviation facing deregulation? (11)

...Black Prince crew abandoned in Helsinki



The *Black Prince* on an earlier voyage

(Photo : Skyphotos)

Continued from page 1

an Olsen associated company in Manila which had been responsible for manning the ship. Faced with these mounting pressures Olsen decided to register the ship under the Norwegian International Ship Register. NIS registration is, however, only allowed to passenger vessels operating in the Scandinavian region provided a special government dispensation is given, and the Norwegian unions made it clear that they would oppose the granting of such a waiver unless an agreement was reached with the crew. The minimum demands were return of their possessions, payment of all outstanding wages and re-employment or adequate compensation.

The Norwegian seafarers' affiliates of the ITF took part in a series of meetings with Fred Olsen to hammer out a settlement. Registration of the ship under the NIS took place on 6 June and on 8 June an outline agreement was reached in Oslo. Going back on an initial demand that all crew members who wanted their jobs back should be on board by June 8 (a physical impossibility) the company agreed that any former crew member of

the *Black Prince* who registered with Olsen's local manning agent by 15 June would get his job back provided they joined the ship by 8 July when its next cruising schedule was due to begin. At the same time an agreement was signed laying down new rates of pay agreed by the Norwegian maritime unions in conjunction with the ITF-affiliated Philippine seafarers' union AMOSUP. The company also undertook to settle the claims which the Filipinos had prior to walking off the ship in May.

For a few days the seafarers concerned were jubilant. They had only to secure the necessary documentation at home in Manila and fly back to Europe to join their own ship. Unfortunately, however, things didn't work out quite so easily. Fred Olsen began recruiting new Filipinos for the ship and it soon became clear that only a small number of the original 100 stood any real chance of re-employment. Then, as the crew were preparing to leave to meet the July 8 deadline, the manning agency, Vinta Maritime, filed a law suit against them claiming that they had committed mutiny and asking the courts in the Philip-

pires to prevent them from leaving the country. Olsen claimed that this action was nothing to do with his company, despite evidence of close ownership links between Vinta and Olsen and his senior managers.

With accusations of bad faith flying around both from the Norwegian unions and the Filipino former crew members, a final agreement was signed in Oslo on 6 July between Olsen and all the Norwegian maritime unions. A final date of 15 July was set for those crew members wishing to be rehired to present themselves on board the ship while those not being rehired would receive 4 months' salary in place of notice. Fred Olsen also agreed to use its best endeavours to "persuade" Vinta Maritime to withdraw the legal proceedings instituted in Manila against the former crew members. Despite the terms of this agreement it seems as though a maximum of about fifteen seafarers are likely to be sailing once again as the *Black Prince* sets out on its July cruise, though Olsens have promised to give the former crew priority when hiring new seafarers for vacant jobs. A further condition for the settlement is that the ex crew members withdraw all their claims against Olsen.

Unfortunately, the *Black Prince* case is far from being unusual. Conditions on cruise ships are notoriously bad. Most exploited of all are the crew members in the "hotel" section of the ship — especially those whose duties are concerned with cleaning etc. Like their colleagues in the hotel and restaurant industry ashore, these workers are frequently forced to work very long hours to look after the needs of passengers and have to rely on tips for the great majority of their income.

The ITF has long been concerned at this exploitation of a vulnerable section of the labour force and is taking active steps to monitor conditions on these ships. It has drawn up a worldwide Cruise Ship Agreement to ensure that there are international standards for wages and conditions applicable to these ships.

General Secretary: Harold Lewis

Publications Officer: David Cockroff

International Transport Workers' Federation
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Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation
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ICFTU LASHES BRUTAL CRUSHING OF BEIJING 'SPRING'

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has added its voice to those calling on the government of China to lift the death sentences imposed on leaders of the pro-democracy movement.

This appeal to the Chinese authorities to respect the rights of students and workers to peaceful protest comes as the ICFTU submits a formal complaint to the International Labour Organisation in which it accuses the government of China of violently suppressing groups seeking simply to exercise the right of freedom of association.

The Autonomous Students' and Workers' Federations were the driving forces behind the pro-democracy movement and the steps they were taking towards the formation of a truly representative independent trade union structure outside the now largely discredited All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) have been identified as one of the factors that panicked the regime into ordering the bloody massacre in Tiananmen Square that so outraged world public opinion.

Recognising the need for concerted international pressure to be brought to bear on the Chinese authorities to spare the lives of the protesters, the ICFTU has approached the UN, UNESCO and the UN Centre on Human Rights asking them to intercede urgently with the Chinese to press for the death sentences to be lifted. Organisations affiliated to the ICFTU are also being

urged to ask their governments to intercede on behalf of those who have been condemned to death for their part in the non violent demonstrations in Tiananmen Square.

Addressing the ILO General Conference in Geneva in June, ICFTU

and other deaths were ordered by China's ageing leadership, embodied by Deng Xiaoping, to ensure twenty years of stability.

The dissidents say that the government response to the clear mass support for the demonstrations in China

"...no sense in...the horrifying repression of those whose protests have been exemplary in their rejection of violence"
— John Vanderveken

General Secretary Johnny Vanderveken used strong language to condemn the crackdown on the peaceful protesters. "There can be no sense in, and no justification for, the horrifying repression of those whose protests have been exemplary in their rejection of violence," he said.

Two Chinese dissidents who have escaped the violence in their country to the safety of France, in an interview with the French newspaper *Libération*, said that the events in Tiananmen Square, which had crushed the 'Beijing spring', were far worse than what happened during the cultural revolution.

These eyewitnesses say at least 2,000 of those in the Square must have perished (the official government estimate is only 300 deaths) and that these

during April and May showed that while purporting to be socialist China was in fact ruled by a dictatorship.

Those in power thought that if they arrested scores of demonstrators and threw them into prison the clamour for freedom and democracy in China would just fade away. In fact, quite the opposite had happened and these ideas had become all the more deeply rooted in the Chinese people.

The direct challenge to the government by the demonstrators was evidence of the growing maturity of a long time feudal nation.

While it was true that the demonstrators had been crushed, all had not been lost. The right of Deng to govern had been seriously compromised. He now had 'no future' and was 'unlikely to last more than two more years'.

Asian union seminars end on positive note

For a number of years representatives of transport workers' unions throughout the Asian and Pacific region have held annual international seminars to discuss matters of common concern affecting workers in the transport sector.

These seminars have been organised through the All-Japan Council of Traffic and Transport Workers' Unions (Zenkoun) which has been keen to develop and maintain workers' unity and solidarity in the Asian and Pacific region.

Much of the credit for the success of

the seminars must go to the Japanese rail workers' union Kokuro which was one of the leading lights in the Council.

Unfortunately recent changes affecting the Japanese trade union movement have meant that Zenkoun has now been wound up and its seminar activities must now cease. The Japanese transport unions that had been members of Zenkoun — led by the private railway workers' union federation Shitetsu-soren — decided that they would use the funds that still remained to call a fourth — and final — seminar of Asian Transport Workers' Unions.

This took place in the capital, Tokyo, at the end of May.

The seminar was attended by leaders of transport unions in eleven countries from around the region, as well as a number of international organisations and by ITF Regional Representative Mo Hoda and Shigi Wada, head of the ITF's Tokyo office.

In the course of the three days, the participants debated the current concerns of the region's transport workers and the steps the unions are taking to come to grips with the major changes

Continued on page 4

IRISH MERGER TO HEAL 65 YEAR OLD SPLIT

One third of all Irish trade unionists are now voting on a proposal to merge the country's two largest unions.

The 150,000 members of the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) and the 50,000 Federated Workers' Union of Ireland (FWUI) members, if they approve the pro-merger decisions of their respective union congresses, will be healing a 65 year old split in the Irish trade union movement and taking a big step towards realising the dreams of both their founders.

James Connolly and Jim Larkin founded the ITGWU to be "One Big Union" for all Irish workers on the syndicalist model of many early European and Latin American unions. Connolly died in 1916 (he was shot by the British for his part in leading the Easter Rising) while Larkin was out of the country. Larkin returned, and following divisions with the leadership of

the ITGWU, left and founded the Workers' Union in 1924.

The organisations have grown into the two largest unions in Ireland, and the project of reunifying them has long been a cherished ideal.

Recent negotiations between the two executives have resulted in a successful plan to create a "super-union".

The new union will be known as the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) and will come into being on January 1, 1990. The structures of the new union have been carefully designed to avoid the new organisation becoming a bureaucratic monolith. The individual member will be at the centre of the union, according to the proposal.

A series of Regional Executive Committees will be established that will have decision making on a broad range of important issues. Future General Officers of the union (President, Vice

President and General Secretary) will all be elected directly by membership ballot — both unions presently elect office holders at Annual Conference.

The new union will also reach out to the broader community with a new "Social Solidarity Service" offering aid and assistance to the unemployed, disabled and retired members.

The new union's rule book and constitution, jointly drafted by the two unions, has now been approved by the annual meetings of both the ITGWU and the FWUI and circulated to the union's members. Although it's clear that the vast majority of the union's membership support the merger, the joint ballot is seen as an affirmation of the mass rank and file democracy that will be a hallmark of the new union.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, who attended this year's ITGWU Conference, has wished the new union every possible success.

...spirit of international worker unity lives on

Continued from page 3
that are taking place in the industry.

In his address, Mo Hoda recalled the ITF's regional conference held in Tokyo in December 1987 which had dealt with the same concerns as those now being voiced by the seminar participants. He was pleased that this latest seminar was taking place at a time when more positive events were taking place in the region, notably in Pakistan, where the government of Benazir Bhutto was committed to restoring union rights taken away by the military regime.

He regretted that the Zenkoun international seminars had to come to an end but promised that the ITF, through its own regional machinery, would ensure that its affiliates were able to further the aims set by the seminars.

He also referred to the ITF's own long-term educational programme in the Asia/Pacific region which was assisting transport workers' unions to meet the challenges of the late 80s. A new 'sense of unity and solidarity' now permeated inter-union contacts and would be one of its most lasting benefits.

Makoto Tamura, president of the Japanese preparatory committee for this last seminar, in his turn mentioned the mutual understanding fostered by the seminars as being among the positive gains.

The final document adopted by the participants pledged that the many valuable friendships formed at the seminars would not be forgotten and that all who had taken part in them would work to ensure that the spirit of worker unity engendered by the meetings did not come to an end with this concluding seminar.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

30-31 August	Rhine-Main-Danube Working Group	Vienna
31 August-1 September	Fair Practices Sub Committee	London
4-7 September	Ship Inspectors	Eastbourne
19-21 September	Railwaymen's Section Conference	Santander
17-18 October	Executive Board	London
23-24 October	Meeting of Cabin Crew Unions	London
30 November-1 December	Dangerous Goods	Geneva

SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA IN 1988 :

NEW REVIEW FOR UNION BOOKSHELVES

Readers of ITF News know that the Southern African situation is constantly changing. ITF News tries its best to provide a running coverage of the major developments, particularly in relation to the growing trade union movement and its transport members.

This information is aimed at providing tools to national trade unions in their campaigns of support for the mass democratic movement in South Africa. More than any other single issue or area of the world, trade unionists are united in opposing the South African apartheid system and supporting the trade unionists there who are fighting for their rights as workers and citizens.

A new publication by the International Defence and Aid Fund for

Southern Africa (IDAF), the Review of 1988: Repression and Resistance in South Africa and Namibia, provides a useful addition to any campaigning or information work.

This review is both concise and comprehensive in summing up the major developments in these countries over the last year. Separate sections on the political scene, labour events, the military front, media and education within South Africa and Namibia provide a handy reference guide and a useful educational tool for unions. Background information and historical details are all too easily lost in the day to day events of strikes, protests and political happenings.

This short book can fill that gap, and would be a valuable addition to

most union's libraries or bookshelves.

The IDAF is a humanitarian organisation that provides assistance to the victims of apartheid. It is committed to the "achievement of free, democratic, non-racial societies throughout Southern Africa." The fund gives aid for the defence and rehabilitation of people who have suffered from the evils and injustice of apartheid and also aims to keep the world informed of the issues at stake in the region.

The 1988 Review is published in English and costs UK£1. You should write directly to the IDAF (not the ITF) with an international postal order for UK£1 at Cannon Collins House, 64 Essex Road, London N1 8LR

FISHERIES

EC QUOTA THREAT TO BRITISH AND SPANISH JOBS

Britain has fallen foul of the European Commission (EC) over its new register of British fishing vessels. The registry, which became operational at the beginning of 1989 following the passing of the 1988 Merchant Shipping Act requires all British registered fishing vessels to be at least 75 per cent British owned. The Commission feels that this discriminates on grounds of nationality and offends against the principle of free right of establishment. The Commission have written to the British government saying that Britain was breaking Community law, which could lead to action in the European courts. The provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act relating to the fishing vessel registry are intended to outlaw the controversial practice of "quota hopping"

whereby fishermen from other EC states (notably Spain) use part of 'Total Allowable Catch' (TAC) for certain species allocated under the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to their British counterparts, by registering as British fishing vessels.

Spanish fishermen successfully challenged the UK legislation in the High Court in March this year, but saw the verdict overturned on appeal, and are now awaiting a final appeal to the House of Lords.

One immediate effect of the UK's legislation was to prevent, inter alia, 103 Spanish owned British registered fishing boats from working and therefore throwing 1500 Spanish and British fishermen into the ranks of the unemployed. This matter was raised by the ITF at a

meeting of the EC Joint Committee on Social Problems in Sea Fishing held on 3-4 July 1989 in Brussels. The Committee, a meeting consisting of representatives from both workers' and employers' organisations, agreed that this matter was within the Committee's terms of reference and would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting in October, the intention being to make the Commission aware of the social consequences of the common fisheries policy and the concept of a total allowable catch.

At the heart of this dispute is the problem that the system of total allowable catches and quotas would appear to be fundamentally flawed since it too discriminates on the basis of nationality.

GERMAN TAXIS : TIGHTER REGULATION URGED

Taxis are an essential and attractive addition to transport in cities around the world and yet in many countries they are subject to far fewer regulations than are public service vehicles. The important service offered by taxi drivers is often not reflected in their working and social conditions which lag far behind those of say bus drivers.

This is certainly the case in Germany where the taxi trade has been specifically exempted from the stringent regulations that apply generally to public passenger transport. As a result, many taxi drivers work excessively long hours (sixty hours or more a week on average). Overwork affects drivers' health adversely and is one of the reasons for the thirty per cent increase in traffic accidents involving taxis in the past ten years.

There is a clear need for a system of effective regulation to be introduced in a trade that is expanding rapidly. Some 350 million passenger journeys were made in 1987 and 40,000 professional drivers, over half of them owner drivers, are now employed in the taxi trade.

It is against this background that the German transport workers' union ÖTV has produced a booklet under the title "Observations of the ÖTV on the taxi and minicab trade" which sets out the deficiencies that beset the sector and suggests how the existing largely unregulated situation might be improved, to the benefit of the taxi trade, those who work in it and those who use it.

On driving hours, the ÖTV argues strongly for the introduction of regulations imposing maximum driving and minimum rest periods. It also insists, in the overriding interests of road safety, that these regulations be rigorously enforced, to bring home to both employers and drivers the duty they owe to other road users. The union points out the importance of enforcing the existing restrictions on maximum working hours in the case of 'moonlighting' taxi drivers, who may have already completed a full day's work in their full time employment before getting behind the wheel of a taxi cab.

The ÖTV booklet urges legislative

intervention to outlaw the practice of paying taxi drivers according to the number of completed journeys — this would bring the sector into line with the buses and road haulage. Instead, the union would like taxi drivers to be paid an hourly rate, as is the norm in other professions.

Currently, most taxi drivers receive a percentage of the cab firm's takings

towards their employees and are capable of fulfilling their responsibilities as public passenger undertakings.

Companies that fall below these standards have no place in the cab trade. They should be closed down, says the ÖTV, and their licences withdrawn.

The union stresses that those who would like to see taxis used as a replacement for public transport rather

Over-reliance on casual labour...the hallmark of the cab trade everywhere

— thus the more passengers they carry, the more they earn. This can encourage drivers to speed back to the taxi rank to pick up more passengers.

The ÖTV also strongly favours the introduction of a compulsory training scheme similar to that for drivers of public service passenger vehicles and open to both school leavers and mature entrants. This would meet the growing expression of taxi drivers for recognised professional status.

The greatest single factor militating against decent standards is identified as the over-reliance on casual labour that is the hallmark of the cab trade almost everywhere.

It is estimated that about three out of four taxi drivers are casuals, often moonlighting from their full time jobs.

Where casual labour is the norm, other abuses abound. Comparisons are drawn with the construction industry which is notorious for massive tax evasion. As in that industry, casual labour depresses standards. While many taxi firms offer a very high level of service, others are casual in their approach, offering a fitful and indifferent service to the travelling public.

The ÖTV therefore proposes that taxi firms with two or more vehicles should be obliged to employ at least one driver per taxi and to remain open for business for at least 12 hours a day.

Reform of the current system of taxi licensing is also urged to ensure that new licences are granted only to those companies that meet their obligations

than as a welcome addition to it should be resisted as this would destroy well regulated jobs in public transport without a corresponding increase in taxi jobs and is not in the public interest.

On safety, the booklet recommends that taxi drivers be required to wear easy release seat belts when carrying passengers (they are currently only obliged to wear seat belts on journeys without passengers).

Taxi drivers, with their sedentary lifestyle, suffer many of the same health problems as lorry and bus drivers and so the booklet proposes a series of remedial measures, including better designed driving seats to help reduce the incidence of back complaints, as well as decent rest and canteen facilities to ensure that drivers eat well and are able to take rest breaks away from the noise and pollution of crowded city streets. Remedial action should also be taken to reduce the high incidence of respiratory disease among drivers as the result of prolonged exposure to exhaust gases.

The ÖTV has agreements covering taxi drivers in the Federal Republic but there are still large areas of the country which remain unorganised.

Clearly there is an important job to do persuading drivers of the benefits of union membership. If the ideas contained in the booklet come to fruition — and they have the full support of the ITF — we could be seeing the beginnings of a growth in union organisation in an area in which it is sorely needed.

Scansped — Nordic haulage unions agree four nation deal

'A breaking of the ice for Nordic trade union cooperation' is how one Swedish HTF official has described a new agreement between the international haulage company Scansped and six unions in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden brought about as the result of his union's initiative.

Under the agreement which was reached in the Swedish city of Malmö on 2 May and coincides with a major restructuring of Scansped, it has been decided that the company management and representatives of its unions in the four Nordic countries should meet twice a year — in the spring and the autumn — for round table discussions.

The autumn meeting will deal with the company's budget and its future plans, while the spring meeting will review the company's financial performance and how well these plans are working.

As the Swedish HTF official puts it, "We will get a chance to see how

things are going and to present ideas and suggestions for future action".

He sees the new agreement as one which will help promote good relations and constructive cooperation, with positive benefits for both sides, the company and its unions.

The union representatives who will be involved in the talks with the company will be given the chance to meet twice a year for their own deliberations prior to their meetings with Scansped.

They will have the right to time off on full pay to attend, their travelling and living expenses will be met and they will generally have free use of the company's telephones, telex and fax facilities to enable them to keep in touch with their counterparts in the different countries.

To enable the union representatives to prepare for their task they will take part in courses explaining how Scansped is run and how the trade unions in the other Nordic countries

operate.

The Swedish union behind the agreement is particularly pleased that it has come about as the Swedish Employers' Association SAF has been always been opposed to international cooperation between the trade union representatives of companies like Scansped which employ workers in a number of different Nordic countries.

The Scansped company and its 40 subsidiaries conducts haulage and forwarding operations throughout Europe, North America and the Far East. It employs 5,000 workers in Scandinavia, almost half of these in Sweden.

The agreement must now be formally approved by the Scansped board and the various union executives but this is expected to present no difficulties.

Once approved, it will run for a trial period to 31 December 1990, after which it can be terminated by either side at three months' notice.

'Ghost trains' to run on Swiss Railways?

Swiss Railways (SBB) are facing a severe staff shortage. At least 270 additional workers are required to meet shortages attributed to increasing rail traffic and pressures on the Swiss labour market. The shorter working week and more flexible retirement have caused the market to contract at a time when rail traffic is increasing.

The ITF affiliated Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) has put forward a programme to improve the situation. The union is pressing for an improvement in working conditions and for higher pay to compensate for irregular hours and night work. It wants studies on rail shift patterns and on the expectations of prospective recruits. Only if rail jobs are made more attractive will recruitment difficulties ease it argues.

SBB management, however, has put forward only stop-gap solutions. One of these was the proposed introduction of 'train assistants' to replace guards on some parts of the network. These were to be part and full time workers who would receive only two weeks'

training. They would be trained in only basic technical matters. Their job description would not include ticket control or dealing with passengers' queries. Even the management admitted that the proposal was not satisfactory.

The union has opposed the switch from fully qualified guards to cheaper 'train assistants'. The only real solution is to draw up a permanent job description for guards. If the duties entailed in the job were clearly set out, the positions would be more easily filled.

The disagreement threatened to upset the relationship between SBB and the union which was considering go-slow action. Last month, however, the two sides met. It was agreed that the idea of 'train assistants' would be dropped, at least until the situation had been reassessed. Only if rest-day working cannot fill the gaps or if staff shortages worsen dramatically, will the new post be introduced. This seems unlikely to happen.

Recognising that only a strenuous recruitment drive can produce a permanent solution to the problems, the management promised to launch a full-scale advertising campaign to try to attract workers into the industry. For some time this campaign remained at the preparatory stage but it has now been set in motion. The SBB is beginning a training programme for 1,107 apprentices on August 1st. In the long term, however, the management is still determined to go ahead with a harsh rationalisation programme. The union fears that passengers may have to travel on 'ghost trains'. Regional trains will soon run without guards. Many stations will not be staffed; passengers will have to contact major stations for information or rely on computerised data systems.

One casualty of the change will be passenger comfort and safety will undoubtedly be reduced by the change. Old and handicapped passengers will be especially affected and women's safety at night will be jeopardised.

LOW PAY AT HEART OF BRITISH RAIL DISPUTE

The train drivers' union, ASLEF, and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) representing white collar staff have accepted a 'no strings attached' 8.8% pay offer from British Rail after a series of one day strikes brought the British railway network to a complete halt. The biggest rail union, the NUR, however, voted to continue

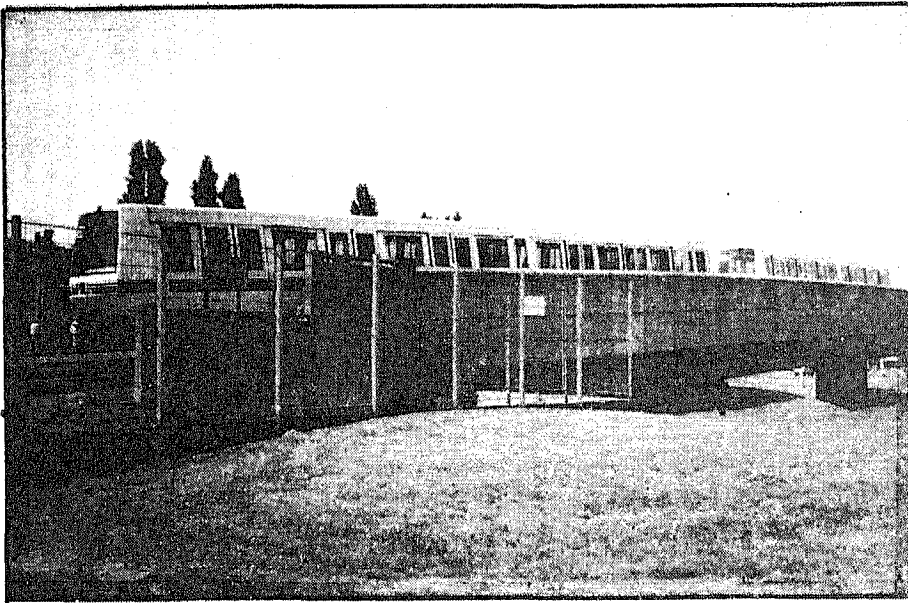
their campaign of 24-hour strikes.

The revised offer was made to all the unions after the rail industry's own appeals tribunal ruled that TSSA members should receive a rise of 8.8%. This compares with the 'final offer' of 7% which had been on offer to the unions prior to the tribunal decision. However, British Rail management,

which has shown signs of gross incompetence in its handling of the whole dispute, managed to provoke a walk out by the unions by insisting on a whole list of conditions which would need to accompany an 8.8% increase. Faced with the unions' determination and widespread public support for their cause, BR eventually dropped all the 'strings', a move which was enough to convince the two smaller unions to accept the pay deal.

The NUR argues that the deal does not resolve the fundamental problems of low pay and long hours in the rail industry. Even with the 8.8% rise, the basic rate of the lowest paid rail workers is just £105.30 for a 39-hour week.

BR have made major concessions on the future of national bargaining machinery, the other issue at the centre of the dispute. Pay and conditions covering hours, holidays, sick pay, pensions and welfare arrangements will continue to be negotiated nationally. So far progress has been insufficient to convince the NUR to call off its successful 24 hour strikes which in London have combined with a separate Underground dispute to paralyse the capital's roads once a week most of the summer. If London's commuters doubted the need for a better rail service before, they have few doubts now.



The most recent meeting of the Joint ITF/PSI Urban Transport Working Group was held in the French city of Lille in mid-June. Those attending paid a visit to the control centre from which the city's fully automated driverless metro system — pictured above — is run.

Copenhagen — bus services under threat

Danish unions are forecasting chaos if the government goes ahead with plans — already well advanced — to privatise thirty per cent of Copenhagen's bus services.

Buses in the capital are currently run by the HT transport authority on which most of the country's other urban transport authorities are modelled. Now the government intends to scrap it, replacing it with a five-man board of local mayors who will run the capital's bus services.

As is often the case when bus services are privatised little attention is given in the government's plan to driver training or the age and condition of the privatised buses. The road transport union SiD fears that the streets of Copenhagen could soon see elderly buses that offer little in the way of comfort and could put passengers at risk. These potentially unsafe buses would be manned by crews who had not received proper training.

The level and frequency of service is also likely to suffer. The union has been unable to get any assurances that reserve crews would be available to take over whenever bus workers were absent through sickness.

Fares will also rise steeply as operating subsidies are to be withdrawn. Inevitably, the less well off, who need the bus services most, will be hardest hit.

Tenders will be invited for HT's routes but public companies will not be allowed to bid. This will be sure to lead to prime routes being creamed off as the private companies are likely to be interested only in the more profitable runs on the edge of Copenhagen that are less heavy in terms of wear and tear on vehicles.

With the unfair advantage that private companies would enjoy over publicly operated services, the government could then turn round and say 'We told you private buses were more efficient'. But such unequal competition is simply not 'fair play' says the unions.

German jobs threat grows

Under the new regime of incoming president Carlos Menem the Argentinian state shipping line Elma is likely to be given two years to become competitive or face privatisation. The company, under its new head and Menem associate Luis Santos Casale, is already facing up to the fact that it must modernise and will be putting 15 of its 38 ships on to the market as part of a drastic rationalisation plan which includes plans for increased pooling arrangements with other liner operators.

ÖTV fears that, once the GIS opened, German seafarers would rapidly be replaced by cut price foreign crews have proved well-founded. Just two

months after the second register opened the first company — Sloman Neptun — has taken on six Filipino seafarers for its gas carrier *Zetagas*. The company had originally intended to replace eight German seafarers with Filipinos but — following a union challenge — was compelled to reinstate two of them because of a technicality. The ÖTV is concerned that this could be the start of a slippery slope as other owners follow Sloman Neptun's lead. The legal challenge to the constitutionality of the new flag continues with the coastal states of Bremen and Schleswig-Holstein and the ÖTV due shortly to appear before the Federal Constitutional Court. In its first two months the register has signed up 200 plus ships.

Owners of Greek ocean going tonnage have bowed to the inevitable and agreed to recognise the seagoing profession as being specially heavy and unhealthy. The move had been expected after the coastal shipowners conceded the arduous nature of the maritime profession in this year's contract round. This recognition marks a significant victory for the Greek seamen's union PNO which has been pressing the issue, with little success, until this year. It will

now be translated into a special 1,000 drachmae a month allowance paid to all ocean going seafarers. In a welcome move, the owners have also agreed to join forces with the PNO to ensure that the appropriate amendments are made to the seamen's pension fund

indicated that its two newbuildings due for completion next year — a vehicle carrier and a containership — will be built for mixed crewing. MITSUI OSK Lines has already said it will build two VLCCS for combined Japanese and foreign manning. Other companies are also likely to place ship orders under the latest government sponsored shipbuilding programme if the mixed crewing issue, which is still the subject of detailed discussion between management and the JSU, can be resolved.

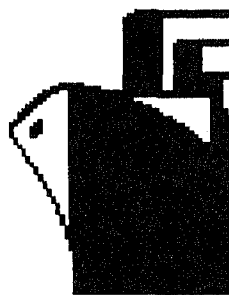
The Liberian register has clearly received something of a jolt from the recent growth in second registers and this has forced a number of

changes to give it increased autonomy (the registry had been hived off from the transport ministry) and make it more flexible to owners' demands, particularly in Asia where it sees the greatest potential growth. A high ranking government official has just returned from a visit to shipowners' associations in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea where he reported on plans for a major expansion of the seafarers' training scheme (currently this turns out 36 ratings every six months). The benefit of the revamped scheme to unemployed Liberians would seem to be doubtful as Liberia says it will not insist on employment of Liberian nationals as a condition of acceptance. The number of Liberian flag ships has remained static over the past twelve months and the register is badly in need of a boost from the burgeoning Far East market.

The nine month old Marshall Islands foc registry has taken on its first Far East ships — two Cape class drybulk carriers owned by Oak Shipping of Hong Kong. According to press reports, Oak Shipping is sponsoring officer cadet training for twenty five Marshall Islanders — presumably the

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The ITF's regular flag by flag roundup



NAT. The concession came at the end of six months of difficult negotiations on the renewal of the contract covering seafarers on ships over 4,500 dwt. Progress was so slow that the PNO had to put the owners on notice that a strike threat would be carried out if the talks failed to produce results. Fortunately, this was enough to give the necessary impetus for a settlement which has produced pay increases of 13 per cent for the first six months of this year, followed by 15 per cent for the second half. Meanwhile, the country's maritime unions have reacted with understandable rage to a government decision allowing six Greek flagged ships just bought by Ceres Hellenic Shipping to be partly manned by foreign nationals. The Ministry of the Merchant Marine has agreed that Ceres may employ suitably experienced non-domiciled deck and engine room officers for a trial period of a year. The unions fear that other owners will now seek to follow Ceres' lead and that foreign nationals will soon replace Greek officers on a growing proportion of ships in the national fleet.

A second Japanese shipowner Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK Line) has in-

VITAL US CRUISE SHIP SAFETY TEST CASE

The US National Transportation Safety Board, an independent government agency which investigates transport accidents, is currently fighting a key test case to establish that it has jurisdiction over American-owned cruise ships operating under foreign flags.

NTSB investigators have filed a petition in the US Federal Court in Miami against Carnival Cruise Lines Inc whose ship, the *Celebration* collided with the Cuban cement carrier *San Luis* on February 10th killing three of the crew members. The Board aims to prove that it has the right to investigate the collision.

Carnival is a Miami-based operation with only one non-American on its board of directors. Nearly all the vacationers aboard the *Celebration* were US citizens and the seven-day excursion originated in Miami.

Despite this clear evidence that Carnival is a US company, the cruise line claims that it does not have to observe US regulations since the *Celebration* operates under the Liberian flag and the accident occurred in international waters. Carnival has already ignored seven subpoenas issued to obtain documents and interviews with crew members.

Carnival argues that assisting the Liberian authorities is all that is legally required. The NTSB is not, understandably, convinced that an enquiry instituted by an FOC registry will be as rigorous as its own.

Rather than using its state-of-the-art

radar system, the *Celebration* relied on lookouts which failed to detect the Cuban freighter darkened because of an electrical power failure. Passengers told the agency that some crew members were not well-versed in emergency procedures or were unable to communicate with passengers because they were not proficient in English.

The NTSB contends that it has the right to probe incidents in which there is a substantial US interest. Board administrators point to the increasing number of US citizens taking cruises. Cruise Lines International, a New York-based industry association says 3.1 million North Americans boarded cruise ships last year.

There is reason to be optimistic about the NTSB's chances in court. In 1988, the board was sued in the US District Court for the District of Columbia by SeaEscape Ltd, another Miami-based cruise line over the same jurisdictional question raised by the *Celebration* probe. The court found that the NTSB had a legitimate interest in investigating an engine-room fire that occurred last year aboard a SeaEscape ship in the Gulf of Mexico. There are a number of similarities between this incident and the *Celebration* collision.

The controversy over the *Celebration* comes as the NTSB is about to conclude a major study of safety practices aboard foreign-flagged cruise ships. The agency is conducting a comprehensive review of the \$5-billion-a-year cruise industry focusing

on issues such as crew training and licensing, manning procedures and fire protection. According to one NTSB official, the industry is heading for a "truly catastrophic accident."

Of 122 cruise ships operating out of US ports, only two fly the US flag. Foreign registration relieves companies of US corporate tax and exempts them from complying with US safety standards. Lynne Smith, chief of the agency's Safety Studies Division, comments: "They're foreign-flagged deliberately to avoid safety regulations. We need to know what the fallout of that is for American passengers."

Jurisdictional conflicts do not arise in other transportation realms, such as aviation. The NTSB has clear authority under the International Civil Aviation Organisation to investigate accidents even when they occur in international air space aboard foreign carriers.

The ITF's US affiliates are arguing before Congress that cruise ship operators operating out of US ports should be obliged to submit to US labour laws irrespective of the flag of the ship or the country origin of the shipowner.

...Russian crews for 'export' ?

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first to be trained under the Pacific Republic's much heralded crew training programme!

Fears that Russia might soon follow Poland and China's lead and start 'exporting' its surplus seafarers to the West were raised by the British National Union of Seamen (NUS) when it met top officials from the Soviet Sea and River Workers' Union in London recently. The Russian trade unionists said that they understood and shared the NUS's concern that the availability

of Russian seafarers could lead to further downward pressure on pay. The explained that the drive to make Russian shipping companies financially self-sufficient had already led to a reduction in crew sizes but that so far displaced seafarers had been found alternative employment in other industries. However, they agreed that western shipowners' demands for Russia's highly trained low cost crews might soon prove hard to resist. Before they left the Russian union leaders promised to support policies that would allay these fears.

US MOVES ON SUB-STANDARD SHIPS

Sub-standard ships would do well to avoid putting in to United States ports now that the Coast Guard has the power to inspect ship-board living and working conditions under the terms of the ILO Minimum Standards Convention 147. Foc rustbuckets still visit the US from time to time as readers of the *Seafarers' Bulletin* will be well aware. European port state control has already driven sub-standard operators away from continental ports and US ratification of no 147 — welcome, if belated — means that they will find the available trading area shrinking yet further. It is now up to those nations that have not yet ratified the convention to do so so that these owners can no longer find a safe haven.

European deregulation?

Europe's aviation industry is moving closer and closer to a deregulated environment. This is the inescapable conclusion to be drawn from reading two new documents adopted by the European Commission on 19 July. The documents represent the first draft of the "Second Wave" of aviation liberalisation proposals following the rather weak set of regulations adopted in December 1987.

Two documents and two Commissioners are involved. The bigger of the two comes from Transport Commissioner Karel Van Miert supported by Competition Commissioner Leon Brittan and is called 'The Development of Air Transport in the Community'. The second, produced by Brittan and supported by Van Miert, deals with the application of Community competition policy to aviation. Both documents will now begin the tortuous process of consultations with the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee before being presented for discussion and adoption by the Council of Transport Ministers. The earliest this could happen would be in October, but the extraordinary length of time which it took the Council to adopt the first package gives few grounds for believing that this one will be finished before the end of 1989.

In this introduction to the 'Second Stage' document, Van Miert points out that the development of a Community air transport policy is not just about liberalisation. It also means that users should have a wide range of services available; carriers should be able to operate in a sound financial environment; airline staff should have improved working conditions and access to their profession; airports should be able to attract and maintain services; and the general public should get better environmental protection. Referring to the December 1987 package of measures, Van Miert points out that these were always considered only as a first stage. Not much actually happened in Europe's aviation industry as a result of the first stage so the second one is

considerably more radical. The main elements proposed are:

FARES

On air fares the Commission wants to strike a balance between giving airlines the freedom to set fares and guarding against 'predatory or excessive pricing'. The first package introduced two discount zones (discount and deep discount) below the normal or reference fare on a route. The new docu-

state to apply to the Commission to stabilise capacity on a particular route for a limited period if the application of the regulation has caused 'serious financial damage' to its carriers.

MARKET ACCESS

The new document proposes that the government of a member state will not be able to stop a new national airline from entering the aviation market and serving international routes

...second stage proposals are considerably more radical...

ment does away with the whole idea of discounts and concentrates on the fare levels. It proposes the scrapping of the "double approval" system currently in use (where both countries affected by a route have to accept a fare proposed by the airline involved) and its replacement with a "double disapproval" system, where both governments would have to refuse the fare proposal. To prevent excessive or predatory pricing, the Commission proposes that governments should examine (and not give automatic approval to) any fare which is 20% higher or lower than the corresponding fare in the previous corresponding season. Provisions are also suggested for preventing non-Community air carriers from acting as price leaders on any given route within the Community.

CAPACITY

The first package began the process of liberalising the rights of governments to intervene to stop the share of their own carriers dropping below 50% of all the traffic on any international route. It laid down a figure of 55:45 up to 1989 and 60:40 thereafter. The new proposals suggest moving to 67.5:32.5 from October 1990 and 75:25 thereafter. Services operated by aircraft with fewer than 100 seats (up from 70) are excluded from these (and most other) controls. A special clause will allow a

provided it meets reasonable technical and economic criteria.

THIRD AND FOURTH FREEDOM RIGHTS

The package proposes that there should be the automatic creation of 3rd and 4th freedom rights between any two airports in different EC countries. In practice this means that governments will not be able to stop airlines which want to operate such a service from doing so.

MULTIPLE DESIGNATION

Further liberalisation is proposed to force states to permit more than one airline to compete on the same route. All city pairs served with flight frequencies above a certain threshold will be obliged to be open to such multiple designation. In the first year after the regulations are introduced, the Commission suggests an annual threshold of 140,000 passengers or 800 return flights per year. After the first year the threshold would drop to 600 flights per year.

FIFTH FREEDOM

This somewhat esoteric term hides one of the most radical proposals in the Commission document. "Fifth Freedom" means the right for one country's airline to operate between points in two other countries. A totally deregulated European aviation market would have to allow complete freedom and

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... 'second wave' proposals unveiled

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cabotage (see later). The document's proposals are a little more modest. The Commission insists that 5th freedom should be exercised only on services which are 'an extension of a service from, or as a preliminary of a service to, the state of registration'; and that no more than 50% of total seat capacity is dedicated to the 5th freedom service. As with most other aspects of the package, these restrictions don't apply to small commuter aircraft with fewer than 100 seats. This will make it much easier for, say British Airways, to offer flights from Paris to Rome.

CABOTAGE

This is the most extreme aspect of aviation liberalisation. What it means quite simply is the freedom to operate domestic services in another EC country. Once again the Commission has stood back from the brink of total deregulation. The document proposes instead first that a cabotage service has to be an extension of a service to the state of registration; secondly that at least one of the airports involved must be a regional one; and thirdly that no more than 30% of the total seat capacity can be used to run cabotage services. Despite these restrictions it will, if these regulations are adopted, be possible for, say Alitalia, to service Paris-Bordeaux.

INITIATIVES IN OTHER AREAS

All the above proposals are advanced in the form of draft regulations. They are intended to have immediate effect. The 'other' aspects (e.g. those which the industry's trade unions have been demanding) are dealt with in a much more general and long-term manner. The document says that the Commission 'considers' that minimum safety and social measures should be applied on a Community-wide basis and that airlines should not be able to exploit unacceptable differences in standards in these areas and that it intends to introduce legal backing to appropriate international norms and standards where they exist. Issues considered under this heading include personnel licensing, airworthiness (including the free exchange of maintenance work and training). In areas where no international rules exist, the Commission

says it 'intends to develop such rules' and propose them to the Council. Included in this group are limitation on flight time for flying crews. Other areas marked out for future work are Computerised Reservation Systems (CRS), denied boarding compensation; air congestion and state aid to airlines. The Commission also says that it will be studying the application of EC aviation policy to relations with third countries including negotiating 'bilateral agreements' at the EC level.

COMPETITION

The Leon Brittan paper deals with the application of EC Competition law to the aviation industry. The 1987 package already included a regulation granting block exemptions from the rules to airline agreements covering intra-EC services. A recent European Court decision (Ahmed Sayeed Flugreisen — ITF News April/May 1989) extended the rules to domestic services and those with third countries. As a result a new block exemption covering these is urgently required to avoid almost all inter-airline agreements involving EC airlines from being ruled illegal. The new regulation will give exemption for slot allocation agreements for domestic services and for a whole range of agreements (planning of capacity, revenue pooling, joint fare applications and slot allocation at airports) as far as international air transport between the EC and third countries is concerned.

The Civil Aviation unions within the European Community are already studying these proposals in depth to see what their implications are for the industry's employees. Total opposition to them is unlikely to succeed given the huge momentum now built up for the completion of the 1992 internal market, but there is plenty of room for amendment to the detail. Of particular importance to the unions will be proposals for harmonisation of safety and social conditions. These cannot wait until after liberalisation but must accompany it. These points will be made strongly in representations to the Commission, to the Council and to the other Community institutions which will be considering these draft proposals over the coming months.

UTA UNION TAKES ON FRENCH 'FRANK LORENZO'

The French cabin crew union SNPNC is once more in conflict with René Lapautre, head of France's second biggest airline UTA. Lapautre, who has become known as Europe's Frank Lorenzo, has built up an enormous business empire partly by exploiting his workforce.

Recently, he laid off cabin crew staff following a strike by pilots. Clearly, he hoped to exert extra pressure on the pilots to call off their action.

The move was also retaliatory, however. The SNPNC have consistently fought against Lapautre's attempts to down-grade working conditions. The 700 SNPNC members at UTA have staged 45 days of strike action over the last year.

Since Lapautre carried out none of the procedures legally required before employees can be laid off, the SNPNC believes that his tactics amount to a lock-out, which is illegal under French law. On July 10th the union filed for an injunction. The pilots ended their strike on the same day and no injunction was necessary.

On July 20th, however, the pilots resumed strike action and cabin crew staff were laid off again. The SNPNC is once more seeking an injunction against UTA.

All this coincides with the appointment by the Ministry of Employment of a mediator in the union's long-running dispute with Lapautre over collective agreements.

Copying Lorenzo's tactics, Lapautre has established a subsidiary charter company, *Aero-maritime*, which operates with lower pay and poorer working conditions for staff. He has transferred a large part of UTA work to the subsidiary. In response to the union's refusal to accept the new terms, he has torn up all collective agreements signed in the last 25 years.

Airline takeover fever is growing

The aviation industry is booming with the Association of European Airlines forecasting that air traffic in Europe will grow by seven per cent a year until 1993. Most of the increase will come from the expansion of flights to the Far East and Australia, with slightly less growth in traffic on North Atlantic routes. After 1993, the picture is likely to be complicated somewhat by the opening of the Channel Tunnel which is expected to impact sharply on the traffic patterns of Britain and France.

In France, Air France has bought a 35 per cent stake in the regional airline **Transport Aérien Transregional**, TAT, in a deal reputed to be worth 240 million francs (US\$37m). Air France already works closely with TAT, France's fourth largest airline company, on a number of routes. TAT, which is based in the central French city of Tours, flies to 45 destinations in France and has a profitable and expanding European network which Air France is keen to tap in to. Up to now, TAT has been wholly owned by its Chairman Michel

Marchais, whose family set up the company some twenty years ago.

Elsewhere, the government of Jamaica has reluctantly decided to divest itself of the state owned airline **Air Jamaica**. It is inviting bids from potential purchasers and says it will not rule out participation in a joint venture to run the airline, indicating that it is 'prepared to discuss all possibilities'. In the past the government has argued that though the state carrier did not make money it was vital to the island's tourist trade, the main foreign currency earner, and should remain under state ownership. Now it seems to have bowed to the growing pressure from the private sector for the loss-making airline to be sold off.

Meanwhile, **Swissair** and **Delta Air Lines**, who signed a wide ranging cooperation pact in March, are to swap shares, with each taking a five per cent stake in the other. This cross purchase of shares is being seen as a logical extension of an agreement which gives Swissair the chance to add Los Angeles to its US destinations while enabling Delta to expand its European network.

The recent developments at Delta have increased its attractiveness as a takeover target and the airline has had to act fast this month to enable it to withstand a potential take over threat.

Delta is by no means the only US airline to be caught up in bid fever. **United Air Lines** has been at the centre of intense speculation following the successful sale of Northwest to Los Angeles businessman Alfred Checchi — largely because of the broad similarities between the two carriers. Both have large domestic systems and strong hubs giving healthy balance sheets and both also have a large Pacific network — one of the fastest growing and most lucrative airline markets. The surge in interest has led its stock to rise by more than fifty per cent in the past three weeks alone. The only reason why a bidding war has not yet begun is presumably because potential purchasers are worried that there may have been a change of attitude under President Bush with approval of takeovers perhaps not quite so automatic as under the Reagan administration.

US bans over-wing exit blocking

In a move which will be applauded by the ITF's civil aviation affiliates throughout the world, the US Federal Aviation Administration has published a new rule which will ban the blocking of over-wing emergency exits on Boeing 747 aircraft. This reverses the FAA's earlier decision to allow US airlines to remove the exits.

Several American B-747 operators will now have to drop plans to block the over-wing emergency doors enabling them to install 12 more passenger seats.

Any reduction in the number of emergency exits has serious implications for in-flight safety. Removal of the over-wing exits would pose special problems for economy class passengers and would be highly dangerous in certain types of accident where the aircraft came to a halt in a nose-up position.

The new rule limits the distance between exits to 60 feet. Removing the over-wing exits on B-747s creates a distance of 72 feet and so will not be permitted.

The decision represents a victory for the ITF-affiliated Association of Flight Attendants which has campaigned strenuously to protect the exits on B-747s. The National Transportation Safety Board also helped to bring about the new rule, as did passenger groups.

Some airlines, including KLM and British Airways, have already blocked the exits on their B-747s. Hopefully the FAA's decision will soon be followed by regulatory bodies in other countries.

BRITISH DOCK STRIKE :

European port unions offer vital solidarity and support

Following months of employer-instigated delay, British dockers formerly covered by the National Dock Labour Scheme went on indefinite strike from midnight on July 10. The strike closed down all the former scheme ports, leaving only ports which were outside the scheme, such as Felixstowe and Dover, working normally.

International solidarity quickly became a major factor in the dispute. Following consultations with the various dockers' unions most directly affected, ITF Dockers' Section Secretary David Cockroft convened an emergency meeting in London on July 17. Present at that meeting were ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, TGWU Dockers' Secretary John Connolly and representatives of dockers' unions from the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. The meeting discussed practical ways in which solidarity action with the TGWU could be co-ordinated in the light of the resolution adopted by the Dockers' Section meeting and Joint Seafarers' and Dockers' meeting in London in May.

The meeting, which was extensively reported in all the countries represented, agreed on four key points: the unions in the continental countries would approach port employers requesting them not to accept cargoes loaded by strike breakers in the UK former scheme ports or cargoes diverted from such ports; dockers' unions would do everything possible to ensure that complete diverted cargoes were not unloaded and that where 'mixed' cargoes arrived the UK destined part would not be reloaded; and that no action would be taken against perishable cargoes.

After the meeting, the unions concerned reported back to their rank and file members and requested solidarity action. The response was, in general, very positive, with the representative

of the Rotterdam port employers' association, for example, advising his member companies not to accept diverted cargoes from the UK. The ITF Secretariat quickly established a system for forwarding information on particular ships affected by the dispute to the unions in the ports for which they were bound.

In the UK meanwhile the total intransigence of the port employers made a long strike look a distinct possibility. Faced with the threat of instant dis-

missal and the consequent loss of any entitlement to redundancy pay, a number of union members in some of the smaller ports either left the industry altogether or returned, reluctantly, to work. In Grimsby they quickly experienced the compassion of the port employers. 225 men who were intimidated into returning to work found themselves next day out of a job anyway—the stevedoring company which employed them had overnight declared itself bankrupt.

Many other dockers' and seafarers' unions have declared their support for the TGWU. Danish and French dockers' unions sent messages to the union and the Swedish unions announced a ban on handling ships from ports affected by the strike. Detailed information was being circulated to shop stewards in Australia and enquiries about practical support were being made to ITF headquarters from affiliates aware that their conditions are likely to be the next to be attacked.

STOP PRESS!

A recalled Conference of dockers' delegates held on Friday July 28 decided to continue the strike, a decision which was overturned by the union's Executive Council on August 1. Massive intimidation by port employers had produced a situation in which more than 50% of the TGWU's members had decided, reluctantly, to cross picket lines and return to work. Faced with this situation the union decided to recommend an end to the strike. Local negotiations on reinstatement of sacked workers and working conditions are due to commence in the near future.

Wharfies in talks on Australian dock reform

Following acceptance in principle of the terms of the Waterfront Industry Reform package proposed by the Australian government (ITF News April/May 1989), negotiations between the unions and employers on the implementation of the package began in early July. The aim of the negotiations is to reach an 'in-principle agreement' on the topics covered by the Reform package which is based on a detailed report on the industry produced by the Inter-State Commission. Leading officials of the Waterside Workers' Federation will be involved in the negotiations for two or three days each week until an agreement is reached or they break down completely.