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## UNION DEMANDS RIGHTS, PEACE AND JUSTICE:

# SRI LANKANS PLAN GENERAL STRIKE

Sri Lanka will be hit by a general strike on March 5th as trade unionists protest against government policy and demand the full restoration of human and trade union rights.

The general strike is being called by the ITF's Sri Lankan affiliate, the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) to demand "democratic and human rights and peace and justice".

The union decided to issue the strike call following a General Council meeting on January 8. The union has issued a special public statement outlining the issues at stake in the strike:

•The CMU protests the "war policy" of the government and the "continuing repression that is taking place throughout the country under the long continuing state of emergency including attacks upon trade union rights". The CMU, which has members in both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities, adopted a policy at last year's Congress calling for a negotiated settlement to

Continued on page 2

# ESAU RANKHOLO: Released from detention

After four and half months of detention without trial, Esau Rankholo, General Secretary of the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU) has been released — without so much as a hint of why he was ever held in the first place.

Rankholo — whose detention was the subject of an intense international protest campaign by ITF affiliates — telephoned the ITF on Monday February 2 to say that he had been freed that weekend.

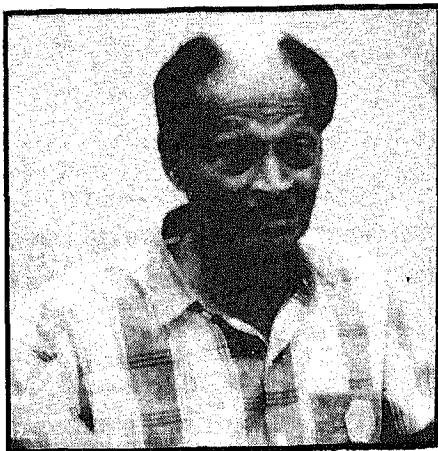
"Our circulars received an unprecedented response from affiliates throughout the world and there is no doubt that they have contributed to Esau's release," said ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis. "They also helped to ensure that he was not ill-treated during his detention."

Rankholo is now faced with the task of reactivating the union's

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## FEBRUARY 1987

# ...government response may be harsh



**BALA TAMPOE**  
CMU General Secretary

## ANNIVERSARIES...

The ITF congratulates the Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (SiD), which has just celebrated its 90th anniversary.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis sent congratulatory messages to two of the ITF's Japanese affiliates who both marked their fortieth anniversaries last month. Celebrations were organised by the private railway workers' union SHITETSU SOREN and the municipal transport workers' union TOSHIKO in honour of the occasion.

## ...South Africa detains more as transport leader is let out

Continued from page 1  
organisational and educational activities, which have, of course, suffered from his lengthy incarceration. The ITF has offered its full assistance to the TAWU in this process.

Rankholo's welcome release, however, does not mean that the South African regime has altered its policy of abusing the civil and human rights of South African citizens.

Just before Rankholo's release, on January 15, Ntai Sello, General Secretary of the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU), a COSATU affiliate, was seized by the police in a raid on the union's Johannesburg headquarters. Like Rankholo, and many others, he is being held without any charge or court appearance.

Continued from page 1

the war in the North and East and the granting of autonomous self-rule to the Tamil community.

•Emergency regulations, and the "Prevention of Terrorism" Act in particular, allow the government to detain people without court appearances. These violations of civil rights, say the CMU, are compounded by "violations of their human rights while in custody".

•The government maintains the "lowest wage levels in Asia" by undermining trade unionism and by encouraging "contract work". A public sector wage freeze is in force, under the pretext of the need to spend millions on "defence" — but the union says that billions of rupees have been squandered by mismanagement in public enterprises. The government has also refused to reinstate "large numbers of employees in the public sector" who were fired when they went on strike for a wage rise in July 1980.

•The CMU is also opposed to the Government's "privatisation" policies which involve the large scale sale of public services to private companies and foreign interests with "mass

dismissals of employees in such enterprises or services".

The union also wants an end to the government's "political interference and discrimination in appointments, promotions and transfers in the public sector."

On the day of the strike, the union is organising peaceful public processions and meetings in the capital city Colombo and in other centres.

While the law technically gives the union the right to organise demonstrations, emergency regulations allow the government to restrict the rights of assembly and protest.

Regulations abound that allow the state to halt almost any political activity they wish to. One regulation bans the distribution of leaflets and posters "without the permission of the Inspector-General of Police or any police officer authorised in that behalf". Municipal authorities have the power to refuse permission to the union for the use of any public place for a meeting, and the police have the power to ban any public procession at will.

The union fears that these repressive measures may be brought to bear against its planned protest. For that reason it has issued an appeal for international support to show the government that the CMU has the backing of trade unions throughout the world.

CMU General Secretary Bala Tampoe has asked for messages to be sent to the Sri Lankan President or Prime Minister endorsing the action. If there is a Sri Lankan mission in your country, he suggests the message be handed over to the Sri Lankan Head of Mission. Copies of these messages should also be sent to the CMU.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, in a telex to Sri Lankan President Jayewardene stating that the ITF "...supports its affiliated union CMU in its peaceful nationwide strike and demonstration on 5th March. ITF expresses its solidarity with CMU's assertion of its right to take strike action and its members' demand for the repeal of the longstanding state of emergency in Sri Lanka which has denied democratic and human rights to the workers and people of Sri Lanka."

# NUCLEAR SITE PROTEST

Trade unions in Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have written to the British government and the local Director of Planning to protest at plans to build a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at Dounreay on Scotland's northern Atlantic coast.

In a letter to Scottish Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, union coordinating committee chairman Ole Jacobsen, who also chairs the ITF Fishermens' Section, sets out the unions' objections which are based on the increased marine pollution and contamination of marine life they believe would follow the commissioning of the plant. Fishing, the mainstay of the national economy in all three countries, would be badly affected, they argue, with serious implications for jobs and living standards.

While day-by-day emissions from

the plant are of obvious concern, the unions are also deeply disturbed by the wider threat from a catastrophic

accident at the plant like that at Chernobyl which can never be entirely ruled out.

## Danish unions agree deal with employers

The Danish trade union centre LO recently signed a new two year general agreement with the employers' federation DA setting out the basic framework for collective bargaining and handling disputes.

Workers are now entitled to a written justification of dismissal from their employer after 9 months' service (previously 12 months) and shop stewards with more than 12 months' service may not be dismissed until the union has had a chance to appeal to

the Labour Court. The rights of worker representatives will be written into all collective agreements and joint employer/union meetings will be held on breaches of agreements.

The LO has announced that it will be seeking new provisions on industrial democracy in its next agreement, while the employers are grumbling about the need to tighten up the 'peace clause' which bans industrial action during the life of a collective agreement.

## DOCKERS

### Rotterdam strike continues after talks fail

Three weeks into the campaign of rolling strikes in the General Cargo section of Rotterdam docks, a settlement seems no closer. Negotiations between the union, Vervoersbond FNV and the employers' organisation SVZ, and the Dutch Social Affairs Ministry in early February broke down and were followed by a 24 hour general strike.

A joint union/government proposal to cut costs by F120m and eliminate 426 jobs without redundancy has been rejected by the employers, who have refused to withdraw plans for 350 immediate dismissals with 500 more over the next two to three years.

Faced with shipowners diverting cargo ships from Rotterdam to other European ports, the union invited representatives of RTB, Belgium, ÖTV Germany and the ITF to a meeting in Rotterdam on January 24 to discuss possible international solidarity action. The unions present agreed to do everything possible to ensure that ships loaded with Rotterdam cargo were not handled in neighbouring ports.

Following unofficial strike action

on February 12 by workers in the container section of the port employed by European Container Terminus (ECT), an official strike was declared by the union with effect from

February 16. The hard line adopted by the employers who are looking for large scale redundancies and much greater job flexibility, is rapidly escalating the dispute.

## Québec port dispute settled after 5 months

Stevedores at the St Lawrence river port of Québec have voted to accept a new contract and have returned to work, ending a five month lockout by their employers.

The stevedores, who belong to the Canadian division of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), have been without a contract since the end of 1985. They struck the port in October 1986 after the collapse of talks on pay and jobs and were then locked out by the Maritime Employers' Association. The situation persisted until the management was ordered back to the bargaining table.

An agreement has been hammered out which gives the 241 dockers and

checkers at the port total increases of Canadian \$1.5 an hour in pay and benefits, bringing their rates into line with those at Montréal and the Canadian Atlantic ports. The employers have also undertaken to match pay levels at Québec to those in Montréal for the next two years.

The ILA has agreed to cuts in the minimum number of stevedores assigned to ships as well as other changes in working practices so as to encourage more flexible use of labour at the port. It is expected that this will set the pattern for Montréal, where contract talks have now gone to mediation.

## Olympic engineers reinstated

Olympic Airways has now reinstated the pilots and flight engineers it dismissed during last June's strike (see ITF News, September 1986 for full story). All outstanding criminal and civil actions against the strikers and their property have also been withdrawn.

The flight deck crews struck the carrier in defiance of a government 'civil mobilisation' order intended to frustrate their action. It was not the first time that the airline had

proceeded against its employees in this way.

The unions' action prompted fierce retaliation from the company and large numbers of strikers were imprisoned, dismissed or had charges brought against them.

Government intervention in the dispute was condemned by the ITF Civil Aviation Section when it met during Congress last August. The dismissed workers have been supported financially by generous

contributions from those union members still working.

The two unions involved - the Greek pilots' union HALPA and the ITF-affiliated EIM Flight Engineers' Association - have now signed a new collective agreement. However, they have had to accept that the dismissed strikers will not be paid for the seven months they were out of work, and a number of collective bargaining concessions have also been made.

## US unions confront drug test dilemma

Several ITF affiliates in the United States are involved in programmes designed to ensure that possible alcohol and drug abuse amongst aviation employees are dealt with humanely, in the face of proposed FAA regulations which could violate employees' civil liberties.

The US Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) has announced details of a drug programme designed

adopt a multi-pronged approach based on education, confidential drug testing and rehabilitation, with suspected drug abusers being urged to come forward voluntarily. They will be removed from flying while undergoing treatment and will be monitored for at least two years after they resume flying. This method of approach has already produced a 90 per cent plus success rate for alcoholics.

documenting an industry wide abuse problem.' If such a problem is found to exist, he adds, it should be dealt with through rehabilitation programmes negotiated by carriers and their unions. Any industry wide regulations adopted by the FAA should, Peterpaul adds, take the form of guidelines which encourage education and the prevention of drug and alcohol addiction. They should also require that any programme fully protects employee privacy and provides non punitive rehabilitation orientated responses for individuals whose addiction has impaired their job performance. The IAM suggests five key principles which should guide the FAA in this area :

### *Treat alcohol and drug abuse as an illness, say ALPA and IAM*

to reassure the flying public that US cockpits will remain drug free. The programme will be along the lines of ALPA's widely praised programme for treating alcoholism among airline pilots.

ALPA points out that drugs have never been involved in any US scheduled airline accident but it is obviously concerned at the growing use of drugs in American society and feels that positive action is called for. A small, isolated number of pilots — probably only running into dozens — have been treated for drug misuse, and this has convinced the union of the need to stop this problem from growing.

The union — acting in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration and the airlines — is to

The union has rejected random drug tests which - because they are carried out no more than once a year - are deemed to be totally inadequate, although it is prepared to accept testing in certain circumstances - such as before pilots are employed and after accidents.

Meanwhile the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), which represents the majority of ground staff in the USA, has submitted comments to the FAA on its proposed rules on the Control of Drug and Alcohol Use for Personnel Engaged in Commercial and General Aviation. Union General Vice President John Peterpaul argues that an industry wide drug and alcohol abuse programme should only be implemented if there is 'hard evidence

1. Drug and alcohol abuse should be dealt with in the same way - as treatable illnesses;

2. No action should be taken against an employee based on off-duty conduct unless it can be shown that work performance is specifically and directly affected as a result;

3. Drug use tests should only be used where there is good reason to believe that work performance is affected by drug abuse, and union representatives should be informed when a request for such a test is made;

4. The highest standards must be observed by testing laboratories with the employee having the right to have a second test conducted at a laboratory of their own choice;

5. Any employee with a positive test shall be placed on an agreed rehabilitation programme.

# Eastern jobs and pay cut plan

Serious trouble is brewing at financially troubled Eastern Airlines whose new owner union busting Frank Lorenzo is planning to slash labour costs by forty per cent. It is estimated that about two thousands jobs are at risk.

The unions, who vigorously opposed Texas Air's takeover of Eastern, have rejected any interference with their contracts and have accused

Lorenzo of seeking to intimidate them.

The company says that some of the cuts would come from voluntary early retirement. It intends to start a retraining programme for displaced workers, but is unable to rule out lay offs.

Lorenzo has already pursued a similar cost-cutting strategy at Continental where he invoked chapter

11 of the US bankruptcy code and tore up the unions' labour contracts, provoking a long and bitter but ultimately unsuccessful strike.

The unions are now bracing themselves for a similar showdown at Eastern with the possibility that Lorenzo will fire unionised workers and re-allocate Eastern's routes and aircraft to Texas Air's low cost non union subsidiary Continental.

## Pan Am for sale

Pan American Airlines workers have joined forces and are looking for an alternative buyer for the loss making company which is currently considering a merger with American Airlines. Other airlines are also understood to be interested in taking over the company.

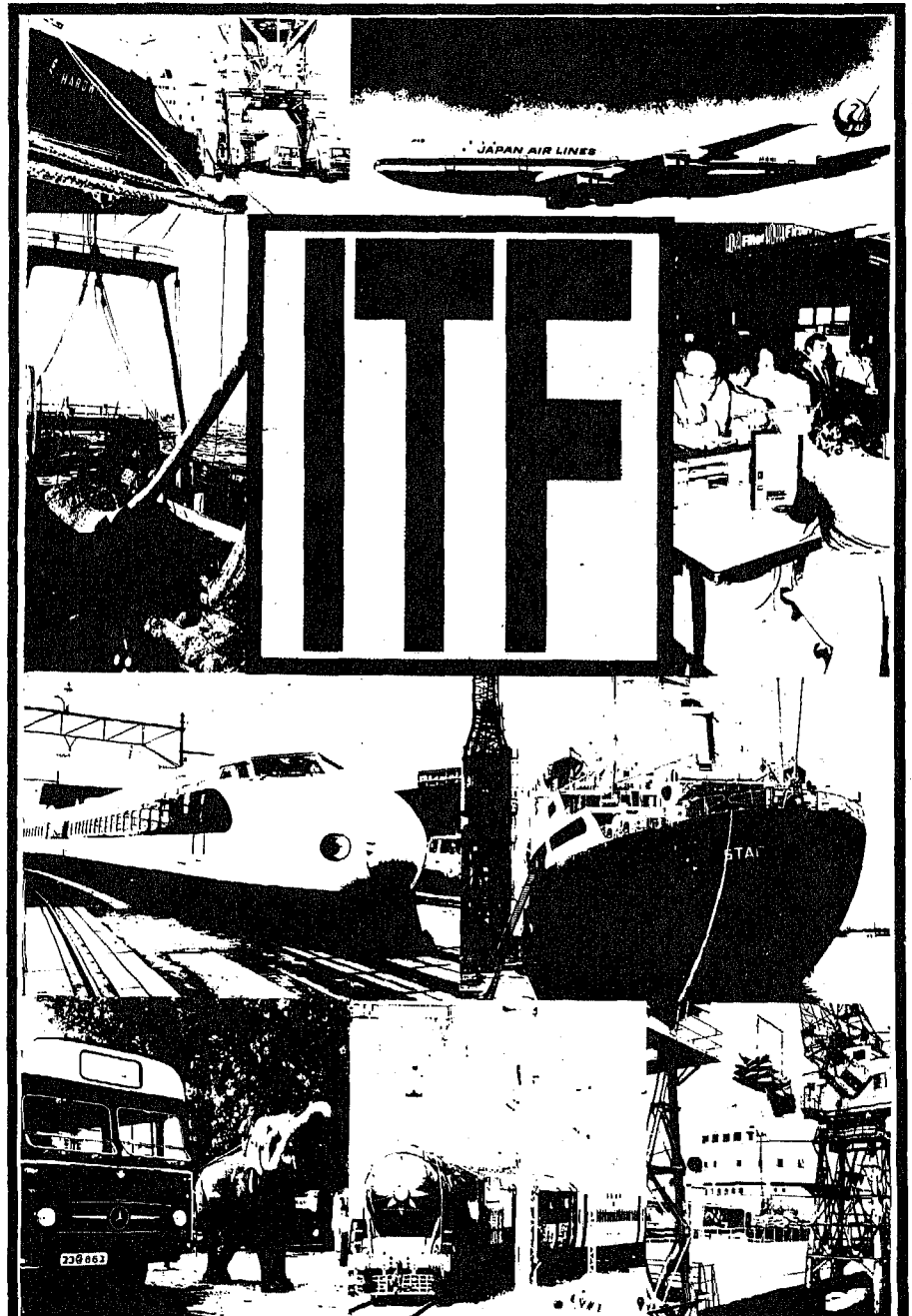
The four unions organising the company's ground and flying staff have hired an investment bank and a leading firm of merger lawyers to look out for possible buyers. They have indicated that they have plenty to offer a potential purchaser and would be prepared to agree pay cuts in return for a substantial cash injection in the company. Pan Am workers hold 7 per cent of the company's shares and could use this to give themselves considerable leverage during future merger negotiations.

## BA drops exit

British Airways has decided to drop the overwing exits from its replacement 747 fleet, the first of which are due to be delivered from Boeing in two years' time. The new 400-series aircraft will replace the airline's ageing fleet and still be flying well into the next century.

Three years ago BA closed up the exits on its B747s to allow it to put in more passenger seats and bigger galleys. The ITF and its aviation unions strongly opposed the move on safety grounds, arguing that it would hinder passenger evacuation in an emergency.

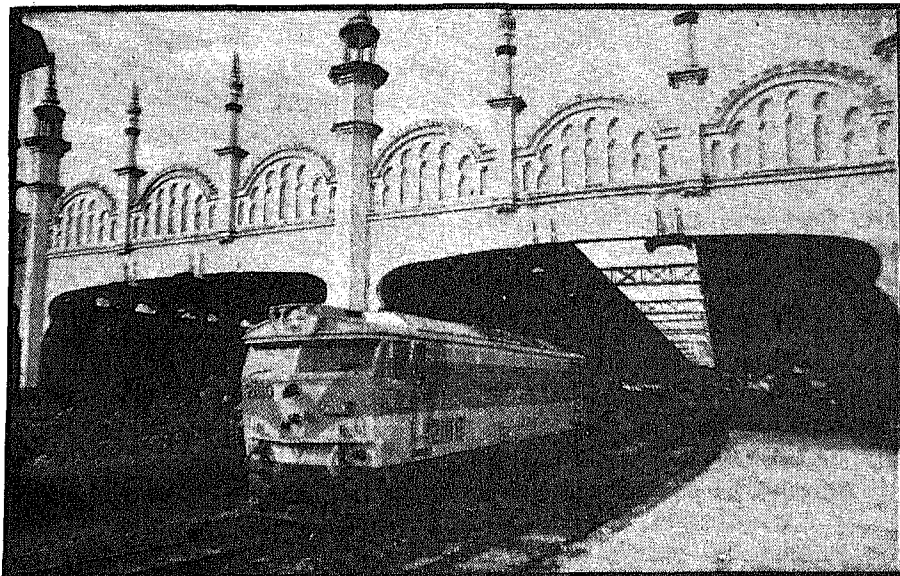
This view won the support of the US Federal Aviation Administration, which instructed US airlines not to remove the doors as they offer passengers a valuable extra margin of safety. BA, now privatised, is clearly unconvinced by this argument.



The cover of the new version of ITF general brochure, which has just been published in English (the other language versions will be available within a month). Anyone interested in obtaining copies should write to the ITF Research and Publications Department.

# INLAND TRANSPORT

## Malaysian bargain basement rail sale



Kuala Lumpur station

## Zimbabwean union unity

Last month saw the founding conference of the Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railwaymen's Union (ZARU), which brings together all three railmen's unions in the country.

The three unions have been cooperating closely in various joint interim bodies for some time now preparing the way for the new union, which groups about 14,000 rail workers.

The founding of ZARU may be seen as something of a landmark in post-independence labour history. For the railmen are the first professional group to come together in a single strong national union.

The extent of interest and support for the new union was obvious from the impressive list of dignitaries who attended the two day amalgamation conference. They included the Zimbabwe Minister of Labour, Hon. F Shava; the Minister of Transport, Hon H S M Ushewokuzne; the President of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Jeffrey Mutandare; and the General Manager of Zimbabwe National Railways John Avery.

Delegates to the inaugural conference formally adopted a new constitution for the amalgamated union and elected its office holders. J

Sibanda, former President of the Railway Association of Locomotive Enginemen (RALE), was elected President and S M Mabekha, former President of the Railway Associated Workers' Union, Senior Vice President of the new organisation. The General Secretary is Brian Holleran, former General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen. ITF Vice-President Anderson Mhungu (formerly of RAWU) is one of four Assistant General Secretaries of the new body.

The new union is committed to international trade unionism and will be affiliating to the ITF on its new increased membership, thereby replacing the affiliation of the former Railway Associated Workers' Union. The newly elected Executive will also be giving urgent consideration to a proposal that Zimbabwe's transport workers join together in a Transport Union Federation, with members from the railways, airlines and road transport.

One of ZARU's first tasks will be to launch a programme of branch seminars for local officials and of general workers' education for its rank and file membership.

The Malaysian government has offered the country's railways for sale at a knock down price of one ringgit (about 40 US cents). Not surprisingly, there has been a lot of interest in the company.

The attraction can hardly lie in the railways' financial record (they have accumulated losses of US\$ 123 millions and a debt load of US\$ 338 million) but more likely in the large tracts of land it owns, some in prime city-centre locations. Until now, the railways have been prevented from using its land for anything other than 'railway purposes' but it is expected that privatisation will sweep away these restrictions.

The railways' General Manager believes that the company could make a marginal profit if the new owner were to inject enough cash to enable obsolete rolling stock to be replaced.

He also points out that whoever buys the company will have to run the railways as a public service, including the uneconomic lines built for political and social reasons - half of the total - at least in the short term. Passenger fares and freight charges could only be increased within a narrow band as there were plenty of competitors just waiting to pick up rail business.

The new owners will face strong opposition from the ITF-affiliated Railwaymen's Union of Malaya (RUM) which has said that it will only accept a deal giving railway workers a deal comparable with that offered to telecommunications workers on privatisation. RUM believes the privatised company - far from increasing pay and offering job guarantees as in the case of the telecommunications company - would try to make profits by dismissing workers and cutting the wage bill.

# Early death for public drivers?

A report on the health of bus and taxi drivers prepared by Doctor Hugo Flaten for the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union and Oslo Central Taxis and published late last year confirms that drivers of public service vehicles are more likely to die prematurely than other groups of workers.

The survey was based on figures supplied by the Central Statistical Bureau and covers the years 1970 to 1980. Dr Flaten regrets that no more up to date figures were available and adds that he has every reason to suppose that the situation has not improved since 1980, rather the reverse.

Men only were included in the study group as the number of women employed as drivers was so small that any general conclusions drawn from such a sample would have been open to question.

Both bus and taxi drivers were found to be at high risk of heart disease, while the incidence of heart attacks, strokes and lung cancer was also found to be above average.

Taxi drivers were in the worst risk category overall, with exceptionally high figures for certain diseases - lung and other cancers, diseases of the digestive system and urinary tract, heart disease and sudden death.

Dr Flaten believes that traditional risk factors such as smoking and general lifestyle, while important, cannot of themselves explain the high death rate among drivers, indicating that other factors (such as stress) must be of considerable importance.

There can be little doubt, he argues, that driving is particularly stressful in towns. The main contributory factors are time pressures, traffic congestion (leading to high levels of irritation), adverse weather conditions (when services must still be maintained), shift work, high levels of responsibility (for passenger safety) and lack of control over the work situation.

Expectations of drivers are such that they can find themselves taking risks or breaking traffic regulations to get to their destination sooner to please passengers and operators. Bus drivers are also blamed for conditions that are entirely outside their control,

such as fares, route changes and missing services, while taxi drivers have to cope with closed streets, pedestrian precincts etc. These factors prevent them from giving the service that is expected of them and which they clearly would like to be able to give, to their intense frustration.

Another key stress factor is the behaviour of other road users. 'Near accidents' are an everyday occurrence, while threats of violence and actual physical violence are a reality for both professional categories.

Environmental factors also affect drivers' health. They are particularly at risk when held up in traffic queues as air intakes into vehicles are often badly situated with air being taken in from the most polluted zones.

The study urges that action be taken clearly to establish the risk factors for these two groups on the lines of the programmes already started in Oslo as a preliminary to improving drivers' health and reducing the unacceptably high death figures. Particular emphasis should be placed on reducing stress by improving traffic flow, reducing time pressures on drivers and training geared to enabling drivers to cope better with the stress situations they encounter.

It finds it a matter for regret that a profession demanding a high degree of skill and level of responsibility is not considered important enough to warrant its own training programme. Better professional training would increase driver confidence and result in better relations with passengers.

The survey recognises that shift work is unavoidable, but urges that negative effects be countered by increased research into the health effects of the various shift patterns,

with increased use being made of those which have the least harmful effects.

It also recommends that the Norwegian health and safety board evaluate the risk factors leading to heart disease in these groups. This should be supplemented by a health service programme giving tips on good diet, campaigns to discourage smoking, promotion of a more active lifestyle and the monitoring of blood pressure and alcohol use.

Emphasis should be placed on helping those most at risk, ensuring that they are monitored more regularly (about every six months) than others (every two to three years). Health programmes should also be written into collective agreements and every effort made to ensure that there is a 100 per cent take up of the services on offer as those least motivated to undergo health checks were frequently those most at risk. It was pointed out that a programme of this kind initiated in Oslo had resulted in the halving of the number of heart attacks over a five year period.

Other recommended countermeasures include reducing exposure to environmental risks by placing air intakes on buses as high off the ground as possible and instructing drivers to keep well away from the vehicle in front so as to minimise exposure to exhaust fumes. Also advocated are more car free areas and bus only lanes, and the more widespread use of lead free petrol.

Finally, the survey advocates that employers should take their own share of the responsibility for ensuring that work can be performed without negative effects on the employee's health.

## Union attacks Belgian rail plan

The Belgian government is planning to cut 2,300 workers from the railways in 1987, while pretending to be able to maintain the same levels of service on the system.

This absurd proposal, contained in the 1987 budget projections for the SNCB, has been met with scorn by the ITF affiliated Railwaymen's Sector of the CGSP who say that the railways need to maintain recruitment in order to keep the service functioning properly.

In an open letter to the government, the union have called for negotiations on a number of key issues including job security, the special problems of workers in specific centres and for the respecting of existing conditions of work in the face of proposed changes.

# CASH BOOST FOR SPANISH RAIL

The Spanish Transport Minister has announced details of a massive new investment programme - amounting to 2,100 billion pesetas by the end of the century - for the Spanish railways RENFE which should enable it to offer services of a standard matching

anything Europe has to offer.

Priority will be given to the construction of new lines and the upgrading of track, complemented by new high speed passenger services between the capital and the various

metropolitan centres as well as a new Madrid-Seville route.

The improvements are expected to generate extra passenger and freight traffic sufficient to reduce the annual deficit - now running at some 200 billion pesetas - by about 70 billion.

## Rhine genuine link boat certificate

In a move which would be welcomed in the shipping industry a new Genuine Link certificate - available to EC and Swiss shipowners only - came into force on the Rhine at the beginning of February.

The Central Rhine Commission (ZKR) believes that introducing the certificate now will make it easier to fend off the threat of unfair competition from Eastern bloc states when the Rhine Main Danube link is established in the early nineties.

Certificates will be issued free of charge to operators on the waterway who satisfy the nationality requirements. Any ships found trading without a certificate before 1 July will receive a warning from with sterner action being taken after then.

## Indian rail staff fight hours hike

Office staff of Indian Railways are going to have to work longer hours. They are moving to a 40-hour week (that means an extra half hour's work a day), in line with a recent recommendation of the board which sets the pay and conditions of government workers.

Protest demonstrations have been staged in a number of cities and the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) has given the office staff its full backing in resisting the changes.

## PEOPLE

Susan Bianchi Sand took over last month as the new President of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), United States, in succession to Linda Puchala who had decided not to seek re-election at the union's recent convention.

Kim Bu Ung was elected President of the Federation of Korean Seamen's Unions by the FKSU Congress in

January. Brother Kim, who succeeds S S Park, was previously president of the Korean Special Seamen's Union, the member of the Federation which organises Koreans serving on foreign flag ships.

Hanafi Rustandi, who is an ITF education officer, has been elected as General Secretary of the Indonesian Seafarers' Union.

## PAY DEALS

Austria - road haulage drivers, 3.3% from 5 January 1987; busmen with private bus companies, 3.2% from 1 January. Both groups receive higher holiday and Christmas bonuses.

Italy - Alitalia and ATI cabin attendants, monthly productivity bonus averaging 160,000 lire over three years, plus slightly shorter hours and more rest leave for crews on short and medium haul flights.

Norway - 5.8% for ratings on cargo and passenger vessels in the oversea trade and on the offshore fleet, effective 1 November 1986. The working week will also be reduced by two and a half hours from the beginning of August this year.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

26-27 February	Road Transport Steering Cte.	London
10 March	Management Cte.	London
10-11 March	Executive Board	London
12-17 April	Latin American Dockers' Conference	Tampico, Mexico
11-15 May	Latin American Inland Navigation Conference	Santa Fé, Argentina
18-19 May	Seafarer members of ILO Joint Maritime Commission	Geneva
8 June	Dockers Meeting	London
9-10 June	Fair Practices Committee	London
15-16 June	Standing Cte. on Maritime Mobile Offshore Units	Rio d. J. Brazil
16-18 June	Urban Transport Cte.	Finland



# SEAFARERS

## FOCS' FLEETS ARE EXPANDING FAST

The stampede of shipowners from their own countries' registers to flags of convenience (FOCs) shows no signs of slowing, according to the latest available data.

Figures obtained by the ITF for the end of January 1987 show a huge increase in runaway flags' tonnage in the seven months since June 1986.

The figures, produced by a special search for the financial magazine *Offshore Investment*, also show a drastic drop in the gross tonnage for the UK fleet — down from 11.57 million gross in June 1986 to 7.8 million at the end of last month. This puts it within a whisker of the Bahamas' register, which has shot up from 5.98m to 7.76m in the same period.

Similar leaps in gross tonnage are recorded by Panama (from 41.3m to 42.83), Cyprus (from 10.62m to 13.23m), and the British colonies of Gibraltar (from 1.61m to 3.21m) and Bermuda (1.2m to 1.97m).

Perhaps the most startling rise of all is in the register of the South Pacific tax-haven Republic of Vanuatu (population 130,000) — which had a mere 12 ships and 160,000 gross tons last June. There are now 165 ships, with 1.22m gross tons, giving the Republic the 48th largest merchant fleet in the world. The competition announced last year by Deputy Registrar Clayton Beale Wentworth to guess the registration date of the 200th Vanuatu ship looks like producing a winner fairly soon.

The success of the Vanuatu approach (bargain basement tonnage rates) reflects on the more "traditional" FOC register of Liberia — which, while still boasting the largest fleet in the world have seen its tonnage drop from 52.65m to 51.18m over the period in question. Liberia cut its fees twice last year, and has been offering special "loyalty" discounts to shipowners, but it is still being outpriced by cheaper registers.

At the end of January Liberia announced that it was relaxing its age limit on vessel registration so that, under certain circumstances, ships older than 25 years would be allowed

### WORLD FLEETS — GROSS TONS

for January 31st, 1987

Figures are gross tonnage millions to nearest 10,000, brackets are position in world fleet..

Country	June 1986	Jan. 31, 1987
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#### FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

Liberia	52.65 (1)	51.18 (1)
Panama	41.30 (2)	42.83 (2)
Cyprus	10.62 (8)	13.23 (8)
Bahamas	5.98 (18)	7.76 (14)
Singapore	6.27 (16)	6.88 (15)
Gibraltar	1.61 (39)	3.21 (30)
Bermuda	1.20 (45)	1.97 (37)
Malta	2.01 (37)	1.75 (40)
Cayman Islands	1.39 (43)	1.27 (46)
Vanuatu	0.16 (...)	1.22 (48)
St. Vincent	0.51	0.67 (58)
Netherlands		
Antilles	—	0.25 (80)

#### OTHERS

Great Britain	11.57 (5)	7.8 (10)
Nauru	0.04	0.07 (106)
Isle of Man*	*	0.91 (56)
Hong Kong	8.18 (11)	8.29 (9)

There were 56 ships on the Isle of Man Register at the end of January 1987. The IoM is not classed as an FOC — the ITF Fair Practices Committee agreed, last year, to keep the register "under scrutiny."

The comparative figures are incomplete at the time of press — a full listing will be printed in the next issue of ITF News. Special thanks to Donald Crawford and *Offshore Investment* magazine for providing the January 1987 figures.

to register.

This revoked the previous limit of 20 years, and would appear to be an attempt to keep ships registered with Liberia.

Moves are also afoot to boost the Bermuda register — which is now hovering on the two million ton

mark. Transport Minister Sidney Stallard told *Lloyd's List* that the Bermudans were considering removing the register's stipulation that all ships registered must have at least five British officers — "This is not always acceptable, but we are looking into what can be done about it." he said.

# Save shipping industry call in Germany

Leading officials and activists from the ÖTV and the German Metal Workers' Union (IG Metall) in the four German coastal states met for the first time at a rally in Hamburg last month to call for action aimed at halting the collapse of the West German shipping industry and those industries which depend on it.

Between them, the two unions organise thousands of seafarers, dockers and shipyard workers.

At the rally, the chairman of the ÖTV Hamburg area Horst Matthiesen urged a global approach to the problems facing the maritime industry as the crisis in shipping and the shipyards was too grave to be solved by a piecemeal approach. His views were echoed by the Hamburg district secretary of IG Metall Frank Teichmüller who said that running down shipbuilding was tantamount to giving up on maritime technology.

Dockers were often the forgotten victims of the crisis in the industry, according to another ÖTV regional officer Holger Wohlleben. 5,000 jobs had been lost since 1980, he said, and the public seemed hardly to have noticed. If the German shipping and shipbuilding industry collapsed the docks would be drawn into the maelstrom, he warned.

Dieter Benze, who is in charge of the seafarers' and fishermen's section of the ÖTV, advocated a 'ship German' policy in line with the (40:40:20) UNCTAD Liner Code as one way of dealing with the crisis.

In a statement issued by the ÖTV head office in Stuttgart to coincide with the rally, transport spokesman and ITF Executive Board member Eike Eulen accused the government of pursuing policies that were hostile to the interests of the German shipping industry and of ignoring the earlier advice of parliament on the dangers of flagging out. The government seemed to be 'totally unaware, Eulen said, that the economy of the entire coastal region was being put in jeopardy by the scandalous neglect of the industry. It was an outrage that German owners now operated more ships under convenience flags than under the national flag, he said.

\*\* Latest figures from the Association of German Shipowners reported in *Lloyds List* on February 17 show that more than half of German owned tonnage is now registered under flags of convenience. On January 1 1987 there were 344 vessels with 3.28 million tons gross under German flag, a fall of 85 ships and 1.13 m tons in 12 months. There are now 345 ships totalling 4.11 m tons under foreign flags compared with 199 (3.38 m tons) in 1986. The most popular FOC with German shipowners remains Panama (30% of the total) but Cyprus is attracting increasing numbers of German owned ships because it permits dual registration. The sectoral breakdown of the statistics is also interesting. Bulk shipping (20% of the fleet) is 100% flagged out, tramp shipping (40% of the fleet) is 55% under FOCs, while liner services and tanker ships operate mainly under German flag (only 17% and 22% under FOC respectively).

## Icelandic strike victory

The five week strike by Icelandic seafarers ended on 7 February when they accepted a 20 per cent pay rise. The settlement runs for two years and was reached shortly before a sympathy strike by the country's dock workers was due to begin.

The dispute paralysed virtually the entire Icelandic fleet and had a serious effect on fish exports - a major foreign currency earner - which had already been hard hit by January's fishermen's strike (see last edition of ITF News).

## Greek two day strike

The Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) brought its members out on strike from 10 to 12 February to back up its demands for a new collective agreement (see last issue of ITF News). Crews of coastal passenger and cargo vessels and ferry personnel all took part in the action.

Another one-day strike was staged on 16 February and the union gave a warning that action would be stepped

up if new approaches to the owners and the government fail to produce a satisfactory response.

Meanwhile, the Greek trade union confederation (GSEE) called further one day strikes on 12 and 16 February - joined by most transport workers - in protest against the government's two year austerity programme which has virtually frozen pay since October 1985.

## Brunei crude oil still reaches South Africa

Oil from the Pacific sultanate of Brunei, which only joined the international blockade against oil exports to South Africa in 1982, continues to reach the Apartheid regime.

The Amsterdam based Shipping Research Bureau (SRB), which monitors the progress of the oil boycott, has just released a detailed report on oil shipments from Brunei.

Between 1979 and 1986, the SRB has identified 56 separate deliveries of oil from Brunei to South Africa, amounting to about 6.7 million tons of crude oil - which represents six

per cent of South Africa's oil imports in this period.

Until 1981 Royal Dutch Shell and British Petroleum were the major oil companies involved, with Marc Rich & Co of Switzerland taking over from 1981.

When Brunei joined the oil boycott in 1982, the shipments continued by the use of intermediaries. Marubeni International Petroleum Co. Ltd - the Hong Kong subsidiary of Marubeni K.K. (Japan) - bought crude from Brunei Shell Petroleum and resold it to Marc Rich (Switzerland), which then delivered it to South Africa.

# Swedish ship noise safety probe

The health and safety implications of noise and vibration on board ship are discussed in a handbook just published by the Swedish National Occupational Safety Board.

The authors of the handbook recognise that seafarers find themselves at special risk from noise since — unlike land-based workers — they spend seven days a week at their workplace and spend their leisure hours in the same environment.

As well as proposing modifications to existing vessels, the handbook also sets guidelines and recommendations that should be followed when new vessels are commissioned or when vessels are being rebuilt.

Various ways in which noise levels can be reduced in four main areas — propellers and stern; engine room; superstructure; and other areas (mainly the deck and hold) are described in detail.

Excessive propeller noise is identified as one of the worst problem areas and here it is suggested that maximum efforts should be made to minimize noise at the design stage by testing a variety of models, while in older ships consideration should be given to modifying the shape of the propeller.

As engine room noise may be heard throughout the ship the handbook advocates the soundproofing of the engine room and its location well away from the accommodation spaces.

Also suggested is improved insulation of engine machinery and its associated systems (exhaust pipes etc), the location of engines in separate spaces and the casing in of auxiliary engines.

The handbook recommends that as far as possible noise and vibration should be prevented from reaching the superstructure by good sound insulation.

It also urges that a high priority be given to reducing excessive noise in hold spaces and on deck as seamen who are unable to hear instructions are a danger to themselves and others.

Other chapters of the handbook are devoted to advice to crew members on how to measure noise levels and to essential facts about noise and vibration and its effects on the human body.

The new publication has been welcomed by the Swedish Ships' Engineers' Union, whose safety

official points out that it costs money when seafarers have to retire prematurely because their health has been damaged by exposure to excessive noise levels.

## SIU—Canada talks break down

The Seafarers' International Union of North America, faced with a demand for cuts in the pay and benefits of its members on the Great Lakes, has broken off contract talks and is considering strike action. The union hiring hall system is also under threat from the employers who are seeking to replace it by a computerised hiring system. SIU officials fear this will be used to keep out union activists who the employers see as trouble makers.

## Owners, UN meet on Gulf

A delegation of shipowners with vessels trading in the Gulf met the UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar on 15 January to express their concern at escalating attacks on ships in the area.

The delegation from the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) included representatives of the

Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) and the Independent Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO).

The owners argued that aircraft attacks on neutral shipping in the Gulf were 'acts of terrorism' and that little protection was currently provided under international law as there was no precise legal definition of the rights of merchant shipping in areas of conflict.

\*Meanwhile, lobbying of national governments continues. In Britain, both owners and unions have submitted written evidence to a government committee which is looking at ways of protecting British merchant vessels in the area.

The British officers' union NUMAST has also contacted EC Transport Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis urging coordinated European trade sanctions and an arms embargo against Iran and Iraq while the attacks on shipping continue. In a separate development, the ratings' union NUS used last month's missile attack on the Shell tanker *Isomeria* to ask Britain to exert diplomatic pressure on the warring nations.

## ITF aid for Foc crew unpaid for 11 months

The ITF has agreed to provide emergency financial assistance to the crew of an FOC ship arrested by one of its affiliates in Singapore many of whom have not received any wages for 11 months.

Discovering in the course of a routine inspection that the 24 man crew of the Panamanian registered *Ratan*, who are from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, had been sailing for months without wages, the ITF affiliated Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) arranged for lawyers to

arrest the ship in Singapore where the crew were reported to be in a "desperate" state. They are owed a total of nearly US\$200,000 in wages, and their case against the shipowner is considered to be legally very strong.

The ITF has advanced funds for their legal case and has given the crew the equivalent of two weeks wages so that they can survive. Arrangements are now being made for the men to be returned to their families and homes.

# Sri Lankan union battles for seafarers

An urgent meeting with the Sri Lankan Minister of Shipping has been demanded by the ITF affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) following a case where the government jailed 17 seafarers who had received back wages.

"...terms and conditions that are deplorable ...and some of which should not be tolerated by the government of any civilised country."

The 17 men had been recruited in Sri Lanka through a private manning agency to work on a West German owned Panama registered flag of convenience ship. They left the ship on September 19, 1986 in the Port of Margehera, in Venice, Italy.

The ship had previously been visited by an FOC inspector from the Italian Transport Workers' Federation who persuaded the Captain and agency to pay the crew back wages and repatriate them to Sri Lanka.

On arrival at Katunayake International Airport on September 21, 1986 the men were arrested by members of the Sri Lankan C.I.D on the grounds that they had "intimidated" the captain to obtain their wages. Their money was confiscated by the police.

At their fourth court appearance, on December 5th, the 17 men were discharged by the presiding magistrate who found that the government's prosecution evidence was insufficient.

Meanwhile, the agency that had signed up the men — Ceyline Shipping (Pvt) Ltd. — had obtained an interim injunction preventing the men from getting their money back, claiming that it had been obtained in breach of their contracts of service by illegal means. The injunction, now renewed, will continue until a full hearing is convened in the Colombo District Court.

The General Secretary of the CMU, Bala Tampoe, who is also acting as the attorney for the 17 men, has written to the Sri Lankan Minister of Trade and Shipping, informing him that the CMU is now representing seamen in and from Sri Lanka. The union believes that the Ministry has a special responsibility in respect of the employment of Sri Lankan seamen which it has "unfortunately failed to discharge properly.

"...we regret to state that it appears to us that your Ministry has lent its support to foreign shipowners to employ Sri Lankan seamen on their ships, on terms and conditions that are deplorable, and some of which should not be tolerated by the Government of any civilised country," writes Tampoe.

The union is now demanding discussions with the government on the issue of Sri Lankan seamen's employment and "the terms on which they have been permitted to be employed or been sponsored for employment on foreign ships by your Ministry and/or by its officials."

## Union compiles dossier on iron ore ships

The British officers' union NUMAST is compiling a dossier on casualties to iron ore carriers in the hope of finding clues which will help prevent further tragedies.

Its concern goes back some time but has been heightened by the loss in one month of three iron ore carriers - the Liberian-flag *Cathay Seatrade*, the Maltese flag *Kythera Star* and the Philippines bulker *Testarossa*.

NUMAST General Secretary Eric Nevin comments that the incidence of these casualties is surely 'more than just coincidence' and that his union is looking for 'a connecting thread' which would throw some light on the mysterious sinkings. He pointed out that refined ore has an explosive character and that this called for

further investigation. It was also known that some ore cargoes with a high moisture content could shift dangerously, turning the load into slurry, while other ore cargoes formed a 'stiff' load capable of swinging like a violent pendulum on a ship buffeted by the wind. This latter type of cargo could give rise to stresses affecting the hull, perhaps leading to the sort of cracks recently found on the *Kowloon Bridge* which is now leaking large quantities of bunker oil on to the tourist beaches of County Cork.

Though it had no members on the ships involved, the British National Union of Seamen is clearly concerned for the welfare of seafarers on iron ore carriers and has called for full inquiries to be held into the latest

casualties. Meanwhile, the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) has said the perilous nature of iron ore cargoes makes it essential that the code of safe practice for these vessels be observed to the letter.

## Greek owner flags back

One of Greece's leading shipowners George P Livanos is returning to the Greek flag, creating about 200 new jobs for Greek seafarers.

The latest transfer involves 21 Panamanian flag minibulkers and 2 new product carriers. This brings the entire Livanos fleet of just under one hundred vessels back under the national flag.