

# ***SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSPORT UNIONS PREPARE TO MERGE***

The South African Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) held its Biennial Congress in Johannesburg from 24 to 26 May.

Some 480 delegates sat day and night to debate reports and resolutions and to elect the union's leading officials in the knowledge that when they gathered again it could well be as part of a new union formed from an amalgamation with the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU).

Serious talks on the merger have started and though many of the details and procedures have still to be worked out, the membership of both unions have committed themselves to the goal of one union covering every sector of the transport industry.

They have already agreed, for example, that they will send a joint TGWU/SARHWU delegation to the forthcoming Congress of their national centre, COSATU.

The TGWU has grown strongly since its previous Congress, in December 1989, with paid-up membership nearing 40,000. It has set down a strong base in the road goods sector. It is a force to be reckoned with in the passenger transport and docks industries despite the deep cuts in employment levels brought about by the government's disastrous bus deregulation policy and rationalisation measures in the ports. It has recently

won recognition in its first collective agreement from a shipping company.

The elections saw the re-election of Nathie Nhleko as General Secretary, Randall Howard as Assistant General Secretary and Mamusa Chopho as Treasurer. Sam Shilowa is the new President, succeeding the very popular Vivian Zungu who was not eligible for re-election, and Alfred Ndlovu — elected as first Vice President at the last Congress but unavoidably absent at the time in a South African prison — was elected again, this time in his presence and in the knowledge that he is now free to play his full role. The team was completed by the election of Reg Thander as Second Vice President.

The TGWU has been an active affiliate of the ITF almost since the union was founded. The ITF's General Secretary Harold Lewis conveyed the ITF's greetings to the opening session of the Congress and pledged the ITF's continuing support.

He gave his impressions of his visit to **ITF News** on his return:

"The first thing that strikes any visitor to the TGWU Congress is how young most of the delegates are, the second is the extraordinary stamina

## **June/July 1991**

Finnish transport strike (3)  
Trade union rights (10-11)

**Tourism Services**  
TSSA conference (11)

**Seafarers**  
FPC meeting (12)  
Zim Lines (13)  
ITF Polish and USSR  
agreements (15)

**Inland Transport**  
Turkish rail workers (19)  
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**Dockers**  
ITF Dockers' meeting (22)  
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**Civil Aviation**  
Niuigini victory — at last (24)  
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# ...Full union support for COSATU/ANC alliance

Continued from page 1

and concentration they bring to hours of intensive debates, and the third — a novelty for the visiting “Westerner” — is a spectacular talent for singing and dancing which gives the proceedings enormous verve.

The leadership and membership alike have a maturity that is quite extraordinary in a union of relatively tender years. They are quick to say how much they have to learn but the general level of understanding and ability stands comparison with the best of the ITF's unions anywhere and in the techniques of organising and negotiating they have a success rate that many would envy.

All this in a fraught political climate and against a background of violence which puts the union activists at constant risk of their very lives. To the visitor this seems (and in fact is) heroic, but to men and women who have spent their lives under a system of state-approved violence, the risks are not new and the rewards of survival and success far greater.

Politically, the TGWU stands four-square behind its national centre, COSATU, and its alliance with the ANC. The alliance has as its immediate objective the formation of a Constituent Assembly which would draft a constitution for a democratic South Africa in which trade union and workers' rights would be entrenched. Both the TGWU and COSATU have stood firm on the right of unions to their independence, to be accountable to their members alone and not to governments or political parties. For them, political involvement is and always will be an essential element in their work (as it has to be for any union), but they are determined to defend their autonomy.

The unions are uniquely placed in the struggle for freedom. They have developed democratic structures and procedures over a period when black South Africans were denied

any formal political outlets. They have been the only schools where the democratic skills of free debate and decision-taking could be openly learned and practised, where the majority view is accepted and the minority view respected, where arguments can be fierce but disciplined.

Their contribution to and influence over the course of South Africa's future are therefore crucial. It was never remotely possible that South Africa would slip smoothly from apartheid to genuine democracy and there are all too many political lunatics ready to fight and die for the old certainties of racism and

privilege. The unions have dug their roots deep. They are well placed to survive the present turmoil, even if there is worse to come.

## AN HISTORIC MERGER

The merger with SARHWU will be an historic step. The two unions have an obvious affinity and in most respects it will be a “good fit”. Most important of all, the members are willing it. SARHWU's General Secretary Martin Sebakwane, addressed the TGWU Congress and was received with a genuine, spontaneous warmth. The momentum is there and the prize is a united transport workers' union of great and growing power.”

## South African transport workers — on the front line

Transport workers have been in the front line of the appalling violence which is terrorising countless thousands of black South Africans. The causes and motives are complex but every objective observer knows that the regime could put an end to it if it wished to and that the worst of it is planned, executed and orchestrated by forces which are determined to destabilise and debilitate the ANC and to wreck the transition to real democracy.

The TGWU Congress adopted a resolution calling for a campaign against “traditional weapons” and the disbanding of sinister para-military forces such as the infamous “Koevoet”. It also called for the setting up of self-defence units at community and industrial levels with active participation from the union's members in the security industry. Union members are to be discouraged from driving buses hired by Inkatha to carry its war parties and other transport unions are asked to join in an awareness campaign among their members to expose the strategies of violence being used against them.

## LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

A further resolution committed the union to campaign for the extension and strengthening of the “industrial councils” system so as to introduce industry-wide bargaining. It also calls for the convening of “Living Wage Conferences” for the passenger and goods transport sectors and for cleaning and security workers.

A resolution on “retrenchment” (redundancy) called on the union to mobilise its members against job losses and to arrange seminars where members could discuss the nationalisation of the passenger transport industry where massive redundancies have followed the government's deregulation of the bus industry.

Other resolutions re-affirmed the union's commitment to a merger with SARHWU, called for government subsidies to the bus industry and demanded amendments to the “Security Officers' Act” under which the union's members in the security industry will be expected to pay substantial registration fees out of their very low wages.

# Finnish transport workers win strike

Solidarity action from ITF seafarer and docker affiliates both in the Nordic countries and elsewhere helped contribute to the final settlement of the more than three week long strike by Finnish transport workers in June.

The strike, called on June second by the ITF affiliated Finnish transport workers' union AKT following long but fruitless negotiations on a new pay deal, virtually paralysed the road transport and ports sectors.

Well aware of the importance of international solidarity, the AKT had been keeping the ITF Secretariat fully informed of the progress in their negotiations and of the possibility that a strike might be called. As a result, once the strike began it was possible to alert ITF affiliates in a position to provide direct help with the minimum of delay. It was also a practical opportunity to demonstrate the importance of seafarers' solidarity with dockers' unions which had been a major subject of discussion at the Fair Practices Committee earlier in the month (see separate story).

On June 13, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis made a formal request to all seafarer and docker affiliates of the ITF to provide the maximum possible solidarity assistance to the AKT during its dispute. Particular attention was directed to the crews of ships which had been identified as breaking the dock strike by loading or unloading cargo or vehicles in strike-bound Finnish ports.

The ITF, in cooperation with the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation (NTF), played a central role in relaying details of target ships to ITF unions representing the crews. Messages from ITF seafarer unions to their members, written in their national language, were then passed back to the AKT so that they could intervene directly with the crews concerned in port.

In Sweden, NTF President Anders

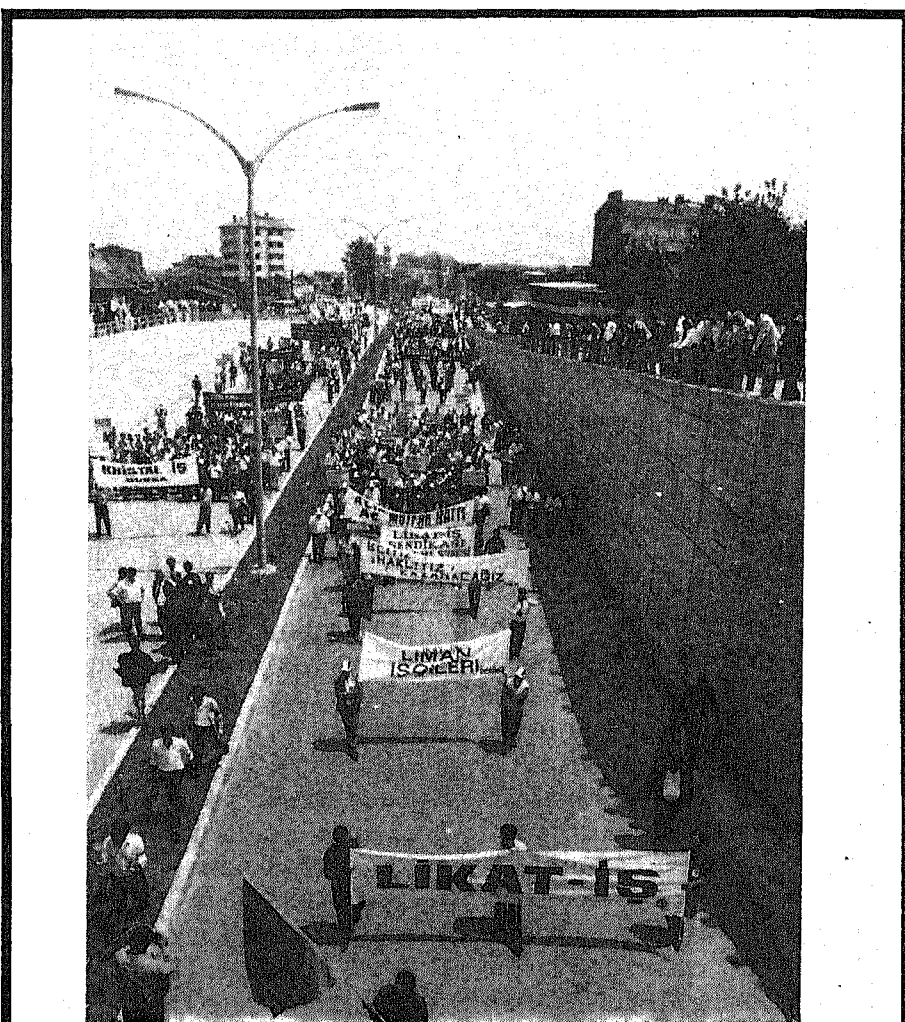
Lindström from the Swedish Seafarers' Union led a demonstration of delegates from the Congress of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation LO down to the Stockholm ferry terminal and successfully prevented the embarkation of vehicles on board a ferry bound for Finland.

In another demonstration of seafarer/docker solidarity, Helsinki based Flag of convenience inspector Lauri Heinonen from the Finnish Seafarers' Union was seconded temporarily to the AKT strike team to coordinate solidarity action from foreign flag vessels.

From June 26, seafarers from Finland and Sweden were instructed by their unions not to take part in any

cargo movements into or out of Finland, with the exception of chemical and oil tankers. The strike of road transport workers ended on June 24 and that of the port workers on June 27 as both groups of workers voted to accept a proposal by officially appointed mediator Jorma Reini.

Immediately after the result of the port workers' ballot was known, union President Risto Kuisma and Secretary Kauko Lehtikoinen contacted the ITF Secretariat by fax, informing all ITF unions that the dispute had ended and thanking them for "so wholeheartedly supporting our fight for better and securer working conditions in Finnish ports."



Over 60,000 workers took part in a demonstration in Bursa, North West Turkey, on June second organised by the trade union confederation Türk-İs against mass dismissals and attacks on collective bargaining in the public sector. Among them were contingents from the ITF-affiliated port workers' union Likat-İs.

# ***"New" European employers turn anti-union***

Private entrepreneurs in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR) are hiring workers as self-employed "partners" to avoid income tax and labour protection legislation.

The move by a number of new private sector companies, which is also intended to deal a blow to the country's well-organised independent trade union movement, is now being copied by some state-owned enterprises.

It is a reflection of the fear of organised labour in management circles that the companies are prepared to go to such extreme lengths to undermine workers' rights. The companies are working hand in glove with a faction in the government which is bitterly opposed to tripartite (employer/union/government) structures in industry and to labour legislation which helps to protect workers from unsafe conditions and unfair treatment.

But the Czech and Slovak workers, already "invisible" for so many years under the old regime, are determined not to be manipulated out of existence by those who would turn Central and Eastern Europe into a union-free zone. The country owes a great debt to the trade unions for leading the democratic revolution of 1989, and government ministers will not be allowed to forget it.

Roman Kovác, President of the CSFR trade union confederation CSKOS, reported on the situation in his country to a meeting of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Coordinating Committee on Central and Eastern Europe in Geneva on June eleventh.

Kováč described how 1000 jobs were being lost every day in the Czech lands alone. CSKOS is fighting hard to establish collective bargaining procedures with as many employers as possible. Unfortunately, in the state sector — where most workers are still employed —

there are few properly organised structures for employers to negotiate with labour. The unions would welcome the formation of employers' organisations in each sector, as there would then be someone for them to negotiate with.

Meanwhile the old government-run union bureaucrats are desperately trying to make a comeback. Officials of the former "union" confederation ROH have set up a new organisation, the Trade Union As-

Secretariats for its international links. The Alfa Cartel, a rival group, has received support from "christian" union organisations. Meanwhile the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions (CNSLR), the former official unions, are violently split between reformers and those intent on salvaging their positions inherited from the Ceausescu regime.

A range of trade unions are currently involved in disputes with

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**“...the old government-run union bureaucrats are desperately trying to make a comeback...”**

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sociation of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, which is apparently seeking affiliation to the discredited World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

The ICFTU Coordinating Committee heard from Bogdan Lis of Solidarnosc about the rearguard action being fought by the Polish ex-Communist bureaucrats against trade unionism. Many former officials are using their political contacts to grab potentially profitable state enterprises when they are privatised. They have also tried to get legislation banning strikes in "essential services", including most transport sectors, but this plan was scuttled by Solidarnosc.

The meeting heard how union activists in Romania are frequently beaten up by management thugs when they try to negotiate a fair distribution of the vast wealth accumulated by officials of the old regime. In the political and economic chaos that dominates life in Romania the independent trade unions are trying to take on a distinct role separate from political parties, although there are serious political divisions between the union groupings. Fratia, the confederation of which the ITF-affiliated Free Drivers' Union is a pillar, looks to the ICFTU and the International Trade

Romania's National Salvation Front government over the direction of its reform policies: if the disputes escalate, the government is unlikely to survive.

The meeting heard that the Bulgarian trade unions are divided along different lines. The democratic confederation Podkrepa, which spearheaded the process of reform in the country, is pulling back from party politics and is keen to affiliate to the ICFTU. The leadership of the former official unions, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB), has made great efforts towards democratic reform, with varying success. At the end of last year a faction of nostalgic Stalinists set up a third rival centre, ironically called Edinstvo ("Unity"), which claims a membership of 227,000. A number of hardline CITUB unions, including some in the transport sector, have left to join Edinstvo.

An ICFTU High Level Mission visited Bulgaria in late March and submitted its report to the meeting. Participants also heard reports on the situation in Albania (see separate story).

The ITF was represented at the Coordinating Committee meeting by Chris Pate of the Research and Publications Department.

# ILO Thailand complaint issued

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has lodged a formal complaint with the International Labour Organisation against the military government which has seized power in Thailand and introduced legislation undermining basic trade union rights and standards.

The military junta which toppled the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan in a coup in February has introduced new laws restricting the right to strike and banning trade unions in state-run enterprises altogether (see **ITF News**, April 1991).

The junta claims that their takeover was necessary because of the civilian government's corruption. Thailand's constitution has been replaced by martial law, and a military-appointed National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) has taken over the administration and control of the Government.

## **RIGHT TO STRIKE**

The NPKC's Announcement 54 restricts the right to strike by stipulating that strike action can be called only when a secret ballot is taken with all the members present and over half of them voting in favour. The Announcement also bars "outsiders" from direct involvement in a trade union. Many unions frequently used to call on the advice of outside consultants and were often assisted by leaders of the more efficiently organised state enterprise unions.

Dissolving the public sector unions and privatising selected enterprises are amongst the military government's top priorities. The state sector has always been the power base of the Thai trade union movement. These well organised unions, who represented workers in the electricity, water, communications industries, plus other public utilities and public transport, were able to make important breakthroughs in negotiations, which in turn helped raise standards for private sector

workers. Since 1977, they also had the right to hold "extraordinary meetings" — effectively strikes — and to carry out industrial action.

Under the new legislation, the existing public sector unions have been dissolved. The union leaders and members have no choice but to turn their organisations into "employee associations" or their funds and assets will be confiscated. These new associations will be subject to strict conditions relating to collective bargaining, holding union meetings, the right to strike and to join existing national trade union centres.

## **ICFTU COMPLAINT**

An ICFTU delegation led by Takashi Izumi, General Secretary of Apro, its Asian and Pacific regional organisation, which visited Bangkok on May seventh informed the Thai government that the ICFTU draft complaint to the ILO would be temporarily withheld to allow the government to reconsider its anti-trade union actions. However, the government's formal response to the warnings was unsatisfactory and the ICFTU decided to go ahead with the complaint.

The complaint, to which the ITF has given its support, stresses that the State Enterprise Employee Relations Act denies public sector workers basic trade union rights as embodied in the ILO Constitution and in Conventions Nos. 87 and 98.

The ICFTU also strongly protested to the Thai Prime Minister, Panyarachun, about his decision to remove Thanong Podhiarn, the President of the national trade union centre, LCT, an ICFTU affiliate, from Thailand's workers' delegation to the annual ILO conference in June.

\*Thanong Podhiarn is now missing. He has not been seen since he left for work on June 19. His car was found unlocked in the union car park the next evening. His briefcase was found without the gun which he nor-

mally carries and the car's phone was disconnected.

His disappearance is cause for very grave concern. It comes only days after he received a strong warning from the Director-General of the Department of Labour that the LCT should not take any aggressive action to oppose the government's labour policies.

## **Swiss women strike for equal treatment**

Thousands of women workers demonstrated in Berne, the Swiss capital, as well as in other Swiss cities in a nationwide day of action on June 14. Over 100,000 women in all were involved in demonstrations. The women's protest, which was organised by the Union syndicale suisse (USS) and was supported by the ITF-affiliated Gewerkschaft Verkauf Handel Transport Lebensmittel (VHTL), was designed to draw attention to the lack of equal treatment for women in Swiss workplaces and in the home.

Unions asked their members not to perform menial tasks in the office and suggested they left housework for husbands to do. The protest originated amongst poorly paid women workers in the Swiss watch industry. The Swiss media was surprised by the mass support for the day of action which underlines the discontent felt by women workers about continuing inequality.

June 14 was chosen because it marks the tenth anniversary of the change in the Swiss constitution which was supposed to bring about equality between men and women. In reality, little has changed. Women still earn one third less than men and take much more responsibility for housework and childcare. Their work in the home still does not count as far as the social security system is concerned. Women are also seriously under-represented in positions of influence — both in politics and business.



# ***ITF Asia/Pacific programme preparations***

With six months still to go, the ITF is now busy preparing for the next phase of its long-term Asia/Pacific Education Programme.

The ground rules for this final and decisive stage of the programme were laid during a meeting held at the end of May between ITF Asia/Pacific Secretary Mo Hoda, representatives of the donor organisations who have been supporting this important educational initiative to date — the LO-Norway and the FNV-Netherlands — and the ICFTU in its role as project coordinator.

It was agreed to conduct an annual review of progress in the thirteen countries that will be participating in the programme. Mid- and

end-of-term-evaluation seminars will also monitor the success of the programme as a whole in meeting the objectives set for it.

A number of possible target groups have already been identified, including female and young workers, and special efforts will be made to adapt the programme to the special need of illiterate workers, for example through the increased use of audio-visual aids.

The educational seminars held under the aegis of the programme will be carefully geared to the needs of the individual countries and special efforts will be made to win the commitment of union leaderships for the programme.

Increased attention will also be given to making the programme self-supporting in terms of both manpower and resources.

The ITF's team of educational officers have been invited to submit their detailed proposals for stage two. The final shape of the programme will be decided at the Tokyo seminar scheduled for mid-November which will be attended by the education officers and members of the ITF's Asia/Pacific Regional Committee, as well as representatives of the donor organisations and the ICFTU.

The first five-year phase ended in 1990 and the ITF has been funding an interim extension of the programme during 1991.

## **Ministers discuss transport policy and guidelines for an integrated Europe**

Policy guidelines for transport in an integrated Europe were one of the major items on the agenda of the 73rd session of the Council of Ministers of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) held in Antalya, Turkey on May 22nd-23rd, 1991.

Three of the newly democratic countries of central Europe — Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic — were formally admitted at the meeting as full members of the ECMT. The participation of the transport ministers of these nations in the ECMT's future deliberations will help shape the transport map of the new Europe. The Soviet Union attended the session for the first time as observers.

The transport policy debate covered infrastructure priorities, funding and cost recovery methods, the role of the private sector, balance between the different modes, as well as social aspects.

The transport ministers agreed

that the common standards on weights, dimensions and certain other technical characteristics of international haulage vehicles adopted by the European Community should be applied from January first 1993 in all ECMT member countries. They emphasised the need to harmonise regulations to avoid the danger of distorting competition between EC and non-EC countries.

However, Austria and Switzerland, which have special problems as Europe's premier transit nations, expressed opposition to a number of specific provisions, not least the 44-tonne limit.

Despite objections from some member countries, the meeting also decided to increase the ECMT multilateral quota of licences for international road transport by 70 per cent from January first 1992.

Previous attempts to increase quotas have met with objections on environmental grounds, but the development of detailed noise and emission specifications for a 'green

lorry' and uniform rules for monitoring compliance have broken the deadlock and enabled licences to be granted to a larger number of trucks.

One area on which the ministers were unable to reach agreement was that of increased dimensions for containers and swap bodies. This issue is referred to the next meeting.

On radio broadcasting of traffic information, the ministers endorsed a message coding system proposed under a protocol developed by specialists in cooperation with the EC, ECMT and the European Broadcasting Union as a pre-standard for use in field trials. The coding system — known as the Radio Data System (RDS) — broadcasts traffic information as coded digital messages that can be understood by any driver, irrespective of language.

Also discussed were ways of reducing the number of road accidents involving elderly persons and measures to improve transport information for people with mobility handicaps.

# Unity move by Indian union centres

Two of India's trade union centres — Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) and the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) — have taken the first positive steps towards an eventual merger. If it goes through the new united centre will represent nearly seven million Indian workers.

The possibility of a merger first emerged at the HMS convention in Faridabad in March 1990 which appealed for greater trade union unity.

This brought a positive response from the AITUC. Informal discussions between the General Secretaries of the two organisations have been followed by formal approval

of merger from the All India Working Committees of both organisations and a national joint committee has been set up to promote united efforts at the grass-roots level and to iron out any conflicts.

The unity move reflects the new international trade union realities with the decline of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), to which the AITUC owed allegiance.

By contrast, the HMS is politically independent and affiliated to the ICFTU, the international trade union body of choice of the new independent trade union centres in

Central and Eastern Europe.

The unity moves within the Indian national centres have their parallel within the rail unions.

The working committee of the Indian Railway Workers' Federation (an affiliate of the AITUC) has adopted a resolution recognising the HMS- and ITF-affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) as the oldest and largest and most representative organisation — an indication that it is prepared to consider making the AIRF, led by HMS President Umraomal Purohit, the focus of a united rail workers' union.

## *New Zealand workers fight new law*

In the face of widespread opposition and protests, the New Zealand government has adopted the Employment Contracts Act.

The intention of this act, according to a statement from the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, is "to remove union rights in the workplace, to weaken union influence, and to completely change the way that pay, conditions of employment and worker rights are set."

The new law is "a vehicle for deunionisation, lower wages, worse conditions and less protection for workers" says the NZCTU.

The new law (see **ITF News**, April 1991) attacks collective bargaining and fundamental trade union rights under the guise of giving workers the "freedom" to choose their bargaining "agent" — so long, of course, that the employers agree.

In practice, the real "freedom" is given to the bosses — who can derecognise trade unions despite the majority wishes of the workforce. Even if they do recognise a union, they don't have to enter into collective bargaining with them. Instead they can impose individual contracts on their workers. There isn't even a proper mechanism for enforcing

these contracts.

The law effectively takes the existing world wide trend by employers towards derecognition of collective bargaining and imposition of personal contracts and enshrines it as law. The New Zealand government has gone further in attacking trade union rights than any democratic government in the world so far.

The trade union movement in New Zealand is continuing to mount a campaign of protest against the new act. Their campaign has been supported by the ITF and other international trade union bodies. Despite the government's refusal to budge, the unions hope that the sheer impracticability of the new system, and the damage that its implementation

will do to the economy will eventually bring them to their senses.

\*In a success against the new act, industrial action by New Zealand seafarers has resulted in an agreement by owners to continue recognition of the union and maintain the existing employment structure for the industry — Dave Morgan, President of the ITF-affiliated New Zealand Seafarers' Union, announced their union's victory at the June meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee. The roster system (for hiring seafarers) and their existing agreement will be extended for a year. The issue of the coastal trade with Australia (the Tasman Trade) has not been settled, and the NZSU will continue to fight for the retention of existing rules.

## **Albanian general strike topples government**

The general strike launched by Albania's new independent trade unions in May (see **ITF News**, May 1991) ended with the toppling of the government and the granting of 25 per cent wage rises by the new Prime Minister.

The government, which had only been formed in April after the country's first free elections, resigned on June fourth under pressure from the successful nationwide action.

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# ***Early history of British Transport and General union now available***

The first detailed history of Britain's biggest union, the Transport and General Workers' Union, has just been published.

A joint production by Ken Coates MEP and Tony Topham, the history covers the years from the 1870s to the 22 union amalgamation out of which the TGWU was born in 1922.

The authors found much new material during their researches with the result that what was originally planned as a slim book has developed into a double volume of some 900 pages.

They felt that the years leading up to the founding of the TGWU represented a crucial period in the growth of the British labour movement that deserved more detailed treatment.

This first volume — a second one is planned — is really a "pre-history" of the early workers' organisations that were the forerunners of the TGWU and their actions to improve the pay and conditions of their members. It chronicles the growing recognition of the need for wider organisational unity, which became particularly acute with the resumption of industrial life following the

end of the First World War.

Readers from ITF unions will find especially interesting the pages on the formation of the National Transport Workers' Federation in 1910 — a landmark in the march towards amalgamation.

The early history of dockers' trade unionism underpins the story and there is detailed coverage of the early dock workers' struggles in London, Liverpool and Bristol at the turn of the century.

These were struggles that were vital to the fight for "new unionism" and prepared the way for the close involvement of the unions in the British Labour Party — the mass party of working people in Britain.

The importance of international trade unionism is an essential strand of the story and there is a special mention of foreign support for British dockers during the famous "dockers' tanner" (a tanner is the slang term for the old sixpence) strike of 1889.

The sections on Tom Mann and Ben Tillett, the charismatic early dockers' leaders and founders of the ITF (Tom Mann was the ITF's first President) will also be part of the

story holding special interest for ITF readers.

If one were to sum up the essential message of the book it would be that workers' progress can only come about through struggle and commitment, through industrial and political means, and not least through solidarity and unity and crucially independence.

The book is entitled "The Making of the Transport and General Workers: The Emergence of the Labour Movement 1870 — 1922".

The TGWU is generously making Volume 1, Parts 1 and 2 available to trade unionists at the special price of only £20 (a quarter of what it will cost in the bookshops).

Besides being an eminently readable and authoritative work on the making of the TGWU, the book is also attractively produced in a presentation slip case.

**Orders should be sent to:  
Transport and General  
Workers' Union  
Transport House  
Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JB  
Great Britain**

## **...Albanian workers make up for lost time**

**Continued from page 7**

The Union of Independent Trade Unions of Albania (BSPH), which is not to be confused with the re-varnished ex-government controlled Confederation of Free Trade Unions (KSL), now claims a membership of 250,000, out of a workforce of 810,000.

Despite the wage hikes already achieved by the BSPH unions, the average wage remains very low, at

an equivalent of US\$40-50 per month, and working conditions in most industries are appalling.

A joint delegation by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Miners' International Federation (MIF) to Albania in late May/early June met with the BSPH and representatives of its constituent unions. Unions for transport and fishery workers have affiliated to the BSPH, and an independent union for seafarers has also been formed.

The new unions are in desperate need of assistance, with a huge information vacuum inherited from Albania's years of almost total isolation and a pitiful communications infrastructure within the country. The ICFTU has already donated money to the BSPH's strike fund, and is coordinating further assistance from unions in other countries.

The ITF has written to the new independent trade union centre offering help and advice to its transport members.



# Transport unions agree more work must be done on 1993

Greater efforts are needed to rationalise and improve the representation of transport workers in the European Community as the 1993 deadline for the completion of the internal market approaches.

This was the consensus emerging from a meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the EC (the "Brussels Committee") held, unsurprisingly, in Brussels on May 21.

The Committee was established in 1958 to coordinate the EC work of ITF affiliates and has more recently been expanded to include a number of so-called "Christian" trade unions not in the ITF. To complicate matters even more the ITF itself is a member.

Although appearing slightly odd to outside observers, this arrangement has worked well in the past in enabling unions to cope with the massive flood of draft laws and regulations constantly emerging from the European Commission's Transport Directorate and in servicing the trade union side in the growing number of Joint Committees created by its Social Affairs Directorate in the transport field. Recently, however, it has come under increasing strain from the sheer volume of work which results from the central role which the liberalisation of transport has been given in the process of creating the Single Market.

In response to demands from the Florence Congress, the ITF Executive Board has already taken steps to reactivate the ITF European Committee which was first established in 1975. European ITF affiliates (who make up more than 80 per cent of the Brussels Committee's total membership) are also demanding more opportunities to discuss overall transport and social policy questions as well as reacting to spe-

cific initiatives coming from the Commission.

Commenting on these developments, Committee President Rudi Schäfer (GdED — Germany) said that in the long term the unions in the transport field would have to think about pooling some of their sovereignty in a real European Transport Workers' Union. In the meantime, it was important to strengthen the role of the Committee and to build on the already high degree of cooperation between it and the ITF. The Committee agreed to ask its Praesidium to investigate ways of improving its structure and working methods and to report back to the next Coordinating Committee which is scheduled for December 1991.

As well as accepting a new affiliate (Fetcomar CC.OO. of Spain) into membership, the Committee agreed to grant observer status to those Nordic transport workers' unions who are not (yet) members of the Community. The Nordic unions were present at the meeting in force led by Anders Lindström, President of the NTF, who underlined the fact that the Community was now set-

ting the pace which other states had to follow in Europe today. He announced that Sweden would shortly present its formal application for EC membership and he thought that other countries would probably follow. The Committee approved the financial reports and accounts presented by its Secretary Clive Iddon and held a debate on the Common Transport Policy following his detailed report on recent developments in the field.

In view of the increasing need to examine Community Social Charter proposals from a multimodal point of view, the meeting also agreed to create a special "multimodal" working group composed of trade union side representatives of the various Joint Committees. At the ITF's request, representation will also be provided for the Ports Industry which has not yet succeeded in achieving the establishment of a Joint Committee as a result of the intransigence of the European port employers. The ITF was represented at the meeting by Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander and Research and Publications Secretary David Cockroft.

## ***What's happening with ITF News?***

Regular readers of ITF News (as well as libraries and similar institutions which like to store back issues) will note that this is a combined June/July issue. This is not because the editorial team is having a month off but because the constant stream of news coming in to the ITF Secretariat has meant that over the last few months, the production date has gradually slipped later and later into the month. As a result, therefore, unlike most other publications, the May issue contained news of events which occurred right up to the end of May. This has caused some readers to believe that they are getting ITF News rather late, a feeling which is even more marked amongst those who receive the non-English versions (English is the original editorial language). The other languages inevitably go out later since they need additional time for translation and page make-up. To try to resolve this problem we have 'combined' the June and July issues. From the August issue onwards, the English version will be published at the beginning of the month. We hope this pattern will continue for the rest of the year and beyond.

# Worldwide trade union rights violations

Some 264 trade union activists from around the world have lost their lives in the past fifteen months at the hands of the police and army units, death squads and hired killers. A further 2,422 have been arrested or detained.

These disturbing statistics emerge from the annual survey on Violations of Trade Union Rights published by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in June.

The report, which covers the period January 1990 to March 1991, cites 72 countries.

## **LATIN AMERICA — DEATH THREATS TO RURAL WORKERS**

Systematic abuse of workers' rights is at its most widespread in Latin and Central America. Rural workers especially suffer at the hands of government-sponsored assassination squads and are subject to constant harassment and intimidation, including death threats.

Hired killers, acting on instructions from drug barons and landowners, were responsible for many of the 138 murders of trade unionists recorded in Colombia.

In the Central American state of Guatemala, 33 labour leaders, many from the rural sector, were killed by the armed forces or death squads. Industrial disputes were also used as an "excuse" for assassinations, including that of a sugar worker and union activist killed in a fake car "accident".

Despite the formal ending of the civil war and the demobilisation of the Contra opposition, serious abuses continue in Nicaragua. Deaths include those of seven rural workers killed whilst being forcibly ejected from reprivatised land and of three workers involved in a union recognition dispute at a sugar mill.

In the Central American dictatorship of El Salvador, trade unionists are portrayed as allies of the left-wing guerrilla group FMLN, making them the targets of right-wing

death squads. Government repression has claimed the lives of 18 activists and hundreds have been rounded up or detained. A "wave of intimidation" has also been launched by large landowners against rural workers.

## **AFRICA — PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENTS UNDER ATTACK**

In Africa, the report notes severe repression of trade unions that have allied themselves to the pro-democracy movements in one-party states.

In Mali, where the national trade union UNTM spearheaded the pro-democracy movement that overthrew the Moussa Traoré regime, five workers were killed in the first protest wave in January 1991, and repression of the democratic opposition resulted in 200 deaths.

Calls by Laouli Moutari, General Secretary of the Niger national centre USTN for multi-party government resulted in the storming by the police of the USTN headquarters, the arrest of six USTN leaders and the jailing of three officials during a general strike.

In the Ivory Coast, 156 unionists were detained in pro-democracy protests, while in Zambia the government has "sharply increased" pressure on the national centre, the ZCTU, because of its leadership of the pro-democracy campaign. ZCTU leader Frederick Chiluba was briefly detained in October 1990.

In a number of African countries, industrial action has met with violence, notably in Lesotho, where seven workers were shot and wounded when police intervened in a strike at a French multinational and in the Central African Republic, where the headquarters of the national centre was occupied by troops following a general strike call.

In South Africa, the survey records a number of "positive developments", including the removal of restrictions on the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), but says that this is

more than matched by "severe and far-reaching rights violations" against the independent labour movement, with 25 trade unionists killed, 778 arrested and over six thousand workers dismissed for their union activities.

The Internal Security Act is still used to hold anti-apartheid activists without trial and the police have used tear gas and beatings to intimidate demonstrators and strikers (one thousand strikers at a tea plantation in the Transkei were teargassed by police in August 1990).

The police also failed to intervene when six strikers were beaten and hacked to death during a strike against South African Transport Services (SATS), which claimed 35 lives.

There is police surveillance of the independent trade unions and files have been opened on some of their leaders.

## **ASIA — CHINESE INDEPENDENT UNIONS BRUTALLY REPRESSED**

In Asia and the Pacific, the survey lists twenty countries where the governments only allow unions that are subservient to those in power, as in China, Iran and Iraq. In a number of others, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, trade unions are prohibited by law, while in Indonesia a new free trade union, Setia Kawan, has been refused recognition.

The threat to the independent trade unions in the People's Republic of China (PRC) is still extremely grave. Many members of the Workers' Autonomous Federations (WAF) remain in prison. Many have been ill-treated, while hundreds, possibly thousands, are now part of the penal slave labour force.

The survey speaks of "blanket repression", with secret courts imposing long prison sentences and over 80 trade unionists facing trial, and possible death sentences.

Continued on page 11

# ...264 trade unionists were murdered last year

Continued from page 10

The newly created independent trade union centre in Hong Kong, the Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU), has become a target of harassment and intimidation from a government concerned not to damage relations with Beijing in the run-up to 1997.

Other blackspots in the region include Fiji, where the military government is condemned for failing to meet its promise to ICFTU missions to restore union rights. The survey mentions racial discrimination in the public services, non-recognition of the FTUC and intimidation of striking mine workers.

Military intervention has been followed by trade union repression in Thailand where public sector un-

ions have been outlawed since the February 1991 coup.

In South Korea, the national security law has been used to justify widespread arrests of unionists. A new national trade centre, Chonnohyop, was declared illegal two days before it was due to be inaugurated and over 350 of its leading activists were subsequently detained.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait also claimed the lives of two trade unionists, while many activists were subject to "brutal abuses", tortured, expelled or made to "disappear".

## EUROPE — EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIONS HARASSED

In Europe, the report notes that trade union pluralism is now a reality in most of Eastern and Central Europe, though in a number of coun-

tries the new independent unions are encountering repression.

In Bulgaria, there is widespread harassment and discrimination against top officials and activists of the independent union Podkrepa. Anti-union discrimination is noted against the independent trade union Fratia in Romania, and serious repression of independent union members in the autonomous province of Kosovo, in Yugoslavia.

Particularly harsh repression of trade unionists occurred in Albania, following large-scale anti-government protests.

The survey also records a bomb attack on the headquarters of the Turkish trade union centre Türk-Is, the mass arrests of striking miners and the strike ban imposed during the Gulf War.



## TOURISM SERVICES

### *Tourism industry provides fertile ground for TSSA recruitment drive*

The tourism industry — now the world's largest — offers a great opportunity for trade union organisation. That was the message brought by ITF Civil Aviation and Tourism Services Secretary David Cockroft when he addressed the 94th Annual Conference of the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association in Llandudno, North Wales on May 20.

The TSSA organises white-collar employees in British Rail as well as in bus companies, ports and other transport enterprises, but the bulk of its new members today come from the travel industry. The conference followed the launch of a major recruitment campaign in Thomas Cook, the company which originated the package tour market and is still

one of the world's largest tourism employers. The results, announced to the conference, were quite obvious. Despite the continuing decline in employment in the railways, for the first time for several years the union's overall membership grew during the year. It now stands at just over 39,000 and virtually all of this growth has come from the travel trade.

Cockroft also referred to the ITF's campaign to persuade European governments to devote more resources to the railway industry. After many years, he said, there were optimistic signs that the message was finally hitting home, the main exception being the British government.

He also referred to the massive change in ITF membership which had occurred recently with new democratic unions from Central and Eastern Europe joining for the first time.

TSSA General Secretary Richard Rosser, who is also Chairman of the ITF Tourism Services Section, warned Conference delegates of the effects of recession now hitting the travel trade. The Gulf War had been, he said, the "final nail in the industry's coffin". Within the largest employer Thomas Cook large-scale cost savings had become inevitable but the union had taken a strong stand against compulsory redundancies. As a result, there had been a significant increase in union recruitment.



# SEAFARERS

## *International insurance scheme for Foc seafarers*

A new, clearer procedure for the approval of ITF Total Crew Cost Agreements was one of the results of the annual ITF Fair Practices Committee meeting in London on June fifth and sixth. The meeting brought together 104 delegates and advisers from 68 seafarers and dockers' unions in 47 countries.

While affirming the existing "benchmark" earnings in these TCC agreements as US\$1,000 a month consolidated earnings for an Able Seaman, an additional minimum wage of \$750 for lower ranks was also agreed. Standardised methods for calculating overtime hours were agreed, while the applications of the package to ships with small crews were referred to the FPC sub-committee for further study.

The meeting also endorsed a set of revised ITF Manning Scales. The new scales are a realistic representation of prevailing crewing standards in national fleets. They provide the basis for ITF agreements on Foc ships, and are also central to the calculation of rates under Total Crew Cost Agreements. To emphasise the importance of minimum crewing, the FPC agreed a recommendation that all new ITF Agreements signed in the future should specify the crewing levels.

### **INSURANCE SCHEME**

In a move that should bring dramatic and direct benefit to many thousands of seafarers worldwide, the FPC gave the go-ahead for the establishment of a comprehensive death and disability insurance

scheme for seafarers covered by ITF agreements.

This scheme comes in response to demands for collective insurance for Foc seafarers from many affiliates, from seafarers themselves and even from some shipowners.

While compensation is provided in existing ITF Agreements, affiliates and inspectors have all experienced tragic cases of disablement or loss of life where the shipowner has been unable to pay (for example, due to bankruptcy). The new scheme will ensure that no seafarer on an ITF covered ship will be left without compensation.

Premiums will be collected from owners who sign ITF agreements. The scheme will be administered by two non-profit Nordic Insurance groupings who have strong links with the trade union movement. No profits will be made by the insurers or the ITF from the scheme.

Disablement benefit for seafarers ranges from US\$40-80,000 (depending on rank) and relatives will receive \$40,000 plus \$10,000 for every child under 21. The scheme covers disability or death resulting from both accident and illness, irrespective of cause or fault. It does not, however, restrict seafarers' rights in any way to pursue legal action in cases of negligence.

The scheme was approved for a three-year trial period, and a new ITF Committee of seafarers' affiliates will review progress.

The Norwegian International Ship Register (NIS) and other Second

Registers came under fierce criticism at the meeting.

The Swedish Seafarers' Union raised the issue of Swedish beneficially owned, Norwegian Second Register flag ships. In contradiction to existing ITF policy, Swedish unions have been denied negotiating rights for these ships because the Norwegian collective agreement for NIS ships covers all ships owned by Nordic citizens. There are also some Danish beneficially owned ships in the same situation.

The FPC adopted a resolution calling on affiliates in second register countries supplying crews to abide by ITF policy and give notice of renegotiation of any agreements which either do not meet ITF TCC levels or which prevent unions in beneficial ownership countries from exercising their negotiating rights.

The resolution also called on the ITF Secretariat to monitor developments in second register countries and to come back to next year's FPC with recommendations to declare any offending registers Focs.

The FPC also re-affirmed existing opposition to cargo handling by ships' crews and resolved to support dock workers' unions in resisting instructions to perform work traditionally done by dockers.

The FPC also expressed its support for the New Zealand trade union movement in their battle against the draconian anti-union Employment Contracts Act (see separate story).

# Israeli seafarers strike against Zim

The campaign of the ITF-affiliated Israeli Sea Officers' Union (ISOU) against plans to flag out the Zim Lines fleet and replace Israeli crews with foreigners led to serious industrial action by officers on ships in Israel, Greece and the United States backed up by solidarity assistance from ITF-affiliated seafarer and docker unions.

The line, which has a large shareholding from the Israeli government, is being prepared for privatisation and the flagging out proposal is clearly part of an effort to make it more attractive to investors. According to ISOU secretary Ephraim Marcovitz, Zim's management has been involved in a series of abuses involving not only breaches of contract but even violations of the law.

On 21 and 22 June, a 48-hour strike was launched by the Officers' union against Zim ships both in Israeli and in foreign ports. In Israel, a total of 10 ships in Ashdod, Haifa and Eilat were affected. In Greece, the *Zim Italia* was held up for 48 hours in the port of Piraeus, and in the United States, sympathy action by the ITF-affiliated ILA, ILWU and SIUNA was of considerable assistance in preventing any cargo handling on the *Zim America* in Los Angeles and the *Zim Canada* in New York during the strike.

In response to a request from the union, the ITF Secretariat made clear to all affiliates involved its total backing for the union's campaign against flagging out. Meanwhile legal and political pressure has been exerted by the company, backed by the Israeli government which owns some 40 per cent of the shares, to make the ISOU back down. The union in Israel and ITF affiliates in the USA have been threatened with legal action, and Israeli diplomatic representatives have been attempting to undermine the strong international support so far shown for the

union by claiming that it does not have the support of the rest of the Israeli trade union movement.

The ITF's position in disputes of this type is perfectly clear. It supports legitimate action taken by its affiliates in defence of their members' jobs and conditions and it does so with particular vigour when the union concerned is fighting for the retention of ships under their national flag.

According to Marcovitz, the international support and press cov-

erage of the dispute has had a very positive effect on public opinion in Israel, and on June 26, the union obtained a Court Order against Zim Lines management on one of the issues under dispute. "Things seem to go our way at the moment and we hope that soon we can sit down to serious talks with Zim's management" he concludes, adding that his union wants to express its thanks to the American unions for support which was "really beyond our expectations".

## Spanish anti-Foc strikes

Plans to flag out Spanish ships and to employ low-cost third-world seafarers so angered seafarers' unions that they called out their members in a month of staggered 96-hour strikes.

The strike action, which was ordered by the Merchant Marine Section of the ITF-affiliated FETT-UGT and the non-affiliated SLMM-CC.OO., began on June 12 and involved ten publicly owned shipping companies.

It was prompted by moves by three of the companies to set up offshore subsidiaries in Foc countries with the aim of gradually switching all their ships to Foc flags such as Panama and the Bahamas and manning them with foreign seafarers.

The wave of strikes caused widespread disruption to Spain's seaborne export trade and were only called off on June 26 when an agreement was reached between the parties.

Under union pressure, the transport ministry has now agreed to urgent talks aimed at agreeing new conditions of competition for ships engaged in international seaborne trade. The target date for agreement is the end of October.

The talks will involve Transport Ministry officials, as well as officials

of the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Trade, the employers and, of course, the two unions.

In the meantime, the publicly owned shipping companies have agreed to put on hold their plans to flag out their ships.

## US tax fraud probe into one ship companies

Some light could be shed on the murky world of "offshore" shipping companies as the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) launches a major probe into maritime tax fraud.

The IRS believes that international shipping groups trading with the United States are using "one-ship" companies to avoid paying US tax.

The Federal government's determination, fuelled by the hefty budget deficit, to secure maximum revenues is causing panic among some shipowners, who are afraid that the probe could reveal many hidden ownership links in the industry. In the past there have been vocal protests from companies in other industries subjected to similar investigations.



# Irish union fights B&I sell-off

The ITF-affiliated Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) is threatening to take industrial action in protest at plans to sell the Irish state-owned ferry line B&I to a private company, Irish Continental Group. The union is demanding that the government retain a 'golden share' in the company so that it can prevent any future take-over by foreign interests. The union is also insisting on retention of existing conditions of employment for ferry crews and full guarantees of employment when the new owners take over.

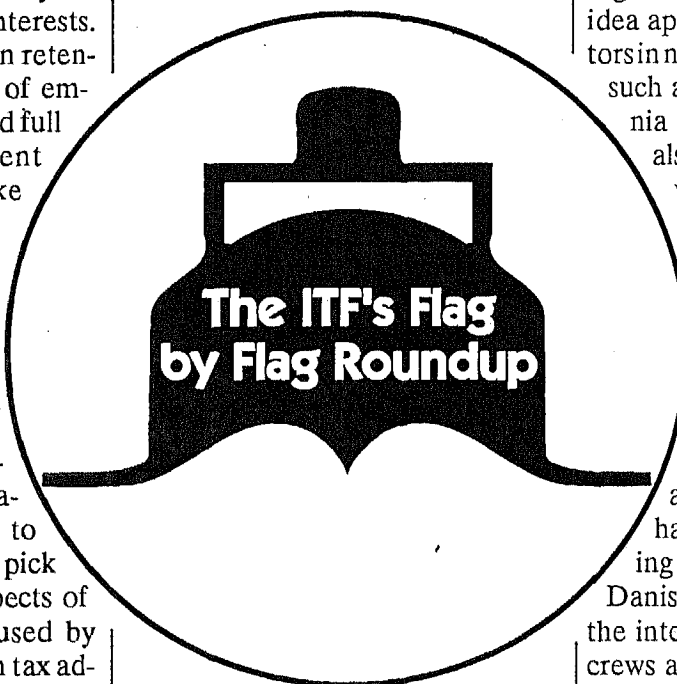
Sailing ever closer to becoming a fully fledged flag of convenience, the **Isle of Man** adopted legislation permitting bareboat chartering of vessels onto its register. This system, which enables an owner effectively to have dual registration and to pick the most advantageous aspects of each flag, has long been used by owners keen to benefit from tax advantages and sometimes in an attempt to find ways round the ITF Foc campaign. On this occasion, the intention is clearly to persuade foreign (ie non UK) owners to place their ships on the Isle of Man register. To make things easier the island intends to relax the (already very minimal) requirements for carriage of British officers. From now on only the senior officers will have to hold British certificates. So far the ITF has treated the Isle of Man as a UK Second Register and has refrained from adding it to the Foc 'blacklist'. The direction in which the flag's administrators appear to be moving will make this position more and more difficult to maintain. Rumours that Shell Tankers intends to transfer up to four of its tankers away from the IoM have so far been denied by the company.

Representatives of the government of **Mauritius** contacted the ITF Secretariat last month to discuss the establishment of an 'open registry' on the island, and a reception in London is planned for July ninth at which the island's maritime commissioner will explain the exciting attractions which the latest flag of convenience has to offer the world's

receive a visit from even one of 'its' ships.

Yet another country, **Turkey**, is threatening to join the queue of countries keen to establish a Flag of convenience register. Turkish ship-owners have apparently begun to lobby the government for an open register to rival that of Cyprus. The idea apparently is to attract operators in neighbouring Black Sea states such as the Soviet Union, Romania and Bulgaria. The owners also hope to achieve more joint ventures with Greek shipping companies. Press reports suggest that the new Turkish scheme, if it gets off the ground, will be modelled on the International Ship Registers of Norway and Denmark. If so, the Turkish shipowners and the Turkish government had better do a bit more studying first. The Norwegian and Danish registers were set up with the intention of providing cheaper crews and less arduous regulations for owners from Norway and Denmark. Even though the Norwegian register in particular has since been abused by the influx of a minority of foreign owners this remains its objective and the only thing which keeps it off the ITF's Foc list. Any attempt to turn the Turkish flag into an 'open register' will guarantee that it ends up with the same low grade reputation which the Cyprus register already possesses. If that is competition, it may be that the Turkish government would be better off without it.

The **Yugoslav** flag fleet, already threatened by the growing political crisis as the country threatens to split into its various constituent republics, experienced its worst ever



shipping market. Like many others before them, the Mauritian government are trying to discover a magic formula which will allow them to operate a Flag of convenience registry without the stigma and inconvenience of being classified as an Foc by the ITF. The ITF's response has been quite clear — there are too many in the world already and one more inexperienced, incompetent maritime administration will do nothing for maritime safety or for seafarers' conditions. If the government of Mauritius wants to promote employment for Mauritian seafarers, it should seek genuine joint ventures involving substantial local ownership, not seek to prostitute itself on a market which is already overstocked with disreputable flags based on tiny islands which never

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# ITF Polish and USSR agreements

Important progress was made by the ITF in protecting the interests of seafarers from Central and Eastern Europe when provisional ITF acceptable Total Crew Cost agreements were worked out in cooperation with new ITF affiliates from the USSR and Poland.

The deals, which have yet to receive the formal approval of the relevant ITF sub-committee, provide levels of pay and conditions well above the existing 'benchmark' used to evaluate such TCC agreements, a fact which will undoubtedly be a major disappointment to shipowners who have been falling over themselves to hire what they thought would be ultra-low cost crews from Central and Eastern Europe.

The USSR agreement, finalised following a visit to Moscow by Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander in May, arises from a long and complex saga which began when a number of USSR owned ships flagged out to Cyprus for financial reasons while retaining full Soviet crews.

A provisional agreement negotiated last year with the involvement of the ITF's Swiss affiliate with the Geneva-based management company Acomarit has now been superseded by a direct agreement signed by the newly-affiliated Federation of Independent Water Transport Workers' Unions. Carefully struc-

tured to cope with restrictive Soviet legislation limiting the amount of foreign currency which the country's citizens are allowed to earn, the new agreement is valued at a total cost of nearly \$1,300 for an Able Seaman compared with the ITF minimum benchmark of \$1000.

Forty per cent of the agreement pay scales will be paid directly in dollars to the seamen on board. The rest of the money will be paid into a fund, set up in Geneva and controlled by the USSR union, which will provide benefits for unemployed seafarers and those serving on USSR national flag ships, so helping to compensate for the financial advantage which being paid in hard currency gives to those USSR seafarers who obtain jobs on foreign flag vessels.

In a major breakthrough, the union has agreed to use the new agreement as the basis for any proposals to supply USSR seafarers to work on foreign flag ships whether they are USSR or foreign owned.

The second Eastern European breakthrough came in June with the successful conclusion of negotiations between representatives of the Maritime Section of Solidarity, the ITF Secretariat and Columbia Ship-management on a TCC agreement applicable to nearly a dozen Columbia vessels.

Other agreements are expected to

follow. The new agreement provides a total monthly wage for an AB of around \$1,100 per month, considerably higher than the appalling exploitative wages currently being paid to some Polish seafarers.

According to the prestigious London shipping newspaper *Lloyd's List*, the high rates of pay being won by the Eastern European unions under the ITF's auspices reflect the tightness in the international maritime labour market and the ITF's success in ensuring the newly democratic unions of East Europe do not create imbalance in the market.

Certainly those shipowners who thought the opening up of the Eastern European labour market would put the final nail in the coffin of the ITF Flag of Convenience campaign have had a very unpleasant surprise.

## ***Icelandic seafarers' centre opens***

The Faroese Seamen's Mission opened its own seafarers' centre in the Icelandic capital of Reykjavík on June second.

Known as the Örkin Seamen's Home, the centre can take up to 60 seafarers in ten en suite twin and ten split-level family rooms, each with television.

The centre also has a restaurant, TV and hobby room.

Located right in the heart of the city, it is convenient for shopping and sightseeing.

Seafarers benefit from reduced rates at the centre. Rates are 600 Danish kroner for two persons in a twin and 400 Danish kroner for a single room (reduced to 500 and 350 kr respectively for serving seafarers).

**The address of the centre is:**

**Seamen's Centre**

**Brantarholt 29**

**Reykjavík**

**Telephone: (009-354-1) 680777**

**Fax: (009-354-1) 689747.**

## **...ITF talks with Croatian seafarers**

**Continued from page 14**

decline in the first half of 1991. 29 vessels had left the register, either to be scrapped or reflagged, by the end of May. No vessel had joined. Eleven ships were reflagged to Foc registries including Panama, Liberia, St. Vincent and the Bahamas. As with other Eastern European countries one of the principal reasons for the reflagging has been the need to seek

capital on international money markets. Political instability means that mortgages can only be obtained under foreign flags. Meanwhile the ITF has held detailed discussions with the Croatian Seafarers' and Dockers' Union which represents the great majority of organised Yugoslav seafarers. The union's formal application for ITF membership will be presented to the Executive Board in October.

# ITF prepares to meet with shipowners

ITF Seafarers' unions, in London for the FPC meeting (see separate story), met on June fourth for a preliminary discussion of the forthcoming International Labour Organisation's Joint Maritime Commission.

The 26th session of the JMC, which will be held in Geneva from 17-25 October this year, is an important gathering of seafarers' trade unions and shipowners under the auspices of the ILO.

## Safety concerns over log ships

Concern has been growing in international maritime circles about the safety of log carriers, particularly older vessels.

Figures released by the Salvage Association record 43 log carriers foundering between 1978 and 1990, with another 20 vessels being grounded or wrecked.

Log carriers are particularly vulnerable because cargoes, unless stowed very carefully, can roll and affect the stability of the ship. In addition, timber can easily damage the hull or hatch covers as it is loaded onto the ship. A succession of dents caused to a vessel over the years can then allow water to get into the hold if the ship starts rolling in a heavy sea. This is particularly dangerous where there are long holds designed for timber carrying.

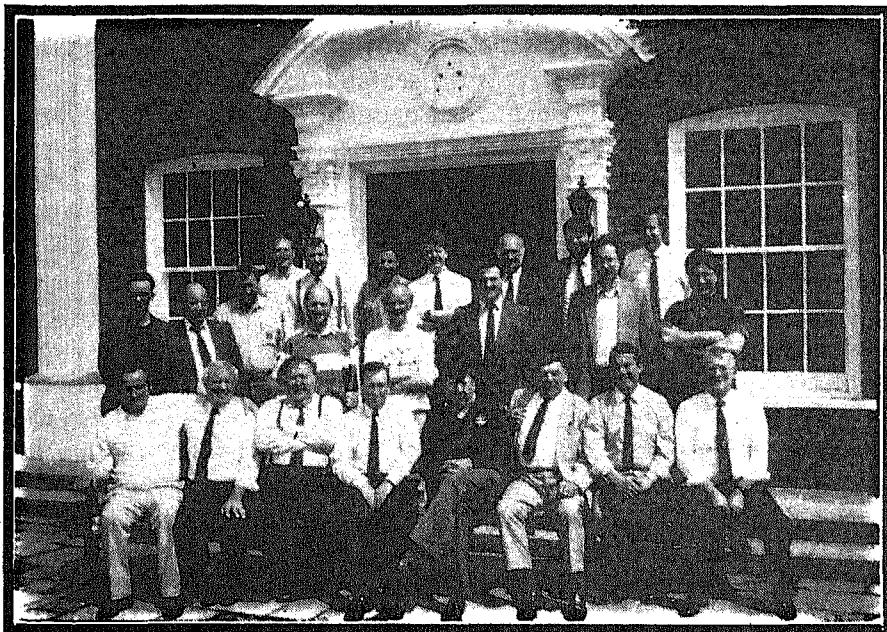
Smaller vessels with poorly-trained crews inexperienced in log carrying are particularly at risk: relevant and accessible guidelines on the loading and stowage of timber are particularly needed.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is responding to the concern about the casualty level of log carriers by preparing a revised version of its Code of Safe Practice for Ships Carrying Timber Deck Cargoes, which was first issued in 1978.

This uniquely important bilateral meeting performs many useful functions for seafarers. The ILO Minimum Wage, which the ITF considers a basic minimum for non-Foc national flag shipping, is set by this meeting. The ITF will be arguing for an upward revision of the existing US\$286 — and the shipowners will doubtlessly be arguing for less.

The meeting discussed the agenda for the JMC and reviewed various

issues. On a note of some historical significance, ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander explained that, for the first time ever, there would be no need for the ITF unions to meet separately before the meeting of the workers' group—with the exception of the delegate from the Chinese "union", all others are now members of the ITF and so there will, in effect, be no difference between the workers' group and the ITF.



## UK Foc seminar

The first-ever ITF UK Flag of Convenience Seminar was held in the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers' (RMT) centre in Frant, England on June 13th and 14th. Foc Inspectors, local officials from the RMT (the new union formed from merger between the ITF-affiliated National Union of Railwaymen and National Union of Seamen), representatives of the officers' union NUMAST, and the Missions to Seamen (totalling 25) attended the meeting, which covered aspects of the practical implementation of the Foc campaign in UK ports, and ITF policy and proce-

dures. The meeting also saw the first rush-release of the Foc Inspectors' training film. Participants overwhelmingly thanked the ITF for organising the seminar, which represents a growing commitment within the UK's ITF affiliates to prosecute the aims of the ITF Foc campaign—but felt more time was needed for future meetings. The ITF was represented at the meeting by Special Seafarers' Department Secretary Brian Laughton, Foc Inspector Bryan Allen, and Geoff Ablett, Mark Dickinson, Richard Flint and Jon Whitlow from the Secretariat staff.

# Strikers forced off ship at knife-point

The Indonesian and Filipino crew of the Maltese registered Flag of convenience *Esther Reefer* haven't been paid for many months. Their ship isn't covered by an ITF Agreement, either. In the face of this, the crew went on strike on June first in the port of **Algeciras**, Spain and called upon the ITF for assistance. They are demanding a full ITF agreement. Union official Paco Fernandez from the ITF-affiliated FETT-UGT has come to the assistance of the strikers, who were forced off the ship at knife-point! The strikers decided to take a walk about the port and when they returned to the ship, the Master threatened the men with a large knife and prevented them from returning to the ship. He also prevented Fernandez from going aboard. The ITF is now putting up the strikers in a local hostel. The crew are owed US\$58,000 and they now have a local lawyer who is in the process of applying to the local court to arrest the ship.

The Maltese flag *Al Taif*, whose Egyptian and Sudanese crew went on strike in the Italian port of **Ravenna** on May 17 (see **ITF News**, May 1991) for better wages, has now been arrested by the local court. The crew are claiming one million US dollars in settlement. The owners asked the court to allow the ship to travel to another port, but the Judge has decided to adjourn the case till October first.

It's often forgotten that in addition to fighting crew exploitation on Foc shipping, the ITF campaign also seeks to drive Foc ships back to their domestic shipping registers. In the case of the Nigerian owned *Sea Friends* (see **ITF News**, May 1991), this campaign aim has been achieved. The ship was registered under the Saint Vincent Foc, and the crew hadn't been paid for months, or even provided food —

they had to make do with Red Cross parcels. As we went to press last month, no progress had been made on the crew's wage claim — but now it has been settled. On June sixth nearly US\$94,000 was paid out to eight crew who have also been repatriated. The owner has also agreed to re-register the ship under the Nigerian flag.

One of the crewmembers on board the Maltese flag *Marina* contacted the ITF to say that he had not been paid for seven months. Another crew

## FOC CAMPAIGN NEWS

member made a phone call with a similar complaint to Foc inspector Ruud Touwen from the ITF-affiliated Dutch seafarers' union FWZ when the ship docked in the port of **Amsterdam** in early May. The ship did not have an ITF agreement. Touwen went on board the ship and spoke to four crewmembers who showed him their contracts which explicitly stated that they must not contact the ITF or any other union about their rates of pay. He drew up a pay claim for them and they were eventually paid US\$26,905.52 in regular and overtime pay for the seven months they had been on board and given free tickets back home.

The Indonesian crew of the Honduras flag *Puk* were being cheated on their ITF Agreement by being paid substandard wages. When it reached the port of **Rotterdam** the crew contacted Foc inspector Ruud Touwen, who asked a firm of local lawyers to investigate on his behalf as he was unable to board the ship immediately. It was established that a total

of US\$74,090.56 was owed to six Indonesian crewmembers, but the company was in severe financial difficulties and in no position to meet the claim in full. With the agreement of the crewmembers, Touwen accepted a settlement worth 50 per cent of the crew claim plus free repatriation to Indonesia. The crewmembers concerned have now received a total of \$36,545, and the company has handed over \$3,000 in respect of legal costs. Some of the crewmembers have now got new jobs with a company in Rotterdam. Following the success of the other crew's claim, another crewmember got in touch with the ITF to say that he was also owed substantial backwages (nearly \$26,000). The lawyer who had dealt with the case contacted the German owners, but they refused to reply. RMT official Bob Maskey approached the vessel in **Belfast**, Northern Ireland on June 20 to ask why the lawyer's communications had been ignored. Despite the fact that a ship sailing under an ITF Agreement is contractually bound to allow an Inspector access to the ship and crew, the master of the ship refused Maskey access to the ship in an insulting and offensive manner. He then threw the shore-based workers off the ship and sailed out of port. The company have now apologised for their misbehaviour and agreed a settlement for the crewmember. He is to be paid \$15,000 in three \$5,000 monthly instalment payments.

A claim has been settled for five Tanzanian crewmembers on board the Cyprus flag *Maria M* in the German port of **Hamburg**. The crew of the *Maria M* had joined the ship last December but had only received a US\$100 advance against their pay. Foc inspector Ali Memon of the ÖTV obtained a settlement of US\$30,000 for the five men.



# ITF Seafarers' Bulletin published

The sixth edition of the ITF Seafarers' Bulletin is now available in the English language.

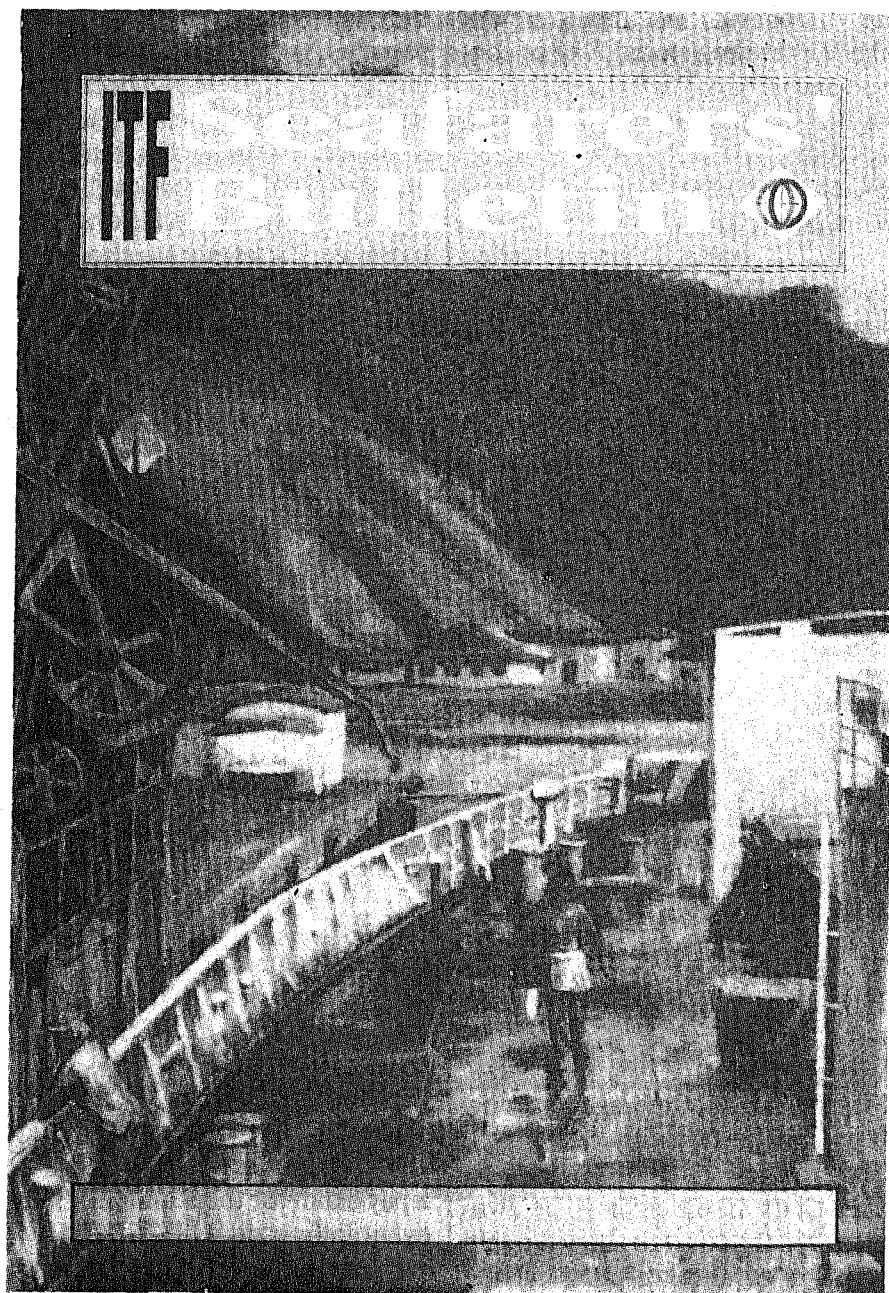
The ITF Seafarers' Bulletin is a unique, worldwide publication directed at serving seafarers on Flag of convenience vessels.

More than 100,000 copies are distributed worldwide by Foc Inspectors, port workers, seafarers' centres and ITF affiliates. Additionally, a growing band of individual seafarers directly distribute copies to ship's crews.

Reaction from seafarers themselves demonstrates that the Bulletin, which aims to inform crews about what the ITF is, what it does and how the campaign against Foc shipping works, clearly fills a vital gap in every ship's library. This edition contains four pages of letters to the Seafarers' Bulletin from every corner of the world (and every sea).

Additional language versions of the Bulletin will be appearing over the next three months. This edition will appear in Tagalog (Filipino), Korean, Chinese, Russian, Polish, Spanish, French, German and Swedish.

Regular distributors are already receiving their supplies. Thanks to the ITF's expanded membership in Central and Eastern Europe and the USSR, the Bulletin will be available to crews from Vancouver to Vladivostok, and Archangel to Cape Town and Buenos Aires. If you



would like to help the ITF with distribution, or even if you just want your own copy, please write to the ITF Research and Publications Department (133-135 Great Suffolk Street, London, England SE1 1PD).

Stories in this full colour, 48 page Bulletin include: News

from the ITF Campaign, the situation in Burma, Seafarers' Art by "Mellis" Melander, Seafarers' working hours, the continuing scandal of bulk carrier losses, the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System, the ITF Seafarers' Trust, AIDS and letters.





# INLAND TRANSPORT

## Turkish railway workers "sick-out" in protest

Railway workers from all over Turkey joined a mass "sick-out" on June 20th in support of their demands for a new collective agreement.

Over 20,000 rail workers marched to their local hospitals at 9 a.m., registered themselves sick and then marched back to their workplaces chanting their demands.

Branch officials and shop stewards of the ITF-affiliated railway workers' union Demiryol-Is were arrested in some regions, but were later released.

The union has been negotiating with Turkish Railways (TCDD) over a new agreement since April. A particularly obstructive attitude on behalf of TCDD caused the negotiations to break down on June 18th, and a mediator has now been appointed to settle the dispute according to Turkish labour law.



Demiryol-Is is determined to secure wage increases which compensate for the halving of real earnings since 1980.

## Japanese rail crash highlights dangers of multiple operators using same track

The dangers inherent in allowing publicly and privately owned companies to share the same rail network — particularly when private sector companies operate to lower safety standards — were tragically underlined last month in Japan when forty-two people were killed and over 400 injured in the country's worst train accident for almost thirty years.

The accident happened on May 14th in a rural district of western Japan when two trains — one a semi-express and the other a slower local train — collided head-on on a curve on the single track Shigaraki Highland Railway line.

The first carriage of one of the trains — a packed three-coach excursion train taking 600 tourists to a

festival in Shigaraki, 65 km east of Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto — jack-knifed up into the air. The other train — a four-coach local train carrying about 100 passengers bound for Kibukawa — also suffered severe damage to its leading carriage which buckled on impact. Most of the dead were on the tourist train.

The driver of the local train was killed in the accident and the driver of the tourist train suffered serious facial injuries.

The two trains had been meant to pass at a crossing point that had been specially constructed to deal with the increased rail traffic generated by the festival but the local train was late due to a malfunctioning signal and left the station despite a red signal.

While not wishing to prejudge the findings of the accident investigation, it would appear that the division of responsibility for safety on the rail line where the accident happened could well lie at the root of the tragedy.

The line itself used to belong to the state-owned Japanese National Railways, but was converted to private operation in 1987 and is now owned by Shigaraki Highlands Railways, a semi-private company. The tourist train was operated by West Japan Railway company, which is a division of the Japan Railway Corporation — the successor of the former state-owned JNR — while the local train belongs to the semi-

Continued on page 20

# ***New rules for European railways***

Infrastructure must be run separately from railway operations and European railway undertakings will be obliged to provide access to their national networks for foreign operators, according to a decision taken by the European Community Council of Ministers on May 20.

The Council adopted in principle a draft Directive on the Development of Community Railways which, according to Transport Commissioner Karel van Miert, "opens the door" to a barrier free rail network within the EC. The key element in the new package, which for the first time applies to rail the principles of "freedom to provide transport services" already dominating the road and air modes, is the automatic right of joint ventures between companies in more than one EC member state to use rail track in other EC states necessary to run the service.

The Directive effectively opens

the door to private companies running their own trains although it is careful not to express a preference for private or public ownership. Rail undertakings outside the EC (for example in Switzerland, Austria or Yugoslavia) can be part of the proposed joint ventures provided they do not hold a controlling interest. The package also gives the right of access to the entire EC network to any company operating "combined transport" — ie moving freight by a combination of rail and road (and where appropriate, water) from its own country to another EC destination.

In order to make these proposals work in practice and fit in with EC competition policy, they will have to be accompanied by important changes in railway accounting and charging practices and greater "transparency" over the subsidies given by governments to operate

uneconomic but socially necessary services.

The separation of infrastructure and operations is something on which railway unions have mixed feelings. On the positive side, it could help to provide more equal competition between rail and road (at present most road infrastructure is state funded, while railways have to build and maintain track themselves). On the negative side, however, there is a danger that the new proposals could be used to open up the railways to privatisation, a move which could, taken together with the obligation of states to identify subsidies, encourage the further closure of rural and suburban services. There are also serious safety concerns, demonstrated by the recent Japanese crash (see separate story), about allowing multiple operators access to the same track.

## **...Japan's worst rail accident for 30 years**

Continued from page 19

private Shigaraki Highland Railway Company.

Shigaraki Highlands Railways has already admitted to allowing the local train to leave the station against a red signal without confirming that the track was clear. Railway officials would also appear to have contravened regulations by boarding the train and overriding the on-board Automatic Train Stop system. In their defence, the railway company said that releasing the ATS system would have turned all track lights to red and that there was little danger of a collision as trains heading towards each other would normally stop in such circumstances.

There is some dispute as to whether information on the signals breakdown and the subsequent delay to the local train was passed to the next station for transmission to the JR train, but, whatever the truth

of the matter, the JR train was not relayed information about the delay to the local train (direct train-to-train communications were impossible as their radios operated on different frequencies) and must have assumed that the line was clear.

In a press statement, the ITF-affiliated Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions (JRU) said that the accident was a tragic consequence of putting profit before rail safety.

This tragic accident, which apparently stemmed from a minor private railway company's neglect of vital

safety procedures, should make states everywhere reconsider just how safe it is to allow private rail companies access to their systems — a subject which may grow in importance since the EC is planning to open up rail networks in the Community to outside operators (see above).

Meanwhile, the JRU is demanding an exhaustive investigation into the causes of the accident and the implementation of safety measures to prevent similar accidents in the future.

## ***New agreement for German river workers***

German river workers have won a 5.8 per cent pay increase in a new one-year contract signed by the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (ÖTV).

The agreement, which came into effect on May first 1991, follows two difficult negotiating rounds led by union negotiators Manfred Rosenberg and Hans-Werner Kayßer.

ÖTV members working on goods and passenger vessels as well as those employed in continuous navigation are all covered by the new pay rates.

# ITF union assistance to truckers caught in border blockades proposed

The worldwide threat of future frontier blockades arising from deregulation and liberalisation was discussed by the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section Committee at its meeting in Copenhagen on 15 and 16 May 1991, which was chaired by Ricardo Pérez of the National Federation of Road Haulage Workers, Argentina.

The meeting suggested that as this type of action was likely to become increasingly common the Secretariat should draw up a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of local union officials in border areas for use by driver members of ITF affiliates caught up in blockades.

A resolution was adopted assigning a coordinating role to the ITF Secretariat and urging the UN Economic Commission for Europe to bring its influence to bear on governments in countries where actions occur to ease the situation of affected drivers.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers introduced a Specimen Regulation covering the Duty Time and Rest Periods of Drivers of Commercial Transport Vehicles, drawn up with the aim of assist-

ing unions in countries where such regulations either do not exist or only cover technical subjects.

The Regulation, which in its essentials is entirely compatible with ILO Convention No. 153 concerning Hours of Work and Rest Periods in Road Transport, was adopted by the Committee as a Recommendation.

The question of a possible European Collective Agreement was also alluded to briefly and then referred to the next Section Conference.

## CONSTRUCTION OF VEHICLES

The meeting examined proposed ITF Construction and Design Standards for trucks drawn up by the Secretariat with the aim of persuading vehicle manufacturers to accept them. Some progress has already been made with Scania, which has indicated that it would be willing to sign an agreement with the ITF to construct vehicles to an ITF standard.

It was agreed that the Standards should apply to vehicles of 3.5 tons gross vehicle weight and over, and that an automotive engineer should be consulted on cab impact resistance standards.

A small working group, headed by Anders Westin of the Swedish

Municipal Employees' Union, has been set up to draft proposals on corresponding construction standards for buses and coaches. The group will use the results of a major Swedish research project into optimum driving conditions as a starting point for their deliberations.

## ASSISTANCE TO DRIVERS ABROAD

The meeting looked at the possibility of setting up an international driver assistance scheme similar to the one provided by EUROP ASSISTANCE to Belgian drivers.

Many affiliates already assist each others' drivers and it was suggested that the various bilateral agreements between affiliates might eventually be merged in a Europe-wide scheme.

The Secretariat has agreed to put together a list of union contact addresses, names and telephone numbers which will be issued to driver members of ITF affiliates so that they will know who to turn to for help if they run into difficulties on international journeys.

On health and safety, the Committee was briefed on the progress of the research project being carried out by Professor Åkerstedt in Sweden on driver fatigue.

The meeting was also told that researchers in the Netherlands were preparing a proposal for research on drivers in long-distance passenger transport.

## VISIT TO SCANIA

On May 17, delegates visited the Scania plant at Södertälje near Stockholm where they attended the Scania centenary show and visited the Scania museum, information centre, body assembly line and test track.

The next Road Transport Workers' Section Conference will be held in Japan in September/October 1992 at the invitation of the Japanese members of the Section Committee.

## Vienna-Prague EuroCity service

The recent political developments in East and Central Europe are having a positive impact on the pan-European rail network.

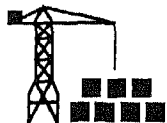
Closer co-operation between national railway administrations has led to an expansion of the EuroCity passenger rail system.

On June 2, the "Antonin Dvorak" had its maiden run as the new Vienna-Prague EuroCity service. EuroCity has recently started Munich-Zagreb, Munich-Budapest,

Zürich-Berlin, Leipzig-Luxembourg-Paris and Dresden-Paris services.

EuroCity was introduced as a value added passenger network in 1987. It now links 200 European towns. The trains must meet strict quality standards in terms of reliability, speed, catering, comfort and overall service.

Similar moves towards integration are also underway in the EuroCargo freight system.



# DOCKERS

## *Unions call for port training strategy*

Cargo-handling by seafarers, vocational training standards for dockworkers and the transport of nuclear waste were among the issues discussed at the annual meeting of the ITF Dockers' Section, held in London on June third and fourth.

The meeting was attended by 45 delegates from 27 affiliated unions in 25 countries. It was chaired by Dockers' Section Chairman John Connolly (Transport and General Workers' Union, Great Britain).

Delegates were given the results of a survey conducted by the ITF among dockers' affiliates on national regulations and practices governing the handling of cargo by seafarers. The survey was conducted at the request of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in view of new US legislation restricting cargo-handling to US longshoremen. The new law (see **ITF News**, February 1991) only allows foreign seafarers to handle cargo if the country of beneficial ownership of the vessel allows American seafarers to handle cargo domestically. The survey revealed that in most countries cargo-handling work is normally restricted to registered port workers. More information is still being collected.

The issue of vocational training for port workers has grown in importance with the introduction of successive waves of new technology and with the attempts at deregulation of the ports sector in many countries. It is of particular urgency in the European Community because of the harmonisation of vocational qualifications and occupational categories accompanying the creation of the Single Market. Delegates agreed to schedule a fuller discussion on the issue at the next Section meeting and to work towards draw-

ing up an ITF policy on port workers' training.

On the issue of the transport of nuclear waste, delegates discussed the best way to implement the ITF's policy as contained in a resolution adopted at the Florence Congress last year. It was agreed that effective action against such cargoes could best be provided by a joint campaign of affiliates from all the ITF Sections involved. The focus of the campaign should be persuading the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to adopt measures prohibiting the carriage of irradiated nuclear materials on non-purpose built vessels.

The meetings sent messages of protest to the Turkish port employers, who are continuing their attempts to deny port workers new collective agreements, and to the President of Mexico, whose government has

placed the port of Veracruz under police control in the run-up to privatisation.

Rotterdam dockers' secretary Kees Marges of the ITF-affiliated Vervoersbond FNV is to visit the Brazilian ports on behalf of the ITF at the request of the ITF-affiliated maritime union CONTTMAF to discuss the experiences of European port workers with deregulation and restructuring.

The meeting approved the idea of constituting a Dockers' European Regional Committee, in line with the recommendation of the ITF's Executive Board that this be done for each industrial Section. The Executive Board and the Asia/Pacific Regional Committee are also to be asked to consider ways in which dockers in the Asia/Pacific Region can be given a forum to discuss the specific problems they face.

### **Swedish simulator measures cargo shift in transport**

**Anyone concerned with transport safety will have a better chance of understanding why container cargoes shift in transit, thanks to a new simulator constructed by a Swedish insurance company.**

**The simulator, built by a claims adjuster with Trygg Hansa, consists of a full-size container with transparent door panels mounted on a platform that moves up and down and side to side to recreate sea-like conditions. A similar platform is used to simulate carriage by road, with realistic acceleration and braking effects.**

**What happens to the cargo inside the container can be observed through the doors and is also monitored by a camera mounted inside. A computer wired up to 16 different points on the container can be used to measure the stresses and strains on the cargo and its lashings.**

**The simulator is already proving of great value in deciding the safest methods of packing and stowage for both maritime and land-based transport.**

# Union victory in Karachi strike

Resolute action in the face of harassment and arrests has won dockworkers in Karachi, Pakistan a 20 per cent pay hike and increases in other benefits.

Over 6,000 dockers belonging to the ITF-affiliated Karachi Harbour and Dock Workers' Union launched an eleven-day strike on May 22nd in support of wage demands and greater job security. At present the dockers do not have a guaranteed monthly wage.

The government and port authority took fright at the action, which quickly and effectively shut down the port and threatened to have major repercussions for the coun-

try's economy. Private stevedoring companies were encouraged to bring untrained casual labour into the port under heavy police protection.

When well-organised picketing by the union persuaded the casual workers not to break the strike, furious police commanders had 29 strike activists arrested and sent search parties hunting for the union's leadership.

The authorities next tried to instruct seafarers to operate dock cranes, but the ITF-affiliated Pakistan Seamen's Union (PSU) quickly put a stop to this.

With the Karachi Dock Labour Board threatening to place thou-

sands of untrained workers on a "temporary" register, the dispute threatened to escalate out of the control of the government. Federal Communications Minister Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi called a meeting of all sides, and an offer acceptable to the union was soon on the table. The casual workers were withdrawn from the port.

In addition to the 20 per cent rise in daily wages, bonuses have been increased. The union's demand for permanent status for registered workers has been referred to the National Industrial Relations Commission.

## *Union refutes company closure claim*

Rattled by the strike by ITF-affiliated Turkish port workers' union Likat-Is and by a highly effective protest campaign by ITF affiliates (see **ITF News**, April 1991), the Limas port company is attempting to hit back with a bizarre justification for its actions.

In a letter to ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, Limas management claimed that they had been forced to dismiss their workforce and refuse to negotiate with the union because their parent company Metas had closed a year previously and as a result the port had to shut down altogether.

If this were true, the Limas management's sole function in the last three months must have been sitting by a fax machine receiving angry messages from ITF dockers' unions.

In fact, as Likat-Is have pointed out, Metas is working again after a period of financial difficulties and has recently increased its capital stock to TL 450 billion. It also recently received a State loan of TL

100 billion, a difficult feat for a company which has supposedly closed down. Metas management recently signed a collective agreement with the metal workers' union, which organises workers in its plants.

Likat-Is has a much more coherent explanation for the dismissals at Limas: an attempt by the company to avoid paying redundancy allowances.

"Their aim is to get rid of our members and to hire non-unionised new workers on minimum wages," says the union, adding that the legality of the dismissals is currently being decided by the Court of Appeal.

\* Prompt action by members of Likat-Is in the public sector port of Mersin on the Mediterranean coast has quashed an attempt by the employers to introduce non-dockers into the labour force on temporary contracts. 1500 dockers held a sit-in on May 16th after Turkish Railways (TCDD), which owns the port, had hired three new workers on seven-

month contracts. Normally casual workers are hired from a list provided by the union, but this procedure was ignored in this case. TCDD panicked at the sit-in and laid off the three workers again, but before the action could be called off seven Likat-Is branch officials were detained by the security forces, the authorities claiming that the sit-in was illegal. The dockers continued to occupy the port in protest, and their colleagues were released without charge fourteen hours later.

\*\* Likat-Is members in a number of ports have led mass protest actions against the attacks on collective bargaining rights in the public sector. Throughout mid-June port workers held local protest marches and joined their colleagues from other state-owned industries in mass "sick-outs", hammering home the message to the Turkish government that the problems of the public sector cannot be solved by attacking the workforce.





## CIVIL AVIATION

# ***ANG: solidarity action and government intervention finally brings reinstatement***

The nine flight attendants dismissed by Air Niugini for taking limited protest action against excessive duty hours have finally been reinstated. This victory follows a long dispute during which the airline was both uncompromising and dishonest in its relations with the ITF-affiliated Papua New Guinea Flight Attendants' Association and the ITF (see *ITF News*, April 1991).

Following a Grievance Board decision in the union's favour, the airline wrote to the ITF claiming that the flight attendants had been reinstated — a statement which the ITF later discovered to be completely

untrue. In fact the airline had reneged on its promise to abide by the Board's decision and had not put the flight attendants back on the payroll. As a result of the airline's dishonesty, the ITF requested its affiliates to take further action in support of the Papua New Guinea Flight Attendants' Association.

Following a lengthy period during which fruitless attempts were made to persuade the company to keep its promises, members of the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union once again refused to handle Air Niugini's aircraft on May 29 after it arrived in Sydney. For most of that

day no fuel or catering was supplied to the aircraft. The Australian Flight Attendants' Association agreed not to co-operate with any additional Qantas services to Papua New Guinea and the Australian International Cabin Crew Association also agreed to support this action.

The prompt and effective solidarity action taken by the Australian unions this time stimulated action at the highest level. Following a discussion in the PNG Cabinet, the Prime Minister intervened and ordered the airline to reinstate the flight attendants.

## **Mass sackings follow strike at Turkish Airlines**

Members of the ITF-affiliated Turkish civil aviation union Hava-Is were considering a three day hunger strike in protest against the victimisation of union members following their strike victory in May (see *ITF News*, May 1991).

The hunger strike which was due to last for three days beginning on June 19 was a response to the dismissal by Turkish Airlines (THY) of four hundred workers.

None of these workers could possibly have been dismissed for poor service — one of them received an award in 1990 for his work as a technician. THY simply wanted to take revenge on those who supported the strike which ended with a 154 per cent pay rise for the workers.

The airline's management are also aiming to weaken the union so as to make it easier to implement large-scale redundancies in the run up to privatisation. The company is reported to be planning to shed 3,000 workers — more than a third of the

total workforce.

Under Turkish law, it is easy for employers to dismiss workers without compensation simply by claiming that their company is overstaffed. Employers often use dismissals to intimidate workers and to weaken trade unions.

Against a background of fierce anti-union legislation, Hava-Is will face great difficulties fighting the worst effects of THY's privatisation programme. As with their strike, however, they will receive the full backing of the ITF's civil aviation unions worldwide for their fight.

## ***TGWU action in support of Gulf-based crews***

Support by members of the ITF-affiliated UK Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) for BA employees in Bahrain has paid off. The Gulf-based employees, dismissed as part of BA's cost-saving plan, have been reinstated.

The Gulf-based crew, many of whom are Palestinians, are not covered by the redundancy provisions negotiated by the TGWU for BA's UK employees. However, TGWU members felt that equal conditions should apply to both home and foreign-based crews, whatever their nationality.

The TGWU refused initially to agree to the cost-saving plan because of BA's decision to discriminate against its Gulf-based employees. A recent ruling by the Bahrain court found that the dismissals were unfair and ordered that the workers be reinstated with back pay dating back to the dismissal date.

# Thai Airways dismissals battle continues

The ITF-affiliated All India Federation of Foreign Airlines Employees' Unions (AIFFAEU) is continuing its struggle against a decision by Thai Airways International to dismiss 22 of its "temporary" employees in New Delhi and to subcontract their work to outside companies (see **ITF News**, January 1991).

There are now reports that the local management in Delhi is planning to transfer all of Thai Airways' airport operations to private contractors, possibly including Air India. If these plans go ahead, the remaining employees in Delhi will be threatened with dismissal.

Throughout the dispute, the Thai Airways' local managers in Delhi have used vindictive and inti-

midatory anti-union tactics against the Thai Airways Employees' Association which is a member of the AIFFAEU. These tactics have included illegal transfers of union activists between jobs and the payment of extra benefits to non-union employees.

The meeting of the ITF Civil Aviation Section Committee in London in April adopted a motion expressing support for the dismissed workers (see **ITF News**, April 1991). ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary Mo Hoda has now written to the Managing Director of Thai Airways asking him to intervene personally to resolve the dispute. ITF civil aviation affiliates in countries to which Thai operates have been asked to

make similar approaches to the management.

The ITF's Japanese Coordinating Committee is organising a special meeting on July second to discuss the situation at Thai Airways Delhi office. Support from Japanese unions could be particularly effective since Thai Airways operates to a number of Japanese destinations.

The behaviour of Thai Airways is typical of the disregard shown by many foreign airlines operating in India for their local employees. These operators are increasingly subcontracting their operations as a means of cutting costs and undermining organised labour. Contracting out was also an issue on which the Section Committee passed a strongly worded resolution.

## ***ITF warns American against union busting***

The ITF has warned the management of American Airlines that it may face solidarity action from ITF aviation affiliates if it continues with plans to cancel union recognition when it takes over TWA's services out of London's Heathrow airport from July first.

Ground staff employed by TWA have for many years been represented by a number of unions including the ITF-affiliated TGWU and MSF. The ITF was asked to intervene by the British unions when they learned that AA local management were proposing to cancel existing collective bargaining arrangements for employees transferred as a result of the route takeover and to make employees sign individual contracts with substantially inferior conditions of employment.

Employees of TWA have been balloted on possible strike action about the move but the unions may be caught by a bizarre twist in UK industrial relations law. Thanks to Mrs. Thatcher, workers can only ballot on strike action against their employer. This means they can only

strike against TWA (which isn't causing the problem) until the change-over takes place, forcing a new ballot amongst those TWA employees who have been lucky enough to get new jobs with AA.

In a letter to American's chairman Bob Crandall on May 24, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis expressed strong support for the British unions' campaign to retain trade union and collective bargaining rights, and warned that, if the dispute was not resolved, ITF affiliates in other countries might be called on to take solidarity action. The letter was backed up by solidarity messages to the UK union from the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America (TWU) which organises more than 32,000 American Airlines employees in the United States.

On May 31, American Airlines' Vice-President for Europe responded to the ITF protest. In a statement which will sound familiar to unions facing union-busting employers worldwide, Mr Conrad Jacoby disputed the ITF's claim that

the new contracts offered to ex-TWA staff were "inferior", on the grounds that the vast majority of TWA employees had signed them "promptly of their own volition, despite being offered time to discuss them with their families".

What Mr Jacoby did not mention was that workers refusing to sign the new contracts would have been without a job from July first! "We are not anti-union," Mr Jacoby concluded, "we are simply a pro-employee employer."

Discussions to resolve the problem are still continuing but one thing is perfectly clear. This type of union-busting activity by foreign operators is totally unacceptable. If American Airlines is permitted to get away with it in Heathrow, it will try the same trick elsewhere and other airlines will be keen to see if they can do the same. ITF civil aviation unions therefore have a strong interest in seeing that American's activities meet with an appropriate international response. The precise nature of that response will emerge in the coming few months.

# Post-Gulf industry recovery is very slow

Airlines are continuing to recover from the effects of the Gulf crisis — but much more slowly than expected. Many carriers have put in motion cost-cutting programmes and big job losses are expected at KLM, SAS and Qantas. The endless round of airline privatisations continues in all parts of the world, while Trans-European Airlines has won the right to fly from London-Gatwick to Brussels.

## ICAO ESTIMATES

The International Civil Aviation Organization estimates that the world's scheduled airlines experienced a loss of 1.3 per cent on operating revenues of US\$198 billion in 1990, the first recorded loss since 1982. This result is attributed primarily to a weak economic climate in 1990, exacerbated by the Gulf crisis and increased fuel prices.

The airlines' organisation, the International Air Transport Association, estimates that its members lost \$2 billion in the first two months of this year and are continuing to suffer from the slowdown in international air travel. However, leading aircraft lessor GPA has said that some predictions have been unduly pessimistic and is forecasting that traffic will grow by three per cent this year — about half the rate predicted before the crisis.

## COST-CUTTING PROGRAMMES

One of those hit by the downturn in world air travel is KLM, the Dutch national carrier, which has recently announced a US\$315 millions net loss for the financial year 1990-1991 — a sharp reversal from the net profit posted in 1989-90. The airline is planning to cut 1,000 staff jobs and to contract out "non-core" activities such as catering, which will eliminate a further 2,000 jobs.

Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) also wants to restructure its activities, and is planning to cut 3,900 jobs. The group will try to achieve half this reduction through relocation and early retirement but the

remainder will involve compulsory redundancies.

## QANTAS JOB LOSSES

Qantas, Australia's government-owned international airline, is preparing to shed up to 3,600 workers by December as it gets ready for privatisation. A report by the management consultancy firm Coopers and Lybrand recommends a cut of 14 per cent in the technical staff and 18 per cent of sales and marketing staff. 700 cabin crew will lose their jobs if the report is implemented. The report also recommends a cut of 200 of the airline's top management — one third of the total.

The Australian government is planning to sell off 49 per cent of the airline. Northwest Airlines has emerged as a potential bidder for a stake, along with Japan Air Lines and Singapore International Airlines. The Australian government is prepared to sell up to 25 per cent to foreign investors.

## MAS RESTRUCTURING

The Malaysian government has announced plans to spin off the regional and domestic operations of Malaysia Airlines (MAS), the national carrier, as a separate airline. The proposed move is in line with the government's policy of privatising the entire transport sector, including airports, ports and railways.

It is probable that MAS's regional and domestic business will be merged with two other government-linked civil aviation companies. This will leave MAS as a strictly long-haul carrier. The airline is also expected to spin off catering services.

## PHILIPPINE AIRLINES PRIVATISATION

The Philippine government, keen to arrange early privatisation of Philippine Airlines, is set to assume the flag carrier's foreign obligations of more than US\$400 million. The government has also raised the limit on foreign ownership in the privatised Philippine Airlines to 40 per cent from 35 per cent. Northwest Airlines has expressed interest in

taking part in a consortium being organised by a big Philippine bank. Another contender is a Manila-based consortium backed by a group of Philippine Airlines pilots.

## LOT AIRCRAFT PURCHASE

The Swedish airline Linjeflyg has signed an agreement with the Polish state-owned airline LOT to start a regional European airline run as a joint venture. LOT which is being prepared for privatisation, is to lease nine MD-80 medium-range passenger jetliners and already has three leased Boeing 767 aircraft in operation.

## TRANS-EUROPEAN AIRWAYS

Trans-European Airways (TEA) has won its battle with the Belgian government to operate scheduled services from Brussels to Gatwick. The airline starts operations next week, replacing the services of Air Europe which was put into administrative receivership in March after the collapse of the International Leisure Group.

## Sacked Argentinian cabin crew reinstated

Eleven cabin attendants, members of the ITF-affiliated Asociación Argentina de Aeronavegantes (AAA), who were dismissed by Aerolíneas Argentinas on 24 January 1991, have been reinstated, following a ministerial decree.

The cabin attendants were dismissed as a result of accusations made against them by New Zealand customs for importing goods without receipts. The AAA was very active in pressing for the cancellation of the dismissals.

The meeting of the ITF Cabin Crew Technical Committee held in Buenos Aires in March, adopted a resolution in support of the dismissed cabin attendants. This resolution was useful to the AAA in its efforts to have the dismissals reversed and the union has expressed thanks to all the delegates who attended the meeting.

## The whaling ban: sentiment versus science

Are whales specially privileged creatures to be protected for all time, or should they be treated like big fish? Can the world's dwindling fish stocks survive an unfettered growth in whale numbers? What chance is there of a global consensus on the international regulation of whaling when the relevant international regulatory body appears dominated by member states who are opposed in principle to the very existence of the industry?

The annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission (the 43rd), at the end of May in Reykjavík, Iceland, left these and other fundamental questions unanswered.

The crisis within the IWC arises from a tension between two increasingly irreconcilable positions. On the one hand there are the traditional whale-hunting nations, which agreed to the 1986 moratorium on the sound scientific grounds that dwindling whale stocks needed to be protected so that rational harvesting could continue in the future. On the other side are the environmentalist movement and their IWC allies who believe that morally no whale hunting should be allowed no matter how many whales there are. Ironically, many of the states who so vigorously espouse the "environmentalist" position were responsible for the virtual eradication of the world's whale stocks in the first half of this century.

Whether it is guilt on the part of countries like the USA and the UK which drives them into the arms of the anti-whaling lobby, or simply that they no longer have any economic interest in the business, it is clear that sentiment, not science, determines their policy.

Scientists now agree that there is a sustainable yield of Minke and fin

whales in Arctic and Antarctic waters (fin whale stocks, in fact, were never seriously depleted).

While stocks were low, the anti-whale lobby based its position on conservation arguments. Now the numbers have increased, they have switched to moral arguments. Much of the general public agree with them — so far — but it's time to start looking at what some of the more extreme (and honest) environmentalists are saying. Whales eat fish (especially cod) and lots of it. If unfettered growth in whale numbers continues, humans will have to accept an ever decreasing yield of other fish.

The alternative to radical vegetarianism is to acknowledge that humans are a part of the food chain, and that whale-hunting has long been part of a managed and balanced approach to the marine environment.

### THE TRADE UNION VIEW

The ITF-affiliated seafarers' federations in Iceland (SSI and FFSI), who represent the vast majority of the country's fishermen, issued a statement at this year's IWC. The statement pointed out that:

"For a long time, Iceland has based its livelihood on the utilization of the resources of the oceans surrounding the country. The prerequisite for a fishing nation like Iceland to be able to utilize its resources on a permanent basis is that constant care should be taken not to exploit them.

"Icelandic seamen and ship operators have always conducted their fishing in compliance with the advice of scientists on how much utilization the stocks will sustain," the unions say.

They point out that the IWC moratorium was originally agreed to run from 1986 to 1990.

"The resolution stipulated that during this time the IWC should initiate comprehensive scientific research on the whale stocks with the aim of being able at the end of this period to assess the size of the different whale stocks and on that basis to make a decision on the continuance of whaling.

"Under the leadership of Iceland, comprehensive research on whale stocks has now been conducted in the North Atlantic. This research shows unequivocally that we now can safely start hunting for Minke whales and fin whales around Iceland."

Despite the fact that Iceland was asked by the IWC to conduct this research, various environmentalist groups have denounced the research and even called for a boycott of Icelandic goods because of the research whaling — an indication of a two-faced lack of respect for the IWC's authority.

"The seamen who have been involved in whaling around Iceland," say the unions, "whose entire livelihood depends on such utilization to be authorized again, trust that in the light of the available data... permission will be given to start hunting for Minke whales and fin-whales immediately this summer. The livelihood of the seamen and their families is at stake."

Furthermore, the Seamen's Federations point out that if the IWC declares a continued ban on whaling, the livelihood of those who fish in the ocean surrounding the country, as well as the whole nation, will be put in jeopardy in future due to excessive growth in the marine mammal population. "Now, as always before, Iceland intends to conduct its whaling in close co-operation with

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# Unions to campaign for marine environment

A worldwide campaign against the increasing damage to the world's seas by pollution is being promoted by the ITF Fishermen's Section.

The section's Sub-Committee on Marine Pollution, meeting in Reykjavik on 29-30 May, reviewed the "ITF Action Programme on Marine Pollution" (adopted June 1990 by the conference of the ITF Fishermen's Section) and the "Plan of Action for the Sea Environment" adopted by the International Trade Union Conference on Sea Environment (Leningrad, September 1990) with a view to developing a comprehensive policy on marine pollution and the protection of the environment.

The meeting agreed that the policy should be produced as a campaigning brochure. An outline of the policy was agreed and the Secretariat was asked to draft a proposed policy and circulate it to all Fisheries' affiliates for comment.

In response to the Leningrad meeting's recommendation that the ITF and Foodworkers' International IUF should arrange an international conference on the environment, the meeting endorsed the suggestion and recommended that the ITF should take a leading role in organising this event.

Under other business, the meeting requested the Secretariat to write to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conveying the ITF's disappointment at the ILO's con-



tinuing failure to establish a Standing Committee on the Fishing Industry.

The meeting also asked the Secretariat to circulate the European Communities Commission document on problems with the Common Fisheries Policy to ITFEC fisheries' affiliates for comment.

Finally, the meeting discussed the serious threat posed by under sea-bed dumping of radioactive and other toxic wastes, such as the British plan for a radioactive waste under-sea dump north of Dounreay, Scotland.

The Committee passed a motion condemning moves to dump waste under-sea. The motion points out that in the North Atlantic the 1974 Paris Convention under which contracting parties undertook to adopt measures to forestall or eliminate pollution of the sea by radioactive substances and other wastes from sources on land is an existing instrument which should be broadened to apply to the threat of under-sea dumping. The motion calls on states who have signed this convention to bring under-sea dumping into the convention.

## ...Affiliates call on Iceland to quit IWC

Continued from page 27

the country's scientists in this field and take care that the whale stocks will not be threatened by whaling, so a continued balance in the ecosystem can be maintained."

In the end, the plea fell on deaf ears. The IWC has agreed to a potential lifting of the ban in the Antarctic on Minke stocks. Scientists

calculate that there are 760,000 Minkes in the area, and a provisional quota of 7,000 Minkes is now under consideration.

But despite similar calculations that there are 100,000 Minkes in the North Atlantic, no quota will be allowed. Iceland only wanted immediate permission to hunt a few hundred whales, but they were ig-

nored.

The unions are urging the Icelandic government to commence whaling in spite of the IWC. Icelandic whaling commissioner Gudmundur Erikson has publicly recommended that his country leave the IWC.

The ITF was represented at the meeting by Senior Section Assistant Mark Dickinson.



# OBITUARIES

**Norman Docker**, former General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia (WWF) and the union's longest serving official, died in May, aged 68.

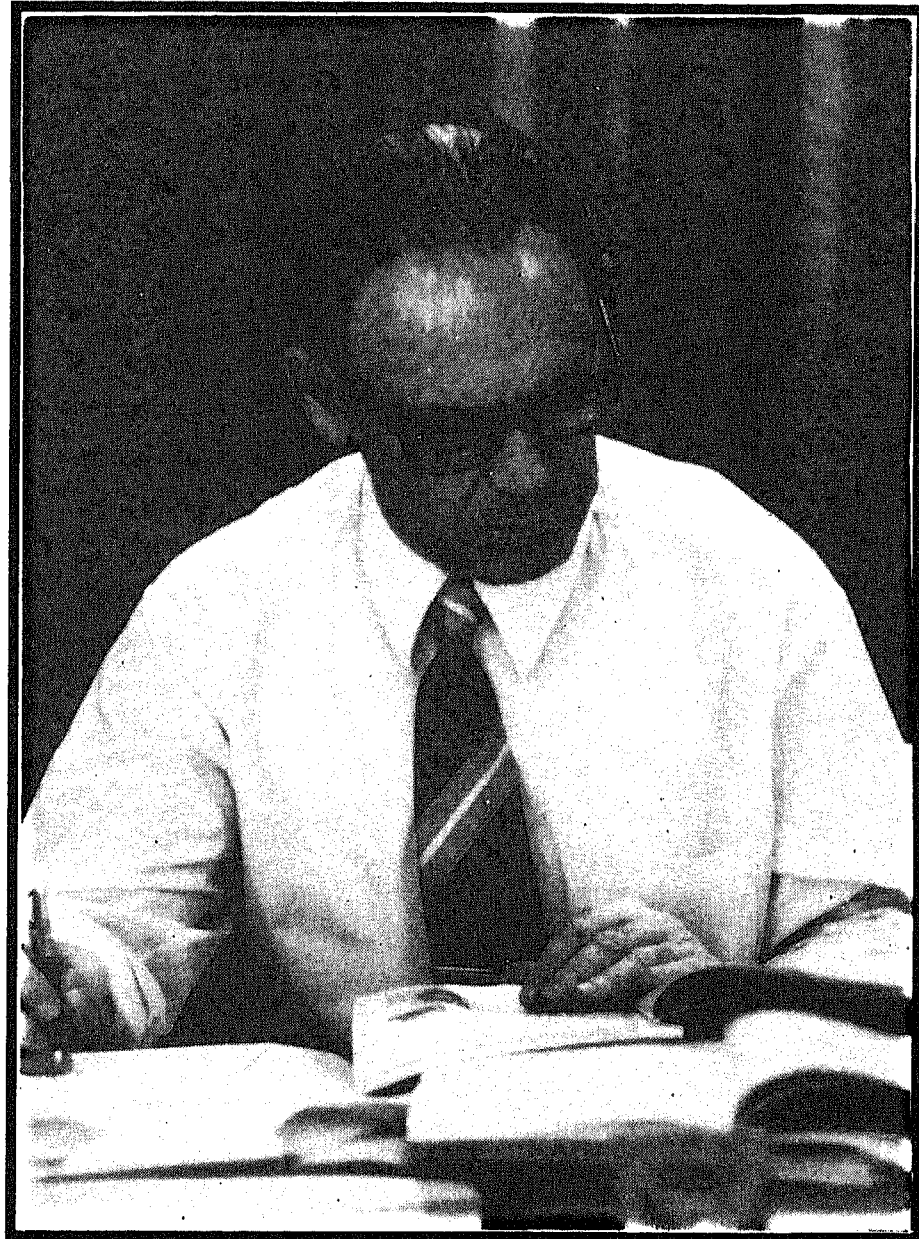
Norman first joined the WWF in 1950, working on the Sydney waterfront. His talents were soon recognised and within a year he had been appointed to the post of Federal Industrial and Research Officer.

In a distinguished union career, he held a number of posts, his elected positions including those of Industrial Officer, Assistant General Secretary-Treasurer and Assistant General Secretary.

On the retirement of General Secretary Charlie Fitzgibbon in 1983, Docker was elected to the union's top post, but was forced to retire early a year later for health reasons. It was typical of the man that he shrugged off the serious problems that had forced him to take this difficult decision and which only became fully apparent once he had left office.

Docker's career with the WWF spanned the peak of the union's numerical strength and political and industrial influence and he himself was an influential figure in both national and international circles. He was a member of the ACTU Industrial Legislation Committee and represented the WWF for a number of years on the waterfront industry's consultative council.

It was Docker with his carefully prepared and researched submissions to the various government inquiries of the time who helped put an end to the much-hated casual labour system and assisted in the creation of a modern dock industry in which the workers enjoy job security, a guaranteed minimum wage and conditions of employment that are superior to those offered by most other industries.



He also did much to make the WWF an industry union, recruiting tradesmen, shipping clerks and shipwrights to its ranks, although it took his not inconsiderable skills as an advocate (he was a trained lawyer) to fend off legal challenges from those factions that sought to resist the growth of an industry union on the docks.

He was active within the ITF Dockers' Section and at the ITF's request intervened on various occasions in the support of a number of Pacific dockers' unions.

**Avraham Alon**, Director of Histadrut's International Department, died on June 24, at the age of 59. Alon had worked for the General Confederation of Labour in Israel for over twenty years and had a deep commitment to international trade unionism.

**Joseph P Selly**, President of the American Radio Association and its predecessor union for nearly thirty years, died on March 13, aged 85.

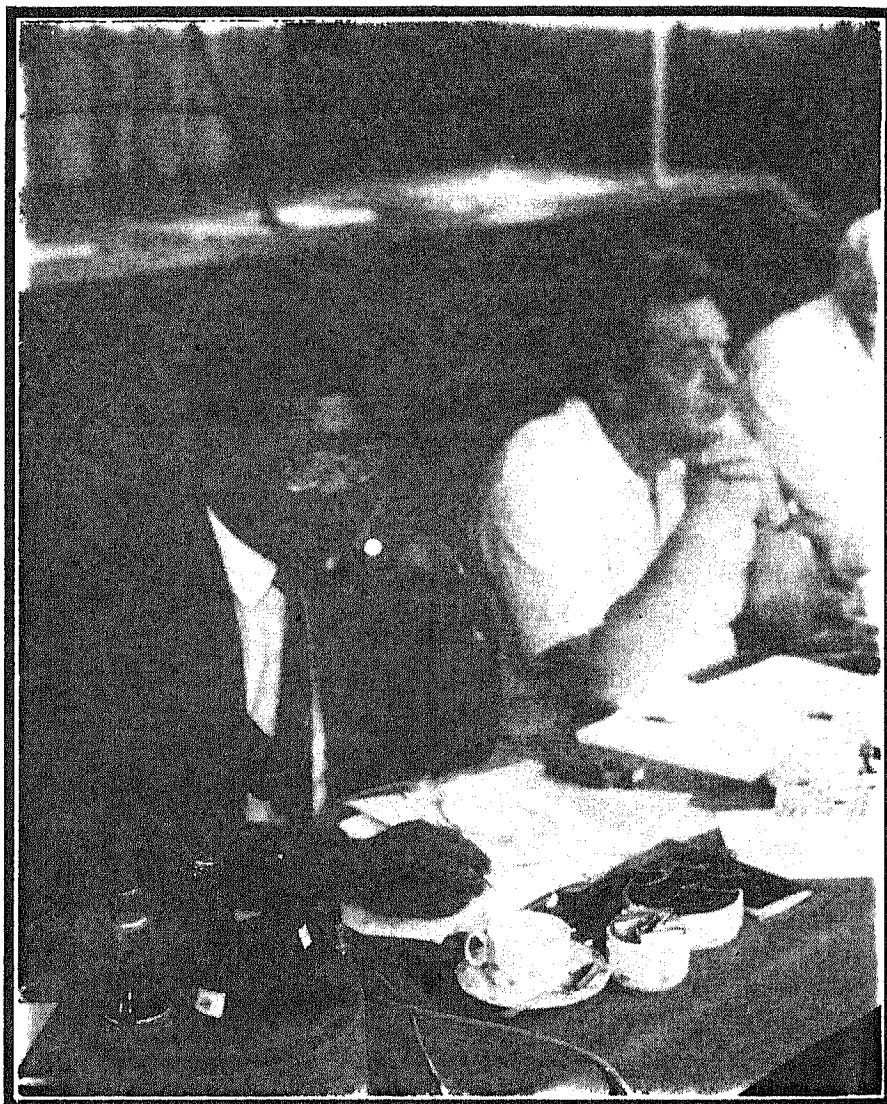


## PEOPLE

### ***Bill Morris elected General Secretary of British Transport and General Workers' Union***

ITF Executive Board member **Bill Morris** has been elected as the next General Secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union. Aged 52, Bill moves up to the union's top post from that of Deputy General Secretary—he has been the union's second highest ranking officer for the past five years. Bill will take over as General Secretary from Ron Todd when the latter retires in March 1992. Born in Jamaica, Bill settled in Britain in 1954 and found work in the engineering industry in the West Midlands, where he became a union shop steward. His full time involvement with the TGWU began in 1973 as district organiser and later as a district secretary. His progress in the union was swift and by 1979 he had become National Trade Group Secretary for Passenger Services, with responsibility for national negotiations in the bus and coach industries. Six years later, he was appointed Deputy General Secretary. He serves on the General Council and Finance and General Purposes Committee of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) and also chairs the TUC's Transport Committee. Bill was elected to the ITF Executive Board at the Luxembourg Congress in 1986.

ITF Executive Board member **Victoriano Sánchez** was re-elected General Secretary of the Spanish FETT-UGT at the union's extraordinary Congress held on May tenth and eleventh. **Miguel de Julian**, was also re-elected by the extraordinary congress as the union's International Secretary.



**Bill Morris (left) at the ITF Congress**

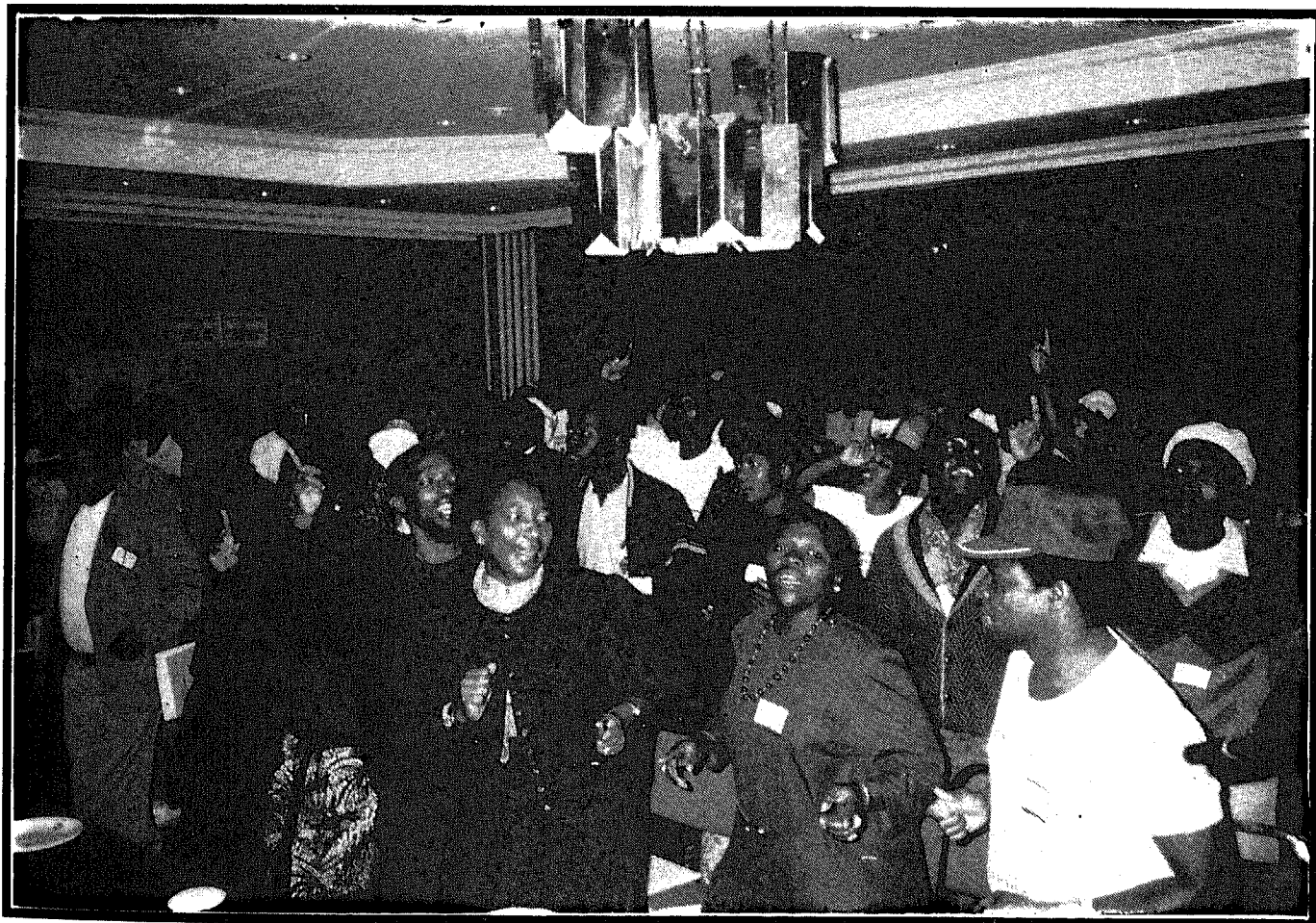
**Andreas C Savvides** has resigned after seventeen years as General Secretary of the Federation of Semi-Government Employees of Cyprus to take up the post of Financial Officer of the Cyprus Workers' Confederation. Savvides is succeeded as General Secretary by **Panayiotis Karavas**, who was elected by in May.

**Karl Casserini**, Assistant General Secretary of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF), has retired after thirty four years' service with the IMF. He was previously General Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD.



# FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

2-6 September	Foc Inspectors' Seminar	Eastbourne (England)
9-10 September	Fair Practices Committee Sub-Committee	London
11 September	Steering Committee of European Seafarers' Regional Committee	London
25-26 September	Rhine-Main-Danube Working Group	Regensburg
8-9 October	Channel Tunnel	Paris
9-10 October	Railwaymen's Section Transport Policy Sub-Committee	Paris
15-16 October	Executive Board	London



Not the usual scene at an ITF meeting, but certainly an inspiration to us all — the South African Transport and General Workers' Union Congress (see story on front page).

# ***ITF NEWS***

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Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation  
Fédération Internationale des Ouvriers du Transport  
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