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**Women and labor-management conflicts in the airline industry:
Implications for the future of organized labor in the United
States**

Belcon, Patricia E. D., Ph.D.
City University of New York, 1991

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WOMEN AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS IN THE
AIRLINE INDUSTRY:
Implications for the Future of Organized Labor
in the United States.

by

PATRICIA E. D. BELCON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

1991

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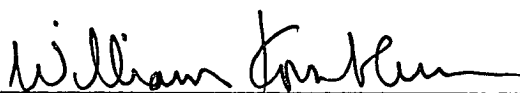
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Abstract

**WOMEN AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS
IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY:
Implications for the Future of Organized Labor
in the United States.
by**

Patricia E. D. Belcon

Advisor: Professor Bogdan Denitch

This is a critical case study of sexism in contemporary labor-management relations in the airline industry. The airline industry is critical as a barometer for the future of American industrial relations. It is a highly capitalized, technologically sophisticated and highly unionized sector of the American economy. Most unions in the USA share problems of declining employment, continual management demands for concessions, union-busting activities and internal conflict over women and other minorities. In an environment of rapid change -- a new diverse workforce, and female dominated unions with female leadership -- patterns of collective bargaining and union organizing are uncertain at best. The projections of increased female membership presents unprecedented challenges. This dissertation investigates the 1986 strike by the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants at Trans-World Airlines (TWA). It is based on in-depth interviews with the strikers.

DEDICATION

A Special Dedication to:
Robert Gilleece and Richard Styskal

Bob was sincere and understanding. Dick was very supportive in my journey. Without them I would still be tilting at windmills.

To IFFA and its flight attendants whose love, caring and sharing made this work possible and gave new meaning to "solidarity". Thank you Sisters and Brothers! VIVA LA HUELGA! NO PASARAN!

Thanks to Sue Zalk and the Center for the Study of Women and Society, Center for Labor-Management Policy Studies and my Grad Center friends, especially Mary Curry and Jonathan Kranz.

I thank my family, Andy, Joy, Seyna, Andrea, Patrick, Li'l Joy, Li'l Casey, Donovan, Li'l Patrick, my Mother Dolly and Aunt Laura for their input, it was decisive in my completion. To Rich McCarthy and Dana Fenton for being there when I was falling. I am grateful.

To the son of Trinidad, you cast a lite on my life even through the gales. I dread the thought of losing you, I look forward to your warmth again, I'll remember this phase too. Mo fe oko mi! Mo ferefun gbogbo Orisha!

To my Committee: Bill for his patience. Vic for his vote of confidence, and Bogdan whose gentle arrogance incited my "tiger instincts." Obrigado!

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When I Go Back I Will Remember...

**How cold it was in March of '86
and the kind people who brought warm blankets
and words of encouragement to the picket lines;
and I'll remember those who didn't...**

**I will remember to slow down and take care of myself;
to heed the call of nature
even if the service isn't finished
and the cart is in the aisle.**

**I will take more time off too discover the places and things
I didn't before
because I thought I needed more money
or didn't want to put the company in a bind.**

**I will try to remember not to be angry with the passengers
who remained ignorant of our struggle,
perhaps because I didn't try hard enough
to seek out the forums in which to educate them.**

**No, I will reserve that anger for the collaborators
who called themselves unionists,
sprinted across picket lines
and offered sage advice from positions of safety;
and for me the people who hired armed guards
to keep me from my job -
the same people who threatened to fire me
for not reporting to work when I was sick!**

**And who can forget the young ones who would not listen
and are finding it difficult to live
with the consequences of their actions.**

**They are learning that loyalty does not come
with a reciprocal agreement
and that an honest man's loyalty is not for sale
at any price.**

**Their cries for equity and justice are lost in the sound
of ten thousand running feet - future replacements -
the unremorseful destroyers of what little is left.**

**Glamour is in the eye of the beholder
and when the ugly truth is unmasked
it is often too late for apologies.**

**I will choose my friends more wisely
for I've learned the meaning and value of real friendship;
and I will remember the name of every person
who betrayed us through stupidity, fear or greed
and will never turn my back in their presence.**

**Their complicity proved the key to our undoing;
and having acted as the willing instruments of our defeat
they deserve the permanent scorn of our profession.**

**I will remember that our country's systems work slowly
and sometimes are not only blind but bought;
and that if I depend on anyone to protect my rights,
other than myself,
that my rights are in questionable hands;
and that religion does not make a man good;
that the Church has no conscience
and that the "holiest" of them all was only an old man
in long robes with clay feet.**

**I will remember our sisters and brothers who have died,
some alone and by their own hand;
the financially ruined and those who knew they were ill
yet chose to sacrifice their benefits for their beliefs...
if there is a heaven, surely they have earned it.**

**I will remember the faces of the faithful who attended every meeting,
every rally, every protest;
 who took our fight to the newspapers and television;
 who fought on the front lines
 inspiring those who preferred to remain hidden
 (or uninvolved)
 to retrieve their deserted commitment
 and rejoin the battle.**

**I will remember to wear my union pin
 with as much pride as I used to wear my uniform
 and I won't forget
 that my uniform is really my union suit.
And if I hear a striker spoken ill of or harassed,
 I will raise a strong voice in their defense...
 because I remember.**

**And I will not forget for a moment
 those who are still locked out.**

**They may have taken away my livelihood,
 but they cannot take away my essence or my memories
 of what we were
 and what we have become.
And if it takes another year, five years or a decade,
 when I go back I will remember...
 and I won't let them forget.**

**Yvonne Perano
TWA 1977-1986
IFFA 1977 to the end**

CHAPTER ONE:

Flight Attendants And Labor Management Conflicts

"Why, then, do the workers strike...," Frederick Engels asked a century and a half ago, "Simply because they must protest against every reduction, even if dictated by necessity; because they feel bound to proclaim that they, as human beings, shall not be made to bow to social circumstances, but social conditions ought to yield to them as human beings; because silence on their part would be a recognition of these social conditions, an admission of the right of the bourgeoisie to exploit the workers in good times and let them starve in bad ones." ¹

Engels was writing of a period in which workers lived nasty, brutish and short lives, working in dark, satanic mills. Today, workers are employed in clean, high-technology workplaces. Some work in areas never even dreamed of in Engels' day, like the subjects of my work, Flight Attendants. Must they, too, strike instead of bowing to social conditions?

This dissertation examines the "social conditions" which led to and the people who were involved in one way or another with the 1986 strike

¹. Engels, The Conditions of The Working Class in England, Granada: New York 1981 p. 245

against Trans World Airlines (TWA) by the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA). The basic conflicts and failure of accommodation which led up to and precipitated the strike are examined and the aftermath of the strike is described. The future of the labor movement in general and the IFFA in particular is discussed, and specific recommendations are made based on research, - interviews with parties involved (pre- and post-strike) and current labor forecasts which are prevalent in the United States today.

This is a critical case study of contemporary labor-management relations in the airline industry. Airlines can serve as a barometer for the future of American industrial relations. The airline industry is both a highly capitalized and technologically sophisticated sector of the American economy and one which is highly unionized. Recent empirical evidence indicates that the American labor movement is suffering serious declines in membership and power. Most unions in the U.S. share problems of declining employment, continual management demands for concessions, and internal conflict over the succession of women and minorities to leadership. In an environment of rapid change, future patterns of collective bargaining in the industry have implications for the larger collective bargaining system.

This project explores the many lessons of the 1986 strike and/or lockouts at Trans World Airlines, involving the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants. [In the United States, "flight attendant" is a predominantly female occupation.] Among the issues explored are:

1. The role airline deregulation played in creating the conditions which led to the strike and/or lockouts.
2. That gender politics established barriers to union solidarity and the policies that were or were not arrived at to ease these obstacles.
3. The extent to which labor and management have been able, in some cases, to develop new strategies of cooperation and in other cases to maintain organizational development on more traditional lines.
4. The extent to which collective bargaining is being undermined by management-induced strikes.
5. The role of government through recent legal decisions involving the U. S. Supreme Court and lower courts; the Railway Labor Act (RLA) and the National Mediation Board (NMB); the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB); the Labor Department; and the Judicial, Executive and Legislative Branches in weakening the

foundations of the American labor movement.

Airline deregulation has strained the system of industrial relations. As a result, collective bargaining in the U.S. air transport industry has been transformed into a confusing and changing set of arrangements that vary across unions and carriers. Common to all situations, however, are pressures on unions by managements to grant concessions. The impetus to cut labor costs is particularly strong in the airline industry and a solution to "payroll bloat" is being sought in cooperation and give-backs. Competition from low-wage, low-fare, airlines is causing major carriers to restructure union wages and work rules.

The Air Traffic Controllers, Pilots, other craft unions and now the flight attendants have all become vulnerable members of a working class that is subject to the desires of management and the ups and downs of the market place operating in a conservative political atmosphere. 'To weaken labor' is management's goal. On the other hand, 'the push and pull of collective bargaining is over the distribution of the wealth that labor creates and capital commands, and the strike is part of this process.'²

². Moody, Kim, "Needed: A New Kind of Unionism, New Visions For A New Direction" Labor Notes, p. 8

Throughout this country the trend is 'concede or strike and lose'.

This is the common problem plaguing labor in general. In this context, my research provides the additional data for the portrayal of an entire industry in crisis in a modern industrial setting, as a scientifically constructed model of a future social system to understand and seek solutions to the problems of social change.

This study of the plight of the flight attendants, who are not craft workers, is an attempt to fill a void in the industrial/sociological literature. My work introduces a more complete basis for modern conflict bargaining and the transformation of traditional American industrial/labor relations at the macrosociological level.

To answer these questions it was necessary to use a combination of oral history, active interviews, written accounts, and analytic research methods. I have done in-depth interviews (face-to-face and phone) with key personnel in the TWA strike. My sample includes union leadership, rank and file members, permanent replacements, non-strikers, and related airline employees not party to the dispute. These interviews combined oral history and active interviewing (The active interview was used by

Robert N. Bellah et al.³

Oral History is a valuable resource which has been used in African American (Black) Studies, Womens' Studies, and Labor Studies.

Information is obtained by seeking out the involved parties and getting the details first hand. An interview guide was prepared as a base, specific questions were added as necessary to tap experiences and to collect eye-witness accounts.

Although this project is based on a particular historical event, it is not primarily historical. Due to the public and dialogical nature of the study and the sensitive positions of individuals that participated in the conflict, in the course of interviewing as was anticipated there were ethical problems. In the instances where a tape recorder was not permitted and the information cannot be protected for archival collection, or where the respondent wanted to be 'off the record' the active interview proved to be more appropriate.

The active interview created open discussion, public conversation and private opinions of the respondents. The interview is socratic. It attempts to uncover assumptions, to make the implicit explicit and to

³ Bellah, Robert N., et al., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life, Harper and Row; NY, 1986 pp.305-306

attain a degree of common understanding but not necessarily agreement. This encourages dialogue between interviewer and interviewee, exposes the findings to mutual discussion and criticism and stimulates opinion polling - opinion tested in the arena of open discussion.

Those interviewed provide, I believe, a valid cross-section of the membership. Equally, I could not interject all of their words into this work. The quotes used in the text, I believe, express the feelings and attitudes of more than just the respondent. As noted above, some of the respondents, for various (or no) reasons, preferred to remain anonymous. I have respected their wishes.

The policy I adopted was to change the names of everyone I interviewed except for the past and present leaders. Although I assigned numbers, these are real people, human beings speaking.

Excerpts of the conversations in real-life context and written accounts have been integrated into the text wherever possible to make the respondents come to life. Their involvement in the union, their histories, their motivation for activism, their ideologies, their experiences as young or mature workers, their roles in the conflict and their perceptions of their situation are expressed in their own words.

Careful analysis is done to provide a portrait of the corporate,

union and government programs and resources that have emerged since the 1970's in response to the challenges confronting the industry, as well as the factors which have contributed to success and or failure.

We must also ask, like Engels, "Why did they strike," and, perhaps a more important question, "What is a strike?" Conventional wisdom sees a strike as a voluntary withdrawal of labor, usually for economic reasons. However, Sharp ⁴ lists 23 different types of strike, ranging from the "quickie" to the economic shutdown. His definition of the strike is rather involved:

The strike involves a refusal to continue economic cooperation through work. It is a collective, deliberate and normally temporary suspension of labor designed to exert pressure on others within the same economic, political, and, sometimes, social or cultural unit...though the issues are normally economic, they are not necessarily so, even though the means of action are economic. The aim of a strike is to produce by this leverage some change in the relationships of the conflicting groups. Usually this takes the form of granting of certain demands made by the strikers as a precondition for their resumption of work. It is the collective nature of the strike which gives this type of noncooperation its characteristics and power.⁵

⁴ Sharp, Gene, The Politics of Non-Violent Action - 3 Vols., Extending Horizons Books Porter Sargent Publishers, Boston, MA. 1980 Vol. II, pp. 257-279

⁵ Ibid.p. 257

The Flight Attendants' strike was far from a simple economic strike. It had, at least, a dual classification, being both a craft strike, that is, suspension of labor by members of the same craft or occupation, and an establishment strike, suspension of labor in one establishment. It was also, in many ways a protest strike, protesting against the second-class citizenship accorded to Flight Attendants at TWA. It is difficult to give a precise definition of this strike, "...for the reality of social dynamics is always more complex and flexible than the intellectual tools which we use in efforts to understand it."⁶

The major social dynamic in a strike is a power struggle, between labor and management. There are basically four sources of power for labor: the extent to which a group of workers have scarce skills, so that they cannot easily be replaced; the power which derives from occupying a crucial position in the production process; the immediacy with which a group of workers can disrupt the company; and, finally, the ability of a group of workers to create or cope with uncertainty in the production process.⁷ The Flight Attendants could easily be replaced; they were not

⁶ Ibid. p. 258

⁷ Batstone, Eric, Ian Boraston, and Stephen Frenkel, The Social Organization of Strikes, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, UK., 1980

seen as occupying a crucial position in the operation of an airline; their strike only temporarily disrupted TWA operations; But they did manage to create a certain amount of uncertainty in the production process, by withdrawing their experienced labor.

At first glance, the strikers had no chance. Yet they struck. They refused to bow to social conditions. The process involved in this strike, the patterns of influence and the range of vocabularies or systems of argument⁸, have a long historical tradition in the American labor movement, to which we must now turn. First, however, I think that it would be useful to briefly review the literature on labor and strikes.

Selected Studies of Workers and Their Unions

Both classical and contemporary social theorists including, Marx in Capital, Durkheim in The Division of Labor, Braverman in Labor and Monopoly Capital, and Aronowitz in False Promises have all examined the degradation of labor. In addition I examine the modern degradation of work with its added elements: the demoralization of the worker and the working class, and the effects of the continuous assault on wages,

⁸ Ibid. p. 3

working conditions and benefits on the quality of work life. DiFazio in Longshoremen touched on this aspect of the work culture in the system of labor relations. He analyzes the implementation of automation and the fight for wages without work. Longshoremen won short term job security at the expense of "the work culture that had effectively sustained worker power"⁹. These new elements which are now built into the organizational and social system of industry reflect a society-wide change in values and institutions. Kornhauser in Industrial Conflict warns that "conflict is one of the substance out of which human society is built... and that when unions become organs of the state free collective bargaining disappears".¹⁰

Several major issues including cooperation and give-backs, gender and age discrimination, and union militancy all conditioned the context of the TWA confrontation. I report these developments and evaluate their implications for labor-management conflict and the future of collective bargaining. I have analyzed the TWA flight attendants' situation and evaluated its consequences for the new bargaining environment, changing

⁹ DiFazio, William, Longshoremen, Bergin and Garvey, Ma., 1985.(p. xiv)

¹⁰ Kornhauser, Arthur, et al. Eds, Industrial Conflict, McGraw Hill, NY. 1954(p. 529)

institutions, and the American system of Industrial-Labor relations. In addition I have looked at structure, interactions, social forces and technological change.

Some noteworthy studies, relevant to this topic have appeared in the literature: Wildcat Strike, by Alvin Gouldner, which questioned the belief systems and social relations of workers and managers; Shostak and Skocik's The Air Controllers' Controversy: Lessons From the PATCO Strike, investigated that phenomenon and sought solutions to prevent the human and societal toll engendered by such massive conflict. The Economic Analysis of Unions, by Barry T. Hirsch and John T. Addison, attempts to explain the strike as it relates to bargaining power, outcomes in the workplace, wage determination, social costs and the importance of political, legal, and institutional factors that affect industrial relations. Charles Craypo's The Economics of Collective Bargaining describes and analyzes the impact of deregulation and recession in the airline industry on craft bargaining power and the changed environment of concession bargaining. Jean T. McKelvey's Cleared for Takeoff is a comprehensive analysis on the implications of deregulation and its impact on labor relations in the airline industry, it also presents management and union views on the critical effects of deregulation on airline employees in

general.

These works do not properly address the effects these changes have on the people as individuals or on all the groups who work for a particular airline. Shostak and Craypo focused on the professional and craft unions none have dealt thoroughly with the service sector or specifically with the flight attendants. However, they are especially important to anyone doing research in the modern airline industry as they explain the difficulties faced by labor and management in this new bargaining environment.

This new bargaining environment has come about through a change in the balance of power between labor and management. Collective bargaining used to be illegal. Now it seems that management is attempting to restore "the good old days." A long and bloody history preceded the institutionalization of collective bargaining in the Railway Labor Act (1926) and the National Labor Relations Act (1935). Among the historical works studied and/or cited are: Philip Foner's monumental History of the Labor Movement in the United States, Volumes 1 through 8; James Green's World of the Worker, 1900-1980; and Irving Bernstein's three volume study of the American Worker from 1920-1940, The Lean Years, the Turbulent Years, and a Caring Society. All of the preceeding

are classics in Labor Studies; they trace the history of the American Labor movement and of collective bargaining from Colonial days to the present.

The criticism can be raised that the above - mentioned works do not address "women's" issues. On the contrary, wages, hours, and working conditions are women's issues. The TWA strike supported this position. It also demonstrated that the issues of the diversified highly technological workforce go beyond the traditionally economic ones.

This historical analysis on the traditionally economic was mediated and informed by the variety of work on strikes and industrial conflict. Louis Adamic's classic work on strikes, Dynamite (New York: 1931) relates the bloody history of American industrial disputes. From the United Kingdom, Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel's The Social Organization of Strikes gives a trans-cultural perspective that is very valuable. Davis's Prisoners of the American Dream shows how the working class is controlled, as does Aronowitz's False Promises. These works, while not directly related to American female Flight Attendants, offer valuable theoretical perspectives. Batstone, especially, points to the global and trans-sexual nature of management control.

Several books treat the general history of women and their work.

The most comprehensive treatment is

Philip S. Foner's two volume work, Women and the American Labor Movement: From Colonial Times to the Eve of World War I, and Women and the American Labor Movement: From World War I to the Present. Alice Kessler-Harris' Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the U.S. and Barbara Wertheimer's We Were There look at the issue of women's participation in the labor force from a feminist point of view, documenting the fact that poor women have always worked, and that in recent years middle class women have joined their working-class sisters in the labor market. A more up-to-date view is given in Barbara Garson's The Electronic Sweatshop and Kathryn Ward's Women Workers and Global Restructuring.

There is one full-scale treatment of the history of flight attendants and their unions, From Sky Girl to Flight Attendant: Women and the Making of A Union by Georgia Panter Nielsen. It is "an account of the recent feminization of an occupation, which draws attention to the problems special to the women working in it; and it is the history of women organizing and maintaining a union with a predominantly female

constituency." ¹¹

Many authors have focused on the history of the flight attendants and few if any have dealt thoroughly with the 'proletarianization' of the glamorous airline industry. On the other hand, my study is a serious attempt to bridge this gap between the historical and the present. William W. Winpisinger stated, "The IAM predicted that the impact of deregulation on air transport workers would be predatory and demoralizing. It was right about that ... but it underestimated the severity."¹² The severity of the demoralization of workers through sacrificial policies and employers' abuse and disrespect for workers unfold through the many interviews and narratives of the TWA flight attendants.

The TWA flight attendants' case is unique. It is a young, militant, female-dominated, independent union that struggled for the right to pursue a career. An important set of explanatory variables center around the temporal dimensions of social structure and the flight attendants

¹¹ Nielsen, Georgia Panter, From Sky Girl to Flight Attendant: Women and the Making of A Union, ILR Press, Ithaca, NY., 1982(p. xiii)

¹² McKelvey, Jean, Cleared For Takeoff: Airline Labor Relations Since Deregulation, ILR Press, Cornell Univ. New York, 1988 p. 368

perception of the transition in their occupation from a temporary job (five years or less) to a vocation - a career with more professional status. The history and the on-going struggle of flight attendants, specifically, IFFA will be continued. IFFA through the support of its members and its determination to survive have sent a clear message to the airline industry that union-management relations will continue to be a vital process.

In their own voices the story is told - the 1986 Strike and beyond. I understand that those who do not study history will be doomed to relive it. Did the Flight Attendants relive history? A brief review of the history of American labor follows, to set the stage for the 1986 strike.

CHAPTER TWO

Flight Attendants in American Labor History

A lot of flight attendants, yeah right, ring around the collar, definitely, after our jobs, ugh, you want to see our clothes after we get off of a flight, filthy. I am aware that there are a lot of flight attendants who seem to feel that, because they have access to Gucci, and are in a rarified atmosphere, that they consider themselves white collar workers. I don't feel that way. I'm a blue collar worker. I'm in a service position. I'm in a service industry. I am not a white collar worker. I wear a white collar, but I am a blue collar. I identify with labor. I identify, I have a terrific job, under its best circumstances I have wonderful benefits and possibilities of potentiality for this job, I have a great capacity to network, I have time off to pursue other things, but I'm a blue collar worker. I am. I'm in the service industry, I serve coffee, I serve meals, I pick up, I clean up vomit, I empty barf bags, I take diapers away, dirty diapers and I talk with passengers about the accounting industry, the law industry, the labor industry, corporate industry, and I do everything in between. Everything. This job covers it all. It's fascinating. It's a fascinating job.¹³

The struggle for human dignity and justice has been one of the key motivating factors in the labor movement since its inception almost 200 years ago. What is clearly evident, however, is the fact that the working people of this country have had to unite, out of necessity and for survival, to achieve the gains which they have accumulated during these last 200 years of existence. This struggle was one of toil, blood, sweat and

¹³ Interview, FA#1, 12/12/89

dedication.

The labor movement can be considered as a stabilizing force in the American economy.¹⁴ A well trained and highly skilled work force is the hallmark of a strong industrial nation. In addition, the gains of the American labor movement, including child labor legislation, the 8 hour day, the drive for public education, and social security, benefitted not only those individuals belonging to labor unions, but also the country as a whole.¹⁵

During the last 200 years, the labor movement has raised the standard of living for every working human being. Things which we now take for granted, vacations with pay, sick leave, pensions, and other benefits, were achieved through the struggle of the labor movement.

The labor movement in the United States was born three years after the Constitution and grew in an era of scientific, industrial and social development. For example, when the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions gathered in a convention in 1881, Thomas

¹⁴ Freeman, Richard B., and James L. Medoff, What Do Unions Do?, Basic Books, Inc. N.Y., 1979 pp. 3-4

¹⁵ Bernstein, Irvin, A Caring Society: The New Deal, the Worker, and the Great Depression, Houghton Mifflin Co., MA., 1985

Edison had invented the electric light a mere two years before. Just five years before, the first telephone conversation had occurred.

The roots of our nation's labor unions extend back into the very foundations and history of America. Several of the Pilgrims who arrived at Plymouth Rock in 1620 were representatives of skilled crafts, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, cabinet makers, and shoemakers. Fledgling "trade unions" existed during the time of the American Revolution and continued, in some form or another, throughout the early and middle 1800's.

The earliest trade union, the Philadelphia Cordwainers (Shoemakers), was founded in 1792.¹⁶ By the 1820's various unions, who were involved in the effort to reduce the work day from 12 to 10 hours, began showing interest in the concept of a "federation" of unions, joining together in the pursuit of and struggle for the common objectives of working people in all parts of the country.

In the mid-nineteenth century, throughout a large number of American cities, various trades joined together in city and nation-wide

¹⁶

Foner, Philip S., From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor, History of The Labor Movement in the US. Vol. 1, International Publishers, NY. 1947-1985

federations to develop an environment of solidarity and to pursue common goals. Early organizations of this nature included the National Trades Union (1834), the National Labor Union (1866) and the better-known Knights of Labor (1869).

Although these organizations never achieved more than a perfunctory measure of success and were for the most part short lived, they played the very important role of setting the stage for the creation and development of a down-to-earth, practical labor federation which would be able to combine long-range objectives for a better social order with short-term but much needed improvements of wages, hours, and working conditions, the real-life needs of working people.

On November 15, 1881, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a conference attended by workers' representatives from various trades and industries took place which was to have profound and long-lasting effects in the entire labor movement. Out of that meeting came the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (FOTLU), whose primary activity and concern was legislative in nature. This organization was led by Samuel Gompers, a 31 year old cigar maker. Gompers would in later years be almost universally recognized as the "Father of the American Labor Movement," because of the motivation, backbone and intent of

purpose he supplied to the nascent organized labor movement in this country.

Although the Federation was not an overly strong or successful organization, its mainstay of legislative action provided an effective basis of operations for the organization which was to evolve from it: The American Federation of Labor (AFL).

Its principal ideal was to function as a central governing body which represented the needs and objectives of all working people in the United States, including women. Although the AFL fell short of the mark, its early efforts were an important step in the evolution of modern-day labor unions (including, as we shall see later on, IFFA). Although the Federation called for equal pay for men and women and the 8-hour work day, this call was often more honored in the breach. For example, during World War I, the AFL opposed the entry of women into traditionally male occupations in order to keep wages from falling, and rejected a proposal to expand the Executive Council to include two women.¹⁷

In its early years, the American Federation of Labor lent its voice

¹⁷ Philip S. Foner, Women and the American Labor Movement: From WWI to the Present. (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 62-63.

and support to numerous strikes and labor disruptions which were increasingly becoming part of the American work scene.

The new AFL placed great importance and emphasis on the autonomy of its participating unions and encouraged the development of practical collective bargaining methods to achieve gains for the workers it represented. The decade of the 1890's and well into the early 20th century, the labor movement was involved in numerous struggles for recognition.

If the 1890's could be considered the dark days of the American labor movement, perhaps the early 20th century could be considered a time of flourishing growth and recognition. While the struggles were still far from over, more support and recognition for Labor's cause began to appear.

One of the most impressive of these unions, the Ladies' Garment Workers (predecessor of the present International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)), called for a general strike in New York in 1910 to protest the intolerable working conditions of the sweatshops and the inhumane treatment of its workers by management, and gaining extensive public support for its stand, won the 52-hour work week and wage increases for its members. One year later, however, the optimism of

this settlement was undermined by the Triangle Shirtwaist Company Fire, in which 150 young women perished when a fire swept through their loft factory. This tragedy provoked tremendous public outrage and sympathy for the union cause, which led to many long-needed reforms in industrial safety and fire prevention methods. In addition, the U.S. government created the new "Department of Labor" (1913), whose mandate was to protect and defend the rights of wage earners.

In this period a pivotal labor and social organization was created which would have far reaching effects even into our own time, especially in regard to the IFFA. This organization was known as the Women's Trade Union League, and it promoted the rights of women workers, advocated equal wages with men, fought for legislative change for working women, and developed the skills of many outstanding and intelligent women who later held positions of national importance within the labor movement. Most importantly, it acted as the predecessor of many female-dominated labor unions, principally the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and later on, of course, the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants.

As time went on, additional legislative changes effected improvements in the lives of working men and women. Among these

were legal recognition of the right to strike, child labor laws, and the 8 hour day.

The years following World War I saw the labor movement, along with the rest of the nation, riding a "roller-coaster" existence in terms of prosperity, job security and long term advances. In 1929, the Great Depression threw millions of Americans out of work and caused a severe erosion in union membership, resulting in the loss of over one million members and a sharp decrease in wages. During this period, a "paranoia" toward "Bolsheviks", "Communists" and other left wing or radical political groups caused many Americans to associate unionism with "anti-Americanism", thus causing a further erosion of labor values and membership.

In 1933, with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a new and radical plan was put into effect to return people to work, improve social conditions, and enact new labor legislation which would benefit all Americans. In 1936, the Wagner Act was put into law, establishing a legal basis for unions, as well as the legality of collective bargaining; provided for secret ballot elections for the choosing of unions; and protected union members from employer harassment.

During this period of union growth, a number of the large

industrial unions, especially the Mine Workers, headed by John L. Lewis, called for the development of a new organization to spread industrial unionism to the largely unorganized trades including steel, automobiles, textiles and others. With the formation in 1935 of the Committee for Industrial Organization, a schism occurred within the American Federation of Labor. The new was renamed the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in its 1938 convention.

During the late 1930's and into the 1940's, both organizations were remarkably successful in their respective organizing efforts and were spurred on by the generally conducive and friendly atmosphere under the Roosevelt administration. Working together more and more on mutual projects, including several important war-time committees, old differences were resolved, and the AFL and CIO merged into one organization on December 5, 1955.

Under the presidency of George Meany, the AFL-CIO continued its organizational processes, and expanded into other important areas as well, principally in the civil rights campaigns of the late 50's and early 60's, fighting for both the labor rights and social rights of all working Americans. During his administration, Meany was able to foster the organizing efforts of federal employees into labor's ranks, discourage

many of the old jurisdictional disputes which had plagued unions for years, and assisted in developing the COPE organization (Committee on Political Education). COPE represents the labor movement's increasing interest in the political arena and its realization that some real labor battles might be won on the legislative front. However, there is a real battle still to be won: the one within the movement itself that can no longer be swept under the carpet.

LABOR RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

The downturn for American labor coincided with the economic recession of the 1950's and 1960's, and was exacerbated by the extensive technological advances which reduced the demand for labor. Unions were forced to seek job security as the number-one priority. American public support began to decline as unions were blamed for inflation and price increases. Finally, the unions' resistance to and neglect of organizing women and minorities was recognized as a mistake. When Walter Reuther, in 1960, remarked, "We are going backwards"¹⁸, he was probably referring to the newly-escalating downward trend.

Although the Kennedy and Johnson administrations supported the

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Foster R. Dulles, Labor in America, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell), p. 379.

collective bargaining process, the government was forced to intervene and settle several important labor-management conflicts, especially in transportation. This action usually insured that industrial peace was achieved with minimum "pain" to all parties while preserving the collective bargaining process. However, it appeared that ridding the workplace of organized labor was management's new policy for the 1970's.

Meanwhile, passage of the 1978 Deregulation Bill, which was presented as a remedy to the different problems of productivity, cost efficiency, and competitiveness, placed stress on the system of industrial relations. The chief goal was to break up the cartels that flourished under regulation, but the major companies congealed into oligopolies.

The law seemed to address all aspects of the industry's environment except that of industrial relations. Workers and their unions have not fared well under deregulation. In the airline industry, the impact of deregulation has been concessions and more concessions made by workers and their unions. The Deregulation Act's model of economic health assumed that unions were merely another "factor", which market forces would soon rationalize.

In 1978, when the Deregulation Act came into effect, the United

States Bankruptcy Code was changed. This change allowed Continental Airlines to file for bankruptcy in order to unilaterally abrogate its union contracts. In the *Bildisco Decision*, the Supreme Court ruled that a company declaring bankruptcy is allowed to cancel its contracts with labor before the ruling of a bankruptcy judge. Thus, it becomes questionable if the highest court in the land supports collective bargaining, the law of the land ¹⁹.

By the 1980's, government and business had both developed an anti-labor attitude with strike-breaking and lockouts as the operative management tools. On the other hand, "...public officials across the country could well conclude that there are votes to be had by acting decisively against strikers" ²⁰.

President Reagan's administration spearheaded the anti-labor movement with the crushing of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers' Organization (PATCO). "Employers heard the unspoken words from the White House that the time had come for business to take on the unions

¹⁹ New York State Assembly, "Committee on Labor: Hearings on Union Busting", March 22 1984, pp 23-24.

²⁰ See Meyer, p 66.

and wear them down"²¹

The Executive Branch's appointments of anti-union advocates to key posts on the National Labor Relations Board and in the U.S. Labor Department has been interpreted as an attempt to weaken American organized labor. Fairness in industrial relations is no longer taken for granted according to the traditional view of collective bargaining. The NLRB has allowed economic strikers to be permanently replaced. This ability to hire permanent replacements has become management's ace in the hole.

There is no doubt that the philosophy of the 1980's is that "...unions are an impediment to the free market system and are responsible for the decline and failure of once healthy industries."²² But, economic programs lack the social values embodied in union solidarity, which includes job preservation, social equality and upward mobility in this imperfect society. Also, imbedded in the notion of union solidarity is the belief that organized labor was or is the leading social force for social change. As such, one must consider the questions, is there hope for rank

²¹ New York State Assembly, "Committee on Labor: Hearings on Union Busting", March 22 1984, p. 66

²² Ibid., p. 85.

and file unionism and what is its future?

Labor's Historic Pitfall: The American labor movement is not monolithic - it has many faces. Some of the faces have made the Ku Klux Klan look liberal, other faces have led the struggle for equality.

However, labor's track record is not perfect in the areas where it has historically been exclusionary and protectionist.

The movement continues to be headed by white men from the traditionally male dominated old craft unions. The craft oriented focus is not capable of providing the flexibility that is necessary in these constantly changing and challenging times. The gap between the old and the new continues to widen, and blatantly discriminatory gatekeeping policies are still openly practiced by many unions.

The membership of labor unions is declining steadily, and yet, many of the unions continue to treat certain groups of workers as second class even within their own ranks. These minorities, women, racial, ethnic and immigrant groups, are still victims of overt and covert discriminatory practices inside and outside the movement. In other words, it can be concluded that these workers fare no better in unions than they do in American society at large.

While the AFL-CIO continues with a business (unionism) as usual

attitude, it ignores the cancer that has been present from its inception. As a democratic institution and an organ of social change it must address its internal ills, else it will always fall short in its obligations and responsibilities to workers. Many workers, especially the poor and disadvantaged, are still not enjoying equal representation or equal status within their unions. This structure has indirectly encouraged the super-exploitation and oppression of workers as a whole and encouraged fractionalization in the workplace. This tolerance of member unions which are exclusionary and protectionist is a major pitfall that continues to haunt not only labor, but also this society and its institutions.

Institutional discrimination and individual discriminatory practices: sexism, racism, homophobia, ethnocentrism, elitism, chauvinism and other forms of prejudice and outright discrimination have no place in the "organization of workers". This divisiveness impedes any effort in meeting the goals and objectives of unionism. "Unionism" entails the concepts of solidarity and working class (workers) consciousness.

Labor's historical record discloses many shortcomings: the strike of 1986 by IFFA, is one of many.

Rise of The Flight Attendants

New workers were coming to the fore in the Meany years, in new

industries. Among these were the Flight Attendants.

The advent of modern commercial flight as we know it today began immediately after War World I, when the men who had flown as pilots in the Great Conflict found jobs in the burgeoning civilian flight industry. From the start, this was a "man's domain", and women were no more expected in the cockpit of a plane than they were in the cab of a diesel locomotive.

Soon, in order to cope with the exploding industry, the airlines began hiring men to deal with passengers' needs in the cabin. By the early 1930's, women were being hired to fill these jobs. In line with the rather amusing and archaic thinking of the era, women were more suited for these "delicate occupations" of tending to passengers, allaying their fears, soothing the airsick and fearful, and other genteel endeavors. The image which the airlines projected in regard to these early flight attendants was one of innocent, perfect, adoring "girls next door" who would be good enough for your son to marry! In addition, airlines enforced stringent regulations regarding the hiring of these young women, insuring that only slender, attractive, single, non-pregnant white women were hired for this occupation. Moreover, little consideration was given to the important task these pioneering women were fulfilling.

While the highly valued skills of the pilots provided them with a modicum of job security, these women realized that although they were carrying out excellent public relations endeavors for their employers, they were not being properly recognized for their efforts. Their employers were ready to replace them almost instantly with the hundreds if not thousands of young women who were eagerly lining up for these jobs.

The public relations aspect of their jobs, however, was not totally lost on the airlines. Flight attendants in the early days of the industry were touted more for their public relations skills than for the highly-specialized work they performed. The airlines attempted to perpetuate the "exotic" aspect of flying to glamorous remote locations, and the stewardesses were expected to be part of and to help develop that image, which sold seats.

No recognition was given to their roles as customer service liaisons. The lifestyle of the flight attendant became a parody of her real-life situation, and an exploitative and misinformed marketing strategy designed to sell seats at her expense. She was depicted as having a "swinging, freelifing" lifestyle which was often not very accurate at all.²³

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Interview Notes, Faith Grill, April, 1989

While perpetuating this public relations image in order to help sell seats, the airlines did little to foster the more realistic, professional image of the flight attendant's actual tasks: providing safety, comfort and security to the traveling public through the airways of the world; acting as counselor, public relations representative and client liaison; serving food and beverages to millions of passengers per year. With the unfortunate rash of terrorist activities over the last years, flight attendants are now required to add security enforcement to their many responsibilities.²⁴

Although the first commercial aviation stewardesses who were hired by United Airlines in 1930 were trained nurses, little attention was paid to this skill. Again, their public relations image was what sold them to the traveling public. The public was enthusiastic in their response to the "fly girls" as they were first known, but the pilots, fearing that their masculine domain and mystique was being invaded, were slow to accept these interlopers.

By 1933, however, the other airlines began joining the pioneering efforts of United, and hundreds of stewardesses took to the skies. In the

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Interview Notes, Sue Speck, 1989 - 1991.

early 1940's, nearly 1000 flight attendants were serving the needs of hundreds of thousands of passengers per year.

Around the late 1950's, jets replaced the older style propeller aircraft, increasing both the passenger load as well as the workload for attendants. Then by 1970, the Boeing 747, with a maximum passenger load of 500 began exerting a heavy toll on the work responsibilities of flight attendants.²⁵

In the 1980's supersonic transports capable of flying at 1500 miles per hour and more are beginning to once again tax the endurance and capabilities of modern flight attendants. As their responsibilities increase, so too, must the protection from their union and the recognition of these efforts from management, in status, training, career growth opportunity and financial compensation.²⁶

Today, most airlines recruit new flight attendants in a variety of ways. Some are referrals from the IFFA rosters. Others are recruited through newspaper advertisements, word of mouth, flight attendant referrals, college campus recruitment campaigns, response to written

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ McKelvey, Jean, "Cleared For Takeoff: Airline Labor Relations since Deregulation", Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1988 pp. 200-210

inquiries, and other methods. One of the most effective means of present-day recruitment of new flight attendants is through the attendants themselves, or more specifically, the "image" they present. As one flight attendant who has been especially active in IFFA stated:

I would go to the airport as a girl and see...crews coming in from Europe...everyone would turn to look at them...I got to thinking that it was an exciting, glamorous job..."²⁷

Although, there are "exciting" and "glamorous" aspects to it, it is also a great deal of hard work and effort. IFFA has fought hard over the last 12 years to improve the working conditions for flight attendants and the manner in which they are treated and considered by management. The airlines reluctantly have begun to realize the valuable work and high degree of professionalism exerted by the flight attendants in the dispensation of their duties.

In regard to career opportunities available to flight attendants, much has changed since the early days of "fly girls" in the 1930's, although there is still room for improvement.

Traditionally the norm for today's flight attendants, both female and male, is to undergo quite extensive ground school training programs

²⁷ Flight Attendant #2, Interview, January 28, 1990.

before being allowed into the air. These schools, which are run by the airlines themselves specifically for the purposes of providing a formalized training environment for flight attendants, help interested candidates refine their skills and decide whether the occupation is suitable to them, both professionally, economically and psychologically as well.

In addition to the formal training endeavors, however, most airlines have informal on the job training periods for their flight attendants. A novice is supervised by one or more experienced attendants during an initial (3-6 month) trial period before being granted permanent status. A number of flight attendants interviewed stated that the most extensive and valuable training they had received in their professions occurred during this on-the-job period.

Attendants Confront Sexism in Business

One aspect of the flight attendant's job which has occupied a prominent position in my research are sexualization, sexuality and sexism. From the early era of flight attendants in 1930, up to and including the present time these aspects have permeated the job, often to the detriment of the fulfillment of the flight attendant's responsibilities.²⁸

American business has long used sex to sell. The movies did it, the cosmetics industry did it, the apparel industry did it, and of course, when the commercial flight industry began to expand after World War I, it did it as well. The airlines recognized the value of sex as a selling commodity. Yet, inherent in all this was the exploitation of a dedicated, hard working and determined band of pioneering women. These women had to rise above this blatant sexism and do their jobs, effectively, proudly and professionally.

Dana Hawa and Faith Grill along with many other flight attendants discussed how the airlines used discriminatory and sexist practices for decades, up to and including the 1970's, to perpetuate the "vestal virgin" myth of flight attendants. They explained that, it was only in the late 60's and early 70's, when most of the airlines began abolishing the "no-marriage" rule that management began facing the reality of life for flight attendants. While efforts in this regard were being made, flight attendants were forced to live with sexist, racist propaganda perpetuated by Madison Avenue on behalf of their employers.

Thanks in great part to both the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, which opened doors for non-white flight attendants (although, as an interesting aside, many airlines flying to Hawaii often employed native

male stewards since the 1950's, who of course were not subject to the no-marriage, no-pregnancy rules!) and the feminist movement of the 1970's which fought for all women's rights, most of these discriminatory regulations were abolished. No longer would flight attendants have to cope with the indignities of no-marriage, no-pregnancy rules, and hide the fact if they were married and/or pregnant for fear of losing their jobs.²⁹

This struggle against sexism was fought over decades, in countless management offices, courtrooms, conferences, meetings and forums. Flight attendants, who perform some of the most useful and important service functions of the commercial flight industry, have been subjected to some of the most demeaning, dreadful and discriminatory practices imaginable in their recruitment, hiring, training and on-the job environment. It has been through the efforts of many courageous flight attendants, IFFA, as well as the Civil Rights and Feminist movements of the last 20 years, that important positive strides have been made to accord these workers the dignity, respect and professionalism they deserve.

²⁹ Rizzuto, Janet, "TWA And The Independent Federation of Flight Attendants: 1986 Negotiations and the Aftermath", (unpublished MA thesis) Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1989 p. 84

TWA Sky Scabs.

When TWA began its so-called "training college" for flight attendants in the mid 80's, it in all probability designed this as a management ploy in anticipation of a strike which it knew was immanent in order to have a fresh, untapped supply of employees to choose from to fulfill the responsibilities of the striking flight attendants.

The company recruited new flight attendants from outside, rapidly trained them at the "training college" and then put them to work. This created a rather uncomfortable environment for everyone concerned. Many of these people were characterized at the time of the strike as "sky scabs" for failing to honor IFFA's picket lines.

While this has justifiable merit, from an objective point of view, TWA is more to blame for the creation of such a situation. When the company recruited these women, the majority had no previous labor union involvement or understanding. They were basically coerced into begin working under less-than-ideal labor conditions. This created a working environment fraught with friction, ill feelings, and more among both the striking workers and their replacements. These ill-feelings have continued to one degree or another even to today, almost five years after the strike. In a recent interview, an active participant in the 1986 TWA

strike commented that:

"In an emergency, it wouldn't matter to me who I was working with. We'd all pitch in and do what had to be done for the safety and survival of the passengers and crew. ...but on the ground, I don't think I'd want to associate with her (sky scab) too much..."³⁰

Such antagonism, which has been mostly perpetrated through the actions of TWA management, has had a detrimental effect on the morale and professionalism of its flight attendants. Ms.3 believes that in the long run this will have a less than-positive effect on long-term hiring recruitment prospects for the company, as well as, a debilitating effect on IFFA itself.

The company and the union should develop a joint effort to "heal" whatever wounds occurred during the strike for both their own good. Polarity of this kind, especially in the type of work environment involved here, is not only potentially non productive: it can be potentially unsafe for all concerned as well. While consideration of this situation is limited to TWA only, a sensible person can see the possibility of "across the

³⁰ Interview, F/A Ms.# 3, April 3,1990.

board" involvement with other airlines as well.³¹

The Issue of Male Flight Attendants

Another factor which has entered into the picture for flight attendants has been the entry into the profession of male attendants especially since the non-discriminatory legislation of the 1960's and 1970s. While men were actually the first flight attendants (Lufthansa hired one Albert Hufe, a former railroad steward as the world's first recorded actual flight steward early in 1928), the decline in the popularity of this profession for men, coupled with the more prevalent "masculine mystique" of being a pilot, together with the developing attitude on the part of the airlines in the 1930's that women's dispositions were more "naturally suited" for work of this nature, made the profession unappealing to most men.

However, with the advent of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and other court decisions barring discriminatory hiring and firing policies, coupled perhaps with the still-prevailing "glamorous" image associated with the job, more men are flying today as stewards than ever before.

³¹ O'Sullivan, Judith and Rosemary Gallick, "Workers and Allies: Female Participation in the American Trade Union Movement, 1824-1976", Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1975 p. 36

There are various reasons for this.

Physical Abilities. Some airlines are requiring more demanding physical endeavors onboard and are putting at least one male on each plane to help with the "grunt aspect" of the job. During the hijacking era, airlines felt the need to have men aboard. Some candidates find the job appealing for a variety of reasons (travel, freedom, excitement, opportunity for meeting people, steppingstone for career enhancement). The consequences of this increase in male stewards will have important effects on the role of the flight attendant, and of the union in particular. IFFA's first president, now retired, Arthur (Art) Teolis, successfully led the union through its early rise until his resignation in 1985 when he returned to being a flight attendant. IFFA should now have an opportunity to become more identified in the minds of both the airline industry and the general public as a "flight attendants' union" and not just a "women's union".

This public identification and realization should go a long way toward gaining additional respect for the union in terms of bargaining power. Furthermore, it will convince management of something which they should have known all along: the flight attendant's job is hard, serious and skillful; whether it is done by a female or a male is hardly

relevant to the real issue. The airlines will, I hope, also begin to recognize the career potential factor in the job. Women have been stating all along that not enough career advancement exists in the profession.

Men in the profession have assisted their female colleagues in clamoring for this right as well. The airlines must be more responsive to this issue by developing formalized, step by step advancement plans for the field, and not just perfunctory, "paper plans" which have no real-life implementation chances.

Male flight attendants will also help the airline industry move away from the ridiculous "sky girl" image it has perpetuated by becoming responsive to the needs of both its customers and its employees and to society's attitudinal changes as well.³²

The image of flight attendants has grown and matured significantly over the last 25 years. What was originally thought of as a short-term, glamorous job which was mainly designed to function as a "marketing strategy" for the airlines gradually evolved into a professional, highly skilled vocation, which plays a pivotal role in the overall safety and

³² Interview, Vicki Frankovich, February 27, 1991.

comfort of the plane and its passengers. Of course, as the nature of the position changed, so did the attitudes of those women who worked in the profession. They began demanding a full range of benefits, working conditions and other factors which would be equivalent to those of other support services, such as mechanics and pilots.³³

The Emergence of IFFA

The Transport Workers' Union began representing the flight attendants in 1961. As I have already mentioned, during the 60's and into the early 70's, the flight attendant's job was considered by management to be an effective method for marketing the airline. In relation to other airline workers, flight attendants did not have the leverage to demand better wages and more refined working conditions as their counterparts in the TWU. As Teolis noted:

"Airline steward and stewardess unions did not fit into the different TWU structure. The unit was poorly administrated and reduced to a 'paper tiger.'"³⁴

This factor, combined with the union's somewhat patronizing attitude towards the flight attendants and their lack of attention in regard to flight

³³ Nielsen, pp. 102-106

³⁴ Interview, Art Teolis, January 12, 1991.

attendants' heightening of "union consciousness", created a relationship between the attendants and the TWU which was tenuous at best.

In addition, with the advent of the feminist movement of the early and mid 1970's, flight attendants themselves began to realize the pivotal role they played in the overall success of their company. Coupled with a gradual elimination of age discrimination, marital status and pregnancy restrictions, they began to see themselves in a different light altogether.

TWU's Demise The first and most distressing realization of this change was that their union was not representing their needs adequately. Therefore, after over 15 years of TWU representation, and with only modest gains to show for these efforts in their collective bargaining agreements with management, many of the flight attendants began to consider the possibility of establishing an independent union in order to improve their wages, working conditions and long term employment and career development opportunities.³⁵

During the 1976 negotiations with management, rapidly deteriorated between the two parties and a strike vote was decided upon by the flight attendant representatives. In a surprising show of union

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Nielsen p. 56

discord, the TWU representatives did not support the flight attendants' wishes in this regard, based on TWA's purported economic situation. In an unusual turn of events, the TWU representatives joined with TWA to seek an injunction against the strike vote. According to Teolis, this served as a catalyst to induce the flight attendants to seek new union representation for their needs.

The Birth of IFFA. The TWA flight attendants established a new union, the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA) which they hoped would provide for their short and long term needs and effectively represent their interests with management. The TWU had failed in this regard possibly because of the wide range and diversity of labor populations they represented. Teolis felt that, in this diversity, they were not equipped to effectively IDENTIFY properly with the flight attendants' needs, and subsequently were not able to communicate these needs and concerns in their negotiations with management.

According to Teolis, the crucial period was from July 1976, when discussions were first initiated concerning improving the representation of the flight attendants in their negotiations with TWA, until April 1977, when IFFA finally was certified as the union representing flight attendants. This occurred after two elections and a massive campaign by

the Transit Workers' Union to undermine the new union.

However, even this somewhat adverse situation did have positive benefits in that it heightened the "union consciousness" of the flight attendants and it also helped to develop a tremendously strong membership and a sense of solidarity which would be of great importance and benefit in the future strike against TWA.

In addition, Teolis noted that during this same period, the TWA pilots decided to promote an alternative union for the flight attendants, the Association of Flight Attendants. Although at times he perceived the union, as existing more for the sake of diverting attention away from the certification struggle that IFFA was waging, than, as a viable alternative (to represent the attendants).

Under the formidable leadership of Arthur Teolis, a massive educational and consciousness-raising effort was made to inform the flight attendants about the benefits of IFFA membership and the ways in which it would better represent their needs than the TWU. Once certification was obtained, however, TWA viewed the IFFA as somewhat radical and was initially apprehensive in its approach to negotiations. Once a "relationship" was established, however, the honeymoon period ended and TWA again resumed its "hardline" negotiating approach. To everyone's

consternation, this was later seen to be one of the more important factors leading to a breakdown in communications, and eventually, to a strike vote against Trans World Airlines in 1986.

As the labor movement enters the new century, there will be new priorities, new problems, new struggles and new challenges to face. Unemployment, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, overseas manufacturing, anti-union legislation, union busting and other disruptions have stratified the labor movement, causing it to falter. It will continue to falter unless it can meet the challenges of serving a diverse workforce. Meeting the challenges of a diverse new workforce can give the American labor movement the special resolve and renewal of purpose which is needed not only to survive but to prosper.

CHAPTER THREE

From Sex Symbol to Polyester Proletariat.³⁶

"...when we had a strike, everybody knew they were going to go back to work, it was simply a means to taking a break, doing a little radical stuff like picketing and, eventually, there was gonna be dialogue between the company and the unions and bargaining in good faith took place, more or less, and, this is my personal experience in strikes, we got back to the table and everybody agreed on something and every side gave, and every side, each side got and we were back to work. Now, it is not that way. This is the first strike I've ever gone into - and this was my third, that I went into - with absolute terror in the pit of my gut. Because, I knew that there was good chance, I knew that Icahn was going to do everything possible to prevent us from ever coming back to work, and that was never the emphasis before. I went on strike knowing with the Railway Labor Act that because we were participating in a legal strike, I was going to be recalled in seniority order. There's going to be no way that we could get around that. Actually, he tried and we had to go to court to win that. That's another rubber stamp thing. It was already a law. You hire people back, in seniority order, but Icahn forced us to go to court to have the judge say, you hire people back in seniority order. Waste of money, waste of time. But, still, I believe in the strike action because it unifies the work force.

If you have a strong work force, a strong union group, that is behind this strike, this is how you get people together, this is how solidarity is forged. If the worse the company gets, the stronger we become. I believe in the strike because it makes people serious, seriously look at the issues. It used to be: oh hell, let's just strike!

³⁶ Peter Kott, credited.

out in the field talking to people, keeping communications, what kind of information is being sent out. I think that because of our example at TWA, there are going to be a lot of people in management who are going to think twice about a strike, because of the fact that I.F.F.A. has been so tenacious, we have won in court. Our membership was 80% strong on the correct side of the picket line after ten weeks. This is quite astonishing in the labor world and certainly in a world where it's a primarily female work force and, in the flight attendant world, which everybody knows means you're dealing with air heads, people never had respect for flight attendants before. I think strikes are crucial. I think that this strike is going to be a lesson to us and to the rest of the labor world because we know now, we thought we did before, but we don't, we didn't, now we know more, just how much is at stake and we ought not to wait to the last minute to get involved with the union, we ought to be involved all along. We ought to be giving strong messages all along that we are a force to be reckoned with and we are that force long before it ever comes to a strike. The union has always known this."³⁶

³⁶ Interview, FA#1, 12/12/89

TWA Flight Attendants for Dignity and Justice in the Workplace

"I carried a sign that said, 'The Devil has two sons--Icahn and Lorenzo.' The Bible says the leach has two offsprings, both named 'give me.'" ³⁷

Nearly 6,000 members of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants struck Trans World Airlines in March 1986 after over two years of bitter, fruitless and frustrating attempts at negotiating an agreement between the two parties.

The union had tried to use the leverage of a strike as a last-resort option to arrive at an accord with management, but this accord never arrived. Trans World Airlines had been fully preparing for a strike all along, and was quickly able to mobilize replacements for striking workers.

IFFA was unwilling and had fought too hard up to this point already to admit it was beaten, and thus utilized legal proceedings to resolve their differences with TWA, which was personified at this point in time by Carl Icahn.

The bargaining procedures which had taken place over the last two years preceding the strike were clearly indicative of an antagonistic,

³⁷ *ibid*

vehement and often times non communicative "relationship" between the union and management. Numerous outside factors as well clouded their relationship over these last two years to the point that most attempts to negotiate an agreement would ultimately prove to be futile.³⁸

It was already known that there was a need for an independent union for flight attendants. These workers were viewed in the industry at the time of its formation as little more than glamorous, airborne "mannequins", "fly girls", "waitresses", "queers" or "crazies".³⁹ Very little if any attention was paid by almost any one to the fact that the cabin crew played an important role in the overall safety and comfort of passengers and crew.⁴⁰

Thus, while the necessity for the formation of a new and independent union to more aggressively represent the needs of the flight attendants was generally agreed upon, there is some concern about whether the mood of the time was appropriate for such a new entity, given the fact (from a perspective of nearly a dozen years) that the

³⁸ Rizzuto

³⁹ Interview, FA#9, November 17, 1990

⁴⁰ Interview, Arthur Teolis, January 12, 1991

"specter" of deregulation hung heavily in the air around the same time.

The Impact of Airline Deregulation

In 1978, the entire airline industry underwent major and radical changes in the way it operated, the routes it serviced, the schedules it ran, the fares it charged and more due to the elimination of the Civil Aviation Board (CAB), which until that time governed the regulation of airfares, routes, operational matters and much more under its jurisdiction and auspices. The resulting impact of its elimination caused profound changes in the airline industry, especially in regard to airline carriers themselves, who were affected primarily from a financial and operational point of view, as well as the labor unions themselves, who found themselves on the "receiving end" of many of these financial and operational changes.

We are all aware of the aftermath of deregulation in regard to the airline industry. Faced with increasing operational costs which could no longer be merely passed on to the passenger, coupled with ever-spiraling fuel costs due to the oil embargo and shortages of the early 70's, airlines became increasingly "cut throat" and aggressive in their competition for passengers. One of the most interesting (some would say positive)

effects of deregulation was the destruction of "monopolies" which the major airlines such as TWA, Eastern, Pan Am and others, had developed over the years because of their predominance in the industry.

The advent of deregulation was accompanied by the flurry of non unionized carriers that entered the industry. In this new marketplace, they were paying lower wages to their employees than the unionized airlines. The reduced air fares which resulted from this action elicited an immediate response from the other carriers, both union and non-union. The old airlines were compelled to jump on the price war bandwagon in order to stay competitive and to continue to attract customers in a tightly structured and extremely cost-conscious market. The competition among carriers to obtain the most profitable airline routes only added distress and further aggravated an already fastpaced and high-pressured environment.⁴¹

As can be suspected, because of cost-cutting measures, purchases of new equipment and planes, spiralling fuel costs, and more, the airlines turned to the labor unions in order to obtain wage concessions as a means of reducing operational costs and staying competitive within the

⁴¹ibid

industry. This situation was later to be a watershed for the labor movement, because workers who up to this time had been accustomed to generous wage increases were now being threatened with reductions in wages, benefits, and much more. These concessions came from adjustments in wages, salary structures, work rules, work-hours and postponements of negotiated benefits.

TWA sought the usual concessions from its unions, but, for the flight attendants there was an additional demand for 'change in work rules'.

This infuriated the membership and the IFFA representatives, who realized the potential for disruption in the lifestyles and general quality of life of its members if these concessions would be placed into effect by management. Justifiably, they also felt they had been unfairly targeted.

From an organizational strategy point of view, IFFA may have believed that if it wielded enough strength to threaten TWA with a strike in light of the environment of cost reductions, non-restrictive flight routes, price wars and fare gouging, and other factors, it would dissuade management from continuing to demand such drastic changes. By exerting enough influence over management to prevent the implementation of any of these concessions, IFFA would have protected

the interests of its membership and established itself as a force to be reckoned with in future union-management negotiations with TWA.

The introduction of deregulation into the airline industry eliminated all of its most cherished "mutual aid pacts", whereby all carriers would contribute to another airline which had been struck by its employees, thus averting to a large extent the severe financial losses usually associated with such a situation. Art Teolis, former President of the IFFA, described and referred to this as "...labor's reward for deregulation."⁴²

Deregulation in 1978 brought about the dissolution of all such mutual aid pacts. It is not therefore inconceivable to theorize that IFFA may have believed that the strategy of a strike threat against TWA management would once again have the leverage power that it implied, especially in consideration of the highly competitive environment in which the airline industry found itself in around the late 70's.

IFFA faces Deregulation. Although IFFA believed that this strike threat would provide much needed leverage to reach a quick resolution to

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Interview notes, Art Teolis, January 12, 1991

negotiations, in the long run it proved to be more beneficial to TWA management, who began gearing up for the eventual inevitability of a strike. A strike did not occur, however, and instead a fairly successful contract was obtained in which IFFA achieved key gains in compounded pay increases over 3 years of 38.9%; Cola increases; improvements in reserve spread days; transfer expense money; increased vacations and sick days; flight insurance, and many other improvements and benefits for its members. That contract was enthusiastically received by the flight attendants after years of at best marginal gains under their former union representation, the TWU.

Their new contract was leading the industry. More importantly, however, the PSYCHOLOGICAL MINDSET and SENSE OF SOLIDARITY which this contract instilled in the membership and in the union's representatives would prove to be of invaluable usage in future negotiations coming up in 1981, and especially in 1986, when a strike actually occurred.⁴³

This victory led IFFA to believe that they would always be victorious and that they would never have to give up their hard-won gains.

⁴³

Hoffman,

They saw themselves as "winners," and, perhaps, failed to note or to accept that changes taking place in the industry would adversely affect them. The members came to expect "more" as their just due, never thinking of "less."

The rank-and-file and the leadership also gained a sense of solidarity. They could depend upon one another. This sense of solidarity and feeling that they could defeat any management tactics were contributing factors in their perhaps hopeless struggle against TWA.

The ease of negotiations which IFFA had concluded successfully in 1978 would not be repeated in future negotiations. Due to many different factors, some of which were self-inflicted by both management and union miscommunications and, later, by personality conflicts between Vicky Frankovich, IFFA's new president and Carl Icahn, TWA Chairman, contract renewal negotiations deteriorated rapidly into a series of adversarial, bitter and frustrating confrontations which did little to resolve issues, but rather served to divide both parties, who had much to lose in the long run.

The main thrust of TWA's negotiating position was that too much had been gained by the flight attendants in 1978, and this mistake would not be repeated in 1981. The union was steadfast in its refusal to allow

concessions and therefore little movement on either side ensued, preventing the accomplishment of any concrete progress in negotiations for the new contract.

Management Demands Concessions. In 1983, TWA management issued what became referred to as the "Red Book" in which it outlined its salary and benefits clauses to the flight attendants in anticipation of a new contract. The "Red Book" clauses indicated a substantial change in attitude on the part of management from its previous hardnosed position concerning the contract. However, it is now believed that TWA probably sought to maintain with IFFA the same parity in wages and benefits it had already offered to the International Association of Machinists.

TWA took advantage of an astute public relations move by not only submitting the package to the IFFA negotiating committee, but by mailing it directly to the membership as well, in a campaign designed to garner "grass roots" level support before any formal consideration by the official IFFA negotiating committee team.⁴⁴

The ploy was quite successful in its intent, and on 4/12/83, the proposal (now known as the "Red Book") was accepted by both parties.

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Interview Notes, Art Teolis, January 12, 1991

This signing heralded the onset of several major problems in the relationship between TWA management and IFFA, in regard to level of wages obtained versus what had been asked for initially. It also caused severe confusion on the part of IFFA when management brought in a whole new negotiating team to deal with the union. Most importantly, IFFA soon realized that its hand had in effect been "forced" into a signing and that the resulting contract had been more the effort of a one-sided (unilateral), almost dictatorial policy on the part of management rather than a properly negotiated, deliberated and jointly agreed upon conclusion to labor management discussions.

Six months after the signing of the "Red Book" agreement, TWA went to its employees and asked for voluntary concessions from both union and non-union workers in order to obtain vital concession measures. The company claimed this was necessary to stave off critical financial and operational difficulties due to the precarious state of the airline and severe deregulatory problems which were still plaguing the industry. Thus, the stage was set for the prelude to the 1986 strike.

TWA continued to press for concessions it claimed were vital to its survival. IFFA continued to press for the validity of these claims. Neither side obtained answers from the other which in hindsight could have

provided more than the merely perfunctory responses which both parties issued in increasingly tense and deteriorating negotiating sessions.

IFFA's New Leadership And The Strike. In March of 1986, IFFA called for a strike against TWA under the direction of Vicki Frankovich, who along with Arthur Teolis, had been one of the founders of the union. Frankovich was adamant in her position that before the flight attendants would be willing to grant any concessions to TWA, she would have to be convinced of the validity of the carrier's claims concerning the necessity of these concessions. Furthermore, even if the claims turned out to be valid, IFFA also had to be convinced that the flight attendants would not be the only workers to contribute concessions to management.

A charismatic leader whose vibrancy, tireless dedication to her tasks and strong sense of commitment was instrumental in developing the solidarity among flight attendants, Vicki Frankovich was a woman totally possessed by the seriousness of the situation in March of 1986, and was determined to help IFFA weather the storm of antagonism which Carl Icahn had helped to foster upon his takeover of TWA.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Ibid

The Corporate Raider-Turned-Executive Enters

Carl Icahn came to TWA with a previous reputation as a wheeler dealer and corporate raider. A strong-willed, aggressive, ruthless and highly intelligent individual, he was envisioned as the "white knight" who would save TWA.⁴⁶

Icahn's personality clashed severely and in many ways with Frankovich's. Having entered the picture in June 1985 when he began negotiating for the takeover of TWA, until December 1985, when he became controlling stockholder, Carl Icahn moved swiftly to establish TWA in his own image and likeness in regard to administrative operations and employee involvement. He was admittedly an individual with no experience in running an airline, yet he seemed at the time (1985) to be a better choice for controlling stockholdership than Frank Lorenzo, who had developed a somewhat distressful reputation following his involvement with Continental Airlines.

The one thing in Icahn's favor at that time was that, unlike Frank Lorenzo, he had not yet had any major confrontations with the labor movement. Under the circumstances, Frankovich and the other IFFA

⁴⁶ Table of Contents, US Court of Appeals, No. 88-1984 WM

officials, had no reason to suspect he was a "closet-union-buster". IFFA, the other TWA unions and workers believed that he would be more "reasonable" to deal with than Lorenzo in subsequent contract negotiations.

Thus, in the corporate battle for TWA's controlling stock interest, Carl Icahn emerged victorious over Frank Lorenzo, based on three main factors, which must be considered and understood in light of future events:

1. Frank Lorenzo already earned a reputation as a "union-buster" because of the Continental episode and was thus viewed as more of a "threat" by the pilots, machinists and others.
2. Carl Icahn had never been directly involved with labor unions up to that point in time (December 1985) and was viewed by the three TWA unions (ALPA, IAM, IFFA) as a more "rational" candidate for controlling stock ownership.
3. The February 1985 proposals put forth by then-Executive Vice President and Chairman of the Board of TWA Richard Pearson, who was responsible for collective bargaining matters between TWA and its unions, although somewhat reasonable in their content and call for union cutbacks and concessions (totalling between \$100 and \$150 million), were

nevertheless rejected by the IFFA negotiators. Apparently, this was due in part to their rather justified belief that because of the lack of a consistent labor relations philosophy on the part of TWA management as well as a lack of direction, it could not automatically be assumed that these were company-mandated long term goals, and not the "whims" of some short-term policymakers.

In addition, it was also assumed that the rather generous wage increases outlined in the infamous "Red Book" were a management ploy to appease the union membership with short term benefits with no particular intention of carrying out those benefits over the long term. This was evidenced when TWA's management requested concessions of those very terms after only six months of their existence.

Thus, during the period of 1984-1985, concession negotiations and discussions were held between IFFA and TWA which ultimately proved to be fruitless and frustrating. Instead, the stage was set for the sense of mistrust and hostility which later developed between the two parties, fueled on in part by Carl Icahn.

Carl Icahn met with the three major unions representing TWA workers in June 1985, the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA); International Association of Machinists (IAM); and the Independent

Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), in order to develop an understanding with them of the necessity of budgetary and operational cutbacks and reductions in labor costs. He said these were crucial to his taking over TWA. ALPA immediately agreed to a 26% cut, under the stipulation that the other two labor organizations would agree to a 20-22% cut.

"The agreement said that Icahn would do his best to get 22%, so our coalition shattered, obviously. They (Icahn & the Pilots) agreed to a no sympathy strike clause. It had all sorts of things that had everybody upset next day, when we found out."⁴⁷

The IAM initially stated its opposition to cutbacks, and IFFA explained that it wanted to go back to the membership for advisement and consultation. A coalition of the various unions had been formed, but, as Vicki Frankovich explains,

"We made a coalition agreement on June 11th 1985. The first meeting was the 26th or 27th of June. I found out that he (Icahn) was already meeting with the Pilots and Machinists. I'd never met or talked with him before."⁴⁸

In August of 1985, the machinists union agreed to meet with Icahn again and come to an agreement about cutbacks. Icahn allegedly

⁴⁷Vicki Frankovich, February 27, 1991

⁴⁸ Ibid.

requested Frankovich to stay on call in order, he hoped, to engage IFFA in the same negotiations as the IAM and thus conclude a deal with both unions simultaneously. However, due to the uncertainty of the situation, and the long and drawn out process which had proved fruitless for many weeks, Vicki Frankovich decided to keep her personal plans intact which were of returning to California. Due to an apparent oversight, or deliberate breakdown in communications (it has never been properly established as to which), Icahn successfully concluded a cutback deal with the IAM of a 15% reduction that very weekend. "He also received a pledge not to honor any strike by other unions."⁴⁹

Overt sexism at bargaining the table: When Frankovich returned from California she met with Icahn and offered the same 15% reduction. "He insisted on 20%, ...and continued his sexist ploy, he said, 'Too bad, you went to a party (home), now the terms are changed.'" She continued, you can't tell me that there is any man who would have taken that same had a wedding to go to. There weren't big stories in the newspaper about 'Pilot goes to wedding and is unavailable for meetings.' Icahn's 'value system' included the belief that machinists were breadwinners and flight

⁴⁹ Ibid.

attendants were not, machinists were much harder to replace than flight attendants, machinists were a much more highly skilled workforce. At a previous meeting, on Friday, August 2nd, 1985, he said, 'Your deal is a 22% deal, there is no other deal for you. The deal for the Machinists is 15%. But look out that window, see that woman on the street, that woman can be a Flight Attendant. I've got four thousand people lined up around the corner who can take your job.'⁵⁰

These threats and platitudes did little to convince the IFFA leadership of the validity of his budgetary and operational claims for reductions. In December 1985, Icahn purchased TWA without having obtained a concession from the flight attendants, clearly gambling on the belief that they were dealing from a position of weakness and invalidity of benefits.⁵¹

Icahn takes over, demands new concessions! Upon his takeover of TWA in December, 1985, Icahn determined that he would request even more concessions than the plan which was originally developed by the TWA negotiating team led by Richard Pearson. These newly-called for

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Cappelli, Peter & Harris, Timothy. "Airline Union Concessions in the Wake of Deregulation". Monthly Labor Review. Vol.108, No.6, June 1985. p. 37-39.

concessions more than doubled the concessions of the February 1985 demands. The wage cuts and work-rule changes would result in a cut of 22% in salaries and \$62 million in other labor costs.

In legal hearings conducted just prior to the onset of the 1986 IFFA strike, the Western District Court of Missouri, which had been adjudicating the case since the filing of the first legal briefs in 1984, under the direction of Judge Sachs, reviewed Icahn's apparent reasons for this doubling of concession demands, and decided that:

- a) there was a marked difference between the moderate, reasonable decisions of Richard Pearson and the bold, reckless and some times irrational "modus operandi" of Carl Icahn.
- b) severely adverse business conditions had occurred both at TWA and for Carl Icahn's other business interests which may have impelled him to reconsider his purchase offer, thus in effect panicking a large portion of present TWA stock holders, and
- c) a belief that IFFA was an isolated, rather weak and unconsolidated union which would receive little internal and external support in the event of a strike, either from its own membership or from other labor unions,

both in economic as well as in terms of solidarity.⁵²

Meetings between IFFA and TWA management continued during January and February 1986, with various proposals from both sides going back and forth with little if any fruitful progress. In the period just prior to the strike call, there was the significant difference of \$33 million between TWA's offer of concessions and the amount IFFA would be willing to concede. Icahn made a pre-strike "last stand" concessionary offer of an additional 5% less in his wage concession demands (from the original 22% concession demand to 17%) and a promise that he would make no employee staffing cuts. IFFA had already reduced their own 15% wage reduction proposal to 13.5%, without an offer of the Flexible Monthly Credit Cap which Icahn wanted in exchange for his 5% reduction offer indicated above.

On March 5, 1986, IFFA filed a petition in the Western District Court of Missouri for a temporary restraining order to enjoin TWA from unilaterally imposing any proposed wage agreement changes in flight attendants' pay scale, work rules, working conditions and other previously agreed upon and negotiated benefits. Their request for this injunction was

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Rizzuto, p. 41

denied.

The Strike Begins. The stage was thus set for events of March 7, 1986, when IFFA called a strike of TWA flight attendants, resulting in the walkout of about 5000 of its members. TWA countered by immediately placing into effect the wage decreases and other changes in working conditions and rules it had sought under its original Section 6 notice, which had been unsuccessfully mediated by the National Mediation Board.

The strike continued until 5/17/86, when IFFA made an "unconditional" offer to return to work. On 5/23/86, TWA informed the union that it had decided to "freeze" its permanent work force, instead choosing to continue utilizing its temporary work force. All full time strikers had been placed on a preferential rehire list in order to fill any upcoming vacancies by means of seniority.

The New Arena: The Courts. Upon the conclusion of the strike, the battlefield now turned from the picket lines to the courts. TWA had been able to continue operating at almost total capacity for the duration of the strike because they had developed a well-conceived and carefully implemented strategy for dealing with what they were convinced was the eventuality of a strike even while negotiations were still underway. IFFA,

for its part, determined to file an unfair labor practice suit against TWA management, asserting that its members struck for unfair labor practice reasons, and not primarily for economic reasons. The result of this suit, if decided in favor of IFFA, would provide both reinstatement of strikers with back pay and other punitive damage awards to strikers if it were determined that there was justification for such a measure.⁵³

In the next section, a careful review and analysis of events which led to and followed as a result of the March 1986 strike of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants will be undertaken as a follow up to the strike events briefly described in the preceding section.

Aftermath of the 1986 Strike:

Looking back on the entire episode and situations which eventually led to the 1986 strike by IFFA against TWA, one is presented with facts which indicate that the strike was actually sparked by a series of misadventures, misunderstandings, clashes of personalities and outright miscalculations on the part of both the union and TWA. Numerous reasons have often been cited over the last four years as having caused

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Rizzuto, p.25-31

the strike. Those may be summarized as follows for the sake of brevity:

- 1) Each party underestimated the strength, perception and determination of the other in regard to the threat of a strike and of actual conduct and survival during a strike. TWA believed the union could only survive for a very brief time if a strike occurred; IFFA believed TWA would be paralyzed if it called a strike against it.
- 2) Negotiating/labor positions of TWA management underwent so many changes and revisions (3 times during 2 years) that the effect was one of havoc, inconsistency, misunderstanding and ultimately confusion during negotiations, leading to an eventual breakdown and IFFA's strike call.
- 3) IFFA exhibited a tendency to view short-term goals or gains instead of looking ahead to the "big picture" and establishing priorities for long term goals. The membership thus became some what "shortsighted" in this regard and consequently not as open to suggestion.
- 4) The entire scenario began making headlines in newspapers and thus the adverse publicity generated by and against each side made any concessionary actions difficult. No one wanted to be the first one to "lose face", and
- 5) There was an extreme difference in the proposals each side made;

thus, little flexibility or room for negotiation was evident or available.⁵⁴

Of these, probably the most difficult one in regard to pinpointing the "loggerhead" of the strike would be concessions in work rules or productivity changes. Since the lifestyle of the flight attendant is somewhat difficult in regard to schedule, time off, home base, domicile and other related issues, this was in all probability the most jealously-guarded benefit. The one on which least of all they would have wanted to grant concessions. In addition, these work and productivity rules reflected gains which the flight attendants had earned over the years, which in effect had allowed them to go from "management marketing tool" to self confident, assured professional. Thus, it would be nearly impossible to even consider concessions in this area.⁵⁵

Could The Strike Have Been Avoided?:

My research has indicated that there were probably at least three separate occasions when a strike could have been avoided. However, due to miscommunication and misunderstandings on the part of both union

⁵⁴ US Court of Appeals, No. 88-1984 WM, Brief for Appellee, Preliminary Statement.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

and management, perhaps a real chance to avoid what eventually occurred was never seriously considered, and a real opportunity to avoid a costly strike was lost.⁵⁶

The first of these opportunities occurred in February 1985 when Richard Pearson, TWA Chairman, offered IFFA a proposal that many feel would have led to an agreement. TWA had earned a profit the year before of \$30 million and was thus financially in a position to offer the union a decent proposal. The question arises, however, even if the union had accepted, could the company have maintained the financial equilibrium necessary to honor their commitment in this contract? It seems unlikely, especially when one realizes that Carl Icahn was just on TWA's horizon.

In any case, the union, perhaps not trusting TWA to deal consistently with it as evidenced the year before, rejected the proposal. In the second instance, Icahn had made an offer of a 20% wage cut and work rule changes to IFFA, just after the International Association of Machinists concession offer.

⁵⁶ Bensman, David. "Transportation Department Rejects Union's Call for Probe of TWA Management" Aviation and Space Technology, Vol.129, Nov. 14, 1988. p.34-37

IFFA refused, apparently because they refused to grant higher concessions than those offered by the IAM. There is speculation that Icahn and Vicki Frankovich were two obviously strong and demanding personalities who could not reach a "middle ground" with each other.⁵⁷

The final opportunity for a settlement came in early March 1986, when Icahn offered a 17% reduction (down from his original demand for a 22% cut) and a modification of productivity changes. IFFA rejected this proposal, apparently believing that Icahn was not offering the more crucial benefit of "job security". Ms. Frankovich, and the IFFA negotiating team were not comfortable with the ambiguity of Icahn's statement. The strike erupted and lasted 62 long and arduous days. (See Chapter 4. Ms.A. Interview).

The Proletarianization of a Glamorous Industry

The result of the strike was the temporary loss of approximately 5,200 flight attendant jobs, loss of benefits, and other problems. While numerous court victories have returned some flight attendants to work, the majority were unemployed for nearly four years, well into the

⁵⁷ Anonymous National Mediation Board Official, interview, May 11, 1989

Summer of 1989. At that time, the last group of recalls consisted of the new hires that had struck--eight of the 39 that had struck. Many have left the industry altogether, or gone to other airlines.

According to Art Teolis, TWA developed a well-conceived and strategically implemented contingency plan, having realized early in the negotiations that IFFA was steadfast in its solidarity and determined not to be undermined by Carl Icahn's manipulations. In view of this, TWA's development of a "Travel College" to train flight attendants (this in effect created a built in "reserve" of replacement flight attendants when the strike finally occurred).⁵⁸

In addition, Judge Sachs found appalling the lack of support and solidarity which IFFA was exposed to on the parts of its other TWA unions, primarily the Airline Pilots' Association and the International Association of Machinists. He commented on TWA's awareness of IFFA's becoming contractually isolated from potential allies and the perception that IFFA had little economic clout.⁵⁹

Had the other unions stood more steadfastly behind IFFA during

⁵⁸ Art Teolis interview, January 12, 1991

⁵⁹ US Civil Court, Civil Action No. 86-6030, p.12

the strike, TWA would have found it exceedingly more difficult to operate than it did. Carl Icahn realized this early on, and not only did he reach accords with the other two unions but included a stipulation in both contracts in which they agreed not to honor another union's strike call.⁶⁰

The most obvious question that comes to mind in reviewing the events of the last four years, since the March 1986 IFFA strike against TWA, until the present time is: how did the flight attendants come out? In numerous interviews I conducted with rank and file members, IFFA negotiating team members, union officers, and others, the overwhelming consensus of opinion indicates that it was believed that a strike was inevitable.

"No one wants to go out on strike. However, we are in a position that companies are forcing unions out on strike or they are locking you out or whatever..."⁶¹

Most flight attendants were very supportive of IFFA's stand because they realized that it was symbolic of the union's refusal to concede to Icahn's demands (44% total cuts in wages, benefits and work rule changes). To have conceded without a struggle would have symbolized a real "loss" of

⁶⁰ Rizzuto, p.32-36.

⁶¹ Interview, FA# 21, April 10, 1987

all the privilege, status and benefits they had fought so hard for over the years to gain. Although, they realize that Icahn has subsequently gone ahead and done so in any case, most flight attendants speak of the "morality" and "justice" of their cause and feel it was more a strike of "principle" than of issues.

The present contract, referred to as "The Gray Book," (the Red Book with TWA's unilateral changes combined), was recently printed and issued with a video cassette, which explains the contract, and an IFFA UPDATES. (Appendix I). The UPDATES announced to the members that the US Supreme Court had found in their favor and prohibited any further cuts or work rule changes. A number of changes that had been put into effect by management were also rescinded.

CHAPTER FOUR

Flight Attendants and Union Officials' Perceptions of the Strike

And its Aftermath

This section will examine the statements, feelings, opinions and thoughts of various TWA flight attendants and IFFA personnel concerning the 1986 strike and its aftermath in terms of job security, job status, benefits and wages, as well as the psychological and emotional attachments of the job and how these have changed because of the strike. All of the individuals expressed deep personal concerns and impressions about the strike, and how it affected their professional and personal lives on many different levels. Each in turn offered a personal perspective and viewpoint about the strike and what it meant to them, both on an individual level as well as on a collective level with their fellow flight attendants. The five Flight Attendants whose voices are heard at length in this chapter represent experiences that are characteristic of what many others felt.

We Shall Not Be Moved!: A Militant IFFA Leader Speaks

Ms. A was a high ranking official from IFFA, who had been active both as a flight attendant and as a union official for some time before the

strike as well as during the 1986 altercation between TWA and IFFA.

"I was Vice President at the time and I ended up being the one who had to call the strike. We received the authorization to call a strike from our membership and the Board voted whether to call a strike."⁶²

She is steadfast in her belief that the TWA strike was orchestrated in part by Carl Icahn's desire to rid himself of the older and more established flight attendants and related personnel, in order to replace them with younger, less experienced workers to whom he could pay lower wages and reduced benefits.

Icahn did force us out on strike and I think that Icahn really believed that he was going to get rid of the older more pensioned group and we would never come back to work. He would replace us with younger women and men...To some extent you don't care that much about insurance because you haven't started getting sick yet and you haven't gotten married and you haven't started worrying about babies or any of those type of things. This is the way the flight attendant's job was hard to stick with. Because after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act the airlines chose to ignore the Civil Rights Act and continued to force women to quit when they were married or forced women to quit...And of course you had to leave when you reached the ripe old age of 42 and then it wasn't until 1973 that men could even be flight attendants. Some of the carriers such as TWA and Pan Am and Eastern had some men who were pursers...women could not be pursers..And so what happened is the airlines have figured out a way to get that

⁶²Interview, F/A Ms. A, July 13, 1989

quick turnover by offering substandard salaries and interestingly enough TWA performed the highest at \$1,004 per month. I think Eastern is around \$700. People are based in high cost areas such as New York, Los Angeles, or San Francisco. Certainly if you are based somewhere like St. Louis you maybe can get by on that kind of salary but certainly not in New York City. You're flying so many hours that people were just worn out so the company is getting its turnover. Our attrition rate prior to the strike was at 1% and it is now 10%. The people who were hired in 1986 on the January seniority list 800 still left. I presume that it will be much less on this seniority list. If you call me later we should be receiving the list within the next few weeks. We were supposed to have it 3 days ago. The attrition rate is much greater and TWA is offering an early, we call it a pass-back, in order to force them to leave.

This official expresses a viewpoint concerning the events leading up to and during the strike whereby Icahn created an environment of distrust, sexism and substandard controls in order to "divide and conquer" the flight attendants. She explained,

The job did start changing before Icahn, in that TWA started taking flight attendants off airplanes. The remaining flight attendants would provide the same kind of service. The job was already deteriorating. Icahn made it worse because he made you fly more hours for less money with less rest. People are just tired, calling in sick because they are too exhausted to fly. People are having to take stress leaves. We never had people taking stress leaves prior to the strike. Of course, today you also have people from different factions in the union. What happens when you have a strike like ours and you try to operate and you have people crossing the picket lines? Then you hire permanent replacements; this causes such a great division. I remember

flying as a flight attendant to Seattle and one of the flight attendants who had been hired in 1985 and crossed the picket line asked me when this would be over, I can't stand it anymore. My response to her was if you go into a coal mining town or a steel mill town you will have some kid who won't speak to another kid because his great-great grandfather crossed the picket line. As long as there is one striker and one cross-over you're never going to have total peace. There will always be a division because it was a highly emotional situation...But certainly people don't forget -- you're a traitor. As far as having that label taken off you - it will never come off as long as you're with TWA. She said, "But that's not right." I said, "People don't think what you did was right." We at the union represent so many factions now. We represent the cross-overs, the scabs, the people hired as permanent replacements and the Ozark flight attendants...mostly in St. Louis. Some have transferred to NY and other places. We also represent the strikers. Prior to this week, we represented the strikers called back and those still out and you could not make either group happy. The people who were out complained we didn't care about them. We only cared about those working -- scabs and rehires. Those working said we only cared about those who didn't come back to work. The Ozark people say we don't care about them and we were involved in fights they weren't involved in. The cross-overs and the '86 replacements have their complaints...They are members of the bargaining unit in that they are part of IFFA. They don't really become part of IFFA unless they sign formal membership but they have an obligation to pay union dues as a condition of employment...Interestingly enough we have about 32 people who were hired as replacements in 1986 who joined the strike. We're having a reception for them on Saturday and welcoming them into the fold. Most of these people have not seen one single trip. They're scared. We're going to honor 3 in particular and they are 3 who probably did more than a lot of our own members, who had a vested interest in the strike. They are particularly afraid because they have spent their entire 3

1/2 years at TWA fighting TWA.. And they're special people..

Through the course of my interview with her, this official often showed how the intermittent raises and then concessions which TWA offered to the Flight Attendants were part of a concerted effort on the part of Icahn and TWA management to break the spirit of the attendants and the solidarity of IFFA, as a strike became more and more inevitable and eminent.

His whole attitude was if we didn't marry someone rich to take care of us we should have been willing to make concessions and we were willing to give our fair share. He wanted more from us than from the other work groups who were predominantly male including non-union workers because at that time the ticket agents and reservations clerks were non-union. They were comparably paid. One of the reasons that Icahn gave for demanding more is that we got such a large pay raise in 1983 and 1984 and people forget that pay raise was shoved down our throats. In the '81-'83 negotiations we were looking for work rules and the company 2 weeks before our cooling-off period offered us a humongous raise and a couple of retirement and insurance benefits. It was a kind of blackmail -- take it or leave it. We'd have been crazy to go out on strike. Nobody would have gone... If you've got a substantial pay raise on the table all of a sudden the money is much more important than the work-load.

Six months later TWA was asking for some of it back: Concessions. One of the ways TWA bargains and this really became prevalent in the bargaining in between contracts-- their bargaining is I want what I want. I want it my way and our Secretary-Treasurer Bill Hoffman came up with a great comparison, It's like an analogy: "You come to me and say,

'K..., I need to borrow \$100. Do you have a hundred dollar bill?' And, I look in my wallet and say, 'Here's a 50 and 3 20s. How's that?' You say, 'No! Damn it! If you don't have a hundred dollar bill, I don't want it'. That's the way TWA was in concessionary bargaining." The company was looking for \$8 million from us. We gave them concessions in other areas and our package was worth more to the company than their package was but it was not their package so they turned it down. Even in the last round of the '81 to '83 negotiations they played such games that we were trying to talk to them and they said, "You can come back to us with a proposal and if it's acceptable we'll agree to it and if not we'll turn it down." The negotiating committee came back and they were told, "No, that's not it." "What's wrong with it?" "The entire package is wrong." They wouldn't even tell you what items. You ended up negotiating against yourself, which is not a very good posture to be in. Even after we settled and accepted the company's pay increase the minute before midnight, the company was so surprised we were taking this that they already started to renege. One of the things we did get in that contract was retroactive pay for 2 years. We'd ask questions like who would get it. Answer: The eligible will get it. Well who's eligible. Those who get it are eligible. It might be better if we had negotiated with lawyers. The end of this style of negotiation was when we went on strike. The negotiating committee would come to the room and think of more things to give the company. We did what we could to avoid the strike. We'd keep offering more but couldn't give everything the company wanted. We were willing to give up an awful lot of stuff. What we were willing to give up to the company we almost got strung up, like, "You were willing to give this away? How dare you?" I think it's because we do communicate with our membership and the membership knew we were willing to do everything. There's only 2 or 3 items that we want. The membership understands we're open with them and that's the reason we have strong support from them. And why we are still being re-elected after all this time... The company wanted us to go out and send the package

and we told the company that we would send the package if they didn't implement it... They refused to stop the clock."

The working conditions she describes at TWA during this period were heavily influenced by heavy-handed sexist, racist, and ageist attitudes concerning the women who worked for the airline, with little if any consideration paid to the valuable services which they were performing for the carrier.

In our...case it's the same. So far as the reason for the strike, it was really gender. Icahn's feelings about us is that we were over-paid, spoiled little girls, that had taken the company for its money. His reaction was, well, after all, you're probably all married and have secondary incomes and have husbands to support you. I, in particular, do not have a husband; I pay my own way. He (Icahn) actually went to the window and said, "See those girls standing there? I can make them stewardesses-- anyone can be a stewardess."

Furthermore, while she remains optimistic concerning the future position of IFFA, at the same time she does not believe that the union walked away from the strike in a secure and strengthened position, other than from the viewpoint of heightened solidarity and on moral grounds.

"I truly believe we were forced on strike and forced to make greater concessions. I don't believe in today's atmosphere we will prevail, especially after the recent Supreme Court decision that employees will have to prove discrimination".

In addition, she also told me that the solidarity and support which IFFA failed to receive from other related unions (primarily ALPA and IAM) accounted at least in part for the manner in which the strike was concluded:

What happened is there was the coalition. What happened is that the pilots were so afraid of Frank Lorenzo that they came to us and said we'll take any deal that Icahn allows us.

As a final note, the official expressed her deep gratitude to the efforts and hard work of everyone involved in the strike, and commented on numerous occasions about the spirit of solidarity and communication which prevailed before, during and even after the strike:

The only reason we have been able to keep our people informed and together is because of communication. We educate and communicate. I think that's the reason why so many of our people remained on strike. We had 85% of our people still out on strike at the end when we called it off. A lot of unions wish they had 85% on the first day of the strike. The reason why our people still remain very loyal to us is because we keep them informed. We do a lot of our mailings right out of this office because we can turn it out instead of sending it to a printer. Much to the dissatisfaction of many of our employees who have to stay late...One of the things we did which was probably instrumental in really getting the strike going. The company informed us they would not provide transportation back to the domicile, for those actually on flights. Domestically that wasn't much of a problem but we had people as far away as Bombay so what we did is we had a travel agent. We had 3 flight attendants who worked and figured out where every single crew would be the night of the strike. The travel

agent worked for group bargains to bring people back. Nobody knew we were doing this. Probably the first time we kept a secret and then, as the Service Managers were going on their flight, we gave them a sealed package and told them open only in event of a strike and it gave them the information. We positioned flight attendants as contact people. So all the reservations were made and we brought everyone back in 3 days...We brought them all back. The people who were stranded domestically had to provide their own transportation because they could get cheaper fares. Internationally, you're not in your own country and might have to pay five to six hundred dollars for a one way ticket back. You'd be more willing to work the shift back. Once you work the flight back you've lost the strike momentum...We used to have offices on the property but that changed since the strike. That was one of the things that was different...One of the things we started in March of this year is we produced a videotape which was really sort of a union meeting on videotape which we sent to everyone of our members and we did that in lieu of 2 of our newsletters...We do a lot of mailing to our membership. We have a hotline we provide for our members. In addition we have what we call an Information Rep. Program. These are flight attendants who provide up-to-date information to my flight attendants. They're not really union reps. in that they don't present grievances or represent flight attendants with the company, but they are a communication link.

She believes that this spirit, more than anything else, will be a key factor in the survival and growth of IFFA in the future.

When The Union's Inspiration...: A Rank And Filer's Commitment

The next selection is one of the several interviews I had with a

senior IFFA member who had become a loyal activist during the strike. She helped in the dissemination of information to striking workers, and assisted with a wide range and variety of administrative and clerical duties at union headquarters and in New Jersey. This rank and filer continues to volunteer her services at Union Headquarters, and was my assigned contact there. She was an early 'call back ' that returned to work but is presently off the line on salary pending a possible investigation by TWA management. I will refer to her as "Flight Attendant #1".

F/A #1 is convinced that the 1986 strike was most devastating to workers in the area of morale and ability to do the job, in view of the conditions which they have suffered as well as the animosity and feelings of mistrust which have been the unfortunate result of months of union haranguing and TWA management ploys to create divisiveness within the union's ranks.

Personally speaking, my job has suffered because of it, my attitude has suffered, my morale has suffered, my ability to do my job has suffered. I'm being asked to work far more hours than I believe are healthy or safe for me to work and, as a result, although I take very good care of myself, I do all the right things nutritionally and physically and health wise that we know about today, it is a struggle. It's a struggle to do my job to the best of my ability.

As a career, because of what has happened to the in the industry, I could not encourage a relative to do this. I think it would be the worst

possible job in many ways.⁶³

Furthermore, F/A #1 believes that TWA management has been almost totally unresponsive to the needs and working conditions of flight attendants, and now, after the strike, is even more hardnosed in its determination to utilize flight attendants under the most stressful and difficult working conditions.

The powers have it and we don't. We can work unspeakable hours and it's all legal. We have a contract to prevent this sort of abuse but concepts were made to be broken sometimes. Management does not seem very sympathetic to this. Carl Icahn, when he took over TWA admitted flat out on national TV that he did not know anything at all about running an airline and he has proceeded to prove this fact. We're in trouble.

I can tell you that before Carl took over we had quite a good working relationship with the company, we were able to discuss things, we were able to talk about things, we were able to go back and forth and have something closely approximating a creative dialogue.

We don't have that now. We have an inflexible man whose policies, of course, filter down through the rest of the company and we don't have dialogue today.

Before Carl Icahn took over control of TWA, she felt that the flight attendants had established a good, positive working relationship

⁶³ Interview, F/A #1, December 12, 1989

with management. Over and over during our conversations, the factor of "trust", "good judgement", and related terminology came out. These, she justifiably believes, were destroyed by Carl Icahn and his management team in their efforts to completely dominate and overwhelm the flight attendants, under the guise of wage and benefit concessions which were needed for the financial stability of the company. Flight attendant #1 has become almost totally negative and pessimistic about her job, the conditions she has been forced to work under over the last several years, and sees little if any future in continued employment as a flight attendant, even if the alleged Article XVI investigation and or charges brought against her by management are eventually resolved.

It breaks my heart to say this, I mean, this is what I always wanted to be. But the way the job is now, the way we are treated by management, the lack of protections, and abilities to do what we know are the right things to do, in so many areas, I don't want to go back, I really don't.

One of the primary involvements of this person during the strike was in the creation and deployment of an "underground" newspaper whose purpose was to provide a steady flow of information to the striking workers.

If you're not a person that's into violence, you want to do

something that you hope is effective as a means of fighting back and several of us got together and started a flow of communication.

In these days, we can say the word processor is mightier than the sword. So, when we're locked out and we don't know how long it's going to be and we have terrible feelings of being in limbo, this is unlike, bye bye, this is unlike any other strike we have ever had, because, in other strikes we would know we were going to go back to work. Other strikes were like a vacation. Other strikes were, you'd go the beach, you'd take some time off for two or three weeks and then they take you back. This time it was not like that. So, during this time while we're locked out, we're starting to think, how are we going to cope with this? How are we going to keep people together, how are we going to keep them galvanized, ready to volunteer, parts of this fight, how are we going to keep this solidarity? Primarily we needed a mouthpiece.

This was especially valuable during those times when rumors were flying about management's and union's positions concerning matters, and public relations departments at management headquarters were obtaining sympathetic outlets for their viewpoints in much of the traditional media, including newspapers, radio, and TV. Little if any positive and encouraging coverage was provided for IFFA members out on strike. Her involvement in union activities gradually increased to the point that she became intricately involved in many types of services.

What happened during the strike was that gradually people had to go back to work. Most of them had families that were responsible for many of our satellites, as we called

them, I am single, I have no family, I had a certain amount of savings. I'm not a member of the Gucci crowd, I had no debts going into the strike, I had several credit cards with absolutely wide open credit limits and I was constitutionally unable to look for a job at the time because I wanted nothing to take away from I.F.F.A., I really went from totally uninvolved to totally involved. And I got involved with helping to run I.F.F.A. Newark, it was an unofficial, unelected, unsalaried position, but it was my first entre into the volunteer, official volunteer, and that was the extent of it.

At the time of my interview with her, she was still being paid by TWA even during their investigation, and was using this time off to work on several projects and clerical matters for IFFA.

I was taken off being investigated, I'm taking off from my job on the line as a flight attendant and the company, because they are, have not disciplined me yet, they're only investigating me are now, they're still paying me, so, I'm getting a salary without, I'm getting a salary from the company, I'm not working for the company, I now have all the free time to work for I.F.F.A., so the company is paying me to work for I.F.F.A., which I think is bizarre in the most delightful way.

In fact, we've made a joke out of it. The first step in the disciplinary process with the company is called an Article 16 meeting, because it is that particular article in our contract that deals with the company disciplining them. So, we have said that you're not an official recall to the flight attendant ranks, it's not official, if you don't have at least two Article 16. Discipline is the name of the game, in fact, we've made it a further joke by saying, you've got two Article 16's, call it Article 32. And, I personally am on now, article 48, I've had three Article 16 meetings. This is part of a whole plan to get rid of the senior work force, which is not only older and, therefore, of course, homelier, but we make a better

pay scale than the B pay scalers. It is standard treatment to bash the senior people.

This individual believes that TWA has a type of "vendetta" against older and more experienced flight attendants for a number of reasons. First, from a "public relations" viewpoint, management prefers to have younger and therefore "prettier" flight attendants working with the public, assuring themselves of a glamorous and youth-oriented image. Secondly, management can pay reduced wages and benefits to younger and less experienced flight attendants, thus helping to reduce their overhead and administrative costs as well.

We're not the only ones that are being bashed, they're now starting to bash the B pay scalers whose pay scale is due to change up to a certain number of time, I don't know what it is, maybe three years, and they are now getting hauled in as well. What he wants is fresh meat, let's be honest.

The result of this deterioration in working conditions and job security has been the almost-total destruction of the spirit of pride and motivation which was an important part of the flight attendant's job.

It was always we. I had such pride in this company, this company was my company. I helped build it.

It is I and my co-workers who have the most contact with the passengers, therefore, the most chance to win them over or to turn them off. I helped build this airline...I'm saying that my contribution has been important, my, not meaning [me personally], but mine as a flight attendant.

No longer motivated to perform their jobs and carry out their responsibilities in the manner to which they were accustomed in the past, many flight attendants are now working under conditions which can only lead to stressful, disturbing occurrences, a poor public relations image for both the company (and the attendants themselves) and conceivably, even to dangerous situations in the long run.

According to F/A #1, TWA has deteriorated in many ways as a direct result of the 1986 strike, especially in the areas of customer approval rating, safety/incident occurrences, and workers morale. She also believes that airline industry deregulation has had a negative effect on TWA and in some ways was responsible for the chain of events which led to the takeover by Carl Icahn and TWA's subsequent downward spiral.

She cites numerous incidents involving mechanical problems on the aircraft which management covered up, as well as difficulties with cleanliness, safety, passenger comfort, scheduling, and more:

Okay. There's one area that I think was unquestionably the result of deregulation and that is the fact that we have gone from the safest airline in the industry to the most unsafe. You cannot deregulate overnight any industry, you ought not to deregulate any industry overnight that has to do with safety, because where the deregulation, where the cuts are gonna take place, are gonna be in safety. Why? Because

it's the most expensive part. Safety doesn't mean rules and regulations that we foul up, it means the aircraft to begin with. Not only are the aircraft that we board these days filthy, you know darn well, the filth is just unbelievable. One of our flight attendants made a wonderful joke about this. We have waste parts which are in aisle carts that we use for collecting waste and garbage and things at the ends of our service and this girl wrote that you ought to really, because of the filth on the aircraft now, is just wait till the rats get big enough, paint them green and use them as waste carts. Wheel them down the aisle. I mean, the situation is nauseous. Not only do we have to deal with filth due to deregulation, but we have to deal with safety. Aircraft are going out now that ought not to be going out. I cannot offer you paper proof, but I have talked with people who are in a position to know. I have talked with Captains who are equally as upset, as we are, who have let it be known that this is the wrong thing. I know of something that happened last month, a friend of mine was trying to leave Brussels and on the fifth aircraft, he finally made it out of there. The first four had mechanicals. Now these were things that never used to happen but there are things and problems, safety areas that are not being looked at as regularly as they ought to be. We're finding things in log books that have been written up countless times that are not being taken care of, so, it gets worse. It just gets passed over to a new page, a new page, a new page. We don't have the time. It's the same thing that's happening in the shipping industry, shall we say, the government inspections have been pulled away, so they're not inspecting all the chickens now. The same thing is on the aircraft.

Deregulation in her opinion has caused severe labor-management problems which will continue for a long time to come. The emphasis in many airlines has shifted from quality control and passenger comfort and

safety, to cost cutting and cut-throat competition in which the dollar sign is ranked number one before anything else.

F/A #1 is also pessimistic about the court system, which she believes with some justification is extremely prejudiced toward TWA management. For example, she cites court decisions concerning the newer attendants, and the reduced amount of training and instruction they were allowed to receive from TWA management.

One of the most important issues which emerged from my interview with F/A #1 were her views concerning the 1986 strike, and the concept of strikes in general in labor disputes. She admits that the strike is a powerful and important tool in labor negotiations which may have been misused or overused in the past.

Based on her experiences during the 1986 strike, F/A #1 insists that strikes must be used only sparingly, and only as an absolute means of last resort. She feels that had better communications existed between TWA and IFFA, if their relationship had been as good as it had been in the past, perhaps the strike and subsequent hardships she and her fellow flight attendants were forced to endure would have been avoided.

"Nobody strikes for frivolous reasons anymore; it's the last thing you do, it should always have been".

F/A #1 decries the manner in which the sense of professionalism, integrity and standards for which she and her fellow flight attendants had fought long and hard. They have deteriorated and been reduced to substandard acceptability by many of the lesser qualified candidates that TWA has brought into the field via its "flight college". These graduates, in actuality, are receiving less training and adhere to fewer standards of excellence than their predecessors.

She believes, with substantial understanding and justification, that the reality of the TWA strike brought people together and gave the flight attendants a sense of "realization" about their plight which management failed to give them. The union's efforts to work with the flight attendants and support their needs were indicative of the sense of solidarity and support which more than anything else prevailed during the hard weeks of the strike.

Another issue which emerged from my conversations with F/A #1 is that of sexism, both of Carl Icahn and his management team. As a public relations ploy, TWA downplayed the importance of Vicki Frankovich, IFFA president, suggesting that her role as a "homemaker" was more important to her than her role as union president.

The absurdity of this issue in relation to the serious discussion of

strike preceding events is illustrated by the knowledge that in his previous dealings with other companies, Icahn always came off as a hardnosed, ruthless individual with little concept of fair play or equity, someone who always had to play by his own set of rules. As F/A #1 so rightly points out, whether IFFA's president was female or male would have made little difference to Icahn in the end. The strike was called due to management's unresponsiveness to issues and concerns, not to personality conflicts between him or Frankovich, although their adversarial relationship did play somewhat of a role as well.

Other perspectives about the strike concerned the lack of solidarity and support received from the pilots and machinists unions, and the unprofessional manner in which the pilots attempted to act as intermediaries in negotiations between IFFA and management. F/A #1 puts this into perspective by indicating that perhaps the pilots felt that the flight attendants would gain too high a degree of "respectability" in the eyes of management. Therefore, they sought to preserve their status in this regard by sacrificing the integrity and solidarity of their relationship with IFFA.

In line with this attitude is that of male chauvinism, which she believes is a dominating factor in the airline industry in general, and

which has been a factor as well in the deterioration of conditions and the relationship between IFFA and TWA. Thus, the attitude of management for a long time was "We'll deal with these little girls as long as they know their place" (the bottom of the ladder!). Once IFFA began exerting its own muscle and placing justifiable and reasonable demands upon management, TWA began to place pressure on IFFA members and officials.

F/A #1 concluded by stating that in her opinion, the future of IFFA has been strengthened by the sense of solidarity and support which prevailed during the strike, and that the confrontation with management, as hard and consuming as it was, served to develop a sense of "belonging" and "oneness" among the flight attendants. This will undoubtedly help them to gain additional support and respect in the future, both from management as well as from other labor unions.

Most importantly, this same sense of "belonging" and "oneness" will help the flight attendants themselves to regain a stronger sense of their own identities, pride in their jobs and professionalism, which will have important and positive implications for future negotiations, not merely with TWA but with the other airline carriers as well.

You Can't Scab Me!!!

Another interview which I conducted in January 1990 involved a replacement flight attendant, who was one of the first group of 1986 TWA graduates to be hired after the strike began. She showed up for a one-day required period to officially become a TWA flight attendant and a union member. Immediately, she struck and stood in solidarity with her newly found IFFA colleagues in their strike against TWA. I shall refer to her as "Flight Attendant #2."

F/A #2 is a native of the state of Washington, and became enamored of the lifestyle and sense of excitement which is sometimes a part of a flight attendant's job. The constant travel to exotic locations, the pride and sense of self esteem in an exciting and technological industry, the wide range and variety of important people one could meet on the job, were all factors which influenced her decision to become a flight attendant. She is a very extraordinary, unique person and has gained the respect and admiration of her union brothers and sisters. She is one of the three exceptional replacements who was to be honored for her bold and courageous support and loyal activities at the IFFA reception (the one that was mentioned in the first selection by the union official).

Initially trained by TWA just before the strike, and hired when the

strike began she immediately joined the pickets. She justified her action as follows:

"My mother was a housewife and my father owned drug stores out in Washington, so it is not a union background, but where we live, most of the work force is union and it's where I still live. Even the people who are non-union know that you did not cross picket lines. Not in Seattle, it's down in the southern part of the state, a small town, probably about 30,000, 40,000, and you've got like warehouses, you've got ..., you've got International Paper, you've got Reynolds, you've got longshoremen, they're the bulk of the employers, they're, you know, what products is ... and everybody knows if there's a picket line up, you don't go. They have something kind of inbred in everybody."⁶⁴

F/A #2 believes that she was part of a "contingency group" of new flight attendants who were being prepared for on-the-job responsibilities because of the inevitability of the 1986 strike.

Okay, now if they want to do this, but if there's a strike, I will not cross, there is no way. ... And I finished my training ... and then came back the 9th of March and ... at St. Louis Airport and then the union said that you had to get your payroll number, we had to cross to get in. ... you want me to cross the picket line, then you want me out on a strike, boy, this is a good one. Yeah, this is really unusual. And then they said, ... you know, that's how they do it, and then they said, we want you to hang around in the hotel and ... with your flight assignment, ... I am not refusing my flight assignment, ... still got the membership card, but you are now union members, okay.

⁶⁴ Interview, F/A #2, January 28, 1990

Her reactions to the realization that she and 85 other colleagues were essentially being used as "pawns" in a power struggle between Carl Icahn and IFFA made her "angry" she did not appreciate her plight, and described as,

... a bridge to hell. They had guards in the lobby and they had guards on your floor and they had guards outside the hotel and, you know, supposedly to protect these people from, you know, the ... flight attendants out there, you know, and they had guards escorting me to the Wendy's across the parking lot and this and that and the other thing. And then you're living in a ...

Pat: This is where in...?

St. Louis. And when you're walking into that hotel room, and you look at the room rate, it was \$125., that was their ... rate, and my God, this is like a \$125. a day prison, you know, this is unreal. they keep people out, they keep people in, and, Which one is it. Are they keeping them out or are they keeping us in? I finally ... they want to keep the strikers out, they want to keep us in this nice, happy little cocoon. When you have this captive audience, then you're going to be able to feed whatever information you deem necessary for them to have. And the other kind, is one of the kind that's probably next to impossible to get through to these people, plus your adding more tensions to very tension filled situations and it really does get into a whole ... and the manipulations of people.

F/A #2 become increasingly disenchanted with the flight attendant profession, which she initially considered to be an honorable, glamorous and exciting job which held many possibilities for her career development.

Now being a flight attendant is no longer appealing,

I don't know if I would want a child of mine to become a flight attendant, the way things are now ... I would never want a child of mine to go to work for TWA.

Furthermore, her opinions concerning deregulation and its negative effect on overall safety and administrative operations within the airline industry as a whole heavily concur with those of the other interviewees. She was puzzled by and skeptical of politicians and the system, she mentioned that Phil Bates, the aide who wrote the Deregulation Act for Senator Kennedy, its co-sponsor, was sent to Eastern Airline as its President. In contrast, even more puzzling was the Brock Adams experience which she alluded to during her encounter with him,

Brock Adams who is now the U.S. Senator from Washington, was Carter's Secretary of Transportation. He was fired by Carter because he had a real problem with airline deregulation, and IFFA. ... Carter fired him over that. Okay.

Yeah. Adams then got fired from transportation. He ended up on the board of TWA and was there for a year ... just before I come from the line, ... but, he was on the board. So then he decided ... I was thinking that ... this guy would be a real prize to have as voice correspondence. And I mentioned it to somebody and he was running for the State Senate, at the time in Washington ... and they said, you'll never get him, you'll never get that man to connect to this and I go, just watch! ... at the Capitol convention, we had a booth. We had a little table, with I.F.F.A. stuff and the Boycott TWA Petitions, and I said, here's what you're

gonna do, if you steer him over, to my table, ... front of all TV cameras, in front of everything, ...TWA airplanes, ... you know, he knew a lot of it, we had talked with the staff beforehand, they knew a lot of the arguments he and I have developed a fairly good working relationship. I call him, you know, just to chit chat when I go home and, but everybody's said, you would never get that man to sign it, and he has probably been one of our best friends.

One of the most important issues which emerged from my conversation with F/A #2 were her views concerning the socio-economic environment of the early 1980's and the advent of "Reaganomics" which she feels contributed substantially to the eventual upheaval which the airline industry (and many others, such as oil and steel) experienced during the late 1980's.

She recalled, the prediction of a lecturer of this period which he named "sunshine fascism".

We're gonna see two things happen, you're gonna see the labor, labor force get stabbed and you're also gonna see a great consolidation of the wealth and a lot of it was also going into the, you were getting into a crisis of over-production, you were just maxing out the market.

From the social viewpoint, the openly antagonistic attitude of the government in regard to labor unions and working people which prevailed during this era were at least partially responsible for the increasingly aggressive efforts of management to downplay and disregard

labor's motives and demands for their fair share. Often, this disregard took the form of anti-labor public relations endeavors and legal maneuvering on the part of management to break unions, often with the official blessing of the U.S. government, as occurred with PATCO in 1981.

I think PATCO is a catalyst, I think it's been building though for some time. I think it all goes back into the problems with ... and I think somebody had to get it and, unfortunately, the workers got it, they got ...

F/A #2 was vehement in her condemnation of ALPA, which she felt did not do enough to provide moral, financial or solidarity support to IFFA during the days and weeks immediately preceding and during the strike against TWA. She views the antagonism of the pilots as "traitorous" to the efforts IFFA was making in regard to their labor struggles with TWA, and concurs that part of the reason for this attitude was the sexist and chauvinistic attitude which many of ALPA's members and union officials have toward the members of IFFA and female workers in general, especially within the male-dominated hierarchy of the airline industry, which prevails even today.

F/A #2 also revealed during our conversation that she became politically aware and active as a direct

result of her involvement in the 1986 strike.

Okay. When I came home from St. Louis, I think ..., I would call it like the rape syndrome or ... I was so angry, and when it happened, and I was going to fight them tooth and nail and I didn't care how long it took, because of what they had done. I think to see all those guys in Nassau County, in that situation, it just set me off. How dare they do this to me! And I was so angry that, I think the best way for me to deal with that anger, to channel that energy into ...I was so angry at what they were doing to these flight attendants ..., and I was so angry about the fact that these people could ..., and I had to work it through.

During the strike itself when she did clerical and telemarketing/lobbying work on behalf of IFFA with numerous U.S. Senators and Congressmen in order to obtain their support of IFFA in the strike. After the strike she campaigned for "Congressional Action" and to help increase public awareness about the plight of flight attendants and their struggles to establish decent working conditions, wages and benefits in the face of a male-dominated, top-heavy and deregulated industry.

Washington is so male dominated, I think a lot of it was, stewardesses, isn't this cute, what do you guys want? And I think when they found out that we were for real, that we did have a very logical argument, I think one minute of surprise, ... very impressed. That was kind of, what in the hell do you people want, you know, why are..., you know, we never knew you guys had concerns.

A glamorous, sexy stewardess, which has been, I think, very

hard for people to overcome. And it's, you know, it's kind of like when I went ..., when, I think we started contacting the Congressional people, ... oh, flight attendants, what do you guys want? You know, ... and then when they realized that we had a brain in our head, that even shocked them even more.

I think this is why I.F.F.A. been very successful, because, they, I think they're saying that they're able to take that glamorous image and turn it around, and manipulate it to work for their own benefits, you know, you guys have a, it's a very glamorous profession, and it's something that you turn it to, turn it around on itself, and you can use it to your own benefits, because people, because I think there was that impression, oh, isn't this cute, let's talk with the, let's talk with the stewardesses and then I think realized that yes, you were a very smart,..., intelligent human being and have a very logical ... argument ... you got in the door.

She also laments the loss of pride, self esteem and self confidence which were severely damaged by the strike, but is extremely proud and supportive of the work IFFA did against TWA during the trying times of 1986.

In fact, I was talking to a labor lawyer in Seattle and she said, if you got everybody back, in this day and age, in this labor climate, says something in itself. She said, it doesn't happen very often and she says, I think you guys maybe are like the first in ten years, when you've all been replaced and you have all come off.... yes, it's probably very true.... it was basically, ... which was like the double whammy. Cause the union has basically a bunch of women and then the triple whammy is that, they're a bunch of airline stewardesses.

She felt that the union was able to win at least a modicum of

respect from Icahn and his management team by lasting as long as they did in facing overwhelming odds, both politically, financially and professionally. In reference to Icahn she commented,

I don't think I'd call Icahn as the type of man that would ever publicly say, this cost me money, you people did me damage, a bunch of women did a lot of damage to my airline, ... he'd say that privately. I know he's got to be saying that privately, that we hurt him.

I don't know if the strike, by itself, is a viable alternative, is a viable tool. ... warfare, on the property. Like, everybody calls off sick, or you have a slowdown, there, I think we're gonna have to come up with ways to do enough damage, on the property, and I don't mean like, we're gonna start ... airplanes. But, where there are certain things on an airplane, that are considered 'no go' items. You know, and I'm not saying deliberately do it, but I'm saying that if you notice something that's safety related, we'll make sure that that's going to be reported, you take a delay. A delay is gonna cost the airline money. It's called flying by the book. You write up everything in ... I think, also, I think ... and everybody in the work force call up. Or do a one, or maybe a one day strike, you know. You go out for one day, shut the thing down and don't say you're gonna do it. You just do it. Or maybe, strike, one or two areas, just enough to throw a monkey wrench in the system, where maybe, everybody in New York calls up sick. They don't have enough ... to cover those flights.

Which Side Are You On?

The fourth flight attendant whom I chose was a charter member of IFFA, and had been working at her job since the late 1960's. She is married

over 22 years, her husband has been terminally ill for several years and has been unable to work since prior to the strike, they have no children. Initially attracted to the job for the same reasons as the other individuals I interviewed, F/A #3 spoke longingly about the "glory days" of the airline industry, the period from the late 60's to early 70's, when the flight attendant's job entailed much of the glamour, excitement and wanderlust for traveling that has attracted so many women into the profession in the first place. This interview was conducted in early April, 1990.

It's probably a little bit better than what it has been, since '86, but not an awful lot. People still feel very strongly about the whole mess.⁶⁵

F/A #3 began her interview by stating that conditions on the job had not improved to any degree since 1986, and that there is still a great deal of antagonism and bad feelings between those flight attendants who were supportive of IFFA and of the strike, and those who did not support the efforts of the union.

Oh, the working conditions are awful and, there's still a lot of intense feeling about, between the people who honored the strike and those who didn't. That has not really.

Pat: The wounds haven't healed, the bridges haven't been really mended?

⁶⁵ Interview, F/A #3, April 9, 1990

I don't think they ever will. I mean, I think the people that feel so intensely about it will feel that they never will. There will always be that division within the ranks, it's very bad. You know, it's quite awful working under conditions like that, it's not something that goes away or goes away easily. I don't think it will, as far as most of us are concerned, probably, you know, as long as we're working with this company anyway.

Although she is a charter member of the union, her assessment of the strike and the events both preceding it and following it are that the union leadership was not as communicative as it should have been with the membership.

Well, I certainly put it with the leadership, I think they were ultimately, ultimately responsible, just a lack, a lack of, a lack of communication, I think, more than anything, you know, the leadership's not answering, answering the questions regarding that, you know, from the people, from the flight attendants. We never seem to be able to get a clear cut reason for being replaced when everyone knew that we were being replaced and, you know, why the strike was not discontinued, rather than sacrificing over 6,000 jobs and now, and then, of course, after having gone back, under the conditions that we went back, we still do not have a signed contract. I mean, what we have right now, we could have gotten by not even striking, because we, actually, have gotten nothing. We still have, basically, basically, what we did have, except for all of the changes that were implemented, and all of which, they were implemented then, and they're still in effect now.

I will never strike again. I will never picket again. My picketing, I've had enough of them, my picketing, all of that, all of that stuff is, I don't want anymore to do with it, so, the unions better find something else themselves, you know,

but I won't, I've picketed now in about four strikes, you know, of course, the others were, I think the lengthiest was probably a week, you know, which I mean, that's certainly more, that's civilized. But, you know, because, well a lot of us, there were a lot of us that were not, did not want to go on strike and we had no communications there at the end either, I think it was decided, we had taken a strike vote before Icahn even came on the picture, that's how long ago it was and there was nothing ever said about, well now, we're in a different situation here folks, you know, like we're dealing, this is a whole different ball game. Perhaps we should reconsider.

you know, they would have handled it that differently too, you know, and at least polled the people to see how the majority of them, you know the majority of them were feeling.

Secondly, that little if anything was truly gained as a result of the efforts and sacrifices of the strikers. In fact, the loss of over 6000 jobs, together with reductions in benefits and wages indicate to F/A #3 a "failure" on the part of the union to have acted in a competent manner during the events which transpired. She believes, furthermore, that the settlement of the strike was extremely "unilateral" in favor of TWA and that in essence, few positive gains were obtained as a result of the 1986 strike, other than perhaps on a psychological level.

Right, which is, today, an incredible amount of time, I think, to be, you know, to be out of work, or to be, you know, to be away from, to be away from that job, but, even, I think, all of it would have been worth it if, if there were something that made it worth it, you know, even so, like the three years, I mean, being locked out and the amount of time that it took everyone to come back and the

incredible harassment on the job, and still have, and not even, you know, to not even get a contract out of it, you know, it's just like everyone is hanging in limbo, we were just, we're working with the conditions that were presented on the table, presented by the company and that's it. But, you know, there's been no bargaining. the whole thing is such a farce. I guess had we not, the only, the only thing we had going for us is that we had an excellent contract to start with, which IFFA got for us initially and that, you know, that certainly helped.

Another interesting point which was revealed during our conversation was her belief that it had ultimately made little difference to Carl Icahn about whether he was dealing with a female or male dominated union.

I've encountered enough men like Carl Icahn, over the years, and I know what they think of women, which is not too much.

I know Carl Icahn made a lot of sexist remarks, back when.

So, based on that, I think, I think it definitely, it definitely played a part, but, an important one? No, I think it probably was more his personal feelings, because really, he just, he operates on money and that's it.

Since his interest lies primarily in the bottom line, he was more concerned with cost reductions and the vulnerability of the union itself, thus making the flight attendants open to replacement and reductions in lieu of solid and serious negotiations, such as those he conducted with both IAM and ALPA, which were in positions of much greater strength

and importance to TWA operations, according to Icahn's viewpoint.

The issue of solidarity between unions and the rampant sexism which even today exists in many unions was another focal point of our interview. The lack of support, solidarity and encouragement which IFFA received from the other TWA unions has already been reviewed in another section of this dissertation. However, F/A #3 puts this issue into a "personal" focus by expressing her feelings concerning the lack of support the strikers received:

We certainly could have used, could have used more support, but look, we didn't, I mean, we should have had a lot more support anyway, even just being a union, from other unions, which we didn't get either. You know, so, I think it's a sign of the times, people are just not, just don't care about, or are not that interested in unions, even if they belong to them. You know, it was just, it was incredible. I think a lot of the remarks I heard from teachers, you know, as far as unionism was concerned, you know, that belong to their union. They weren't the least bit interested in it or supportive of it, or any, you know, there was no, there's no camaraderie there between, you know, unions - period.

Image and public relations is another issue of great concern to F/A #3. Her viewpoint that the flight attendants are still considered by many passengers (even the females) as "windowdressing" or "ornamentation" is still a prevalent attitude, according to her experiences.

There still is that, a bunch of pretty girls, you know, pretty looking girls walking around, you know, in short skirts, very,

you know, so very, very sexist, even with, you know, the men on the line. But, you talk, I mean, you know, you can, you hear it from passengers all of the time. Of course, they're male passengers. And the female of passengers just kind of, they don't say, generally, they don't say much of anything or, you know, one way or another or they don't, you know, look one way or another and I think that you could tell, you know, a lot of them too, they just don't want to have anything to do, anything more to do with the flight attendants, you know, than what they have to. I think they think that they're there just for the men, you know, to keep the men happy.

This lack of respect and the some what negative connotation this implies has caused much consternation among the flight attendants themselves because it is precisely this public attitude and opinion which has prevented them from achieving the same degree of acceptance and respect as the pilots, mechanics, and the other traditionally male sectors of the industry. This lack of acceptance and respect has in many ways even influenced management's attitude toward dealing with the flight attendants in negotiations, and may have been a contributory factor toward the events leading up to and during the strike.

F/A #3 expressed her personal reflections on the lifestyle of the flight attendants, and discussed her initial impressions about the exciting and glamorous lifestyle and working conditions which had initially attracted her to the job in 1955. However, she deplores the way in which

conditions on the job have changed since she began, which she partially attributes to deregulation as well as to the way in which the public itself views the flight attendants.

Deregulation is, it's been a mess. A mess. You know, all these corporate raiders coming. We have, we really don't have an airline now, we have, I don't know what you call it, but it's, there's no such thing as on time performance and there's no, the equipment is in the most appalling shape. I've never seen any, none of us has ever seen anything like it. The service, service is absolutely atrocious and, but, the thing is, that they're, the general public doesn't know any differently, so, you know, they think they're getting, they really think they're getting their money's worth, you know. So these, these management, I should say, at least our management is really taking them for a ride.

She has become somewhat hesitant toward supporting IFFA at this point because she feels that the sacrifices and efforts of the membership during the strike did not amount to anything significant for them in terms of improvements in wages, working conditions, and benefits, and is critical of union administrators in this regard. She states that while the strike resulted in hardship and sacrifice for the membership, it had positive effects as well by creating an environment of emotional and psychological support and solidarity among the strikers.

I think we had an incredible amount of solidarity, cause we only had about 1,300 people that crossed, you know, out of 6,000 or over 6,000.

Thus, while she cannot credit the union itself for fostering this environment, she believes that the workers, the members themselves, in their actions, sacrifices and efforts during the strike, were eventually able to create this atmosphere for themselves.

It was such an incredible experience, I think the, I was not the least bit prepared for what a tremendously emotional experience it was and how committed all of us were that were committed to it and how we all stuck together and how we're still sticking together and, you know and still trying to be as up as we can, you know, even with trying to be realistic about the whole situation. But I think it was an incredible learning experience and I wouldn't trade it for anything. It was quite unbelievable, but very educational, very educational and changed, changed all, changed my life and everyone that I know of, changed all of us, so much, you know, that we would never be the same, again, because of having had this experience.

Pat: You think you gained or lost due to that strike?

Oh, both, both. We certainly, we certainly lost as far as the job was concerned, but I think we gained in a lot of other areas, you know, self esteem and, and, oh, I think we're all, much, much better, stronger people, you know, emotionally, I think we gained, but, I don't know, I don't know, which, like I said, when you're working, when you're working in it every day, you know, you have to, you have to, you really, you have to keep thinking, you know, thinking of the good of what you did gain, other than what we lost, because we did, we did lose a tremendous amount.

Our interview concluded with F/A #3 stating "I would not give them the time of the day," and that she cannot in good conscience be

forgiving of the "scabs" (replacements) that Icahn hired to take over the jobs of the strikers. She believes that this attitude, both on the part of the replacements and of TWA management, is indicative of a much larger-scale social apathy on the part of the public toward the struggles of working people, as well as decreased government recognition, support and protection of the rights and privileges of union membership which is prevalent in our country today.

We were always under the impression that we had, that Carl Icahn would never get away with what he has, as far as our protections went, so as it turned out, we really had, you know, we've really had no protection, a right, which we no longer have.

Because of this anti-union attitude which was fostered in the early 80's by the traumatic experiences of PATCO and other unions, with the support of Reagan and the federal government, she is not optimistic about the future of organized labor as we approach the 21st century.

It's get rid of the unions, that's it, get rid of the unions and, you know, our union is still not, they're not allowed back on the property. We were, I think, we're still, we're the only, we're the only union of the three that is not allowed on the property and, you know, he's, I mean, they're still doing their utmost to, you know, to get rid of them. I think they realize, at this point, that they probably will not be able to. But, you know, that doesn't mean that they've given up trying. You know, so it would be interesting to see what, you know, what happens in the future after what's occurred at Eastern and then, you know, and then starting with

PATCO, that just started it, that just started it, you know, within the industry and, I don't know, I just think it was appalling. It was just appalling and I think if they, I don't know, I just, I don't see unions, I don't see unions in the airline industry at all, if it continues the way it's going because, at this point, I want a union to get me a good contract, good working conditions, good pay, you know, good benefits. If they can't do that, I don't need a union. I don't need a union, you know, just to handle grievances for me, because, I'm not the person, the kind of person that, generally, you know, that has problems like that. Not to say that I wouldn't, but, I need a contract and I see absolutely, I mean, that's the purpose of the union, as far as I'm concerned and, you know, more unions like it. If we can't, if we can't get working contracts, what's the sense of having them. They would just, you know, they might as well just go down the tubes.

That's why I say, you know, as far as unionism goes, you know, and if you don't have the strike and no one certainly has that. I mean, I think, I don't know why Eastern did what they did, after you know, what occurred with us, you know, starting like with, with what happened with PATCO and then what happened with us, what happened with United. United came out somewhat better but, and then, Continental, that Lorenzo and was it Braniff, whose contracts that he just got rid of, I mean, it's just, it's just mind boggling. You know, I don't think the unions have a prayer.

Don't Listen to Their Lies!!!

Flight Attendant #4 was a long standing member of IFFA, who was on the line since 1967, and is twice married with three children. She first went out on strike and subsequently refused to return to her job, having

become totally disillusioned with the entire situation. In addition⁶⁵, while off the line she became actively involved in helping her husband develop his own business and thus had numerous reasons for not returning to her position as a flight attendant with TWA.

F/A #4 spoke with some bitterness to me about the way the profession has changed since she started working for the air lines in the 60's. Although at one time she believed it was a proud and dignified profession which afforded a woman the opportunity to see the world and earn a living at the same time,"and then, when the unions changed and the airlines changed and it made it possible for a woman to make it a career." Now, with the advent of deregulation, cost reductions, strikes and other demoralizing factors, she no longer considers it to be the "glamour profession" it once was, and even stated that she would not urge her own daughter to enter it.

"I would rather that my daughter go into something else. Unless she did it, I will say that her reasoning would have to be very different, she couldn't look upon it as a life. I would say, go to college, figure out what you want to do, really do for your life, and if you want to fly for a short time, to see the world that way, you know, real fast, and go on, and not really make money or not look upon it as a career, fine, but you can't look upon it as a career any longer."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Interview, F/A #4, April 3, 1990

Simply stated, she believes that an airline attendant's job is no longer one which has career or long-term opportunities.

Management has caused a demoralization and a deterioration of the spirit and pride which was once so integral a part of the job, that it is now viewed as little more than a cheap way to see the world.

Furthermore, it is F/A #4's contention that one of the most serious problems which had been going on for many years prior to the 1986 strike was the total lack of communications between the "on-line" workers and the "head office" people, which she believes precipitated much of the antagonism and mistrust which eventually led into the 1986 confrontation.

One of the main problems was never being really in touch with the employees. I think that there was an incredible gap between what we did on the airplane and what people thought we did sitting in the office at 605 Third Avenue. I don't think that they were, we weren't really working as a team and I think that the mis-management, certainly of TWA, goes back so far, it really goes back probably back before Tillinghast's (During the 1960's) time, which is when I started.

F/A #4 spoke to me about the degradation and demoralization efforts of TWA management, who viewed their flight attendants as little more than convenient sex objects on board to precociously cater to male

passengers' sexual fantasies instead of performing the vital safety and passenger security functions which in reality were their actual responsibilities.

Have you read about the paper dresses, do you remember that, anyone say anything about that to you?

Pat: No, nobody mentioned it but I do recall hearing about it but,

I mean, looking back on that, I cannot believe I ever did that. I mean, they had, I forget now, how many flights they had. There was the Italian flight, the English wench flight, think about that for a minute, as a feminist. English wench. You were an English serving girl. It was the kind of outfit that you would be in an English Pub, sort of the little gray frock, a frock with the white puffed sleeves that looked like, I don't know, I don't know, one of those serving wenches from merry old England. Then there was the Manhattan penthouse flight and I remember that outfit was a black jump suit with silver trim. All in paper. I mean, it was absurd. Seems to me we had four though. Those are the only three I can think of. There must have been something in there. Oh, oh, there was a French, a Parisian, I forget what they called it, but anyway, it was a French flight and the outfit was a gold glitter dress that wasn't much below crotch level, with sleeveless, with sort of a, a clown collar so that you couldn't serve, you couldn't do anything. All in paper. I cannot tell you the number of times one or the other of us had a friend in the bathroom, trying to either staple or masking tape her dress back, when she perspired and it started to rip. It was disgusting. It was like, it was like a really massive sort of peek-a-boo strip show in the air.

The pictures on the front of the menus, God, it was like, not playboy certainly but, it was definitely sort of a come on kind of thing. And then there was an organization called

stewardesses for women's rights, for many years, that tried very hard to do a lot to, to counteract that image.

F/A #4 also discussed her feelings about airline deregulation, and like her colleagues before her in the previous interviews, she too believes that the deregulation activities of the 1970's played at least a partial role in the deteriorating state of affairs which is found in many U.S. airline carriers today.

The world started falling apart when deregulation came in. Everything started changing with that. And how much of it was deregulation and how much of it was coincidence, I really don't know, but once that started, so many things changed. Schedules started changing, cockpit crew and cabin attendants stopped flying together as a group. One went one way, one went another. Scheduling went haywire. The number of people used to work a particular flight was lowered. Turn around time, lay over time, rest time, all that was shortened and changed. It all started then, it really did.

It all started then. The whole competition. Everything was competition.

She also felt that deregulation played a part in the loss of esteem and pride in service which had been a mainstay of many carriers for so long.

And once that cart service came in and I don't know if anyone has commented to you on that, to me, that was really the death knell,... it became like - vending - you know, I felt like I was at Shea Stadium - get your ice cold beer here ...

Instead, they began opting for cost reductions, price wars,

marketing schemes and other short-term goals instead of focusing on the more pertinent issues of passenger comfort and safety, on-time scheduling and other vital concerns.

An important topic which emerged during our conversation was the attitude of F/A #4 toward IFFA. Although a charter member, she could never in good conscience totally support the union because she believed with some justification that as an independent labor organization, IFFA would never enjoy the same degree of status or strength that was accorded to an organization such as the IAM or ALPA, or even the Teamsters themselves. This lack of strength, this unsteady foundation in a sense, was detrimental to the otherwise noble efforts of IFFA to gain respectability and decent working conditions for its members.

I was never in favor of, of IFFA. I was never in favor of us having our own union, because I always recognized that we didn't have any strength - alone. That the only way that we had strength was if we could team up with, with mechanics and people were together, we would have some force. So, I was never in favor of IFFA but, I think that PATCO was the beginning, I really do. I think it started there and when we were on our picket lines, you know, picketing, I cannot tell you the number of people who would walk by and say, what happened to PATCO, will happen to you, you're all gonna lose your jobs, it's gonna happen, you can't do this. And, of course, we did.

However, according to F/A #4's point of view, these efforts were handicapped from the start because of the lack of solidarity the union suffered from, both externally and internally, although to a much lesser degree internally.

I felt that sounded wonderful, but I always felt that we didn't have enough clout. We didn't have enough clout in Washington, I mean, who were we. I, you know, I never had any illusions about the job that I did, I mean, I knew I wasn't a brain surgeon, and I also knew that I wasn't doing anything that couldn't be replaced. I'm not a mechanic and I wasn't a pilot, so I knew that, that we could walk off and we could make things very difficult, but, unless the mechanics or somebody was gonna walk off with us, I knew that we didn't have, I mean, a lot of us knew that we didn't have enough power to make a difference. That always frightened me.

In the end, when we needed strength, we didn't have it....we alone, were not enough to change....we couldn't change things enough to make a difference.

She blames much of this effect on the PATCO situation in 1981, and realized that when the Federal government itself intervened and literally destroyed that union, a death-knoll was sounded for the labor movement in general.

I just think that the way things have gone steadily downhill, with PATCO, with a lot of things. I mean, it's not, and it's not just the airlines. When we were picketing, there were many people from the banking industry and so forth, who said, you know the same thing happened to me, I was with my company x number of years and I was just approaching

retirement and they let me go and, in favor of younger guys, with less money, so, I mean, it's just, I think it's the way the world is working these days, but I think that it can only be decided in the courts. I don't think there's any real understanding between, between labor and management anymore.

That strike set the tone for much of the labor activity of the entire decade of the 80's, and continues to influence court decisions, legal determinations, collective bargaining, management attitudes toward labor and much more even today.

I thought it was a bad timing for us to strike. I didn't think that there was support there for us, I thought it was, it was just bad timing all the way around. I felt very, I didn't feel confident that we would gain much by striking and yet, I couldn't see with what was gonna be taken away, I couldn't see how we could continue to work for so much less, 22% less in pay and, you know, to go backwards, after all those years, seemed ridiculous to me too. So, but I, I supported the union, so I just felt, well, I hope we won't have to think about it. And I went to the Cayman Islands on vacation and turned on the TV one evening and saw a group of TWA people opposite my apartment building, I live on Dag Hammershold Plaza, by the UN, and they were there rallying and the strike had begun... it was such a very odd disembodied feeling to see friends, you know, striking. So, when the strike lifted, I felt, well, it'll be over because I'd been through strikes before and I thought well, ... when the mechanics were off with us, I was picketing out at the airport, in the middle of the night with mechanics and I felt like, and there were no planes going anywhere and I had a feeling that, maybe, you could make a difference and we kept trying to explain to all the people who were being near our picket lines that, we weren't asking for anything more.

People always assume, when they see you picketing, that you want more of something. We said, we're willing to give up, we just don't want to give up this much, it's just way too much and we can't live like this. So, I felt very good about it, but once the mechanics had to go back to work, within a couple of weeks, I felt like we were really in deep trouble. It didn't mean that I didn't support the strikes, I felt we had no choice. I worked at, I did all my picketing duty, I did leafletting around city ... and you know, Fifth Avenue, up near the ticket office there, across from St. Pat's Cathedral, with leafletting trying to encourage the public to understand what, what we were trying to say. And I worked at union headquarters on all my days off, answering phones and just doing mailings and whatever I could do. I did all of that during the entire strike. However, I was very angry in May, when I found out we had been completely replaced. I felt that, I still to this day, don't understand that. I think that was the most ridiculous thing for the union to allow that to happen, because, obviously, you have, you have something to go on if the majority of your people are on the job, not when they're off the job. And when they said, they invited us to, oh, some college out in Queens somewhere, to a big hall, and when they said, there's room for 200 people, and as many years as I've been flying, I wasn't in that 200, there were 5,000 of us. I couldn't believe that the union had allowed that to happen. And, I got up to the mike and asked from the floor, why they had allowed that to happen, because when I was working at union headquarters, I kept hearing the numbers coming in and I kept saying, can this be possible, you know, now they've got x number of people trained and now they've got, this is the numbers were coming in, and the union really made very, well not light of it, but they really gave the impression that they had it all under control and when the numbers came in, what I had been hearing at union headquarters was absolutely correct. TWA was not lying, they did have so many people in training and so many cross overs and, you know, all the numbers were right. So, that part, I felt was really terrible, but, all during the strike I worked very hard and supported

it fully

She blames the loss of her job on the fact that the union did not respond aggressively to TWA's tactic of training and hiring replacements until it was too late to save her job, along with the 6000 others which were lost.

F/A #4 is critical of IFFA's officials, whom she believes were totally out of their league in attempting to negotiate with seasoned professionals from TWA's management team.

I didn't look upon it as a betrayal, but I did look upon it as stupid.

I will say that I think she was out of her league, absolutely, we were out of our league and I think that was a very bad mistake and bad advice for us to wait till we were all replaced.

However, with the precedent-setting episode of PATCO, whereby striking air traffic controllers were permanently replaced by new hires, TWA management scored a victory against the union by utilizing this tactic also. She feels that the union had been somewhat naive in believing that TWA would not dare to attempt what the government had done as well.

They were very misguided and very stupid, because we discussed that, we talked about that, we said that and people were constantly saying, well, look at PATCO, look what happened to PATCO. I mean, we all said it, people said it to us when we were on our picket line. We said it at, you know, at union headquarters, so, I don't know why it

didn't sink in, or why any of us thought that it was gonna be any different for us, but, I sort of trusted the union's numbers.

She also believes that both IFFA and TWA were not communicating effectively with each other, nor with their own internal operations people, which caused additional confusion and anger on all sides.

It behooves the union to tell us certain things and I don't think it was that they lied exactly, but I think that they certainly bolstered numbers. I think that they, they certainly slanted it, to their advantage, absolutely, because there is no way that they could have thought, that there were less people crossing those picket lines than there were. You know, I mean, if I, as a worker, knew the numbers, then they knew the numbers. So, I don't know what the, why they did that, or why they thought it would help, I would love to know the legal advice they received for that, but, I don't know, we supposedly have a very good law firm. You know, she wasn't doing it by herself.

As a result, serious schisms occurred internally, especially with the union, whereby strikers and crossovers/replacements were at bitter odds with each other. This hostility has not diminished even today, according to both F/A #4 and the other individuals I interviewed.

That's when that horrible, sort of, division the schism, within the union occurred, which is still, it will never heal, ... say a month after the strike started, was when friends of mine started crossing the picket line. It was when they said, this is crazy. And, those wounds will never heal. I mean, those people, the people who crossed the picket line are definitely on one side of the fence and the people who stayed to the bitter end are definitely on the other.

It makes me very sad, but ... I lost a childhood friend. I have a friend flying, I've know since elementary school and I felt that her reasons and the way she did it, I mean, I don't believe that the world is black and white. I believe in lots of gray areas and maybe, had her circumstances been different, or she had presented it differently, I might have felt differently, but, as a result, I'm not interested in really talking to her. I'm not angry with her, I just don't have anything to say, really.

In the end, F/A #4 decided not to return to work when she was called back. The excitement and glamour and pride of her profession had been tarnished and diminished and faded in her eyes. The emotional upheaval of the strike, the lost friendships, the moments of intense despair, coupled with additional family responsibilities, had made her form a decision not to fly as a flight attendant again.

Another factor which aided in her decision, according to F/A #4, were the replacements/scabs who were hired in place of senior workers. F/A #4 believed she could not legitimately work with these individuals, who in her opinion were not as well trained, and in some instances actually lowered the standards of flight attendants for all concerned.

Her last bone of discontent was very important and enlightening, she was the only F/A who thought of revealing the events of her 'recall' and how indignant she felt about the 'letter' of recall and 'training'.

Well, a year after the strike ended is when my number came up, which would have made it April, it came up, it was right now, it was this month. I received a letter, I guess I probably received it the beginning of April, or the very end of March, I have 30 days to decide, let me think. Yeah, I received the letter in April and I had to be in training, I know it was Memorial Day weekend, that I would have had to go back to training. So, I guess they gave me 30 days, from the point I received the letter to decide, you know, to tell them whether or not I would return. And it took me the entire time to decide really what to do. Looking back on it, it was probably the second hardest decision I've ever made, in my entire life. ... the brand new people that they had to break our strike, they trained in five days. And we called them five day wonders.... When we went back to work, we had to, when we went back to the training, the training was five to eight days for people who have been flying 22 years. It was absurd. Now, we had been off from work a year at that point, we certainly needed another AER, because you have to have that every year.... And the letter, in fact, I wish I still had it, I should have kept that letter, just for, I don't know, posterity, but it was, it made me so angry and hurt me so deeply that I got rid of it, but, the letter, basically, the tone of it was, well, we don't really want to have you, but by law we have to ask you back, so, you can come back if you want to, but we're not making you, we're not giving you any promises. You may not be in New York, you may not be on domestic and you're gonna have to go to be retrained in Kansas City on Memorial Day weekend, but, let us know. It was that kind of letter. I mean, I took it around, I carried it around for weeks and showed it to everyone I could think of, and they couldn't, it was appalling, it really was. So, I had, I waited until the last, absolute second to make my decision. Hard decision to make.

Clearly, the factors of hostility, lack of communication, bitterness toward both management and labor (to varying degrees), loss of self

esteem and pride in the job, unpleasant working environments, Icahn's unfair and unhealthy working conditions and other factors are a common thread which runs through my interviews with these workers.

F/A #4 who is very active in the National Organization of Women (NOW) took a very radical stand saying,

I felt that the working conditions that Icahn was requiring were unfair and unhealthy, and I couldn't see myself ever working for Icahn. It seems to me, you had to put your money where your mouth was. I mean, you had to stand up at some point and say, it was worth striking over and I'm not going back under the conditions that I said were 'unfair' - it seems sort of ridiculous to me.

These five people whose voices we have heard represent a wide variety of opinions on the strike, the union, TWA, the aftermath of the strike and present and past working conditions. They provide an example of working-class solidarity. Even though their opinions differed, they were all "dinos," a Flight Attendants slang term which means they stuck together through the whole strike. This is a title of honor among Flight Attendants, and, as any worker knows, a title of honor among all workers.

CHAPTER FIVE

RANK AND FILERS VIEW THEIR UNION AND THE 1986 STRIKE

The 1986 strike impacted on a variety of flight attendants, in a variety of ways. Family structure was threatened, yet, in some cases, spouses drew closer together. An old television series ended with the statement, "there are eight million stories in the Naked City and this has been one of them !" There were thousands of stories in the TWA strike, and I think it only right to present some more of them.

The Young Scab, English Dismay, Lion and Mayor, Born-Again Activist

Flight Attendants come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and nationalities. One thing that binds them together is their professionalism. This group of Flight Attendants came from a variety of backgrounds, but found themselves drawn together by the strike.

Ms. #10 feels great pride and a sense of satisfaction because of

her participation in the strike. A long-time member of IFFA, she described a rather stark incident in which she participated during the strike. It illustrates the way most of the membership felt about the scabs who crossed the picket line to work in their places, while they were subjected to great hardship and forced to endure many difficulties because of their support of the union.

"It was a cold night sometime in late March of '86 when I and two other F.A.'s went on a scab hunt that chilly evening of March '86. The three of us got in our car and drove to the domestic terminal at JFK looking for scabs. I saw a young girl waiting inside the terminal with street clothes... we finally identified her as a scab... when a cab pulled up she got in... the cab departed and we followed it into Queens we quickly parked the car and got up and quietly came up to her . . . I yelled 'scab' and let some eggs fly... her crew kit was within grabbing range...so I grabbed it and ran down the middle of the street . . . when we got about 100 feet away from her we stopped the car, opened up the kit and dumped everything in the middle of the street."⁶⁷

While Ms. #10 admitted that the above scenario is cruel and

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Statement, F/A. Ms. #10, October 1, 1990

chilling in nature, it does effectively illustrate the strong feelings which the strikers had against those workers who crossed the picket line and especially against their replacements, who were usurping everything they had struggled to attain during the preceding 25 years before 1986.

Ms. #10 has no regrets about her actions, and likened her position to that of "guerilla warfare". She used references to "war" and "battle" many times and clearly believed with vehemence that while the strike was somewhat successful in its outcome, if stronger and more dramatic (such as those above) tactics been employed, TWA would not have achieved the same measure of compromise it extracted from the strikers nor would the strike have lasted as long as it did.

The harshness of this encounter with the young scab effectively demonstrates the way feelings about the strike ran high within the striking membership. While IFFA has never officially condoned such behavior, many of the members I interviewed had expressed the feeling that stronger tactics could possible have been employed by the union in reducing its concessions to Carl Icahn and TWA.

Ms. #5 is a flight attendant with many years of service, who is now

retired from the profession.⁶⁸ During my interview with her, conducted in May 1990, the disillusionment, disappointment, lack of direction and other factors which have already emerged from the other flight attendant interviews were brought to the surface as well during our conversation.

Originally a native of England, Ms. #5 began with TWA since 1970. The product of a middle class English family, Ms. #5 expressed the same reasons for joining the profession as the others before had, the excitement, glamour, and prestige of working for such an internationally-recognized company. She worked for TWA until the period of the strike, when she left her job and never returned, having decided to retire.

One of the most important factors which emerges in my discussion with Ms. #5 is her belief in how the profession has changed she began in 1970. While she still believes that the position offers a young person an extraordinary opportunity for broadening their travel and intellectual horizons, she also feels that little if any opportunity for career growth or professional development exists anymore. She described the hardships and bad experiences which she and her fellow TWA attendants endured for this change in attitude toward a profession in which she participated

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Interview, F/A. Ms. #5, May 22, 1990

for 20 years.

She cited the poor attitude on the part of management toward the workers, as well as the unappealing salaries and the very hard work required as some for the reasons for her disillusionment. TWA management, according to Ms. #5, effectively made it almost a company policy to harass and intimidate their flight attendants, especially over the last five to six years.

Ms. #5 also cites the issue of deregulation and the impact it had on competition among the airlines as another factor which contributed even indirectly to the 1986 strike. She believes that the airlines were not prepared for the eventuality of a price war and that the cost effectiveness and reductions which were imposed as a byproduct of deregulation were contributory issues toward the strike, because of changes in benefits, working conditions and labor-management relations.

Another factor cited by Ms. #5 was the feeling of impersonality which she believes occurred both at TWA and many other airlines after deregulation, due to the constant price gouging and fierce competition among carriers. These issues caused a severe breakdown in the quality of services toward passengers, as well as in the relations which up to that time had been satisfactory between the flight attendants and management.

The advent of deregulation brought about severe, adverse influences in these relationships.

Ms. #5 also faults the labor movement for an apparent lack of support when the 1986 strike occurred. If the labor movement in general had been more supportive of IFFA, and if the airline unions in particular (ALPA, IAM) had been more supportive of their "sisters" (women) and "brothers" (fags and crazies), she believes that the 1986 strike could have resulted in a more satisfactory end for the flight attendants.

Ms. #5 remains supportive of IFFA and feels that overall, the experiences of the strike have had positive effects on the solidarity of the union, as well as among the membership. However, she remains convinced that more preparation should have been foreseen by the union, and that if fewer picket-line crossers had been around, the strike could have resulted in a more positive outcome for IFFA.

She cited cultural differences between the labor situations here and in England, and believes that even in England, the labor movement has suffered at the hands of the Thatcher government as much as the American labor movement suffered at the hands of the Reagan administration.

Another important issue addressed during my conversation with

Ms. #5 was the blatant sexism in the entire pre-strike period. While Carl Icahn seriously negotiated with the IAM and ALPA unions, both predominantly male, she feels that IFFA was neither taken as seriously nor treated with the same respect because of its predominantly female population.

My interview concluded with Ms. #5's relief at her retirement, although she lamented the difficulty of leaving a group of people with whom she had worked and shared so many different experiences over the years. Still, she does not remain optimistic about the state of affairs of the flight attendant profession in general. She does remain optimistic about IFFA's continued growth and hopes that the union will achieve additional strength and determination in the future.

Ms. #17 was a fortyish white female residing in Illinois at the time of our interview, in early December, 1990.⁶⁹ Already possessing a BS college degree, she secretly hopes to further her education while working as a flight attendant. She cited the extreme anxiety and lack of career growth and potential which she sees in her current profession.

While she was very optimistic about her career growth potential

⁶⁹ Interview, F/A. Ms. #17, December 11, 1990

outside of the airline industry, she was totally pessimistic about her chances of any type of advancement while remaining with TWA, due to the conditions which occurred during and after the 1986 strike.

Ms. #17 became very well known due to a series of infractions which she had incurred on her job, she was fired. She eventually won her case and was reinstated. During the strike, she became noted for actually wearing a lion costume, while proceedings were going on, in order to represent the courage which it took to stand up to corporate raiding! This situation generated a great deal of positive publicity for Ms. #17 and IFFA. The media coverage was extremely useful in helping her to win the case against TWA. These efforts generated positive public relations for IFFA, and it enabled her to meet with many public officials, including Harold Washington, the former mayor of Chicago.

Ms. #17 became very involved in lobbying efforts until illness caused her to withdraw from additional activities. However, until that time, she became active in contacting politicians, public figures, educators, and many advocates informing them about the actions of TWA against the flight attendants. This generated support for them from the general public during the strike.

Ms. #17 spoke with great bitterness about the lack of support and

encouragement IFFA received from other unions, and was especially disappointed by the pilots, who have never provided any type of support for the flight attendants. She stated bluntly: "...I'm not a sex symbol...You see that's our problem with the pilots. That's how they look at us, as sex symbols, and you're just the broads in the back, who would bring them a meal, a little T & A from the back is what they looked at us as."

Ms. #17 recounted a crucial episode in her experiences during which she spoke before the Illinois State Senate about her experiences, the flight attendants situation and the plight of TWA, since Carl Icahn had taken over. She discussed at length the mismanagement, incompetence, poor judgment and lack of cooperation which she experienced or learned about from others, which she feels played a pivotal role in creating the problem. These very issues exploded later on in the strike.

Ms. #17 shared her personal views with me, on the airlines industry, deregulation, the lack of interest of most banks in working people, sexism in the airlines industry, the rampant greed in corporate America, the effects of the 1981 PATCO strike and other pertinent issues.

An issue which was close to the heart of Ms. #17 is the manner in

which legal and judicial channels are now being used in this country to negate much of the work of organized labor. We spoke in great detail about these concerns: "...times have changed and the laws have changed to make all these loopholes for business people, so we need them to stop all this. I don't think we can do it, because you will get the replacement workers...and of course for the right price their lawyers help them find loopholes..."

Ms. #17 spoke at length about her activities during the strike, and recounted numerous anecdotes and offered insights into the ways in which the strike affected her personally and professionally. She has no regrets about her involvement in the 1986 strike, and believes that her responsibilities and actions during those times were historic in and of themselves.

Ms. #17 spoke about IFFA and expressed great satisfaction in the leadership of the union, praising Vicki Frankovich and other leaders for their commitment and dedication to the plight of the flight attendants.

Ms. #12, is a TWA flight attendant in her early 40's and have worked for TWA for many years.⁷⁰ She expressed her dismay and anger at the

⁷⁰Interview, F/A. Ms. 12, December 12, 1990

manner in which she believed her job, its conditions and the sense of dignity and pride which she had always felt were part of her position had gradually but steadily deteriorated under the direction of Carl Icahn and his management team.

Ms. #12, related her story to me in a long and detailed interview which was conducted a number of months ago. The details of the 1986 strike were still fresh and vivid in her mind. She provided deep insights into the workings of the strike, its ramifications for the flight attendant profession, and for the future of organized labor in general.

She spoke about her early years with the company, and the optimism she felt in working for such an illustrious company as TWA, coupled with the excitement and glamour of her working conditions; the travel, foreign destinations, and the caliber of people she was meeting because of her job.

A product of white middle-class America, she was lured into the flight attendant field by the prospects of working for an airline renowned throughout the world for its high level of competence and professionalism. She has seen the company degenerate over her 20 years "into a money-grubbing, poorly run outfit which is interested only in short-term profits and has little if any use for the development of long-term

priorities."

She condemned the stagnation which she feels has set into the company in all phases: marketing, advertising, product development, new services, and management strategies. "They don't seem to welcome anyone under them coming up with any good ideas either...they don't want any waves."

Ms. #12 expressed her dissatisfaction with the process of airline deregulation, as most of the people I interviewed. Labor and management have experienced severe changes due to deregulation, which she is convinced will lead to serious problems with the airline industry as a whole in the very near future.

One of the most severe changes in the relationship between management and labor has been in the abolition of the "mutual aid pact", which had been used to provide financial support to struck airlines out of a general fund which had been set up by the airlines.

When deregulation abolished this policy, labor suffered a severe setback which in essence gave it one less tool to utilize in the event of a strike. In her opinion, the "mutual pact aid" was a stabilizing factor that helped to maintain the "status quo", it indirectly applied pressure on all the carriers. Due to this financial drain, long strikes were discouraged.

One of the most interesting points of the conversation involved her comparison of the 1981 PATCO strike with the 1986 TWA strike.

A striking similarity which she outlined between the two strikes was the way in which the media manipulated public opinion in order to give the impression that both the air traffic controllers in 1981 and the flight attendants in 1986 did not have the safety of the public in mind when they struck.

In addition, both the media and management strove to take an already suspicious public opinion and turn it against both parties. By sensationalizing the relatively minor inconveniences of the strikes (most especially the flight attendants', in terms of public safety) and instead downplaying the true issues of working conditions, lack of benefits, and poor equipment which was the true heart of the matter in each case. "The media made it seem that those people did not have the public safety at heart and really that was the basis of their whole position -- the fact that the work environment wasn't safe and they were working too many long hours..." And (in regard to the flight attendants): "the public was not very empathetic to our strike."

Ms. #12 spoke of the strong feelings she experienced when she went to the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. as a case observer,

during the 1986 strike. Her sense was that while the government was strongly on the side of TWA; she, nevertheless believed that "...I knew that somehow we would come back. I never had serious doubts about the fact that we'd be back."

After 23 years with TWA, she still remembers the founding of IFFA which had come about as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the representation the flight attendants had been receiving from TWU. She recounted how Vicki Frankovich, Bill Hoffman and others had initially taken steps to begin the new union.

As it became clear to the flight attendants that TWU could not properly represent their interests, and in fact had little knowledge of the nuances of their jobs. As more and more of the flight attendants began clamoring for new and different representation: one which was "born" of necessity and one which could identify with their jobs, their needs and their lives.

She then began explaining her role during the 1986 strike and gave me her personal insights into the inner workings of IFFA during those days. "I ran headquarters for three months...a chaotic but exciting time...Illinois is a real labor state so we went to the (AFL-CIO) convention... and got them to pass a resolution for AFL-CIO members

not to fly TWA."

It was during this time as well that Ms. #12 was interviewed on the radio by Studs Terkel, who used excerpts from his discussion with her in his book, The Great Divide.⁷¹ The growth experience, sense of self-confidence and unwavering belief in the righteousness of her cause gave Ms. #12 new-found fervor to cope with the stresses of the strike and enabled her to continue her work at strike headquarters.

The following summary is from an article written by Ms. #12 in which she outlines her personal beliefs concerning the strike, its impact on the company, the union, the flight attendants as a group, and finally, on her personal life itself.⁷²

She relates a story of the solidarity which she slowly saw building up among the flight attendants during the days which immediately preceded the strike, as it grew more and more evident that TWA would not continue negotiating with the union.

She had special praise for the tireless dedication of union officers, legal counsels, and administrators who worked countless long and hard

⁷¹See Studs Terkel, The Great Divide, pp. 332-337

⁷²Written Statement, F/A. Ms. #12, January 1989

hours for little if any pay. "We had leadership that was totally dedicated to the return of every striker."

She believes that it was initially the arrogance and insensitivity of the company, which was spearheaded by Carl Icahn himself, that played a major part in the turmoil which led to the strike. At the same time, she is proud of the energy, sense of commitment and solidarity which were displayed by most of the IFFA members in the face of such overwhelmingly odds.

TWA's inflexibility only aggravated a difficult situation, but the stoic resistance which the strike engendered in so many people was something she is still proud to have been associated with to this day.

Most especially, she remembers the sense of righteousness which everyone in the strike felt about their cause. There seems to have been little if any wavering on anyone's part about whether the strike was justified.

Not only was it justified, but morally correct in order to preserve the dignity and self-respect of the TWA workers. As she relates at the end of her article: "I am proud of each and every striker who despite the hardships and personal sacrifices, knew that without your integrity and sense of self worth, you have nothing!"

An interesting point which was raised during my discussion with Ms. #12 was an emerging pattern concerning flight attendants who are either single, or if married, without children. Ms. #12 attributed this to restrictive laws imposed by the airlines which up until only a few years ago, forbade their flight attendants from being married or from having children.

The above-mentioned coupled with the fact of an erratic work schedule and high pressure deadline-oriented work environments kept most of the senior flight attendants single and or childless. Many other flight attendants mentioned this. In the case of Ms. #12, she has been married for 20 years (to a man who also works for TWA).

Another interesting point in our discussion was Ms. #12's impressions of the Black flight attendants. In her opinion, they had been better able to weather the storm of the strike, "perhaps because they had been more experienced at handling adversity and severe conditions than their White counterparts. They were always the ones who were saying...you know, it was like they had weathered adversity before in their lives. Many of us attendants... began at 19, 20, White had nice, sweet backgrounds - WASPs, never had any... we came from protected backgrounds... but we were insulated and this was the first really awful

negative terrible thing that happened in my life...the Black ladies had probably gone up against that (adversity) all their lives...they were tougher, they were stronger and they took this (the strike) as just one more hurdle."

Ms. #12 spoke about her personal influences from the strike, and how it made her marriage stronger, and her relationships with other people more insightful. In general, she has developed as a professional and as a human being in a more positive manner as a result of surviving the hardships of the strike.

She also insinuated that while the technique of the "strike" was useful in the case of the flight attendants, there was a heavy toll exacted for its deployment, in jobs, emotional upheaval, loss of income, and other financial burdens.

She believes that the labor movement should strive to develop new techniques for obtaining improvements in wages and working conditions for their members. She criticized the manner in which the general public did not support the labor movement in this country anymore, but also believes that in time, the "pendulum will swing back".

BLACK FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

In addition to the sexism that all Flight Attendants face, Black women face an added dimension: racism. This may also constitute a source of strength. When Icahn used glib remarks such as, "stewardesses are second incomes" and "the girls don't need money," to justify his disproportionate demands, he showed a definite disdain for Black women and their contribution to this society. Jacqueline Jones and many other writers have shown that the history of Black women is a history of work: Black women have worked all their lives.⁷³

To many his stereotypical image and remarks were both sexist and racist. However, within the ranks of the Flight Attendants, these Black women were seen by both officers and rank-and-filers as better able to cope with the uncertainties of being on strike. Black women's ability to be resilient and caring yet strong and aggressive was identified as a positive attribute.

It was rationalized that may be they coped better because they had been victimized before - like for all of their lives. Therefore, their lived experiences had made them more sensitive and susceptible to the situation.

⁷³See Jacqueline Jones' Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow.

The implication is that, they were trained in the struggle of being the great equalizer, and that their resilience was possibly the result of the heightened awareness of abuse and living under conditions which had impacted negatively on their lives. They were there before! The fight itself might have made them stronger.

For the duration of the crisis, the strike might have brought about an anti-racist atmosphere. Going the extra mile for this battle, appears on the surface to have minimized racial tensions and reduced race to an irrelevant issue.

But, as we all know, a divided group in time of conflict tend to overlook divisions internally and come together in solidarity to fight. In this case, we have witnessed, the transformation of from a class "in itself" to a class "for itself". Workers in solidarity, that sense of unity -- united in action against the predator -- in struggle was now primary.

Working class consciousness, the concepts of solidarity and unionism in regards to the Black Flight Attendants are relevant in this Chapter. White flight attendants, have sung praises of admiration and respect for the Black strikers in their ranks for their leadership and fortitude. However, they are baffled at the way these women were able to handle the adversities. Real or perceived the Black Flight Attendant's

economic condition was assumed to be less fortunate than her White counterpart.

I interviewed one of the few Blacks working for TWA at the time of the strike, who is referred to as Ms. #7.⁷⁴ Ms. # 7 is a mid-30's female from a middle class family, married with no children and a husband who is fairly receptive to his wife's occupation.

Ms. #7 spoke about her feelings concerning the company and the union, and attributed much of the turmoil and unrest which later exploded into the strike to a lack of proper management on the part of TWA, as well as lack of communications on the part of both the union and the company, especially during the months leading up to the strike.

Furthermore, during our discussions about the preliminary events leading to the strike, Ms. #7 made numerous references to the serious negative impact which deregulation made on the entire airline industry. From her point of view, deregulation has been one of the most deciding factors which caused the strike in the first place, because of the cut-throat all-out competition it fostered among the airlines.

Another resultant factor in the airline industry since the advent of

⁷⁴Interview, F/A. Ms. #7, December 16, 1990

deregulation has been serious reductions in safety, attributable (according to Ms. #7) to the disbanding of the Civil Aeronautics Board, a severe lack of job security on the part of the flight attendants and other airline workers, a loss of dignity and concern for human and workers' rights coupled with an increase in the concerns for profit and big business.

Ms. #7 believes that labor has gone soft and has not fought hard enough to ward off the serious encroachments that management has wrought against the working people of this nation over the last ten years. However, she sees a turnaround in the labor perspective in the country which should increase labor's bargaining position once again in terms of economic and political effectiveness.

An interesting fact which arose during our interview was that Ms. #7 was originally trained to be a pilot, but because of a hereditary illness (sickle anemia), was barred from actually piloting aircraft. Since the only avenue left to her in the aviation field was as a flight attendant, she entered the profession in 1975 as an attendant based out of Chicago.

As so many other people I interviewed before her had done, Ms. #7 at first praised the company and the "esprit d'corps" which existed prior to 1986. With the start of the strike, however, she became quickly disillusioned at the tactics and underhanded machinations which the

company utilized in its attempts to quell the strike.

She believed that if the union and the strikers had more actively and aggressively pursued their goals and had been more adamant in their demands, the outcome of the strike quite possibly could have been more favorable for the flight attendants.

Many of the flight attendants should have responded more ardently than they did to the plight of their union, and should have attempted to understand the problems which initiated the strike in the context of the time as well as of the issues. Had this been the case, Ms. #7 concluded that in all probability the strike would have been settled on more favorable terms for the flight attendants.

In summarizing her attitude about the strike and its effects on her life as well as of her fellow workers, Ms. #7 feels that the strike has made her a more solid and resourceful human being, more receptive to the needs of others, stronger and more aggressive in her own needs and more self-determined than ever.

As I have pointed out, most of the people who have been interviewed have spoken about their "resolve", about their "growth" as human beings, about the sense of "determination" to persevere in the face of great adversity.

Ms. #7 concluded her interview with me by stating that the problems she encountered at TWA during the time prior to the strike still existed. Although she has returned to work, she has seen and felt a moral and physical deterioration of the company, which of course has been extremely detrimental to the continued survival of the organization.

The company seems determined to squeeze the last ounce of work out of each flight attendant, with little if any regard for the working conditions, salaries, lack of benefits and other detrimental conditions which have been imposed on them under the terms of the strike settlement.

Nevertheless, Ms. #7 believes that the strike has caused a major positive impact among the flight attendants in terms of solidarity, sense of dignity and self-esteem, less racism in terms of Black-White relations among the workers, and a more cynical and conscious attitude about the machinations of the company concerning the flight attendants.

The flight attendants of 1991 are more hard-nosed, more cynical, more perceptive, more alert, more intelligent and more aware of the problems they face with TWA in the years ahead. The naivete and lack of concentration which afflicted many of them during the time just prior to the 1986 strike has all been eroded, due in great part to the adversities

most of the flight attendants were subjected to during the strike. Yet out of conflict has come personal and professional growth, stability and maturity.

Ms. #13 is a Black female, 40 years of age, who expressed her views concerning the 1986 TWA strike via a telephone interview which I conducted in December 1990.⁷⁵

One of the most important issues which we discussed involved the higher degree of militancy which apparently exists in Black strikers in contrast to their white counterparts. Numerous factors play a role in this heightened degree of militancy, including the oppression which Blacks have traditionally experienced in this country, a stronger sentiment on the parts of Black strikers to view a management-labor confrontation as a type of "war," and other contributory situations.

As our interview progressed, I continued asking Ms. #13 about various issues which were discussed across the board with the other interviewees, including her outlooks on the impact of deregulation on the airline industry (extremely negative, as was the case in all the other interviews).

⁷⁵Interview, F/A. Ms. #13, December 10, 1990

She focused on the manner in which the 1981 PATCO strike unleashed an avalanche of conservative, right-wing legislation leveled against the labor movement in general and unions in particular, via the Reagan era Supreme Court; the role of the courts in modern day labor relations (the courts are solidly in the corner of management, and labor must struggle not only against its management adversary, but the powerful ally which it has found in the legal/judicial system which exists in the United States).

As to the viability of the strike as an effective labor technique (Ms. #13 feels that while the strike is indeed a viable means of struggling with management, it has lost much of its effectiveness and potency because of the heavily-leaning judicial system which consistently favors the rights of management over those of labor).

The ways in which the 1986 strike affected Ms. #13's lifestyle and professional endeavors was that while the strike made her personally stronger and more aware of her own capabilities, as far as, endurance and reliance on herself are concerned, it also impacted quite negatively on many others who did not or could not maintain a strong and unwavering front for the duration.

One of the most interesting points which Ms. #13 raised was the

heightened sense of sisterhood and solidarity which she noticed during the strike. The strike worked in a sense as a "great equalizer," bringing together women and men of diverse backgrounds, nationalities and races who became united in a common cause in which they all believed.

Ms. #13 summarized her feelings concerning this very important point by stating that: "...the strike... bonded us as a sisterhood, I would say, as a sister/brotherhood type thing, no matter whether you were Black or white...you were willing to go that extra mile for that person...because you had that common bond there, because you were on strike together."

Ms. #13 discussed the issue of sexism within the TWA organization, as has been already examined in previous interviews, there is an indisputable body of evidence which indicates that TWA is a company which is rampant with sexism, ageism, racism and other forms of discrimination, both of a sexual, economic and social nature.

She was firmly convinced that had IFFA been a male-dominated union, there is no doubt that it would have received a much higher degree of inter-union solidarity from male-oriented labor organizations such as ALPA and IAM. This feeling was colloquially expressed by her statement that: "...I think we were treated the way we were treated because we were a bunch of females...and fags."

Ms. #13 went on to discuss her recollections of when TWU represented the flight attendants, and how she realized early on in her career that they were not capable of upholding the best interest of this group of workers because of the very nature of their membership, which was predominantly blue-collar and male-dominated.

As with all the other interviewees, Ms. #13 shared her views that there was no long-term future in the flight attendant profession and attributed this situation to various factors, including deregulation, the intrusion of Carl Icahn into TWA and the recession.

As for her own future, Ms. #13 was optimistic that she could make a career change if necessary, but was ultimately disappointed that because of the negative changes which had occurred within the flight attendant field, would probably never have the chance to continue working in a field in which she had made loyal friends, and more importantly, in which she had been able to develop a strong sense of pride in a job well done, and a sense of achievement in her degree of professionalism and skill.

Another Black flight attendant, whom I shall refer to as Ms. #14, agreed to talk with me and express her views concerning the 1986 TWA

strike.⁷⁶ The product of middle class parents, Ms. #14 was born and raised in Chicago and had attended approximately two years of college at the time she was interviewed.

Many of the topics which Ms. #14 brought up had already been discussed numerous times from various perspectives by the other interviewees including the impact of deregulation on the airline industry, the prospects of job advancement/self-esteem in the flight attendant profession, the problems of labor and management and the resultant situation which has been generated by deregulation, the 1981 PATCO strike and the increasing intervention of the Federal government in labor-management disputes, the lack of employee morale and motivation at TWA and the manner in which Ms. #14 has seen the company deteriorate over the years.

Ms. #14 alluded to an important point, the cynical attitude on the part of management in their dealings with labor, whom they now regard with little respect and an almost total disregard for their needs, and that little attention is paid to the opportunities to provide an enjoyable and efficient work environment for the employees; instead, they are subjected

⁷⁶ Interview, F/A. Ms. #14, December 9, 1990.

to various types of harassment and abuse.

Ms. #14 recounted her activities in the days before and during the strike, explaining that she had resigned her position in 1987 because of the sense of disillusionment which she felt about the strike: "...the strike was very exhausting..."

Ms. #14 was an area chairperson for IFFA in the Chicago area during the strike, and had been very active in coordinating the various activities which were going on at that time. "I was always the elected spokesperson for the flight attendants, but after the strike I became the spokesperson for the flight attendants...for people in Chicago...I did radio interviews, magazines..."

One of the most important issues which I discussed with Ms. #14 involved her belief that the Black flight attendants, especially in Chicago, were far more militant and involved in the strike than their white counterparts. She attributes this militancy and resiliency on the part of the Black strikers to their heightened awareness of abuse, and living under conditions which impact negatively on their lives.

Other issues which I spoke about with Ms. #14 involved her feelings about male vs. female leadership of the union and the sexism which was rampant in TWA.

Lastly, Ms. #14 mentioned her sense of guarded optimism concerning the future of IFFA, and was hopeful that the organization would prevail in spite of the adversities of the strike.

The most important issue which Ms. #14 and I discussed was her role as the only Black elected union official in Chicago at the time of the strike. Her coordination activities, coupled with the tireless work and total dedication to the principles of the strike, gave Ms. #14 a sense of stoic acceptance of the result of the strike, together with the determination to carry on, persevere and strive for improvements in the working conditions of the flight attendants.

MALE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

Flight Attendants are not only women, although the field is female-dominated. Some men also serve. These male Flight Attendants face homophobia from the company and their fellow workers although many of them are "straight." Because they are in a female-dominated industry, they are looked down upon by male workers, as being unable to do a "real man's job," and by some of their female colleagues for the same reason.

The sixth person wrote a narrative of his situation, he is referred to

as Mr. #6.⁷⁷ He related a story about how he felt the 1986 TWA strike had caused severe and permanent chasms in the relationships he had developed and nurtured over the years with his fellow flight attendants. Furthermore, he criticized the materialism and isolation which the strike induced in many of its participants. These factors originated at least in part from the hostile and selfish environment which the company helped to foster in order to create dissension and chaos among the workers.

Mr. #6 also stated that he believed the strike had made many of its participants stronger and more resilient human beings. Their ability to withstand the almost constant verbal and emotional abuse which they were forced to endure for months at a time and surviving, these strikers proved to themselves and to the world that they were hard, strong, determined individuals who would be capable of almost anything to which they set their minds, given the right circumstances and situation.

Mr. #6 also indicated that the strike had allowed him to distance himself from the materialistic values which were the "surface" reasons for the strike, namely, more money, benefits, working hours, and to concentrate more on the "underground" reasons, which were the

⁷⁷ Written Statement, F/A. Mr. #6, November 14, 1990

preservation of human dignity, concern for the plights of his fellow workers, an emphasis on compassion and understanding, and much more. As he so emphatically stated: "... we will support those that are willing to forego a paycheck in order to demonstrate their belief that they are being wronged... we've become more aware of our surroundings".

One of the most important points which Mr. #6 raised during our interview was his feeling that the 1986 TWA strike contributed more than anything else to developing a feeling of camaraderie and unity among the flight attendants, who up to that time, functioned merely as separate individuals.

With the advent of the strike, and the hardship that most strikers were forced to endure, he believes that the flight attendants as a group became less self-serving and more dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the group.

The decline in service, the lack of adequately trained flight attendants, the delays and financial difficulties of the company, are all factors which developed as a result of the strike because management failed to place sufficient value on the abilities and importance of their flight attendants to the overall operation of the organization.

As one of the few male flight attendants at TWA during the time

of the strike, Mr. #6 related to his fellow flight attendants the manner in which he was inspired by the emotional, psychological and in some cases, physical suffering he saw going on around him to persevere in his dedication to the cause.

He also believes that the strike has made him grow as a human being, and has increased his sense of pride, dignity and belief in himself and his fellow workers. The "emotional level" with which he dealt with passengers was transposed during the strike to the emotional level with which he struggled together with his fellow workers to cope with the 1986 strike.

In the end, Mr. #6 explained his satisfaction in returning to his job with TWA, he believes that the company has no future. The sense of pride in his work, his feeling that he had not relented in his struggle, the righteousness of the cause in which he believed and for which he and his fellow flight attendants fought so vigorously, all have contributed to his renewed sense of accomplishment: as having acted in the right way, in solidarity to his union and in harmony with himself.

Another male TWA employee, who agreed to meet with me and discuss his impressions of the 1986 strike from a unique male perspective, currently for the company as a service manager, with responsibilities for

supervising the cabin team and all monies and services related to long international and domestic flights.⁷⁸ The position of service manager involves acting in the capacity of "lead flight attendant", and therefore, Mr. #9 brings an important perspective.

Mr. #9 has worked for TWA for over 25 years, and told me about his unhappiness at what he terms the "deterioration" of the company during that time, including negative changes in service, responsibility of the company in regard to employee relations and the attitude of the company toward its employees.

Mr. #9 provided me with a detailed analysis of his history with the company, which spanned numerous supervisory and management positions, until his most recent one. He decried the extreme turnaround in TWA's position in regard to its workers, and remembers a time when he was proud of the company and felt fulfilled by his work, which he no longer is, at this time: "...it's changed since Carl Icahn took it over, because he's a different managing philosophy and it's very simple, it's called ruthlessness".

As with most other people who have been interviewed for this

⁷⁸ Interview, F/A. Mr. #9, November 17, 1990

section, Mr. #9 denounced airline deregulation as having "strangled" the airline industry. He feels that as a consequence of the advent of deregulation, the airlines became so preoccupied with profit-making and cost-cutting that they have become oblivious to the needs of their own employees.

In regard to his affiliation with IFFA, Mr. #9 praised the union for its efforts on behalf of the flight attendants during the 1986 strike, and concurs with many other interviewees that perhaps the union conducted too proper and civilized a strike, when confronted with as formidable a foe as Carl Icahn's TWA.

Mr. #9 praised the union's leaders, especially Art Teolis and later Vicki Frankovich, as individuals with a high degree of moral integrity and business acumen.

Mr. #9 displayed a strong sense of business understanding. He discussed important topics of general interest to the perspective of the strike, including his feelings about "ethical capitalism", the Reagan years and their effect on unionism in this country, and other pertinent matters.

An important issue concerning the strike which Mr. #9 brought to the forefront of our discussion was his belief that unions have become more pliable and flexible over the last 12 years, which he believes may

have contributed to the strike because of the continued willingness on the part of IFFA to keep negotiating with TWA even when confronted by insurmountable obstacles to its success.

Mr. #9 was very proud of his work during the strike as a captain, during which he helped to coordinate other striking workers. He provided support and solidarity to those on the picket lines, and continued his supportive role until the settlement. Mr. #9 praised his co-workers and the administration of the union for the work which they did during the strike and is proud of his affiliation and involvement during those times.

A key issue to our discussion in this regard, however, was the matter of Mr. #9's "perspective" about himself and his role in the strike, when seen from a total perspective. "I am an average worker who places a very high value in himself and what he does, but my country and the men (the elitists) who run this country, do not have a high value for the workers, they are totally indifferent, so, I learned my place...that I have no value whatsoever other than what I manufacture on my own." While this individual self-confidently placed a high value on his own abilities and integrity, it became evident to him during the strike that the society in which he existed did not.

In regard to the strike itself Mr. #9 provided the insight that he felt Vicki Frankovich had actually intimidated Carl Icahn because of his apparent inability to control her.

In closing the interview, Mr. #9 expressed his opinion that IFFA would indeed have a future in the labor movement, and that it had done more than any other union during the 1980's to withstand and survive the onslaught of vicious anti-union campaigning which were a signature mark of Reaganism in American history.

For the first time in the history of the American labor movement a female-dominated union had the fortitude to stand up to a male-oriented, ruthless opponent and do it with stoicism and a considerable measure of success. In so doing, it has earned an honored place in American labor.

IFFA's PAST and PRESENT LEADERS

One of the most important determinants in the success or failure of any organization is leadership. I was fortunate enough to be able to interview both Art Teolis, the founding President of the I.F.F.A., and Vicki Frankovich, President during the strike. I found them both charismatic leaders, but with differing interpretations of how success could have been achieved.

Of the numerous interviews which I conducted for inclusion in this

dissertation about the TWA strike in 1986, there was perhaps no one better qualified to provide a deep and well-defined insight into the complexities of the strike than Art Teolis, who was the former president of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants from its founding in the early 70's until 1984, he resigned and returned to the line.⁷⁹

Mr. Teolis' philosophies and ideas concerning the labor movement, his belief in the power and strength which comes with union solidarity and affiliation, and his total dedication and commitment to the advancement of working peoples' rights, formed the basis of our interview. His encyclopedic knowledge of the labor movement provided an important and far-reaching sense of perspective to the TWA strike.

His career with TWA began in 1970, when he first began working for the company as one of its first male flight attendants. During this early period, he became active in the TWU, which at the time was peripherally representing the interests of the flight attendants.

In reality, however, Mr. Teolis made it clear that the TWU could not realistically provide the proper representation to a group of workers to whom it could neither relate nor understand. ". . . A lot of it was the

⁷⁹Interview, Arthur (Art) Teolis, January 12, 1991

union's fault too. They didn't do many of the things that needed to be done in order to bring up the level of awareness . . . many things about the job, they couldn't understand . . . ".

Mr. Teolis recalled his early days on the job with TWA as a flight attendant, and recounted the terrible working conditions which he personally experienced, factors which ultimately led to frustration with the TWU, and finally to the creation of IFFA, an organization which properly understood the needs of the flight attendants and thus represented them accordingly.

Mr. Teolis explained his feelings concerning the breakdown of effective communications between the TWU and the flight attendants. He attributes the main problems to difficulties on the part of the union in being able to "identify" with those workers after coming from a traditional labor background of people (mostly males) who worked in the blue-collar type professions such as construction and transit.

Dealing with the flight attendants ultimately proved frustrating for the TWU as well because they could not understand the levels of difference between those types of workers and the conditions on their jobs, and the more traditional workers they had been used to representing.

At last, after prolonged negotiations in 1976 during which the TWU apparently negotiated a contract for the flight attendants with TWA which many workers felt did not do proper justice to the demands and needs of the airline employees, a decision was reached to form an independent union which would more accurately reflect these needs.

Mr. Teolis explained to me that while consideration was given to join with a union with international affiliations, in the end it was decided to form an independent organization, since little support was provided to the people involved in the formation of IFFA.

After narrowly losing an election to the TWU for representation of the flight attendants, IFFA finally won the right of representation in the second election, and began the monumental work of establishing its credibility and confidence with both the flight attendants themselves, and of equal importance, with TWA as the new bargaining agent for the flight attendants.

As a result of this activity, IFFA was able to negotiate the best contract ever for the flight attendants in 1978. Coupled with the new government deregulation of the airlines which had occurred at the same time, IFFA rode on a crest of confidence and assuredness, during this period, which was virtually unprecedented in the history of the labor

movement involving a newly created union.

As Mr. Teolis recalls: "The thing that really galvanized us as a group was the '78 agreement, because it was the best agreement that we had ever negotiated at TWA. The company was really worried about deregulation and we were in the honeymoon period because we had just won the election. So the timing was very good, and we ended up with the best agreement we had ever negotiated with TWA."

Another important issue which surfaced during the conversation with Mr. Teolis was the bitterness he felt due to the lack of support that IFFA received from other airline related unions, especially the pilots. He did explain that the airline mechanics, however, did accord the IFFA members the proper respect and recognition, but that the pilots were almost totally derogatory and negative in their attitudes toward flight attendants. Mr. Teolis believes that "they were more management than they were a union, if you know what I mean". To summarize Mr. Teolis' point concerning other unions' support, it became clear that the airline mechanics provided a degree and measure of support for the efforts of the flight attendants by providing advisement and direction in IFFA's early days, while the pilots exhibited a blatant lack of solidarity with the fledgling labor union during this period.

A serious point of contention which Mr. Teolis discussed during our conversations was the apparent sabotage efforts which the TWU continued to attempt against IFFA and against him personally in order to discredit the new union.

These included lawsuits, direct mail "smear" campaigns, allegations and innuendos which had no basis in fact, and other disturbing issues. In spite of these problems, both IFFA and Mr. Teolis stood firm in their commitment to the flight attendants and to the development of the new union as a force to contend with in the labor movement.

Mr. Teolis spoke briefly about his own personal history and involvement in the labor movement, beginning in his youth when he recalled his father, who was a plasterer and painter. The product of a poor working class family, he became involved in the labor movement in his early days and committed himself wholeheartedly for the rest of his adult life since that time.

In regard to his early involvement in TWA, Mr. Teolis believes that this strong foundation in the labor movement prepared him for the tasks which were to lie ahead. He found severe problems in TWA in its infrastructure and hierarchy, and decried the lack of respect which the airline flight attendants received from the executive office, where in many

organizations they were colorfully referred to as the "tits and ass department" of the company.

Mr. Teolis had initially become involved in the airline division of the labor movement when he joined the TWU, but after astutely realizing that this union could not best serve the interests of the flight attendants, helped to lay the foundation of IFFA.

Unfortunately, his attitude concerning the 1986 strike caused a severe downturn in the enthusiasm and motivation which he felt toward the flight attendant profession in general, which was triggered by the attitude of the company and by its own deteriorating condition, factors which could not help but affect IFFA and its membership as well.

"It's a nowhere job, it leads nowhere . . . what they did to us in the '86 strike was they turned the clock back on us 30 years . . . in terms of rules and pay and that sort of thing." These were the factors which ultimately led to Mr. Teolis' disillusionment with IFFA and his retirement in 1986, after becoming convinced that the strike had been lost.

A key factor in his resignation was his "disgust" with the rank and file membership. Some pressured him to provide concessions to TWA after he had succeeded in obtaining a 38% pay raise. Then there was scare tactics that TWA used against him through the flight attendants,

and the rumors that the company could go out of business, and further cuts would be needed, ". . . and the company went on this tremendous campaign with our rank and file, telling them that we were crazy, that we were going to put them out of business . . . and I started getting tremendous heat from our own members."

Mr. Teolis commented on the belief that while strikes are still valuable techniques in labor disputes, he has come to the realization that other, more modern techniques, such as work stoppages, massive sick calls, on-board work rule actions and poor inflight service may have been just as effective in the long run.

Mr. Teolis expressed his support of and praise for his successor as president of IFFA, Vicki Frankovich, explaining that she had carried forth many of the policies and union procedures which he had developed during his tenure as chief executive officer of the union. He praised her overall actions during the strike, and his bitterness at not receiving the support of other unions either just prior to or during the 1986 strike surfaced once again.

His realization that TWA had recognized the flight attendants as the "weakest" of their employee groups and had decided to attack them most forcefully of all in order to obtain concessions was sharp and

focused in its depth of understanding the situation.

However, he did review certain occurrences and events about the strike, as probable mistakes during this crucial period. This included: immediately striking instead of waiting for a cooling-off period; delays in filing of crucial lawsuits and other matters of importance. He did express the opinion, however, that these mistakes did not contribute to the initiation or the outcome of the strike, which he believes was virtually inevitable because of the outlandish concessionary demands of TWA and the determination of IFFA not to concede.

Mr. Teolis finished his interview by praising the strength and solidarity of IFFA in the face of almost insurmountable odds. As he recalled: ". . . once a corporation in today's environment . . . a big corporation like TWA . . . a multinational, billion dollar corporation, tremendous political influence and so forth, when a corporation like that with all of its wherewithal and resources and political strength decides that it's going to take on a union and win at all costs, if they resolve they're going to break the union, in just about any case, if they are willing to spend the money to do it, they can do it."

IFFA, a small and independent union, lacking in enormous funds or long-time proven credibility, was able to accomplish the impossible,

thanks to the direction set forth by Mr. Teolis and the continued efforts of Vicki Frankovich during the labor crisis of 1986.

In spite of the brutal beating which IFFA took during the strike, Mr. Teolis is optimistic about its growth and future development as the bargaining agent for the flight attendants.

Mr. Teolis was hopeful about the future growth of the labor movement in general, and called upon the AFL-CIO to become more aggressive and active in both stepping up its organizing efforts as well as in improving the image of labor in the United States as we enter the 21st century.

Together with Mr. Teolis, Vicki Frankovich occupies an integral role in the development and growth of IFFA, and played a pivotal part in the 1986 strike which IFFA enacted against TWA.⁸⁰

Her insights into the events leading up to the strike, as well as the meaningful views which she provided, which sometimes were in stark contrast to those previously expressed by Art Teolis, contained important information which showed how the strike was the natural and inevitable consequence of various actions, occurrences and events.

⁸⁰ Interview, Vicki Frankovich, February 27, 1991

Vicki had joined TWA in 1969 as a flight attendant and is the product of a solid middle class background. Possessing a fairly well developed formal educational background (B.A. and several certificates from institutions of higher learning in the fields of labor studies, industrial relations, arbitration).

Ms. Frankovich became involved in the social and labor endeavors of her job early on in her professional life. As she stated in our interview, she envisioned her role as one which is "to do what I am doing and I am happy doing it because I feel I am serving an important social role, that I'm representing people who desperately need representation."

As so many others have done before her in the profession, Vicki decried the deplorable state of affairs which the flight attendants have found themselves in, and in consideration of what she believes to be the horrible conditions in the airline industry at the present time, would not recommend anyone in her family to join the ranks in any capacity with the airlines.

Vicki explained that she saw her role within the union as one which provided inspiration, guidance and direction to the membership, as well as to the operations of the organization itself. She is convinced that Carl Icahn had accomplished very little during his tenure at TWA, other

than to "rape the company, pillage our resources and put nothing back into the company".

She believes that Icahn was callous and unscrupulous in his dealings with IFFA, and that in fact he has created a terrible and rather tenuous state of affairs at TWA because of these business decisions. These actions on the part of Icahn have not resulted in actual cost-effectiveness and reductions, but instead have led to the utter demoralization and disintegration of the company.

Upon questioning Vicki concerning the current general state of affairs of the labor movement in the United States, she was quick to respond that since the advent of deregulation, she has witnessed the slow erosion of the airline industry, and consequently, the weakening and division of the labor movement which governs that very industry.

Vicki provided meaningful insight into the intricacies of her job as IFFA president, especially during the days of the strike, when she found herself preoccupied more and in a type of "labor networking", calling upon government, political and religious leaders in her endeavor to earn a just settlement to the plights of her flight attendant membership.

As an off-shoot of this situation, Vicki also viewed her feelings concerning "corporate America" and how this entity has in many instances

succeeded only in manipulating, taking advantage of and using the skills and labor of millions of American workers while callously and indifferently using their sweat for their own gain, in an utter display of contempt and disregard for the harm such actions can engender.

She expresses this view very succinctly when she states: "There is no sense of appreciation for the rights of employees, there is a sense that employees are useful commodities and that any attempt on the behalf of an employee to negotiate on their own behalf, to stand up for their own rights, is misplaced . . . "

Corporate America, according to Ms. Frankovich, is producing a generation of young people who are so money-oriented that they have lost sight of the true values of life: social justice, moral order, social concern, the integrity of labor and much more.

One of the most disconcerting things which emerged during our interview is her pessimistic views concerning the state of affairs of the labor movement, together with its chances for survival in the 21st century. Her negativity in this regard evidently stems from various issues which she touched upon during her interview with me, including lack of social concerns, a deep and abiding one-sided and biased attitude on the part of the federal government toward the labor movement, and much more.

As so many other interviewees before her did, Vicki shared her personal feelings about the ways in which the 1986 strike personally affected her. She declares that: "It affected me financially . . . emotionally and . . . naturally because I felt a great sense of responsibility for the workforce, the decisions, a great sense of responsibility for trying to find solutions . . . it was emotionally difficult and demanding."

One of the most important issues which Vicki talked about during our discussion focused upon the meeting which she did not attend on the weekend just preceding the start of the strike, a meeting which many in her membership believe would have changed the course of the strike had she been present to attend it and represent their needs.

Vicki was insistent during our conversation that this meeting did not in fact even take place, and that it played no role in the inevitability of the strike. Instead, she found it merely a sexist ploy on the part of Carl Icahn and his cohorts to discredit the female president of a predominantly female labor union and to prevent it from exercising its economic and labor muscle in a cause which it had deemed both necessary and just.

An interesting aside to this situation was Vicki's feeling that although the strike was just and necessary, there was still a sense among a

certain element in the union that compromising and concessions would have avoided the suffering and cutbacks which ultimately followed the end of the strike.

However, it was clear from our discussions that Vicki sincerely believed in the righteousness of her cause, and based her feelings on the demonstrations of support which she received from the various factions within IFFA.

Vicki summarized her feelings as follows: ". . . while we did end up being wounded, it was not mortal. We are still here, we did survive the confrontation, and I think we feel better for having fought off the 'rapists,' than we would have for not having made that struggle."

Vicki and I spent a great part of our discussions concerning the merits of the strike as an effective labor negotiating tool. She believes that the strike is extremely powerful in the labor movement, but that it has been virtually strangled over the last ten years (especially since the advent of Reaganism) until it has become severely hampered by legal decisions, resembling a powerless and ineffectual means to achieve an end by the labor movement.

Vicki also spoken about the sense of solidarity which she perceives has grown even more strongly within IFFA after the tribulations which

people endured during the 1986 strike. She believes that little divisiveness exists today within the rank-and-file membership because they have overcome their own minor hostilities to take on an infinitely bigger and more powerful threat which has become personified in Carl Icahn. "We have overcome our hostilities because here is a bigger enemy and there is no internal antagonism within the workforces about the issues of race or color or national origin."

Ms. Frankovich expressed her concern and desire to insure the continuance of an effective communications environment which presently exists in IFFA in order to address the gap between someone entering the profession today and those who are more experienced within the field. Effective communications among the membership is of even more vital concern today than during the strike.

Vicki realizes that with the perilous state of the airline industry, with the continuing instability and the threatened folding of many different companies which have become an almost routine or daily occurrence in the industry, steps must be taken to constantly be on the lookout for any threats to the security and stability which has already been achieved.

Vicki discussed her views concerning the issue of sexism in the

company, and the impact of TWA's sexist attitudes in regard to the flight attendants and the 1986 strike. It has been implied on numerous occasions that the female leadership of IFFA had created an adverse impact on the effectiveness of the strike.

Both Vicki and Art Teolis had vehemently refuted this concern, and Vicki in particular believed that the real issue was not one of gender but of social and economic class. The composition of IFFA's membership, and consequently the composition of the flight attendants themselves, is solidly white, middle class and conservative. There could be no way that such a social or economic background could utilize violence, illegal tactics or similar methods in a strike situation.

On the other hand, Vicki believed that if the union had been male-oriented, there would have been a higher degree of inter-union solidarity. "When you're from a very bland, safe, protected background, getting to the point where we got to is already an enormous step. . . . to the next step of saying, 'well I must take another aggressive step.'"

I concluded my interview with Vicki Frankovich by discussing the future of women in the labor movement, a future which Vicki feels is unfortunately not too optimistic because of the fact that few women are in roles which are critical within the labor field at this time. Few females

occupy management or decision making roles, and until that changes, Vicki does not feel encouraged about womens' roles within the labor movement.

In summarizing my interview with Vicki Frankovich, she displayed enormous charm and dedication to the cause of the flight attendants. While conceding that the 1986 strike could have been more successfully concluded, she nevertheless agreed that the union had achieved many of its goals, had survived the onslaught of Carl Icahn and TWA's attorneys, and looked forward to greater achievements in its future.

RETIRED DINOS

A strike can destroy a union, but it can also make it stronger by inspiring the workers with a sense of solidarity. Even after leaving active work, many Flight Attendants have maintained this sense of solidarity, volunteering their time and energy to their union.

The next flight attendant whose interview was chosen is Ms. #18, who had become prominent and well-known during the strike for her knowledge of women's issues and their role in the labor confrontation with TWA.⁸¹ We spoke at length about this and numerous other topics.

⁸¹ Interview, F/A. Ms.#18, January 24, 1991

Ms. #18 was a white female aged 52, who had worked as a flight attendant for over 25 years. The product of a middle class background with a formal educational level of a high school diploma, she spoke with me about various issues which played a role in the 1986 strike: the manner in which she believed deregulation played a part in the strike, the sexism which exists in the company and the way in which this sexism is not only tacitly approved of by management, but actually utilized in its marketing and advertising endeavors.

During our conversation, Ms. #18 spoke about the relationship of this sexist attitude on the part of the company, and discuss why and how the flight attendants were poorly treated by management, the pilots and mechanics because they were women and consequently were not considered primary breadwinners, and thus of inferior importance in the operations of the company and not critical to its future growth. Carl Icahn used this issue in order to create a divisive situation for everyone: ". . . what Icahn did was he did this 'divide and conquer' type thing. As a result the pilots did not back us. . . the mechanics said they did, but in reality they were in cahoots with the company."

Ms. #18 also spoke about the good job which she believed the union had accomplished in dealing with the strike and its aftermath,

especially in view of the extremely limited inter-union support it received from the other unions in the airline industry.

She firmly believes that had IFFA been a male-oriented union, the organization would have received tremendous support from both other unions and would also have been viewed and dealt with differently by management itself. This statement is not only serious in itself, but also serves to illustrate what many female unionists have been saying for years: not only is management sexist, but to a certain degree at least, the labor movement is as well!

Ms. #18 played an important role during the strike in EEOC policy infractions and violations which affected TWA. She also found herself involved in earlier strikes (via TWU) and labor work in the late 60s and 70s, primarily in the areas of women's rights and civil rights legislation, in order to insure that this Federal legislation impacted in a positive manner on the airlines. Thus, Ms. #18 became highly skilled in the areas and issues of women's rights, and served IFFA with this knowledge during the strike.

I discussed with Ms. #18 her viewpoint and feelings about whether the strike made her a changed or different person. It is interesting to note that as with all the other interviewees I spoke to, she

stated that the strike had made her a stronger and more self-confident human being and had strengthened her sense of "relationships" with her fellow workers. ". . .you had a great pride in what you did, although it cost you a lot. . . it became emotional at times. . . I feel like it was something that made me stronger."

We also spoke at length about the usefulness of the strike as a labor negotiating technique, and Ms. #18 expressed her view that because of the situation which currently exists with judicial legal intervention in the labor movement, it may be better at this time to step up efforts at negotiating rather than carrying it to the next and drastic step of a strike. This judicial/legal intervention stems directly from the actions taken in 1981 by Ronald Reagan when the Federal government was successful in destroying the PATCO organization, thus setting a precedent for future government intervention in strikes as well as a heightened sense of security and scorn toward the labor movement by management.

Returning to the issue of sexism, I spoke with Ms. #18 about the role for women in IFFA, and whether she believed that Carl Icahn would have dealt differently with the flight attendants if their leadership had been male. To this she responded that in her estimation, the only person

to whom this was even an issue was Carl Icahn. She also displayed great support of and faith in Vicki Frankovich in her leadership capacity, as well as the future of IFFA itself.

The next person I spoke to was a retired flight attendant, a white 59 year old woman who has been working on a part-time basis at IFFA headquarters, and have had been privy to certain issues and events from a unique and important perspective.⁸²

Ms. #15 spoke with me at length about the issue of Article 16 harassment, and the manner in which TWA had habitually used these infractions to harass, abuse and humiliate its flight attendants, insuring discipline, uniformity and strict and unquestioning adherence to me company line.

Ms. #15 had begun her career in the airline industry in 1953, and had great pride and enjoyment in her job, until the time when Carl Icahn took over the helm of TWA. This traumatic event, according to Ms. #15, coupled with the previously occurring situation of deregulation, had led her to view a once-proud job with distaste and disillusionment: "It boils down to Mr. Icahn and his greed. . .they all are worrying about when are

⁸² Interview, F/A. Ms.#15, January 14, 1991

they going to lose their job, when is he (Icahn) going to make another cutback, when is he going to cut my salary. . ."

Ms. #15 retired just prior to the 1986 strike, but had been called back to work at union headquarters when the strike occurred. In this capacity, she was able to view firsthand many of the situations which sprung up from the strike. She also explained why IFFA never resorted to any type of violence or illegal activity during the strike, recalling that there is a significant difference in the "strike psychology" of blue collar vs. pink collar workers.

Her recollections of the strike evoked a sense of anger in Ms. #15 because of the feelings of frustration and disruption in lives which she saw during her experiences working at IFFA headquarters.

Because of this sense of frustration, Ms. #15 believes that the strike as a labor tool is not really useful in view of the circumstances and conditions which are prevailing in our nation today. As legislation infringes more and more on the rights of labor, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for a labor union to function and protect the rights of its members, in a world increasingly hostile to the rights of labor and the needs of working people in general.

HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAMS: LOVERS AND FIGHTERS

Two-paycheck families became a feature of the American economic landscape during the 1980's. I was able to interview some husband-and-wife Flight Attendant teams. Their responses to the strike varied. Some worked and fought together, others fought each other. Love was challenged--love was strengthened, love was weakened, love remained the same.

The next summary for this section involved a husband-and-wife team who both were employed for TWA at the time of the strike.⁸³ The husband, who is a pilot for the airline, was basically anti-union in general and anti-IFFA in particular. The wife was a flight attendant for the airline. Their story illustrates the personal struggle which many individuals endured because of the strike, and the ways in which the strike caused many changes in the lifestyles, friendships, relationships and other circumstances of these workers.

The husband resoundingly told me that he believed the strike was wrong, and that the union should have backed the company up more closely during an apparent time of fiscal crisis. The wife, whom I shall

⁸³ See Studs Terkel's The Great Divide, pp. 198-206

call Ms. #11, vehemently opposed her husband's viewpoint, and explained that she felt compelled to participate in the strike because of the principles which the union stood for and in solidarity with her fellow workers. Furthermore, she decried her husband's lack of support of the IFFA strikers, and was very adamant during the interview about the disgust she felt because of the lack of support the strikers received from the pilots, who crossed the picket lines every day.

For his part, the husband believed that the strike accomplished little in the way of substance for the flight attendants and that in the long run, they lost more than they gained. He stated: "The strike of the TWA flight attendants was ill-timed and unjustified. The other two labor groups on the property had made wage and working-conditions concessions The pilots were not sympathetic to their cause at all."

At the same time, his wife expressed her belief that the strike was an honorable and justified event that she was compelled to follow through on in solidarity with her sister flight attendants. She was angry at the fact that the TWA pilots did so little to provide solidarity to their fellow employee during the strike. "We didn't get the support we needed from the other TWA unions If our own pilots had supported us, we would have easily won the strike."

The husband's point of view concerning the profile of the flight attendants was very typically chauvinistic in many ways, and mirrored Carl Icahn's comments that most of the flight attendants were not breadwinners to begin with!

In summarizing this interview, it became clear to me that the strike had created a sense of divisiveness in this family, much as it had also created divisiveness among the various workers at TWA (pilots, mechanics, flight attendants) and among the flight attendants themselves. While the points of view expressed here are personal in nature, they effectively mirror the prevalent sentiments which were in evidence during the period leading up to, during and after the strike.

The next peak into the personal perspectives about the 1986 TWA strike involved a husband and wife, a flight attendant (wife) and a flight manger (husband).⁸⁴ I shall refer to these two individuals as Mr. #16H and Ms.#16W.

Both individuals come from middle class working backgrounds and are politically oriented toward the Democratic party. In my discussions with these people, I touched upon the topic of how their jobs and the

⁸⁴Interview, F/A's: Mr.#16H and Ms.#16W, December 4, 1990

flight attendant's lifestyle has affected them personally. Both feel that it is a life which is suitable to them, and after nearly 20 years on the job, it is the only lifestyle they know and understand.

As usual, I began speaking to #16H and 16W about the impact of various issues and situations on the labor movement in general, and on the TWA-IFFA strike in particular. These topics included deregulation, sexism on the job, employee and company morale, labor-management relations over the last ten years, the issue of conformity vs. individuality on the job, etc. The response which both individuals provided for me were of the same basic nature and scope as from the previous interviewees.

Ms. #16W decried the terrible conditions which have been allowed to prevail at TWA, and spoke bitterly about the absolute lack of interest from the company in improving this situation. "The company has done nothing, absolutely nothing, as I view it, to improve the management-labor situation, at all." As she sees the situation, for TWA it has become strictly a matter of economic survival at the cost of its employees.

Mr. #16H spoke about the situation which has always existed in regard to the strained and rather tenuous relationship between the "cockpit and the cabin" as he put it. the lack of communications and

mutual respect which exists in these two areas between the captain and the flight attendants may have been one of the primary reasons for ALPA's lack of support for the efforts of IFFA during the strike. No bridge between these two parties exists, and thus there is little communication and therefore a lack of mutual respect for each other's abilities and needs as well.

Both husband and wife spoke at length about the resentment, bitterness, anger and frustration they feel as a result of the strike, and both provided me with examples or anecdotes about friends and colleagues who had made unbelievable sacrifices because of the strike. However, at the same time, both are proud of their own efforts and would not hesitate to become involved again in a similar strike if the need arose.

While both husband and wife agreed in principle that the issue of deregulation has played a major role in the events which eventually led to the strike, they also understood that for every good thing which came with deregulation, so came the drastic cutbacks and squeezing of labor by management. Although deregulation increased productivity, it also increased greed and slipshod behavior on the part of the management.

The issue of the PATCO strike surfaced once again during our

interview, with both husband and wife agreeing wholeheartedly that this event was the turning point for the downslide of the labor movement in this country, and remains even today a threat to the economic stability and growth of the labor movement. "Well, simply it was like the opening shot in the war against labor; and the war is just continuing, it may be in a little bit different vein but its basically the same as then. It showed the contempt the administration (Reagan) had for labor."

Both individuals sought little of a positive future for the labor movement in this country while the Supreme Court and other Federal judicial parties consistently vote against labor-related issues, policies or concerns.

When we discussed the issue of how the strike affected their lives, both Mr.16H and Ms.16W spoke openly about the hardships they and others endured, but also about he enduring friendships and relationships which were cultivated then.

Both husband and wife expressed their admiration and support for Vicki Frankovich and Art Teolis and cited their total dedication to the cause of the flight attendants. In addition, they realized after a 4 1/2 year perspective that in all probability, Carl Icahn had effectively goaded the flight attendants into a strike because he considered them superfluous

and secondary in importance to the needs of his company.

In discussing the future directions of the company and of the union, both husband and wife agreed that things looked bleak. They were quick to point out that without the constant interfering of the Federal government in the affairs of labor, little hope is held for organized labor's continuance in to the next century. "The scales are tipped in management's favor."

An interesting issue which we discussed during our interview was whether it would have made a difference in the final result of the strike if there had been a male president in charge of the union, and both parties vehemently agree that the issue was not male vs. female, but rather primary vs. secondary status in terms of job importance. "It still surprises people when they see one or more men on the crew as a flight attendant. . .I don't think they take us seriously." Ultimately, it was Carl Icahn's perception of which union was the weakest in terms of economics and job importance which played a decisive factor in the calling of the strike, and which precipitated a confrontation which ultimately resulted in serious damages to IFFA.

Finally this husband and wife team of TWA flight attendants had viewpoints radically different from most of the other individuals I spoke

with. I will refer to these people as Mr. #19H and Ms. #19W.⁸⁵ Both individuals appeared to be highly articulate and knowledgeable people who were well-versed in the events and situations which led to the 1986 strike.

Both viewed the strike as a total travesty and a horrendous mistake on the part of IFFA in general and Vicki Frankovich in particular, whom they believe to be an "inexperienced, idealistic, self-impressed and ill-prepared union leader" who fed a line of distorted innuendo and untruths to her membership.

Several points were raised in our discussion about the reality of many of the issues which Vicki Frankovich and IFFA presented to the membership. According to their own independent research into the facts about the case, Mr. #19H and 19W allegedly discovered the following facts:

a) TWA had built up a tremendous contingent workforce and cash reserve. The union had always claimed this was not the case.

b) No other labor group was prepared to support IFFA in its strike efforts. IFFA had claimed that there were many other unions which

⁸⁵F/A's #19, Letter, Ms. Magazine, February 1, 1987

would be ready to do so. As we already know, this was indeed the case after the strike had begun.

c) All returning workers received their full sick leave and other accumulated benefits.

d) The contingent workforce which and been hired was better trained and far more numerous than the union had expected.

e) Although IFFA claimed that European operations were severely affected by the strike, in reality it appears that few European airports were disrupted by the TWA flight attendants being on strike.

f) A report that TWA was flying empty airplanes that were taking off and landing at the same airport to give the impression of "back to normal" operations was proven to be false.

g) Vicki Frankovich failed to cite evidence of TWA falsification of repair reports or FAA safety violations.

These two individuals were bluntly honest in their appraisal of the union and of the efforts of its president. They felt that the strike should never have occurred, that Vicki Frankovich was ill-informed and unprepared for the consequences of a strike, and that once the strike started, she could not determine a way to end it honorably for the workers, which resulted in the loss of 5,000 jobs, numerous personal

hardships for the membership, and other factors.

One of the most interesting views offered by these people involved the issue of whether Vicki should have been present at the August, 1985 weekend meeting when Carl Icahn successfully negotiated a contract with ALPA and IAM.

Mr. #19H and 19W unequivocally stated that the leaders of these two other unions had both publicly stated that had Ms. Frankovich been present, Carl Icahn was prepared to offer the same type of package to IFFA that had been offered to both ALPA and IAM. Because Vicki was not present in the meeting, she lost the opportunity to strike while "the iron was hot" and instead lost her credibility and leverage ability with Icahn.

Both flight attendants laid out what they believed were the issues which led to the strike. These issues had originally been derived from the horrendous mess brought about by deregulation. "The real culprits [of deregulation] are the Reagan and the Alfred Kahn along with the other politicians who are the architects of this chaos. . . in the name of lower fares, allowed this irresponsible act and who continue to defend it despite the bankruptcies, the tragedies in the lives of innocent employees and the compromises in airline safety."

To summarize, both husband and wife believe that the strike was an event which was not necessary, that should have been avoided with the proper preparation, information and hindsight, and that IFFA's president acted in an irresponsible and unprofessional manner in leading her union down this destructive and ill-timed path.

As mentioned earlier, there are eight million stories in the naked city...these have been some of them. They show the variety of attitudes, backgrounds, and the diversity of the work force. But this very diversity may have been a means of strength, enhancing the workers' class consciousness. Not all unions, however, evinced the same sense of class-consciousness.

CHAPTER SIX

The Relationship Between the Pilots, Machinists and Flight Attendants:

An Historical Overview

The Airline Industry: The RLA and the Airlines.

The most significant result of including airlines (through a 1936 amendment) under the Railway Labor Act (RLA) was the effective integration of common air carriers into the "national interest" of maintaining uninterrupted domestic and foreign transportation.

The amendment, which applied to interstate and foreign commerce and the transportation of U.S. mail, revealed the extent to which the industry was receiving substantial federal subsidies. The mail subsidies were an essential pre-condition to any attempt to provide regular, scheduled passenger service. Those scheduled carriers which catered solely to passenger demand did not long survive.

Federal subsidies made the airline industry a lucrative investment for owners, but workers faced other problems. Air carrier employees found that their working conditions (small crews, with little outside contact or contact with other crews) made organizing an arduous task.

mentality in the airlines, as opposed to the burgeoning industrial unions formed by the CIO in the 1930's.

The Pilots. A case in point would be the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA). Flying is a skill which, for many pilots, grew out of combat aviation with its military traditions: the pilots were officers, but the rest of the flight crew consisted of noncoms and enlisted men. Consequently, right at the beginning of the industry there was a social and occupational status gap between the pilots and the rest of the flight crew. In addition, flying was also susceptible to the instabilities of a relatively high rate of technological change. Organizing goals were therefore caught in a dialectic between traditionalism and the constant erosion of the working environment. This situation was further aggravated by the attempts to organize the industry's other skilled staff.

Initially, strife arose between pilots and engineers over crew size (and, necessarily, jobs). Technological development was also a factor in the conflict over jobs. As the aircraft is the integral work site for the industry, there are no real substitutes or transfer possibilities for redundant crew members.

The airline industry, in short, is by definition not a traditional industry, and the application of the existing RLA to the infant industry

may have been questionable from the start. When the use of flight attendants on common air carriers handling passenger traffic became standard in the 1940's, the historical inadequacy of the American labor tradition, especially its insensitivity to gender and age issues, became more glaringly apparent.

While the RLA restricts organizing to workers of the same craft (thus precluding an industrial union), the delineation of pilots as the only true craft was complementary to the traditional mythology of combat aviation. This combined mythology enabled the predominantly white-male ALPA to impede the organizing efforts of other workers.

If pilots jobs were being deskilled, the pilots were, in turn, "deskilling" the remainder, in fact, the bulk, of the industry's labor force through its negotiating and organizing strategies. Attempts by flight attendants to define themselves as a "craft" were frustrated by the hegemony of men within the ALPA and the International Association of Machinists (IAM).

Flight Attendant Defined--Craft Status? Ideologically, the industry has defined flight attendants as adjuncts, through emphasis on their marketing, sales, and housekeeping functions; and through hiring and retention practices which were blatantly sexist and discriminatory (i.e.,

single, young and attractive women only). Only the male-dominated aircraft operation and maintenance workers, those with their hands on the machine, were entitled to craft status.

Female flight attendants were forced to rely on abstractions, like crew integration and passenger safety responsibilities, to assert their claim to the status needed in order to be recognized as a craft under the RLA.

The inadequacy of this approach by the flight attendants cannot be blamed on them alone. It must be asked if the industry's social organization does not reinforce the notion that the F.A.'s work is unskilled, hence one which fails to meet the historical test for a craft union, making them unorganizable under the RLA. This self-serving notion of management and the male craft unions thus prohibits effective organization of flight attendants and other "unskilled" workers.

Women have had a long history in organized labor in the United States, but often as second-class citizens. Generally, they were employed in low-skilled jobs in industry. However, there is one noticeable exception, that of the telegraph industry in the late 19th century.

As Gabler remarks, " Daughters had become sisters"⁸⁶ "...the

⁸⁶ Edwin Gabler, The American Telegrapher: A Social History 1860-1900. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 144.

'lady operators' of 1883 were passive victims of neither their employers nor the social order in which they had been born." ⁸⁷

Wages and status were comparatively high. "With a few exceptions, they were among the best paid of their sex. In 1869, the *New York Times* found telegraphers, at \$10 a week, in the same range as schoolteachers, compositors, and wood engravers. They were not so fortunate as actresses (\$15) or editors (\$18), but better off than book folders (\$8) and hoop-skirt makers (\$7), and much better off than paper box makers (\$5) and live-in domestics (\$2.50)...Prestige, as well as income, was higher for lady operators. Telegraphy demanded a general education above the average. Its workday milieu required standards of dress and deportment unusual in the experience of most female breadwinners...This was gentility of a new kind, no longer within a patrician setting, but tracing the cultural ambit of an emerging strata of 'brain workers'"⁸⁸

Like becoming a Flight Attendant, it provided at least the impression of social mobility. "In a sense, they were neither working nor middle class, or perhaps they were simultaneously both. Entering telegraphy from

⁸⁷ Gabler, p. 107.

⁸⁸ Gabler, p. 124-125

working-class homes involved mobility, but not necessarily upward; moving sideways was possible, too...The lower-middle-class world of the telegraph office sometimes converged with existing blue-collar values rather than jarred them.

Labor aristocrats could accept their daughters' entry into clerical work both because it kept family living standards comfortable and because ideas of proper appearance, behavior, and taste were as much a part of the respectable working-class home -- what Leon Fink aptly christens 'popular gentility' -- as of the middle-class one" (Gabler 126).

Male telegraphers were not exactly overjoyed at the entrance of women into the craft. They feared falling salaries, deskilling, and the break-up of the family. The differential between male and female salaries at Western Union was anywhere between 25-100 %, or, nationally, \$65 male and \$43 female, according to Western Union, or \$54 male, \$36 female, according to the Brotherhood of Telegraphers.⁸⁹

The constitution of the union, however, stated the union's intention to gain parity of wages. At the time of the 1883 strike against Western Union, estimates of the female membership (and support for the strike)

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 135

of the Brotherhood of Telegraphers of the United States and Canada (District 45 of the Knights of Labor) vary from 3-400 to 1,000, compared to 7,000 male members.

The legacy of the telegraphers emphasizes the underpinnings and the endemic problems that have haunted female workers, and the fact that labor, through its omission and/or commission have violated its own code of union solidarity and social responsibility (i.e., equality in representation that spans racial and sexual lines).

ALPA and IFFA: The 1986 Strike.

It is an historical fact that airline pilots have always been a "breed apart", a rather self-serving entity who believe themselves to have skills and abilities which not only place them above other workers but which make them virtually indispensable to the airline management organizations. While their skills are indeed formidable and quite out of the ordinary in many ways, they are not an ends and means unto themselves.

Traditionally, because of this sense of self-superiority which they often indulge in, pilots have aligned themselves more with management than with other labor organizations. In fact, TWA pilots have repeatedly supported the company during open labor disputes with other unions.

The effect of such an alignment on their parts has caused unions to still solicit their support and encouragement, in spite of this attitude, while at the same time, creating a wariness on the part of these unions of their (pilots) support when they obtain it.⁹⁰

Knowledgeable of the pilots' affiliations, IFFA remained suspicious of their support during the course of negotiations throughout 1984-1986. Nevertheless, because of the circumstantial differences at that time (Icahn possibly coming in as TWA's "white knight") IFFA maintained an open attitude toward the pilots in the hope that a new type of relationship could develop between them. This was not the case. Instead, once the pilots received an agreement from Icahn, they reverted back to their self supportive stance.

At one point, during the time when Icahn was demanding union concessions, the pilots offered a 26% wage reductions with the stipulation that Icahn obtain 20-22% from the machinists and flight attendants. Not only did this show a lack of sensitivity on the part of the pilots union for the concerns of other unions, whose members were their colleagues (although they haughtily disagreed), it became immediately clear to Vicki

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McKelvey, p. 16-23.

Frankovich that she could not count on the pilots' support of IFFA's demands. In addition, the pilots spoke out against IFFA's demands, stating that they found them to be "excessive and obstructionist" to the economic benefit and well-being of TWA.⁹¹

In spite of this, interviews conducted with numerous IFFA leaders indicated their continued belief that pilots were the key factors in any successful strike efforts within the airline industry. In addition, hope was also expressed that an accord or better understanding between IFFA and ALPA would one day take place, and that IFFA's future strength and status would be highly dependant on recognition by the airline pilots. There are two main reasons for this: the improved bargaining and negotiating leverage which is gained when unions organize their efforts together, the old "strength in numbers" idea.

IFFA has realized that the pilots for the most part accord their members little if any respect as professionals, while at the same time understanding that the positions of their respective members have significant differences. At the same time, however, as a matter of courtesy and perhaps even of "solidarity", ALPA should not belittle or undermine

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Rizzuto, p.24

the efforts of IFFA or any other union to achieve a better lifestyle and working conditions for its membership.

Over the years, ALPA has successfully obtained numerous benefits for its members, including protected flight patterns, reasonable time off, retirement, insurance and health benefits. IFFA justifiably believes that their members are just as entitled to these types of benefits as the pilots in regard to the work and nature of their responsibilities on the job.

IFFA's top leadership has acknowledged that it is detrimental to their efforts when ALPA intercedes on behalf of the company during its negotiations. Such intercession is neither solicited nor wanted by IFFA's negotiating members, who have never acted in such an inappropriate manner when ALPA and management have conducted their own negotiations.

This obvious lack of respect for both the real needs and the professionalism of IFFA members has created a severe stumbling block in the creation of better relations between the two unions, and in fact, has perhaps created an environment of divisiveness which could be used to management's advantage during any future strike efforts by either

union.⁹²

There has always been a strong, militaristic concept behind the attitudes of the pilots, especially in regard to domination, gender, ageism and the political implications of racism and sexism. Many of the present pilots are war veterans whose attitudes have not changed since their combat days. However, many of these men are now retiring, and being replaced by the younger, and perhaps more modern-thinking individuals who do not equate flying with machismo or jingoism.

The attitude of these younger pilots toward women in general, and flight attendants in particular, is bound to be substantially better. This should lead to some acceptance (or at least respect for flight attendants), as well as, a heightened consciousness on the part of these pilots toward the professionalism and integrity of the flight attendants and the important services they carry out for the safety, comfort and security of both passengers and crew.

A heightened understanding and appreciation of flight attendants by these younger pilots (some of whom are even women!) should lead to an improved relationship and a stronger sense of solidarity in the future

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1983 IFFA-TWA Contract.

between IFFA and ALPA.

IAM and IFFA: The 1986 Strike

In regard to the relationship IFFA has had with the International Association of Machinists (IAM), a rather enigmatic situation has been in existence for years. When the flight attendants were first represented by the TWU, machinists were quite supportive of their efforts at improving the conditions of their members on the job. When IFFA became certified however, and replaced the TWU as the labor representatives of the flight attendants, the IAM did not remain supportive over the long run.⁹³

IAM insists that it had to cross IFFA's picket line. According to the agreement the machinists had signed with Icahn in August 1985, in which a 15% wage reduction was granted, there was a stipulation that forbade the union (IAM) from honoring any other union's picket line in the event of a strike.

While this clause has often been included in many unions' agreements for years, no one has every really taken it seriously. In the past, such a stipulation had never stopped the IAM from honoring

⁹³ Walsh, David. Inter-Union Relationships in the US Airline Industry: Some descriptive Findings. Cornell University, 10/90, Paper presented at the Winter'90 meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Assoc.

anyone's picket line. Yet, this time, it did.

IAM claimed that it could not in good faith support IFFA's strike efforts because of this very stipulation which was in their newly-concluded contract with Carl Icahn. This claim was further supported by a court injunction to that very effect on the first day of the IFFA strike reminding the IAM of their commitment in this regard.

Some experts have claimed that the relationship enjoyed by the past presidents of both the IFFA and IAM (both white males) had cemented support for each other in the past. When both unions elected new presidents, the relationship, while cordial, never fully achieved the closeness of the previous officers. Their relationship was never tested until the 1986 IFFA strike.

On the surface, perhaps a conscious effort was being made by the machinists to support only their own membership and no one else's, similar to the self-serving attitude of the pilots. IAM had never before held this type of philosophy: it had long extolled the virtues of union solidarity and had practiced what it preached on numerous occasions over the years.

Another reason for IAM's apparent (in)action has been theorized by a party close to both unions. He believes that a situation involving the

attempted unionization of TWA's ground crews by the IAM over a 15 year period may have led to a misunderstanding and subsequent lack of support for IFFA during its crisis. Among the ground service crews, there were a number of individuals who sought to become unionized. They invited a number of unions to campaign on their behalf in the hopes of obtaining enough signed cards to force an election. One of the unions was IFFA. Without extending the courtesy of discussing this situation with IAM, who had expended hundreds of thousands of dollars and 15 years of time and effort on a fruitless endeavor, IFFA embarked on its own organizational effort. IFFA lost both the campaign, and perhaps through an avoidable and unintentional error, the support of their former labor brothers and important ally as well.⁹⁴

Gender Politics and the Failure of Solidarity

A third and final idea which has already been mentioned is the sexism which is still prevalent throughout the airline industry. Although for the most part, the pilots are the foremost practitioners of this blatant sexism toward flight attendants, perhaps the machinists have played a passive sexist role as well.

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Walsh, p. 53

Long viewed as just an "interim job" until something better (i.e., MARRIAGE) came along, it was not until just recently that the significance, long term career opportunities and professionalism of the flight attendant's occupation has come into focus. The sexist attitude of the pilots and machinists still prevails toward flight attendants, whose jobs are not viewed in the same "serious" manner as their own.

There is possibly a psychological implication here that the flight attendants have not been taken seriously enough by both management and the predominantly-male dominated unions (ALPA and IAM) because of the same reason: the failure to accept women as equal beings sharing the same work environment.

It has been established that sexism has been without a doubt responsible for the lack of support from these unions during IFFA's strike against TWA in 1986. The subsequent events, i.e., the "Boycott of Conscience" and the slow return to work after the strike ended, and, the manner in which it ended, namely an "unconditional" offer to return to work on the part of IFFA, in the opinion of several flight attendants has significantly weakened the union's position for future negotiations.

"These events can be partially blamed on the fact that there was no inter-union solidarity. The male unions within the industry could not get

beyond their prejudices."⁹⁵

This problem was not only present at TWA or in the airline industry, but also in the labor movement as a whole. There was no assistance and support from the rest of labor as a unified movement. Individual unions did support IFFA but there was not a united front. There is no doubt that gender politics played a role in inhibiting inter-union solidarity and the collective bargaining process in this instance. It is rumored that one major labor leader said, "What's is the problem with the broads?"

Gender politics is defined in this instance as the unwillingness of the labor movement to deal with the particular circumstances and issues that surround women workers and female dominated occupations, especially in the case of the predominantly female union, with female leadership.⁹⁶

Gender is only one of the divisions of the labor movement. Trade unions are not only divided by race, ethnicity and the other well known criteria, but also the divergent interests of the members themselves play

⁹⁵ Interview, FA #9, Nov. 17, 1990

⁹⁶ This interpretation, while it may be open to question, I have found invaluable as a working hypothesis for the purposes of this work.

an important role. Many male workers fail to see the value of "women's issues" (child care, parental leave, comparable worth, discrimination on the job and such) to themselves, and view it as taking money out of their pockets. In some sectors, women are resented, not only as competitors but also on the basis of gender.

"Woman's place is in the home not the workplace" is still the dominant ideology and many men feel emasculated when their wives have to work. Society expects the woman to prove herself by being a worker as well a housewife and mother -- the myth of the "Superwoman". The flight attendants do not see themselves as Super-anything, they see themselves as oppressed workers, striving for a better life for themselves and their families.

CHAPTER SEVEN
IMPLICATIONS OF THE STRIKE FOR IFFA
AND ORGANIZED LABOR

The Battle Lines Were Drawn: IFFA Survives and Prospers.

"Union-management relations will continue to be a vital process in the airlines industry. All the major carriers remain substantially organized... There are many indicators that... unions will remain a force in the airline industry and that they may very well recoup some of the bargaining power that was dissipated by deregulation, technological changes, socio-economic circumstances and a hostile political environment."⁹⁷

The Message of Hope. The U.S. Supreme Court in its oft-criticized decision affirmed IFFA's right to exist under the RLA. In this era of bitterness and hostility in airline labor relations a message of hope was sent in regards to IFFA and the TWA Flight Attendants to Carl Icahn, TWA, the airline industry, the labor movement, management and American society.

This came about as a result of IFFA's persistent ongoing struggle after the loss of the 1986 Strike. The Court's message was loud and

⁹⁷ Mc Kelvey, p. 6.

clear, that labor-management relations will continue to be a vital process in the airlines industry and throughout the land.

This young, independent, female-dominated union, led by a courageous, resilient woman has demonstrated that it is not over until it is over - the struggle goes on! TWA might have won a battle but not the war.

IFFA has earned a position of 'honor' in the ranks of labor. This union with its loyal rank and file have confirmed the notion that "unionizing is a resistance to control". In the face of adversity its leaders and members were strong, committed, supportive and united in solidarity against the oppressive forces.

IFFA Sets Example: Inventive Responses to Unprecedented Challenges

After essentially losing the strike, they did not abandon the cause but turned to new tactics and new battlegrounds. They publicly highlighted their cause in the courts, media, Congress and wherever they could through litigation, boycott, lobbying, networking and consensus building.

"Strikes can have a cathartic effect, cleansing away accumulated tensions and making possible new approaches

to stubborn problems..."⁹⁸

They pulled together and with renewed energy resisted TWA's strategies to gain more control over their lives, to rid their workplace of the union and to replace them with informal, unprotected (nonunion) labor. This predominantly female union and its members by their actions have reiterated what many already know that:

"Women organize for the same reasons that men organize - for a voice on the job, for fair and equal pay, to have their own organization," (said) Richard Bensinger, director of the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute.⁹⁹

The presence work of women in organized labor will increase as women's participation and support becomes the vital element for the movement's survival and in the struggle for justice and dignity in the workplace. Women have proven that once committed, their unflagging support is for the long haul. They are willing to make personal and financial sacrifices. This tenacity can be beneficial to unions, as was proven in IFFA's conflict with TWA.

We Stand Against Industrial Slavery!

The Demoralization of Workers: The responses to attempts at

⁹⁸ Rees, p. 34.

⁹⁹ Labor Relations Week, BNA. Vol.4, 19 September, 1990, p.859

exploitation, demeaning and dehumanizing treatment by management and an awareness of the changing developments and critical problems that have affected the industry so dramatically in the day-to-day relationship between management and workers will continue to be dominant issues for both management and labor. Robert L. Crandall, President and Chair of American Airlines said,

"We have heard far too little about the most profound changes that the impact of sacrificial policies have had on the people who work for our nation's airlines, and on whom the public depends for the high calibre of service that have been the hallmark of America's aviation industry...I think it is time for all of us labor, management and government to join forces to make it clear that our society will no longer tolerate an airline - or for that matter any company - abusing its employees in order to beat competition."¹⁰⁰

The lesson is that a system of industrial slavery is bad for this society and efforts to further introduce it must be met by strong organized resistance as the flight attendants have done. Workers desire to exercise control over their work and they will zealously guard a structure that allows people to share power. Workers are demanding that their unions be concerned about their needs and protect them.

Therefore, like IFFA, unions have to fight for justice and dignity

¹⁰⁰ McKelvey, p. 386

for all workers. The American labor movement needs to reaffirm IFFA's stand that: a sacrificial policy regarding employees is not only bad social policy it is bad trade union policy and should not be administered.

The toll in human suffering, personal and financial hardship that these strikers endured should help to ensure that whatever policies - public or otherwise - that are in store, labor relations considerations and "people" will not be neglected again.

More than four years has now elapsed since the 1986 strike against TWA. During that time, few if any substantial gains were acquired for the membership especially in regard to wage benefits and working conditions. While TWA has taken back some of the strikers, others found themselves not being recalled at all; still others were forced into retirement or left despairing of ever being called back, and with the economic necessity of supporting themselves and their families.¹⁰¹

In spite of the hardships they experienced, the majority of IFFA members are still supportive of the union, and many still believe that given the facts which were evident in their dispute with TWA, few viable alternatives to a strike existed at the time. Most flight attendants viewed

¹⁰¹ Rizzuto, p. 78-82.

the strike as more a matter of conscience or principle than anything else, since they had to strike, according to their beliefs in order to show Carl Icahn and TWA management that they would not stand idly by and see themselves stripped of all they had gained via so-called "necessary" concessions demanded by management.

Although, ultimately, Icahn did unilaterally obtain most of his demanded concessions, many flight attendants are adamant in their feelings that the strike was needed to send a defiant message to TWA that they were human beings, and were entitled to what was rightfully theirs. Thus, the numerous court battles which IFFA is even today engaged in with TWA serve to highlight the sense of justice which they feel shall prevail in this issue.

The union has also worked hard to maintain a sense of pride and solidarity among the membership. Based on research, as well as on the various interviews I conducted for this work, there is overwhelming evidence to support this. IFFA has maintained a line of communication between itself and the general membership over the years. These efforts are at least in part due to the tenaciousness of their president, Vicki Frankovich, who has personally established lines of communication with the membership in as activities as possible.

The union has also been steadfast in developing counseling and assistance services for flight attendants, whether that involves financial assistance, supportive counseling, or related services. This endeavor, perhaps more than any other, has been one of the most important and far-reaching unifying forces for IFFA and its membership during the last four rough years.

In regard to court cases in which IFFA and TWA have been involved, evidence points to three major cases which have already been heard before numerous courts as of this date. These three major cases include:

A) BAD-FAITH BARGAINING CASE

B) UNION MEMBERSHIP AND DUES CASE

C) RETURN OF STRIKERS CASE

All three of these cases have been argued, and I shall summarize below findings and rulings applicable in all cases.

Bad-faith Bargaining Case:

A critical issue throughout the period immediately preceding the strike as well as during the strike was bad faith bargaining. This case was heard before the United States District Court, Western District of Missouri, St. Joseph Division. Presiding judge was the Hon. Howard F.

Sachs.

According to the union, TWA had violated numerous good faith bargaining statutes in its dealings with IFFA prior to the strike. These included withholding of information, dealing with an outside union (ALPA) in an attempt to stabilize wages, violation of the Railway Labor Act in arranging pre-hire agreements with pre-employed flight attendant trainees, bad faith in its negotiating posture in an attempt to stalemate negotiations, alteration of non-negotiable work rules and regulations for flight attendants, obstruction of union officials' attempts to perform union functions, interference in the election of the IFFA president, and other issues.

In his rulings, Judge Sachs summarized his findings as follows.

Regarding "bad faith bargaining", Judge Sachs ruled that since the company had the right to reach an agreement which would be economically viable for the organization, the proposal revisions and changes it engaged in were not sufficient evidence of bad faith bargaining posture. Furthermore, these revisions were dependant on seasonal and outside factors beyond management's control or influence, such as peak travel season, weather conditions.

In regard to the withholding of information charge, Judge Sachs

ruled that in consideration of the length of the strike and the discussions held both before and during the dispute, it is unlikely that any additional information could have significantly altered the outcome, and thus this charge was nonadmissible.

The allegation that ALPA exerted unfair and undue influence over TWA management concerning IFFA wages was declared unfair, since ALPA neither claimed to represent IFFA membership nor bargained for IFFA with Icahn. Sachs found that ALPA was imposing pressure on Icahn to reach an agreement with IFFA.

One of the most serious issues involved the "predictably unacceptable" posture of TWA's demands toward IFFA, including the 20% wage cut, sex discrimination in the negotiations and the issue of age.

Judge Sachs ruled favorably in TWA's case, based on his findings that in terms of economic importance, Icahn viewed the machinists as more potentially devastating to the airline than the flight attendants in the event of a strike, and was thus prepared to negotiate differently with both parties. The Judge ruled that IFFA did not prove to be a "comparable worth" case in this regard.

To summarize his findings, Judge Sachs found that Icahn and

TWA were within their rights to put forth proposals and make changes which they felt to be in the best economic interests of the airline. The critical issue involved in the entire case, according to Judge Sachs, was that Carl Icahn had realized that the flight attendants were not of critical importance to the operations of his airline (as were the pilots and machinists) and had utilized that knowledge and leverage to his advantage.

Union Membership Case:

IFFA has been fortunate to have obtained a positive ruling in its favor in this case, which has been at least partially responsible for the survival of the union during the past five years.

To summarize, TWA management had filed a lawsuit designed to determine whether the union's security clause survived the so-called self-help period after both parties had bargained to an impasse.

The union's position in this matter was simply that the clause should have remained in effect and should have included the check-off of union dues, as well as the requirement that new members become part of IFFA. Thus, two important issues were at stake in this situation.

One was whether the duration clause of the contract allowed for these stipulations to continue in effect, or did notice of intended changes allow

for dissolution/termination. Secondly, if the contract did allow for termination, was the duration clause lawful under the tenets of the Railway Labor Act.

Judge Sachs was supportive of IFFA's position in this regard, ruling that under the Railway Labor Act, there is an implied continuity of relationship between employer and employee, and thus a contractual clause duration as well within the confines of this relationship.

Although TWA argued this issue, stating that this ruling simply dealt with the court's authority to approve changes not addressed at the bargaining table during a strike, Judge Sachs ruled against this argument on the basis by interpreting this as a violation of the Railway Labor Act.

Therefore, upon IFFA membership's unconditional return to work offer, dues collection (which had been suspended during the strike) became legally activated once again.

Return of Strikers Case:

In their desire to return their workers back to their jobs, IFFA filed a suit contending that in consideration of their status as "economic strikers", they were entitled to reinstatement under three categories:

1. the over 1000 new-hires who came on during the first few days of the strike were not strike replacements but permanent replacements;

2. junior cross-overs, individuals who did not participate in the strike but continued working, or who returned prior to 5/17/86;
3. over 450 trainees of TWA's Flight Attendant College, who began their flight training but did not complete it prior to IFFA's "return to work" offer of May 17.

Concerning this issue, it has been management's position that since this has not been proven to be an unfair labor practice, all three categories should be entitled to remain on the job. Furthermore, TWA contends that IFFA did not make their unconditional return to work offer, as is required under labor law before strikers are allowed to be re-employed.

After reviewing the issues and contentions involved in this situation, Judge Sachs made an determination favoring the union, thus establishing the right to reinstate workers as vacancies within the flight attendants ranks develop.

In regard to the cross-over issue, Judge Sachs ruled that the contract between the union and management does not authorize utilization of seniority in order to provide for post-strike job reinstatement. Concerning the new-hires, Judge Sachs ruled in TWA's favor, explaining that the new-hires had been apparently hired by

TWA management under a status of replacement workers, since a strike by TWA flight attendants was occurring and was public knowledge.

Thus, these new-hires were advised and understood that their hiring was potentially provisional in nature, based on the absence of the striking flight attendants from their jobs. In regard to the 463 flight attendant trainees, it was ruled in favor of IFFA, under the contention that these trainees did not fulfill the required on-the-job service clause within a reasonable time period after completion of training.¹⁰²

Ultimately, the Court of Appeals overturned most of Judge Sachs' rulings, and in the end, the only decision remaining in IFFA's favor was that concerning the 463 trainees.

The U.S. Supreme Court in a 6-3 decision in 1989 ruled that, after a strike had ended, employers could retain crossovers in preference to more senior full-term strikers.(109 S. Ct. 1225). These events prompted Frankovich to remark that, "our courts have made a mockery of federal statutes regulating and promoting collective bargaining."¹⁰³ The legal right to strike has certainly been curtailed.

¹⁰²TWA Appellee Brief,

¹⁰³ Frankovich, Vicki, Statement before U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Aviation, 4-10-91, p. 6

On the surface of these events, it appears that IFFA gained little if anything from the 1986 strike against TWA. However, when viewed from a more detailed overall perspective, IFFA accomplished many important factors.

The union was able to gain the respect of management as a viable contender in labor struggles. Management at least realized that if nothing else, IFFA was a tenacious and dedicated opponent which would fight with every ounce of strength it had for its members.

Secondly, during the prolonged strike and resultant court battles, at least a degree of public understanding and support for these women was brought to the forefront via media exposure and notice.

In addition, IFFA remained the bargaining unit for the TWA flight attendants, and was neither decertified or disbanded.

In an astute public relations and survival move, by bringing their battle to the courts, IFFA was able to gain respect, public relations, public sympathy, and most importantly, time to revamp and re-establish its position and strength with the general membership, whose composition was radically changed from pre-strike days. By the end of the Summer of 1989, all the strikers have been recalled who wished to return and are on the job. With the return of the strikers the union no longer consisted of a

majority of crossovers, replacements and scabs, but had a more balanced composition.

According to various union officials I spoke with informally on this issue, nearly all agreed that IFFA remains viable, attractive to its members, commands great loyalty among the membership, has an enhanced public relations image, and even commands a degree of grudging respect from TWA management for its tenacious survival against one of the largest and most prestigious companies in the United States.

The union continues its active participation in many daily activities, including grievance procedures, and other collective bargaining duties. While it is true that wage reductions and work rule changes have been imposed, other stipulations such as benefits rulings and grievance procedures remain in effect. Most importantly, IFFA members possess, and are protected by, a CONTRACT.¹⁰⁴

Today, the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants is a strong, active and vocal organization which continues to represent the best interests of its membership, and has gained prestige, respect and recognition from the airline industry.

¹⁰⁴Frankovich, Interview, February 27, 1991

Furthermore, its survival is owed at least in part to the stipulations outlined in the Railway Labor Act, which states that labor contracts do not expire, but become amendable. In effect this insures that unions do not become decertified by vote, but rather by the election of another union to represent the membership.

While in the early days of the strike, IFFA's reputation suffered slightly, this can be attributed to the further diversification of the bargaining unit, which were splintered into strikers, Ozark flight attendants, crossovers, new-hires, and replacements. Since many of these workers had little or no familiarity with IFFA, the union was at the center of many controversial viewpoints and did not enjoy the same sense of solidarity and loyalty it does today.

Having become embroiled in various court battles with TWA and Carl Icahn, IFFA became the center of controversy and dispute, and in the process, created a sense of animosity and resentment, both within the airline industry as well as with the membership (whose composition was quite different from today, as I have already indicated).

However, during the last four years, IFFA has undertaken enormous efforts to turn this negativity around to its advantage, and in so doing, has once again fostered for itself a strong, positive and self-confi-

dent image, both with the membership, the airline industry and the general public.¹⁰⁵

IFFA made great strides toward improvements of its this image, and started by an intense educational campaign to re acquaint the membership with its tenets and principles. It utilized as much positive public relations and notification of its actions and intentions as possible in order to win over the support of the general public, which IFFA believe it has succeeded in doing.

Thanks to the efforts of its officials, led by the indefatigable Vicki Frankovich, IFFA has generated news through the court cases and battles in the legal arena with TWA has also placed the union at the forefront of much labor and political news.

Consistently maintaining a steady stream of information and communication with the membership and the general public was an astute move on the union's part. This helped to garner the necessary public support of the traveling public once again after having lost much of it during the 1986 strike. The media attention helped to put IFFA into focus and in the news.

¹⁰⁵"Airlines in Turmoil," Business Week, No. 2811. 10-10-83, p. 98-102

Instead of rejecting the new members, IFFA wisely sought to win them over by extolling the virtues and benefits of union membership, especially in regard to grievance procedures, and benefits protection.

Not only did the union re-gain added support from its long-standing members, but almost as importantly, it gained new support from the new hires and crossovers it had absorbed after the strike was concluded. This added strength will undoubtedly prove to be of tremendous value in future labor negotiations and/or disputes.

Although IFFA has suffered serious setbacks over the last five years, these setbacks have not been irreversible. On the contrary, IFFA has slowly and steadily been gaining back strength and leverage on many fronts, primarily within the negotiating arena. There is hope and the possibility of a real agreement being concluded.

One of the most important areas of change in regard to IFFA has been in its attitude toward and understanding of TWA management. I believe that the union has a better understanding of management than it had five years ago. Future negotiations between IFFA and TWA, in my opinion, will weigh more heavily on the union's side because they have in effect, "weathered the storm of adversity" in the previous conflict with management, and perhaps they now have a better understanding of what

to expect in the future. Certainly their "eyes" are more clearly focused today than they were some years ago.

For example, when reviewing the events of 1986, IFFA should have been able to see that with the serious deficits the airline was experiencing just prior to the strike, perhaps it should have been more open to suggestion in regard to certain concessions in return for certain guarantees of their own. Instead of pushing for alternatives to their disagreements, IFFA plunged headlong into a costly albeit "instructional" strike which made everyone more cognizant of the reality of the entire situation. While, of course, TWA committed more than its fair share of abuses and unreasonable actions to precipitate the strike in many ways, the union should have also been aware of its vulnerability in many ways as well, and should have been able to recognize how costly a strike call under those conditions could have been.

Lacking the support of the other airline unions (ALPA and IAM) as well as its own independent union status, IFFA should have been more cautious in its actions. Furthermore, since TWA had already signed contracts with the other two unions, IFFA should have been more forceful in its determination to conclude an agreement as well instead of remaining inflexible in spite of everything which was being thrown against

it. Carl Icahn certainly realized that with both ALPA and IAM on his side (two unions whose operations were totally critical to the functioning of the company), as well as the adequate strike preparations the management team had already been deploying for months before the strike (the Flight Attendant Training School), he was in a much stronger position than IFFA.¹⁰⁶

Ultimately, if IFFA is to continue its growth and achieve its total viability as a union representing flight attendants, then it should act in the best interests of those flight attendants by seeking affiliation with the AFL-CIO, or at the very least join with other independent labor organizations in order to strengthen itself and insure both its survival and growth.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF ORGANIZED LABOR:

The 1986 IFFA strike against TWA was just one example of the difficult times the 1980's were for organized labor. The destruction of PATCO by President Reagan in 1981 set the tone for the entire decade. As late as 1989, Frank Lorenzo had been conducting a vicious and

¹⁰⁶ Rizzuto, p. 18 - 23

vituperous anti union crusade at Eastern Airlines.

There are now indications that the 1990's will be a decade of both recuperation and renewed energy for the organized labor movement in the United States. Three recent court decisions have been good examples of this renewal of labor values:

1. Frank Lorenzo was recently removed as head of Eastern Airlines by a Federal bankruptcy court.
2. A three judge federal appeals court upheld new National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) rules that will make it easier for labor unions to organize workers, especially those within the human services/health profession areas.
3. The Supreme Court upheld another NLRB policy which stated that an employer cannot automatically presume that people it hires to replace striking workers are themselves anti-union! The byproduct of this important finding will be that it will become more difficult for a struck employer to free itself from negotiating with striking employees.

The American public itself appears to be returning to its older values of respect of and support for the workers of this nation, as seen in the results of a recent public opinion poll conducted by the Roper Organization, which indicated that the "American public sees its own fate

as tied to the fate of the average worker". This poll has also indicated an increased support of striking workers and a decreased belief that unions have been responsible for increases in the cost of living.

Recently, there has been an upsurge of interest in banning permanent replacements for striking workers. The AFL-CIO is mounting a massive lobbying campaign on the national level. St. Louis, MO, has passed legislation restricting the use of permanent replacement workers.¹⁰⁷ St. Louis is where TWA is headquartered and is the site of the training school. During the strike and after a lot of attention was directed there.

Flight attendants lobbied and did a lot of consensus building in that city. St. Louis was at the center of the controversy, the federal court case was filed in that district.

Needless to say the events had an impact, most likely negative, and as a result here is an effort by a locality to curtail a practice that is nothing more than a "divide and conquer tactic" that is used by employers to exploit and oppress workers. It interferes with the delicate balance of power between labor and management in guaranteeing workers an

¹⁰⁷ Labor Relations Week, BNA, Vol. 5. (2-13-91), p. 153.

effective right to strike. "The right to wage an effective strike is a bulwark of economic justice for American workers."¹⁰⁸

This law even though it may be considered "grass-roots" level should be used as a precedent by the labor lobby and advocates at the local, state and federal levels.

Clearly, there is a trend here which is evident of an upsurge in public sentiment toward organized labor. The workers of this nation built this country into the strongest and most powerful one on earth. I sincerely believe that it shall be both our duty and our responsibility as union members as well as educators to maintain this momentum and to help succeeding generations of Americans appreciate the vital role which the labor movement has played in American society for 200 years.¹⁰⁹

This mandate calls for serious changes and adjustments that must be considered as prerequisites. My study has shown that the labor movement has neglected its obligation by failing to promote talented leaders from the new industries, especially leaders who are women and minorities.

¹⁰⁸ The industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO., Digets, p.3

¹⁰⁹ McKelvey, p. 94 - 105

Vicki Frankovich is a very good example of a person who emerges from the strike situation and is a classic example of a leader from the rank and file, who should be promoted within the ranks of organized labor into a position of greater leadership. She should have gotten more support instead she received less support.

Among the many things that were highlighted by the strike is that organized labor or the establishment within organized labor has failed to support the efforts of people like Vicki and other rank and file women leaders adequately.

It is no surprise that the movement is unable to organize or lure many of the new workers (new people in the workforce) into the ranks of organized labor. Recent projections have all pointed to women as the source of growth for the American labor movement.

Demographic studies show that four out of every five new entrants will be minorities - blacks, hispanics, immigrants and women in the majority.¹¹⁰ The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by the year 2000, 62.6% of women will be holding down paying jobs. While 12 million women is expected to enter the workforce between 1988 - 2000,

¹¹⁰Jacob, John E., To Be Equal, Col. 26., p. 1

compared to 7.4 Million men.¹¹¹

This changing American workforce composition will definitely result in a changed makeup of labor unions. Already women workers have been responsible for any increases and stability in union membership. Female increase in unions from 1985-1989 has been 409,000 while men have decreased membership for the same period by 444,000.¹¹²

To improve the status of workers, especially women, it is necessary to organize more women into unions and to introduce women and their interests into union leadership. This pool of potential members must be tapped.

But how can they be tapped? Can the predominantly white, male leadership of the labor movement¹¹³ deal with this new work force of minorities and women? The answer, obviously, is no. Then where shall the new leadership come from? Union leaders have traditionally come

¹¹¹ Labor Relations Week, BNA. (Vol.4), 4/19/90, p. 859.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 859.

¹¹³ A case in point would be the International Ladies'Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) which has a predominantly female membership (heavily black, hispanic, and asian) and a white male Executive Board--with the exception of Edgar Romney -- a Black male. See Moody, p. 272-281

up the ranks and attained leadership status before continuing their educations beyond what was needed for the job. They were responsible and responsive to their constituencies. The new leadership also needs to come up from the ranks, attain further education and organize and train their colleagues in the Freirean mode where the teachers are also students, and the students teachers.¹¹⁴ As Gene Debs once noted, you can rise with the class, or above the class. The purpose is to raise the class.

¹¹⁴ Freire, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," cited in Socialist Pedagogy," p. 69

Appendices

Appendix 1 - IFFA Update



Independent Federation of Flight Attendants

630 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017
(212) 815-1130



***** UPDATES *****



We won the Status Quo Case at the U.S. Supreme Court!

- * We have a contract!
- * We are still fighting to get a fair, improved contract with wage increases and work rule improvements but, in the meantime, we intend to enforce the contract we have!
- * To do so, IFFA has now published our current contract which we are calling the "grey book"!

ENCLOSED IN THIS PACKAGE IS OUR CONTRACT -- or the "grey book"! In fact it is a combination of the 1983 Contract with an overlay of those March 7, 1986, unilaterally implemented wages, work rules and benefits which TWA can legally implement until we win our bad faith bargaining lawsuit or are otherwise able to succeed in our negotiations with Carl Icahn/TWA.

We hope you will carry it with you on your flights and familiarize yourself with the contents. If you believe the Company is not complying with the terms of this contract challenge it. If the scheduler or supervisor refuses to comply, your remedy is to file a grievance. Contact your local IFFA office and speak to your IFFA fulltime representative.

TWA should have provided this book, but since they have refused to do so, we have had to do it. We intend to arbitrate to get TWA to pay for the cost of the IFFA published "grey book". Regardless of the outcome of that question we felt that those of us on the line should not be forced to wait any longer to know what the rules are.

ALSO ENCLOSED IN THIS PACKAGE IS A VIDEO -- which is your own personal copy. We feel it is important to speak directly to you but we know that flight schedules and busy lives may make it difficult to attend meetings -- so we are bringing this meeting to your home. We are aware that not every home possesses a VCR but they are readily available with family and friends.

By this time you should have received notice of our upcoming Work Rule Seminars. These meetings are being conducted by IFFA Vice President Karen Lantz and Negotiating Team Member, Cynthia de Figueiredo. If you can make it we are sure you will find the meetings helpful in understanding the changes embodied in the enclosed "grey book". Please be sure to bring your copy of the "grey book" to the meetings with you.

We hope you find the contract helpful and the video informative and uplifting.

~*~*~

WE WON THE STATUS QUO CASE! SO WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT MEAN?

It means that TWA cannot further change our pay, work rules and benefits without negotiating with us.

Unfortunately, it does not mean that "MP" is gone. The abolition of same calendar day balancing and many other of the onerous work rule changes were the subject of negotiations between March 1984 and March 6, 1986. Therefore, those items will only change when we win our Bad Faith Bargaining case or succeed in our negotiations with Carl Icahn.

It also means that items which were not properly negotiated during the period of March 1984 and March 6, 1986, must be changed back to pre-strike status. Those items include:

- 1) One-Year Eligibility Requirement for Flight Service Manager Position
- 2) Promotion of Flight Service Manager by supervisor "Selectivity" instead of seniority
- 3) LOD Flight Service Manager Bidding Procedures instead of seniority
- 4) XCAP-ACM First Class Seat Selection
- 5) Elimination of Article 11(D) - seniority integration procedures in case of merger
- 6) Elimination of Article 27(C) - negotiations in case of merger
- 7) Rotating Reserve
- 8) On-Line Instructors
- 9) Exclusion of Full-Term Strikers From Seniority List
- 10) Furlough/Recall Procedures
- 11) Denial of Access of Information
- 12) LOD Introduction on Domestic Flights
- 13) Reduced Standby Penalties
- 14) "Easy Borders" - Designation of San Juan, etc. as domestic
- 15) Refusal to Provide Retiree Passes and Insurance
- 16) Denial of Benefits/Work to Flight Attendants on medical or other leaves of absence
- 17) Elimination of Passes for Union Business
- 18) Denial of Union Reps to have physical access to property
- 19) Mandatory Drug Testing Policy
- 20) Method/Delay of Monthly Base Pay
- 21) Ambassador Boutique
- 22) "Ideas Beyond the Horizon"
- 23) "Communications Centers"

As you receive this mailing, our attorneys are in court seeking enforcement of these provisions as well as our other pending court issues such as - Reinstatement of jobs and backpay in the Service Manager case, enforcement of the Union Security Provisions requiring Union dues as a condition of employment.

Further explanations and/or more information can be obtained from your local domicile offices.

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