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CAMPAIGN FOR TRADE UNION RIGHTS:

KOREAN SEAFARERS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

The ITF-affiliated Federation of Korean Seamen's Unions (FKSU) is "waging a daring struggle for the realization of a democratic labour movement" according to their President Bu-Ung Kim.

"Korea is now awash in waves of democracy for which the people have fought long" says the head of the 100,000 strong union. Following the military government's capitulation to mass protests demanding political democracy last June, Korean workers have been demanding their rights — "the democratisation of politics must be accompanied by the democratisation of industries" says Kim, whose union has thrown itself fully behind demands for sweeping reforms in labour law and trade union rights.

Thousands of workers in South Korea have been engaged in strikes and demonstrations over the last month demanding economic and trade union reforms.

One shipyard worker, Lee Sok Gyu, was killed by a police grenade during a demonstration on August 22.

Dockers, coal miners, bus and taxi drivers and industrial workers have all participated in actions demanding that pay rises and trade union independence.

The present South Korean labour law, while notionally tolerating trade unions, places severe restrictions on their freedom to organise. Unions are restricted to individual workplaces, and genuine federations of unions in industries or regions are prevented from having real bargaining or representation rights.

"The labour movement in Korea has been fettered by political, sociological, and military factors," says Kim, who was elected to his post earlier this year "We are now trying to throw off the yoke of government-influenced union leadership that has been imposed on the general union members."

The FKSU is "marching hand-in-hand with the democratisation campaign of the nation, the time for our unions to wage a democratic union movement has arrived" states Kim.

The FKSU fully backs Korean workers who "are taking collective actions" but, because their members are mostly on ships in far-flung corners of the world, the FKSU is "unable to show our collective action." Union officers in Korea, however, are joining the mass protests and the President has formulated a twin track policy of organisation and lobbying for constitutional changes.

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SEPTEMBER 1987

...Seamen must 'rise up' to support change

Continued from page 2

The union is launching a major organising drive amongst its members, as shown by a front page article in the Monthly Seamen's Press of August 1 — a Korean language newspaper distributed to FKSU crews on board ships.

The article calls for "the democratisation of the economy" and states that "We, 100,000 seamen have long harboured a bitter feeling in our hearts that for a long time...we have been neglected and ill-treated." Calling for the principles of "Freedom, equality and the basic rights of the people" to be incorporated into the new constitution, the union demands a widespread reform of the seafaring industry.

The union calls for protection for seafarers against the abuses of manning agents, and for a new system of pay for seafarers. The present system, by using a low basic wage topped up by allowances, robs seafarers of fair retirement and social security benefits, says the union.

The present structure of seafarers' contracts gives no job security, the union states, allowing shipowners to hire and dismiss crews at will — "the Seamen's Act should rather be called as the shipowner protection act" they say.

"The competent authorities and the employers should realise that the poisonous provisions in the Seamen's Act must be eliminated..." says the union, calling on seamen to "rise up" in support of change.

The FKSU has also placed draft amendments of the Korean Constitution and the Seamen's Act before the National Assembly, and is organising a major lobbying campaign to demand these changes be accepted.

"We are demanding that the constitution of the Republic of Korea be amended so that the three rights of the workers (right to unionise, right to collective bargaining, right to collective action) be guaranteed" says Kim.

Because the Seamen's Act is a special law that covers the labour conditions of seafarers, Kim is also demanding reform of this law.

Economically the South Korean

workers have very strong grounds for demanding substantial pay increases. The country's "economic miracle" of the last decade has seen company profits rise massively while wages remain low.

According to a study published by the French newspaper *Le Monde* industrial productivity in South Korea has risen 150 per cent since 1980, while salaries have increased by only 40 per cent. Monthly industrial wages range from US\$120 dollars to US\$185 dollars a month. The average industrial hourly wage is \$1.55, compared, for example, to \$2.55 in Singapore. The working week averages 54.3 hours (compared to 47.4 in Taiwan). It costs a company in South Korea US\$3 an hour to build a car, compared with \$18 in Japan and \$24 in the USA. There is clearly room for a large economic readjustment in favour of workers' wage packets.

The exploitation of Korean seafarers has long been an issue of

major concern to the ITF. Its position as a major labour supplying country for Flag of Convenience shipping has put in the spotlight. Central to ITF concerns has been the weak position of the Federation of Korean Seamen (FKSU) in representing their members on board Focs, and the role of the manning agents who place seafarers on board these ships.

These concerns led to a special ITF delegation to Korea earlier this year which sought to strengthen the hand of the FKSU in dealing with the government and manning agents. A number of measures, including the setting up of a supervisory body, with FKSU representation to oversee contracts for Foc seafarers, followed in the wake of the visit. The ITF Fair Practices Committee meeting in London last June, which Kim attended as newly elected President, passed a motion of support for the efforts of the FKSU in fighting for the rights of Korean seafarers.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

15-16 Sept.	Rhine/Main/Danube Working Group	Nuremberg Fed. Rep. Germany
22 Sept.	Seafarers' Section Conference	Geneva Switzerland
29-30 Sept.	Road Transport Section Committee	Zurich Switzerland
3-4 Nov.	Executive Board	London
24-25 Nov.	Ground Staff Technical Committee	Eastbourne England
3-5 Dec.	Asia/Pacific Regional Conference	Tokyo Japan
1988		
15-16 March	Executive Board	Oslo Norway
30-31 May	Dockers' Section Conference	Rotterdam Netherlands
1-3 June	Fair Practices Committee	Rotterdam Netherlands

CIVIL AVIATION

Scabs in training for Canadian dispute

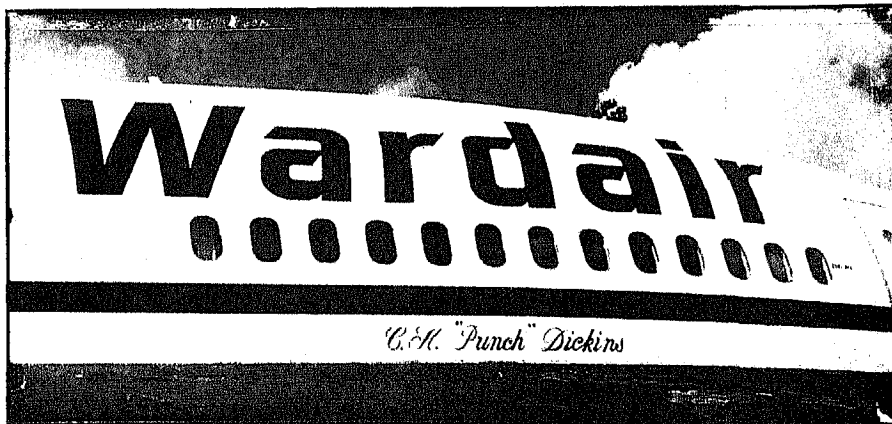
Canada's Wardair airlines are hiring and training strikebreakers for a dispute that has only just gone to mediation.

Wardair's provocative attitude to ITF-affiliated Airline Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has been consistent throughout the contract negotiations. A wide range of issues remain unresolved between the union and management. Talks between the two sides have now finished, with both applying for mediation. A Federal government conciliation officer will be appointed at the end of this month or the beginning of October.

If a resolution is not achieved through this mediation, the Canadian Minister of Labour has the option of either appointing a commissioner to provide further conciliation advice, or leaving the two sides to settle the issue through industrial action — seven days from the first conciliation effort's conclusion a strike or lockout becomes legal under Canadian law. The union says that, if the conciliation effort fails, it is likely that there will be a strike somewhere between the end of October and the middle of December.

Wages, and the company's insistence on keeping a two tier wage scale, is the central issue.

Wardair is a very profitable company. The company's Director of Financial Planning Jim Ormiston



told *Flight International* that its operating earnings put Wardair among the top ten airlines in the world. Last year the company made C\$49 million in profits with a fleet of only nine planes.

The company is planning to expand further from its chartering roots into a full scheduled carrier with many more regular routes.

The company freely admit that a large slice of their profits comes from the low wages they pay, which *Flight International* describe as "substantially below those of the competition" — as if to make matters worse, Ormiston also states that more than half of their edge comes from the higher productivity of the staff — since the company clearly appreciate the excellent work performed by their employees, their blatant refusal to recognise this by paying fair salaries is all the more disgraceful.

At the centre of the wages issue is the existence of the two-tier pay scale. Flight attendants doing the same job are paid differently and have different promotion prospects depending on whether they are scale "A" or scale "B". Scale "B" is for new employees, and, of course, pays lower rates and has fewer increments.

This discriminatory system of pay was forced upon the union in 1983 after Wardair had locked out staff in 1981 and used strikebreakers to keep the airline going.

The company's wage proposals involve freezing the rates and lengthening the increments on scale "A" while increasing scale "B" marginally.

"The employer in their offer is sending the strong message that it sees the "B" scale as the way it wants to pay all Wardair flight

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Machinists strike at Wardair

Mechanics, flight planners and other members of the ITF-affiliated International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) are on strike against Canada's third largest airline.

The IAM strike at Wardair began at midnight on September 3, following the overwhelming rejection by the membership of a mediation proposal.

The 352 members of local 2413 are unsatisfied with the company's wage offer and the three year contract offered.

Wardair flight attendants, members of the ITF-affiliated Airline Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) have to continue working because their contract is still in force — and under Canadian labour law they are legally obliged to stay at work. They have pledged their support to the IAM, committing their members to performing their ordinary duties and no more. Members of CUPE have joined the IAM picket lines, and CUPE have promised to keep the IAM informed of any safety violations they encounter in the airline.

Flight attendants are bracing themselves for their own potential dispute with Wardair (see above story), and the company is already hiring and training strikebreakers in preparation for a CUPE strike.

...Union seeks end to two tier scales

Continued from page 3

attendants in the future." says the CUPE negotiating team. In effect, with all new staff hired being on scale "B", there would be a cumulative reduction in the earnings of Wardair staff (which are already considerably lower than other Canadian airline staff rates).

The union's response is to eliminate the two-tier scale and introduce a single-grid with uniform rates of pay and promotion prospects for all staff. In order to see this principle of fairness achieved, the union are willing to accept lower increases for those staff on scale "A" so that the two groups can be brought together for all future contracts. The actual financial difference between the union claim and the company offer (taken for those already working at Wardair) is not great, the crucial difference is the union's insistence on the principle of the removal of a discriminatory pay system where two attendants doing the same job with the same seniority can be paid differently.

"The company is insisting that we drop our demand for a fair wage scale before they will talk about any issues. This company position is unacceptable to our negotiating committee," says Ross Nichol, Wardair General Chairperson and member of the CUPE negotiating team.

The company is also making a number of clearly unreasonable demands in non-wage areas. They are demanding the withdrawal of appeal and arbitration procedures for disputes over the application of uniform and grooming regulations, they want to increase the amount of unpaid ground staff duties, reduce rest breaks at their discretion, and require new staff to be resident within the area of a ground base. Additionally, they have rejected union proposals for a non-discrimination and harassment clause in the contract and have demanded that the union drop over 150 outstanding grievances that are pending against the company.

The company's positions clearly illustrate their unwillingness to reach common ground with the union. Wardair are a highly profitable and successful company on

the verge of a major expansion — it isn't that they can't afford to accept the union's positions, but that they don't want to.

It would appear that Wardair actually want a strike because they believe they can smash the union and operate a Lorenzo-style non-union, low-pay airline.

Wardair is now hiring scabs to prepare for strike breaking.

"They are trying to intimidate the flight attendants by training scabs and circulating misinformation," says Nichol, "The company has trained one batch of scabs, approximately 200, and they are preparing to send another group to Miami in mid-September."

CUPE believe that this entire operation is costing the company C\$50,000 a day — another illustration of the financial health of the airline.

The union is preparing for a major dispute.

"Our internal organisation, including the selection of national and local coordinators, strike captains and action teams in now in place," says Nichol, "We have recently completed a membership survey to gather input and ideas for imaginative and effective pressure tactics. This information will be combined with our other ideas to form a corporate campaign aimed at forcing Wardair management to negotiate in good faith and to be reasonable at the bargaining table."

The union is now stronger than it was in previous disputes in 1981 and 1983, because what was then the Canadian Airline Flight Attendants Association merged last year with CUPE — which is Canada's largest union.

"With the new and additional skills and resources available to service our members we are making a significant effort to pressure Wardair into eliminating the two-tier wage system," says Nichol.

If a dispute comes, the ITF and its affiliated unions will be prepared to offer their fullest support and solidarity to the Airline Division of CUPE.

"We know that Wardair are planning to force a strike, and we recognise that what they are trying to do now, other airlines may try tomorrow. The company should know that ITF unions will not stand by idly if they attempt to use strikebreakers to break the union. We are in close contact with the CUPE on this issue and they have our complete support," said ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Pio Albanesi.

"Wardair is following in the footsteps of the American carriers, they are using deregulation as an excuse to attack the workers. Our fight today is a fight for dignity and fairness for the future," says Nichol.

ITF affiliates in the United States have already been contacted about the strikebreakers' training, and are informing their members about the dispute.

No sell-off for Air France

There are no plans to privatise Air France, according to Chairman Jacques Friedmann.

In an interview with *Le Monde* newspaper, the personal friend of Conservative Premier Jacques Chirac, who was appointed to head the airline last February, categorically denied that there were any plans to remove the company from state ownership. The company does intend, however, to place 15 per cent of the company's shares in private hands — ten per cent

would be reserved for Air France employees.

Friedmann also said that there were no plans to fuse with Air Inter, the domestic French airline. Internationally, in the wake of growing competition and the possible fusion of Britain's two international carriers (BA and BCal, see ITF News, August 1987), Friedmann said that Air France must seek to co-operate more closely with UTA, France's other international airline.

US DEREGULATION BEGINS TO BITE:

Detroit crash saps public confidence

The mysterious crash of Northwest Airlines Flight 255 in Detroit on August 16 that killed 156 people has sent shock waves throughout the US aviation industry.

The United States' second worst airline disaster, coming in the wake of a number of widely reported near-misses and safety violations by airlines, has shaken public confidence in the industry — for the first time since deregulation, the general public is genuinely worried about aviation safety.

The crash itself is the subject of a detailed investigation by a ten-man team from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), who have already discounted initial reports that the accident was due to engine failure. Detailed examination of the MD-80's two engines has clearly established that they were both running at the same power level at the time of impact.

Attention is now directed at the flap and slat positions, and the NTSB will have to carefully sift through the entire wreckage before they can accurately ascertain the cause of the crash — this investigation may well take a year.

Eyewitness reports about the state of the flaps are directly contradictory — some claiming to have seen that they were deployed, others that they were not.

At this early stage it seems quite possible that deregulation may be ultimately to blame for the crash. Laxer safety standards, combined with heightened stress and tension among flight deck staff and controllers is already clearly the cause of the alarming increase in near-misses. It was only a matter of time before these same factors caused a deadly catastrophe.

There is a safety system on board the MD-80 which is supposed to warn the crew if the flaps are incorrectly deployed — a spokesperson for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) told *Flight International* that the warning system compares "the relationship of several things, including flaps, slats, trim, spoiler, parking brake, and centre of gravity."

The device issues an audible warning tone and an optional

computer-generated voice warning — neither of these are present on the tape recovered from the cockpit voice recorder (CVR). Either this crucial safety device was not functioning, or the flaps, slats etcetera were properly set.

Furthermore, in another by-product of the confused and overcrowded skies of deregulation, the plane had to make a last minute runway change before take-off. This required a manual change to the flap settings — but, once again, an error should not have been able to occur.

Public confidence in the safety of the U.S. industry has now hit an all time low, according to a poll conducted by the Gallup Organization.

Two-thirds of those questioned stated that they have less confidence in the safety and efficiency of airlines than they did a few years ago. The polling claims that the findings reveal a long-term decline in confidence — not an immediate reaction to the Flight 255 disaster. In a similar poll in 1983, 50 per cent said they had a "great deal" of confidence that the airlines were doing all they could to maintain safety, that figure dropped to only 24 per cent in this poll.

One of the airlines that has recently suffered a number of safety related incidents — Delta — have offered full refunds to all passengers who already hold tickets and are worried about flying.

In response to what he described as the public's perception of an "erosion of safety", the newly appointed head of the FAA, T. Allan McArtor, hastily assembled a meeting between the FAA and 200 senior pilots on August 27.

McArtor told the meeting that the industry must "recapture" the public's confidence.

Captain Henry Duffy, President of the ITF-affiliated Airline Pilots' Association (ALPA) threw the ball back into the FAA's court, by pointing out that the unions and FAA agreed in 1984 to a US\$9.4 million three-year programme to look at ways of solving human problems in the cockpit. The scheme was agreed, but it never got off the ground and only one million was spent.

McArtor, who has only been at the FAA for a month, admitted that he knew nothing about the scheme, and would "look into it". The meeting, held in full public glare of TV cameras, appeared to be a public relations exercise.

The FAA's concern for the public image of the industry is obviously one shared by all aviation employees, but solutions cannot be found simply by altering impressions when the fundamental issue remains the overstretched, corner-cutting atmosphere of unregulated competition.

In another move aimed more at restoring public confidence than addressing these fundamental issues, the FAA has pressurised six major airlines to reduce flight delays or face fines.

In an agreement signed between the FAA and American, Delta, United, USAir, Continental and Eastern on August 28 covering Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, Chicago and Boston airports, the airlines undertake to ensure that 75 per cent of their flights from these airports will operate within 30 minutes of scheduled times from November 1.

The airlines were presented with the "agreement" on Friday afternoon and told to sign — they managed to bargain it down to the listed airports, but otherwise they appear to have had little choice in accepting it. Penalties for infringing the agreement will US\$1,000 per day per flight.

According to FAA figures, delays are up 25 per cent on last year — a side effect of greater airline competition on certain limited money-spinning routes — again, caused by deregulation.

Frank Lorenzo's Eastern Airlines — long used to dealing with its own employees by means of take it or leave it pronouncements — was somewhat put out by the FAA treating them in the same way. In a written statement the airline said "We were presented with a fait accompli this afternoon. This is no way to run a delicate and sensitive industry. We have definite and serious reservations about the actions taken today."

German crews resist forced deportations

Flight crews organised in the ÖTV have become increasingly concerned at the number of refugees being compulsorily returned to their home countries on board flights of the German national carrier Lufthansa and are threatening disruptive action if the airline continues to compel them to cooperate with these forced repatriations.

The Federal Republic introduced legislation in January imposing financial penalties on airlines which carry passengers seeking to enter West Germany illegally or with forged or inadequate papers. The airline has also been flying back illegal immigrants and refugees deported after their application for refugee status had been refused.

Lufthansa's flight deck and cabin crews say they are unable to

square what they are being asked to do with their consciences. They know that many unsuccessful refugees, returned to their country of origin, end up in prison, "disappear" or are executed because they come from dissident minorities or otherwise hold views unacceptable to the ruling regime.

They are also aware that genuine refugees fleeing persecution in their home country usually leave in haste, often taking a round-about escape route, and are rarely able to acquire all the 'correct' papers the law now so unreasonably demands.

The ÖTV says that so far its members have reluctantly complied with orders to carry these refugees on Lufthansa flights because they fear disciplinary action from their employer but feel the

time has now come to take a humanitarian stand. The union warns that it will take the airline to court if the airline's employees are compelled to obey instructions against the dictates of their conscience.

Most of the refugees come from the Indian subcontinent, from the two warring Gulf states of Iran and Iraq, and from Syria.

As **ITF News** goes to press we learn that four Lufthansa flight crew members have refused to report for duty on flights carrying these refugees and have turned to their union for help. The ÖTV has agreed to assist them in bringing their case before the courts where the four will argue that they have a constitutional right to withdraw their labour in matters of conscience.

DOCKERS

New-tech deal for Dutch dockers

The ITF-affiliated Dutch Dockers' Union Vervoersbond FNV in Amsterdam has successfully negotiated the first-ever agreement covering the introduction of new technology in the Netherlands.

The two year agreement — with Overslag Bedrijf Amsterdam (OBA) — follows an agreement in principle with the dock employers organisations that such deals should be concluded on a company by company basis.

The main points of the agreement are:

*No forced dismissals due to the introduction of new technology.

*A commitment by the company to "use every effort" to maintain the same number of jobs as there were at the start of the agreement.

*A guarantee to all workers that their annual income will not decrease in spite of technology-caused reorganisation.

*A set pattern of consultation with the union on new technology. The union will be consulted at all steps in the process — from research and design through to decision and implementation. These discussions will specifically exam-

ine jobs, working conditions and issues of privacy.

*The company has undertaken to provide an education plan for re-training existing workers so they can keep their jobs.

* Rules will also protect the privacy of workers — there will be no monitoring of individual produc-

tivity by the new technology.

Vervoersbond Docker's Secretary Kees Marges says that the union's strong position in this specific company assisted them in reaching this important agreement. In the following months, the union hopes to conclude similar agreements with other employers.

Latin American ports face privatisation crisis

In the central American state of **Honduras** the ITF's Lima Office reports that the union SITRAENP is concerned that the country's ports have found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy because of the financial losses incurred by an incompetent management and the lack of proper legislation governing the industry.

A little further south, in **Costa Rica**, the national port and railway authority is facing a financial cri-

sis brought about by government indifference which is so serious, according to the Railway and Port Workers' Union (UFPN), that it threatens the continued viability of the authority and the job security of the workers it employs.

Again in **Mexico**, the government has plans to privatise the ports and this has provoked fierce criticism from the Veracruz dockers' union.

SEAFARERS

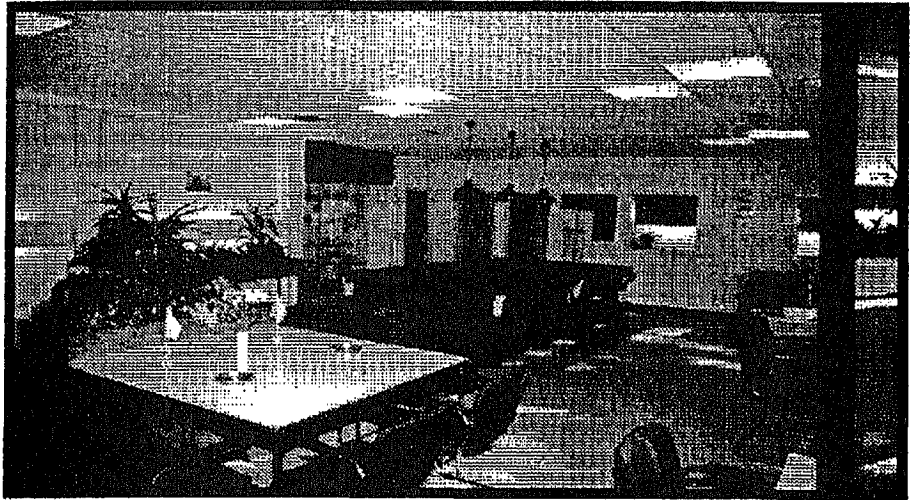
ITF ROTTERDAM SEAFARERS' CENTRE IS OPEN AND READY FOR BUSINESS

Following more than a year of renovation work, September 8 saw the official opening of the ITF De Beer Seamen's Centre in Rotterdam, the world's largest port. The De Beer centre, acquired by the ITF Seafarers' Trust in 1986, is adjacent to a luxury hotel and restaurant complex, still in the process of modernisation, also under ITF ownership. These facilities will also be available to seafarers visiting the centre at a discount price.

The centre's official opening was attended by H R H Princess Margriet of the Netherlands and by Mr A Peper, Mayor of the City of Rotterdam. ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, who chairs the special trust set up to run the De Beer centre and K Mols Sørensen, chairman of the ITF Seafarers' Section also addressed the invited guests.

The Seamen's Centre is under the day to day management of the 'Stichting Zeemanzshuis Rotterdam' (Rotterdam Seamen's Homes Institute), which also runs two other Seamen's centres in other parts of the port. It offers a low priced bar and snacks, games room, library and a video room. The library is in the process of being equipped with books and magazines in English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Greek and Polish, selected by ITF affiliates. Hotel facilities available free of charge to seafarers will include heated indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, and football pitch. Special discount arrangements for seafarers have also been made with a golf course adjacent to the site.

The De Beer Hotel/Restaurant, under the professional management of Tom van den Born, an experienced Rotterdam hotel manager, is being run on a commercial basis. Ideally situated mid way between Rotterdam city centre and the giant Europoort dock area, the De Beer complex intends to establish a reputation as one of the top restaurants/hotels



Plush facilities at De Beer...

tel in Rotterdam. Work has already been completed on the reception area, bar, coffee shop and top class French restaurant, as well as a complex of meeting rooms of different sizes catering to the local business community. When current renovation plans are completed in Summer 1988, the Hotel will offer 80 four star rooms each with private shower, colour television and radio.

The plans for the purchase and renovation of 'De Beer' which two years ago was a bankrupt seamen's club visited by less than 500 seafarers a month, have been supervised by Jack Gerritse, Secretary-Treasurer of the Dutch Seamen's Union (FWZ).

"With the economic crisis forcing us constantly onto the defensive" he says "it is nice to be able to do something positive for seafarers' welfare".

Each day representatives of the 'Stichting' monitor the telex traffic from ships approaching Rotterdam and send a 60 seater bus (purchased with a grant from the ITF Seafarers' Trust) to inform the crews of the facilities offered by De Beer. At present, according to Gerritse, around 2,400 seafarers a month are visiting the Centre, a figure likely to increase still further when the hotel rooms are complete.

De Beer is only the first in a series of facilities which the ITF is helping to finance where seafarers can relax in comfortable surroundings, and meet seafarers of other nationalities. Work will shortly begin on renovating the Mascot Bowling Club in Australia between Sydney and Botany Bay and a major investment is also planned in a new seafarers' centre being built by the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) in Tokyo, one of the most expensive cities in the world for visitors. Other projects from ITF affiliates are being examined with a view to extending the world network of ITF Seafarers' Centres as widely as possible.

Seafarers of all nationalities are welcome at the De Beer Centre and Hotel. ITF seafarers' affiliates are asked to advertise it as widely as possible in their publications.

HOTEL RESTAURANT DE BEER

Europaweg 210
3198 LD Europoort Rotterdam
Tel : 01819 - 62377
Telex : 29979

SEAMEN'S CENTRE DE BEER Europaweg 208

3198 LD Europoort Rotterdam
Tel : 01819 - 63133
(free transport to and from ships)

Tax victory for Greek coastal officers

Greek officers on coastal passenger ships have won a wide measure of relief from the heavy tax burden placed on them by new government legislation with the owners' offer to raise their monthly salaries to offset lost earnings.

The law, passed in 1986, penalises officers on these ships by phasing out over a five year period their previous exemption from payment of income tax.

Officers filing tax returns on last year's earnings - when payment of the first 20% of the new tax became due - found that in some cases they were being asked to find up to

\$1,000.

The officers' union, the PNO, called a three-day strike on all Greek coastal passenger vessels for late August - a busy period when most Greeks are returning from their summer holidays - in protest.

The Greek Shipping Minister, Stathis Alexandris, who has shown himself sympathetic to the officers' plight, seems to have played a key role in helping to bring about the settlement that led to the strike being called off.

He sanctioned a 10% fare increase on coastal passenger ships

for this autumn. Assured of this extra revenue, the owners were able to make the PNO an improved offer that goes a long way towards making good the officers' lost earnings.

The officers were offered "compensation" in the form of a salary increase on a sliding scale in the range of Drs 3,500 to 7,000 a month, depending on rank, to take effect once the fare increases are introduced.

The proposed increase was approved by PNO members in a majority vote and the planned strike was cancelled.

The PNO, while it is pleased with the extra cash, says it will continue its campaign for the repeal of the legislation. If it is successful the tax position of crews of coastal passenger vessels will revert to that of their fellow seafarers on cruise and ocean going vessels who, because their ships bring valuable foreign exchange into the country, enjoy privileged fiscal status.

Canadian Seaway contract signed

A new three year contract for ships on the St. Lawrence Seaway has been signed by the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' International Union (SIU) with the Canadian Lakes Carriers Association (CLCA).

The agreement covers 1,500 seafarers working on bulk carriers in the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes.

On wages there is an agreement for a base rate freeze this year, followed by a cost of living allowances for the next two years.

Originally, the CLCA had demanded wage reductions from the SIU, but the union refused to accept cuts. Changes in the method used to calculate overtime and other premiums will, according to the union, actually mean an increase in most seafarers' take home pay.

Agreements have still to be reached with two unions - the Canadian Merchant Services Guild and the Canadian Marine Officers Union - who represent nearly 800 officers in the Great Lakes.

Global working conditions still poor

Working conditions at sea have barely improved in recent years, and new measures must be sought to improve shipboard standards, according to a report by the Director General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The Report, which also gives an overview of recent developments affecting social conditions for sea-

farers will be debated at the forthcoming Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference, which opens in Geneva on September 24. This unique gathering of governments, shipowners and seafarers is the forum for the adoption of international labour standards. The ITF will, as usual, be coordinating the work of the Seafarers' Group at the conference which last met 10 years ago.

Director-General Francis Blanchard's report says that conditions have been declining, pointing a finger at the drastic reductions in manning levels on the world's ships. Smaller crews lead to greater stress, loneliness and other related problems - such as the ever-present fear of unemployment.

Blanchard says that overcapacity in the industry lies at the heart of the problem, and urges moves to halt the "harmful speculation" in building and operating ships.

Full reports on the ILO meetings will be contained in the next issue of ITF News.

Ecuador union rights' campaign

The campaign of the ITF-affiliated Ecuador Seamen's Union UMPABE for the adoption by parliament of a law protecting the rights of seafarers is now entering an active phase.

UMPABE, led by its President Leonel Rivadeneyra, has been fighting for some time for a seamen's law which is much needed as there is currently no legislation protecting Ecuadorian seamen from exploitation.

This has left the country's seafarers at the mercy of the whims of

unscrupulous shipowners who are able to totally disregard even the few - weak - national regulations that presently govern the industry.

The union spoke to ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers about its efforts to secure legal protection for this vulnerable group of workers when he visited them in Quito at the end of May. On behalf of the ITF, Brothers promised the maximum solidarity and support to the seafarers of Ecuador.

ITF demands UN convoy in Gulf

The threat to the lives of seafarers entering the Persian Gulf rose dramatically in early September following the resumption of attacks on shipping and oil installations by Iraq and Iran. These attacks, which resulted in at least two total losses of support vessels, and damage to more than 17 vessels in three days, came after a quiet period following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 598 which called for a ceasefire from both parties to the conflict.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti owned US flagged tankers and gas carriers continue to be escorted through the Gulf by a growing armada of US naval vessels. A growing number of vessels even in areas previously considered safe have suffered mine damage and minesweepers from the US, UK and France were reported heading for the area. With the US fleet and USSR minesweepers already on station, the Gulf is rapidly becoming the focus for one of the greatest concentrations of naval firepower since the Second World War.

At a meeting with representatives of the US Embassy in London on 3 September, John Newman, Deputy General Secretary of the ITF UK affiliate NUMAST drew attention to the serious risks posed by the current situation for the thousands of seafarers who are obliged to earn their living by moving oil and other products in the Gulf area. Stressing that at any one time between 300 and 400 NUMAST members are sailing in the Gulf, Newman expressed the view that the present policies of various world governments have little to do with the protection of seafarers or the principle of freedom of navigation. Such governments have been utterly careless of such principles for more than six years, he suggested, and the union was worried that the lives and limbs of seafarers "are just pawns in a political game in which there will be no winners."

Newman concluded by calling for a US initiative at the United Nations to provide Resolution 598 with teeth including an international arms embargo and a UN coordinated force of neutral warships and minesweepers in the Gulf.

On 3 September the ITF also issued a statement calling for a United Nations naval force to be sent to the Gulf. ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander, who is also secretary of the Seafarers' group of the International Labour Organisation Joint Maritime Commission drew attention to a resolution which has been submitted by the Group to the forthcoming Maritime Session of the International Labour Confer-

ence which opens in Geneva on 24 September.

"The ITF fully supports UN efforts to bring an end to the Iraq-Iran war", he said "but in the light of the rapid escalation in hostile acts against ships manned by our members in the past few days, governments must at least take swift action to prevent further bloodshed and to guarantee safe navigation for all neutral ships transiting the Gulf."

Foc owners use war to exploit crews

The human casualties of the Gulf war are not limited to those killed and injured by Iraqi or Iranian attacks.

The war also brings out some of the worst examples of crew exploitation by owners and manning agents of flag of convenience ships. Crews are tricked into sailing into the war zone and once there forced to stay on board in expectation of wages which never arise.

This appalling state of affairs is typified by the situation of the Panamanian flag *Pamit*, an OBO (oil-bulk-ore) carrier owned by Adventure Inc and managed by a Greek Company Halcoussis A of Piraeus. In the last few months, the ITF office has received dozens of letters from members of the Sri Lankan, Indian and Greek crew. Desperate for work, some of the Sri Lankans claim to have paid fees of up to US\$2,300 to a Piraeus based manning agent P Pararajha to secure jobs on the *Pamit* which, he claimed traded between different European countries and visited the Gulf "once every two or three months".

On joining the ship, the crew discovered their mistake. The *'Pamit'*, far from being an occasional visitor to the war zone, was on permanent charter for a shuttle service between the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas and the oil terminal at Kharg Island.

According to one crew member even when he joined in April conditions on board were pretty bad. The air conditioning on board did not work, there were no fans in the cabin, the water supplies were contaminated and food in very short supply. Vessels trading in Iranian waters also face the constant threat of air attack, however, and the fate of the *Pamit* wasn't therefore very surprising. Already damaged once by an air attack in August 1986, on 29 April it sustained bomb damage from an Iraqi plane. Although there were no serious injuries the whole ship filled with poisonous smoke, the engine room caught fire, and the fresh water tank was damaged. The fire was eventually put out and the ship towed to Bandar Abbas. Despite complaints of giddiness and vomiting from smoke, no medical treatment was given to the crew and there were no medical supplies on board. The fresh water was found to be full of chemicals and oil and the crew were forced to use seawater for cooking and washing. Crew accommodation was unusable so the crew were forced to sleep on deck and the absence of cooking facilities forced them to light cooking fires on deck (of an oil tanker).

Since April the *Pamit* has not touched port. Food supplies re-

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ITF campaign is here to stay

The ITF has no intention of abandoning the campaign against flag of convenience shipping.

That was the clear message delivered to the assembled delegates at a Lloyd's of London press conference at the beginning of September in London by ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander.

The conference — entitled "Which Register?, Which Flag" — brought together representatives of shipowners, registers and insurers. Selander was invited to give the trade union perspective on what was otherwise largely a management and owners' gathering.

"The ITF does not wish to give up its campaign against flags of convenience," Selander said, in a speech that outlined the losses in maritime employment and membership of ITF Seafaring unions in the last twenty years.

"Seafarers from the so-called traditional maritime countries have lost hundreds of thousands of job opportunities in the last two decades, and it would be too simplistic to assume that all those jobs have been picked up by members of ITF Seafarer affiliates in the Third World," he said.

A third of these jobs have been lost forever to automation and lower manning levels, said Selander, while as much as another third have gone to cut-price crews supplied by manning agents from state-trading and dictatorship countries which have no real trade unions.

Selander stressed that the poor safety records and exploitative labour practices of Foc registers and operators remains a major concern for the ITF, and he stressed that, in spite of manning agents' attempts to set ITF affiliates against each other in a worldwide competition for jobs, the ITF remained united behind its campaign.

Responding to the argument that ITF policies discriminate against developing countries, Selander also pointed out to the conference that trade unions strongly supported bona fide joint ventures in shipping between developed and developing nations which are the best way of developing the latter's maritime industries.

*Swedish Club director Lars

Lindfelt told the same conference that underwriters should draw up a "blacklist" of shipping registers which do not meet two critical basic requirements.

These requirements would be for a survey before registration and an effective maritime administration. According to Lindfelt, a third of the Foc registers do not meet these requirements.

Open registers with lax labour standards, he said, risk becoming a "dustbin" for owners considered undesirable by home administrations.

he pointed out that many Foc registers had significantly higher casualty records than the world average. Panama, for example, has a loss ratio of 0.86 compared with the world average of 0.34.

Japanese hours may be cut

Japanese seafarers could soon be working shorter hours if new proposals coming from the Transport Ministry win the approval of the owners and the unions.

The Ministry says that the present seamen's law, which also covers paid leave and crew complements is out of date (it is forty years old) and fails to reflect the conditions of the country's seafarers in the modern industry of the 1980s.

The main change that the Ministry would like to see is a move towards a uniform eight hour working day. At present Japanese seafarers work different hours depending whether their ship is at

sea (56 hours a week) or at anchor (48 hours a week).

The moves come about as a result of recommendations made by a panel of experts and academics who act as an advisory body to the maritime technology and safety bureau — part of the Transport Ministry.

The proposed amendments to the seamen's law will now go to the shipowners' association and the ITF-affiliated All-Japan Seamen's Union (JSU). If they agree to the changes a parliamentary bill will then be drawn up and submitted to the Japanese Diet for its approval.

...No pay, no food, and no water

Continued from page 9

main totally inadequate and the crew have been reduced to bartering tins of paint and oil drums from the ships store for provisions from passing boats.

Why do they remain on board in such conditions? For one very good reason. None of the current crew have received a cent in wages since they joined the ship. Promised a bonus of 40,000 Drachma per month for War Zone service, they haven't even received their

basic pay and they know only too well that if they leave without getting paid, that will be the last they hear of it.

Although the ship is not under an ITF acceptable agreement, the ITF secretariat has responded to the crew complaints by sending a stream of telexes to the Panamanian authorities who are in theory responsible for conditions on board. So far they have merely replied citing messages from the owners reassuring them that eve-

rything on board is fine. The lack of the will or the resources to send a surveyor on board its ships to check such statements is one of the hallmarks of flag of convenience registries.

Unless the Panamanian authorities do something to force the owners to pay up, the stalemate on board the *Pamit* will continue. The question of how many other crippled ships with unpaid crews are anchored in the Gulf remains to be answered.

Owners remain wary of Norwegian register

Shipowners so far seem unimpressed by the new Norwegian International Register (NIS) which came into operation from 1 July despite desperate efforts by the government to promote it. By 18 August only 23 ships, all of them Norwegian owned, had entered the register, all but one having transferred from the 'genuine' Norwegian flag. ITF warnings to foreign owners about the register's flag of convenience status seem so far to have been heeded with few non-Norwegian owners having taken advantage of the loose crewing and tax rules which the NIS offers.

Norwegian owners are still waiting for a definite outcome of negotiations which have been going on in Manila and Bombay between the Norwegian Shipping Employers' Association (ASO), Norwegian maritime unions, and ITF affiliates in the Philippines, and India. Pay and conditions deals broadly comparable with ITF approved total crew cost (TCC) agreements for flag of convenience vessels were finalised late in August, but the rates of pay and other conditions involved still have to be ratified by the Shipowners' organisation The ITF Fair Practices Committee (FPC) deadline of September 1 for the conclusion of these negotiations has now passed. Unless the Norwegian unions report the conclusion of an acceptable deal in the near future, a special subcommittee meeting will be convened, during the ILO Maritime Session in Geneva at the end of the month, with power to add all NIS ships to the ITF's list of Flag of Convenience registers. For non-Norwegian owners the NIS already has Foc status and ITF affiliates worldwide have been warned to be on the lookout for such ships.

Despite its relative lack of success, the NIS is still causing consternation amongst shipping registers, both traditional and Foc. The Danish government is reported as actively studying the establishment of a "DIS" and the economic ministers of the four German coastal 'Länder' (Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony and Schleswig Holstein) have formally recommended that the Federal government establishes its own offshore flag. Other recommendations made by the ministers include reductions in corporate

taxation for shipping companies, more direct government financial aid for shipowners, adjustment of manning regulations and provisions to allow German seafarers to receive their wages net of income tax. Locations suggested for a German offshore flag include the tourist island of Heligoland and Berlin (Luxembourg has already shown that lack of a coast need be no handicap). Departmental heads within the Japanese Transport Ministry are also reported to have formed a special working group to monitor developments in the offshore register market.

In the absence of acceptable agreements with French unions, ships flying the flag of the French island of Kerguelen are also being

treated by ITF affiliates as flying a flag of convenience.

Panama meanwhile has shown signs of panicking in the face of the new offshore flags. The world's second biggest shipping register and with one of the worst casualty records, Panama has recently taken out huge display advertisements in the maritime press citing its long 'experience' in flag of convenience operations and the freedom which it gives shipowners.

Meanwhile Clay Wentworth, Vanuatu's colourful globetrotting maritime representative has told shipowners that the Vanuatu government is busy preparing new laws which will 'protect' foreign companies from any liability if their Vanuatu based shipping 'subsidiaries' go bust.

LATIN AMERICAN SHIPPING: A STATE OF NEGLECT

In Latin America neglect of the shipping industry is rife and is having harmful effects on the working lives and living standards of the many thousands of seafarers in the region.

Instead of viewing their major national shipping companies as vital strategic industries, governments throughout the continent are divesting themselves of a vital asset. Others are putting more and more of their ships under flags of convenience or chartering in foreign tonnage entered in these phoney registries.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the Atlantic nations of Argentina and Brazil where government moves have provoked fierce union reaction, especially in Brazil where a number of owners of deep sea tonnage have expressed a wish to buy the state owned company Lloyd Brasileño - a repeat of the situation a few years back when maritime labour successfully fought off a similar threat.

The governments of Chile and Peru are following similar policies, again against the background of strong union protests. The ITF-affiliated union of employees of the Compañía Peruana de Vapores - the Peruvian state owned shipping company - has also deplored the

company's decision to sell a number of its ships for scrap (although some of them at least are definitely still seaworthy) and to use foreign ships flying convenience flags to carry its cargoes.

The Peruvian union is also angry that the company has been quietly getting rid of large numbers of its employees under the guise of 'voluntary redundancy', attracting seafarers to give up their jobs by paying them compensation in excess of the legal payments they would be due in cases of genuine redundancy.

Neglect of the shipping industry in Colombia has been continuing apace over many years and has made the state owned company Gran Colombiana the target of repeated strike action. Now the company is being gradually dismantled and hived off to the private sector in small segments, ensuring that one day it will simply cease to exist.

Already the Gran Colombiana workforce, organised in the two organisations UNIMAR and ANEGRA, has had to face mass sackings and the remaining company employees are likely to find that their interests have been 'overlooked' as the company slowly shrinks.

Foc register admits its own incompetence

The Registrar General of the Cayman Islands, a British colony offering flag of convenience facilities has admitted that the country has neither the legal powers nor the resources to take action against operators of substandard ships.

In a statement reported in *Lloyds List* on August 22 registrar Woodward Terry said his island's government "is powerless to take disciplinary action against shipowners in breach of maritime safety standards". Mr Terry pointed out that no action had ever been taken against any ships on the Cayman Islands register, and he could

think of no time that a master of officer had had their certificates removed.

In a letter to the UK National Union of Seamen earlier this year, Mr Terry stressed that the registry inspected ships only when recommended to do so by one of the "Big Five" classification societies.

He pointed out, however, that legislation was being drafted which, if approved by the UK government, would at least allow the islands to ratify the SOLAS and MARPOL conventions. Yet as his August statement makes clear, even if adequate legislation is

passed, there is no chance of it being properly enforced. The Cayman Islands has only one ship surveyor who deals almost exclusively with determining the size of ships applying for registration. The Registrar's department has a staff of 12 and, as his letterhead makes clear, they have to register not just the 282 Cayman Island flag ships but also "Companies, Trusts, Patents and Trademarks, Partnerships, Trade Unions, Building Societies, Friendly Societies, Cooperatives, Company Management, Marriages, Births and Deaths".

British cover-up on Gibraltar registry report

A shoddy whitewash of the Gibraltar flag of convenience is the result of an official British government inquiry into the loss of the *Syneta* last December.

The 2,600 tonne Gibraltar registered tanker sank in clear conditions off the Icelandic coast on December 25 last year with the loss of all 12 crewmembers (see *ITF News*, January 1987). The sinking produced a major storm of protest about the Gibraltar flag of convenience and its almost total lack of a maritime administration. Within Britain, the sinking caused the government to announce a review of the status of "British Dependent Territory" registers. In Gibraltar the sinking has lent weight to a campaign by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union, and the opposition Gibraltar Socialist Party to eliminate the territory's flag of convenience status.

Because Gibraltar had no facilities for an enquiry, the British government agreed to conduct an investigation into the loss. The final report, published on August 14, however, was nothing more than a haphazard translation of the initial Icelandic enquiry.

Without so much as a shred of evidence, the inquiry assumes that the loss was caused by crew error — the "most likely cause" being that a watchkeeper failed to perform his duty.

The report makes no mention of the deficiencies in safety standards on the register, nor does it

mention the fact that the Norwegian manufactured lifejackets on the ship were all later shown to be defective — all but one of the dead crewmembers' jackets had broken crutch straps and two of the jackets were split down the back.

Both British ITF seafaring affiliates, the NUS and NUMAST, have condemned the report as incomplete and unsatisfactory. In the absence of survivors, a vague assertion of crew error is an easy way out for the enquiry.

Meanwhile, British plans to revise the status of colonial registers seem to have slipped onto the back burner. It is significant that the

British navy "Armillia Patrol" operating in the Gulf to protect "British" flag shipping has been happily escorting Gibraltar-registered Focs. On the one hand the UK government denies any control or responsibility for the Gibraltar register — in response to journalists enquiries about the register, the DOT has refused to provide information from the register list they have in London, and has denied even knowing the telephone number of the Gibraltar authorities! But, the British government seem quite happy to provide naval protection for these same ships.

Union focus on health hazards

Fatigue and stress amongst seafarers were the focus of attention of a special working group meeting held under ITF auspices in Gothenburg, Sweden on 4 September.

The meeting, under the chairmanship of Sven-Erik Nylund (Swedish Ships' Officers' Union), discussed the preparation of ITF submissions to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on these two key factors affecting health aboard ship

The meeting, which was also attended by ITF Assistant General

Secretary Åke Selander, agreed to act as a reference group in the future for collecting and disseminating regulations on working hours and rest periods. It will also examine maritime casualty reports in order to establish whether fatigue was a contributory factor.

Of particular importance will be the relationship between fatigue and manning, especially in view of the growing pressure from shipowners for the 'single night look out' concept. An ITF study on fatigue and stress factors in different shipboard departments is also planned.

SIU denounces 'unfair trading practices'

'Unfair Trading Practices' by other countries are among the reasons for the pitiful share of United States trade carried by US flag shipping. This was the theme of President Frank Drozak's report to the triennial Convention of the Seafarers' International Union of North America (SIUNA) which met in Piney Point, Maryland from 24-26 August.

Pointing out that the number of US flag tankers fell from 217 to 90 between 1976 and 1986 and the number of merchant fleet jobs fell from 22,700 to 14,300 over the same period, Drozak attributed the decline to "international shipping practices" which prevent US flag vessels from providing efficient and price competitive delivery of cargoes. These practices include 'licensing regulations, technical restrictions, government control of commercial cargoes, government ownership of vessels and the use of cheap labour working in unsafe and unacceptable

working conditions"

Stressing that the union would continue to work to open foreign markets for American goods and transport services, he pledged to make maritime policy and trade the union's number one priority in lobbying the US Congress.

The SIUNA Convention, held at the union's training and recreation centre adopted more than fifty resolutions covering maritime and energy policy, safety and health, offshore activities, fishing industry problems, cruise ships, manning and minimum wages, and civil rights.

Addressing the meeting, ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander stressed that the problems facing US seafarers were not unique. As a result of inadequate international rules governing ship registries, flags of convenience were winning the battle against traditional maritime registries. The SIU needs us and we need you, he emphasised, calling on dele-

gates to aid the ITF in its fight to prevent the implementation of the 'whitewash' UNCTAD Ship Registration Convention and to ensure that all Foc ships were covered by ITF acceptable agreements. He also stressed the importance of forging cooperation with shipyard workers through a scrap and build policy, and of the worldwide introduction of the system of Port State Control of sub standard ships.

In return for cooperation from its affiliates he pledged that the ITF would do more to ensure compliance with its wage and conditions standards for example by widening the network of inspectors and standardising its procedures.

During its coverage of international affairs, the SIUNA Convention unanimously adopted resolutions supporting the ITF, ICFTU and ILO activities, urging inter-governmental action against terrorism, and opposing the reflagging of Kuwaiti ships to the US registry

European seafarers study social plan

A joint seafarer/shipowner working party was held in Brussels on September 9 to examine a draft social survey of maritime transport produced by independent researchers.

Although both sides agree that the Commission should examine as a matter of priority whether it is possible to reduce the burden of social costs involved in the employment of European Community (EC) seafarers, the unions are anxious that such action should not lead to reductions in the quality of life of seafarers.

The draft report reveals that most EC seafarers pay between 15 and 25 per cent income tax, shipowners contribute between 7 and 40 per cent of a seafarers gross income in social security and, after such deductions, the seafarers are left with between 65 and 75 per cent of their gross income.

The owners want these social costs to be borne by the various EC member states. They also envisage the increased employment of non-domiciled seafarers, reductions in

the cost of maintaining a register of available seafarers, reductions in training costs and, perhaps, offshore registries as a means for placing the EC fleet in a better competitive position.

The unions, on the other hand, argue that while they may be willing to give consideration to tax reduction (both income and corporate) they believe that more emphasis should be placed on subst-

dies, depreciation rates, and so-called outsider competition.

The unions, unlike the owners, are refusing to accept at face value any figure quoted of manning costs as a percentage of total operating costs without having access to the basis of such calculations and without taking into consideration the capital costs - since the cost of a small deviation in mortgage interest rates could easily equal the manning costs of a ship.

Brazil's first worker director

Industrial democracy in Brazil has taken an important step forward with the appointment of the first Worker Director - he comes from the ITF-affiliated CNTTMFA Transport Workers' Federation - to the Board of the national shipping company Lloyd Brasileño.

The decision to allow a Worker Director to sit on the board of the

company follows a cable from President José Sarney to the union indicating that he was in favour of the inclusion of a board member representing employee interests in all state owned companies.

He felt that Lloyd Brasileño was an appropriate choice as the first company to have a Worker Director.

ITF aids stranded Indian crews

The ITF has come to the assistance of stranded Indian seafarers in the wake of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company's financial collapse.

The famous Indian shipping company, which defied the British Empire in 1919 by launching the first Indian ship on the eve of the launch of Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, appears to have come to a sorry end. Financially overstretched, blighted by incompetent management and hit hard by the worldwide shipping recession, the company is now in the receivers' hands.

Over four thousand people work for Scindia, 2,500 of them abroad its 24 ships — and none of them have been paid for six months.

Many of these seafarers — all members of ITF Indian affiliates — have been stranded on ships in different parts of the world with no

money, and in the more extreme cases, no food.

The ITF stepped in to assist crew members of six of these ships who received little or no assistance from the company or the Indian embassy.

Forty-nine crewmembers on the bulk carrier *Jalawihar*, stranded in Ghent, Belgium, were flown home by the ITF, along with 39 from the cargo/container *Jalamuna* in Flushing Roads, the Netherlands.

The ITF has also obtained lawyers to stranded crews so that their legal rights for compensation may be pursued. The *Jalamuna* has been arrested and will be sold on September 9.

Lawyers have also been provided for the crews of the *Jalamayur* cargoship, stranded in Algiers, and the *Jalagopal* in Turkey.

The worst case encountered was

that of the *Jalamudra*, stranded in Suez, Egypt since February. The ITF received desperate telexes from the master saying that they had run out of food and that the local Indian embassy refused to help. Food has now been provided to the crew after protests by the ITF and the Indian affiliates resulted in money being sent by the Official Receiver. Intervention was also required with the Indian authorities to provide food in Algeria and Turkey.

One other ship, the *Jalawjaya*, which was anchored off the Danish coast has now been moved into international waters off the English coast and is being closely monitored.

Plans are now underway to rescue the company, with approximately 18 of the ships remaining.

New safety system threatens life at sea

The lives of seafarers and passengers will be unnecessarily endangered if present proposals for a new maritime distress and safety system are adopted, says a new ITF publication *The Future Global Maritime Distress and Safety System — a trade union response*.

The publication examines the present proposals for new-technology/satellite-based distress systems and finds them seriously deficient. The replacement of the present system, with its inbuilt back-up systems and proven track record in saving lives, with an untested system, coupled with the potential elimination of skilled Radio Officers on board ships, needs deeper consideration, it concludes.

The present proposals emanate from the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and will be a major item of discussion at the forthcoming International Telecommunication Union's World Administrative Radio Conference (Mobile Services) meeting in Geneva.

This inter-governmental meeting, which lasts from September 14 to October 17, will be attended by nearly 700 representatives. The



ITF has official observer status at the International Telecommunications Union and will be represented at the conference.

The ITF's primary concern is seafarers' safety. As it presently stands, the FGMDSS proposals will, we believe, put seafarers in greater jeopardy than they are at the moment. But the doubts about the viability of the new system are also of direct significance to governments and shipowners.

As the brochure makes clear, The only way that the costly high-

technology equipment and coastal stations can be made to seem economical is by removing the Radio Officer from ships. But this is a false economy, because the removal of skilled technicians will increase repair costs (which will have to be performed while ships are in port) and require duplication or triplication of equipment on board to ensure back-up safety. This triplication, is not budgeted for in the costings by the new system's advocates, will raise the system's costs — even without Radio Officers — to more than the present system.

So the new system not only endangers the lives of seafarers, it also threatens the financial viability of ship operation. An apparently cheaper system which leads to greater ship losses serves the interests of no-one except the manufacturers of the technology.

This publication, which is only available in English, has been distributed to ITF-affiliated seafaring organisations, government representatives, the press and shipowners organisations. The text has been deliberately kept straightforward and easy to understand.

Rio meeting calls for ITF offshore policy

The ITF Seafarers' Section Standing Committee on Maritime Mobile Offshore Units, chaired by ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander, met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 15 to 17 June.

Delegates from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States attended.

The Committee reviewed the employment situation in the offshore industry following a decline in charter rates, falling oil prices and overcapacity and asked that the ITF Secretariat with the assistance of a small working party should be entrusted with the development of an ITF policy for the offshore industry.

Particular attention was devoted to the activities of multinational companies in the offshore sector. The Committee adopted a resolution urging the ITF Secretariat and ITF affiliates to do their utmost to ensure that workers' representatives are included in the decision-making processes of multinational companies.

The meeting also called for the promotion of the ITF collective agreement for the offshore industry - the final version was agreed at this meeting - as the basis for collective bargaining claims in the sector.

The Committee urged the ITF Secretariat to examine the possibility of establishing a register of

companies active in the offshore industry which have violated legislation and/or agreements.

The Committee discussed restructuring its activities and considered the draft of the Maritime Offshore Drilling Units code.

The delegates were informed of several disputes which had arisen in maritime mobile offshore units and called on ITF "offshore" affiliates to respect industrial action taken by other affiliates by not supplying replacement crews or working units intended as replacements for strike-bound units. Members agreed to advise the ITF Secretariat of any such pending actions.

PEOPLE

Fritz Prechtl bows out

This week sees the end of an era in the Austrian Railwaymen's Union as Fritz Prechtl, who has given over forty years of devoted service to the trade union movement, retires at the union's 13th Congress held at the union's headquarters in central Vienna.

It is hard to believe that a man who has been so much a part of the trade union scene, both in his native Austria and internationally, for very many years is leaving us. But we can be sure that his will be an active retirement and that trade unionists will continue to go to him as they have in the past for counsel born of the wide-ranging experience of this wise 'elder statesman' of the union movement.

Marked out for early success, Fritz was the youngest-ever President of the union when he took over the reins in 1965. The confidence of union members in the skill and dedication with which he guided the union as its President was such that he was re-elected to office for the next twenty years at successive union Congresses.

His sense of duty and service to his compatriots, particularly the working classes, was reflected in the many other spheres of Austrian life - the national executive of the Austrian Trade Union Confederation (ÖGB), the Vienna Chamber of Labour and the Board of the Austrian Railways (ÖBB) - in which he was appointed to high office.

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Fritz addressing the ITF 35th Luxembourg Congress

...a respected trade union leader

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Fritz sought and won election to the Austrian parliament, where his firm grasp of the intricacies of transport planning made his voice one that was listened to with the utmost respect.

Delegates at the union's Congress held from 9 to 11 September paid their own warm tributes to Fritz on his retirement.

The mantle of office, carried with such distinction by Fritz, now passes to **Hans Schmölz**, who we feel sure will prove a very worthy successor in the years to come. Hans brings a wealth of experience to his new post, having been General Secretary of the union for the past twelve years.

His involvement in the wider international movement, where he is Chairman of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, will give an added dimension to his term of office, reinforcing

those close links which the ITF has always had with its Austrian affiliate throughout its long and at times very difficult history.

The Congress also elected **Gerhard Nowak** as the new General Secretary. Nowak has previously worked as union secretary for Vienna, and the provinces of Lower Austria and Burgenland.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis attended the opening session of the Congress on September 9 when he paid tribute to Fritz's tireless work for the ITF and passed on his best wishes for the future development of the union's work.

* * *

Captain John Dickinson retires as General Secretary of the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild at the end of October when **John McLeod**, currently the Guild's

Assistant Secretary, takes over.

* * *

Robert Cook retired as National Executive President of the Canadian Merchant Service Guild at the 8th National Convention in Québec in June. His successor is **Maury Sjoquist**, the Guild's National Executive Secretary/Treasurer for the past ten years. **Larry Dempsey** has been elected as the new Secretary/Treasurer.

* * *

Roger Deschamps retired on 4 September as union officer in the Maritime Section of the ITF-affiliated FGTE-CFDT. He had served as a permanent seamen's union official for the past 27 years and had just announced his retirement as France's ITF Ship Inspector.

INLAND TRANSPORT

Brazil-Peru road link pact

Brazil has come a step closer towards realising its long held dream of creating a transport network linking the Atlantic coast in the east with the Pacific in the west.

This happened at the beginning of July when two top-level meetings were held between the Brazilian President José Sarney and President Alan García of Peru.

The meetings led to the signing of an historic agreement confirming the intention of the two nations to build a complex road network connecting the Brazilian Amazon region with the east of Peru.

Although this is a vast construction project taking many years, it is clear even at this early stage that one of the main beneficiaries will

be the road transport workers of Brazil and Peru.

As trade between the two countries is opened up new and welcome jobs will be created for the large numbers of truck drivers who will be needed to transport the increased volume of commercial traffic.

Union seeks Brazilian navigation seat

The Brazilian Ministry of Transport is aiming to set up a state board - provisionally named CENAV - with responsibility for overseeing the country's vast inland navigation sector.

The primary task of the board will be to participate in the evolving and implementation of policies promoting the expansion of the

inland waterways of Brazil.

The board will work in close cooperation with the various institutions and undertakings in the sector in seeking solutions to the grave problems the industry is currently facing.

The Ministry has petitioned President José Sarney who is ex-

pected to agree to its request that CENAV be established.

Now that a precedent has been set at Lloyd Brasileiro (see item elsewhere in **ITF News**) the ITF-affiliated CNTTMFA is confident that it will be able to secure trade union representation on the CENAV governing body when it comes into being.

ITF meets United Transport on South African bus workers' sacking

Nearly 200 workers were sacked in the aftermath of large scale bus strikes in the Transvaal and Orange Free State which brought services to a standstill during August.

The strikes were by members of the ITF affiliated Transport & Allied Workers' Union in protest against redundancies proposed by Vaal Transport Corporation (VTC) and Western Bus Lines. Both companies are subsidiaries of United Transport which is part of the UK based multinational company BET.

On 25 August following an appeal from TAWU General Secretary Esau Rankholo, the ITF, together with the British TUC and the UK Transport & General Workers' Un-

ion sent messages of support to the London headquarters of BET requesting the company to suspend the threatened dismissal of VTC workers and to resume negotiations.

In response to an invitation from the parent company an ITF delegation met the Chairman of United Transport International Paul Rudder and senior colleagues in London on September 1.

The UTI representatives explained the serious financial situation of the bus industry in South Africa. Bus deregulation accompanied by a huge growth in "combi" bus/taxis had crippled the regular bus services used by black workers, forcing them to move from three shifts to one. The

ITF General Secretary said that he accepted that economic problems existed but stressed out that provocative acts such as imposing impossible deadlines, firing strikers, including shop stewards, were unlikely to improve industrial relations.

He asked the company to reinstate the 78 workers fired by VTC on 25 August as well as the 96 dismissed by Western on August 21 and to enter into genuine negotiations about the planned redundancies.

On 3 September UTI telexed the ITF disputing the union's claim that VTC had not been negotiating in good faith but agreeing to pass on the ITF's views to the local management.

CANADIAN RAIL STRIKE ENDED BY BACK TO WORK LEGISLATION

Nearly 55,000 striking Canadian rail employees have been forced back on the job by government legislation.

Over 52,000 railway workers in the nine-member Associated Railway Unions grouping, working for the state-owned Canadian National (CN) and private Canadian Pacific (CP) railways, went on strike on August 23.

They have been without a contract since December 13, and the main area of dispute is job security in the face of impending Canadian transport deregulation. 15,800 out of 77,000 jobs on the railways have been cut since 1978, and the unions calculate that over 50,000 jobs have been lost in the last 16 years. The companies say that, with the January 1, 1988 introduction of deregulation in the transport industries, they want to chop another 15,000 jobs — in

order to be "competitive" with deregulated road transport.

The unions have demanded job guarantees for employees with more than four years service, and have asked for a four per cent wage increase in 1987 and 1988. The companies refused to negotiate whatsoever on the issue of job security, and offered a take-it-or-leave-it two per cent offer on wages.

After 10 months of fruitless talks the unions finally took strike action. Canada's Conservative government appointed a federal mediator — William Kelly — who failed to find any common ground between the two sides.

On the fourth day of the strike, On Thursday August 27, the Canadian government rushed through emergency back to work legislation. The law imposed com-

pulsory arbitration on both sides and imposes existing contracts for up to two years while the arbitration is under way.

Railway union leaders have accused the companies of deliberately encouraging government intervention by refusing to negotiate in good faith. Trade unionists are suspicious of any arbitrator imposed by the anti-labour Mulroney government.

Within days of the original legislation, the government acted again to prevent another strike on CN Rail by 2,500 locomotive engineers.

Their contract talks broke down during the last weekend in August, and their union called a strike from noon on September 1st. The day before the strike was due to start the government intervened to add them to the original legislation.

Belgian road tax condemned

The Belgian government's proposals to introduce a motorway toll sticker for all foreign and national vehicles has been condemned as "a return to the practices of the Middle Ages" by the International

Road Transport Union (IRU).

The new tax, slated to start next January 1, would be fundamentally discriminatory, says the road hauliers' association. It would contravene reciprocal bilateral

exemption agreements between Belgium and 24 European countries, and would damage a whole range of multilateral agreements on the free circulation of goods and persons.

The IRU criticise the tax because it is being implemented for fiscal reasons unrelated to the road system, and it will be imposed as a flat rate on all users irrespective of the time they spend in Belgium.

The IRU further warns that "heavy Belgian vehicles are going to be penalized in international traffic when countermeasures are introduced aiming to restore equality of treatment."

The IRU "most strongly urge" the Belgian government to scrap the tax, pointing out that this decision could endanger the creation of a standardised European market and create "serious consequences and turmoil in European transport".

The European Commission is reported to be studying the proposals with a view to taking action against the Belgian government for introducing a discriminatory tax.

BRAC to the future

The US Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks - familiar to the world's transport workers for many years as BRAC - is no more.

In its place is a new union - the Transportation-Communications International Union (TCU) with a new logo, replacing the old pencil and quill denoting the railway and steamship clerks the union represented when it was set up at the end of the last century.

The decision to change the Brotherhood's name was taken at the 28th Regular Convention in Hollywood, Florida.

The delegates to the Convention felt that the old title was now out of date and that a new one should be

chosen that would reflect the wide variety of jobs its 200,000 plus members members in the United States and Canada now perform in the modern sophisticated world of transport and communications.

To accompany its new name the TCU has chosen a new logo, its design of circling arrows symbolising the unity, strength and permanence of the new TCU which replaces the old BRAC. The three interlinked arrows show that the TCU is a union in motion, in step with a changing industry.

The Convention re-elected **Richard Kilroy** as International President and **Donald Bobo** as International Secretary-Treasurer.

ITF meets with Int'l Union of Railways

An informal meeting was held on September 2 in Paris between leaders of the ITF Railwaymen's Section and representatives of the International Union of Railways (IUC).

The discussion, which had been proposed by the ITF, covered the need for closer co-operation between railway management and trade unions, the development of high-speed lines, the application of new technologies and future ITF activities to promote the railways.

Hans Schmölz (Austrian Railwaymen's Union), Chairman of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, proposed regular contact between the ITF and the IUC in future and greater stress in future promotional activities on the railways' benefits in terms of safety, energy conservation and environmental protection.

IUC Secretary-General Jean Boulay described the railways' concern to ensure a long term share in the freight market and some of the measures they were taking to achieve this: quality of service and price were the two essential factors. With respect to passenger traffic, the various markets each required an individual approach.

The IUC firmly believes that high speed lines should be part of national railway systems and not separate companies - the function of secondary lines should be to feed passengers into the high speed network.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers said that as far as technological developments were concerned, the ITF had a number of priorities:

* The number and type of jobs.

* The failure by many railway managements to discuss the implications of technical changes with the trade unions prior to introducing new technologies.

IUC Assistant Secretary General Ebeling said that the IUC was determined to ensure compatibility between the data processing and storage systems being introduced by the railway undertakings. Additionally, the railways saw a clear need to reduce maintenance costs and to construct rolling stock that could be modernised at frequent intervals.

It was agreed that the ITF would inform the IUC of its future intentions concerning activities to promote the railways with a view to obtaining IUC support for them.



Striking Brazilian bus workers face police bullets

Eight workers were shot and at least 27 others arrested when the military police in the **Brazilian** city of Manaus took violent action to break up a peaceful strike by

public transport workers who were holding a demonstration in the city centre on 14 July in support of a pay strike.

The Manaus strike coincided

with the general strike of Brazilian workers against current government economic policies.

It had the backing of the overwhelming majority of the city's bus crews who were seeking pay increases of 37 per cent to bring their salaries, which had fallen below the legal minimum, up to decent levels.

The stoppage was called after the breakdown of pay talks involving the local union - part of the CNTTT Transport Workers' Federation - the omnibus companies and the municipal authorities.

On being informed of the shootings and mass arrest of strikers, CNTTT President Orlando Coutinho - who is also a member of the ITF Executive Board - sent a strongly-worded protest to the provincial governor and the legislative assembly denouncing the military repression against workers exercising their legitimate rights and urging that the police officers responsible for the violent acts be brought before the courts.

Chile an rail privatisation threat

Attacks on transport resources in Latin America are not restricted to the maritime sector. In **Chile**, for example, the National Federation of Railway Workers' Unions reports that state support for this vital industry is being phased out and being replaced by private capital.

Vital parts of the company are being put into private hands, fewer passengers are being carried and goods transport by rail is declining, while maintenance work is being performed by private contractors. Inevitably, the toll on

rail jobs has been high - over ten thousand railwaymen have lost their livelihood in the past fifteen years.

The picture throughout the region is bleak and likely to get even bleaker. Latin America ITF transport workers' affiliates, with their limited resources, are facing a task which will need all the resources they can call on, including naturally the support of the ITF as conflicts inevitably arise with transport administrations seeking to implement key policy decisions with little thought for the consequences for organised labour.

FISHERIES

US Congress to look at new crew rules

The United Congress is considering a law that will require US boats to be crewed exclusively by US fishermen.

Unlike the law for merchant shipping, it is possible for a non-US company to register and operate a US processing vessel with full

rights to domestic fishing grounds.

Congressman Don Young of Alaska has introduced a bill that, if passed into law, will ensure that US fishing vessels are crewed by US fishermen, and that all U.S. registered fishing boats are built only in U.S. yards.

According to the Congressman, the fishing industry in Alaska has expressed disquiet about the possible exploitation of loopholes in the present maritime laws, which could allow foreign vessels freedom to exploit U.S. fishing grounds.

OBITUARIES

Abdul W Hassan, former National Chairman of the Sierra Leone Motor Drivers and General Workers' Union, died on 3 August, aged 66. Brother Hassan, who came to the union after a career as a railway civil servant, was elected to the presidency in 1972, a position he held until his death. He also played a prominent role within the national labour movement, serving for a number of years as a Vice President of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, and also representing organised labour as a member of the Sierra Leone parliament.

In October 1979 he was elected the founder President of the West African Transport Workers' Federation and in September 1984 Hassan he became joint Vice Chairman of the ITF African Advisory Committee.

As a trade union official of many years standing, who has played such a key role in the movement within West Africa, Brother Hassan will be sadly missed by the many friends he has made within the ITF family.

Olavi Keitele, former President of the Finnish Seamen's Union, died on 19 July, aged 60. Keitele, who had been a union official since the early 1950s, served as Seamen's Union President from 1967 to 1976.

He was active over a long period within the ITF, representing Finnish seafarers both on the Fair Practices Committee and the Committee of the ITF Seafarers' Section. He was also closely connected with the organisation of the 27th ITF Congress held in Helsinki in 1962.