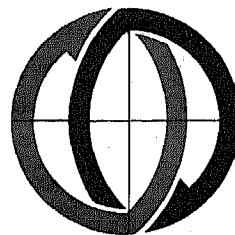


# ITF NEWS



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## Greek union fights gov't decree:

# SEAFARERS STRIKE TO SAVE JOBS

Greek ships arriving in foreign or home ports after 1 December are being hit by a rolling programme of 48 hour strikes called by the ITF-affiliated Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO).

The strike was called in response to the decision of the Government to cut manning levels and re-introduce the so-called 'bilateral crewing arrangements' which enable shipowners to employ up to 40% foreign seafarers per ship at cut-price rates at the expense of the thousands of Greek seafarers currently out of work. The unions is also striking against the decision of Merchant Marine Minister Stathis Alexandris to impose wage increases of around 14% for PNO members on cargo ships while the union was in negotiations with the Union of Greek Shipowners (UGS).

On learning in November that the bilateral arrangements, which have only recently been phased out, were to be reintroduced, ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander protested strongly to the government, stressing that the ITF views them as totally unacceptable. On receiving details of the strike call, ITF seafarers' and dockers' unions worldwide were alerted and asked to provide practical assistance and solidarity to striking Greek seafarers in their ports.

Reports so far received in the ITF Secretariat indicate widespread support for the strike. Teams of union officials from the PNO were despatched to ports in France, Netherlands, UK and Israel. Sympathy action was reported in ports in the USA, while in Paranagua in Brazil four striking seamen from the *Andros Oceania* were arrested by the authorities, sparking off still more protests from the ITF and PNO. One attempt by the shipowners to have the strike declared illegal by the Greek courts has already failed but a second hearing was due to take place on 9 December.

ITF News wish all our  
readers fraternal greetings of the  
season and all the best for the new  
year

DECEMBER, 1986

# NEWS

## Rankholo — apartheid prisoner

Esau Rankholo, General Secretary of the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, is now spending his eleventh week in a South African gaol following his detention by the security forces in September.

There is now considerable concern for his well being; we know for instance that he has been denied visits by a union lawyer. ITF affiliates have made vigorous protests to South African diplomatic representatives worldwide at the arrest of a trade union leader who is a

well known and respected figure in ITF circles. Despite claims to the contrary by the South African ambassador in London, it is clear that Rankholo is being detained because of his trade union activities. ITF affiliates will continue to campaign in the strongest terms for his release.

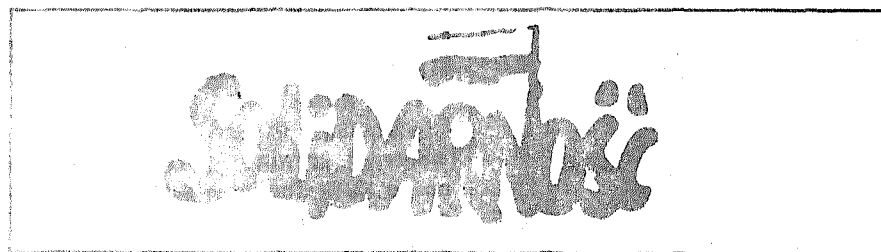
## Solidarnosc joins the ICFTU

Following a personal appeal from its Chairman Lech Walesa, the independent Polish trade union Solidarnosc became the first union organisation from a Communist ruled country to be admitted into affiliation of the 7 million strong International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) when its Executive Board met in Brussels in November.

In what was described as 'an historic decision' the ICFTU Board agreed unanimously to accept Solidarnosc's request for affiliation.

A parallel decision to accept the union was made by the ('Christian') World Confederation of Labour, also based in Brussels. Solidarnosc has continued to operate in Poland despite intense government harassment since the imposition of martial law in 1981.

The ICFTU Board also agreed to accept requests for affiliation from two union groups operating under the military dictatorship in Chile demonstrating, in the words of ICFTU General Secretary Johnny Vanderveken, that 'free trade unions fighting dictatorships regimes, regardless of whether those regimes are right wing or communist, identify themselves with the international free



trade union movement. The Chilean unions accepted into ICFTU membership are the Democratic Trade Union Centre (CDT) and an important grouping of unions which are members of the National Workers' Command (CNT). Together they represent about 300,000

Chilean trade unionists.

\*\* The Polish government has deferred for 12 months its decision to leave the tripartite International Labour Organisation (ILO) in response to severe criticism of its record on trade union rights.

## Union leader's murder condemned

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has condemned the "callous murder" of Filipino union leader Rolando Olalia.

Olalia, chairman of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (May 1st Movement — KMU) trade union federation in the Philippines, was murdered last month.

John Vanderveken, ICFTU General Secretary cabled Filipino President Corazon Aquino to express his "horror and shock" at the assassination. Vanderveken urged the government to open an investigation into the murder

which took place in the midst of a series of threats to the country's process of democratisation after the overthrow of the Dictator Marcos.

The threat of a coup d'etat has now receded, with the forced resignation of Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and the thwarting of attempts to stem the country's return to democracy.

Vanderveken expressed the ICFTU's renewed support for Aquino's efforts to restore democracy based on a full respect of human and trade union rights.

## Trade union code on chemicals

A Trade union "Code of Principles" for the prevention of chemical disasters was launched at an ICFTU press conference on 27 November, a few days before the second anniversary of the Bhopal chemical disaster which claimed some 2000 lives in India. The Code, which was drafted at the meeting of the ICFTU/ITS Health and Safety Working

Party in October, cites the recent Sandoz disaster as well as Bhopal, Chernobyl, Mexico City, Seveso and Flixborough.

Firms and governments will be urged to implement its principles which include: the notification of accidents and risks; the preparation of safety analyses, emergency planning, plant design and operations, training of workers and

supervisors as well as workers' and unions' rights to be fully consulted and informed and to refuse dangerous tasks free of reprisals. A special section of the Code deals with the transport of hazardous goods.

Copies of the ICFTU code are available from the ITF headquarters.

## Unions celebrate their anniversaries

The long history of two European affiliates of the ITF was marked by separate celebrations recently at which ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis participated.

The 100th anniversary of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union (Vervoersbond FNV) were celebrated at a special rally held in Noordwijk near Amsterdam on 20. The meeting was opened by union President Arend Drenth and its programme included an introduction to the history of the union which has recently been published as well as a stage adaptation of a Bertolt Brecht story.

The German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) marked its 90th anniversary with a gathering in Hamburg on 30th November. In his address to the meeting Harold Lewis drew attention to the long association between German transport workers and the ITF, but warned that in many ways the situation of German railwaymen today was no better than in 1896 when the union was founded.

*(Left, an illustration from the GdED anniversary publication showing one of the union's old banners)*

### Help the BIU in their new HQ

The ITF's Bermudan affiliate - the Bermuda Industrial Union - is about to move into its new headquarters building in Hamilton which is now undergoing its final touches.

The union is anxious to ensure that its new HQ shall be as attractive and well equipped as possible so as to encourage members to drop in and make full use of the facilities on offer. While it is making every effort to provide all it can, resources are necessarily limited and it thought that ITF affiliates might wish to help by donating functional or decorative items from around the world.

Any help unions can give would be much appreciated and would give the building added character. Sample items mentioned by the BIU when it put the suggestion to us include:

- \* books for the union library
- \* folding chairs for the meeting hall
- \* prints and paintings for wall decorations
- \* educational materials
- \* visual aids
- \* video cassettes.

Please help if you can. The union would be delighted if it could have these house warming gifts already in the new office when the formal opening ceremony takes place in the new year.



**1896-1986**

**90 Jahre**

**Schutz und Sicherheit  
für alle Eisenbahner**



**Gewerkschaft der Eisenbahner Deutschlands**

## French unions agree deal on redundancies

Trade Unions in France have reached an agreement with the central employers' organisation on redundancies that substantially improves on the government imposed law of July 1986.

The accord with the employers group CNPF will become law next year, and supercedes the earlier government decree.

France's new right wing government has been seeking to introduce what it calls greater "flexibility" in the economy, and regulations making it easier for companies to lay-off employees were a central element in that strategy.

The new agreements, according to the the ITF-affiliated FGTE-CFDT, "contain some positive elements, basically in greater protection for workers in medium and small-size businesses who did not have the full protection of the law before. They also contain negative elements, particularly in the absence of effective control over work inspections that are intended to enforce the new rules." In such cases, the FGTE notes, union strength is the crucial factor in seeing that these rules are properly enforced.

The new measures call for greater consultation with the unions and the workforce, in particular the negotiation of a "social plan" for jobs in small businesses, with efforts to avoid redundancies through long term planning. They also for the first time, have introduced fixed periods of redundancy notice for workers in smaller businesses.

# Chemical menace to workers

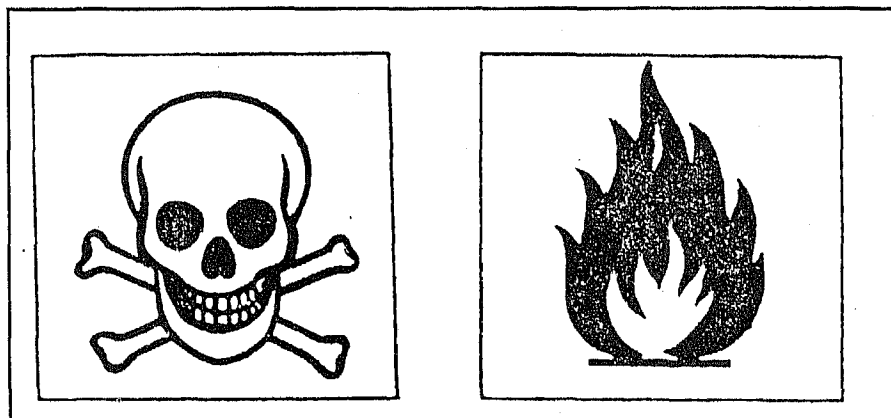
Hard information about the dangers posed to workers' health by dangerous chemicals was the centrepiece of the first ever consultative meeting between trade unions and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Geneva on 1 December.

The WHO is the UN specialised agency responsible for the protection of disease and accidents and promotion of health care.

The meeting was sponsored by the International Programme on Chemical Safety, a body based at WHO headquarters but run jointly with the ILO and the UN Environment Programme.

Representatives from 9 international trade secretariats who attended the meeting were briefed about a new international system for disseminating information about the nature of toxic chemicals and the health risks which they pose for workers. At the moment such information if it exists, is provided by national governments. Some governments make it clearly and easily available to workers, including those involved in transporting dangerous chemicals. Some do nothing at all.

The IPCS intends to change all that. Starting in 1987 some 200 Chemical Safety Cards per year will be published and distributed through national



governments, union organisations, professional bodies etc. Aimed at workers at risk from chemicals, the cards give simple information about the risks involved and guidance about what to do in an emergency. The cards will be backed up by about 50 Health and Safety Guides. These will give much more detailed information on specific chemical hazards and immediate advice for medical personnel required to treat those affected by them. The Guides will be of direct use to supervisors and those in workplaces who are responsible for workers' health and safety. At still a higher level of detail are the WHO's "Environmental Health Criteria", summarising available scientific and medical knowledge about the health effects of a significant number of

chemicals.

Despite these efforts, participants at the meeting were told, only a small fraction of existing chemicals which workers come into contact with have even been tested for short or long term health effects. More new substances come into use every day, making the matter worse. To cope with this demand, the UN has established an International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals. This register contains scientific information about toxic effects and, in a computer data base, details of legal regulations governing chemical use in a number of industrialised countries.

The ITF was represented at the meeting by Research Secretary David Cockroft.

## Spotlight on communications

Improving the way trade unions communicate with their members, the press and the public at large was the theme of two recent international meetings in which the ITF took part.

The joint ICFTU-ITS consultation on "The Perception of Trade Unions by the Media" which took place in Brussels on 17-19 November was a direct response to a call made by the ITF to the General Conference of international trade secretariats in January this year. It brought together press officers and trade union journalists from national union centres and international trade secretariats together with professional journalists to discuss how to improve the coverage of trade unions in the general media (newspapers, radio, TV etc.), how to improve unions' own communications

with their members (union journals, using video or other mass media techniques), and how the ITS's and the ICFTU could cooperate together better to improve the general flow of information about policies and activities in the international trade union movement.

A more professional approach to the handling of press information could improve media coverage of union activities, it was suggested, although in many countries the anti-union bias of many papers, TV stations etc. presented a major problem. As far as the union press was concerned, with a few exceptions it tended to be unattractive and was not widely read even by trade union members. One problem was that it was often seen as a tool of propaganda rather than information. It is better that trade union members should learn even

unpleasant facts from their union than from the general media, the participants agreed.

Following on the theme of communications was a conference held in London on 20 November on the use of Video. Unions from the UK, United States and Sweden, as well as a number of political organisations showed clips of TV programmes and videos which they had produced and discussed the advantages and disadvantages. Amongst the speakers was Julie Graves of the ITF affiliated US Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) who demonstrated how video and satellite 'teleconferencing' had been a potent force in keeping the pilots together during the United strike.

The ITF was represented at both these meetings by Research and Publications Secretary David Cockroft.



# SEAFARERS

## ITF wage rate remains the same

The minimum monthly wage for an Able Seaman serving on ships flying Flags of Convenience (Foc) which is acceptable to the ITF will remain at its current level of \$821 for a further 12 months from January 1 1987.

This decision was taken by a Sub-Committee of the ITF's Fair Practices Committee which met in London on 24 November.

Calculations prepared by the ITF Secretariat based upon a weighted average

of wages in the countries of beneficial ownership of Foc ships showed that an increase by 3.4 per cent to a new rate of \$849 was justified by wage and currency movements since the rate was last revised in 1983.

The Sub-Committee, recognising the difficult state of the world shipping market and taking account of increases in the annual leave provisions of the ITF Collective Agreement due to take effect from January, decided, however, to leave the AB rate, against which other ITF

acceptable wages and benefits are calculated, at its present level for another year.

Amongst other items on the Sub-Committee's agenda was the question of how to treat Foc ships owned and crewed by nationals of countries without ITF affiliates such as Poland, Yugoslavia and the People's Republic of China. It decided that to comply with ITF policy, such ships must sign ITF acceptable agreements on the same basis as any other Flag of Convenience ship.

## High-tech distress system challenged

The future maritime distress system is an issue of major concern for all seafarers.

This point was emphasised by a special ITF Seafarers' Section meeting on the Future Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (FGMDSS) held on November 21 in London.

The meeting discussed in detail the plans for a new telecommunications system for ship safety. Four draft ITF position papers on the new system were approved by the delegates, which have now been forwarded to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) which is responsible for taking decisions about the System's implementation.

The issue, too often shrouded in technical language, is vital to the future of safety at sea.

The new system proposes a combined set up of satellite and shore based communications systems operating in different global communications zones as a replacement for the radiocommunications equipment presently used.

The ITF's chief concern is that what was originally a proposal to experiment with the new system, in order to establish whether or not it worked better than the present radio/morse code based distress system has, since the end of the 1970s, developed into a mad rush to establish the new system without sufficient evaluation or testing. Economic considerations, championed by some Western nations, are in danger of

obscuring the crucial questions of reliability and effectiveness.

The new systems are very expensive but shipowners hope to recoup the money by dispensing with the services of a trained radio officer. Yet this move is likely actually to decrease the effectiveness of safety and distress systems.

The radio officer's role is crucial in a number of ways. He is responsible for maintaining communications during an emergency: it is at exactly this point that the absence of a radio officer would be felt.

A new technology communications system will not be flawless. But without a skilled technician on board capable of repairing the equipment, there will be a greater danger of ships having no communications because of breakdown. Proposals that the new system could work on duplicated or triplicated circuitry and replaceable circuit boards are not realistic. Errors can occur between circuit boards, and even triplicated systems (which are more expensive than present cost projections) have been known to fail.

Shore based maintenance would inevitably mean long delays waiting for spare parts or skilled repairmen. This has been acknowledged by shipowners, who have already proposed that, under the new system, ships could, in certain circumstances, leave port without repairs. This, as pointed out during the ITF

meeting, could actually mean that a ship would be allowed to sail from Vancouver to Yokohama without a functioning communications system.

The new system also proposes to shift the burden of responsibility in an emergency from ships receiving distress calls to the shore based systems. This introduction of a third party reduces the moral responsibility on individual ships to answer a distress call and introduces another step in the process which can cause delay or error in assisting a ship.

Technical problems still proliferate with satellite based communications. Certain meteorological conditions can put satellite communications out of order, and, as remarked on in the ITF meeting, satellite information is not always reliable.

For example, one of the Pacific satellite systems waits for a second confirmation of a distress signal (which means the satellite has to orbit the earth one more time, a crucial delay) because of the great number of non-existent distress signals it registers. A delay of four or five hours may well be the difference between life and death.

Within the IMO many countries are now coming out against the proposals to rush ahead with the FGMDSS. Many developing countries are dubious of what they see as a Western sponsored leap into an untried and untested new technology. Trade union arguments, particularly about safety and maintenance of the new equipment, are gaining ground.

# French unions to strike against new Foc

A series of rolling 72 hour general strikes have been called by all French maritime unions during the period 8 to 20 December.

The strikes, which will affect all French vessels when they arrive in port, are in protest against the government's decision to transfer 12 bulk carriers to the

new offshore convenience flag of Kerguelen and against the terms of a new plan for the maritime industry being advanced by Shipping minister Ambroise Guellec which threatens the social protection of all French seafarers. The 'Guellec Plan' envisages a number of measures designed to assist the financial position of French shipowners including

a cut in the period during which seafarers receive sickness pay from 4 months to 1.

In response to a request from the ITF's French affiliates FO and CFDT, seafarers' and dockers' unions worldwide have been informed of the planned strike and asked to provide all possible practical and solidarity assistance to striking crews in foreign ports.

## Japanese take stand on crew levels

A new hard line policy on Japanese owned Flag of Convenience ships was announced by the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) in October.

From now on, according to JSU International Department Secretary (and ITF Inspector) Masahiko Nakamura, every Japanese owned ship must have at least five Japanese crewmembers who are members of JSU and paid according to the Japanese Collective Agreement if they are to get the green light for an ITF agreement.

This move is part of a more aggressive attitude towards Japanese shipowners by the union which has up to now tolerated foreign crews manning Japanese FOC vessels provided they received ITF wages and conditions. It also reflects the growing number of unemployed Japanese seafarers - around 1500 are registered as unemployed with the union and the total is substantially higher.

Nearly 20 per cent of the world's Foc ships are Japanese owned and more than 50% of these ships are currently sailing with an ITF "Blue Certificate".

The new policy was strongly endorsed

by the 47th Ordinary Convention of JSU which took place in Tokyo from 11 to 15 November. Union President Doi was reelected to his position by the Convention, which also agreed to create a new seafarers' welfare facility in Tokyo Port.

## Gulf war zone review demanded

The widening of attacks in recent weeks to merchant ships over a far wider area of the Gulf and the bombing of the oil loading terminal at Larak Island in the Straits of Hormuz has led seafarers' organisations in a number of countries to seek an urgent review of the area within the Gulf war risk zone.

Both Danish and British shipowners have agreed to extend the zone to longitude 56° 30 minutes East and thus to include Bandar Abbas, Hormuz and Larak Islands in the area for which war risk premiums will be paid to seafarers. Other countries are known to be considering the new situation and are expected to take similar action in the coming weeks.

## Cyprus cracks down on small ship conditions

The Cyprus government is cracking down on safety standards for its register's smaller vessels.

Most International Maritime Organisation (IMO) conventions do not apply to vessels under 500 tons, but the government have announced that they intend to introduce special legislation within the next two or three months to extend the cover of many IMO

conventions, such as safety of life at sea (SOLAS).

Nearly 500 of the 1,600 vessels registered in Cyprus are under 500 tons and will be affected by the move.

\*\* Malta, one of the Foc registers with the worst casualty records, has recently ratified the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention.

## EC shipping policy deal possible

European Transport ministers meet later this month to grapple with the elusive proposals for a common European Community shipping policy.

Proposals from the EC Commission, which concentrate on increasing the level of competition within the EC and between the EC and third parties (with little reference to the social and economic considerations of seafarers), split the transport ministers at their June meeting when they last discussed the issue.

Now it appears that the British government is willing to put aside the Commission's proposals on the elimination of coastal trade reservation (cabotage) in order to seek a general

agreement amongst member states on the less controversial elements of the proposed policy. Greece, in particular, has stridently opposed the elimination of its own coastal and inter-island cabotage.

In September the European Parliament criticised the Commission's proposals for failing to put forward a strategy to counter the growth of flags of convenience and develop the European fleets. The Parliamentary resolution stated that the assembly:

"Considers it of the utmost importance that for the pressing problems of 'flagging out', 'flags of convenience' and technically and socially substandard vessels, the Community should take the

appropriate measures; regrets the fact that the third memorandum has adopted the one sided view that such practices are an economic necessity while, in reality, they are a means of exploitation not consistent with the Treaty's obligations to enhance the working conditions and the standard of living for seafarers; considers it of the utmost importance that Community shipping policy should aim to create a climate that will ensure the maintenance of EEC tonnage."

The resolution also notes that the flag of convenience system "entails unfair practices" such as the "lack or prevention of effective trade union organization."

# Unions fight for Argentinian fleet

A one day strike was called by maritime unions in Argentina on November 25 as part of their campaign in support of the national merchant fleet.

Nine maritime unions have established a Coordinating Committee to oppose the policies of the Argentinian government towards the national fleet which have brought about a severe shipping crisis (30% of the deep sea fleet is currently either laid up or has been sold) and led to the almost total disappearance of national flag ships from the Argentinian river system.

In a pamphlet produced by the Coordinating Committee, the unions condemn the government's policy of chartering in foreign ships at a time when so much of national flag tonnage is laid up. The unions also accuse the government of failing to comply with existing regulations, particularly those on cabotage and cargo reservation drawn up with the aim of protecting the national fleet.


The effects on seafarers had been devastating; there had been a record number of job losses in recent months.

The unions are demanding a firm government commitment to a national maritime transport policy which gives preference to the Argentinian flag for the

**¿Sabe Ud. lo que se podría hacer con los 800 millones de dólares pagados al exterior en concepto de FLETE?**

- 113.000 Escuelas Rurales
- Pavimentar 15.066 Km de Ruta
- 90.000 Viviendas
- Aguinaldo extra de ~~A~~ 350 a cada Jubilado

**"LOS RECURSOS DEL ESTADO VENDEDOR ESTAN EN MANOS DEL ESTADO NAVEGANTE"**  
MANUEL BELGRANO



*Union publicity from the Argentinian campaign.*

country's trade, especially exports of grain (only 4% of grain exports to the USSR in 1985 were carried in Argentine flag ships). This should be complemented by a planned renewal of the country's ageing fleet, which is increasingly unable to compete with the modern vessels operated by the developed nations.

Such a policy should also ensure that

proper use was made of cheap river transport, possibly through the introduction of a system of cargo reservation such as that in force in Paraguay. The unions are particularly scathing about the indifference of the Argentinian authorities in the face of the Uruguayan intention to develop the port of Montevideo as the marine terminal of the Argentinian river system.

## UN treaty on terrorism gains support

The International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) proposals for a new international treaty on terrorism is winning widespread support, says IMO Secretary General C. P. Srivastava.

The recommendations, which emerged from the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) in September, were presented to the full IMO Council in November. Srivastava is reported as saying that the strong support shown for the proposals indicates that it might be adopted as a treaty by 1988.

The MSC approved measures designed to cut down the risk of terrorist or other attacks on the passengers or crew of ships at its meeting in London from 8 to 17 September, 1986. The measures aim to prevent any repetition of incidents like the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in 1985.

The IMO recommendations cover: security plans for ships and ports; reporting of unlawful acts; security surveys; security measures procedures and

devices; security training and exchange of information. They are intended for application to passenger ships engaged in international voyages of 24 hours or more and to the port facilities which serve such ships.

The IMO recommendations also require governments to designate an authority to ensure the development, implementation and maintenance of ship

and port security plans.

The IMO's legal committee now plans a special meeting to discuss the measures as a proposed International Treaty, which will be followed by two working group meetings to draft the Convention next spring, and, if all goes well, a diplomatic conference to adopt the Treaty in Spring 1988.

## Nigeria halts calls by state line

Nigeria's state owned shipping company has suspended all calls at European ports fearing arrest of ships for unpaid debts.

The Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL) is reported to need to pay over US\$9 million in order to clear all outstanding claims. The government have recalled all ships until this money is paid, to prevent ships from being tied

up, and potentially sold, due to arrests.

At least five NNSL ships have been arrested in European ports this year, and one, the *River Rima*, is still under arrest at Liverpool — although the debtor's claim has been settled and the ship sale cancelled.

The government is expected to clear its debts early in the new year, and the ships will be unfrozen at that time.

# 'Poison ship' owner sought by crew

A former bartender turned shipowner with shady connections is now embroiled in a fight with his former crew over back wages and compensation for loss of belongings.

Günter Janssen, a Bremerhaven bar manager by trade who heard about the lucrative possibilities of running a flag of convenience ship from people who drank in his bar, was operating the "Olaf" under the British Grand Cayman Islands flag of convenience.

The last voyage of the Olaf came to an abrupt and unromantic end last July 7 off Den Helder in the Netherlands. The ship had sailed from Ålborg, Denmark

"an illegal cargo of 3,500 tonnes of toxic cadmium and arsenic contaminated mud"

carrying an illegal cargo of 3,500 tonnes of toxic cadmium and arsenic-contaminated mud bound for Great Britain where the poisonous goods were to be reprocessed.

The dry cargo vessel, not designed for this kind of a load, soon encountered difficulties in rough seas. The solid parts of the load soon sank to the bottom of the hull, leaving the liquid free to splash around in the hold. The waves inside the hold ruptured the hatch coaming so that water was free to enter the space between the hold and the outer plating. The ship listed dangerously, but, during the first few hours of the emergency the crew were not allowed to send off distress signals because the owner still hoped to reach the port of destination without alerting the authorities to his illegal cargo, crew members claim.

After five hours of precarious listing, a Dutch frigate arrived and took the crew on board. The frigate had to use its own lifeboats because the Olaf's were unserviceable.

The ship sank in 28 metres of water, and salvaging took over five weeks. The salvagers are claiming expenses from Janssen, but they don't expect to receive anything. Reports indicate that the Olaf was not insured.

Janssen is, in fact, proving very hard to locate. His Bremerhaven lawyer has refused to reply to any letters from the salvage company and the shipowner appears to have disappeared.

In a bizarre twist, one Bremerhaven

newspaper reports that Janssen is staying at the house of another notorious Bremerhaven seafarer— Captain Wolfgang Bindel, the man who is alleged to have shipped Tamil refugees to Canada for DM750,000.

It is also rumoured that it was Janssen who suggested the shipping of the Tamils to Canada to Captain Bindel. Bindel had bought the "Aurigae" from Janssen but couldn't keep up with his payments. Janssen, according to the Bremerhaven newspapers, offered to find people seeking asylum who would pay enough for their passage so that Bindel could pay off his debt and make some ready profit.

Janssen is also being pursued by his former crewmembers, who are owed back wages and have yet to receive any compensation for belongings lost when

the Olaf sank. Crewmembers are individually owed between 3,500 DM and over 36,000 DM. The ITF-affiliated ÖTV in the Federal Republic is supporting the men's claims and has appointed a lawyer to pursue Janssen in the courts.

Meanwhile, the issue of responsibility for the ship's sinking remains a matter of dispute. Janssen has, apparently, been attempting to lay the blame for the accident on the Chief Engineer — while the crew blame the owner for using the wrong kind of vessel to ship an illegal cargo.

The British government, embarrassed by the affair and the bad light it throws on a Crown Colony's flag of convenience register, have "responded" to a carefully orchestrated request from the colony to hold a Department of Trade investigation into the sinking.

## Kowloon Bridge sinking : link with Derbyshire tragedy?

The sinking of the Hong Kong registered combination carrier *Kowloon Bridge* off the coast of Ireland at the end of November has highlighted the potential design weakness of this type of ship.

Fortunately no lives were lost when the *Kowloon Bridge* went down, but her sister ship, the *Derbyshire*, disappeared mysteriously without a trace off the Japanese coast in 1980 with the loss of 44 lives.

The ITF-affiliated Hong Kong Merchant Navy Officers' Guild has called for a government enquiry into possible design faults of the ships — three of the *Kowloon Bridge's* six sisterships fly the Hong Kong flag. Relatives of the *Derbyshire* crew members have also renewed their call for a British government enquiry into the 1980 disappearance.

Concern centres on the fact that the ships appear to have a tendency to develop deep cracks in midship — scientists at Bradford University in Great Britain have argued that the design of the ship actually makes such severe cracking a certainty in a strong storm.

In Great Britain, opposition Labour Party transport spokesman Roger Stott has called for a full public enquiry into the structural deficiencies of the ships, but the British government have only agreed to hold an enquiry into the sinking of the one ship. If this reveals that there were design deficiencies, they may hold a further enquiry.

## Dutch strike stops North Sea flagging out plan

Strike action by crews of vessels owned by Dutch support ship operators Smit-Lloyd in November hit company vessels in ports as wide apart as Britain, the Netherlands, Singapore and the Philippines.

The strike was called by the Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ) in protest at the company's plans to meet the recession in the oil industry by cutting back its fleet and transferring several of its ships to the Bahamian flag, replacing the Dutch crews with Filipinos. These plans threaten one in three of the current workforce.

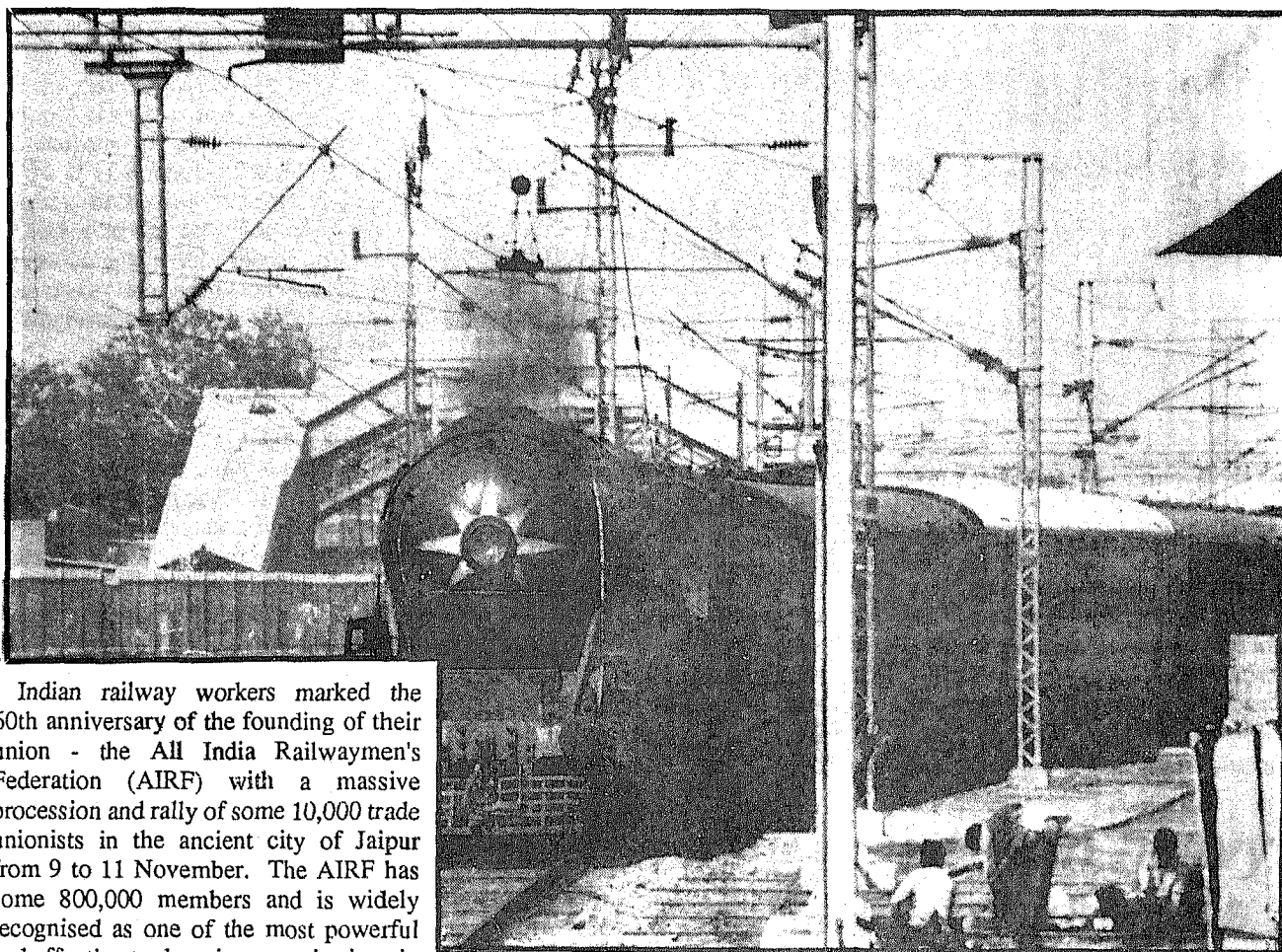
The FWZ is urging the company not to employ foreign crews and to agree that surplus labour should be reduced by voluntary redundancy rather than through compulsory retrenchment.

The strike was called off after two days when the management agreed to reconsider its reorganisation plans.



# INLAND TRANSPORT

## AIRF union rally draws 10,000



Indian railway workers marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of their union - the All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) with a massive procession and rally of some 10,000 trade unionists in the ancient city of Jaipur from 9 to 11 November. The AIRF has some 800,000 members and is widely recognised as one of the most powerful and effective trade union organisations in Asia.

The length of the AIRF's links with the ITF - almost as old as the union itself - was emphasised by the guest of honour at the rally, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, who referred to the recognition given to the ITF's fight against colonialism by one of the fathers of Indian independence Pandit Nehru. The AIRF was, Lewis said, a fine example of a trade union organisation which had stuck steadfastly throughout its history to basic principles and above all to its independence from all external influences and pressures in the pursuit of its members' interests.

The rally was held in conjunction with the 60th annual convention of the union at which Umraomal Purohit was reelected Federation President. The ITF was represented at the Convention by Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary M S Hoda.



# Cab noise 'a threat to health'

'It's as if there were an echo chamber between the cab and the body of the truck' says Åke Karlsson.

What Åke is describing is the noise made when he opens the roof panel on his cab; the noise level - already high - is magnified, making conversation between the driver and anyone in the passenger seat impossible. Although the cab is equipped with two way radio to enable the company to keep in touch with its drivers it is doubtful if a voice at the other end of the line could be heard over the racket in the cab. Not surprisingly, drivers complain that the constant cab noise makes their head buzz after driving for any distance.

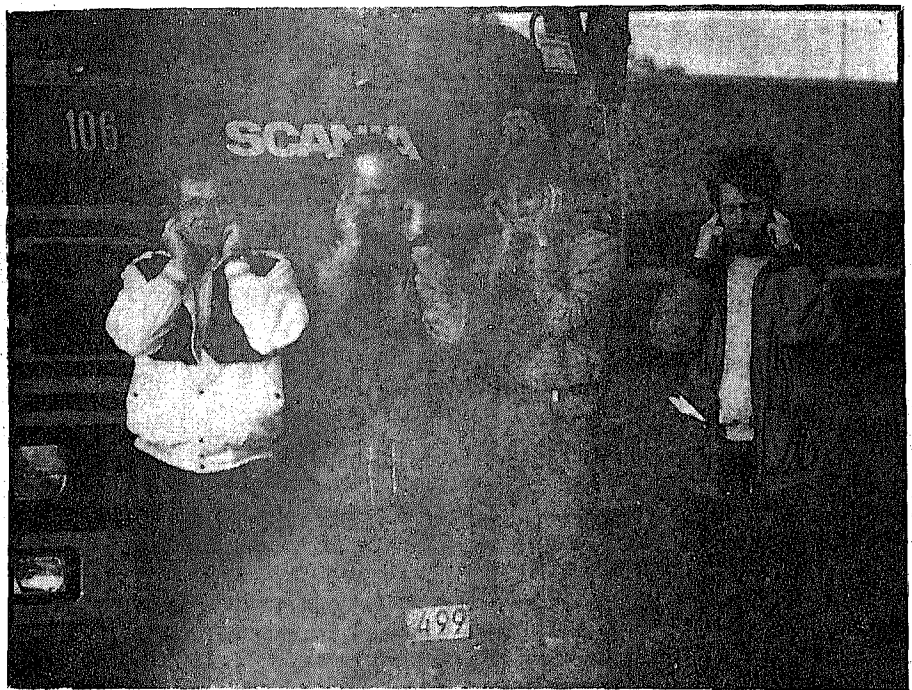
## Brand New Truck

These drivers are not talking about an old truck on its way to the scrapyard. The object of their anger is the brand new Scania 142 Intercooler which has come under fierce criticism from this and other employees of the Adamsson haulage company based in the southern Swedish town of Jönköping since they first started driving it earlier this year.

These complaints have found their way into the magazine of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union (STF) which is concerned for the effects that the noise will have on drivers' health. Independent measurement of the noise levels confirmed that they were above those set by the Swedish Workers' Protection Board. When the roof is closed, decibel readings of 76 dbA (the upper limit of the recommended range) were obtained. With the roof open, levels rose to an astonishingly high 88 dbA. Scania's reply to these criticisms was to agree that readings of up to 76 dbA had been recorded with the cab roof closed (better than older models) but to argue that the ventilation system in the cabs is so good (there is a complete change of air in about a minute) that it did not consider it necessary to check noise levels with the roof open.

According to one of Adamsson's drivers the reason for the excessive noise is the poor insulation of the cab floor. He tells of one driver who glued an extra layer of insulation around the foot pedals, which helped - but, he adds, this should hardly be necessary in a truck costing around half a million Swedish kroner!

Objections to the Scania Intercooler cab don't stop at the noise - bad enough



*Åke Karlsson and his colleagues from the Swedish Transport Union experiencing the earsplitting noise from the Scania Intercooler truck*

as it clearly is. The drivers find the cab very cramped. For those above medium height it is a real squeeze, while the space between the driver and passenger seat - a handy spot for stowing documentation and personal effects - has been removed from the new cab. In

general the drivers feel that more space has been won for the load at the expense of driver comfort. Scania seemed to agree with this assessment but believes that Sweden has a better record than other countries, with most of the new cabs introduced being of generous proportions.

## Driver fatigue cited in heavy Danish road accident rate

Higher technical standards and measures to reduce driver fatigue would help improve the safety record of heavy goods vehicles on Danish roads - one fatal accident in five now involves a truck - according to a recent Danish road safety conference convened to discuss the problem. Representatives of SiD (the haulage drivers' union) and the employers took part in the conference together with spokesmen for the various government agencies responsible for road safety and vehicle inspection. The traffic division of the Danish police was also represented.

It was the unanimous opinion of all parties that a combination of factors - driver fatigue, vehicle overloading and long journeys - were behind these alarming statistics.

SiD transport group official Leif Rasmussen said that drivers were under pressure to drive excessively long distances, carry extra heavy loads and skimp on rest periods. The employers' representative agreed with this analysis; the driver's lorry was his workplace, he said, and as such should be well ordered, although this was far from being the case. Overloading was a particularly intractable problem - the regulations needed tightening up and the authorities must not fight shy of prosecuting anyone overstepping the law.

The road safety board spokesman said that most accidents were the result of faults in the vehicle itself and the area of technical standards was where efforts needed concentrating - the remedy lay in technical improvements such as eliminating blind spots by the installation of mirrors (he found it incredible in 1986 that this advice should still be necessary) and better brakes so that the stopping distances laid down in the regulations could be improved on.

# Latin American road transport 'in chaos'

Over 100 delegates from 21 trade unions attended the 4th ITF Latin American Road Transport Workers' Conference from 26 November to 28 November in Panama City, Panama.

The delegates discussed conditions in the region's road transport industry. In the absence of any legislative framework for transport, disorganised chaos best sums up the state of road transport in Latin America today, they concluded.

In Central America and the South American countries of the Andean region both passenger and freight transport is almost exclusively in the hands of owner-drivers and small scale operators whose employees are either self-employed or sub-contracted.

In the South American countries bordering the Atlantic, there is, in general, a much larger proportion of large operating companies whose staff have the status of employees.

Working conditions in the industry are poor throughout the region. Driving and working hours are excessively long and wages low. Piece rate payments and the absence of proper social security benefits are also serious problems.



On the more positive side, trade union influence in the industry is relatively strong, with the absence of proper regulations being partially compensated for by the formation of co-operatives and the control by trade unions of functions such as the issuing of driving and operating licences.

The conference adopted 18 resolutions. The unions called for the introduction and enforcement of an eight hour day with a

living wage, for better health and safety conditions, a healthier working environment, greater respect for trade union rights and pledged to develop greater contact and co-operation between themselves and the ITF.

The ITF was represented by Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers, and J. Fonseca and J. Cruz from the ITF Lima office.

## Union rights still denied in Turkey

Trade unionists from several European countries attended the Congress of the Turkish Railway Workers' Trade Union Federation (DYF-IS) held in Ankara at the beginning of October. Speaking at the opening ceremony, which was attended by delegates representing 50,000 railway workers, union President Mehmet Acidereli attacked the government of Prime Minister Turgut Özal. He criticised the government for restricting union freedoms, particularly the right to strike which was so hedged in with restrictions (he cited the requirement to enter into compulsory arbitration, often over many months, and the complete freedom employers enjoyed to replace strikers by blacklegs) that it was virtually impossible for unions to take strike action.

He also accused the government of keeping the unions in a state of tutelage and treating them with condescension as well as of pursuing policies that were favourable to capital and against the interests of the workers, so much so that even the country's labour laws favoured the rights of employers rather than those of the workers. He charged Özal with trying to turn Turkey into a European country using the methods of 200 years ago.

Acidereli was re-elected to office by the Congress, as were the four other members of the union's executive.

## Austrian truckers get better training

Moves have been made in Austria towards the introduction of formal vocational training for truck drivers. After years of opposition the employers have at last agreed to a vocational training experiment for drivers lasting five days initially which if successful will be built up into a formal system of professional qualification which all new entrants to the profession will be required to undergo.

Unions in Austria have long been concerned that drivers are seen as nothing more than 'auxiliary workers with a licence' and that men responsible for valuable loads who need considerable driving skills safely to steer the very heavy and technically sophisticated vehicles on the roads today receive no proper training.

The transport workers' unions hope that experienced drivers will also have the chance to take part in voluntary courses and examinations leading to a professional qualification.

**\*\***Over six thousand Austrian truck drivers have made use of the union mobile advisory service that came into being at the beginning of the year. The service is operated from a converted minibus manned by two union secretaries, travelling constantly up and down the major routes used by long distance drivers. Wage queries have accounted for a great many of the consultations, while alleged breaches of the driving hours regulations have been reported to the relevant inspectorate.



# Fair road/rail competition needed, ITF tells transport ministers

The "obsession" of European Community governments with promoting road freight and the threat posed to transport workers' jobs and conditions by moves to liberalise the transport market in Western Europe were the twin themes of a paper presented to the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) by ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers at a meeting in Paris on 19 November.

The ECMT, which is an intergovernmental body bringing together transport ministers from Western European countries, was holding a consultation meeting with international organisations on plans to strengthen Europe's transport infrastructure. In recent years the organisation's policy coordinating role has taken a back seat as the European Community (EC) has become more aggressive in pushing forward the frontiers of deregulation in the transport market.

## Equality of Treatment

The direct application of the principles of free competition to transport is a nonsense, the ITF statement stressed, because the infrastructure which transport operators use (roads, rails, waterways) are all reliant on government decisions. Fair competition between different transport modes can only exist when there is equality of treatment in the way that governments levy charges for using the infrastructure. At the same time a consistent system of compensation for services of a social or public service nature must also be agreed.

The major problem facing freight transport planning today, Brothers pointed out, is the 'obsession' of the European Community with developing the free market in order to favour road haulage over all transport modes. Although paying lip service to the concept of combined transport, EC policies ignore the fact that massive public investment in freight transfer centres will be necessary to make the idea work.

Amongst other points touched on by the ITF paper were:

- the need to clarify what is happening about customs and immigration controls between EC countries
- the massive increase in road maintenance costs caused by the decision to increase lorry axle weights

- the risk of increased road accidents as well as worsened working conditions which would arise from attempts to boost the amount of freight shifted at night

- the need to reduce road congestion (an idea the ITF proposed was a study on whether special 'lorry lanes' should be designated on multi-lane roads through Europe)

- the need to study the implications for freight movement on completion of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal link

- the need to stop the introduction of

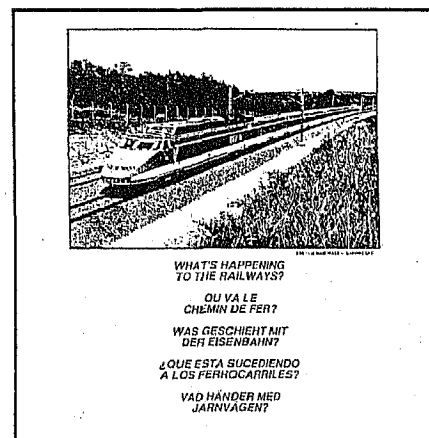
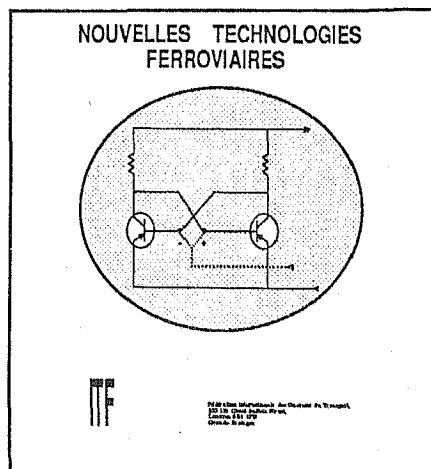
the US super container (48ft long and 9ft6" high) which is incompatible with European road and rail standards.

The whole thrust of European governments' transport policy at present, Brothers concluded, is to cut costs whether through abandoning merchant fleets to unscrupulous f-o-c operators or by letting foreign freight operators set up in national markets with nothing more than a fictitious address in the country concerned. These policies threaten job safety and working conditions.

## Two new ITF rail books

The ITF has just published two resource books for railway affiliates.

*WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE RAILWAYS?* is a multilingual compendium of railway statistics from a number of countries with ITF affiliates. Tables and charts illustrate levels of state investment, levels of goods and passenger traffic, and a host of vital statistics on the world's railway networks.



*NEW RAILWAY TECHNOLOGY* is a product of the ITF Railwaymen's Section technology working group. Available in all ITF languages, it contains a number of detailed articles by trade unionists on various technological aspects of the railways.

Both are now being sent to affiliated railwaymen's unions and are available on request from the ITF.

## ITF Rail Week in 1988

The next stage of the ITF's campaign to promote Europe's railways will culminate in a mass rally of railway workers in Frankfurt in the spring of 1988. The rally, to which politicians, railway users and railway administrations will be invited, will be the focal point of European Railways Week.

This was one of the decisions taken by a subcommittee of the ITF Railwaymen's Section which met in Bremen on 11-12 November. The meeting also decided to approach representatives of the International Union of Railways (UIC) to discuss issues such as transport policy, the development of high speed railways and the introduction of new technologies.

More cross-border union action in favour of the railways is also planned along the lines of the recent campaign by Austrian and German railway unions which distributed more than 2 million leaflets to the public explaining the case for more investment in the railways and their opposition to job cuts.

# CIVIL AVIATION

## *IATA moves against Nigeria*

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has suspended Nigeria Airways from its ticketing clearing house facilities.

The move comes after many weeks of escalating tension between the Nigerian government and international airlines concerning fares following the introduction of a two-tier foreign exchange system (see ITF News November 1986).

But IATA insist that the suspension has nothing to do with the other dispute, citing, instead, Nigeria Airways' UK£9 million debt to the organisation as the basis for suspension.

IATA's position is that Nigeria, having failed to remit their August monies to the IATA clearing house, faced automatic suspension at the beginning of December according to IATA regulations.

However, representatives of Nigeria Airways told *West Africa* magazine that the £9.2 million owed had been placed in a London bank account at 4pm on Monday December 1st — covering the remittance in time, according to Nigeria Airways, to avoid suspension.

The IATA clearing house system allows member airlines to sell tickets for flights on other IATA carriers, with a standard currency conversion — calculated by IATA — determining the price. IATA calculates and decides the revenues from these sales, periodically either issuing remittances for deficits or payments for surpluses to the respective airlines. The methods of calculating costs have recently been criticised by another African airline, Air Afrique, who claim that third world airlines do not get a fair share of the revenue from IATA.

Nigeria Airways, while suspended from the clearing house, remains a member of IATA. In order to rejoin the clearing house, however, they will have not only to pay their outstanding debt, but also remittances for September, October and November. The clearing house may also ask for a bond to be posted as security against future defaults.

Meanwhile, a temporary truce has been declared in the dispute within Nigeria between the government and foreign airlines.

Following the introduction of a secondary currency exchange market at the beginning of October, with a consequent 300 per cent devaluation of the Naira, foreign airlines in Nigeria refused to sell tickets in the local currency unless they were granted an equivalent fare rise.

The airlines have now accepted a 94 per cent fare increase as "an interim measure" on condition that talks continue with the government for a further increase. Reports from within Nigeria have also indicated that the IATA threat to suspend Nigeria Airways was linked to this dispute.

Though the airlines have agreed to sell tickets in Naira, they appear to be restricting the numbers they sell. British Caledonian is only selling Naira tickets on condition that they are for flights to the UK and are bought directly through BCal offices. Swissair is restricting Naira ticket sales to one flight out of Nigeria — passengers wishing to interline or

travel beyond Zurich are being asked to pay for the additional segment in foreign currency.

The Nigerian press have also reported that the European airlines in Nigeria have been secretly plotting to stop the sale of Naira tickets unless they are granted a further increase. According to the local press, planning meetings have been held under the auspices of the Board of Airline Representatives (BAR). African airline representatives were deliberately excluded from these meetings, which has led to a delegation of African airline representatives denouncing the "exploitative" attitude of the Europeans.

Nigerian Aviation Minister Brigadier Jerry Useni, meanwhile, has renewed his threat to close down the offices of any airline that refuses to sell tickets in Naira and throw them out of the country, saying that any airline who does not believe their service to be viable should quit Nigeria.

### **Noumea : Cabin crew strike UTA**

Cabin Crew personnel stationed in Noumea, in the French Pacific colony of New Caledonia are striking against UTA demanding equal conditions with their French based colleagues.

The dispute involves 80 UTA cabin crew staff who have been without a collective agreement since 1975. French cabin crew union SNPNC are demanding that the airline accept the same collective agreement for staff in New Caledonia as their Paris based counterparts.

### **France : Olympic sack nine**

A decision by the management of Olympic Airways in France to dismiss 9 of its ground staff employees has been strongly condemned by the ITF affiliated transport union FGTE CFDT. Protests were made to the airline management by the ITF and the Greek aviation unions and a publicity leaflet has been distributed.

### **UK : Engineers and pilots link up**

Britain's airline pilots' and flight engineers' unions have linked up in a move designed to strengthen their trade union representation. The flight engineers will retain their full membership of the officers' union NUMAST with access to its legal and other services. At the same time, the British Air Line Pilots' Association (BALPA) has agreed to provide local representation and professional services for the category from its London headquarters. A NUMAST official has been seconded to BALPA for this purpose.



# Indian Aviation Safety Plan

A major union campaign to boost safety awareness amongst civil aviation workers in India was one of the results of a three day ITF seminar recently held near Bombay.

The seminar, which took place from November 14 to 16 brought together over 50 trade unionists whose main aim was to assist them in improving their members' working environment.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis opened the meeting, and Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary M.S. Hoda and Dr. Tord Kjellström of the World Health Organisation (WHO) guided the sessions.

The meeting was divided into four groups representing technical ground staff, non-technical airport ground staff, administrative ground staff and flight crews.

The three days of intensive discussion produced a number of conclusions

- the importance on union-management consultation on health and safety;
- the need to set up joint occupational health and safety committees at all levels in all workplaces;
- the right of workers to have full access to information on potential health hazards likely to affect them.
- that management should bear full responsibility for providing healthy, hygienic and safe working conditions.

• the need to establish an information centre and data base on health and safety issues.

The ITF Co-ordinating committee of Indian Civil Aviation workers is to draw

up a charter of specific demands on occupational health and safety, to draw up a model agreement, and to launch a safety awareness campaign among Indian Civil Aviation workers.

## EC air policy talks stalled

European Community (EC) Transport Ministers have failed, yet again, to reach an agreement on civil aviation policy.

The continuing wrangle over deregulation and the interpretation of the competition clauses of the Treaty of Rome (already covered in ITF News May, June/July, and September 1986) remains a sore point within the Community.

On one hand a number of EC states (led by Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands) advocate a limited form of deregulation, while most of the rest are relatively happy with the status quo.

### Court Ruling

Both sides are required, eventually, to reach some form of agreement, however, because of the European Court ruling last April that determined existing airline regulations in Europe to be contrary to the competition rules of the Treaty of Rome which set up the Community.

While this ruling has had no immediate effect, it means that a full legal challenge could throw out the entire structure of civil aviation agreements within the community. Though this legal challenge could take years to work its way up through the courts, it provides a powerful incentive to the ministers to reach a compromise.

In addition various airlines and the EC Commission have also threatened to initiate legal proceedings against member states and national flag carriers unless some deal is reached.

These latest threats, plus the fact that the pro-deregulation British government's six month presidency of the council of ministers ends in December have combined to move the issue of aviation policy to the centre of the political stage.

The British, keen to score some domestic political points from their presidency, have pushed hard to reach a deal. At the last Transport Ministers' meeting on November 11, the British

surprised hard line advocates of deregulation by proposing a compromise.

Essentially they offered to back a full exemption for aviation from the EC competition rules in exchange for three modifications of existing practices:

(1) The removal of restrictions on deep discount fares, such as the five day away or Saturday night stop over to conditions;

(2) The virtual elimination of bilateral deals between airlines that divide seat capacity on routes — many airlines now split traffic on a 50/50 or 60/40 basis on certain specified routes;

(3) Increased access to routes, and allow greater freedom for regional (small airport to small airport) flights.

This compromise — promptly denounced by some of the deregulation and consumer lobby — very nearly succeeded. The first proposal split the ministers, but the last two received 10-2 and 9-3 support. Good, but not good enough in the EC where unanimity is required.

The British were severely disappointed by this failure — and they have, since the November meeting, offered one more carrot to the Greek government (the most fervent opponent of deregulation in the Community). The British government have now publicly offered a transitional exemption for Greece under the new agreement — but there has been no public reply from the Greeks.

### Cut price flights

Meanwhile two British airlines, less than fully impressed with their government's backtracking, have announced that they intend to apply to fly a whole host of European routes at low fares. British Caledonian and Air Europe want to offer cut price flights to most major EC capitals and have said that they will challenge any government in court who refuses to grant them licences.

## Eastern unions outbid Lorenzo

A coalition of three unions representing 44,000 Eastern Airlines employees has put in a counter bid for the airline as part of their continuing campaign to block the proposed sale of the company to union basher Frank Lorenzo's Texas Air. The unions — the pilots, flight attendants and machinists — claim that their bid, for which funding has been agreed, is substantially superior to the agreement reached between Eastern and Texas Air in February under which Texas was to acquire Eastern for \$10 per share in cash and securities. Eastern's employees already own about 25 per cent of the airline's stock.

# DOCKERS

## Higher skills but fewer jobs says ILO

A depressing future for dock employment in both industrialised and developing countries is foreseen in a new study published by the International Labour Office (ILO).

Prepared by Professor A D Couper of the University of Wales the 170 page book updates a 1969 ILO study which eventually led to the adoption of two important ILO instruments on the social protection of dockworkers (Convention 137 and Recommendation 145) in 1973.

The study analyses changes in cargo handling techniques since 1969, looking at improvements in break bulk handling techniques, the growth of containerisation, and the introduction of computers, robots and microelectronic systems to cargo handling. It identifies a new and different form of port automation which is currently taking place and which has different effects from traditional mechanisation.

Microelectronics in the docks will, it says 'replace many of the more intricate human operator skills, and will have a greater impact on clerical than on cargo handling workers.' Further chapters in the report look at employment trends. The past 20 years have, it says, seen dramatic falls in port labour particularly in industrialised countries.

Examples include Antwerp (which has lost 39% of its workforce over the past 20 years); Hamburg (11%); New York (48%); Liverpool (78%) and the Australian ports (55%) Although a few developing countries have seen modest rises in dock labour, most have also experienced a significant fall (eg Dakar 25%, Singapore 65%).

The report makes clear that it is not just technology which is responsible for job losses. Just as important are: the world recession which has particularly hit general cargo volumes; diversion of seaborne trade to road rail or pipelines; and the worldwide growth of inland freight depots or 'dry ports' where non dock labour does work previously carried out by dockers. The conclusion of the report is clear - on any sensible assumptions the likely rise in productivity in the world's ports will be more than enough to absorb any increase

in cargo volume. The outlook for jobs is therefore bleak.

The report also examines decasualisation, gang sizes, wages, working hours and social benefits, labour management negotiations, port worker training, and future technological developments. It stresses that in every country, rich or poor, the ports are becoming among the most technically advanced sectors. Under pressure from shipping lines, new cargo handling techniques are being introduced even in developing countries with low labour

costs. The demand for port labour worldwide will therefore continue to fall and different skills will be needed, underlining the need for developments in training. Whereas once the career expectations of dockworkers were limited to movement from unskilled to semi skilled jobs, it argues, this need no longer be the case.

*Copies of the Report "New cargo handling techniques : implications for port employment and skills" are available (in English only) from ILO sales agents or directly from the ILO 1211 Geneva 22 Switzerland, at a price of Sfr30.*

## US Lines threatens bankruptcy

The parent company of US Lines, one of the world's biggest container ship operators, filed for protection from its creditors under Chapter 11 of the US bankruptcy code on November 24.

The company, McLean Industries, continues to operate its Transpacific Container services while financial reorganisation continues, but its loss making Transatlantic and round the world services have both been stopped. A number of Europe bound US Lines ships were ordered to head back to the USA following the bankruptcy application on fears that they might be arrested by port authorities and other creditors. One ship, the *American Georgia* was arrested in Bremerhaven on December 3 by a number of creditors including European Container Terminal (ECT) and Felixstowe Port Authority.

According to the ITF affiliated National Maritime Union of the US the position of US Lines' employees in the United States is confused at present. A large number of shore based employees have been dismissed and at least five vessels are idle. Crew members are still on board ship but wages and fringe benefits have been frozen by Court action. In Rotterdam where US Lines employed more than 100 shore based clerical and administrative workers, members of the ITF affiliated Vervoersbond FNV have been occupying the company's offices and legal action

has been taken by the company's lawyers for a total of some Dfl 4.7 million in redundancy compensation (approximately 6 months wages per employee). In anticipation of this action the Rotterdam District Court has agreed to the seizure of US Lines Dutch assets.

The dire financial position of the company partly reflects low freight rates in the international container market, but also reflects the decision to buy 12 giant 4,200 TEU ships in 1982 just as the market turned down.

The ITF is cooperating closely with unions in the countries affected by the US Lines decision to alleviate the position of the employees.

## PAY DEALS

•Austria Public service workers (who include railway workers and municipal employees) awarded 2.9% from 1 January 1987

•Cyprus Seafarers, 13% plus loss of life damages Dr1.4 million and Dr450,000 per dependant.

•Great Britain Thomas Cook travel group employees awarded 6.5% from 1 November

•Great Britain Ratings, £3 per week flat rate increase from next January; Officers, 3.4% from their next settlement date

•India Seafarers, 8% from 1 October 1986, followed by 6% from 1 April 1987 under an 18 month agreement.

# Gov't halts Canadian lockout

The Canadian government has taken legal action to halt a four day lockout of British Columbian longshoremen.

The 3,700 dockers, members of the ITF-affiliated Canadian section of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) were locked out on November 16 after the breakdown of contract talks with the 65 companies represented by the British Columbian Maritime Employers' Association.

The workers had been without a contract since December 31 last year, and the central dispute between them was a container handling clause which the employers wanted to drop. The unions maintained that they had a right to protect dockwork, and hence the stuffing of containers.

The 16 year old clause grants ILWU members the right to stuff or strip a

container at the dockside if the contents relate to more than one shipper within a fixed radius of the port.

The employers lock out lasted for only four days, at which point the Canadian federal government rushed through special legislation to end the lock-out. This imposes wage increases of 2 per cent this January and 2 per cent January

1988, and extends the existing contract until 1988 — unless the two sides can reach an agreement on their own.

While the union is unhappy about the government imposed wage settlement, Donald Garcia, president of the Canadian ILWU has said that "The only bright spot in this legislation is that the container clause has survived."

## Port Klang Clerks fired

Despite firm assurances from the Malaysian government that jobs would not be affected by the privatisation in March of the container terminal at Port Klang, twenty tally clerks represented by the Union of Employees of Port Ancillary Services Suppliers (UEPASS) found themselves out of work at the beginning of October.

It is established practice in the port — and has been since the container terminal first started operations — that when a new contractor takes over, the employees of a previous contractor will all be absorbed.

The company now operating the container terminal — the Klang Container Terminal Company — has taken over responsibility for the provision of tally services but has refused to employ 20 tally clerks who have been declared redundant. Union attempts to reach an amicable settlement with the company have failed and the Port Klang Authority, which previously dealt with such matters, now has no power to step in. Left with no other avenue of approach, the union has intervened with the Minister of Labour to secure the right of their members to continued employment at the terminal, and has asked the ITF to assist in resolving the dispute.

## OBITUARIES

Switzerland has lost a prominent trade unionist and leading politician with the death on 23 October, at 73, of **Dr Richard Müller**. His union career spanned over forty years: from General Secretary of the Post, Telephone and Telegraph Workers, he went on to hold a number of the highest posts, including those of president of the national centre, the SGB, and president and vice president respectively of the umbrella organisations of workers in posts and telephones and the public service.

His four years as head of the SGB did much to shape the forward looking image that the centre still enjoys today. His political career began in cantonal government in Berne and soon led to his being elected to the national parliament, where again his progress was marked with a steady rise to the very top of the Social Democratic Party.

He will be remembered as a doughty fighter for a fairer society and for his defence of the rights of workers and the socially disadvantaged.

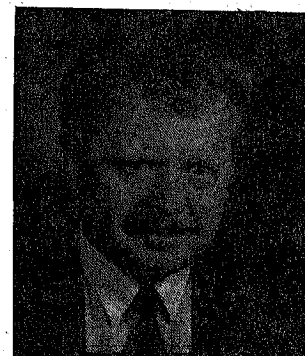
**Luis Somolinos**, who was elected honorary president of the FETC of the Spanish General Workers' Union (UGT) at the union's fourth Congress earlier

this year, died on 14 November after a long and painful illness. Somolinos founded the FETC — the transport and telecommunications section of the union — in 1972 and represented road transport workers on the executive of the UGT. Delegates voted unanimously to make him honorary president in recognition of the total dedication with which he had served the UGT, which he joined in 1933 and to which he remained loyal during the long years of exile in France before the union was able to operate freely again in Spain with the death of Franco.

**Donald MacDonald**, former president of the Canadian Labour Congress, died on 25 September, aged 77. He held the presidency of the CLC for six years until his retirement in 1974, and in his last two years of office also served as the first non European president of the ICFTU.

A former mineworkers' union activist, MacDonald was also for four years leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (the predecessor of today's New Democratic Party) in the Nova Scotia Parliament.

## Bye Bye Bernie



Civil Aviation and Travel Bureau Section Secretary **Bernie Beyerdt** left the ITF last month after two and a half years on secondment from his union the ÖTV, F.R.Germany. His former colleagues at ITF headquarters and members of both sections wish him and his family all the best for the future.