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SOUTH AFRICAN RAIL STRIKE:

POLICE KILL SIX : SIEGE AT UNION HQ

At least six railway workers were shot dead by South African police on April 22 as tension mounted in the six week old strike of 16,000 railwaymen employed by the giant state owned South African Transport Services (SATS).

On the same day the management of SATS, runs railways, ports, and air transport, announced that it was going ahead with the formal dismissal of all those still on strike. The strike, the biggest in South Africa's history, has crippled the movement of container freight and has prevented the despatch and receipt of machinery, manufactured goods and raw materials. It has also provoked a massive wave of intimidation and repression by SATS management and the police.

It was sparked off when one worker at the Central Railway Depot of Kazerne in Johannesburg, a delivery driver concerned - a member of the South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU) - was fired for checking in late and failing to hand in takings from a delivery even though the cash office was closed.

The dismissal has shed a spotlight on worker dissatisfaction with SATS' disciplinary procedures, which do not allow workers to be represented by democratically elected worker leaders. It has also highlighted long standing allegations of racism within SATS which as a state-run company has consistently discriminated against black workers in filling higher paid and higher skilled jobs.

SATS has consistently refused to recognise SARHWU, which agreed in principle shortly before the strike to merge with the ITF affiliated T&GWU, and has instead sponsored a tame 'in house' workers' association, BLATU, which has consistently urged an end to the strike.

Local unions are now warning that the strike, which has now spread to a total of 23 depots and is costing SATS millions of Rand (it is losing 50,000 Rand a day at its main Kazerne depot alone) could well fan out to other provinces, closing down the ports of Cape Town and Durban, with massive implications for the South African economy, if a solution is not found soon.

The strikers are demanding a commitment from SATS that it will change its disciplinary and grievance procedures to provide for representation of workers in hearings by representatives of their own choice. They are also seeking an undertaking from the company that it will end all racist practices.

SARHWU has won thousands of new members - by no means all of them from the Transvaal - during the strike.

Union HQ attacked

Increasing violence by the police against strikers and union leaders culminated in a frontal attack on the headquarters of the national union centre COSATU in Johannesburg where regular strike meetings have been held. Telephone and telex links were cut off, many union leaders arrested, documents

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APRIL 1987

AMNESTY HIGHLIGHTS CASES OF JAILED TRADE UNIONISTS

To mark May Day Amnesty International — the organisation which campaigns against human rights abuses — has selected the case of five trade unionists from widely spread countries to focus attention on the violation of trade union rights by governments around the world.

From the many South African trade unionists in prison under the emergency Amnesty has selected Samuel Fezile Tiyo, National President of the Textile Workers' Industrial Union, which organises mostly black workers in the textile trade.

The recent spate of detentions -Tiyo himself has been in prison since he was arrested last June - are but the latest manifestation of the repression by the state and its agents of black union activists. Over the years, many black trade unionists have been detained without being brought before the courts and several have died in jail in suspicious circumstances, while others have suffered cruel torture while behind bars.

Trade unionists in the countries of Central America are frequently the victims of the notorious 'death squads'. This year Amnesty has

chosen Jorge Herrera, legal adviser to several Guatemalan trade unions and a former teacher at the School of Trade Union Studies at the University of San Carlos to symbolise the continuing violence against trade union activists and their supporters in the region.

Herrera was abducted in Guatemala City last July, probably by one of the 'death squads' of plain clothes army and police officers acting under superior orders emanating from the government.

He is the fifth member of his family to 'disappear' or be killed. There has been no further news of his whereabouts and the Guatemalan authorities deny any knowledge of his detention.

Although an elected civilian president took office in Guatemala at the beginning of 1986, the government has so far failed to investigate the many thousands of 'disappearances' and extra-judicial executions - many of them directed at trade unionists - which occurred in previous years.

Although South Korean law prohibits the use of torture, Amnesty

has received many reports indicating that prisoners in that country are tortured or ill treated and for the first time two policemen were charged earlier this year with causing the death of a student who died in police custody.

Amnesty has chosen as focus for its international campaign against the use of torture Kim Mun-su, a member of the Seoul Federation of Labour Movement who was arrested in May 1986 for his opposition to the government and, on his own testimony, cruelly tortured.

He was kicked and savagely beaten while being arrested and during the time he was held by the army and the Anti Communist Section of the Seoul City Police in Changan-dong in eastern Seoul he was subjected to electric shock treatment over an extended period, had water poured into his nose and mouth while being held suspended and received further vicious beatings which reduced his skin to a pulp. Kim Mun-su reports hearing screams coming from other cells where other prisoners were presumably being similarly humiliated.

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...Workers demand right to own representation

Continued from page 1

removed and equipment vandalised by the police who stormed the building which also houses the headquarters of the T&GWU.

Negotiations with SATS which have been going on sporadically have now resumed, with the company agreeing to sit down with a team of 37 workers representing strikers in the different areas of the province.

Meanwhile, other COSATU unions have pledged their solidarity with the strikers and have mobilised action in their support.

According to the TGWU, its members in private transport companies are refusing to stand in for SATS workers where SATS has requested private companies to take over the movement of goods, while workers throughout the Witwatersrand are refusing to buy train tickets and are boarding commuter trains free of charge as ticket examiners are on strike.

COSATU has appealed to other employers' bodies, seeking to put

pressure on SATS to reach a settlement. The TGWU has also held talks with the Bus Owners' and Motor Transport Owners' Associations with which it negotiates in an attempt to persuade them to intervene.

In a telex sent to the South African government on 15 April, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis accused SATS of inventing the black staff association to head off genuine trade unions within the company and urged it to recognise any union which can show substantial membership among its employees. This message was followed up on 24 April by a strongly worded message to the London

Ambassador indicating that railwaymen and transport workers throughout the free world are appalled at the killing of the six strikers. Lewis also expressed the ITF's anger and disgust at the occupation of COSATU headquarters. All members of the ITF Executive Board were also notified by telex of developments and asked to add their own protests.

No solution will be found to this dispute, the ITF believes, until a new and fair disciplinary procedure is introduced throughout SATS and black workers are given full freedom to choose their trade union representatives.

Australian unions vote to merge

Members of the Motor Transport and Chauffeurs' Association (MTCA) - a small organisation of some 5,000 bus and taxi drivers in the state of Victoria - have voted decisively in favour of a merger with the Transport Workers' Union of Australia.

The TWU, with some 115,000 members nationwide, is the largest transport workers' union in Australia.

The Transport Workers' Federal Council has unanimously endorsed the amalgamation, which took effect at the beginning of March.

Spanish unions strike against government austerity plans

This month has seen a growing wave of public sector strikes in Spain, as trade unionists challenge the Socialist government's attempts to impose an austerity programme.

At issue are public spending cuts and the government's desire to impose a five per cent ceiling on wage increases, starting with the public sector and somehow inspiring the

private sector to follow suit. In effect, with inflation running over five per cent, the government is attempting to cut real wages.

A series of limited stoppages called by the ITF-affiliated FETC-UGT have successfully halted the railways, urban transport and the two state owned Spanish airlines. Further strikes are occurring as we go to press, and, so

far, the government have shown no signs of compromising with the trade unions.

Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez is reported to be considering introducing legislation to restrict the right to strike in the public sector, by imposing compulsory balloting procedures and mandatory cooling off periods before action is taken.

...imprisoned for trade union activities

Continued from page 2

The Seoul Federation of Labour Movement was formed in August 1985 with the objective of helping workers press for higher wages and better working conditions. It also campaigns actively for the repeal of labour laws restricting trade union activities.

Amnesty is urging trade unionists to ask the South Korean authorities to conduct an impartial investigation into the torture reports and to make the results public.

The abuse of human rights in the USSR and in particular the imprisonment of dissenters in maximum security psychiatric hospitals is well documented and on the occasion of May Day Amnesty is highlighting the case of Vladimir Gershuni, a Moscow stonemason, who has been confined against his will in just such an institution for the past five years.

These special hospitals are reserved for the criminally insane who are 'especially dangerous to society' and yet Gershuni has never been charged with a violent offence and Amnesty, after detailed study of his case, believes he is being confined simply as punishment for campaigning for union rights.

Before his arrest in 1982 he was a leader of the unofficial group called the Free Inter-Professional Association of Workers, better known by its Russian acronym SMOT, which advocates the separation of trade unions from the state. During his time in SMOT Gershuni compiled and distributed many lengthy bulletins on the living conditions of various sections of the Soviet labour force.

About 20 SMOT members have been arrested for these activities and

imprisoned or put in mental hospitals against their will. Amnesty has taken up all their cases for adoption or investigation as prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty has no recent information regarding Gershuni who is being held several thousand kilometers from Moscow but has reason to fear for his health as he is officially registered as an invalid because of several acute medical problems.

Amnesty's final trade union prisoner comes from Algeria where he is currently serving a three year prison sentence for his defence of the rights of freedom of expression and association.

About Arezki, who is associated with a number of human rights organisations and is Secretary of a University Branch of the General

Union of Algerian Workers, was arrested while laying wreaths at the Independence Memorial on Algeria's Independence Day. He was charged with others with membership of an unauthorised organisation (the Association of the Sons of the Martyrs), distributing leaflets and attending illegal gatherings.

Most were released after questioning, but further arrests followed and twenty two prison sentences were eventually handed down, with the prisoners being dispersed to different gaols.

An Amnesty observer at the trial concluded that Arezki and his co-defendants had been sentenced for the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights and Amnesty itself has urged the Algerian authorities to release them immediately.

Union campaign to organise part-timers

The ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) in Great Britain has just launched a major new campaign to recruit and organise part-time workers.

In a time of changing employment, with declining trade union membership, the only growth area in British jobs has been the casual and part-time sectors. These largely younger and mostly female workers work in what are often appalling conditions with no security or benefits. They have also tended to be outside the trade union movement.

The TGWU campaign aims to bring these new workers into the union by fighting for equal benefits and conditions for all workers. New organising techniques, and a special awareness of women's concerns are cornerstones of the policy.

The campaign was launched at a rally in London last month, with keynote speeches from opposition Labour party leader Neil Kinnock, TGWU Women's Officer Margaret Prosser and TGWU General Secretary Ron Todd.

Campaigning for human rights

Sri Lankan trade unionists will continue their campaign for the restoration of human and trade union rights in spite of government attempts to silence them.

The ITF-affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) staged a successful one day general strike on March 5th (reported in ITF News February and March 1987 issues), but were banned by the government from holding a peaceful protest march. In a display of senseless censorship, the government also refused to grant permission for a poster advertising the day of action which called for "Democratic and human rights and peace and justice" — a message, apparently, too sensitive for the Sri Lankan government.

The same poster, with the date changed from March 5 to May 1, is now being submitted by the union for approval as their May Day publicity.

The traditional CMU May Day parade will raise the same demands as the March 5th action, according to CMU General Secretary Bala Tampoe.

Tampoe talked to ITF News on a recent visit to London about the situation in Sri Lanka. The CMU, he says, is "trying to act as a spearhead" for social change within the troubled country.

On paper, Sri Lanka is governed by an elected Parliament with an independent legal system and a



CMU members protesting government policy during the March 5th General Strike.

regulations and the infamous Prevention of Terrorism Act allow the government and police a free hand to detain and hold citizens without charge or trial.

While the courts continue to operate, their decisions are not necessarily respected. This is clearly illustrated by the case of the State Fertiliser Corporation employees who went on strike in 1975 and were dismissed without cause.

put the present UNP Party in power. Despite their criticisms of the previous regime's handling of the case, the new administration pursued the appeal. They won the appeal on a point of law, and the CMU took the case to the Supreme Court.

In October 1984 the Supreme Court ruled in the workers' favour, reinstating the original Tribunal's ruling. But the 500 dismissed workers have still not received any money, nor have they been offered their jobs back.

"What's the point of the rule of law if this is what it means?" said Tampoe "Twelve years have passed, 500 workers have been dismissed and they have not got a cent."

The CMU is also having to counter what can only be described as a government policy of official racism against the minority Tamil community. Despite the fact that most of the CMU's members (over 90 per cent) come from the majority Sinhalese community, the union has taken a strong stand in favour of the Tamil community's right to self determination.

The military situation in the North-East, where government forces are involved in major military operations against the pro-independence Tamil Tiger guerrillas makes trade union organising all the more difficult.

**FOR DEMOCRATIC AND
HUMAN RIGHTS &
PEACE & JUSTICE**

DEMOCRATIC UNION ACTION

ON 5TH MARCH CMU

This poster was banned from distribution by the Sri Lankan government.

constitution that safeguards most basic rights. In practice, however, these rights do not exist.

The present UNP government, elected with a 2/3 majority in 1977, prolonged its parliamentary term in 1983 by means of a referendum, which was dubiously won with only 51 per cent of the vote. Emergency

The 500 workers affected appealed to the local Labour Tribunal, and eventually won their case — reinstatement and back wages were ordered to be paid. But the government decided to appeal against the Tribunal's decision.

That was in 1977. General elections that July removed the government and

...international support is very important

Continued from page 4

CMU branches in the war zone have continued to function, in some cases assisting refugees and sheltering bystanders during government military operations.

Tampoe, from a Tamil background, has also had to face the politics of racism. During the build up to March 5, government supporters argued against the strike by attempting to stir up racism against Tampoe — they failed.

Tampoe recalls the terrible events of July 1983, when hysterical crowds of Sinhalese engaged in an anti-Tamil pogrom in the capital city of Colombo. Murder, arson and looting swept the city while the authorities stood by and did nothing. Tampoe and ten loyal union members went to the union headquarters and stayed there for ten days:

"I decided that if I was going to be bumped off, it had better be in the union headquarters," he said.

In the event he survived, and continues to be an outspoken critic of the regime in a country where many others fear to speak out. Tampoe's own unusual background — his early academic career as a teacher of Botany was cut short when he was sacked for taking part in a strike — led him to join the CMU where he decided that it "would be a good idea" to qualify as a lawyer. His legal work, as well as bringing him vital contacts for the trade union, has also earned him a reputation as one of Sri Lanka's leading civil rights lawyers.

The main reason, however, that Tampoe can continue to criticise the government and continue the union's work, is that the CMU is, in his own words, "a very strong union."

Independent of any political party, tightly organised and rigorously democratic, the 50,000 strong CMU is uniquely placed to agitate for a return to democratic rights within Sri Lanka. The March 5th strike saw a response of well over 90 per cent amongst the membership, despite the fact that posters and leaflets advertising it were banned.

International support for the CMU is also very important, says Tampoe. Messages of support for the March 5th action from the ITF and affiliates, as well as both the Foodworkers and Textile workers internationals (to whom the CMU is also affiliated) were received very well. Every message of support was read out at the public meeting in Colombo.

"I could have made a speech," said Tampoe. "But I thought that reading all these messages was more important, so that people would know about the international movement and know they had support."

The situation in the country "could suddenly go haywire" warns Tampoe, and he believes that the CMU represents one of the few hopes for positive change in Sri Lanka.

"Only an organised working class movement can provide the stability needed for real human rights," he said. "Only open mass action can ultimately restore democratic rights as happened in Manila — we haven't reached that stage yet, but if it continues, eventually it will come to that."

The CMU's demands...

The CMU's demands for "Democratic and Human Rights and Peace and Justice in Sri Lanka" are encapsulated in a seven point list of grievances. They are as follows:

1) The government's "war policy" in the North and East, coupled with the long standing state of emergency which suspends trade union and civil rights such as picketing and demonstrating.

2) The exercise of the "Prevention of Terrorism" act under which large numbers of people are detained without trial.

3) Maintenance by the government of the lowest wages in Asia through the restriction of trade union rights to organise and the use of "casual"

classifications of workers in state enterprises who are, in fact, full time employees.

4) The enforcement by the government of a public sector wage freeze on the grounds that money is needed for the war — in spite of the fact that millions of rupees are regularly squandered by mismanagement and corruption.

5) The handing over of public enterprises to private, often foreign, interests with a consequently large scale of enforced redundancies.

6) Political discrimination in hiring and promotions within the public sector.

7) The widespread denial of the right of legal redress to workers in certain public enterprises.

PEOPLE

Pio Albanesi is new ITF Civil Aviation Secretary

The ITF has a new Civil Aviation Section Secretary. He is Pio Albanesi, who comes from the Italian Transport Workers' Federation (FILT-CGIL) where he was previously employed in the International Department.

Albanesi, who was appointed by the Board at its meeting earlier this month, expects to take up his new post at the beginning of May. He

brings to it a wide experience gained as a cabin attendant with Alitalia and later as a leading union official representing flying staff. Within the ITF, he has played an active part in the work of the Civil Aviation Section as a member of its Cabin Crew Technical Committee.

He will naturally combine these duties with those of Travel Bureau

Section Secretary. Here again his experience of work in the tourist industry will be an asset in his new post.

* * *

Neil Milligan will take over as General Secretary of the British Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen when Ray Buckton retires later this year. Milligan is currently ASLEF Assistant General Secretary.

INLAND TRANSPORT

Dealing with drivers' trauma in train suicides

A depressed man throws himself on to the railway line. A train comes along, but is unable to stop in time. The man is killed and his family grieves over his loss. But only too often the train driver is forgotten. Not so in Malmö, Sweden thanks to the special 'crisis assistance' ('krisjour') which swings into action immediately after a rail accident in the region.

The 'krisjour' (crisis assistance) idea comes from Jan Frisk, local chief safety officer of the State Employees' Union (SF). It grew from his concern that drivers involved in accidents would become depressed and unable to concentrate.

In the course of his duties, Frisk said he would be called out after an accident to find even the toughest of drivers deeply disturbed by the experience and collapsed in floods of tears.

Now having to cope with the consequences of an accident alone is a thing of the past for train drivers in the Malmö region.

Each driver has been issued with a small plastic card, about the size of an ID card, telling him what he should do whenever there is an accident or incident.

After an accident the train is stopped and the driver removed from duty at once. The 'crisis assistance' then comes into effect.

The driver's supervisor rings a 'contact man' whose name appears on a special list. The contact man takes a taxi to the accident spot, his job being to look after the driver.

First, he accompanies the driver to the emergency department of the local hospital where he is given sedatives if necessary and can talk with a doctor about what has just happened to him. If he is still in deep shock, he may be admitted as an in-patient.

The contact man then accompanies the driver home and stays with him until a member of the family is able to take over. The scheme recognises the importance of not leaving a driver in shock alone and without help.

The driver is only allowed to commence duty once he has the all clear from his own doctor.

The Swedish Railways (SJ) company doctor in Malmö has nothing but praise for the union initiative. From a medical point of view, he finds the scheme a model of good practice. The driver benefits from having someone

to sympathise with him at a time of deep distress and conflicting feelings. Anyone who has ever found himself in similar circumstances will know without being told just how important it is to talk through the experience.

The company doctor said that the scheme was likely to prove of even greater benefit now that the contact men had been specially trained - once again Jan Frisk's idea. He has every reason to be proud of the success of his brain child - as he says, it is a scheme which has grown out of the need to offer help to fellow drivers and is very much close to his heart.

schemes. He also thinks such crisis management could be applied to other areas such as alcohol abuse etc. Drivers should also have their income protected if they have to change to other duties as the result of psychological problems arising from an accident, he adds.

•• Meanwhile, in Great Britain, the drivers' union - the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) - has won its four year battle to establish the right of footplate staff to financial compensation for the severe depression, anxiety and mental stress which often follows

Train drivers should never be left alone after the incident...

Frisk would now like to see the scheme extended nationally and says he would be only too willing to help set up other local schemes, giving union health and safety representatives the benefit of his experience in Malmö.

He thinks it is particularly important that the contact men should be health and safety officers. For that makes looking after the driver a health and safety issue, to be paid for by the employer and not from union funds.

He illustrates the need for 'crisis assistance' by quoting one incident where a duty driver ran over a suicide. He then had to continue on his way. It was some hours before anyone thought of what had become of him. When an official caught up with him at Malmö central station he was unable to remember the accident; he was so shocked he had simply blanked it out. He denied that he had ever been at the site of the accident, even though he had passed through there once again after the accident. Worst of all, he was allowed to go home alone. When his wife eventually found him there he had collapsed with severe breathing difficulties and might very well have died had she not just happened to arrive home.

While Jan Frisk is obviously delighted with the success of his idea, he is not going to sit back on his hands and let things rest there. He says he would like to see other categories of railway worker (such as shunting staff) covered by similar

seeing people commit suicide on the track.

Most severely affected are those drivers - and there are many - who have to cope with this ghastly experience more than once. The union knows of one driver who had hit 10 persons on the track and another who became suicidal after hitting a body for the third time.

Sympathetic Labour MPs finally succeeded in late February in overcoming government opposition to the introduction of a clause in the Criminal Justice Bill covering train drivers suffering psychological injury from the shock of seeing trespassers and suicides killed or maimed on the track.

When the bill becomes law later this year drivers will once again be eligible for financial compensation for injuries thus caused.

Compensation had been paid to drivers by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board on a discretionary basis between 1979 and 1983 but was then stopped and ASLEF was advised to go to law to establish a legal right to compensation for its members. Following a setback in the Court of Appeal a year ago the union realised that the only way forward lay in achieving special provision for drivers in the proposed new law.

Commenting on the outcome, ASLEF General Secretary Ray Buckton said: "It is a great victory for us and for the four hundred or so drivers every year who have this terrible experience".

Malaysian union attacks rail sale plans

Plans by the government to privatise the country's railways have come under fierce attack from the ITF-affiliated Railwaymen's Union of Malaya (RUM).

The union claims that privatisation of the railways in Malaysia is detrimental to the interests of a developing country which has just begun to open up the rural areas. To attract people to these areas what is needed, the union argues, is a rail system providing good transport connections, run as a public utility.

RUM has held a series of meetings with the Railways Board and the government to express its strong objections to the proposals and has backed up its case against privatisation with a memorandum outlining its arguments for keeping the railways in the public domain as being in line with the objectives of government policy.

According to RUM the crux of the problem facing Malaysian Railways is that it has been consistently underfunded over the past twenty years. During this period, spending on roads, ports and aviation has gone

up (by 18%, 70% and 5% respectively) while investment in the railways has fallen by 9%.

The debt burden of the railways is now so acute that the railways are quite unable to service their loans.

RUM recommends that the railways be placed on the same footing as the other transport modes and that the government should make outright grants for much-needed capital improvements and modernisation of the system.

The union wants the Railways General Manager and the Board to be given greater autonomy in the running of the railways. It envisages an industry managed by professionals capable of running a highly technical operation on prudent technical and commercial lines.

RUM also believes that a single Transport Committee should be set up to coordinate the development of the various transport modes and ensure fair competition in the interests of the national economy.

The memorandum points out that in the past high priority has been given to developing the road transport

network, with millions of dollars being spent on new roads, to the benefit of the urban areas. As the emphasis will now be on rural development the focus should shift to developing the railways to cope with the task ahead.

In sum, what is needed, in the union view, is an efficient and effective rail system in public ownership including:

- a more positive approach to modernisation
- greater capital investment from the federal government
- improvements in track, signalling and rolling stock with the aim of developing both passenger and freight services and making Malaysia Railways more competitive
- a wide degree of flexibility in operation and financial and commercial freedom.

Considerable interest has been generated by the plan for selling off the railways outlined in the February issue of ITF News. So far British, Canadian, French and Japanese companies have submitted proposals.

Eighty South African bus workers sacked for taking strike action

80 striking South African bus drivers, members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU), have been dismissed for taking industrial action in a union recognition dispute involving bus drivers and maintenance staff from 5 bus depots.

The drivers, employed by Bophuthatswana Transport Holdings (BTH) in the so-called "homeland" of Bophuthatswana were dismissed in the middle of February.

Another striking company driver, Lucas Kekana, was detained without charge by the Bophuthatswana "police" on February 18.

Yet other drivers were forced by the company to return to their posts some at gunpoint according to TAWU General Secretary Esau Rankholo — while the strike was continuing. White drivers were also engaged to drive buses during the action.

Some workers left their homes at the time of the strike for fear of police harassment after workers' leaders were detained.

South African police have also frustrated workers' attempts to hold protest meetings in the Pretoria area where the company also operates.

The company is now attempting to divide the workers and their union, according to Rankholo, by telling some of the dismissed workers that they had the right to appeal against their dismissal on an individual basis.

TAWU has won considerable public support for its stand as the result of joint appeals from the BTH support committee and local residents' associations to the local community to back TAWU's call for recognition and to join the union in urging an end to harassment and the release of strikers.

BTH is wholly owned by Bophuthatswana Transport Investments — which is itself jointly owned by the Bophuthatswana government and the South African Development Trust Corporation (PTY) Ltd based in Pretoria. Bophuthatswana government representatives form the senior management.

BTH has adamantly refused to negotiate with TAWU because it is a 'foreign (ie South African based) union' with no legal status in the homeland although it has successfully organised almost half of the company's workers.

The dispute dates back to last year when about 50 employees of the PUTCO bus company were transferred to BTH when it took over several former PUTCO routes.

TAWU sought representation from BTH on behalf of these workers who were not prepared to give up their trade union membership but met with a rebuff from the company.

Many of these workers lost their jobs as a result of the change but this did not discourage their remaining colleagues from beginning a drive to organise their fellow workers under the watchful eyes of the Bophuthatswana authorities and BTH security personnel.

They were so successful that in six

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...TAWU denied recognition after organising half the workforce...

Continued from page 7
months 2,146 out of 4,800 workers had been unionised, the majority of the new union members being concentrated in six of the eight operating centres of the company in the Pretoria area.

Trade union organisation in the homelands is notoriously difficult and

dangerous.

These areas, which the South African government pretends (with no support from any other nation on earth), are independent, are in fact puppet administrations of the apartheid regime who are often more brutal than the Pretoria regime

itself. Their disregard for human, civil and trade union rights is illustrated by the almost complete lack of labour legislation in the areas and the broad powers granted to the self-styled "police" forces who are, in effect, controlled by the South African government.

Volvo voted drivers' top truck

Last year, we asked European road transport workers' affiliates in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands to distribute a questionnaire to road haulage drivers asking what make of truck they prefer and what improvements they would like to see in areas such as design and equipment of cab and trailer and driver comfort and amenities.

Over sixteen hundred questionnaires were completed and returned to the ITF, two thirds of these from Britain.

Drivers had been asked to list in order of preference the vehicles they had driven since 1980, considering factors such as comfort, safety and reliability.

In the event, a significant number of drivers (some 250) indicated just one preference, even though they must have driven more than one make during the period covered by the survey.

To minimize distortion, these latter findings were recorded separately from replies where several vehicles were placed in order of preference.

Points were allotted on a scale from 8 for the most to 1 for the least favoured vehicle make; where a single preference was listed each vehicle was awarded one point.

Vehicles have been listed by the name of the manufacturer only as some respondents did not give the model name and number and it was unclear whether the same models were actually operated in the different countries covered by the survey.

Not surprisingly the preferences stated tend to reflect the market share of different manufacturers in the countries concerned.

Volvo, with 5,266 points, was the manufacturer which emerged as a clear favourite among drivers who listed an order of preference of vehicles. Mercedes/Daimler-Benz (with 3,134) was in second place just in front of Scania with 3,133 points.

Drivers in Austria put Mercedes at the top of their list, Belgian and British drivers favoured Volvo, while German drivers preferred Daimler and Dutch drivers DAF.

The results were rather different in the case of the small sample of drivers, most of them British, who indicated only one preference. This list was headed by Bedford (57), followed by Mercedes/Daimler-Benz (34) and Volvo (28).

When suggesting improvements to the vehicles they drive, the respondents gave the highest priority to

driver comfort and amenities. Among the changes most drivers would most like to see are bigger cabs with better seating, more legroom and storage space.

Other improvements to which they gave a high priority were improved vision and heating.

With sleeper cabs becoming more common it was perhaps not unexpected to find that the most desired improvement was for proper night heaters in the cab (409 suggestions) while a substantial number of drivers (204) wanted quieter cabs with better insulation and sound-proofing or air conditioning or ventilation (119).

The fact that drivers regularly spend long hours each day in the cab, even sleeping there on long distance journeys, was also reflected in a demand for the provision in the cab of cooking and washing facilities, bigger and better bunks and generally enhanced interior comfort.

The ITF has sent the detailed results of its survey to the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the International Organisation of Motor Manufacturers (OACI) and asked its road transport affiliates to give it publicity in their union newspapers.

OBITUARIES

Eyo Honesty, President of the Nigerian National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), died in March as the result of a car accident. His loss will be deeply felt within the NURTW of which he was a dedicated and highly effective union leader.

In a message of condolence to the union, ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers praised Chief Honesty as a 'dignified leader and eloquent spokesman on behalf of the road transport workers of Nigeria and of the whole African continent'.

Recalling Chief Honesty's presence and valuable counsel at the Second ITF African Road Transport Workers' Conference in Sierra Leone last December Brothers said that the ITF's sadness at Honesty's premature removal from the ranks of the world's transport workers was all the more profound.

Hans Ericson, former ITF Executive Board member and President of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union

from 1968 to 1980, died on 4 April, aged 59. The ITF has expressed regret to his union at Ericson's passing.

Gene Spector, long-time Research Director of the National Maritime Union of America, died on 1 April just weeks before his 65th birthday. In a message to Gene's family ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander said he had been much saddened by his sudden death of a family friend and a man who had the good of seafarers at heart.

SEAFARERS

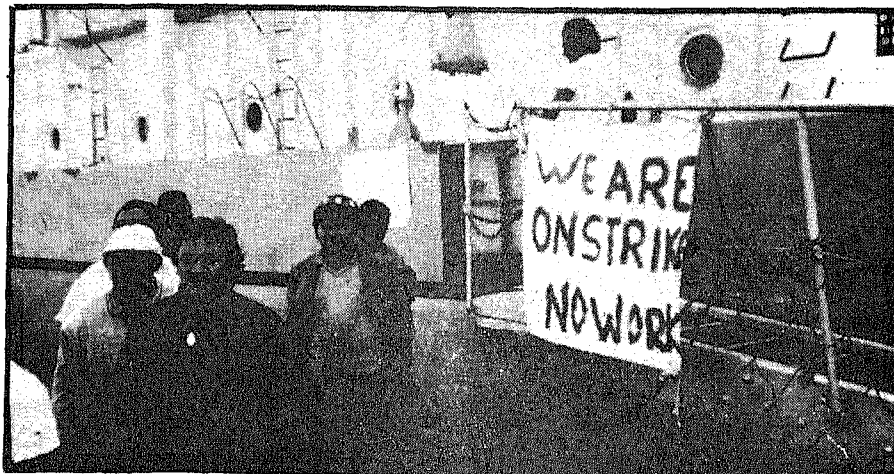
Strike boosts Brazilian seafarers' pay

Brazilian seafarers called off their month old strike on 4 April on reaching agreement with the last company to hold out against their demands - the state owned shipping line Lloyd Brasileiro. The settlements reached with owners as a result of the action have brought the seafarers wage increases of up to 120 per cent.

The strike was prolonged by the intransigent attitude of both the private and state owned shipping lines, while armed intervention in the ports and the arrest of strikers only heightened tensions and made a settlement more difficult.

To win public support, striking maritime workers and their families staged a mass demonstration in the streets of Rio on the eleventh day of the strike.

At the height of the action, 177 ships were held up in Rio, Santos and



Striking crew members from the Nacional Santos in Houston, Texas

other major Brazilian ports and 15 ships were stopped in foreign ports.

The unions involved have expressed

their thanks to ITF affiliated maritime unions for the solidarity and support they received during the strike.

Dutch owners say no to keeping ships' cook

Over 3,000 seafarers on Dutch ships under 4,000 grt went on strike on 7 April after union attempts to conclude a new collective agreement on their behalf were rejected by shipowners.

The Dutch Seafarers' Federation (FWZ) has been talking with the owners for over twelve months in an effort to reach agreement on a new contract to replace the one which expired at the beginning of April 1986.

The owners have shown themselves unwilling to concede the key union demand in the current contract round for catering staff to be carried on these ships.

The FWZ wants a qualified cook to be retained because voyages can take up to six months and it is clearly important that seafarers at sea for such long periods should have good food well prepared and presented by a properly qualified person.

The union sees the government decision no longer to require a cook to be carried on ships of this size as yet further evidence of the erosion of crewing levels on Dutch ships which has angered the country's seafarers. It is hard to see with the drastic cuts in manning levels that have recently taken place how any other member of the crew could add catering to his other duties.

Other improvements in pay and conditions sought by the union include:

- the continuation of a six monthly cost of living increase
- an additional long service increment worth 3% for service in the European area (the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Sea)
- an additional day's leave as evidence of a commitment to shorter hours.

It is also asking that seafarers should be able to take voluntary early retirement on full pension at 59 rather than 60 as at present.

Within five days of the strike starting three owners broke ranks and signed individual agreements with the FWZ on the carriage of catering staff in defiance of the call from the Dutch association of owners in the coastal

and short sea trades (VNRK) for a united stand on the crewing issue. Two more companies gave in later, bringing the total number of ships for which new agreements have been signed to 26.

While the FWZ is pleased that a settlement has been reached with these companies it is anxious that the short sea trades agreement should not become fragmented. As there are many small companies (some with only one vessel) its negotiating position would be made extremely difficult. That said, the union hopes that if more VNRK members give way the association will end its opposition on the catering issue.

Several ships are held up by the strike in Continental North Sea ports but vessels as far afield as Singapore have also been drawn into the action.

Kerguelen flag legal - Council of State rules

The French Council of State have approved the government law setting up the Kerguelen offshore flag in the Antarctic seas.

Seafaring unions had challenged the legality of the government decree, because it allows for discriminatory

employment of non-French nationals at lower wage rates. The Council of State — a constitutional court with the right to review the legality of government legislation — has now confirmed the strict legality of the register's creation.

Engine room health risks probed

Health risks faced by seafarers working in ships' engine rooms were subjected to an in-depth analysis at a special technical meeting on 8 April sponsored by the Nordic Engineer Officers' Federation (NMF).

The meeting took place on the 35,000 GRT Finnish ferry 'Wellamo' as it ploughed through the ice-covered Baltic between Stockholm and Turku in Finland. It was attended by ITF affiliated marine engineers' unions from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark (the members of the NMF), as well as by ITF affiliates from the USA, Argentina, Great Britain, Spain and Australia.

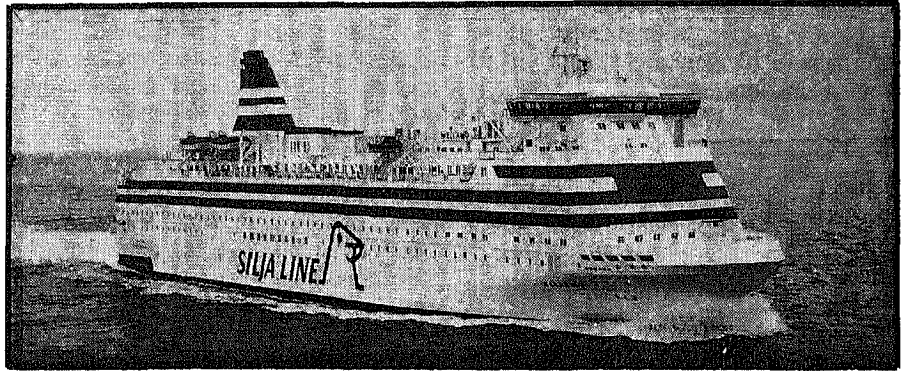
Engineering officers and engine room ratings face one of the worst working environments which exist. Noise, heat, constant vibration, exposure to oils, lubricants and other chemical substances and risks of fire and explosion are all a normal part of engine room life. Unlike shore-based workers, many of the health risks - particularly noise and vibration - are often just as present during off-duty hours as when work is actually being performed.

As new technologies come into use in ship construction and shipowners see opportunities to reduce manning costs, the traditional engine rooms are being replaced by automated ones, where the engineer on watch stays in an air-conditioned control room watching visual display screens which are designed to warn of any malfunctions. This reduces some health risks but also introduces new ones.

UMS

Increasingly, automated engine rooms are being run without a constant engineering officer watch (which requires two or three engineers on board). Instead, the UMS (unmanned machinery space) system is used. This uses computer technology to transmit automatic warnings to the engineer during his off-duty periods, rather than requiring him to actually be on watch.

At one level UMS represents an improvement in working conditions for engineers since they no longer work shifts. But uninterrupted sleep for 8 hours is one thing and sleep when an alarm bell may send you running to the engine room at any moment is quite another. The results of a study carried out by the Swedish Work Environment Fund were presented to the meeting. The study



The Wellamo ferry belonging to Finland's Silja Line where the Nordic engineer officers' meeting was held

showed that the sleep patterns of engineering officers when on UMS standby were very different from days when they could confidently expect a proper night's sleep. This disturbance could affect health in the long term and is particularly bad for older workers, the researchers concluded, although they were not able to pinpoint any obvious direct impairment of work performance.

HIGH-TECH SHIPS

On ships still carrying two engineers, a system of 'one day on, one day off' is still possible. Where only one engineer is carried, the risk of disturbance exists 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. This is the direction in which Norwegian (and other) shipowners are going. This was pointed out by Martinus Kvande, research director of Wilhelmsen Shipping, whose company is operating a ro ro car carrier with a crew of 13. New 'safety' manning regulations which came into force in Norway in March will probably, he suggested, lay down legal manning levels of six or seven with anything more being left to negotiation. Carrying more than one engineering officer is seen by many shipowners as an expensive luxury, and many are actively pressing for 'dual' (engineer/navigator) certificates. The day when the chief engineer steers the ship while cooking his own meals cannot be far away.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Details were also given to the meeting of a new handbook, shortly to be published in English as well as Swedish, giving advice on how to cut down noise and vibration on board ship. It deals with new ship design but also recommends engineering solutions on how to cut down engine vibration on existing ships, and how

to provide sound insulation in engine rooms and crew accommodation. Finally, it deals with hearing protection. Copies of the handbook can be obtained from the Joint Industrial and Safety Council, Box 3208, S 103 64, Stockholm, Sweden.

HAZARDS OF FUEL OIL

Of particular concern to the engineering officers are increasing reports of potential health hazards associated with marine fuel (bunker) oil. Shipowners have to fuel their ships from many different ports and often have little or no control over the quality of the fuel. A pilot study sponsored by a number of Norwegian safety organisations and shipowners has already shown serious chemical contamination of fuel oil samples from a wide range of sources.

Engine room officers and ratings come into contact with fuel oil on a regular basis. Even with the most stringent precautions there is a risk of inhalation of oil vapours, and contact with skin and eyes. On low cost ships with lax safety standards the risks are far higher.

The second phase of the Norwegian investigation is now nearing completion and is expected to be presented to the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at the end of April. The ITF whole-heartedly supported the initial Norwegian initiative at the last MSC and would urge all affiliates to do likewise whenever the matter arises during national briefing sessions prior to IMO meetings. Fuel oil samples tested using special automatic analysis techniques developed in Norway showed in some cases high concentrations of pyrolytic oil resulting from unsatisfactory refining techniques and several cases of high

Continued on page 11

... officers sound alert on health threat from contaminated fuel oils...

Continued from page 10

concentrations of chemical contaminants. These chemicals, chiefly fluor but also heavy metals and indene, result either from inadequate cleaning of tanks, pipes and barges or even from deliberate 'dumping' of hazardous wastes into marine fuel oil tanks.

Contaminated fuel oils, which often have a distinctive pungent smell, can cause short-term health problems such as giddiness, nausea or skin burns, and longer-term problems including allergies, eczema and skin, lung and intestinal cancers. Some contaminants can also cause severe damage to engine components, so shipowners

have a direct interest in minimizing them.

On the positive side, tests of working environments on Norwegian-owned ships have found in general that ventilation and protective procedures keep exposure to fuel oil within accepted occupational limits. The number of cases of chemical contamination also seems to have dropped after a peak in 1983 and 1984, leading to the conclusion that when oil prices are high, fuel suppliers are less scrupulous about their sources. The situation in flag of convenience ships or other vessels owned by non-Norwegians has yet to

be adequately tested.

If you suspect something may be wrong with bunker oil on your ship (funny smell, giddiness or nausea after exposure), you can obtain a free analysis by sending it to:

Martinus Kvande
Director Research & Development
Wilh. Wilhelmsen Ltd.
A/S Roald Amundsens
Gate 5
Oslo 1 Norway

The ITF Secretariat was represented at the meeting, which may become a regular event, by Åke Selander and David Cockroft.

Greek government backs down over seamen's pensions

Greek seafarers on coastal vessels renewed their industrial action this month in support of demands for more pay and better pensions, striking at first for 48 hours and then extending this for two further two-day strikes.

The strike waves were only called off when the government gave assurances that the men's main claims would be dealt with.

The Minister of the Merchant Marine has agreed to withdraw a highly unpopular amendment to the seamen's pension fund (NAT) regulations which would have required

seafarers to work for 18 years (rather than 13 years 6 months as at present) before qualifying for a pension. The withdrawal of this provision has been welcomed by the ITF-affiliated PNO which has fiercely resisted the Ministry's intentions.

The strikes succeeded in halting most passenger and inter island ferry services but reports reached us of at least one ship putting out from Piraeus with an 'emergency crew' and of strikers being subjected to violent attacks by harbour corps officials when they attempted to stop it sailing.

•Meanwhile, the PNO has signed a new collective agreement covering ocean going vessels over 3,000 grt and providing for increases of 14 - 15% for 1987.

As part of the agreement, the owners have undertaken, together with the union, to attempt to persuade the government not to proceed with reported plans to ease pressure on the industry's technically bankrupt pension fund by raising the minimum retirement age for ratings from 50 to 55 and for senior deck and engine room officers to 60 years.

ITF calls for more pressure on warring states to stop Gulf deaths

In the latest attack on merchant shipping in the Persian Gulf eight crew members died in an Iranian missile attack on the Singapore flag tanker *Sedra* at the end of March despite the presence in the area of a US naval vessel.

The *Sedra* was the seventh vessel trading with Kuwait to come under suspected Iranian fire this year.

The ITF immediately contacted the Iranian ambassador in London condemning the unprovoked attack on the *Sedra* and Iran's continued defiance of world opinion which was increasing its isolation from the international community.

The ITF reminded the ambassador that the ITF was not alone in its condemnation of these indiscriminate attacks on neutral shipping. Government and owner representatives as well as religious organisations had voiced their concern. Port workers were also increasingly refusing to handle shipments of arms to areas of armed conflict, including Iran and Iraq, the ITF message pointed out.

In a circular to seafarer affiliates, the ITF says that the time has now come to focus a spotlight on each case in which seafarers have to pay with their lives when going about their legitimate duties in war risk areas. Affiliates are being urged in this instance to bring pressure to bear on Iran to stop its attacks and to respond to future incidents involving innocent merchant shipping.

As part of this process the ITF will be publishing regular round ups of Gulf casualties in ITF News.

In response to the *Sedra* incident, the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) has reminded owners and agents to inform ships' officers if their vessels are scheduled to sail into the Gulf war zone.

SMOU says it has received a number of complaints in recent months from members saying they were not informed that their vessels were heading for the Gulf war zone until they reached the area.

Meanwhile, the US has increased its long standing presence in the Gulf amid discussions on a possible escort system for tankers serving Kuwait.

CIVIL AVIATION

Strike threat pays off in first contract for DLT flying staff

A pay strike by flying staff of the German regional airline DLT (Deutsche Luftverkehrsgesellschaft) was narrowly averted in late March when last minute negotiations between the staff union ÖTV and the management resulted in an offer which was immediately accepted by the union.

DLT's 140 flying staff have only just recently been organised in the ÖTV which was seeking to negotiate its first collective agreement.

Talks began half way through November but eventually broke down in February because of the obstinacy of the employers, who were unwilling to improve on their 4% salary offer. The union's key demand for a narrowing of differentials between DLT salaries and those of other German airlines was simply ignored.

The company even attempted to put pressure on its flying staff to abandon their demands by cancelling February's salary payments.

Before the strike, DLT captains were typically earning up to 7,000 DM a month less than Lufthansa pilots, while cabin attendants were up to 1,400 DM worse off.

The union was unable to understand the rigid position adopted by DLT which is a profitable airline enjoying a growth in passenger numbers that is the envy of many other airlines. DLT is also planning to double the number of its aircraft - another sign of its healthy competitive position.

When the talks collapsed the ÖTV

organised a ballot of its members, who voted overwhelmingly (over 90%) in favour of strike action. Armed with this strike authority, the union was in a strong position in the talks that followed, although it took over twenty hours of hard talking to reach an acceptable result.

The ÖTV has every reason to be pleased with the result. DLT has agreed to increase the salaries of its flying staff by an average of 7 per cent and to increase the rate at which additional flying hours are compensated by 25 per cent.

The ÖTV points out that DLT is

now offering salaries that are better than the other regionals and that bear comparison with those within Lufthansa. It will now concentrate its efforts on achieving comparable pay levels for the employees of the other regionals.

At the request of the ÖTV, the ITF alerted its civil aviation affiliates to the possibility of a strike at DLT and a number had promised their support in the event of industrial action. The ITF itself also contacted the management of DLT urging it to promote a settlement producing realistic levels of flying staff pay.

US flight attendants seek rules to cut meal cart injuries

It is estimated that one flight attendant is injured every day in the United States alone as the result of having to wheel heavy meal and beverage carts in the restricted space of the average aircraft cabin.

Their excessive weight [about 250 pounds (55 kg)], small wheel diameter and frequently defective brakes make the carts tricky to operate, especially over carpeted areas. Considerable strength is needed to set the cart into motion and as there is a requirement that it should be pulled rather than pushed this adds to the physical strain on the attendant.

If one also bears in mind that the carts are in use during the ascent and descent and must be safely

maneuvred along narrow aisles and into and out of cramped galleys where it is difficult for the cabin attendant to position him- or herself safely, the potential for injury becomes clear. Indeed they are the leading source of equipment-related injury to flight attendants.

In an attempt to provide a safer cabin working environment and reduce the growing number of back injuries cabin staff suffer from the carts - some of them bad enough to cost a successful career - the ITF-affiliated US Association of Flight Attendants has now turned to the Federal Aviation Administration, which is also charged with matters relating to occupational safety.

The AFA has asked the FAA to consider new regulations placing a maximum limit on the force required to operate the carts and to limit the degree of wrist bending during cart use, as excessive wrist twisting is leading to serious wrist disorders among cabin staff.

The union would also like to see the introduction of a requirement on the government to compel carriers to repair malfunctioning carts. It cites the case of one medium size carrier with more than 1,000 cart malfunctions in two years and adds that airlines short of carts put broken ones back into service, even though they are aware that these pose a serious safety hazard to cabin crews.

First Worker Director appointed at Air Malta

A significant milestone was reached last month with the appointment of the first Worker-Director to the Board of Maltese national carrier Air Malta.

The man chosen by the Malta General Workers' Union for this pioneering role is Victor Bonnici, who has been a shop steward at the airline for the past 20 years and is currently Ramp Section Manager.

He is Vice President of the GWU port and transport workers' section and a member of its national council.

As a worker director he will have an important say in major decisions affecting the working life of the airline's 1,200 strong workforce.

On the same day as Bonnici's appointment was announced, a company wide regrading exercise hammered out in months of hard bargaining by the GWU was completed. Employees of the airline will receive increases of between £M70 and 100 a year, backdated to 1 July 1986, under the new agreement.

Agreement signed on North Atlantic air fares

A new Memorandum of Understanding on North Atlantic pricing was signed on 13 February between the aviation authorities of 13 member states of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and the United States.

The new Memorandum came into effect on 1 April and will apply for two years.

The Memorandum provides for automatic approval to be given to North Atlantic fares filed by airlines within specified pricing zones. The authorities also undertake not to prevent any carrier from participating in multilateral tariff coordination while the arrangement is in force.

Point Air back in service

Point Air — the French charter airline grounded in February for violations of safety procedures and mismanagement — is back in service.

The government's civil aviation authority, the Direction générale de l'aviation civile (DGAC), grounded the airline's two DC8 planes on February 5 for failing to meet minimum safety conditions (see ITF News, March 1987).

The airline agreed to make a series of repairs to their two planes, and also to implement more rigorous guidelines for the safe operation of their flights.

They also accepted the demand of the DGAC for the dismissal of the Point Air manager Maurice Freund, and have replaced him with Claude Guibert, an ex-pilot.

An agreed reference fare level has been set for each route, with prices of the five main fare types (first class, business, economy, 'discount' and 'deep discount') being allowed to vary within an agreed percentage range of that reference level.

Recent cost trends have been taken into account in fixing the pricing zones and reference fare levels.

Provision has been made in the

Memorandum for the first time for consultations to take place at any time on matters related to North Atlantic air transport.

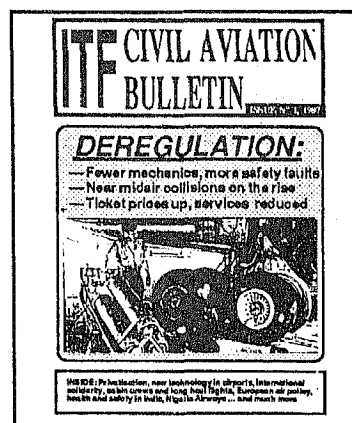
•Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia (signatures from a further 3 states are expected shortly).

New ITF bulletin...

The ITF's first edition of the *Civil Aviation Bulletin* has now been published. This 24 page magazine is devoted to news and analysis of civil aviation issues from the trade union point of view.

This first edition focuses on deregulation, with extensive reporting of the situation in the United States and the many, often unreported, ill effects of the policy. There is also a special feature and international survey on the introduction of new technology in airports and an account of the continuing wrangle in the European Community over aviation policy.

Copies of the Bulletin, for distribution by affiliates, are available free from the ITF Research and Publications Department in London (133-135 Great Suffolk Street, London, SE1



IPD, Great Britain). English language copies are now available, and versions in the other ITF official languages will be available shortly.

FISHERIES

Canadian/French fisheries fight

The Canadian and French governments are engaged in a bitter dispute over exploitation rights in the fish-rich Gulf of St. Lawrence and Grand Banks.

The source of the friction is the renewal of a fishing agreement between the countries for the 1988-1991 period.

The French, when they handed over what is now the Canadian province of Québec to the English in the 18th Century, retained one small chunk of *Nouvelle France* in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. These islands of St. Pierre-et-

Miquelon remain, to this day, a part of France. And this gives French trawlers a unique claim, based on sovereignty, to the rich fishing grounds of the Gulf and Newfoundland coast.

The Canadians, concerned at the growth of large factory trawlers fishing the banks, and a noticeable drop in stocks, have sought to set quotas in the area. But the French government insist that what they do within the St Pierre zone is

entirely a domestic concern.

This has led the Canadian government to ban visits to Canadian ports by French trawlers, which has in turn led to the French denouncing this ban as unjustified when negotiations on the new agreement, taking place in London, England, are still underway.

These discussions continue with a view to agreeing both quotas and an exact definition of French sovereignty within the Gulf.

DOCKERS

ECT contract protects Dutch dock jobs

Renewed talks between the Dutch dockers' union Vervoersbond FNV and the world's biggest container handling company, Europe Container Terminus (ECT), at Rotterdam port have resulted in the conclusion of a collective agreement which the union is asking its members to accept.

The settlement guaranteeing jobs for 300 ECT workers threatened with redundancy, which the Vervoersbond says represents a substantial improvement over the company's previous offer, will be put to union members at meetings held after the Easter holiday break.

In line with its earlier undertaking, ECT will keep the workforce at current strengths - thus meeting the union's main demand for job security for its members - but to achieve the necessary cost savings following the loss to the port of United States Lines' business when the company collapsed last year pay will be frozen for the entire contract period. Dockers' guaranteed annual rates of pay will also be cut by 1,500 guilders and the Christmas bonus (previously equivalent to one month's pay) limited to 2,000 guilders a man, although an additional bonus payment of 125 guilders will be made for each 10,000 containers handled above the annual transshipment figure of 940,000 boxes.

The agreement is valid for two years with the possibility of an extension for a third year to March 1990 if ECT's throughput remains below 1.1

million moves a year.

Meanwhile, the union has agreed to restart talks with the employers on manning levels and new work practices in the general cargo sector of Rotterdam port. The talks, which are due to restart shortly, will proceed with an independent chairman.

Negotiations broke down in mid January and were followed by two months of strike action in the sector.

This was only called off by the union after a court ruling forbidding the employers from going ahead with planned redundancies before May (see last issue of ITF News).

Workers in the grain sector of the port staged a series of lightning strikes earlier this month after the employers turned down union demands for the inclusion of a shorter working week in the new agreement.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

11-15 May	Latin American Inland Navigation Conference	Paraná, Argentina
18-19 May	Seafarer members 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 de J. Brazil
16-18 June	Urban Transport Committee	Helsinki
15-16 September	Rhine/Main/Danube Working Group	Nuremberg, Fed. Rep. Germany
3-5 December	Asia/Pacific Regional Conference	Tokyo

ITF Asia/Pacific Bulletin...

A special Health and Safety issue of the ITF Asia/Pacific Bulletin has just come out and is available on request from ITF headquarters.

The issue, which may also be of interest to affiliates outside the Region, includes features on preventing accidents at the workplace and on noise and on where to go for information on health and safety.

There are also articles on the work of the International Labour Office and the ICFTU's Trade Union Principles for preventing Chemical disasters.

ITF ASIA/PACIFIC BULLETIN

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	PREVENTING CHEMICAL DISASTERS: ICFTU CODE --page 15--

PAY DEALS

Finland - deck officers in the foreign trade, 5.1% from 1 March on pay scales, 4.2% on other allowances other than subsistence allowance, which is increased by 1.7%.

Germany - railwaymen and public service workers, 3.4% backdated to 1 January.

United States - officers on dry cargo vessels, 2% in July 1987, 1988 and 1989 under new contract expiring 30 June 1990.