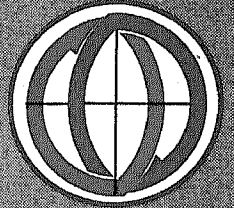


INFORMATIONS : NOTICIAS

ITF NEWS



NACHRICHTEN : NYHETER

SPANISH BORDER BLOCKADE — THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN TRANSPORT?

The 11 day blockade of the Spanish-French frontier by angry truck owners in October gives an unpleasant foretaste of what European Community road transport may look like after 1992. That is the clear message delivered to the European Commission and the EC Council of Transport Ministers by ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis.

The action, carried out mainly by owner-drivers, was sparked off by recent rises in fuel prices and the government freight transport rates deregulation leading to 'piratical' practices in the industry. It ended on October 19 with the Spanish Transport Minister promising a package of financial measures designed to help the industry. Before the agreement most border roads were closed by trucks which also, at one stage, blocked the main Madrid-Paris railway line.

The ITF message makes it clear that this will happen again unless existing deficiencies in European road transport policy are corrected. The Commission's obsession with deregulating road transport is removing all safeguards necessary for the stability of the market, it says, stressing that the Community has consistently ignored the warnings of ITF transport unions about the serious consequences which this could have:

"The economic health of transport undertakings, the safety of transport operations and the livelihoods of transport workers can only be assured when transport costs do not exceed potential earnings" the ITF message says, pointing out that by systematically dismantling guarantees of minimum tariffs

in international freight transport, the Community has permitted a situation to develop in which many transport operators are unable to obtain a return on their investment in vehicles, material and infrastructure.

It is not too late to change, the ITF argues, calling on the Council of Transport Ministers meeting on October 30 to adopt the measures necessary for a system of minimum and adequate tariffs for international transport operations so that transport operators and transport workers "can in future provide the level and quality of service on which Europe depends".

*In a separate dispute Italian truck operators are blocking the Austrian frontier protesting against the fact that their transit quotas for October ran out before the month was half over. Serious problems have been caused for long-distance drivers from many countries, particularly Germany. The Austrian government continues to pursue a tough policy of limiting transit rights for foreign trucks and is trying to direct more of them onto 'piggyback' rail services. The ITF's German affiliate ÖTV has been in touch with several companies to arrange for mobile toilet facilities to be installed near the border as conditions for truck drivers stranded there continue to worsen.

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THE FUTURE OF THE LIBERIAN FOC REGISTER (11)

New labour laws in South Africa

South Africa's trade unions have achieved a significant breakthrough in the reform of labour relations legislation.

Manpower Minister Eli Louw announced on September 20 that the government had accepted the substance of an agreement on amending current legislation reached between himself, the employers and the two national trade union centres COSATU and NACTU.

The agreement, reached after six months of negotiations and just before a stay-away protest planned by the trade unions for early October, means that the provisions of the controversial Labour Relations Act 1988 will be scrapped.

* The South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU) has concluded a collective bargaining agreement with the Transnet railway company which provides a 30.4 per cent increase in the minimum wage. It

is the first wage award for the company won by SARHWU in a 54-year battle for recognition since the union was founded.

The agreement also provides stop-order facilities for union dues, independent supervision of disciplinary procedures, equal opportunities programmes in the company, the abolition of temporary status for workers and measures to recruit staff from the ranks of those laid off or victimised by other employers.

ITF transport workers' seminar in Thailand

The Thai government's privatisation programme came under fierce attack from thirty officials of Thai transport workers' unions who took part in the first national transport workers' seminar held in Thailand since the ITF education programme in the country was reactivated.

Five transport sectors — rail, road, civil aviation, docks and inland waterways — were represented at the seminar which was held on the campus of the Agricultural University of Nakorn Pathom from 17 to 20 September 1990. The seminar was coordinated by Thailand's new education officer, Utumporn Sirisorachat, who is the secretary of the ITF-affiliated Aerothai Staff Union.

ITF Regional Secretary Mo Hoda was present and lectured at the seminar, which was also attended by a representative of the Ministry of Labour and the President of the Aerothai Staff Union.

The seminar participants expressed their opposition to government plans for the privatisation of large sectors of the transport industry, especially the docks, which are the government's first privatisation target. Dockers in Thailand have already staged a series of strikes over the privatisation issue (see *ITF News* February 1990).

The participants also denounced the threat of privatisation hanging over the state-owned railways and the national air carrier. Given the government's determination, the unions accept that

they may not succeed in their battle to keep transport in the public sector. This was why the seminar participants argued strongly in favour of firm safeguards to protect the interests of the transport workers who will inevitably be displaced as a result of the privatisation process.

Those attending the seminar urged the amendment of national labour laws

to provide for new clauses guaranteeing workers the right to educational leave and time off for union activities, as well as expressing their support for a unified national centre as a means of strengthening trade union unity.

Also discussed at the seminar were Thai industrial relations and the work of the ITF and the ILO on behalf of transport workers.

Toxic smuggling ring discovered

Environmental protection authorities in Essex, England have broken up a major smuggling operation which was bringing hundreds of tonnes of toxic waste into the country from Germany disguised as non-hazardous goods.

The authorities believe that the cargoes of poisonous and inflammable chemical wastes were originally destined for what was East Germany, but because of the process of German unification had to be diverted for disposal elsewhere.

Under East Germany's old régime the government was willing to dump toxic waste from the West in return for hard currency. Now Britain is seen as the country with some of the loosest controls in Northern Europe. It was only the vigilance of local government inspectors which exposed the operation.

The loads were imported by truck through the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe. The forwarding company had been told by the waste brokers that the materials were not hazardous, but suspicious documentation with the loads prompted the local authorities to examine the contents.

This was not the first occasion that illegal toxic waste had been imported through the region, putting the life and health of port workers, truckers, seafarers and the general public at risk. Politicians in the area are now pressing the European Commission for stronger measures against such operations.

* Environmental experts in Austria have calculated that some 330,000 tonnes of hazardous waste simply disappear in the country each year. According to the "AZ" newspaper, of the half a million tonnes of hazardous waste that are produced annually, some 70,000 tonnes are burned in Austria and a further 100,000 tonnes are accounted for by exports, mainly to Germany, Britain and Switzerland. No-one has yet provided an explanation for what happens to the remaining two thirds.

New national centre in Hong Kong

A new independent trade union centre was inaugurated in Hong Kong in August.

Known as the Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU), the new centre has been set up to represent the interests of workers in the free and autonomous unions in the colony. Most importantly, it is politically independent, owing allegiance neither to Taiwan or China as do the two other established national centres.

The ITF was unable to be represented at the inauguration ceremony because of Congress but it did send a warm fraternal message expressing the ITF's satisfaction at the setting up of the centre and wishing it every success. Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary Mo Hoda has since visited Hong Kong for talks with leading CTU officials.

Transport, manufacturing, teachers' and civil service unions are among those represented in the new centre. Four trade union federations and 21 individual unions make up its initial membership.

The Hong Kong transport workers' unions have been foremost among those advocating the setting up of the new centre and will be participating strongly in its activities.

The CTU sees its prime task as being to assist workers to organise in effective unions and to bargain collectively as well as to enable its member unions to participate in the governmental decision-making process, particularly in respect of new labour and social legislation.

The CTU is pledged to maintain close contacts with trade unions in different countries and to fight together with them in defence of the interests of workers. It also plans to forge links with international trade union organisations and to promote cooperation with these organisations, especially as regards worker education.

Though politically non-aligned, the CTU will be advocating workers' rights in the run up to the 1991 Legislative Council elections and will be seeking candidates who identify with and sup-



From left to right, officers of the new CTU — C.S. Lau (Chairman); V. Zesto (General Secretary); C.Y. Lee (Chief Executive); and ITF Education Officer Elizabeth Tang.

port the aims of the CTU programme.

The independent trade union movement is growing rapidly as workers see the benefits of belonging to unions that cut across the traditional political divide. It is significant that at the end of 1989 the independent unions were the

largest with a total of 245,943 members. The pro-China unions were the next biggest group with 173,820 members and the pro-Taiwan faction by far the smallest with only 18,176 members. This is a trend that can only accelerate as 1997 approaches.

Romanian strike victory for reform

A week-long strike by dockers, seafarers and truck drivers has succeeded in breaking the deadlock in the process of economic reform in the Romanian port of Constanta.

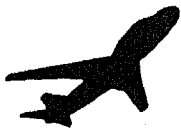
The newly ITF-affiliated Free Drivers' Union of Romania and Romanian Seafarers' Union paralysed Constanta from September 17-24 in a wave of disgust at the way in which the henchmen of the Ceausescu regime have been able to retain their posts in the management of port and transport enterprises. Workers demanded that the reform of the state-owned enterprises already promised by the government should at last be carried out.

For the first few days of the strike the government would only send junior officials to meet the unions. But as dozens of Romanian ships throughout

the world joined the strike and Constanta remained at a standstill, it became impossible to ignore the strikers' demands any longer. On September 24 the government agreed that enterprises in the port would become independent of state control by the end of October 1990, and a return to work was secured.

UN sets 1994 as year of the family

The United Nations International Year of the Family in 1994 must promote equality between women and men, says the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). As part of the international union movement's input to the Year, the ICFTU's Executive Board has adopted a special policy statement on work and the family.



CIVIL AVIATION

United Nations agrees to set up air blockade of Iraq

As widely predicted, the Security Council of the United Nations approved on 26 September by 14 votes to 1 a resolution extending the mandatory arms and economic embargo against Iraq and Kuwait to include air traffic. After some confusion it became clear that the ban extends only to cargo. Transport of passengers only to those countries is not excluded but passenger aircraft are subject to search to ensure that they are complying. UN officials made it clear that the embargo was not intended to include the interception of civil aircraft by military forces. UN members are, however, expected to refuse permission for aircraft using their airports or airspace to file flight plans including Iraq or Kuwaiti destinations unless the contents of the aircraft have been checked and approved.

In response to requests from a number of affiliated unions, on 21 September, the ITF Secretariat sent to all civil aviation affiliates a set of recommendations on the operation of air services in the Gulf region taking account of the fact that the Lloyds insurance market, while charging higher premia for flights into the Gulf area, has not established a list of high risk airports. The recommendations proposed that special conditions be negotiated for flight deck and cabin crew operating into Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, U.A.E., Qatar, Oman, Iran and Lebanon with the possibility of also including Turkey, Egypt and Israel if the situation worsens. Flights to these countries should be avoided if at all possible, and crew members and unions should be fully informed of the current security position and briefed on emergency procedures to be adopted.

In addition, where flights do take place:

- they should be operated on a volunteer only basis
- crews should not be accommodated overnight in the area
- war risk bonuses should be paid to

crew members involved

• enhanced disability and death benefits should be negotiated.

The ITF has asked its affiliates to

keep it fully informed of any important new developments affecting civil aviation in the region while the present crisis continues.

Job cuts at Air New Zealand

Air New Zealand has made 600 of its 9,000 workers redundant in big cuts to provincial routes. The airline blames cuts on fierce competition from Australian-owned Ansett New Zealand which is now operating in the New Zealand domestic market.

Ansett New Zealand is currently the only airline in the world allowed to operate domestically in a foreign country. The Australian and New Zealand governments have agreed to a joint study to assess the possible impact of merging their aviation market, as part of a closer economic relations pact. It is expected that more airlines from both countries will soon be able to fly within each others' home markets.

Just as in Europe (see *ITF News*, February 1990), the creation of a single market would raise difficult questions concerning international air transport agreements. It is unlikely that the two countries will continue to negotiate traffic rights separately. If so, which body will be responsible for joint negotiations? Other governments might well demand changes in their agreements with New Zealand and Australia to reflect the new situation. In addition, services between Australia and New Zealand would become cabotage operations in a unified market, raising the question of the continuation of 'fifth freedom' operations for other international carriers.

Cabin crew safety role stressed

The recent report by the British Department of Transport's Air Accidents Investigation Branch into the Kegworth air disaster of January 1989 has revealed the need for much higher standards of cockpit-cabin communication.

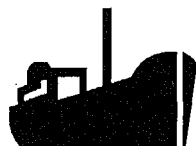
The report concludes that the disaster, in which 47 people died, was caused when the pilots shut down the wrong engine after the airframe began to shudder violently and smoke and fumes entered the cockpit. Some members of the cabin crew were able to see that the fire had occurred in the left engine. However, even though the captain announced over the cabin address system that he had shut down the right engine, they did not enter the cockpit to tell him what they had observed.

The cabin crew may not have been aware of the pilot error since they said that they had not heard the captain's reference to the right engine. The report

states, however, that cabin crew are generally aware that any intrusion into the flight deck can be distracting, particularly during emergencies. There is a "firm division" between flight deck and cabin which made it difficult for the cabin crew to take the initiative.

The report concludes that present patterns of airline training do not encourage the exercise of coordination between cabin and flight crew and recommends that "Training exercises for pilots and cabin crew should be introduced to improve co-ordination between technical and cabin crews in response to an emergency."

The accident illustrates the need to guarantee the highest standards of safety training for cabin crew — something which the ITF believes can only be achieved through a system of state licensing based on internationally agreed standards.



SEAFARERS

From Liberia to the Marshall Islands...via Virginia

The ships may fly a Liberian flag of convenience, or a Marshall Islands flag, but they should really have Reston, Virginia painted on their hulls and sport the corporate logo of the USA United Services Life Insurance Company (USLICO)—the multinational corporation that operates 60 subsidiaries in eleven countries (see box), including the Liberian and (now) the Marshall Islands Foc registers.

Sovereignty is increasingly a minor concern for multinational companies like USLICO, who have now acquired the commercial contracts to operate the shipping registers of two independent

states. They are apparently interested in acquiring a third — who knows, perhaps one day, all Foc registers may be owned by the same US multinational.

Shipowners registered with USLICO have been slightly troubled by the brutal civil war that has paralysed Liberia. Despite assertions from the Virginians that everything was “business as usual”, the US company was having some difficulty in registering mortgages and new companies in Liberia, and international banks were starting to advise owners not to register new tonnage with Liberia. Rumours (reproduced in ITF News, September 1990 — re-

member where you read it first) abounded that the US owners of the register were seeking to take over another Foc register to provide an escape route from Liberia.

In a special press conference in New York City on September 25, Liberian Services Inc. (LSI) announced a “diversification and expansion” of services — the acquisition of the Marshall Islands’ register franchise.

Obviously, this opens the way for guilt-ridden Liberian registered shipowners to transfer flag of registration while remaining with the same company — one-stop convenience shopping for the modern shipowner.

Meanwhile, the handful of Liberians who actually work for USLICO and whoever picks up the telephone in the Liberian government buildings these days were greatly upset by the Marshall Islands announcement. No-one at USLICO felt it was necessary to inform any Liberian (within LSI or the government) of the move before it happened. When they were informed of the fact, LSI told *Lloyd's List* newspaper that “The Liberians” (sic) were “not as happy as we would want them to be, but they are not unhappy.”

Liberia’s delegate to the London-based International Maritime Organization, George B. Cooper, told *Lloyd's List* that he was “disappointed” by the news and asserted that he and other Liberians had been kept in the dark about USLICO’s corporate endeavours. The possibility exists that a future Liberian government may take legal action to secure control of the register from USLICO. The Liberian Foc earns about US\$23 million a year — which, considering the fleet is the largest in the

WHO REALLY OWNS THE LIBERIAN REGISTER?

The multinational behind the Liberian and Marshall Islands Foc registers is the United Services Life Insurance Company (USLICO).

USLICO is based in Arlington, Virginia (USA) and wholly owns Liberian Services Incorporated, the Reston, Virginia company that administers and operates the Liberian Foc. USLICO acquired Liberian Services Inc. in 1986 as part of a bizarre reverse take-over of its own parent company — the Washington International Bank. Till 1986, the Washington International Bank owned all of Liberian Services Inc. and 35 per cent of USLICO — at that time merely a domestic insurance holding company which owned five life insurance businesses. At the end of 1985, when the bank was in some difficulty, USLICO bought them out on the basis of a Bank-USLICO share swap (at a 0.627 to one rate). USLICO then liquidated the bank, sold off some assets and integrated the rest into their new multinational structure. USLICO’s global holdings include real estate, data processing, banks, and insurance companies. In addition to Liberian Services Inc. they also own the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment, the Insurance Company of Africa, Atlantic Data Corporation and the International Trust Company of Liberia — all based in Liberia. The “ownership” of the Foc register is based on a contract between the Republic of Liberia and the International Trust Company of Liberia to administer the Liberian Maritime Programme.

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Toxic gases may have killed ferry victims

Toxic gases produced by the burning of plastic laminates used in on-board fittings probably killed many of the 158 people who died aboard the passenger ferry *Scandinavian Star* in April this year (see ITF News April 1990), according to a preliminary report on the disaster.

Doctors present at the scene of the tragedy formed the impression that many of the passengers who were killed died soon after the outbreak of the fire. Investigators have now established that when the plastic surfaces on board the ship caught fire they released clouds of carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide (HCN) smoke. HCN is lethal at relatively low temperatures consistent with the early stages of the fire, but is neu-

tralised as the temperature increases. A resolution adopted at the ITF Congress in August expressed grave concern at the way in which the equipment

and training of crew members on board the *Scandinavian Star* failed to match the standards laid down in international maritime safety regulations.

UK unions call for new safety inspectorate

The British government is being pressed by the trade union movement to create a new independent maritime safety inspectorate.

The call from the September Trades Union Congress (TUC) meeting came after heavy criticism of the Department of Transport after several major maritime tragedies.

There was also concern at how the

lack of power and resources in the Department's marine accident investigation branch prevented its inspectors from acting effectively in many cases.

Delegates unanimously passed a motion calling for the setting up of an independent inspectorate capable of carrying out full and prompt investigations when serious marine accidents occur.

... Marshallese make false claims about genuine links

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world, is not a very large sum of money.

Meanwhile, USLICO is looking to add a third flag to its portfolio. Discussions have been held with the Caribbean island state of Nevis, which have apparently been fruitless, but yet another Caribbean island deal is apparently pending.

These developments, coming relatively soon after the invasion of Panama, serve to highlight the absurdity of the flag of convenience system and to underline the complete absence of any "genuine link" between Foc registration and the country of register.

The ITF has always believed this, but now others in the maritime community are starting to question the wisdom of the Foc system.

Paul Slater, President of the First International Leasing Corporation, told *Lloyd's List* he was very angry about the Marshall Islands switch:

"I'm steaming about this. The real rotten egg of Liberia has surfaced. This is what I call one-stop ship register operations where Mr. Maitland [from LSI] wears his Liberian hat then his Marshall Islands hat, then another."

Slater is advising his clients against registering with either of the USLICO creations and says "I would like to see flags of convenience abolished."

Amidst the widespread criticism and cynicism generated by USLICO's moves, there are a few voices raised in support of the move — from Marshall Islands' government employees, for example.

Thomas S. Busha, who describes himself as the Deputy Commissioner of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Authority (in London), wrote a letter to *Lloyd's List* in response to the many criticisms and comments in its pages.

Strangely enough (and perhaps the Americans haven't told him what the register will be about yet) he seems to think that one of the great advantages of the Marshall Islands will be that "Marshalls' vessels will have in time a genuine and very practical link with the state" — namely that there will be "young Marshallese on its flag vessels as seafarers"! Perhaps the Panamanian and Liberian seafarers working on their Focs would like to get together with Mr. Busha and tell him about the em-

ployment prospects for his fellow-citizens. At present calculations, these seafarers could probably fit into Mr. Busha's office with plenty of room to spare.

Busha also quotes former International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary General C.P. Srivastava as saying that a "genuine link" is beneficial to ensuring safer shipping and cleaner seas. Even if there were a number of Marshallese working on the Foc ships, this would not constitute a "genuine link" of any kind. As it is, few of the newly registered Marshall Islands ships will ever visit the country — nor will many owners even bother to find out where the Marshall Islands is. As for quoting the IMO, it is nice that the Marshall Islands pays some attention to this important organisation, but they do not, at present, belong to it.

The ITF, at least, has not been caught napping on this one. The Marshall Islands is already designated an Foc by the ITF Fair Practices Committee, and will receive exactly the same treatment as all the others. Some applications for ITF-approved Collective Agreements for Marshall Islands registered vessels have already been received.

Lufthansa gets flight rights for Berlin

The German national airline Lufthansa has been given permission by the cartel office to take over US carrier's Pan Am's coveted routes to Berlin, opened up following the ending of the city's four power status. The airline is clearly delighted with the decision that has given it this key prize, which had been in doubt on grounds of the reduced competition in German skies. By this winter the airline will be operating 45 flights a day to Berlin from cities in the west of the newly reunited Germany. Lufthansa has been asked to give up three take off and landing slots at Frankfurt in return. These will go to the charter and scheduled airline Aero Lloyd, which had itself hoped to obtain an entry into the Berlin service.

British Airways and Aeroflot have laid the initial plans for the creation of a new international airline, provisionally known as Air Russia, with routes to western Europe, North America and the Far East. Under the terms of an agreement signed in Moscow on 12

October between BA and the Soviet Ministry of Civil Aviation, a study will be undertaken into the feasibility of the new airline and a number of related airline projects. If the scheme goes ahead, BA would have a \$39.4 million minority holding in a joint venture in which Aeroflot, the world's biggest airline, would hold the majority stake. Air Russia would come into being in 1992, operating out of Moscow's Domodedovo airport, possibly from a new terminal. The two partners are also considering setting up an aircraft leasing company in conjunction with a number of financial institutions.

Just under half the shares in Olympic Airways are to go on the market as Greece's heavily indebted state-owned airline seeks an injection of cash that will enable it to pay off its loans. A number of leading European carriers have expressed an interest in buying in to Olympic, among them Swissair, KLM and the Scandinavian airline SAS.

Sweden took a decisive step towards eventual deregulation last month when

the Scandinavian national carrier SAS sold its 50 per cent stake in the domestic airline Linjeflyg to the giant Swedish-owned transport company Bilspedition AB for 475 million kroner (\$82.9m). Linjeflyg is Sweden's biggest domestic airline, linking 18 different cities and carrying 4.7 million passengers each year. The change will mean stiffer competition between SAS and Linjeflyg for domestic passengers. The same could also apply to foreign routes if Linjeflyg is granted permission to operate services into London's Gatwick airport later this year. Apart from Bilspedition, the other owner of Linjeflyg is Aktiebolaget Aerotransport, a holding company that in turn owns 43 per cent of SAS. Linjeflyg has indicated that it may offer its employees the chance in two or three years' time to become part owners and that a listing on the stock exchange might be a possibility at about this time. Bilspedition expects the main advan-

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... European employers argue amongst themselves

Continued from page 6

to provide a wide range of long and short haul services see things very differently from the charter carriers which are used to operating low-cost services mainly for holiday travellers or the 'regional' airlines which operate smaller aircraft between smaller airports. The airports, which also employ many aviation workers, also have an altogether different perspective from any of the airline operators.

This meant that much of the argument at the meeting took place between the different employers' organisations rather than between employers and trade unions. Having reserved their right to take legal action against the Commission for establishing the Committee in the first place, representatives of the smaller companies eventually agreed with the scheduled airlines to elect Dr. Malte Bischoff (charter airlines) as

Chairman of the Committee. Manfred Hölzel (ÖTV, Germany) was elected Vice-Chairman from the union side (the chairmanship rotates between the groups every two years).

The representatives of the Commission welcomed the participants and explained that a smaller Bureau comprising 5 representatives from each group would organise the Committee's work. The Committee's first task would be to decide on establishing a number of working groups to deal with the detailed work programme. Following along and difficult debate, it was agreed to set up three groups straight away: one on flight and duty time limits to deal with an already published Commission proposal; one on infrastructure with special reference to airport slot allocation; and one on the harmonisation of licensing standards.

The Committee's Bureau met for the first time in the afternoon of September

13 with further meetings on 3 October and 6 November planned. Its members, in addition to Manfred Hölzel, are George Ryde (TGWU, Great Britain), Miguel de Julian (UGT, Spain), René Valladon (FO, France) and Clive Iddon (Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community—the "Brussels Committee"). The ITF is represented on the Joint Committee directly by Civil Aviation Secretary David Cockroft and 26 of the 27 union seats are held either by ITF/Brussels Committee unions or by representatives of the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) at the Brussels Committee's invitation. The first meeting demonstrated that pursuing the social dialogue in aviation will not be simple, but at least a structure now exists within which discussions can take place, something which sadly still eludes the International Labour Organisation (see separate story).

European slot allocation code planned

The European Commission is planning to introduce a code of conduct to force larger carriers to hand over slots to their smaller competitors. This will make it easier for new airlines to open routes to Europe's main airports, increasing competition on these routes.

The Commission is concerned that unless a code of conduct for slots is established its 'second phase' air transport liberalisation policy will be undermined by entrance barriers for new competitors at congested airports. The runways at hub airports such as London, Frankfurt and Düsseldorf are overloaded, and major airlines are holding on to every available slot. They are able to do this because of the system of "grandfather rights" which allow existing carriers first refusal on new slots or exploitation of existing slots

with alternative services.

The Commission wants to sit in on the twice-yearly scheduling conferences of the International Air Transport Association. It also wants powers to force airlines with more than eight slots per day at a congested airport to surrender some of their slots to smaller competitors. The code would define congested airports as those for which no slots are available during a four-hour period for the peak days of any week over two months of a season.

Newly created slots, unused slots and those given up by a carrier before or by the end of the season would be pooled. Fifty per cent of these would be redistributed to new entrants up to a maximum of two slots per carrier per four hour period.

The most radical solution — auc-

tioning airport slots to the highest bidder — has been ruled out in Brussels on the grounds that it would reinforce the position of the strongest airlines. Instead the code of conduct will be introduced, backed up by the competition rules of the Treaty of Rome that cover slot agreements between airlines.

The Commission has made it clear that adoption of the Code will be a precondition for the removal of the 'block exemptions' granted to European airlines under Article 85 (the competition rules) of the Treaty of Rome. Otherwise, all existing inter-airline arrangements will be open to legal challenge from 1 January 1991. A special meeting of the Bureau of the EC Joint Committee on Civil Aviation has been convened on 6 November to give advice on the slot allocation issue.

... Government scraps Turkish Airlines sale plan

Continued from page 7

tage of the purchase to lie in joint involvement in the express mail delivery market, a current growth area.

Meanwhile, the Turkish government, which like Greece has embarked on an ambitious privatisation programme, has officially announced plans for the sale of Turkish Airlines.

However, uncertainty in the aviation industry caused by the continuing crisis in the Persian Gulf means that no date has been set for the public issue of between 10 and 15 per cent of the airline's nominal capital, which is expected to constitute the first phase of the sell-off.

The directors of UAL Corporation have rejected a restructured buyout bid for the US company from its unions and employees. The company had given the bidders four months to obtain the necessary US\$2 billion financing for their original bid made on 9 April 1990 (see ITF News May/June 1990).

The employees, led by the ITF-affiliated Machinists' Union, who have spent the last year seeking to mount a

takeover of United, failed in their efforts to get the necessary bank financing within the deadline, despite being given a sixty day extension — the credit squeeze and the rise in oil prices following on the Gulf crisis made it impossible satisfactorily to syndicate the proposed bank loan.

This did not stop them from making a revised buyout offer on 9 October, putting two separate proposals on the table for consideration, both of which were substantially in excess of the current market price of UAL stock.

UAL's ground and flying staff unions called a temporary halt to wage talks while the bid deal was finalised but will now be seeking the speedy conclusion of new contracts covering their members. The negotiations are expected to be difficult, given the tough bargaining position adopted by the airline's chief executive Stephen Wolf who has been accused by the unions in the past of being too quick to demand concessions from UAL employees. All three unions involved in the buyout deal — the machinists, pilots and cabin crew — have expired contracts.

Despite its turbulent past — it has gone through four takeover bids and three chief executives in the past four years — United recently regained from American its position as the US's largest carrier, thanks to high aircraft utilisation, lucrative Pacific routes that account for 30 per cent of its business, and its recent expansion into Europe.

In the past few days, UAL has placed a major order for new Boeing 777 aircraft, throwing serious doubt on the success of any new bid to take over the airline.

Between 450 and 500 jobs are to go at Carl Icahn's embattled Trans World Airlines which has been seriously hit by the steep hike in fuel prices in the past two months. Management and clerical employees will bear the brunt of the current cutbacks, but further jobs could well go if the airline, as seems likely, is to drop some of its flights. Other hard-pressed US carriers, notably Pan Am, have already announced cutbacks in staff and future capacity as dearer aviation fuel hits an industry already suffering because of over-capacity and rising costs.



INLAND TRANSPORT

Eastern German truckers' strike

In September, truck and passenger vehicle drivers in what was still then East Germany took a courageous and novel course of action. They staged a two-hour warning strike, adopting a tactic that has been employed for many years by their counterparts in west Germany to back up their contract demands when negotiations drag on.

Over 25,000 workers stopped work for two hours on 14 September after the employers had failed to come up with a realistic offer despite three negotiating rounds.

The turnout was impressive given the difficulties of communicating with rank-and-file union members in the east.

The action had been called jointly by the transport workers' union ÖTV and its new eastern counterpart, IG Transport.

The warning strike clearly showed the employers that the workers meant business and the fourth contract round in the evening of 17 September led to the successful conclusion of the first-ever nationwide collective agreement for workers in the sector.

Not surprisingly, pay had been at the top of the list of contract demands. The agreement goes a long way towards meeting the demand for a cost-of-living rise by offering the workers an extra 200 DM a month from the beginning of September. New recruits will get increases of 50 DM a month and there are pro rata increases for part-time workers. Other clauses in the agreement provide for the introduction from 20 September of minimum daily subsistence allowances of between 12 and 28 DM, depending on the length of time the driver spends away from his work base, with an additional payment of 35 DM to drivers of vehicles without sleeping cabs for each overnight stop. Existing agreements that provide for higher subsistence rates remain unaf-

ected by this clause.

In a significant development the parties to the agreement have pledged to begin talks in mid-October on bringing the terms and conditions of workers within the former boundaries of the GDR gradually into line with those laid down in the pay and framework agreements in the former Federal Republic of West Germany.

Having proved the effectiveness of concerted action, the union side will seek to press home its advantage by entering into further negotiations on improving conditions when the agreement expires at the end of the year, with the main emphasis likely to be on improving training and job security, securing shorter working hours and longer annual leave.

PAN AMERICAN RAILWAY CONGRESS

The present and increasing transport and environmental crises can only be resolved if governments and international bodies with responsibility for transport promote ethical systems of transport, according to the 18th Pan American Railway Congress, meeting in Rio de Janeiro from 9 to 14 September 1990. The Congress defined as "ethical" those transport systems whose cost structures fully reflect their effect on the environment and on the quality of life.

The Congress, attended by 400 delegates from nearly every country in North, Central and South America, as well as ten European countries, discussed seventy papers under the theme "The railways: their role from now until the 21st century, and the consolidation of integrated schemes for transport." In a 15 point Declaration of Rio de Janeiro, the delegates called for:

- * elimination of distortions in the terms of competition between the railways and other transport modes, to include infrastructure and operating costs and external effects;
- * measures to ensure compliance with legislation intended to prevent overloading;
- * measures to ensure compliance with standards covering employment and working conditions;
- * development of rail transport in urban areas to reduce congestion, pollution and land use;
- * technical and administrative modernisation;
- * development of the railways' commercial potential;
- * development of high-speed passenger and freight services and expansion of intermodal traffic in inter-regional and international services;
- * full compensation to the railways for the provision of non-commercial services in the interests of the community.

The ITF, which is a member of the Pan-American Railway Congress Association, was represented at the 18th Congress by Orlando Coutinho and Hélio Regato, Brazil, Eduardo Astiz, Argentina, José Criado, Chile, Eduardo Carvajal, Costa Rica, Graham Brothers, ITF Assistant General Secretary and Mario Caligari, Director of the Buenos Aires Sub-Regional Office.

Nordic trucks like 'primed bombs'

All too many trucks on the roads of Scandinavia are like primed bombs that could explode at any moment.

This is the alarming conclusion of Nordic road transport workers' unions meeting in Jönköping, Sweden, in late August.

The meeting held under the auspices of the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation called on all Nordic governments and regulatory authorities to take urgent and decisive action to ensure the highest standards of truck safety. Similar measures on bus safety

were also urged by the meeting.

Increased competition in the road haulage sector in the region means that owners are compelling drivers to take out trucks that are in a poor state of repair, at considerable risk to themselves and other road users. Truckers in Norway and Sweden have informed the section of serious technical defects in many heavy goods vehicles. Similar defects are expected to apply to Danish and Finnish trucks, though no reports have been received from these two countries.

The meeting recalled a Danish incident where a whole town narrowly escaped a massive explosion following an accident involving a petrol tanker and a recent tragic accident in Måbydalen when a number of school children lost their lives because a bus had faulty brakes.

The section warned that if those responsible, including bus and truck operators, did not heed this warning its members would be forced to take action themselves, with far-reaching consequences.

European railways need co-ordinated policy

"Like navigating in a fog without a compass." That was how the President of the Community of European Railways **Leo Ploeger** described the position of the railway industry in the European Community when he spoke at a one-day conference organised by the Italian Transport Minister on 9 October. Despite the need for long-term solutions based on dispassionate analysis, there is no European transport policy in place and no likelihood of one being adopted, he said.

Mr Ploeger, speaking on behalf of the EC railway undertakings, said that they wanted a number of concrete measures to be taken including: action to reduce damage to the environment based on realistic evaluations of the causes; the external effects of transport to be included in cost comparisons; recognition of the need for transport policy to serve the public interest; a clear statement of government requirements for transport; clarification of the railways' financial position; public support for those transport links which are clearly in the European interest; the provision of sufficient infrastructure for future requirements; and action to prevent cartels from blocking transport developments which are clearly in the public interest.

John Welsby, who addressed the conference on behalf of British Railways, stressed the importance of recognising railways' functions within the

overall transport framework. Competition must be within a market which is both fair and free and different transport modes must face the same financial and operational requirements. The railways must be run as an integrated entity and he opposed the idea of removing control of infrastructure from the railway undertakings.

Paul Monserie of French Railways said that his organisation's task was to serve the needs of France. The objectives of the State and of SNCF were clearly defined in legislation and SNCF

retained control over infrastructure but maintained separate financial records.

Peter Langager, President of the International Union of Railways (UIC), underlined the big potential for the growth of combined transport in Europe but felt that the Commission's proposals in this field fell far short of the Community's aims. He wanted to see the current draft Directive completely withdrawn.

The ITF was represented at the conference by Assistant General Secretary **Graham Brothers**.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

13 November	European Dockers	Rotterdam
14-15 November	European Seafarers	Rotterdam
2-6 December	Asia/Pacific Regional Civil Aviation Seminar	Chiang Mai, Thailand
14 December	Flight and Duty Times Working Group	London
1991		
17-18 January	Maritime Safety Committee	London
25-27 February	Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee	Taipei

No consensus at ILO experts meeting

The deteriorating climate of labour relations in the world's civil aviation industry was ominously reflected in the failure of the ILO Meeting of Experts on Civil Aviation, held in Geneva from 8 to 17 October, to adopt consensus conclusions on the implications of structural change.

The meeting, which comprised 30 experts — ten nominated by employers, ten by governments and ten by trade unions, was chaired by **Ian Canney**, the government expert from Australia. It was the first meeting to deal with the civil aviation industry organised by the ILO since 1977.

Despite intense lobbying by the ITF, the ILO Governing Body was unwilling to convene a full-scale tripartite industrial meeting for the sector. Instead it proposed an 'expert meeting', something which was reluctantly accepted as a second best solution. Expert meetings, to which people are theoretically invited in their individual capacity rather than as representatives of their organisations, are normally used within the ILO structure to discuss technical questions such as safety and health. This was the first time such a meeting had been asked to comment on the social and economic transformation of an entire industry. It proved clearly unequal to the task.

An early indication of the unsuitability of the meeting's format was the fact that both the employer and worker experts insisted on functioning as groups, even though there was no provision for this in the meeting's structure or timetable. **Bill Scheri** (IAM, United States), Chairman of the ITF's Civil Aviation Section, was elected the workers' group informal spokesman while **David Cockroft** from the ITF acted as its secretary. The employers' informal spokesman was **Dick May**, deputy head of personnel of British Airways, a company which is obviously keen to show the world its new tough approach to industrial relations.

The employers made it clear from the start that they were 'not prepared to

negotiate' on the conclusions. Since this is how consensus is normally arrived at in ILO meetings, it was an attitude certain to produce problems — and it did.

The meeting opened with a detailed discussion on a series of changes proposed by the workers' experts to the 'points for discussion' provided by the ILO office. The workers were concerned that the points, which form the meeting's agenda, prejudged the debate in that they assumed that job and pay cuts would result from structural change and merely asked the experts to talk about how to cope with them. Once assured that they would not be prevented from raising other points, they withdrew their proposed changes and began a four-day debate on the implications of structural change.

An ILO report prepared for the meeting was presented by the Office's aviation specialist **Avishai Gil**. He argued that airlines had to take account of the long-term need to recruit highly qualified manpower as well as the short-term pressures to cut labour costs. A number of observer organisations took the floor at the beginning of the session including **David Cockroft**, speaking on behalf of the ITF, who called for the establishment of a permanent ILO Civil Aviation Committee. The ITF opposed deregulation but supported fair competition based on harmonised labour standards, he said.

Questions raised by worker experts included the increasing use of subcontractors with inferior conditions to do jobs traditionally carried out by airline employees, the poor bargaining power of developing countries faced with the development of global 'mega-carriers', the crucial need to invest in new ground infrastructure particularly in Europe, and the need for stricter international training and licensing standards. **Bill Scheri** gave a graphic description of the experience of the US aviation unions with deregulation which had forced many workers to leave the industry and produced a demoralised workforce. He hoped Europe wouldn't

go down the same path. Employer representatives stressed that the industry was a high paying one which had traditionally offered good conditions and attractive jobs. The problems which had arisen from deregulation in the USA were due to the inadequate application of competition rules and this would not happen in Europe.

The workers described the negative aspects of competition including the deterioration in the public service side of air transport. Low-cost carriers were used as examples to lower wage costs and cross-border recruitment was leading to a segmentation of the workforce. They argued for adequate job and income security measures at national level, adding that the international nature of the industry meant that the ILO should adopt a special international labour convention for civil aviation. They called for measures to ensure that part-time work was truly voluntary and that employees retained seniority during airline mergers and takeovers. The employers said that there was no reason to fear that structural change would cut employment and that the key factor was workers' adaptability to change. Cross-border recruitment was not simply motivated by the need for cheap labour but by a variety of factors related to the quality of service. Special help should be given to developing countries which often lacked the sophisticated equipment necessary to train pilots, mechanics and air traffic specialists.

The meeting agreed that skilled manpower shortages must not lead to any deterioration in training standards. The workers argued that more flexible skills and new technologies should be negotiated with unions. There was a danger of over-reliance on new technologies compromising safety, as in the use of the two-man cockpit on modern aircraft. Engineering skills remained just as important as in the past and the workers stressed the importance of state, as opposed to company, licensing of maintenance engineers. The workers

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European joint committee established

After several years of difficult negotiations, the European Community Joint Committee on Civil Aviation held its first meeting in Brussels on 13 September. The Committee is made up of 27 trade union and 27 civil aviation employer members from the 12 countries of the EC. Its job is to further the 'social

dialogue' in the aviation sector and to provide advice to the Commission on proposals for legislation and other matters.

The long delay in setting the Committee up (following the successful establishment of similar bodies in most other sectors of transport) stemmed

from the fragmented structure of the employers' side. Unlike other branches of transport, different aviation employers have widely differing interests. The large scheduled airlines (the so-called national flag carriers) which are largely state owned at present and which have

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...Employers' group at ILO refuses to negotiate

Continued from page 5

also pressed strongly the argument for international licensing standards for cabin crew which would provide guarantees of their ability to carry out their primary safety functions. The meeting emphasised the importance of limiting flight and duty times for flight deck and cabin crew and the importance of good communications between cockpit and cabin crew in emergencies. In the view of worker experts, there were serious medical problems affecting flying crews and more research was needed. Discussion also focused on cabin crew complement and in-flight rest facilities on long-haul flights.

The most difficult debate focused on the future of labour-management relations. While the workers argued in favour of consultation and negotiation about changes, the employers preferred to talk about communication. Experience in the US and elsewhere, the workers argued, showed increasing use by airlines of union-busting techniques. Trade union rights should be fully respected in the industry.

Towards the end of the discussion the experts focused on recommendations for the ILO's future work. The workers asked for a permanent ILO Civil Aviation Committee properly serviced by the ILO office; for a meeting of experts on flight and duty times; and for work on health risks in aircraft cabin environments. The employers rejected the idea of a permanent committee, calling instead for ad hoc meetings and suggested that the ILO office should collect information and

provide technical assistance to developing countries.

Having completed its general discussion the meeting reconvened two days later to consider a set of draft conclusions. Despite repeated attempts to arrive at a 'package' acceptable to all three groups of experts, the employers' representatives repeated their unwillingness to enter into "negotiations" about the text. On a number of key policy points, such as consultations on structural change with workers' organisations (trade unions), they put forward positions which represented a retreat from existing ILO standards and they refused to make any movement towards the workers' position on the creation of permanent ILO machinery for civil aviation or on flight and duty times. Even on less controversial issues, such as safety, training and health, they demanded acceptance by the worker experts of language which seriously weakened the conclusions. On most of the key points supported by the workers' experts and most governments, however, the employers simply refused to agree, causing the chairman to declare that they were 'lost' because of a lack of consensus. Requests for a vote to test opinion were firmly rejected on procedural grounds.

After two and a half days of hard discussion, including extra night and morning sessions not originally timetabled, the meeting was presented with a list of 22 'consensus' points from the original 31 prepared by the chairman with the help of the ILO office. After careful consideration of the list, the workers' experts unani-

mously agreed that they would support them only if it was made clear in the conclusions that several other key points from the ILO proposals had been excluded only because of the veto of the employer experts. The meeting, which was scheduled to end around lunchtime on 17 October, was still in session at 6.45 p.m. discussing this proposal without reaching agreement on it. In the end, therefore, the three 'groups' were invited to make closing statements and the meeting ended without adopting conclusions. Bill Scheri, making the closing statement on behalf of the workers, stressed that they had approached the meeting in a spirit of compromise but had not found the same spirit forthcoming from the employers. It was not acceptable that points could simply be dropped from the conclusions because one group vetoed them. They regretted the way the meeting had developed and felt that it demonstrated that politically controversial subjects couldn't be handled by meetings of experts.

In addition to Bill Scheri, the worker experts were: Manfred Hölzel (ÖTV, Germany), Miguel de Julian (UGT, Spain), Jagdish Lal (AIFFAE, India), Hideo Kato (Koku-Domei, Japan), Fred Anderson (NZ Engineers' Union, New Zealand), Mohamed Moussa (SUAC, Niger), Ken Chipato (ATWA, Zimbabwe) — all representing ITF affiliates; Flemming Sørensen (Danish Pilots' Association representing IFALPA); and Mr C Depoil (CGT, France). The ITF would like to record its appreciation to all the worker experts for their solidarity and hard work during the meeting.

Joint ILO/IMO training committee meeting

The importance of structural factors such as working hours, training and operational management in issues of maritime safety were stressed by the Joint International Labour Organisation (ILO)/International Maritime Organization (IMO) Committee on Training, which met in Geneva from 17-21 September.

The session, chaired by ITF Seafarers' Section Chairman Mols Sørensen, was attended by safety experts from ITF seafarers' affiliates, as well as by government and employer representatives.

The ITF Seafarers' Section submitted a detailed presentation to the meeting calling for urgent consideration to be given to how to provide a decent working environment at sea and minimise the factors responsible for the high levels of fatigue among seafarers (see *ITF News* September 1990).

A move by shipowner members to divert the Committee into considering

the so-called "Human Element" in maritime accidents was rejected by the seafarers and the IMO members.

The Committee decided to continue its work through three Working Groups.

The first Working Group considered how shipboard life factors affect fatigue, and what measures can be taken to minimise these pressures. It stressed the importance of sensible shore-based management and on-board management techniques, in the context of improved statutory regulations from national authorities.

As far as crew conditions were concerned, the Group urged that employers should take measures to reduce boredom and loneliness in the working environment. The use of small crew complements and ill-trained multinational crews needed to be taken into account here, members pointed out.

The second Working Group, looking at the adequacy of relevant international standards, proposed that revisions

should be made to ILO Convention No. 109 on Wages, Hours of Work and Manning (Sea) Convention of 1958, in order to bring it into line with modern operating conditions. It was felt that the provisions of the Convention and the accompanying Recommendation No. 109 should be strengthened to take account of the policies already adopted by the IMO and the Joint Committee on Training on the fatigue factor in the manning and safety of ships.

The remaining Group was charged with considering how investigation procedures could be developed to determine the contribution of fatigue to maritime accidents. It recommended that the IMO and ILO should set up a joint Group of Experts with the participation of the World Health Organization (WHO) to draw up a uniform framework of procedures for investigations which would identify whether, and if so to what extent, fatigue was a contributory factor.

Report highlights rising costs of shipping

The first signs of the steeply rising costs that are likely to be the hallmark of ship operation in the 1990s are already beginning to make themselves felt, according to a new report from Drewry Shipping Consultants entitled *Ship Costs: Their Structure and Significance*.

"The outlook is for an end to cheaply-acquired and cheaply-run ships, as both the market place and environmental concerns exert potentially irresistible pressures", the report concludes.

Shipowners who have got used to an apparently endless supply of cheap labour are in for a sharp shock, the report says, as seagoing manpower becomes more and more scarce and owners have to scramble to attract suitably trained crews in a fiercely competitive marketplace.

Other factors such as escalating fuel prices, an estimated doubling of repair and maintenance costs (typical annual costs by the year 2000 will be in the range of \$1m for a 2,000 TEU

containership and \$2m for a ULCC) and the anticipated steep increases in port and bunkering costs will combine to push up operating costs yet further, according to the consultants' report.

Insurance cover for ship tonnage will inevitably rise in line with increased hull values, higher maintenance costs and increased liability for pollution and other environmental risks.

Fifty per cent pay hike for Indian-flag officers

Service conditions for officers on Indian-flag ships have been raised to a level comparable with that on foreign vessels, in a deal struck by the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of India (MUI) in late August.

A two-year agreement between the MUI and the Indian National Shipowners' Association brings a 50 per cent hike in net wages. Taking into

The report also calls into question the continued viability of some of the longhaul trades that have grown up in an era of low freight rates.

The report quotes the example of typical annual operating costs for a NIS-registered bulker or tanker with a Filipino crew, currently \$400,000, and likely to almost double to \$750,000 by the turn of the century.

account the difference in manning scales between Indian and foreign ships, this establishes a rough parity between the two.

This major achievement by the MUI comes in the wake of the big pay rise for Indian ratings secured by the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) in April (see *ITF News* May/June 1990).

Registers cash in on Liberian war

It is an ill wind as they say and Bermuda seems to be benefiting from the political turmoil in the West African state of Liberia as worried owners seek an alternative register. According to the colony's Registrar of Shipping Ronald Bulling up to ten former Liberian registered ships could soon be placed on the 100 ship Bermudan register. Further growth is expected from newbuildings, seven of which are already earmarked for the register, and the possible addition of some of the currently UK-registered cruise ships which regularly visit the British colony.

The flag of convenience registry of Cyprus has now reached 2,000 ships (end of June figures) and seems marked out for further growth as it takes on newbuildings already committed to it by locally based foreign ship managers when they are delivered in the second half of 1990. Much of the growth has come from the Soviet ships added to the register this year as a result of the undertaking entered into by the 'independent' Soviet shipping company Sovcomflot to switch ships to the Cyprus registry. 40 Sovcomflot ships have already been transferred to Cyprus and a further 80 ships have still to join the island register. However, the registry could well find the competition toughening up as other registries, notably Panama, seek to muscle in on this territory. Both registries are set to launch major new marketing campaigns and Panama has openly admitted to being interested in new Russian tonnage. Meanwhile, Cyprus has signed a shipping cooperation agreement with China which should give a further boost to the flag.

The Greek seamen's union PNO has reacted angrily to this month's announcement by the country's new

shipping minister Aristotelis Pavlides that crewing levels on ocean-going cargo ships are to be cut back in a government drive to win Greek-owned tonnage back to the national flag. Protest action on all ships culminating in strikes is threatened if the measures are not withdrawn. The PNO has accused

crews since crewing levels were last fixed four years ago.

Irish transport unions representing the 900 employees of the state-owned B and I Line have expressed strong opposition to suggestions that the shipping company might be sold off to private interests. Three companies are believed to have been approached and asked whether they would be prepared to buy B&I. The government argues that it cannot continue to pour the massive subsidies into the company on the scale of the past ten years when it received a total of \$172 million in government funds. The unions are taking comfort from the fact that there is as yet no definite decision on the company's future and hints that a joint venture with a private company might also be an option — a move that would be more in line with the policy of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on privatisation. Meanwhile, the ICTU is seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister for Tourism and Transport to discuss the situation.

The concept of mixed crewing is gradually winning acceptance on Japanese ships after the Japanese seamen's union, the JSU, gave its formal go-ahead to the plan last year. Four major shipping lines have already concluded new contracts with the union, which allow for a maximum of nine Japanese nationals on their ships and permit the transfer of seamen from seagoing to land-based jobs and vice versa. The companies are offering those involved extra training to assist with the adjustment to their new status. Now five small and medium-sized companies are discussing new employment contracts with their employees. Faced with rising operating costs it seems



the government of acting illegally, adding that the minister has gone back on his promise to discuss the planned manning changes with them beforehand. The PNO alleges that the changes, which would cut manning by between 4 and 7 seafarers depending on the vessel's size and type, would cost 4,000 seagoing jobs and that some categories could well disappear as a result. The union plans to enlist national and international support for its stand, arguing that if the changes go unchallenged, Greek-flag ships, particularly those to which bilateral crewing arrangements apply, would be little better than Focs. The government claims that the new manning levels do no more than formalise 'experimental' crew complements that have been in force on a number of ships that have applied for permission to operate with smaller

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Caribbean maritime policy initiative

A regional maritime policy is slowly taking shape in the Caribbean as the countries in the region take the first tentative steps towards coordinating their shipping activities.

The first move was made in July when transport ministers in the countries belonging to the regional economic community Caricom agreed to rescue the regionally-owned Wisco shipping line with a cash injection of US\$7.5

million. As a result, Wisco is now expected to be in profit for the first time ever by 1992.

Tariff barriers that have discouraged investment in shipping are being dismantled to promote the growth of a sound regional shipping sector and encourage local shipbuilding. Caricom is also investigating the possibility of subsidising port dues for lines owned by one or more member countries or by

Caribbean nationals. School leavers will be encouraged to take up seafaring as a career through the introduction of regional training programmes and the harmonisation of seafarers' taxation. Caricom member countries are being urged to set up national maritime administrations with proper levels of funding that render them capable of exercising real control over the whole range of maritime activities.

...Foc states look for new Eastern European tonnage

Continued from page 14

inevitable that many of those currently serving on the ships belonging to these companies will be transferred to jobs ashore and that foreign crewing will be introduced. The companies are arguing that without this flexibility their very survival could be at stake.

The Panama foc registry seems to be battling it out with its rival Cyprus for new tonnage from eastern Europe, where real possibilities for growth have been identified. Panama has already taken on some Russian tonnage and according to New York based marketing director Robert Dunn plans are being laid for registry officials to visit Russia soon. Romania is also being eyed as a further source of new business. Panama claims to have been conducting a thorough 'house cleaning' of its records in recent months and has struck off its books over a thousand ships that have not paid their fees for upwards of

five years. It has also lost three hundred plus ships to other registries this year and so is badly in need of an injection of new tonnage. Panama has had remarkably little to say about Liberian Services' takeover of the Marshall Islands register (see item elsewhere in this issue) other than to say that there has been much soul-searching among owners over Liberia and that it has gained some ships as a result. It has also just announced new incentives in the form of negotiable discounts for complete fleet transfers and reduced tonnage taxes for owners signing up this year with the clear aim of attracting new business, especially from former Liberian tonnage which will be not be required to pay registration fees and tonnage taxes for 1990 until next year. These moves have not surprisingly angered the Liberian Shipowners' Council which has accused Panama of taking advantage of Liberia to offer 'cheap commercial incentives'. Mean-

while, Panama has promised the IMO that it will pay its outstanding contributions before the end of the year. This will bring some relief to the hard-pressed organisation which has little hope of receiving the money still owed it by Liberia. Humberto Jiron, the new director-general of the country's maritime administration Secnaves, is also anxious to rebuild the register's reputation, which was seriously damaged by the widespread corruption under the Noriega regime in the Panamanian consulates providing services to ships on the register. Jiron admits to problems in the past, but says that the consulates are now free from the taint of corruption and will continue to offer services to Panamanian-flag ships in collaboration with newly-established regional Secnaves offices, which he claims will offer a tighter degree of control. The first three offices — in New York, London and Hong Kong — are expected to open later this year.

PEOPLE

Arvid Dale has been elected National Secretary of the Norwegian Seamen's Union. A previous manager of the union's office in Yokohama, Japan, in the late seventies, Dale brings a wide experience of international trade union affairs to his new post.

Mac A Fleming was elected as the new President of the US Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees at the union's convention in July. **William E**

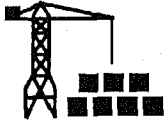
La Rue has been elected to Fleming's previous post as the Brotherhood's secretary-treasurer.

Amal Mukherjee retired at the end of September after fourteen years as Chief of the Workers' Relations Branch of the International Labour Office. Mukherjee has spent nearly forty years in the service of the trade union movement. **John Simonds**, Mukherjee's deputy, took over as Chief of the Work-

ers' Relations Branch from the beginning of October.

Ralph Taylor retires as National Secretary of the Australian Railways Union (ARU) in February 1991.

Gudmund Åsheim retired as Managing Director of the Norwegian Ships' Masters' Association at the end of September and is succeeded by **Tore Gjestrum**.



DOCKERS

New Zealand workers defeat employers' plans

New Zealand's harbour workers have defeated plans by port employers to scrap national bargaining for the industry.

After solid support for the threat of strike action by members of the ITF-affiliated Harbour Workers' Union (HWU) in early October, the employers were forced to retreat and agree to a new one-year national Award (collective agreement). The planned action was then called off.

The new Award, which provides a 2 per cent increase in total remuneration, can be supplemented by further productivity or other bargaining at port level.

The victory came after HWU members had been ordered back to work by the Labour Court on a technicality in late September (see ITF News September 1990). The union was forced to give fresh notice of industrial action, which finally brought the employers to

their senses.

The HWU had previously secured a massive 98 per cent support for a new national Award in a membership ballot, with 94 per cent voting to strike if necessary.

The union has pointed out that the port employers' stand went against the policy of both the country's main political parties, which say that local agreements should only replace na-

tional Awards if the workers vote that way.

Under the terms of the new Award, a Working Party will be set up to review the way in which wages and conditions are bargained under the Award and to propose new bargaining structures for the 1991 wage round. However, unless the Working Party produces such proposals the present structure of national Award bargaining will be retained.

German dockers celebrate union centenary

The centenary of the national organisation of dockworkers in Germany was celebrated at a rally held by the ITF-affiliated transport workers' union ÖTV in Kiel on September 6.

Dockers from Baltic and North Sea ports, along with delegations of inland navigation workers, seafarers and road

transport workers, came to commemorate the courage and hard work of the pioneers of early docker unionism. The rally welcomed dockers from East German ports and other transport workers from Eastern Germany, who are once again able to take their place alongside their colleagues from the rest of the country.

In his address to the rally ÖTV National Executive member Eike Eulen, who is also ITF European Vice-President, paid tribute to the achievements of the dockworkers who built a unified organisation in the German ports.

By 1910 the German dockers were able to unite with seafarers and road transport workers in a single transport workers' union. Eulen underlined the importance of this long experience of united action among transport workers for the period of continued challenges facing dockers today.

In a situation where fewer and fewer workers are expected to handle ever greater volumes of cargo, the ÖTV is determined to protect the employment conditions and levels of occupational qualification in the ports.

NEW US WEST COAST CONTRACT

A basic pay rise of \$2.15 an hour over the contract term has been won by 9,000 US west coast dockers in a new three-year deal concluded between the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association, which brings the new hourly basic to \$22.48 by 1992.

Dockers will also now receive three weeks' leave after an eight year qualifying period, while existing health and welfare benefits are guaranteed.

Under the contract, the maximum monthly pension will go up by \$210 to \$1,365 by June 1992 and in a one-off

deal the employers have agreed that longshoremen leaving the industry between October and December 1990 through unfitness will be able to retire on a full pension.

ILWU President Jim Herman points out that both working and retired dockers stand to benefit from the contract terms. He is also pleased at the success the union has had in tackling in this contract round many of the long-standing problems in the industry. An important feature of the agreement is the protection it gives to dockers in the north west whose jobs are under threat from restrictions in the log trade.

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