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## UK DEREGULATES BUSES:

### PASSENGERS SUFFER AS CHAOS GRIPS THE ROADS

From October 26 1986, anyone in the U.K. with a roadworthy bus and a suitable driving licence can operate a scheduled bus service.

Until now, most scheduled services have been operated by local authorities or by the publicly owned National Bus Company. Route allocation and fares charged were under public control and subsidies ensured that bus fares on little used routes were kept at an affordable level.

Now all that has been changed by the 1986 Transport Act. The power to regulate bus services has been taken away from local authorities. Their bus operating companies have been removed from local authority control and chopped into bite sized pieces to make it easier for new private bus companies to compete with them. The National Bus Company has fared even worse - it has been split into 70 separate undertakings, each of which is up for sale to the highest bidder. Its new owners will be expected to make a profit out of their bus operations.

The justification for all this is that competition is being introduced into the supply of bus services. In other words the travelling public will be able to choose between different bus companies vying for custom on the same routes. This dream (which overlooks many realities of which the position of bus workers is only one) has come as close as possible to realisation in the Scottish city of Glasgow. Deregulation took place a few weeks early there and the number of bus operators rocketed from 20 to 190. The peak time chaos as a multitude of buses clogged the streets

hunting for passengers was applauded by devotees of deregulation as a sign that the new policy was working. The reaction of passengers who found bus travel slower than walking was less enthusiastic!

In the rest of the country, however, Glasgow's experience looks unlikely to be repeated. On the contrary, interest in the routes available is well short of the government's expectations. Only 3% of bus routes will be subject to competition between different operators, and 17% of the National Bus Company's network has been completely ignored by the private sector which has little appetite for running rural, off peak, school or hospital services. Even here, local authorities are being forced to award contracts to the lowest bidder who will then benefit from government subsidies designed to support services deemed 'socially necessary'. Whether private companies will find it profitable to operate these services, even with a subsidy, remains to be seen.

What is certain is the devastating effect of deregulation on employment. Some 9000 jobs are at risk in the National Bus

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NOVEMBER, 1986

# TRADE UNIONISTS MEET TO PLAN ACTION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

An international monitoring unit set up by the United Nations, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organisation, Lloyd's Register and the Shipping Research Bureau should check shipping movement to and from South Africa in support of a comprehensive trade embargo. This was one of the key points of a special trade union conference "Beating Apartheid and Strengthening the Frontline" in Lusaka, Zambia from 21 to 23 October.

The Conference, jointly sponsored by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), brought together some 120 top trade union leaders from 60 countries throughout the world, together with 13 representatives of the black independent trade unions in South Africa. The main debate on sanctions was introduced by Ron Todd, General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, Great Britain. ITF African representative Ben (Roxy) Udogwu attended the Conference and was appointed to the 14 strong committee which drafted the conference conclusions.

The Conference was opened by Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, and its opening session was addressed by Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress; General Garba, Nigerian president of the UN Apartheid Committee; and representatives of COSATU and CUSA/AZACTU from South Africa.

The conference's conclusions declared the solidarity of the international trade union movement with the majority people of South Africa and highlighted the need to continue to exert pressure on the South African regime to end Apartheid. Welcoming the recent move by the US Congress to agree a package of economic sanctions against South Africa, the statement called on the European countries and Japan to take similar action and made a number of key recommendations for making sanctions more effective, including demands that:

- \* the United Nations adopt a mandatory Security Council resolution in line with the programme adopted by the US Congress;

- \* all governments adopt sanctions packages at least as strong as the US legislation;

- \* the Organisation of African Unity member states withdraw landing and overflying rights for all traffic to and from South Africa.

## *Flag State Responsibility*

The declaration calls for national legislation to make breaking sanctions a criminal offence. It demands that all states take legal responsibility for enforcing sanctions on ships flying their flag, and calls for the establishment of a UN monitoring unit "to ensure that sanctions are applied and that sanctions busters are put out of business".

Recognising that trade unionists trying to take action against South African trade can find themselves in legal trouble, the declaration also calls on governments to implement a recommendation of the ILO to remove legal impediments to trade union solidarity action against Apartheid.

Moving from recommendations to government to trade union action, the conference promised the fullest possible assistance from the ICFTU and the ITSs to making sanctions work - mobilising public opinion, providing information on successful action, and exposing cases of sanctions busting to public view.

## *Supporting the front line*

An important aspect of the conclusions was the emphasis given to helping the front line states. These countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) rely heavily on South Africa for transport and trade links, and

will face severe difficulties if sanctions are properly enforced. Urgent efforts must be made by governments to build and protect alternative transport routes for those countries' imports and exports, to provide financial and trade support and to protect them against aggression by South Africa and its proxy bodies such as MNR in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola. The international trade union movement itself can also play a vital role in helping the workers in those countries to build strong and independent national trade union centres, the conference also agreed.

## **Workers' jobs under threat from British bus deregulation**

Continued from page 1

Company alone, with thousands more threatened in local authority bus operations. Employment in bus manufacturing plants will also be slashed as demand switches from traditional large buses to the small minibuses favoured by private contractors.

Those bus workers who manage to keep their jobs, will find pay and conditions under severe pressure from employers engaged in cut-throat competition. Existing national level collective agreements will be scrapped as large employers are split up into small local units, resulting in an inevitable weakening in the effectiveness of trade union organisation, a result unlikely to cause many sleepless nights for Mrs Thatcher.

The stated economic objective of deregulation - to reduce the level of public subsidy - is likely to be achieved, but at the cost of destroying the last traces of coordination between different parts of the road and rail passenger transport systems, forcing more and more people into using private cars, and making the future for those without private transport bleak indeed.

# ITF and Nigerian gov't dispute rights

Relations between the ITF and the government of Nigeria are still strained following the forced closure of the ITF's African Regional Conference in Lagos in May this year (ITF News June/July).

Protests by the ITF General Secretary to the Employment Minister eventually produced a response in which the government proclaimed that it 'believes in and respects the ILO's Convention no 87 on Freedom of Association of workers' and is not therefore 'against any fraternal association of the industrial unions with their international counterparts'. The decision to close the ITF conference was taken, the Minister added, because of the government's policy of opposing foreign affiliation of industrial unions to international trade union bodies, and because the meeting was organised by a body 'whose operation in Nigeria has not been approved by government'.

Replying to these points early in November, the ITF General Secretary directed the Minister's attention to the precise wording of Convention 87 which is the basic ILO instrument on trade union rights. Article 5 of the Convention states quite unambiguously that "*Workers' and employers' organisations*

*shall have the right to establish and join federations and confederations and any such organisation, federation or confederation shall have the right to affiliate with international organisations of workers and employers*". There is in the Convention, the ITF's letter stresses therefore a "right" to affiliate - not a "privilege" to be granted or restricted or withdrawn, but a right; not "fraternally associate" but "affiliate".

While understanding that the Nigerian government does not want Nigeria to be a battleground for irrelevant and divisive quarrels and struggles, the ITF ought not, the letter stresses, to be deprived of Nigerian membership for the sins or omissions of others. "We have no secrets. We are not subversive. We have fought for ninety years against imperialism, racism, and totalitarianism in all their forms. Our Nigerian unions do not think they should settle for "fraternal association". They realize that if they do not pay, they can expect no say. They do not want to be second class citizens in the transport workers' world community. Why should they be?" it concludes.

## Union women call for positive action

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) jointly sponsored the first international trade union seminar on *positive action* in Brussels from October 6-8. Sixty-eight women trade unionists from 27 countries, 16 International Trade Secretariats and other organisations attended the seminar.

The aim of *positive action* is to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination by:

- a) opening up entry for women into non-traditional work;
- b) redressing the effects of past discrimination; and
- c) revaluing traditional women's work, with the aim of achieving fair representation of men and women in all spheres of employment.

There is, sadly, no reported example of union-negotiated or government-recommended programme for *positive action* in any developing country.

In most industrialized countries the legal barriers to equality of men and women have been lifted. The seminar felt, however, that this was not enough to tackle the problem of indirect or "systemic" discrimination in education and employment. (Women's wages expressed as a percentage of men's wages vary between 53 and 90 per cent.)

The seminar advocated the creation and maintenance of women's committees to formulate demands, pressurize decision

making bodies and gain greater representation in union bodies.

Patterns of discrimination in the workplace need to be identified and dynamic legislation is needed to introduce *positive action*. Trade unions urgently need to negotiate *positive action* programmes with concrete targets and timetables and regular monitoring of results.

However, if unions are to promote equal opportunities at the workplace they

must first overcome their own discrimination by re-examining their structures.

The seminar also agreed that all training programmes for men and women should include equality issues with a view to preparing more women for leadership positions and supported the idea of "extra seats" or "quotas" to achieve power sharing in trade union decision making bodies.

*The ITF was represented by Eva Leigh.*

## People before debt...

"First the People, then the Debt" is the title of a declaration issued at the end of a 3 day conference on Debt and Development in Latin America sponsored by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and its Interamerican Regional Organisation (ORIT) which took place in Buenos Aires in September.

The meeting, which was addressed by the Argentine President, the President of the CGT union confederation, and ICFTU general secretary John Vanderveken, was attended by top union officials from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

The declaration adopted by the meeting dealt with three main issues:

- Under reforming the international financial system it called on creditors to write off a substantial proportion of

developing countries' debts, cancelling debts incurred by dictatorships, indexing debt repayment to commodity prices, suspending repayments for countries in severe difficulties, and a massive expansion of aid by the World Bank and other international bodies. It also demanded that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should refuse loans to countries which violate trade union and human rights.

- Under the contribution of industrialised countries it called for closer international economic cooperation to stimulate world growth, the removal of barriers to access for developing country exports, increased development aid to meet basic needs, and international agreement on stabilising commodity prices;

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## Fears for lives of jailed unionists in Paraguay

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) says it fears for the lives of the leader and officials of the Journalists' Union who were arrested by the Paraguayan authorities late last month and have not been seen since. It is appealing to its member organisations to intercede with the government seeking their immediate release from custody and has urged the Director-General of the International Labour Office to take similar steps to secure their safety and freedom.

## ITF VIDEO

A video film on the ITF called "Can You Help Us" is now available from ITF Headquarters. The video gives a valuable general introduction to the Federation for union education courses or for anyone wishing to learn more about its history, structure and worldwide activities. It is currently available in English and Spanish, although other language versions may be available in the future. The cost of the video, which is available in VHS and Betamax formats for both PAL and NTSC television systems, is £15.00 to ITF affiliates. Terms for outside organisations are available on request. If you would like to order a copy please contact the Research & Publications Department.



*The cover of the ITF video*

## New policies needed to tackle debt crisis...

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- Under New Economic and Social Policies it called for serious economic and political efforts to raise the working population of Latin America and the Caribbean out of poverty by large scale investment, led by the public sector; measures to stimulate savings and investment; more spending on transport and other infrastructure projects; and cuts in military spending.

The declaration ended by calling for greater emphasis on the trade union role in development by ICFTU and ORIT affiliates as well as for full respect for international labour standards by all countries in the region.

## FISHERIES

### Malvinas exclusion zone

Britain announced on 29 October that it is to establish a 150-mile interim fishing conservation and management zone around the Malvinas/Falkland Islands.

The zone coincides with the existing protection zone from which Argentinian vessels are currently excluded unless they have been given permission to enter the area.

The British government says that its action has been rendered necessary because of the increase in fishing - largely by vessels from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan - in the south-western Atlantic. Overfishing in the area is threatening stocks of certain species, particularly the blue whiting which is used for fishmeal, while squid even runs the risk of extinction if present fishing levels continue.

All vessels fishing within the conservation zone will require a licence from 1 February 1987 when legislation introduced by the Falklands government takes effect. The zone will be policed by two British fisheries protection vessels and a surveillance aircraft.

The Argentinian government has vigorously opposed the British move while the Prime Minister Felipe

Gonzalez has said that Spain will ignore the planned fishing restrictions around the Islands.

### New EC measures to conserve stocks announced

Tough new measures to conserve fish stocks in EC waters were agreed by the fisheries ministers of the twelve at a meeting in Brussels on 5 November.

The Commission will have the power to prevent further fishing once the annual quota for a certain species has been exhausted. The Community's inspectors will have new powers to make visits to member states on their own terms (previously they were only allowed to carry out their duties when and where the state's own national inspector permitted), although they will still have to be accompanied by their opposite number from the country concerned.

The ministers' decision follows a report published earlier this year which deplored the lack of effective deterrents to curb the excessive overfishing of certain species taking place within Community waters.

## PEOPLE

Sam McCluskie has been elected to succeed Jim Slater as General Secretary of the British National Union of Seamen. McCluskie, previously Assistant General Secretary/Treasurer of the NUS, is a leading figure in the British Labour Party, holding the post of party treasurer.

ITF Executive Board member Jack Otero was elected the new President of the the US Labor Council for Latin American Advancement at its recent national conference. Otero, who is an International Vice President of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, is a Cuban American and is a former Director of the ITF's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

# INLAND TRANSPORT

## Organising first for Spanish union

A resolution supporting the demands of employees of Spanish 'messenger' companies (who make urgent deliveries for businesses - usually via motorcycle riders) adopted at the ITF's 35th Congress in August played an important part - together with strikes and legal action - in enabling the messengers' union -FETC UGT) to gain collective bargaining rights for this generally unorganised group of workers.

Some 15,000 'messengers' and other related groups throughout Spain are covered by the two year agreement, concluded on 16 October between the

union and the Association of Messenger Companies (AEM), which comes into force on 1 January 1987.

The agreement will end the insecure position of messengers who were neither subject to normal industrial relations procedures nor treated as being self employed. As a result the employers were able to impose such conditions as they chose, leaving the messengers in the main poorly paid and often obliged to work excessively long hours at the cost of their health and inevitably of road safety.

The main elements of the the

agreement are :

- a 40 hour week at a guaranteed minimum daily rate of 3,250 pesetas.
- one month's annual leave and two annual bonus payments. in July and December.
- social security contributions and accident insurance cover provided by the employers.

It is estimated that the benefits available under the contract will push up the messenger companies' operating costs by some forty per cent - an indication of just how much ground the messengers needed to make up.

## Union splits hamper Japan rail fight

Efforts to find a solution to the job losses threatened as a result of the Japanese governments decision to privatise Japan National Railways (JNR) have been complicated by recent divisions both between and within the ITF's two affiliated unions, KOKURO and DORO.

Having previously opposed the privatisation plan due to take effect next April, DORO in January of this year reached a Job Security Agreement which in its view guaranteed the continuing employment of its members and provided the conditions for a healthy future for Japan's railways. It also signed a joint statement with other small JNR unions supporting the privatisation.

KOKURO, however, which represented a majority of JNR employees, continued its strong opposition to the whole privatisation plan. The hostility of the Nakasone government, reinforced by its recent General election victory, meant however, that KOKURO was losing membership at a rate of nearly 10,000 per month to unions which had signed the Job Security Agreement. Recognising this, the KOKURO leadership convened a special Convention in Shuzenjicho at the beginning of October and proposed a change of policy - agreeing to negotiate with JNR on job security while maintaining the principle of opposition to the plan.

Strong opposition to this policy from the rank and file members at the Convention led to the mass resignation of the KOKURO leadership under its Chairman Shunichi Yamazaki and the election of a new leadership under Satoshi Roppongi, former director of the

union's organisation Department.

Members of the union supporting the old leadership then announced the formation of a group supporting efforts by the national centre SOHYO to find a compromise agreement. For the present this group remains within KOKURO.

## Swedish workers welcome new rail safety measures

The introduction in June next year of new regulations covering shunting operations on Swedish railways (SJ) has been welcomed as one way of reducing the rising accident rate among shunting personnel - always one of the most hazardous occupations. Now the shunters' union - the Swedish State Employees' Union (SF) - is demanding that the new regulations be followed up by stronger efforts by management and labour on safety.

The SF would especially like to see more shunters employed at those yards which are under strength. This would enable the tempo of work to be eased and should lead to fewer mistakes with potentially dangerous or even fatal consequences.

The Swedes point to Finland as an example of good practice - the accident rate there has fallen by thirty per cent as a result of similar measures.

## Pollution disaster on Rhine

Massive pollution of the Rhine, Europe's premier inland waterway, has been caused as the result of a major chemical disaster caused by a fire at the Sandoz plant in Basle, Switzerland.

The governments of the Federal

Republic of Germany and the Netherlands have been taking emergency action to counter massive pollution. Fish stocks have been badly affected by the chemical wastes, including large quantities of mercury, and large damages claims against the company are likely to be made.



# 6 day rail strike victorious

A six day strike and sit-in by Nigerian railway workers has culminated in victory for the union's demands.

The dispute centred on the fact that the government had simply stopped paying railway workers -- even pension payments had dried up. The railways themselves were also suffering from a

total lack of funds -- with rolling stock immobilised due to a chronic shortage of spare parts.

The unions demanded that the government pay all wages and pensions, with arrears, and undertake to fund spare parts for the system. On October 7, after the government refused to respond

to a 21 day deadline for answering their demands, railway workers reported for work and occupied their workplaces. The rail network was brought to a complete standstill, and six days later the government gave in to all the union's demands -- giving a loan of 30 million Naira to the railways corporation to cover costs.

## CIVIL AVIATION

### IATA threatens Nigerian Airways

A major dispute between the Nigerian government, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and a number of major carriers flying to Lagos remains unresolved.

The crisis, with major ramifications for many developing countries' relations with the international aviation industry, began with the Nigerian government's recent introduction of a two-tier currency exchange rate -- an increasingly popular tactic of hard pressed "soft-currency" countries seeking to introduce foreign exchange at international market rates while maintaining a separate internal rate. This second tier rate invariably involves a massive devaluation of the currency rate -- in this case the Nigerian Naira dropped nearly 300 per cent from its previous fixed rate.

The introduction of the new exchange rate at the beginning of October brought an immediate reaction from European and United States airlines operating in Nigeria. Claiming that the new exchange rate made them unable to sell tickets purchased in Naira, they refused to honour any tickets bought in the local currency. As a result normally packed 747s left Lagos with only a handful of passengers aboard. The airlines demanded permission from the government for massive fare increases to bring rates in line with pre-devaluation exchange.

On October 18 the government announced that it was allowing airline ticket prices to rise by 94 per cent. This staggering increase was met with derision by the airlines, who had asked for nearly 250 per cent. At this point -- according to the Nigerian Sunday Times -- a special delegation from IATA went to Nigeria and met with the government to

lobby for the full 250 per cent increase. Though no official report emerged from this meeting, it would appear to have ended in a deadlock.

On November 1, Nigerian newspapers reported that IATA was threatening to "blacklist" Nigeria Airways from the international airline's ticket 'clearing house' -- a move that would cut Nigeria Airways off from international ticketing facilities and prevent the airline from offering through services with other airlines. Officially IATA told the Nigerian press that the move was connected to the massive debt owed by

NA to IATA airlines (£14 million sterling at the end of August) -- but the real reason, according to unnamed IATA sources quoted widely in Nigeria, is the intransigence of the Nigerian government in the ticketing and currency dispute.

The latest escalation in this dispute came three days later, with a belligerent statement from the Nigerian Minister of Aviation and Transport, Brigadier Jerry Useni, that if international airlines did not agree to sell tickets in Naira, their offices would be closed down and their licences revoked.

### Australia bans South African air links

Air links between Australia and South Africa are to end in twelve months. Australia has given formal notice to the Pretoria government of its intention to terminate landing rights for South African Airways. Qantas, the national carrier, does not fly to the Republic.

### United stewardesses defeat sexist rule

Stewardesses who were fired by United Airlines in the sixties under the airline's 'no marriage' rule have finally won the right to their jobs back. After a sixteen year legal battle, vigorously contested by the airline, the stewardesses have obtained a \$38 million settlement and will be entitled to full seniority from the

original date of hire for pensions purposes provided they stay with the airline for three years after being rehired. The settlement covers 475 flight attendants who lost their jobs because of the airline's earlier policy of employing only unmarried women; 400 other flight attendants have already been rehired.

### Security rules should cover airports

Top officials of the world's airlines decided, at the annual meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in Montreux in November, to lobby for the extension to airports of the ICAO conventions dealing with terrorist

acts against civil aircraft. A motion adopted by the meeting also called on governments to ratify and implement consistently the three existing security conventions (Tokyo 1963, Hague 1970 and Montreal 1971).

# Terrorism: pilots point the finger

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) has declared Libya and Syria 'offending states', basing its decision on evidence presented in British courts during recent weeks clearly implicating the two states in acts of terrorism, including criminal acts, against civil aviation.

IFALPA's member organisations are currently being consulted with a view to determining

appropriate action against the two countries. Meanwhile, IFALPA is continuing to seek further evidence for justifying action of the strongest kind, including a ban on flights to and from these two states.

IFALPA has the firm backing of the ITF in its efforts to protect innocent flight crews and airline passengers from being used as pawns in furtherance of the

objectives of terrorist groups and those governments which harbour such groups and given them either overt or covert support.

Following IFALPA's annual conference in April the ITF issued a statement indicating that ITF aviation affiliates would cooperate to the full with IFALPA in action against countries whose involvement in terrorism could be clearly identified.

## SEAFARERS

### *Japanese union acts against Focs*

Over a hundred Foc ships were inspected by officials from the Japanese Seamen's Union during the first week of October and warned of possible future difficulties in Japanese ports if they failed to negotiate acceptable agreements with the ITF.

The week-long clampdown on Focs was the tenth time that the JSU has staged action in support of the efforts of the ITF to ensure that Foc ships observe decent standards in respect of their crews.

Five major ports - Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kobe and Moji - had been chosen as the focus for the union's action which was the most widespread in its coverage of any undertaken so far. Not surprisingly only a small proportion of the ships stopped (20 in all) were actually in possession of an ITF Blue Certificate indicating that the pay and conditions of the seafarers on board meet the standards set by the ITF.

Some of the vessels stopped, while not holding a Blue Certificate, were at least able to prove that they had applied for one and the JSU regional officials organising the action managed to persuade an appreciable number of vessels (21 in all) that they should negotiate with the JSU or other national affiliates of the ITF and sign agreements. A close watch will of course be kept on these ships in the next few months to see if they keep to their word.

Other vessels were warned of the inevitable consequences when they next



*The JSU campaign bus in Yokohama port.*

put in to the same port if they failed to meet ITF standards. The fact that two ships - the Panamanian registered *Evermore Bloom* and the Liberian flag *Fernando Everette* - both on charter to Japanese companies and with largely

Filipino crews, were held up for a day in Kobe and Yokohama respectively must have helped to concentrate the minds of those owners who feel they can hold out and continue to ignore the ITF's campaign against Focs.

### **New New Zealand federation**

A new federation of maritime, transport and general workers has been created in New Zealand as a result of an initiative by two of the ITF's affiliates - the Waterside Workers' Federation and the Seamen's Union.

The decision to set up the body was agreed in mid-June at a meeting of ITF affiliates held at the offices of the WWF. This meeting set up a working party to

draw up a constitution for the federation. A draft constitution was then presented to a further meeting of the federation's member unions in September for their approval following which rank and file members of the various unions joining the new Federation - to be known as the New Zealand Maritime, Transport and General Workers' Federation - have been asked to ratify the agreement.

# Gulf attacks worry owners

The growing number of attacks in recent weeks on merchant shipping passing through the Persian Gulf, which has been condemned by seafaring organisations in a number of countries, has also been causing increasing concern to the world's major shipowners. The fact that ships are now being attacked in almost the entire Gulf area and that these attacks affect ships trading with states other than the two warring nations has hastened the concerted response from shipping interests.

In October nine shipowning organisations including the International Shipping Federation, BIMCO, Intercargo and Intertanko sent a joint message to the UN Secretary-General asking him to make urgent representations to the governments of both Iran and Iraq seeking a guarantee that neutral shipping will be assured a safe passage when in the international waters.

\*\*The six nation Gulf Cooperation Council issued a communique at the end of its annual summit pledging to protect

freedom of navigation to and from the ports of member countries. The summit was attended by leaders from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

## Greek crew strike likely

A worldwide strike by Greek seafarers now seems likely at the beginning of December following the breakdown of months of negotiations between the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) and the owners.

The union is seeking pay increases of between 12 and 14 per cent on behalf of its members on ocean going, Mediterranean and coastal cargo vessels - figures which represent a scaling down of earlier demands and that

are in line with increases awarded to crews of domestic ferries and cruise and coastal passenger ships in September - the foreign currency earnings of the industry being cited as the reason for circumventing the pay freeze imposed by the government.

The action will take the form of 48 hour strikes during the period 1 to 20 December, with crews striking whenever a ship reaches port.

## Euroflag call by Davis

The creation of a single European merchant fleet could be one way out of the present crisis affecting European shipping, according to European Transport Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis who put forward the idea in a speech given in London last month.

If Community shipping was to survive, he said, governments might have to consider merging their national interests into a common purpose.

"Governments are allowing our shipping industry to drift aimlessly. I want this historic industry to be steered into the future, not left to take its chance in the shoals of neglect", he told his

audience.

According to Davis, a new 'Euroflag' might be one option for taking the industry forward. A unified European fleet would prove an attractive trading partner and would also be robust enough to provide a stable and expanding source of employment for Europe's seafarers while offering them decent conditions. The ships themselves would have to meet the most exacting safety and environmental standards.

Coupled with this the Transport Commissioner said that he would like to see an EC shipping policy in place by the end of the year.

## North Sea jobs crisis

Urgent action is needed to save North Sea oil jobs says the British National Union of Seamen (NUS). The downturn in oil prices has been reflected in job losses - nearly seven hundred NUS members have been made redundant since April - and over a third of oil rigs and supply vessels are laid up as a result of the decline in oil exploration and drilling. The union wants the government to

allow only British rigs and supply vessels (at present foreign rigs and vessels predominate) to operate in the British sector of the North Sea - a move which it reckons will create a thousand jobs for seafarers and half as many again for rig workers. As part of its offshore campaign the union is also planning a recruitment drive among non-unionised offshore workers.

## New registers on the cards

Luxembourg and the Canary Islands are the latest small territories to join the ranks of aspiring maritime nations. According to *Lloyds List* the government of Luxembourg is considering setting up a shipping register to complement its growing banking and financial sectors. Since Luxembourg is not renowned for its shipowning or seafaring prowess, it can only be concluded that the new register will be open to citizens of other countries. However a senior official quoted in *Lloyds* reassuringly says that the register "will be very serious and much more restrictive than some other flags".

Meanwhile the Spanish government is considering whether to set up a Kerguelen style offshore register in the Canary Islands. The move is being pushed for by Spanish shipowners who want to lower their costs. A report by the Spanish Maritime Institute, also quoted in *Lloyds List*, says that the new register would lead to a considerable decrease in labour costs. About 60% of the Spanish fleet could be expected to register in the Canaries if the plan goes ahead, the report concludes.

One of the newest flag of convenience registers Vanuatu is so pleased with its success in undercutting registration fees from older established FOCs like Liberia that it has offered a prize for the person who guesses when the 200th ship will register under the Vanuatu flag. Clayton Beale Wentworth, the former New York insurance executive who appears to run the register, has pledged a week's holiday in the Pacific Island to whoever produces the correct date.



## \$100,000 won for Gulf attack victim

Compensation worth over \$100,000 was paid in October by Hong Kong based shipowners Gulf East to K K Jaffrey, a member of the ITF affiliated Pakistan Merchant Navy Officers' Association. This followed legal action initiated by the ITF and lasting more than a year following an Iranian missile attack in the Gulf in March 1985 on the Liberian flag *Caribbean Breeze* on which he was serving as first officer.

As a result of the attack Mr Jaffrey lost the sight of one eye and was unable to resume his career as a merchant navy officer and will find it difficult to find alternative employment ashore. On receiving final settlement of his claim, he called at the ITF's office to express his thanks for the legal assistance given, without which he would have been forced to rely on the legal Workmen's Compensation system in Pakistan which would have provided very little financial help.

## Goodbye Red Duster!

The British merchant flag (the Red Duster) is fast disappearing from the world's oceans. By the end of this year, the flagged out fleet operated by British registered companies will exceed tonnage under the British flag.

This is the forecast of the President of the General Council of British Shipping, Garry Runciman - who said at a recent conference on maritime operations in the 1990s that the true British fleet (ie excluding the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) is likely to fall to under 7 million deadweight tons by the beginning of next year. Again according to his figures the flagged out sector will be well ahead by that time, being probably somewhat over 10 million tons.

Runciman argues that a much-needed common understanding on future operations and investment in British shipping could be reached between shipping companies and the unions if the government were to undertake to reduce ship costs within its control. He believed that the government would be well advised to take a leaf out of the book of those countries offering special rates of tax for seafarers and providing assistance with repatriation costs as well as grants for seafarers' training. Greater incentives to owners to invest in new tonnage would also provide British shipping, now very much in the doldrums, with a much needed fillip, he believes.

## Nordic officers' FOC pleas rejected

A set of measures for protecting the national fleets of the Nordic nations and reversing the trend towards flagging out were presented to owners' representatives at a special meeting held in Abo, Finland at the beginning of October in conjunction with one of the twice yearly meetings of the Nordic Ships' Officers' Congress (NFBK), a body which brings together ITF affiliated engineer and navigating officers' unions from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The officers are demanding more cargo and passenger traffic reservation for Nordic flag shipping. They also want to see more money invested in advanced technology ships using highly trained multipurpose crews which they see as a way of offering secure jobs and making a seagoing career more attractive to future generations.

Their demands, which were presented to the shipowners, also included measures to reduce the oversupply of world tonnage, the phasing out of the flag of convenience system, and strict observance of IMO and ILO standards by existing FOC ships.

The reaction of the shipowners to these proposals was entirely negative. The employers prefer to continue to rely on the cheap labour of third world crews, arguing that this is the only way open to them of staying on top in an increasingly competitive market.

The unions see this attitude as a recipe for disaster and insist that if the owners persist with their present policies the destruction of a proud centuries old maritime tradition will be the inevitable result.

## Seamen's Union attacks Norway's Government policy on flagging out

Angered at the lack of support for the national fleet from the Norwegian government, delegates to the 20th Ordinary Congress of the Norwegian Seamen's Union interrupted their discussions, marched to parliament and lobbied Prime Minister Gro Brunt Harland.

In his opening address to Congress union President Henrik Aasarød said that the crisis the shipping industry was going through was by no means confined to Norway. He criticised Norwegian

owners for refusing to listen to the union's suggestions for reducing manning and operating costs, adding that this reluctance seemed to be linked to the irresistible lure of the transfer of registry to tax havens.

To counter these developments the meeting adopted a maritime policy action programme in which they agreed to work even closer with the Norwegian Dockers' Union to counter the exploitation of workers on shipboard. To assist the union in this task, it undertook to

attempt to improve cooperation with trade unions and political parties at home and abroad.

Action to counter the growing levels of unemployment among oil workers in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea and increased attention to the safety of fishermen was also decided on by the Congress, which reelected Aasarød as President at its closing session. The ITF was represented by Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander.

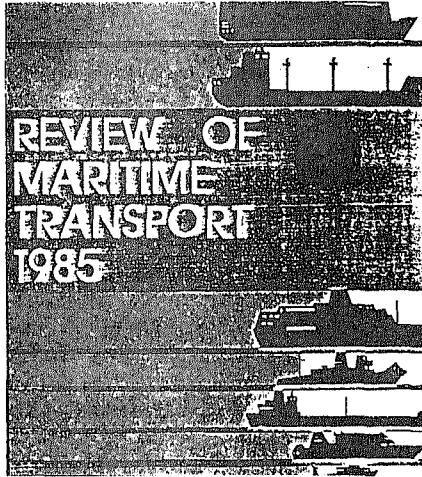
# Rich countries have lion's share of world fleet says UNCTAD

Ownership of the world's shipping remained heavily concentrated in the developed market economy countries.

This is one of the conclusions of the 1985 Maritime Transport Review of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The report shows clearly that developing countries' participation in fleet ownership is much lower than their share of international seaborne trade. In 1985 they generated 37% of world cargo movements but owned only 17.1% of deadweight tonnage. The OECD countries had 73.1% of tonnage while generating 56% of world trade.

The cost of shipping also hits developing countries disproportionately. Their freight costs were almost 10 % of



*UNCTAD's Review of maritime transport 1985*

total import costs in 1985 compared to a figure of 5.1% for the richer countries.

The declining trend in the size of the world merchant fleet, which began in 1983 has continued, the UNCTAD report emphasises.

In mid 1985 the total dw tonnage was 664.8 million, a fall of 1.4% over the previous year. Open registry (flag of convenience) tonnage continued to grow (from 202.2 million dwt to 203.4 million) but the share of Liberia, the biggest FOC fell from 74.9% in 1981 to 55.8% in 1985, while the share of all other FOCs rose. The fastest growth was for the Bahamas which now represents more than 3% of FOC tonnage.

## DOCKERS

### Rotterdam stevedores' jobs threatened

500 dockers' jobs in the general cargo section of the port of Rotterdam - the World's largest port - are under threat as a result of a planned merger of stevedoring companies. The new company, Triton, formed from Seaport Terminals, Multi Terminals Vaalhaven and Muller Thomson, handles 35% of the port's general cargo and employs a similar proportion of dockworkers.

The dockers' union Vervoersbond FNV is vigorously fighting the proposals which they see as an attack on the long term agreement on restructuring general cargo operations reached in 1985 after a long period of negotiations with the employers. The 1985 agreement, based on figures provided by the employers, projected a loss of 1500 jobs in the period up to 1991 and made recommendations on how to achieve this without compulsory dismissals. It formed part of a general plan drawn up by the Van der Louw Committee which was set up to advise both on the corporate structure and the technical and social aspects of general cargo handling in the port.

The 'Van der Louw Agreement' included a range of measures designed to



*Only one year after reaching a long term job security agreement, the jobs of 500 Rotterdam stevedores are now under threat*

avoid any need for compulsory dismissals including:

- a general cut in working time of 5% with 1.8% financed by the workers and the rest by the employers;
- a further 11% working time cut for dockworkers aged 55 and above;
- voluntary early retirement on 90% of salary for dockworkers aged 57 1/2;

- redeployment on a voluntary basis to other sections of the port;

- expansion by 5% of the labour pool employed by the central SHB organisation which is 50% state financed;
- voluntary redeployment of clerical workers to other companies;
- hiring of a minimum of 35 young workers each year.

# VANUATU STRIKE THREAT LIFTED AFTER ITF VISIT

Efforts to secure severance pay for 193 Vanuatu dockworkers who lost their jobs when their employer (the Vanua Navigation Company) was forced out of business have now moved into the Courts following the suspension of strike action by the Vanuatu Waterside Maritime Allied Workers Union threatened from 1 October

At the request of the ITF, Claude Cumberlidge (Waterside Workers' Federation, Australia) visited the country in October and held discussions with the companies, with representatives of the Government and with the Receiver of the bankrupt stevedoring company.

He advised that the severance pay

## Local deals in New York

Higher pensions, but smaller gang sizes for certain cargoes and a cut in the number of hours per year guaranteed annual income were the main features of a local agreement at the beginning of November for dockers in the port of New York. This and the CONASA settlement (see below) brings to an end the series of local and national negotiations which have been reported in recent issues of *ITF News*.

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) which organises East Coast dockers - was involved in four days of intensive negotiations prior to the conclusion of the contract.

The union resisted calls for a savage cut in the number of guaranteed paid hours per year and agreed a modest cut from 2080 to 1900. Gang sizes for cargoes of sugar, scrap, lumber and steel as well as for bulk and "neo bulk" cargoes have been reduced by two.

Pensions of retired dockers aged 62 and over have been substantially improved by the contract, with pension pay ranging from \$880 per month for retired dockers with 25 years' service to \$1,045 for those with 40 years. Incentives, available until next May, have also been agreed as part of the agreement to persuade more dockers to take early retirement.

A settlement has been reached in the dispute between the ILA and the Council of North American Shipping Associations (CONASA) which led to a three day shutdown at eleven ports at the beginning of October (see last issue of *ITF News*). This provides for a two tier pay scale with dockers handling bulk grains and ores receiving \$16 an hour for the life of the three year master contract and other dockers being paid an hourly rate of \$17 in its first two years, rising to \$18 in 1989.

owed to the dockworkers, some of whom have 30 years service with the company, could only be secured by a court action to declare it a 'secured debt' under bankruptcy law. Despite assurances by government ministers to the union in the past, no support had been forthcoming, and the union has now agreed to pursue six individual test cases before the courts.

Meanwhile the two new stevedoring companies which took over Vanuatu Navigation's contracts have dismissed 83 of the re-employed workers and has imposed inferior working conditions on those who remained. The union is committed to fighting these changes but has received no support from the government for doing so. This becomes less surprising after examining the management of the two new stevedore companies - *Ifira Wharf* and *Santo Stevedoring*, both of which are run by senior government figures, the latter having the Minister of Foreign Affairs,

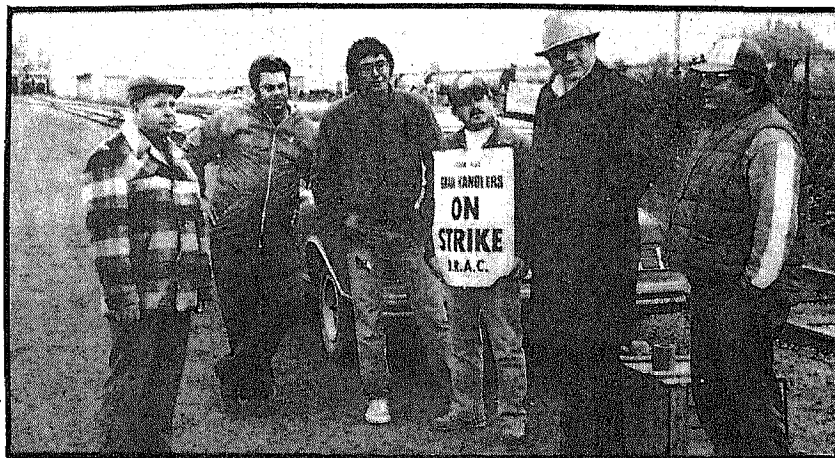
Sela Molisa, as the Chairman of its Board.

According to Cumberlidge the Vanuatu government "has a lot to answer for". The decision to withdraw the contract from Vanua Navigation and give it to the two new companies was, he says, taken as a result of direct government intervention and against the advice of the tender committee.

The new companies "didn't exist" before they submitted their bids for the contracts, and had no previous experience in the industry, and no equipment. Once the contracts were awarded, the government gave Vanua Navigation three days to wind up its business and sell its assets (eventually extended to 3 weeks after legal action by the company).

The government had planned, according to the union, to bring in blackleg labour from overseas if the planned strike had gone ahead. Agreement to negotiations with the Santo company has now been reached. ITF dockers' unions, many of which have already declared their support for the Vanuatu union will watch developments in the industry with interest.

## Grain loaders' agreement



Grain handlers at Ontario's Thunder Bay terminal have won increased job security under a new three year contract signed with the six companies at the port's grain handling terminal. The new contract was reached after a month long strike by members of the Canadian division of the Brotherhood of Railway, Airline, and Steamship Clerks (BRAC) (*ITF News* October).

A key part of the new agreement is a new clause on new technology. It provides that BRAC members affected by changing technology will be offered retraining where appropriate to fit them for other work at the terminal or transfer to a job elsewhere. Otherwise, they will be offered early retirement or severance compensation. The grain handling companies have also undertaken not to contract out work normally performed by BRAC members if this would result in layoffs.

## UK Dock Jobs cut by 20%

Port labour in Britain has fallen by 20 per cent in the past three years according to the latest survey from the British Ports Association and the National Association of Port Employers.

The total number employed fell from 51,473 to 41,208 over the period, with losses concentrated in the Dockwork Register Scheme ports where the labour force shrank by 24 per cent and the numbers of registered dock workers fell by almost four thousand.

Reductions in labour in the non-scheme ports were substantially less - these ports now account for 28 per cent of the total labour force, up from 25% three years ago.

The success of these ports is largely accounted for by the fact that the operators have developed small scale ventures, concentrating on single or specialised cargoes; and have not had to embark on massive new investment in port facilities.

## Nigeria moves towards port decasualisation

The Nigerian dockers' union has tentatively welcomed a government sponsored review of the ports on condition that some form of job security is guaranteed. At the moment some 15,000 dockworkers in Nigeria are employed on a casual basis at very low wage rates.

The slump in the Nigerian economy, reinforced by the cut in oil prices which has reduced foreign exchange earnings, has had a serious effect on Nigeria's seaborne trade. As a result most dockers work only two or three days a week, if at all. The General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated National Union of Dockworkers, J K Abam, have denounced the present working conditions and pay on the waterfront as "inhuman".

They have welcomed the wide spread government review of the National Dock Labour Board's operations, which is reported to be considering measures for

stipulating minimum working conditions for stevedoring companies -- but have stressed that job security is an absolute minimum requirement in any reorganisation.

## Karachi docks: pay increase

Dockers at the port of Karachi in Pakistan have won average increases of Rs 300 per month under a two year agreement negotiated by their union - the Organisation of Karachi Port Trust Workers - in September.

Other benefits raised by the agreement include bonus pay, housing rent and travelling allowances.

## OBITUARIES

**Peter Bahuwa**, Assistant General Secretary of the Railway Associated Workers' Union of Zimbabwe, died in a car accident on 1 November. ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis has sent his condolences to the family.

**Elroy Robson**, one of the founder members of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers, died recently, just a week before his 89th birthday. Robson travelled the length and breadth of Canada building up the union in the 1920s and keeping it alive throughout the depression years of the 30s. He rose to become National Vice President and also regularly attended ITF Congresses on behalf of the Brotherhood - the first North American affiliate of the ITF.

The former chairman of the ITF Fishermen's Section **Heinrich Rake** died on 6 September. Rake was head of the

Seafarers' and Fishermen's Section of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) from 1970 until his early retirement in January 1978. He played an active role for many years

within the maritime sections of the ITF, serving also as the German member of the Committee of the Seafarers' Section and as its representative on the Fair Practices Committee.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

21-22 November	London	ITF Conference on Future Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
26-28 November	Panama	Latin American Road Transport Workers' Conference
8-12 December	Sierre Leone	African Road Transport Workers' Conference
23-25 February 1987	Manila	Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Cttee.
8 June 1987	London	Dockers' Section
9-10 June 1987	London	Fair Practices Committee