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ITF SEAFARERS MEET PEREZ DE CUELLAR:

UNIONS DEMAND UN GULF NAVAL FORCE



Pictured, left to right, meeting in the UN Secretary-General's office, Javier Perez de Cuellar, Åke Selander, Mols Sørensen, John Newman and Shannon Wall.

A force of around 50 warships, drawn from member states of the United Nations and under UN command should be stationed in the Persian Gulf to protect merchant shipping against military attacks by Iranian and Iraqi forces. This was the principal demand of a delegation of ITF seafarers' trade unions who met the United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar in New York on February 4.

The delegation was led by ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander. The ITF delegation, which included ITF Seafarers' Section Chairman K Mols Sørensen, Shannon Wall of the US National Maritime Union and John Newman of the British merchant navy officers' union NUMAST, reminded the UN Secretary General that more than 300 seafarers had lost their lives in attacks on more than 400 ships since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq conflict.

Although it fully supports Security Council Resolution 598 which

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FEBRUARY 1988

Guyanese unions fight wage freeze

The government of Guyana, faced with court decisions ruling their attempts to impose a national wage freeze unconstitutional, is now changing the constitution retroactively to justify its illegal actions.

The ITF-affiliated Clerical & Commercial Workers' Union (CCWU), along with other trade unions and the Guyana Bar Association, have denounced this move and have called for the immediate withdrawal of the Constitutional amendment bill.

The Guyanese government, with a dubious record of election rigging and violations of human rights, also has a long history of trade union rights violations. Like many third world countries, the majority of the workforce is in the public sector, employed directly by the government.

The present episode has its roots in a wage freeze over ten years ago. In August 1977, after a public sector wage freeze that had lasted a number of years, the government and the national centre (the GTUC) signed a Minimum Wage Agreement covering rises for the years 1977,78 and 79. These minima (which were, in fact honoured as maxima) were G\$8.40, 11.00 and 14.00 a day.

But by 1978, the government, claiming economic difficulties, refused to honour the agreement for 1979.

A number of unions fought for, and won, increment payments above the 1978 rate to compensate for this freeze. The government responded by issuing a circular to all state enterprises banning the payment of such increments. Increments that had already been agreed were suspended from May 31, 1979.

The Agricultural and Industrial

Workers' Union NAACIE decided to challenge the legality of the government's ruling, and found an individual — S. Teemal, who had particularly suffered from the increment withdrawal, to go to the courts against the state owned Guyanese Sugar company GUYSCO.

In the first instance a Mr. Justice Viera ruled that the government had breached its contract with Teemal, and ruled their suspension of the increment illegal. His ruling was confirmed in appeal.

The government acted to change the law. They hurriedly passed a Labour (Amendment) Act on March 16, 1984 (only one week after announcing their intention) that, amongst other things, stated that wages above the 1978 minimum wage could not be paid unless the President of Guyana had given instructions to pay such higher wages.

NAACIE again produced plain-

tiffs to challenge the government in the courts. They went to the high court asking for the Labour (Amendment) Bill to be declared "fraudulent, contrary to the constitution, null and void".

Their argument, based on Article II of the constitution, which guarantees trade unions the right to "participate in the various management and decision-making processes of the State ...", was that the new law was a violation of fundamental rights.

The High Court agreed with them, and, in March 1986 struck down two sections of the bill, including the clause on the wage freeze.

The government took the case to appeal in October 1987— argued by Dr. Shahbuddeen (who is now a member of the World Court) — but they failed to get the ruling overturned.

Now, last December, the government have announced their intention to alter the Constitution — making clauses like Article II dependent on the whim of the government and non-binding on the courts. Not only are they changing the law, but the Constitution (Amendment) Act also states that the changes "shall be deemed to have come into operation on 6th October, 1980" — retroactively overturning all the defeats that the government have suffered.

...Secretary General 'sympathetic' to seafarers' plight

Continued from page 1

mandates de Cuellar to discuss a cease-fire with both Iran and Iraq, the ITF delegation made it clear that urgent action to stop attacks on neutral shipping cannot wait for a resolution of the whole conflict.

While its preference is for a total end to the war and the withdrawal of all naval vessels from the Gulf, therefore, the recent escalation of attacks had led it to the conclusion that an international naval protection force under UN auspices was the only way to cut the mounting death toll of innocent seafarers. Such a force should be accompanied by an effective international arms embargo against both states,

it suggested.

In his discussions with the delegation, de Cuellar expressed great sympathy with the ITF's position, but stressed that he was limited in his actions by the need to gain the agreement of the Security Council.

Several proposals had already been made to station a UN naval force in the Gulf, including one from the USSR although there had been no clear consensus on what the role of such a force would be.

He suggested that ITF unions might try approaching national governments to support such a venture and also referred to a campaign made by two US public figures, Elliot Richardson and

Cyrus Vance, to muster support for a force which would exclude both US and Soviet forces. On the practical side, he did not dispute the ITF's suggestion that a force of around 50 naval vessels would be needed to provide escort cover for all neutral shipping visiting the region.

The UN Secretary General agreed to keep in touch with the ITF about progress in his efforts to secure agreement on measures to protect merchant shipping. He also viewed positively a proposal from the ITF that further discussions on the question should be conducted jointly with shipowners within the framework of the ILO Joint Maritime Commission (JMC)

New clampdown in South Africa silences peaceful opposition

The South African government's latest measures against the anti-apartheid and trade union movements has attracted immediate worldwide condemnation — and many fear that the latest harsh measures may only be the beginning of an even more vicious wave of repression.

The latest lurch to the right by the white minority regime further underlines the political bankruptcy of those western governments who have argued against concerted action against apartheid. It's quite clear that the "constructive engagement" of Thatcher, Kohl and Reagan has failed to move the Botha dictatorship one inch towards the dismantlement of apartheid. In fact, the latest set of banning orders, coupled with the now permanent state of emergency and the growing physical violence of state backed vigilante groups against the opposition, makes South Africa a more repressive and totalitarian state than it was before the "reform process" began.

The promulgation on February 24, under the new "Public Safety Act" of the effective banning of the explicitly non-violent, multi-racial United Democratic Front (UDF) and 16 other organisations (including such innocuous groupings as the Parents Support Committee, the National Education Crisis Committee and the Vaal Civic Association), along with specific banning orders against a host of individuals involved in all these groups can only be viewed as a statement from the South African government of their complete unwillingness to accept the existence of peaceful political opposition. The organisations are not formally banned, they are just not allowed to do anything apart from keep bank accounts and undertake legal action.

In addition, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) — to which the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union belongs — has been ordered to limit its activities only to trade union affairs.

COSATU fears that this may be the first step in an attempt to ban the trade union federation outright.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, in a message that has been circulated to all affiliates describes these latest bans as "totally unwarranted" and calls upon all ITF unions to send the strongest possible protests to the South African President and local South African embassies. "If you can back your protests by actions of any kind, they will have the greater effect," he says. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has also vehemently denounced these restrictions on the activities of COSATU:

"In a country where industrial relations - like every other aspect of life - are governed by the whole network of apartheid legislation, trade unions are forced to extend their activities beyond the workplace to carry out their basic task of defending workers' rights and interests," said ICFTU General Secretary John Vanderveken. "We stress once again that the only hope for peace and stability in South Africa is the elimination of Apartheid. We repeat our request

for the unbanning of banned organisations, release of political and trade union detainees, and the lifting of all restrictions hampering trade union activities."

* One of the most notable exceptions from the organisations shackled by the South African government, is Chief Buthelezi's Natal-based Inkatha organisation. Buthelezi, in fact, has been surprisingly quiet about the latest round of bannings. Inkatha has been engaged in a campaign of violence and intimidation against UDF and COSATU activists in Natal (see *ITF News*, January 1988 for an account of attacks by Inkatha against transport workers in Natal).

One of the first casualties of the restrictions and bannings, according to Southscan magazine, has been the tentative peace talks in Natal between Inkatha, on one side, and the UDF and COSATU — because the talks are not strictly "trade union" matters (even though much of the violence is directed at trade unionists) COSATU can no longer participate, and the UDF is already silenced.

25 KILLED DURING BANGLADESH GENERAL STRIKE

The Bangladeshi government replied to a nationwide general strike on January 24 by opening fire on unarmed demonstrators and killing 25 people.

This latest incident, which comes amidst a rising wave of protest demanding the government hold free elections, was perpetrated by the paramilitary B.D.R. armed security forces.

As a result of the killings at the peaceful demonstration, there was an immediate half day strike in Chittagong the next day and another 24 hour national general strike on January 26.

The military government, under pressure from mass protest for a long time, has said that it will hand over power to an elected civilian administration. They have stated that there will be elections on 3 March — but almost all the political parties are refusing to participate because they do not believe that the process will be fair.

The Awami League, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the Muslim League, Jamate Islam, the left parties and the Pro-Moscow Communist Party are all boycotting the election.

The situation in the country is very difficult. The political crisis is mirrored by severe economic problems, and, in the words of the General Secretary of the ITF affiliated Bangladesh Noujan Sramik Federation Al-Haj Protapuddin Ahmed, trade unionists are facing great difficulties "to keep our activities alive."

CHILEAN UNIONS FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

— dictatorship death threats against leaders

Chilean trade unions, with the backing of the international trade union movement, have launched a "Campaign for the organisation of free elections in Chile". The military dictatorship, for its part, appears set to continue its own campaign of intimidation, repression and violence against trade unionists.

The Chilean national centres — the Comando Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT) and the Central Democrática de Trabajadores (CDT) — have launched a campaign of non-violent protest, mobilisation and education directed at all workers. The explicit aim of the campaign is to mobilise the country for the holding of free and honest elections.

Their demands include: that the 1989 Presidential election should be competitive (rather than a confirmation of the dictatorship's continued rule); that the National Assembly should be directly elected by universal secret ballot and that this body should have constitutional powers; and that Mayors, Councillors and local authorities should be elected by direct vote.

The unions demand that these should be genuine free elections, with genuine competition between candidates of different ideologies, conducted in a way that ensures equal access for candidates to the media and with independent checking of the vote.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has endorsed the union campaign, and is calling upon all its affiliated national centres to support the Chilean unions practically with financial donations to assist the campaign.

Meanwhile, dictatorship-sponsored persecution of trade unionists continues.

Three union leaders, Manuel Bustos, President of the CNT along with Moises Labraña and Arturo Martinez from the CNT were sentenced to imprisonment on October 21 last year for their involvement in the general strike on 7 October. They were charged with "violating state security".

Following an international outcry at their imprisonment, the three men were released on bail on 12

November. In January Bustos and Martinez were given 541 day sentences, and Labraña a 61 day suspended sentence. They are now appealing these sentences.

Bustos was then arrested again on January 29 and charged with "showing contempt for the military forces" — based on statements he made over a year ago in which he called on the Army to end their support for the Pinochet dictatorship. He was released the next day.

The CNT and its members are also the targets of a number of shady "clandestine" groups who, in a manner similar to many dictatorship states, clearly have links to the official security forces (although, of course, the government denies this).

According to Amnesty International these groups "operate with absolute impunity and have been responsible for a persistent campaign of death threats."

CNT offices in Rancagua were bombed last year, and a hangman's noose was drawn on the wall of the union's headquarters in Santiago with the message "Volveremos por Uds." (We will come back to get you.)

Bustos has been the subject of an intense death threat campaign. On the day of the CNT general strike last October 7, a noose was again drawn on the union HQ with Bustos' name written underneath. Then a message was sent to a journalist by *Acción Chilena Anticomunista* (Chile Anti-Communist Action), one of the names these gangs go by saying that Bustos had only 30 days to live.

Each subsequent day, Bustos' lawyer received a telephone call saying that Bustos had one less day to live. On November 6, however, the CNT was told that the group had decided to "suspend" the ultimatum after an appeal by the Archbishop of Santiago.

Bustos' case is but one of many — ztrade unionists and civil rights campaigners have also received numerous death threats from these groups.

The Chilean trade unions have a large task at hand if they are to succeed in bringing a return to democracy in Chile. International attention, and the support of trade unions throughout the world is an essential addition to that campaign.

WALESA TO LEAD POLISH DELEGATION

The Polish independent trade union NSZZ Solidarnosc will be sending a delegation to the forthcoming International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' World Congress in Australia.

The union affiliated to the ICFTU and the WCL last year, becoming the first affiliate from a state trading country to join either global federation.

1983 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Lech Walesa, is hoping to lead the union delegation to the ICFTU's 14th Congress next March in Melbourne. Walesa, the ICFTU says, is now waiting to receive a passport from the Polish authorities. Australian public service unions are reported to have threatened to deprive Polish diplomatic premises in Sydney and Melbourne of electricity and telephone services if the Polish authorities do not give Walesa permission to travel to the ICFTU meeting.

This will be Walesa's first trip outside Poland since Solidarity was outlawed in December 1981. He was unable to travel to Oslo in 1983 to pick up his Nobel prize, because he received no assurances of being allowed to re-enter Poland.

Non-EC European unions prepare for 1992

The completion of the EC internal market by 1992 will undoubtedly have profound effects on the transport industry in the non EC European countries as well as in the member states of the Community. Transport unions from these countries are naturally therefore keen to learn more about the direction EC policies are taking. For this reason, and also to give their leaders a chance to question EC transport officials about their future plans, the ITF convened a two day seminar for non EC affiliates in Brussels on 3 and 4 February.

The degree of interest in Community affairs is shown by the fact that the seminar was attended by nineteen unions from ITF affiliates in Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

Clive Iddon Secretary of the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community (the Brussels Committee) and EC Transport Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis were both present to give participants the benefit of their extensive first hand knowledge of the workings of the Community.

The opening session was devoted to an explanation of Community structures, institutions and procedures and to an outline of developments within the railway, road, maritime and aviation sectors. This was given by ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers and Clive Iddon.

On the second day, representatives of the Transport Directorate-General explained the policies and

possible future developments in the specific sectors for which they were responsible. Lively question and answer sessions accompanied each of the presentations.

In the course of the two day seminar participants were able to raise a number of questions that were of particular concern. These included: the need for more Alpine transit traffic to be transferred to the rails; access by third countries to maritime trade between EC countries; flag of convenience shipping in European trade and the size of the EC fleet; the effects of liberalisation and future bilateral negotiations on air services; the enforcement of safety regulations in road transport; and the possibility of improving the financial position of the railways.

INLAND TRANSPORT

New German dangerous goods rules

"A small step in the direction of safer road transport of dangerous goods" is how ITF Board member and ÖTV transport spokesman Eike Eulen describes the new proposals covering the carriage of dangerous road cargoes put forward by Transport Minister Jürgen Warnke in November. The most important change is that all haulage companies will henceforth be obliged to appoint a dangerous goods officer.

This is something that the union has always advocated and the employers have just as strenuously resisted. The one shortcoming in the union view is that in small companies the owner will be able to designate himself the dangerous goods officer.

Other proposals by the Minister which have been welcomed by the union include an obligation on hauliers to take out compulsory minimum insurance and an accelerated road building programme with more bypasses. The union is also pleased that large containers of highly dangerous substances on journeys over 200 km will now have - by law - to go by rail or ship rather than road and that owners have been given only three years - instead of the five originally envisaged - to equip tankers with "belly straps".

But Eike Eulen has mixed feelings about other proposals made by the Minister which he says do not go far enough.

He particularly regrets that he has not seized this opportunity to radically overhaul driver training. The union would have liked to see drivers undergoing a special examination before being permitted to carry dangerous goods. Instead all they will have to do to comply with the new regulations is to present themselves for re-examination for the old test every 3 years rather than at five yearly intervals as at present.

Eulen is also concerned that there will be no tightening up of conditions for the issuing of permits for the carriage of dangerous cargoes and that there are no plans to step up inspections of company premises to ensure that dangerous goods are being transported responsibly and in accordance with the regulations.

The ÖTV would also like to see firmer action taken against employers who put pressure on drivers to skip rest periods to get to their destination faster, with serious safety risks to all road users.

FREE TRANSPORT

Take the bus - it's free! This is what the authorities are saying to the inhabitants of the tiny principality of Liechtenstein.

In a remarkable one year experiment that it would be wonderful to see copied elsewhere, all journeys on the yellow postal buses operated by the national post office will be fare free.

It is hoped that the promise of free travel will tempt the residents of the principality to switch from the car to the bus. This will serve both to relieve road congestion and reduce air pollution in the tiny 60 sq mile Alpine state tucked between Switzerland and Austria. Though small, Liechtenstein is a very prosperous nation and levels of car ownership are correspondingly high, with the associated problem of pollution from exhaust gas emissions.

The authorities will also study the journeys made by bus over the course of the year to enable them to assess future transport needs. If the experiment is a success - and we wish it well - fares, at least in Liechtenstein, could well be a thing of the past!

CIVIL AVIATION

ITF unions pledge support for Alitalia staff

ITF European Civil Aviation unions have declared their solidarity with Italian unions in their long running dispute with the national carrier Alitalia.

A special meeting of civil aviation unions was held in Frankfurt on February 18 chaired by ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Pio Albanesi. The CFDT and Force Ouvrière unions from France, the ÖTV from the Federal Republic, and the UGT from Spain met with heads of Italian civil aviation unions in the three federations (CGIL, CISL and UILTRASPORTI) to discuss the current dispute over the renewal of Alitalia ground staff's collective agreement which expired last August (see *ITF News* November/December 1987).

The European unions expressed their solidarity for the Italian workers in their dispute, and agreed to inform their own members about the issues involved. Alitalia's hard line refusal to negotiate properly with the unions highlights the airline's incompetence in dealing with the widespread changes that are coming to the European civil aviation scene as a result of the new airline liberalisation accord (see *ITF News* January 1987). Like many other European airlines, Alitalia appears at a loss to understand what it should do, or how it should cope with the new environment of liberalisation.



Italian demonstration in support of the Alitalia workers in Rome on February 19

The other unions supported their Italian colleagues in condemning the behaviour of the Alitalia management. As a concrete expression of their support, they have agreed to only carry out routine maintenance on Alitalia planes in their countries (as required by the ATLAS agreement) — in the event of non-routine maintenance being shifted to other countries by the airline company, the unions will refuse to do it.

All the unions agreed that this dispute underlines the need for all European unions to build a com-

mon strategy in order to defeat the negative effects of the new liberalisation. Unions must ensure that airline companies do not use liberalisation as an excuse to attack established rights, and they must make sure that airlines do not blame the workers for the ill effects on their own balance sheets of liberalisation.

The text of the agreement reached in Frankfurt was read out to a demonstration of 7,000 civil aviation trade unionists in Rome who were marching in support of the Alitalia workers the following day.

Pan-Am pilots win age discrimination case

Ninety former Pan American pilots are to share a record \$17.2 million cash settlement after bringing a case against the airline under federal age discrimination legislation.

The pilots had been refused permission to continue flying as flight engineers on reaching 60 — the compulsory retirement age for commercial passenger pilots under FAA rules. Flight engineers are allowed to continue flying until age 70.

The settlement was reached just before the district court hearing the case was due to hear the concluding arguments in a twenty day jury trial.

As well as the compensation, the airline has been ordered to pay the pilots' legal fees. These are expected to come to over a million dollars.

As part of the settlement, Pan Am will also be required to allow pilots

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coming up to sixty to qualify as flight engineers so that they can then transfer to the new function.

The suit, which was filed by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, dates back to 1981.

Each pilot stands to benefit by about \$175,000, provided the settlement — as expected — is formally approved by the district court judge.

Iberia victimises Indian workers

Hard on the heels of last month's **ITF News** story of crude union busting at the feeder airline Vayudoot another example of anti union discrimination in the Indian civil aviation industry has come to light. This time the culprit is a foreign airline, the Spanish carrier Iberia which is systematically victimising its employees because of their active involvement in union affairs.

Iberia's Indian ground staff employees became concerned about the long term implications for jobs at the airline's base in Bombay when the local management contracted all its cargo work out to a private contractor and then began to replace its staff at its Bombay city office by independent Sales Agents. Faced with this clear threat to their livelihoods, the Iberia workers decided last December to form a trade union which was formally registered on 6 January as the Iberian Airlines of Spain Employees' Association.

The airline, interpreting the move as a threat to its authority, quickly retaliated.

First it 'advised' a secretary, one of the longest serving employees in its Bombay city office, that she should hand in her notice, making it clear that if she did not follow this 'advice' she would be dismissed.

She obtained a Court injunction forbidding the airline from dismissing her until her case alleging an unfair labour practice was heard.

In spite of the existence of the injunction she was prevented from signing the muster roll and performing her regular duties, a clear contempt of court on the part of the airline.

When Iberia Bombay station manager Diego Vinagre started abusing the employees, taunting and humiliating them with racist language the newly formed Association again sought the assistance of the courts.

The Association successfully obtained a second interim injunction on 18 January forbidding the airline from employing others to do the work of its existing employees and restraining it, pending final settlement of the complaint against it, from terminating the

services of any of its 22 employees.

This sparked off a new round of victimisation. On 19 January the Deputy Commissioner of the Bombay airport police, at the request of the Iberia management, confiscated the airport passes of two employees, both union activists, one of them being the union's Vice President.

The police were acting on dismissal letters that had been sent by Iberia on receipt of the injunction on 18 January but backdated to January 17, a Sunday.

Iberia withdrew the dismissal notices a few days later but the entry passes were not returned and so the two men could not report for duty. Two further employees, both active in the union, were later also dismissed and had their passes withdrawn.

Meanwhile, the Regional Manager of the airline has refused to meet with the union to discuss their grievances or even to meet the office holders for a formal introduction.

To add to this Iberia, which has been operating flights into India since May 1986, has yet to introduce proper working conditions for its 22 Indian employees. They have no fixed probationary period, Indian national holidays were not observed and it was not until January 1988 - some twenty months after Iberia first set up in India - and just after the union was formed that its employees were awarded their first such holiday leave and they began to get leave

for days they had missed last year).

The situation is causing grave concern to employees of the other foreign airlines operating in India who last year formed their own All India Federation and later applied for membership of the ITF. The new union at Iberia is a member of the Federation, which brings together a total of 1,800 employees from 20 foreign airlines operating in India.

Meeting in emergency session on 22 January, the Federation adopted a strongly worded resolution demanding that Iberia rescind its anti labour action forthwith and enter into talks with the Association representing its employees. The resolution went on to assure Iberia's workers of the fullest cooperation and assistance in their struggle.

A similarly worded resolution of solidarity was also adopted by the Coordinating Committee of Indian Affiliates of the ITF at its meeting on 15 February.

Far from adopting a conciliatory attitude as India's unions were wisely suggesting, Iberia has further exacerbated an already tense situation by threatening to cease flying to India, allegedly for 'commercial reasons'.

Alarmed by these developments, ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Pio Albanesi spoke to Miguel de Julian of the Airlines Division of the ITF-affiliated Spanish UGT-FETT, explaining the situation and seeking his assistance on behalf of the Indian trade unionists.

Near misses raise concern in UK

The British government is introducing air traffic flow restrictions to maintain safety in the face of growing public concern about the safety of the Southern English skies. Recent near air misses have highlighted the shortcomings of the UK system.

Pilots and air traffic controllers have been calling for more stringent safety measures and the establishment of more advanced air traffic control procedures for the sector. Air traffic in the South of England has been expanding massively this decade - but control systems still remain rooted in the

early 1970s. The UK traffic control computer is generally recognised as being not powerful enough, and the software is at least one generation behind most of Europe and North America

There is, for example, no automatic conflict alert facility on the ATC system. Nor does the London area ATC zone extend all the way to the ground - a problem that was brought to light with the opening last year of the London City Airport and the subsequent temporary suspension of flight to Paris because of conflict between the low

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SAS and Aerolineas Argentinas discuss links

Fresh from its failure to merge with Sabena and its thwarted attempts to buy into British Caledonian, Scandinavian Airline System (SAS) is now discussing a joint venture with Aerolineas Argentinas.

The two airlines — situated almost exactly on opposite sides of the planet from each other — have decided to explore the possibility of SAS taking over 40 per cent of the shares in Aerolineas Argentinas in two stages.

The Argentine state owned airline, which employs 10,323 people, has been a candidate for privatisation for some time now. After hearing of SAS' failure with BCal, the Argentinians approached SAS to investigate the possibility of a partial sale.

The two airlines have now signed a letter of intent that sets up a feasibility study to investigate the plan and report back by May 15. The idea is that SAS would buy an initial stake of 20 per cent in the airline, followed later by another 20 per cent. The proposal also includes the handing over of an additional nine per cent of the shares to the workforce.

The two companies are open in stating that both airlines need to

expand to survive in today's changing market:

"The consequences of deregulation in the US are increased competition, a reduction of fares, an increase in the number of passen-

gers carried and tighter profit margins." said Aerolineas' managing Director Hugo Casadella.

"As deregulation spreads, the trend to fewer and bigger airline companies is inevitable" he said.

UK CAA may require 3rd person in long haul cockpits

An important challenge is being mounted to the two man flight deck crew concept, which has found favour with the world's airlines who are keen to maximise their profits.

The challenge comes from the British Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) which is actively considering making a third pilot mandatory on some long distance non stop flights on the new aircraft types shortly to be introduced.

These include the Boeing 747-400 series and the Airbus A-340 and McDonnell Douglas MD-11, all of which have been specifically designed for two pilot only operation.

The CAA plan stems from con-

cern that the strain on a two man cockpit crew operating on such routes would be intolerable. While a firm decision is still some time away, the CAA says that it plans to hold talks soon with the airlines and pilots' organisations with a view to setting a maximum sector length - 11 hours under the most favourable conditions is the figure currently under consideration - before a third pilot is required.

Airline pilots and flight engineers worldwide, through their unions - and with the active support of the ITF - have been fighting for the retention of the third crew member as a vital safety measure and will no doubt hope that other regulatory authorities will follow the CAA's lead.

...new ATC regulations introduced

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flying City craft and the Heathrow and Gatwick approach lanes.

Concerns about the ATC system — and its lack of automatic conflict alert facilities — have arisen over two near air collisions this year.

On February 22 two airliners with 222 passengers were involved in a near collision just by the North Sea coastal town of Clacton.

A British Caledonian BA1-11 carrying 65 passengers had just left Gatwick bound for Amsterdam and was flying at 6,700 metres. A Pan Am Boeing 727, carrying 152 people from Oslo to Heathrow had descended from 10,500 to below 8,800 metres under instructions from ATC. The planes passed within visual sighting range, but the West Drayton controller saw the problem and, according to the government, "took immediate action."

Earlier this month, on February 6, there was another incident over the Kent coast.

A number of factors, including the need for an emergency runway repair, a failure of communications between London's Gatwick and Heathrow airports, and confusion over stacking instructions led to a very close miss involving over 500 passengers when a Bulgarian Balkan Airlines Tupolev 154 came within metres of a British Airways TriStar. The Bulgarian airliner was returning from Sofia to Gatwick, while the BA plane was heading from Paris to Heathrow.

The two planes passed within 100 metres of each other, their images merging into one on the ATC screen. The BA pilot managed to veer away when he made visual contact.

Official inquiries are now being

held into both incidents.

*On Monday February 1st there was a near disaster at Gatwick involving a Continental Airlines Boeing 747 with 445 people on board.

As the Continental plane was taking off one of the four engines failed and the craft struggled to gain altitude as it took off.

This, according to sources at Gatwick, is about as close as you can get to a real disaster without it actually happening.

Cross winds were high on the day — and the Gatwick runway is considered short by many in the aviation community (at less than 3,500 metres in length it is shorter than most European jet runways). The aircraft has been impounded by the Department of Transport pending a full examination of the faulty engine.

Who owns the Foc fleets?

Greek shipowners have toppled the United States from the number one position in the world league table of flag of convenience operators. This is one of the conclusions of a brand new study just published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Figures from the study, which was carried out by A P Appledore a leading firm of management consultants, show that the four top FOC owning countries are Greece, the USA, Japan and Hong Kong. These four countries together accounted for 67.5% of all the ships flying flags of convenience as defined by UNCTAD. This definition, which is narrower than that used by the ITF, includes only Liberia, Panama, Cyprus, Bahamas and Bermuda. Inclusion of other FOCs such as Gibraltar and Malta would have some effect on the figures but the bulk of the world FOC fleet is still covered by this study.

According to UNCTAD, during the period July 1984 to July 1987, the number of ships flying open registry flags showed an increase of 8.4 per cent - from 6, 615 to 7,169. The deadweight tonnage over the same period increased by 6.8 per cent from 202.5m to 216.4m at a time when the percentage growth in the world merchant fleet was 6.2 per cent. As a result the share of flags of convenience (as defined by UNCTAD) in total deadweight tonnage rose from 30% to 34.2%.

Changes in individual countries' shares are quite interesting. Greece increased from 36.4 million dwt to 45.2 million (20.9% of the total) to head the table while the USA fell from 49.8 million to 39 million. Japanese beneficially owned tonnage increased from 23m tonnes in 1984 to 33.8 m in 1987 while Hong Kong fell from 37.3 m to 28.1 m.

Among other countries Norway recorded a huge increase, more than doubling its beneficially owned tonnage from 8 m to 16.7 m over the three year period.

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF OPEN REGISTRY SHIPS

Home country Beneficial Owners

	Number — DWT — % of total DWT		
Greece	1311	45155	20.9
USA	569	39000	18.0
Japan	1591	33813	15.6
Hong Kong	696	28131	13.0
Norway	385	16674	7.7
Germany F R	427	7340	3.4
United Kingdom	257	5676	2.6
Switzerland	135	3303	1.5
Taiwan	133	2503	1.2
South Korea	82	2487	1.2
P R China	66	2384	1.1
Singapore	132	2006	0.9
Netherlands	146	2004	0.9
Monaco	53	1944	0.9
Finland	51	1770	0.8
France	38	1768	0.8
Sweden	42	1589	0.7
Brazil	11	1357	0.6

In terms of ship *type*, the world FOC fleet continues to be dominated by tankers, which account for 43 per cent of total tonnage. Dry bulk and combined carriers represented 35.9 per cent of the fleet. There were 285 containerships and 2,199 general cargo vessels sailing under FOC in 1987, making up 2.4 % and 8.3% of FOC tonnage respectively.

Liberia, which remains the biggest FOC registry, recorded a tonnage loss of 19.5 per cent over the period surveyed, while Panama grew by 14.5 per cent, Cyprus by 150 per cent and the Bahamas by 206 per cent and Bermuda by 123 per cent. Recent efforts by the Liberian maritime authorities to clean up the image of their register have clearly scared many shipowners off it.

PNO Congress draws up action plan

The 22nd Congress of the Greek Seamen's Federation PNO held last month adopted a 30 point action programme designed to protect the jobs of its members against a background of the decline of the national merchant fleet.

Heading the list of priorities is the conclusion of PNO collective agreements for Greek owned ships flying flags of convenience.

The union also pledged itself to continue talks with Cypriot seafarers' unions and the ITF on problems arising from the flagging out of Greek ships to the Cypriot register.

The PNO also decided to press for the setting up of a fund - financed by owners' contributions - on which seafarers abandoned without pay in foreign ports by insolvent owners will be able to draw.

Other issues covered by the programme include the defence of cabotage rights within the EC and strict adherence to the labour standards of ILO Convention no 147.

The opening ceremony of the conference was addressed by the Greek Minister for the Merchant Marine Evangelos Yannopoulos who promised effective government action to keep ships on the Greek register and to attract back those that had already left.

The Minister said that the shipping industry was a valuable earner of foreign exchange and thus vital to the Greek economy. There was every justification for treating it as something of a special case.

PNO General Secretary Michael Zenzefyllis, who was re-elected for a further five year term, told the Congress that it was taking place at a "borderline" period when the shrinking Greek fleet was under serious threat from the new off-shore registers with their offers of ever cheaper crews as well as from traditional FOCs.

In a fraternal message to the PNO Congress, the ITF expressed sympathy with Greek seafarers at this difficult time when jobs and union rights were much under threat and wishing the meeting all possible success.

* Following detailed negotiations

with PNO representatives during the ITF Maritime Policy Committee meeting in Baltimore last December, the ITF Secretariat has provisionally agreed that certain Greek owned FOC ships should be exempted from the requirement to contribute to the Seafarers' International Welfare, Assistance and Protection Fund as a condition for the issuance of an ITF 'Blue Certificate'. The ships concerned are those for which an ITF approved PNO collective agreement has been signed and where contributions are made by the shipowner to the Greek Maritime Social Security System NAT on behalf of the crew.

The number of such ships has fallen drastically, from 1200 to around 230 in recent years with NAT contributions representing about 24% of the wage bill. The decision, which is subject to ratification by the Fair Practices Committee in June, is in recognition of the fact that NAT membership provides a high degree of social security protection. Greek owned FOC ships which do not contribute to NAT will remain subject to normal ITF policy, and the PNO will be able to ask for ITF assistance to ensure that PNO agreements are signed and kept to for such vessels.

DONA PAZ OWNERS HAVE DUBIOUS SAFETY RECORD

The Philippine National Bureau of Investigations have revealed that there were more than 3,000 people on board the ferry *Dona Paz* which sank last December.

The figure is a thousand higher than was last feared (see ITF News, January 1988), and represents twice the number actually on the ship's manifest.

The new figure, based on official interviews with relatives, states that there were 3,099 passengers and 59 crew on board. Only 26 people survived the December 20 collision between the heavily laden ferry and the small tanker *Vector*.

Relatives of the dead and survivors have filed for a massive peso 9 billion damages suit against Sulpico lines, the owner of the *Dona Paz*.

Sulpico is denying that they were to blame. A Coast Guard enquiry will report its findings in a month's time.

But the lawyers in court will almost certainly be raising the issue of Sulpico lines' safety record.

Since 1955 Sulpico has suffered 19 total losses, eight of these in the last ten years. Some examples:

* April 24, 1986 ro-ro *Dona Josefina* started leaking, developed serious list, sank.

* February 28, 1986 container vessel *Lorenzo Container VII* sank during heavy weather.

* September 28, 1984 *Lorenzo Container VIII* developed engine trouble, capsized and sank during typhoon.

* December 6, 1982 *Dona Lillian* sank.

* September 19, 1980 *Sulpico Container* sank.

* July 25, 1980 *Don Ervin* Heavy list during bad weather, cargo shifted, sank.

* July 29, 1977 *Don Carlos* sank.

* March 5, 1977 another *Dona Paz* passenger ferry sank. The ferry that was later named to take this ship's place (the *Don Sulpico*) also had a serious fire and was beached in 1978.

There were at least eight other major disasters that narrowly avoided being losses in the last ten years.

These casualties would appear to be more than just a bad string of luck for Sulpico lines; they cast doubt on the company's control and concern for proper safety measures.

Pakistan merchant marine in crisis

Incompetent management and the appointment of naval officers to senior positions in the National Shipping Line have brought about a major crisis in Pakistan's national flag shipping industry. This was the message delivered by Sheikh Mohammed Iqbal, General Secretary of the ITF affiliated Pakistan Merchant Navy Officers' Association when he visited ITF headquarters in early February.

Iqbal estimates that there are at least 3,500 out of the total of 7,000 Pakistani merchant navy officers out of work at present and the number is growing. In 1970 the state owned shipping line PNSC operated 71 ships. Today the number has shrunk to 23 and only 1,000 officers are able to work on them. Yet the main reason for this desperate state of affairs is not the crisis in the world shipping industry, but the incompetence of PNSC management Iqbal believes. He points out that national fleets in other countries in the region have been growing. There has been widespread corruption and embezzlement at the top of the PNSC and in the port authorities encouraged by the appointment to senior management positions of naval officers such as Vice Admiral Y H Malik who heads the PNSC, and rear Admiral Wallilullah who runs



**Sheik Mohammed Iqbal,
Gen. Sec. Pakistan
Merchant Navy Officers'
Association**

the Port Quasim Authority. The military have also launched a bitter attack on trade union rights (see ITF News February) through the Pakistan Master Mariners' Association which has effectively called on the government to abolish independent trade unions.

Although martial law has now theoretically ended in Pakistan, the influence of the military on political and economic life is still very strong. Iqbal describes the situation as "mini martial law". Evidence submitted by the union to a Parliamentary corruption

enquiry has still to be acted on although Iqbal says he has "confidence in the Prime Minister" to make the necessary changes in the shipping sector. These should include the removal of all naval officers from positions of influence, the establishment of a separate Ports and Shipping Ministry, the representation of merchant navy officers in the Pakistan senate and the stamping out of drug smuggling aboard PNSC vessels (the company is apparently widely known as the Pakistan Narcotics Supply Corporation). The union is also demanding a programme of ship acquisition which will give the national line the capacity to offer a wide range of bulk, products and container shipping services as well as new passenger ships for the transport of muslim pilgrims from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia for the traditional 'Haj'. The current ships (described by Iqbal as combination carriers for buffaloes and pilgrims) are old, uncomfortable and in some cases unseaworthy.

The union's campaign is aimed at giving at least 50% of all senior positions in the maritime industry to merchant navy officers and at "restoring dignity respect and security" to the workers in the industry.

BOOST FOR SEAFARERS' RIGHTS AS US PREPARES TO RATIFY ILO CONVENTION NO. 147

In a move that will be of direct benefit to seafarers crewing ships calling in US ports, the USA is about to ratify the International Labour Organisation's Convention 147.

The US Senate has passed a bill that is now awaiting the President's signature which will become the first ILO Convention ratified by the USA for nearly 40 years — the US government has traditionally shied away from ILO ratifications because it maintains that its own standards are generally superior to ILO instruments.

Convention 147 — Minimum Standards in Merchant Ships — was drawn up in 1976 and came

into force on 28 November 1981. It is of particular interest to seafarers and their trade unions because it directly addresses the problems of sub-standard shipping and makes a specific reference to flag of convenience vessels.

The Convention binds states to make adequate social provisions for the engagement of seafarers and for dealing with their complaints about mistreatment, for inspection of the safety of vessels and for the holding of official enquiries with public reports into disasters for ships registered under the states' flag.

More importantly it gives states the right to intervene in the affairs

of foreign flag shipping — responding to appeals from trade unions, for example, about social conditions on board Foc shipping.

The degree to which 147 is applied depends on the attitude of the respective states, but it does form a cornerstone of the growing Port State Control movement — which began in Western Europe. With the ratification of 147, the US Coast Guard (who are responsible for Port State duties in the USA) will have broader powers to intervene in cases of sub-standard shipping and crew exploitation, and this should also assist the Foc inspectors working for the US maritime unions.

ITF Asia/Pacific seafarers' meeting

Urgent action by the Philippines government to enforce standards of watchkeeping on their vessels in the wake of the Dona Paz disaster was urged by the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Seafarers' Committee which met in Hong Kong from 22-24 February.

More than 30 delegates and observers from seafarers' unions in 14 Asian and Pacific countries attended the meeting which was presided over by ITF Seafarers' Section Chairman K Mols Sørensen.

The session was opened by Hong Kong Marine Director G A Higginson who talked about seafarers' recruitment and the forthcoming Seafarers' Bill to be introduced in the Hong Kong legislature. ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander, in reply, praised Higginson's forthright attitude and willingness to stamp out shady recruitment practices and underlined that Hong Kong should not try to become a fully fledged flag of convenience. Too much reliance on the UNCTAD Ship

Registration Convention without the continuation of genuine link between ship and flag state and adequate manning by Hong Kong nationals could result in Hong Kong falling foul of ITF FOC policy, he warned.

The meeting adopted a strongly worded resolution on the Dona Paz disaster in the light of information which indicated that the causes were overcrowding, inadequate navigational aids, poorly maintained safety equipment and unqualified shipboard personnel. It also offered the expertise and facilities of the ITF to the Philippine government to enable it to ensure that proper safety procedures were followed in the future.

Serious concern was expressed by the committee about the deteriorating predicament of seafarers in the Persian Gulf. Full support was given to the proposal for a UN protection convoy and an arms embargo against belligerent states and the possibility of boycott action against shipowners trading into the area was not ruled out.

Resolutions were adopted supporting the struggle of the Pakistan Merchant Navy Officers Association (see separate article) and condemning the Sri Lankan administration for its policy of registering Sri Lankan seafarers under articles of agreement which force them to accept wages and conditions even below ILO standards with the penalty for objecting being blacklisting for life.

The committee also decided to establish a working party to determine manning quotas for the Asia/Pacific region and to draft definitions and policy recommendations on beneficial ownership and bareboat charters for consideration by the next meeting of the Seafarers' Section Maritime Policy Committee. ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary M S Hoda, who also attended the meeting, took the opportunity of convening a meeting of the ITF Coordinating Committee in Hong Kong and of liaising with potential ITF affiliates in the Colony.

Landmark legal decision aids Burmese seafarer

In a landmark legal decision which strikes a major blow against attempts by labour supplying governments to intimidate their own seafarers, a Burmese greaser on the *MS Cape Hope* has won damages of US \$ 44,239.40 plus interest in a case brought by the ITF before the Bremen Labour Court against the Kingfisher Shipping Company of Nicosia, Cyprus.

The greaser, Maung Thein Myint, had been employed on the *Cape Hope* since 20 May 1985. On 5 November 1984 the owners signed an ITF collective agreement laying down, amongst other conditions, the rates of pay which should apply to the crew.

Right from the start, however, Myint was cheated of his entitlement under the agreement. 70% of his pay being remitted directly to the Burmese government's Seamen's Employment Control Division (SECD) supposedly as a result of an 'agreement' reached between SECD and the ITF. Neither Myint nor his family ever saw

the 70% again.

What seems to have happened is that the Burmese crew members on board the *Cape Hope*, Myint included, had been intimidated by fear of what would happen to them on their return home into signing each month two wage accounts - one showing the ITF standard rates, the other approving the deduction of 70% of their wages by the SECD. Their plight eventually came to light when in desperation they sought help in May 1987 from Bremen seaman's pastor Monsignor Johannis Bieler. Asked by several crew members to visit the ship, Bieler came on board where the men explained their grievance and said that, despite the possible consequences, they wanted to pursue a case against the company.

Bieler then got in touch with Bremen based FOC inspector Hans Kreitlow of the ITF affiliated ÖTV and explained the situation to him. Kreitlow went on board the *Cape Hope* on 5 May, talked to

captain Nicola Platis and took away the ship's articles and other relevant documents for copying. After checking the amounts actually received against the agreement, Kreitlow obtained the crew's permission to apply to the local Labour Court for the arrest of the vessel and they later signed powers of attorney and affidavits for use by the court in the arrest proceedings.

When Kreitlow returned to the ship a week later he found the crew looking very dejected. They explained that Myint and another crewman had been visited by the Second Secretary of the Burmese embassy in Bonn who had forced them to testify before a Bremen lawyer that they were dropping the case.

With the assistance of another ÖTV officer in Hamburg, the following day, 12 May, Myint and his fellow crewman signed an English language affidavit testifying that they had been taken by taxi to a

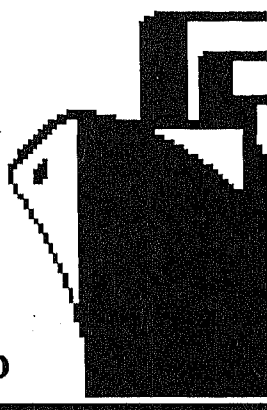
Continued on page 13

Second German register would be "unconstitutional"

Alarmed by the increasingly vocal demands of German shipowners for access to cheaper crews, Monika Wulf-Mathies President of the ITF affiliated ÖTV wrote to Chancellor Helmut Kohl in January calling for urgent action to deal with the crisis in the shipping industry. Her letter asked the Chancellor to put a stop to 'political moves' aimed at giving in to pressure for the introduction of a second shipping register along NIS lines.

In a statement attached to the letter the union pointed out that the Transport Minister's plans for a second class register employing foreign seafarers at much lower pay rates than those enjoyed by German nationals would violate the Federal Republic's Constitutional provisions on discriminatory treatment.

The
ITF's
monthly
flag
by
flag
roundup



The Constitutional guarantee of freedom of association would also be breached the union points out, stressing that it would never be able to represent workers on second class conditions and dismissing the claims of supporters of the second registry that they would

negotiate with the "unions" in the seafarer's home country. Many of these unions are far from independent and are subject to restrictions which render them incapable of defending the interests of their members. The idea of two registers, one with German and one with sub-standard conditions, would conflict with a further constitutional clause committing the German state to ensure a unified merchant fleet, the ÖTV argues, and would also contradict the basic social objectives laid down in the Constitution.

Other worrying implications of a two tier register are set out in the union statement. Safety standards would be compromised, and the maritime industry would quickly suffer from a lack of

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...seafarer entitled to ITF rates of pay

Continued from page 12
lawyer's office in Bremen on 11 May by the Burmese diplomat and forced to sign a statement withdrawing the powers of attorney granted to Kreitlow.

When the case finally came to trial in Bremen, the shipowner, Kingfisher Shipping Company, stated that it was relying on another English language statement which Myint was alleged to have signed in June, a month later, before a Burmese lawyer in Burma. This statement was said to absolve Kingfisher of any responsibility in respect of the wages paid to Myint in the period May 1985 to May 1987 and to revoke all powers of attorney and all verbal and written statements made to Kreitlow when instructing him as a representative of the ITF to pursue legal action on his behalf through the German courts. Myint was further alleged by Kingfisher to have signed a second statement on September 11 and again attested to by a lawyer in Rangoon in which he said that he had received the money to which he was entitled and had signed receipts for it before U Myint Thein, Director of the SECD.

Myint denounced both these statements as forgeries, pointing out that he was not in Burma but

in Bangkok, Thailand in June when he was said to have signed the first statement, and that the signature on that statement also differed markedly from that on the power of attorney he had signed in Germany a month earlier.

In reaching its decision the Bremen Labour Court fully accepted Myint's account of events. If the veracity of Myint's testimony is accepted, the court stated, one must inevitably also conclude that the documents furnished by Kingfisher are false.

Kingfisher Shipping had maintained throughout the case that it knew nothing of the allegations made by Myint. The Court also rejected this defence arguing that the captain must have been aware of the visit to the ship of Monsignor Bieler and that the shipowner must have known about the intervention of the Burmese diplomat who had clearly become involved following an approach to the Burmese embassy by someone involved in the case. A close examination of Myint's passport also showed clearly that he had not been in Rangoon on the dates when the statements on which Kingfisher relied had been made, the Court concluded.

The court ruled that there was no doubt that Myint was entitled to be

paid according to the rate fixed in the ITF Collective Agreement. Kingfisher had failed to convince the court that it had discharged this responsibility. Moreover, the alleged 'agreement' with SECD which formed part of Kingfisher's evidence to the court had not been signed by the ITF, which had led Myint to claim that it therefore had no authority. Kingfisher had failed to provide evidence which proved otherwise.

Even if the 'agreement' between the ITF and SECD were valid, Myint's claim would still have been valid the Judge held since the terms of the 'agreement' provided for the 70% deduction to be made on the seafarer's express instructions. Kingfisher had failed to show that Myint had specifically asked for this remittance to be made.

In the light of the above, the court awarded Myint his claim in full. He will receive back pay of \$ 44,239.40 plus 4 per cent interest from 10 August 1987. Judgement for costs was also given against Kingfisher. Myint, who as a result of the court action he has taken is unable to return to Burma has since been helped by the ITF to find a job on a German-owned flag of convenience ship.

...offshore registers continue to proliferate

Continued from page 13

trained German personnel.

The ÖTV statement concludes by pointing to the 17,000 jobs that would be lost were the register set up and the serious implications this would have both for the seafarers themselves and for the local economies of Germany's coastal cities.

Meanwhile, the first Portuguese and Spanish owners have indicated their interest in the proposed new register on the Portuguese island of **Madeira**. Portline, Portugal's largest bulk cargo and liner services operator, has indicated that will transfer some of its vessels provided the registry lives up to expectations while a major unnamed Spanish operator has also expressed interest. The registry forms an essential part of the island government's plans for the development of Madeira as an offshore financial centre and free trade zone.

In **Canada** Transport Minister John Crosbie has told shipowners seeking an open register that he will look favourably on their request and will be discussing the proposal with the Department of Finance.

In **Norway**, the leading ship management company Barber International - one of the foremost supporters of the country's newly-created international register - has just signed a collective agreement

with Portuguese seafaring unions to provide Portuguese crews - both ratings and officers - for NIS registered tonnage. The crews will be provided through Soponata, Portugal's leading tanker operator. One crew has already been provided for a Barber managed bulk carrier and upwards of twenty other vessels are expected to take on Portuguese crews in the course of the next twelve months.

The advent of NIS has given a fillip to Barber's business. It has entered into a joint venture with Canadian Pacific and plans to open a new London office from which BCP Ship Management, as it is to be known, will be launching an advertising campaign aimed at attracting British owners to the NIS.

Like other European nations currently considering the opening of second registers the **Spanish** merchant fleet has been losing tonnage throughout the eighties and the government now seems worried about whether it will be able to compete effectively once the EC free market comes into effect in 1992.

This is the background to a report that appeared in the business daily *Cinco Dias* saying that the government wanted to create a single shipping line covering regular trading routes to and from Spain.

It is believed that the report was leaked deliberately as a way of

finding out what would be the industry's response to such a plan which would involve operators of bulk carriers, chemical tankers, oil and products carriers and general cargo ships.

According to the article, as part of this process loans owed by the sector would be renegotiated and special incentives would be offered to induce the companies to merge their assets.

With an official **Swedish** government decision still awaited on a possible 'SIS', leading shipowner Gorthons Rederi announced last month that it was switching its remaining owned fleet - 4 ro ros - from the Swedish register to the Bahamas in a bid to reduce operating costs and that their Swedish crews would be re-employed under offshore conditions. The company set up a subsidiary in Nassau last year and has already switched 3 bulkers to the registry since that time.

Gorthons' move has angered the Swedish Seamen's Union as it was made without proper consultation. This latest blow to the union comes just after the decision by Johnson Line to sell three Swedish owned, Panamanian registered and Swedish crewed tankers, with the loss of 150 jobs. In a formal statement, Johnson indicated that the vessels might not have been sold had the SIS been in place and it had been able to operate with an international crew.

PEOPLE

Alexandre Delgado, General Secretary of the Portuguese Engine Room Ratings' Union SITEMAQ, has been elected National Secretary of the Portuguese trade union centre UGT, which is affiliated to the ICFTU.

ITF affiliates in Fiji have shown up splendidly in the recent elections to the Management Board of the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC). **Mahendra Chaudhry** of the Fiji Public Service Association is the FTUC's new National Secretary, while **Fred Cokanasiga** of the

Federated Airline Staff Association and **David Eyre** of the Air Pacific Employees' Association are both National Vice Presidents.

The newly formed Maritime, Transport and General Workers' Federation of New Zealand held elections for office at its recent inaugural conference. **Sam Jennings**, General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation, was elected as the Federation's first General Secretary, with **Dave Morgan**, President of the Seamen's Union (NZSU), as Vice

President. Elected as President was **Don Goodfellow** of the National Union of Railwaymen. Executive members elected at the conference include **Jim Woods** of the NZSU and **Joe Harkness** of the WWF.

Val Birnie is to succeed **Norman Hitchen** as an Assistant General Secretary of the British Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) when Mr Hitchen retires in the summer. Birnie is currently a Divisional Secretary with responsibility for British Rail goods and workshop staff among others.

German dockers fight for shorter hours

Posters are appearing in German ports as part of the dockers' campaign for shorter working hours.

Although German dockers currently work 40 hours they are entitled to 9 days off with pay a year. Taken over the year this brings the weekly average down to 38.5 hours.

The union feels that with Germany's major industrial companies moving towards 37 hours by 1990 and the recent steel industry settlement which cut hours to 36.5, the time is now ripe for a further cut in the ports industry.

With this in mind the working hours agreement between the union and the employers was terminated by the union at the end of 1987. Talks between the two sides began as early as last November though little progress has been made so far.

Dock employers initially maintained a hard line, insisting on major changes to existing shift systems, determined on a local rather than a national basis and with the length of shifts varying between 5 and 8 hours according to the port. They also wanted the dockers to work at weekends and even challenged the dockers' right to pay for the nine days off they currently receive.

By the end of January they had softened their stance somewhat and were now saying that they wanted to introduce a new pattern of working time that would apply to all German ports.

This would be based on a five day week, with Sunday working once every six weeks. Shifts would be of 7 hours, plus a half hour unpaid break, with the possibility of an extension of a further 3 hours up to normal weekly working hours. In some ports the start of the working day would be deferred to 10.00 (ports on the lower Weser) or 11.00 (Hamburg).

Provided this new working scheme was accepted by the un-



ÖTV publicity for the campaign (trans: We in the ports are united in our aim -- more days off!)

ion, the employers agreed that they would not pursue their attack on the existing nine days' paid leave provision and indeed might be prepared to grant the dockers more paid time off.

With the dock pay agreement set to expire at the end of March a union strategy meeting was held on Feb 3 to plan the next moves in the negotiations. The result was a demand for an increase in hourly rates and shift premiums of 5% in total as part of a new 12 month pay agreement as well as the continuation of its campaign for more paid time off.

In a press release issued on 3 February, the ÖTV restated its

position: it would not allow the employers to tinker with a shift system that had proved its worth and extra obligatory weekend working would be fiercely resisted.

The latest news we have is that the ÖTV has asked the employers to put forward an offer at the next round of talks at the end of this month on which it would be possible to negotiate.

Meanwhile, transport workers have been staging short protest demonstrations in a number of German cities in the past few days in support of shorter hours which are at the centre of negotiations in this year's public sector pay round.

FISHERIES

Big EC pay out for Iberian fishermen

Over 10,000 Portuguese and Spanish fishermen are to receive financial compensation from the European Community for the fact that they have been excluded from Moroccan banks they have fished for years.

The compensation of Ecu 3 million (£2.07 million) a month is less than demanded by Portugal and Spain for the fishermen, but it is still an unprecedented acceptance of blame by the EC for their failure to negotiate a renewal of the Ibe-

rian-Moroccan fishing treaty which expired on December 31, last year.

The original agreement predated the two countries joining the EC. But with their entry into the Community the responsibility for the bilateral agreement passed to Brussels (see **ITF News** August 1987). This original deal expired last July, but was temporarily extended to the end of 1987. The Moroccans, for their part, were wary of having to negotiate with

the entire Community, and have insisted on seeing the talks encompass a broader swathe of Moroccan-Community issues.

The Spanish and Portuguese government have openly expressed their unease about the fact that an agreement that they had no problem maintaining has now been fouled up by the involvement of the EC.

While these discussions continue, 700 Spanish and 30 Portuguese fishing boats and over 10,000 fishermen have lost their livelihood. The Moroccans are still upset with the EC for the rapid rejection of their King's application to join the Community last year. The Moroccans are also unwilling to accept the EC's request for a 25 to 30 per cent rise in the gross registered tonnage of EC boats allowed to fish in their waters.

The Moroccans have demanded a cut of 10 per cent a year in EC fishing in their area.

Large differences remain on the question of compensation to be paid to Morocco for the treaty. While the Moroccans want Ecu 100 million, the EC is only offering Ecu 37 million.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

15-16 March	Executive Board	London
19 March	Railway Rally	Frankfurt
6-7 April	Fishermens Section Cttee	Vigo, Spain
11-12 April	Urban Transport Group	Geneva
20-21 April	Maritime Policy Committee	Bremerhaven
4-5 May	Railway Section Committee	Vienna
30-31 May	Dockers' Section Conference	Rotterdam
1-3 June	Fair Practices Committee	Rotterdam
27-28 June	Research & Publications Meeting	London
28-30 September	Civil Aviation Section Conference	Tenerife
4-6 October	Road Transport Section Conference	Brazil
18-19 October	Executive Board	London
30 Nov. - 2 Dec	Seafarers' Section Conference	Brazil

OBITUARIES

Mrs Winifred ("Win") Blyth, widow of Charlie Blyth, the ITF's General Secretary from 1968 to 1977, died on 17 February. ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis writes "She had been chronically ill for many years and had survived almost exclusively on an extraordinary will-power which fended off one physical blow after another, any one of which would have laid most of us low.

There are still many, many people in the ITF who will remember her with great affection: no airs or graces, open and warm, a lovely sense of humour, very brave, always with time for everyone else but not, perhaps, enough for herself. She leaves two daughters, Janet and Katherine, and four grandchildren who have our deepest sympathy". (The ITF will will-

ingly pass on any messages to them.)

John Elliott, International President of the American Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) from 1959 to 1973 and a member of the ITF Executive Board from 1962 to 1973, died on 18 January 1988 at the age of 74. First a truck driver and later a streetcar and bus driver, he first joined a union in 1933, transferring to the ATU in 1938. He gradually worked his way through increasingly responsible union positions till his election as the union's International President in 1959.

He won many good friends during his service on the ITF Executive Board. He had a tremendous sense of humour and was a master of the very American art of the one-liner. At bottom, however, he was very

serious about the things that he thought were really important: equity, social justice and trade union rights. It was impossible not to like him and to trust him implicitly. There are still many, many people in the ITF who will remember him with great affection and will want to send their deepest sympathy to his widow, Carol.

He have just learned that **Morris Weisberger**, former President/Secretary-Treasurer of the US Sailors' Union of the Pacific, has died, aged 80. Weisberger, who first went to sea in 1926, was also an officer of the Maritime Trades Department for many years. In a tribute, current MTD President Frank Drozak said that his "dedication and knowledge were invaluable to the MTD".