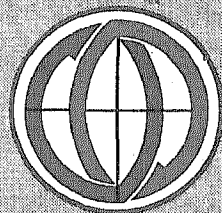


**INFORMATIONS : NOTICIAS**

# ITF NEWS



**NACHRICHTEN : NYHETER**

## ***BASQUE DOCKERS HALT TOXIC WASTE SHIP***

**Basque dockers boycotted a German ship in Bilbao in June, after information about toxic waste on board was withheld.**

The ITF affiliated union ELA-STV successfully blocked the discharge of German flag ship *Baltica* when the Basque government broke their promise to order an inspection of the suspect cargo of 1,700 tonnes of iron filings containing toxic residues of cadmium, arsenic and zinc.

The Basque authorities had been warned by Greenpeace of the dangers of the cargo (waste from a German factory). Despite guarantees from the Basque Government's Environment Councillor Jon Larrinaga, discharge operations were allowed to begin at 8:00 hrs. on the morning of June 28th without any cargo examination having taken place.

Due to heavy policing, portworkers were at first unable to gain access to prevent the unloading, but were finally successful in stopping completion of the discharge.

The cargo had been handled without adoption of safety measures, and "the trucks used were not even covered over, allowing small quantities of the material to fall to the ground or in the water", a union official in the port confirmed.

A Greenpeace spokesperson commented on the lack of protective clothing provided to port workers, and condemned the intervention of

the police in the port, given that the position maintained had always been one of non-violent dialogue.

As a result of the decisive action taken by ELA-STV and other unions in the port sector over this case, Bilbao Port Health and Safety Committee then took up the matter, reporting the case to the labour courts who obliged the Bilbao company ASER, recipients of the cargo, to provide a full analysis of the material on board.

Although ASER was not able to provide this, the company finally agreed that no further loads would be discharged without the provision of a proper analysis, and unloading operations were allowed to continue, this time under adequate safety conditions agreed by the port health authorities.

In a letter to the ITF, ELA-STV official Juan Cruz Lopez criticised the "chaotic situation" in the port of Bilbao concerning health and safety issues, and pointed to the lack of information given to portworkers as a matter for deep concern.

"ELA-STV has been protesting about the lack of information and of adequate safety provisions in the handling of goods in the port of Bilbao for

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**NIGERIA LIFTS UNION AFFILIATION BAN (4)**

# USSR coup : where were the unions?

The international trade union movement was quick to condemn the ill-fated 56 hour putsch by hard liners in the USSR.

The self-proclaimed "President" of the short lived "Committee for the State of Emergency" — Gennady Yanayev — was a former head of the USSR's official trade union movement. His prominence and subsequent fall highlights the nature of the old union bosses — who were just as much a part of the ruling clique as the senior officials in the KGB and the Army.

Questions remain about the position of the official trade union federation — both the Seafarers and the Fishermen's unions (which were accepted into ITF affiliation in March) have withdrawn from the national centre, along with the Mineworkers.

ICFTU General Secretary John Vanderveken, in a statement after the defeat of the coup, said:

"To our knowledge, the existing official trade unions have not clearly condemned the coup, nor have they openly backed the pro-democracy leaders. It would appear that they are very far from the workers' views on the crisis.

"As long as workers in the official trade unions do not enjoy the rights freely to elect their representative and determine their organisations policy, the credibility of such labour groups must be questioned as must their ability to contribute to the re-

## ...Bilbao dockers

Continued from page 1

some time, and has now proposed to the Health and Safety Committee that special attention be paid to these matters, demanding that the relevant labour authorities take action to place at the Committee's disposal adequate measures to deal with this serious problem, the consequences of which affect not only the workers, but also the environment," he said.

form process. It is worthy of note that coup leader Gennady Yanayev is a former chairman of the official unions."

The Miners' International Federation (MIF) held an emergency meeting in Budapest on August 20 (during the coup) to issue an appeal to Miners' unions to support the demands of the Confederation of Soviet Mineworkers' Union.

## Taxi drivers form free Indonesian transport union

Transport workers in Indonesia have created a Free Transport Union led by taxi drivers demanding the replacement of the present payment system.

Drivers have to pay a fixed sum to the taxi owner, but are now demanding the implementation of a percentage share-out system.

The act of creating a free trade union in Indonesia is a direct challenge to the government's long standing refusal to allow freedom of association to Indonesian workers.

The government requires all trade unions to be members of the SPSI or KORPRI "federations" that es-

The USSR Confederation called for the appearance of Gorbachev on television, the immediate withdrawal of all military forces from civilian areas, and a meeting of the Supreme Soviet to restore Constitutional order.

The USSR union called on its members to take "all appropriate steps including unlimited strike action" to enforce their demands.

pouse the official corporatist ideology of Indonesia's ruling Golkar party.

Some workers launched a new federation called SBMS (Solidarity Free Trade Union) in November last year. SBMS claims to have organised branches in 13 provinces.

Although the union has not been banned (perhaps an encouraging sign of a possible liberalisation in the regime), several ministers have said that the SBMS will not be officially recognised. Indonesian human rights observers have reported that the SBMS General Secretary was assaulted by armed men in June.

## African union leaders jailed

The military government of the Central African Republic has jailed two prominent leaders of the country's trade union centre in an effort to stifle the trade union movement and the pro-democracy movement which, in common with many African countries, has been led by the workers' movement.

Theophile Sonny Colé, head of the USTC and Ballet Nestor were sentenced to a year's imprisonment on July 31.

In a message of protest to the CAR's military ruler, General André Kolingba, ICFTU General

Secretary John Vanderveken stated that the men were being persecuted for their "legitimate efforts to represent the interests and aspirations" of their members and for their involvement in the country's pro-democracy movement.

Vanderveken accused the regime of running a campaign "clearly aimed at breaking the union and suspending all trade union activities in the country".

The ICFTU will be making a formal complaint to the International Labour Organisation about Colé and Nestor's imprisonment.

# SA violence is government sponsored

Revelations that the South African government secretly funded the anti-sanctions, anti-ANC/COSATU Inkatha organisation clearly confirm what the trade union movement has been saying all along.

The confirmation that the South African government has substantially funded both the Inkatha political group and the associated United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) seriously discredits the government's claims to neutrality and even-handedness.

Nathi Nheleko, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), says that the revelations "confirm the non-trustworthiness of the S.A. government.

"It further confirms what we, in the COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) Federation, have been saying all along, that the S.A. government has been colluding with Inkatha in perpetrating violence.

"UWUSA was formed with the sole purpose of destabilising the progressive trade union movement, and in particular our federation, COSATU. In accomplishing its mission of destabilisation, UWUSA has embarked on violence and intimidation against our TGWU members.

"In Natal, TGWU was one of the first victims of UWUSA's violence. Our shop stewards' committee chairperson at S.A. Stevedores (SAS) in Durban was stabbed to death by an UWUSA member during an UWUSA/TGWU organising battle in the company in 1988. Some members of the Zulu royal family were employed in this company so whereas before the launch of UWUSA in 1986 (soon after the launch of COSATU in 1985) TGWU had a clear majority in this company, but UWUSA used their royal connections to undermine the TGWU. The company was happy to go along with this weakening of

TGWU which was a genuine and militant trade union and started to overtly favour and employ UWUSA and Zulu royal family members. Four years later we have again won back the majority in SAS as workers now clearly understand that UWUSA can do nothing for them.

"In Pietermaritzburg in Natal our members at the bus company Kwa Zulu Transport (KTZ) have come under sustained attack from UWUSA elements. In fact the conflict in this company is now seen as a trigger for the carnage that has happened on and off in this area up to this day. Following an UWUSA organising drive, and a national stayaway by COSATU members to protest the 1987 white elections (a stayaway which our bus drivers at KTZ closely observed) a number of TGWU bus drivers were killed. UWUSA blamed TGWU for the success of the stayaway because there were no buses available to take people to work. Bus drivers were shot at while in their cabs with buses careering off the road and endangering all on the bus. At least

eight TGWU KZT people were killed over the next few years, and our Vice President, Alfred Ndlovu, a KZT worker survived a number of assassination attempts before the state decided to assist UWUSA and jailed him on terrorist charges for five years. He was recently released under the indemnity for political prisoners.

"No-one has ever been arrested or charged with these murders although in some cases workers know exactly who did it. The police have steadfastly shown no interest in following up cases. It became clearer and clearer to us that the police were protecting UWUSA and Inkatha."

Following the news, the TGWU delegates at the COSATU Congress (24-27 July) resolved to embark on a series of actions around the UWUSA funding revelations. Workers are urged to refuse to pay taxes because of the abuse of tax payers money and a campaign of mass demonstrations culminating with a general strike has also been recommended.

## *Stop the war in Yugoslavia !*

A united front of all Croatian trade unions is appealing to the world to recognise the independence of the Republic.

In a letter to the ITF, the Hrvatska Unija Sindicata (HUS) grouping describes the present civil war in Yugoslavia as a situation which it unfortunately cannot avoid.

"The root cause of the social, economic and trade union problems, we had hoped to address, is the political situation in Yugoslavia. This political situation has been brought to a head by the Croatian and Slovenian peoples expression of free will and their desire to live in a democratic society."

Because of the civil war, the trade union movement is restricted to "stop-gap measures", HUS says.

The union federation has decided to "take a more political profile" for the time being, hoping that it will be better able to carry out its trade union role in the "not too distant future".

To this end, HUS is calling for international recognition of Croatia's independence:

"Politicians around the world continue to seek a resolution to Croatia's problems and we believe that recognition of the Republic of Croatia by the rest of the world will bring a speedier solution to them. In the name of our membership and the people of Croatia we seek your moral support."

# Nigeria lifts union affiliation ban

The Nigerian government has lifted its ban on trade unions affiliating to international organisations.

Following the ruling of the International Labour Organisation's Committee on Freedom of Association (see *ITF News*, August 1991) that called for the Nigerian government to rescind Decree No. 35 (December seventh 1989), the military government has scrapped the ban.

The decree banned Nigerian trade unions from affiliating to Interna-

tional bodies like the ITF, and was strongly condemned by the ITF, its African affiliates and the Nigerian trade union movement.

Most recently, the ITF African Road Transport Conference in Kenya in January condemned the decree.

"I made it quite clear that whether there was a ban or not, the National Union of Road Transport Workers was still in the ITF", said V. Jack, National Secretary of the Nigerian

NURTW.

Jack says that the announcement of the lifting of the ban was made on network news on the evening of August sixth:

"The Federal Military Government of the Republic of Nigeria has categorically said that the ban has been lifted. Let us therefore thank the Almighty God and also thank the Federal Military Government of Nigeria for its understanding and co-operation with all of us".



## SEAFARERS

# Marquest Imaging says they can find the *Derbyshire*

The US company who found the *Titanic* and the *Bismarck* have told a British seafarers' union that they can find the *Derbyshire*.

Billy Anderson, Liverpool official of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), who works closely with the families of the lost crew, wrote to Marquest Marine Imaging asking them if they could find and photograph the wreck of the bulk carrier that sank on a voyage from Canada to Japan in 1988 (see *ITF News*, August 1991):

"The sheer size of the *Derbyshire*, the biggest ship ever to be lost from the UK register should have easily ridden out the typhoon 'Orchid'. The officers and crew were all British and fully qualified." said Anderson, "This is why I have sought out the assistance of the Marquest Group who are world leaders in the field of finding sunken ships".

Anderson has talked with Marquest President Michael Stewart and has received a letter from re-

tired submarine officer Jack Maurier Jnr:

"We are, of course, not qualified to address the structural analysis of the design, nor is it appropriate that we speculate on the accident. We can, however, suggest that a series of detailed, high quality images could contribute significantly to an understanding of its possible causes."

The first step, says Marquest, is to find the ship. The topography of the area of the loss is "exceptionally hostile" and imposes "logistic and infrastructure complexities".

"Nonetheless," says Maurer, "the ship is on the bottom, and given proper resources and sufficient time, it can be found".

Marquest propose a preliminary planning effort to accurately determine the final costs. This initial survey would cost in the region of US\$25,000.

The RMT is now investigating means of raising the money for this initial assessment.

"We are confident that images

recovered from the *Derbyshire* could contribute significantly to your efforts to resolve the questions surrounding her final moments." said Maurer.

\*The International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) has, finally, reacted to the high incidence of bulk carrier casualties by setting up a working party to examine the problem.

The group is chaired by Lloyd's Register's technical planning and development manager John Ferguson, and will meet every three months, starting next October.

The group's work could lead to unified requirements for hull surveys amongst the world's classification societies.

A survey completed earlier year by Lloyd's Register blamed structural weakness for 34 bulk carrier losses since the beginning of 1990 (in which more than 250 seafarers have lost their lives).

# Port State Report shows Foc registers are worst abusers

The number of defective ships detected by European Port State Control Inspectors rose again in 1990.

The annual report for 1990 of the 14-member European Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (MOUPSC) states that there were 13,955 port State control inspections in 1990 (up from 12,459 in 1989) uncovering 22,623 deficiencies (compared with 18,608 in 1989).

MOUPSC calculated a "deficiency rate" which measures the number of deficiencies against the number of inspections. Since the number of inspections has increased, it only makes sense that the number of deficiencies will also increase. However, the "rate" has also risen dramatically — confirming a longer term trend since 1987.

"This development gives reason to great concern" says the report.

The categories of deficiencies have remained stable over the years. The largest group detected (43 per cent) are deficiencies in life saving and firefighting equipment:

"Although alarming in itself, this figure did not change from last year's figure. However, when the number of deficiencies in life saving appliances and fire fighting equipment are related to the number of inspections or the number of individual ships involved, the respective percentages are even more alarming: in 42 per cent of all inspections and in 60 per cent of all individual ships, deficiencies were observed in life saving appliances, while the percentages for deficiencies in fire fighting equipment amounted to 28 and 39 per cent respectively." says the report.

The fact that most defects are life-threatening to seafarers is a scandal, as the report observes:

"...it is obvious that the majority of deficiencies noted are a result of

lacking proper maintenance, which directly affects the safety of the crew. It is re-iterated that most of these deficiencies could have been avoided if proper maintenance would have been carried out."

The report says that there is a "distinct task for flag State authorities and for classification societies, acting on their behalf, to assume their responsibilities by looking into this problem..."

Flag of convenience registers, by their basic nature, cannot and will not "assume their responsibility". The new Foc register of Mauritius was honest about this when they launched their new "owner-friendly" service at a London press conference last month (see *ITF News* August 1991) — a spokesperson for the register stated "We offer non-interference in the way a shipowner runs his ship and business... we expect a shipowner to comply with all conventions and regulations in force. Our role is not to act as policeman."

The MOUPSC does not distinguish between Foc and national reg-

isters — it is true that there are national registers who score high in detentions, but none of them come close to the Focs.

A total of 441 ships were detained in 1990. Only seven registers had more than 20 ships detained. The registers? Cyprus, Honduras, Liberia, Malta, Norway, Panama, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines — only Norway isn't on the ITF list (but the second register NIS is clearly operating according to Foc standards. The greatest number of ships detained by flag is Cyprus (49), followed closely by Malta (44), then Panama (42) and the Foc register they say has better standards, Liberia, next at 24. Of 441 ships detained in 1990, 234 — 53 per cent — came from ITF designated Foc registers.

The MOUPSC Secretariat and their member governments cannot draw the same obvious conclusions from this figures, at least not yet, but it is clear, from any examination of the figures, that the greatest threat to safe shipping remains the menace of Flags of convenience.

## *Commission official wants European Maritime Agency*

European shipping ministers may not be able to agree on a Common Maritime Policy, but if one senior official has his way, at least they'll have a full-time agency to implement whatever policies are agreed.

European Commission vice-president Dr. Martin Bangemann has drawn up proposals for the creation of a European Maritime Agency. The scheme will be considered by the EC Commissioners in September, and if it has their approval, it will go forward to the November

Council of Transport Ministers meeting.

The proposed agency would, in itself, represent a radical new means of determining Common maritime policies by replacing the present Council of Ministers (where complete unanimity is required) with a majority voting system. This would certainly break the jam in a number of presently undecided debates — but whether the results would be welcomed by European Seafarers is another matter.



# ***Belize finally opens new Foc register***

The government of the small Central American state of Belize have finally got around to opening their new Flag of Convenience register. Readers may recall our story about Belize (see **ITF News** January 1991) where we reported two interesting points. One was that Belize hadn't opened their Foc register yet because they were "still working on some documents and regulations", and the other was that some companies had fraudulently hoisted the Belizean flag on their ships without so much as telling the Belizean government. This amusing business was compounded by the fact that our good friends at the US based International Ship Register Review (ISSR) had featured Belize as their "flag of the month" in December 1990. Somewhat defensively, the July 1991 issue of ISSR, in reporting that the register is now open (in August) says the ITF said there was no register (in January) and comments "Well, it does indeed have a registry" — glossing over the eight month delay. In any event, Belize so far has one ship legally registered, joining the Mauritius and the Portuguese third (or is it fourth?) register in the single ship registry stakes. The ideal complement to the one-ship company, perhaps?

A working group within the **Finnish** Ministry of Transport have put forward a proposal that would allow Finnish shipowners to hire foreign seafarers on national flag ships at "local rates" of pay. The proposal will go forward in government discussions of the 1992 State Budget discussions. Under this scheme, agreements between foreign seafarers and Finnish flag shipping companies would be "personal" and would set aside all Finnish laws on working hours, leave and social security. All four Finnish Seafarers' unions (ITF-affiliates) have strongly protested against the legislation proposals, which are a clear attack on

the acquired wages and working conditions of national flag Finnish seafarers. In a letter to ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, the four unions say "If the proposed legislation goes through the Finnish Parliament it means that all Finnish seafarers engaged onboard Register Ships could be sacked and new foreign seafarers could be engaged instead with lower wages. We could not let this happen and will do all we can to stop it in Finland..." In the meantime, in line with existing ITF

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## **The ITF's Flag by Flag roundup**

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Policy, they are asking the ITF to remind all ITF affiliates to inform them immediately if any Finnish Shipping concern approaches them to supply crews or conclude agreements for Finnish ships. Nor should any ITF affiliate enter into any discussions with Finnish companies before contacting the ITF and the affiliates in Finland.

The government of **South Korea**, having rejected the establishment of a Second Register, has now decreed that non-Koreans may work on Korean national flag ships. Citing the shortage of trained Korean seafarers, the Korea Maritime and Ports Administration (KMPA) announced in late July that up to 10,000 Chinese, Filipino and Indonesian seafarers will be employed on one year contracts.

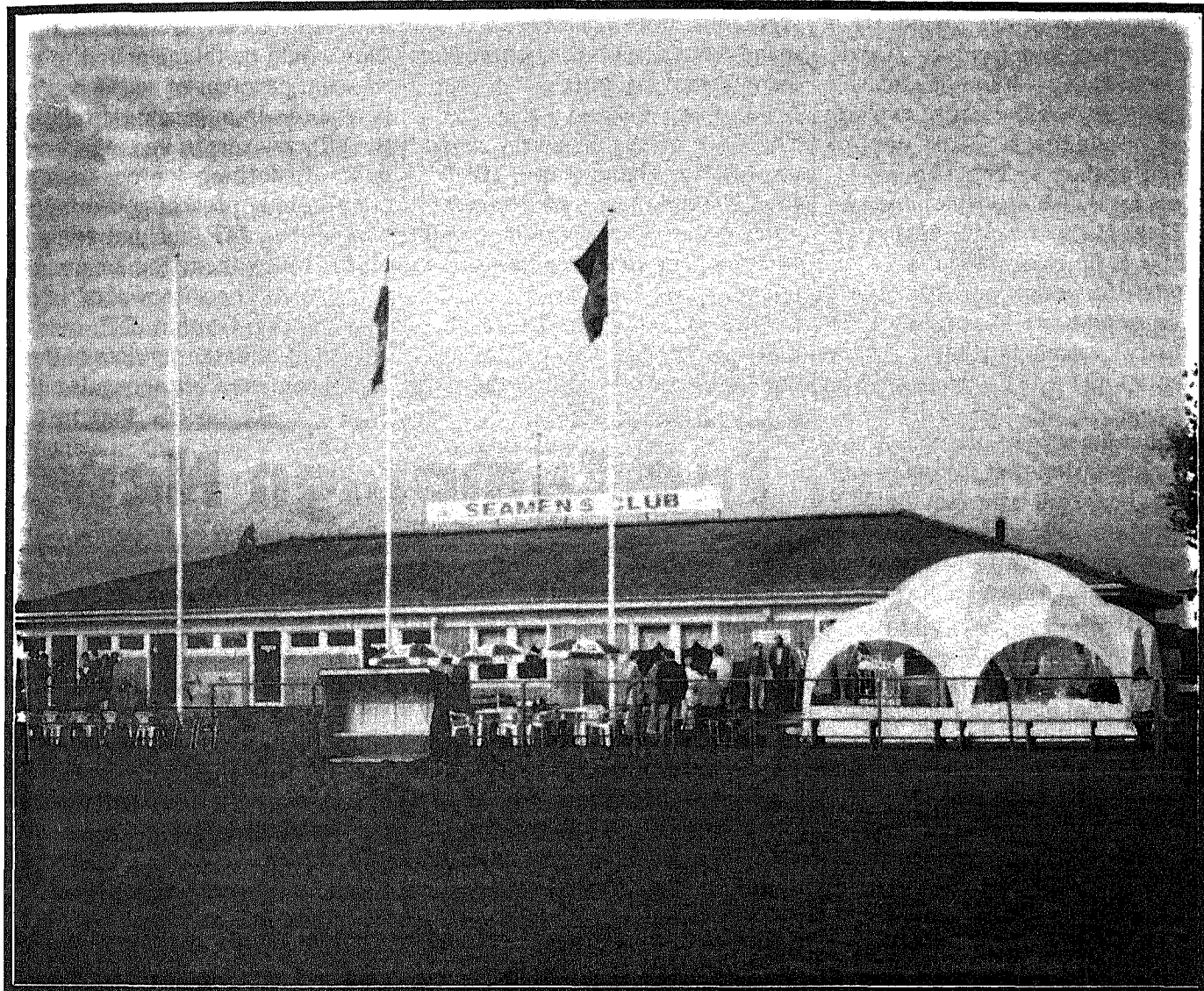
**Norway's** merchant tonnage dropped in the first six months of this year from 54.9 million tonnes dwt (January first) to 53.8 million. The figures, from the Norwegian Shipowners Association, show that the decline has all been in what is

left of Norway's traditional shipping register, which now stands at merely 1.6 million tonnes dwt. On the other hand, the Norwegian second register (NIS) continues to creep forward.

The head of the **United States** Maritime Administration (MarAd) has shocked the industry by telling the US Congress they should consider setting up a second register. Speaking to the House of Representatives' Merchant Marine Subcommittee Warren Leback spoke of the "benefits" of the Norwegian International Register (NIS), but was clearly unable to provide anything more than the most vague ideas about how such a US-NIS would work. MarAd has traditionally been an advocate of the US flag fleet, but these remarks indicate a disturbing potential shift in administration policy. While most US external trade is already carried in foreign flag ships, a US second register is seen by the industry as a neat way of side-stepping US laws obliging government cargoes and domestic shipping (cabotage) to be carried only by US flagged and crewed vessels.

The Soviet Deputy Shipping Minister Gennady Gerasimchuk told *Lloyd's List* (before the 56 hour coup) that his ministry has asked the government to lift existing restrictions on flagging out of **USSR** flag ships. Flagging out, he says, would allow them to raise finance from foreign banks for newbuildings and second-hand purchases. If approved, regulations would be relaxed by the end of this year. Under the terms of the ITF Agreement for Soviet seafarers, signed with the Independent Federation of Water Transport Workers (see **ITF News** June/July 1991) any such USSR owned, flagged out ships must retain USSR crews and abide by the same terms, wages and conditions as the Acomarit agreement.

# Johannisborg Seamen's Club opened



The Johannisborg Seamen's Club, which takes its name from an old ruined castle of the same name, was formally opened by Swedish Communications Minister Georg Andersson on May 28th.

The new club, which replaces the former seafarers' club in a now largely disused area of the thriving east coast port of Norrköping, has been made possible thanks to the generosity of the municipality of Norrköping and the ITF Seafarers' Trust.

The municipality has contributed two million Swedish kroner towards the building and running costs of the centre's outdoor sporting activities, while the Seafarers' Trust is donat-

ing 2.8 million Swedish kr to finance the centre's new indoor sports and recreational facilities.

The club is run by the Swedish Government's Seamen's Service HKF, the body which is responsible for coordinating cultural and leisure facilities for seafarers, and is open to seafarers of all nationalities and their families.

Built adjoining the football pitch at the Saltängen sports ground, which was used by seafarers from the old club, the new club offers a wide range of sporting facilities — football, table tennis and billiards. There is also a swimming pool and sauna as well as a cafeteria.

The new club is larger than the old one and more conveniently sited — it is within walking distance of the city centre and closer to the main port area. Inside and outdoor sports are also now conveniently combined on the one site rather than on the previously split sites.

The opening ceremony was attended by members of the HKF Board of Directors, as well local municipal leaders and shipping industry representatives.

The ITF was represented by Swedish Seamen's Union Vice President Börje Persson, who spoke of the special need of seafarers for high quality recreational and leisure facilities.

# Croatian union aids Korean crew

The expansion of ITF membership into Eastern and Central Europe has already had a dramatic effect on shipowners who dreamt of exploiting a non-union, low-cost pool of skilled seafarers. The ITF agreements for Polish and Russian crews on Flag of Convenience vessels (see **ITF News** June/July 1991) have set a standard for decent wages and trade union conditions — the maritime industry has accepted that it's better to work with the ITF than against us.

Another important aspect of the ITF's expansion that is now beginning to bear fruit is the fact that ITF support and solidarity for Foc crews now extends to many more ports of the world and a host of new maritime nations.

One case recently concluded deserves special mention because the union concerned is not an affiliate of the ITF (though its application will be considered at the next Executive Board meeting in October) and because of the very unusual political circumstances which it is currently forced to operate in. The union is the Croatian Seafarers' and Dockers' Union — and they were asked by the ITF Secretariat to try and assist the crew of the Greek-owned, Liberian flag of convenience registered *Champion*, which is in a repair yard in **Rijeka, Croatia**. The Korean crew of this vessel were owed US\$90,000 in backwages, but had no collective agreement. The union sent Captain Predrag Brazzoduro to visit the crew. Due largely to the persistence and determination of Captain Brazzoduro, who visited the crew almost daily, arranged emergency food supplies and pressed the owners to settle the men's claim, they have now been paid nearly US\$90,000 and repatriated to South Korea. A new crew has now been sent to the ship and Captain Brazzoduro has informed the owners that they should sign an ITF

Agreement for the new crew, a demand that the union's dock worker membership supports.

The case of the Swedish-owned, Cyprus Foc abandoned in **Walvis Bay, Namibia** (see **ITF News** August 1991) has been settled. The *Carolina's* 15 crew's case had been taken up by a Cape Town law firm (Bisset, Boehmke and McBlain). The vessel had already been placed under arrest by the mortgagee, and

in a telex received next day, that they would be taking action to ensure the payment of wages and repatriation. In a dazzling display of the effectiveness of Foc registers in general, nothing happened. The crew were approaching starvation, and so the ITF decided to send US\$1,000 to them for emergency provisions. The shipowners' international organisation, ISF, readily agreed to offer the services of their own agent in Chittagong for the

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## Foc Campaign News

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the lawyers successfully arranged with the mortgagee to settle the crews claims immediately and recover their costs when the arrest is finally settled — thus saving the crew from a long wait. The crew have now been repatriated after receiving a total of US\$70,000.

The ITF was contacted by the Latin American crew of the Panamanian flag of convenience *Red Deer* at the beginning of August. Their ship had been unloading cement in **Chittagong, Bangladesh** since April and the crew were owed over US\$100,000 and had no food. The ship is owned by a US company, which claims to have no money and to have sold the ship to a Bangladeshi breakers yard. In fact, the crew have instructed a lawyer to arrest the ship. The crew have been willing to strike if the owners try to move the ship, and because they haven't been paid since April, they have been working as slowly as possible. The ITF contacted the owners — Rodson Shipping Inc. (Florida, USA) but was told they had no money. On July 23, the ITF sent an urgent message to Mr. J. Caravajal, Director of Maritime Affairs for the Panamanian register. The Panamanian legal department told the ITF,

transfer, and the men received the money in August. Both the ITF and the ISF are continuing to request the intervention of the Panamanian authorities in the case — a nice example of international co-operation that has helped to open the ISF's eyes to some of the more disgraceful aspects of the industry.

Troubles continue to beset the Pakistani-based Gokal shipping group (see **ITF News** August 1991) whose Gulf East Shipmanagement was implicated in the BCCI banking scandal (as a recipient of a major, unsecured loan). Reports continue to come in from all over the world of Gokal/Gulf East Ships in financial trouble and not paying their crews. A British subsidiary of Gokal went into voluntary liquidation at the end of August, foreshadowing greater problems for the seafarers on these ships. But in many cases, after crew complaints and union/legal intervention, Gulf East appear able to come up with money and pay their disgruntled crews. The Liberian registered *Java*, anchored off Singapore, finally had a crew change, with the previous Polish and British seafarers receiving their money and repa-

Continued on page 9



# ...Gokal/Gulf East crew wages' problems persist

Continued from page 8

triation. The Liberian flag *Sana* (off Dubai) has settled with its crew, but the Liberian registered *Carnival*, anchored 50 miles off Hong Kong (in Chinese territorial waters) still owes its crew a lot of money — though much needed food and supplies have now been provided. The Panamanian flag *Garcia De Resende* is anchored off the Pakistani coast, and the crew are still awaiting payment (but at least, since they are Pakistani, they won't have far to travel home). The all time not-being-paid-by Gokal record goes, unfortunately, to the long suffering crew of the Liberian flag *New Era* which has been sitting in Pusan, South Korea since September 1990! The Pakistani and Maldivian crew have not been paid for fourteen months. The owners have ignored their appeals for payment, and the vessel is under arrest by other creditors. None of the crew have ever received their contracted wages and,

according to the crew, their living conditions are "very poor". The food has almost run out, and the men have had to collect rain water for drinking and washing. The ITF is now attempting to assist the men. The case of the Liberian flag *Eastray* (see ITF News, August 1991) in Rotterdam has been settled. Foc Inspector Gert-jan Harmsen has convinced the company to settle the 15 Pakistani and Maldivian crew's wages and medical bills of US\$15,000. The men will be paid up to September 23, when they should receive about \$150,000, and they will be repatriated on September 28.

The Greek and Russian officers (members of the respective ITF national unions) of the Maltese flag, Greek owned *Borabora I* contacted the ITF in August with a desperate appeal for help. The ship, they said, was in an appalling state — the main engines broken, they were under tugboat tow bound for Fiji. Because sanitary fans were damaged "it is

not possible to remain in our cabin". The water supply had run out and they had to make do with "rain water from dirty decks". Crew claimed to be suffering from skin and stomach diseases — these sort of things used to happen "fifty years ago" said the officers (but, sadly, as regular readers of this column know only too well, they still happen a lot today). The ship is infested with cockroaches and mice, say the officers. Their contracts had expired, and pay was late, so, in addition to all of this, the crew feared they were going to be abandoned in Fiji without their wages. The ITF has contacted the Maltese authorities, but received no reply from them. We then received a copy of a telex from the master to the Maltese flag of convenience register. He states that one of the officers is responsible, through negligence, for the damaged engine. The ship has arrived in Fiji, and repairs are underway. The master claims the allegations made to the ITF are "exaggerations".



## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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	Regensburg
8-9 October	Channel Tunnel	Paris
9-10 October	Railwaymen's Section Transport Policy Sub-Committee	Paris
15-16 October	Executive Board	London
5-7 November	Latin American Inland Navigation Conference	Porto Alegre, Brazil
3-5 December	Latin American Road Transport Conference	Mar del Plata, Argentina



# INLAND TRANSPORT

## *Australian rail strike over national standards*

Australia's rail freight services came to a complete halt for 24 hours in July in a union protest against Federal plans for the freight network.

The action — the first in 15 years — was organised by the ITF-affiliated Australian Railways Union (ARU) to demonstrate their strong opposition to Federal proposals for a new agreement on the formation of a National Rail Freight Corporation (NRFC). Long distance passenger services were not affected by the action.

"The national stop-work for rail freight operations stems from the Federal Governments refusal to incorporate a range of national industrial standards into what is the most significant national micro-economic reform initiative in railways this century — the National Rail Freight Corporation", said ARU National Secretary Roger Jowett.

Australian economic integration The NRFC plan is part of the Federal governments "micro-economic" plan for integration of the decentralised Australian economy. There are, in fact, more effective trade barriers between Australian states than between members of the European Community.

Nowhere is this more so than in the railways. There are five separate railway undertakings — New South Wales, Victoria, West Australia, Queensland and Australia National (despite its name it is the South Australia system). There are even different track and loading gauges across the network!

On October 31st, 1990, the Australian Prime Minister and State Premiers signed a "Heads of Agreement" to form a NRFC by July 1991. Since then a "fast track" process has been pursued under the auspices of the National Rail Freight Initiative Taskforce to develop a corporate

structure and practical standards.

The ARU fully supports the concepts underlying the formation of the NRFC.:

"The union and its members recognise and have recognised for decades, the major benefits to all Australian from an integrated rail freight (and passenger) system."

The ARU has participated constructively in the work of the taskforce.

The unions take issue with the government for ignoring crucial industrial issues in their plans. In a point that echoes what many unions in Europe are saying about economic integration, they state:

"Surely micro-economic reform in the railways must include national uniformity of industrial standards if concepts such as the NRFC are to have practical application."

The present proposals have also been criticised by the media and neutral observers as inadequate because of the small sums of money committed to them. The NRFC proposal would involve an investment of AUS\$1.6 (US\$1.25) billion over ten years for upgrading terminals, re-aligning track and replacing rolling stock. In fact, this sum only represents an additional AUS\$523 (US\$411) million of real new expenditure.

The Federal Government is demanding that the ARU sign an NRFC labour agreement which is seriously deficient in many areas...

### **JOB SECURITY**

The issue of job security has been totally ignored by the governments. The complete absence of any work-force planning in the proposals means that no-one knows what the effect on jobs will be. Depending on which government leak to the media is believed, anywhere between 1,500 and 6,000 jobs face the axe.

There are also strong concerns about support services for the NRFC (workshops and permanent way maintenance). The Federal government has suggested farming such work out to the lowest bidder — a drastic threat to thousands of railway jobs.

### **NATIONAL TRAINING STANDARDS**

Negotiations are already very well advanced between the railway undertakings and the unions about unifying the disparate training standards across the different rail systems. But, the Federal government has refused to link NRFC training standards to a national system of training and accreditation.

### **RETRAINING, REDEPLOYMENT AND REDUNDANCY**

Railway work, unlike many other industries, is characterised by a very high level of railway specific skills that are not easily transferable. Railway retraining is nonexistent in most Australian systems. Redeployment usually results in loss of income, deskilling and family upheaval.

Railway redundancy often results in a very high incidence of financial hardship and chronic unemployment, especially for older workers.

These facts were established by the findings of the Federal Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics survey of redeployed and redundant rail workers (see **ITF News** February 1991).

On the basis of this study, the Rail Industry Council recommended that there should be a "single national transfer, redeployment and retraining agreement and in circumstances where rail industry restructuring may require reductions above the level of natural attrition, a uniform retirement/redundancy package may be negotiated."

Continued on page 11

# Indian rail workers unite in the AIRF

Indian railway workers are putting their historical divisions behind them and uniting under the banner of the All India Railwaymen's Federation.

The AIRF, founded in 1914, has a long and honourable tradition as the vanguard of the Indian trade union movement — forerunners of the Federation were some of the first trade unions formed in India, and the AIRF was also in the forefront of the independence struggle. In 1930 the AIRF called a nationwide strike to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation

## *...Federal government refuses to incorporate national standards*

Continued from page 10

In respect of the NRFC, the unions have framed a detailed log of claims in this context but the Federal government is refusing outright to consider them at all.

### **NATIONAL BARGAINING**

In September last year, both Federal and State governments endorsed the Railway Industry Council recommendation that:

"A national award structure be developed and overlapping industrial jurisdictions removed".

But now, the Federal government refuses to contemplate a strategy for making a new NRFC award the first step in developing such a system.

"For the nation, this retreat into parochialism by the Federal Government heralds a real industrial relations mess for the NRFC because it implies that railway workers doing the same classification of work and working from the same depot might be working for different employers, under different awards, with different pay rates and working conditions. That is a certain recipe for an intractable mess in the nation's railways," says the ARU.

campaign — the strike lasted months longer than the general protest.

The ITF's links with the AIRF go back to the 1930s, and the union remains one of the ITF's largest affiliates.

"Till May 1948, AIRF was the only single Industrial Federation of Indian Railway Workers. It has a glorious past and through AIRF railway employees have achieved very significant gains for railwaymen," says the AIRF.

The splits that occurred in 1948 had two causes — both internal and external. Indian independence saw the different parties in the Indian National Congress — then a broad alliance — break down into ideological fractions. The Communists and others also organised separate trade union and union national centres. This was echoed on the international stage by the disintegration of the World Federation of Trades Unions (WFTU), an ill fated alliance of that included the world's democratic trade unions, the Communist-led unions and the state controlled "official unions" of the USSR. The WFTU only lasted from 1945 to 48 and then split, with a rump of "officials" and some (but not all) real trade unions that were Communist-led or pro-Soviet retaining the name.

In India, on the national stage, the trade union movement divided into the INTUC (pro-Congress), the AITUC (pro-Communist) and the HMS (non-aligned democratic socialist).

The AIRF retained its independence and never joined any of the National Centres. Many of its affiliates are HMS-affiliates, and the present President of the HMS, Umraol Purohit, does happen to also be General Secretary of the AIRF.

But the AIRF has always stood by its long and proud tradition, which predates any national federations. The AIRF has always welcomed any railway worker or union who wishes

to work with it. Consequentially, throughout the years, the overwhelming majority of Indian railway workers have been members of the AIRF.

With the collapse of the WFTU and its puppet "Trade Union Internationals" in the last year, those genuine trade unions who had been associated with it are faced with the choice of isolation or rejoining the mainstream.

Contrary to the cold war propaganda of the old WFTU, the rest of the world's trade union movement does not select who it works with on the basis of what political line the leadership or membership of the union espouses. Rather, the only criteria is that the unions be controlled by their members. The door has always been open, as the AIRF says, and now the unions are being welcomed home.

Unity between the HMS and the AITUC is now agreed. A working party between the two centres has been discussing unity (see *ITF News* June/July 1991) and they have now agreed to form a new federation with a new name, logo and constitution. The new federation, which will organise over five million workers, is appealing for all the unions in India to unite in one organisation.

Meanwhile, the working Committee of the former AITUC Indian Railway Workers' Federation (IRWF), in response to the AIRF's appeal for unity, has decided to wind up the IRWF and appeal to all affiliate unions to join and strengthen the AIRF.

The AIRF has welcomed the decision:

"This is a healthy decision of IRWF and we welcome it. It is sincerely hoped that other unions on the Indian Railways will follow suit and join the mainstream of the Indian Railway Workers' Trade Union Movement under the banner of the AIRF. The doors of the AIRF are open for all the railway employees."



## FISHERIES

# ITF aid for abandoned fishermen

The ITF has intervened to help a fishing vessel crew abandoned in Scotland by a Nigerian shipowner who is already well known to ITF unions.

The *Peace*, bought by Nigerian businessman S Oteju in July 1990. The ship was registered in Nigeria and crewed by West Africans and Bulgarians. The vessel was set to catching fish for freezing.

On its first voyage, the radar broke down off Las Palmas and the Captain found out that the charts were out of date.

The *Peace* sailed up to Ullapool, Scotland, arriving in September 1990, where she was served with writs by two of Oteju's creditors (but not formally arrested). The vessel has now been there for nearly a year. The crew stopped receiving any wages last January. The four Nigerians, three Ghanaians and six Bulgarians are now owed about \$90,000.

In May food ran out, and fuel supplies became erratic.

Captain Veselin Varbanov told the British *Independent* newspaper:

"This company has broken all the rules. Of course businesses go bust, but that does not mean they can forget human rights. Nobody has a right to treat people like slaves any more. This is the twentieth century but we are still being treated like animals, even if those who do it wear smart suits."

The crew were reduced to relying on the charity of the local community, until the ITF paid for food for the men in May. The ITF has now obtained food and supplies for the men on a number of occasions.

In an unusually bright footnote to this terrible affair, crewmember Harrison Megbagandhu met Audrey Canning in the local shop that was

supplying the food — and now they are married! He has now left the ship and settled in Ullapool.

The remaining crew have not had such a good time. One man's wife is suing him for divorce because no allotments have been paid this year. Another's son has had to leave Polytechnic because he can't afford the fees.

Oteju is no stranger to the ITF. He also owns the *Glory* and *Sea Friends*; Flag of Convenience ships which abandoned their crews earlier this year — one crew having to survive on Red Cross food parcels (but union intervention won through in the end — see *ITF News* May 1991). The *Glory* was also berthed in Ullapool.

At the beginning of August, Oteju visited Ullapool and entered "negotiations" with the crew.

Finally, at the beginning of August, Oteju visited Ullapool and entered negotiations with the crew and an ITF appointed lawyer.

The owner offered the men an immediate payment of half their claim (\$50,000). The Bulgarians were told they would be flown home and would receive the other half of their money in Sofia. The Nigerians and Ghanaians were told they would have to wait with the vessel till it was sold and then they would receive the balance of their wages.

Oteju said he would settle the first payment on August 14, but he never showed up. He promised to appear on Friday August 23, but he never did.

He has bought some oil for the vessel, but that's all. Meanwhile, the crew continue to languish in Ullapool.

## Iceland slashes quotas

The Iceland government has announced a ten per cent cut in quotas in one of the world's most abundant fishing grounds.

The 12 month cut, effective from this September, is an emergency measure to preserve Iceland's dwindling fish stocks in the 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone.

These are some of the cleanest and richest grounds on the planet. The decline in fish stocks in these waters — directly supporting 10,000 fish industry workers who are responsible for 80 per cent of Iceland's gross national product — dramatically highlights the global crisis in fish populations. It also demonstrates the strong bonds that tie the world's maritime eco-system together. Overfishing in some parts of the world combined with the ever continuing pollution of the seas, is threatening all the world's marine life. The ITF Fishermen's Section believes that this environmental catastrophe is one of the most important challenges facing fish industry workers, and is campaigning for governments to act immediately to reverse the damage to the marine world.

# Japanese union to investigate abuse claims

The Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) is conducting a high level enquiry into charges of gross maltreatment of Filipino fishermen on two Japanese-owned vessels.

The union was asked by the ITF to investigate the situation after a direct appeal from Reverend David Craig, Missions to Seamen Chaplain in Halifax, Canada.

On July 18 three Japanese squid ships arrived in Halifax. On the *Yuko Maru 10* and the *Yuko Maru 11* (owned by the International Fishing Development Company in Tokyo) there were very serious complaints made by the Filipino crew against the behaviour of the Japanese officers on their vessels.

The crew had served eleven months out of a twelve month contract, but were notified, three days from Halifax, that they were to be repatriated when they arrived in Canada.

When the *Yuko Maru 11* arrived, the Filipinos were denied shore leave. Three crew members snuck off the ship in the middle of the night and walked twenty kilometres to the Missions to Seamen to seek help.

They had a long list of grievances, and if the men are to be believed, a disgraceful story of abuse and oppression.

They complained about the termination of their contracts one month early. They said they had to work 120 hours fixed overtime a month without pay and rarely got more than three or four hours sleep a night — they often had to sleep in their work clothes, which were sometimes wet. They hadn't even been paid properly on a monthly basis — instead they were paid a US\$50 cash advance every month.

The basic salary was less than they had been promised. The Manila Manning agent had got the men to sign blank contracts, and the figures filled in were less than they were told (an all too common trick amongst shady manning agents).

Living conditions on the ships were appalling. The crew claimed they were only allowed half a bar of soap each for a month.

The most disturbing charges are that the Filipino crew were discriminated against by the Japanese officers in a campaign of verbal and physical abuse, and that they were denied anything like the same facilities as the Japanese crew.

One Filipino was brutally beaten by the Chief Cook in front of witnesses. This incident was investigated by the Canadian Police, who said they would have made an arrest except for the fact that the incident happened in international waters.

All the Filipino crew say they suffered continuous physical and verbal abuse. They say that the Japanese constantly made racist comments about Filipino people.

The Filipino crews of the two vessels had the same story. They attempted to initiate the grievance procedure in their contracts of employment but they were ignored.

"In this instance I support the action taken by the Filipino Crew Members on humanitarian grounds," said Craig.

He says that this is not an isolated incident:

"In the past two years I have heard the testimony of many foreign seafarers who are employed on these Japanese fishing vessels, from different countries...

"There is strong evidence of brutal physical and mental abuse on these vessels and all who are involved or concerned with this industry should try everything in their power to eradicate this type of intolerable treatment and disgraceful conduct of fellow human beings on the international seas".

The ITF helped the crew to arrest the vessels and they obtained their contracted wages and repatriation.

All of the crew had medical examinations where the doctor recommended further medical coun-

selling to help them cope with their gruesome ordeal.

One former crew member is deformed for life because his broken finger was never attended to. The doctor has said that the finger can't be straightened because it has been left too long.

The Canadian Ports Police, who investigated the case, have passed on their findings to the Japanese authorities.

The ITF-affiliated JSU have reacted strongly to the report and have initiated their own enquiry into the matter.

## **ITF complaint to Taiwan**

The ITF has asked the Taiwanese government to investigate the growing numbers of complaints made by foreign crews working on Taiwanese-registered fishing vessels.

Writing to Jason Hu a Senior Adviser of the Taiwanese President, and former official of the ITF-affiliated National Chinese Seamen's Union (NCSU), ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander says:

"Over the past 18 months we have noticed an increase in the numbers of complaints received from seafarers working on board Taiwanese fishing vessels. These complaints vary from problems regarding non-payment of wages to the more worrying incidents of maltreatment, and in some cases severe beatings, of foreign crew members."

Selander has given Ho copies of reports concerning the appalling treatment of foreign crews on three Taiwanese vessels in late 1990 (see **ITF News** November/December 1990) in South Africa:

Ho has written back agreeing that "Your letter raises a serious issue which must not be overlooked." He has raised the government's Department of Fishery Affairs, who are investigating the cases the ITF has passed on to them.





## CIVIL AVIATION

# ***Air India 737 crashes into hillside***

An Indian Airlines Boeing 737 crashed in Eastern India on 16 July 1991 killing all 69 people on board. The jet was on an internal scheduled flight from Calcutta to Imphal in the

Assam region. It slammed into a hill about eight km from Imphal airport and caught fire.

The government-owned Indian Airlines, which operates mainly on

domestic routes, acquired the jet in December 1977. Madhavrao Scindia, India's minister for civil aviation, recently announced plans to phase out some of the carrier's Boeing 737 fleet after expressing concern over the age of the aircraft.

The fleet was made up of 20 aircraft, four of which were recently phased out. However, the aircraft which crashed was not one of those due to be taken out of service.

The accident comes 18 months after the crash of an Indian Airlines Airbus 320, which caught fire and crashed on its final approach to Bangalore airport in southern India, killing 90 people and injuring 56.

The 18 Airbus 320s owned by the airline are being gradually reintroduced after the accident inquiry committee declared them airworthy. Indian Airlines has been criticised for over-using its Boeing 737s and Airbus 300s while the Airbus 320s were grounded.

## **Lauda crash: FAA bans use of reversers in 767s**

Following preliminary investigations by Boeing into the crash in Thailand of the Lauda Airlines jet that killed 222 people in March 1991, the US Federal Aviation Administration has ordered American carriers to deactivate electronically-controlled engine thrust reversers on Boeing 767 jets.

The problem is that reversers can be activated during the flight and cause the jet to crash. When foreign material was placed in a component of the reversers called the directional control valve, the valve was capable of turning on the system. It is thought that this may have been the cause of the Lauda Air crash.

As many as 175 aircraft out of a fleet of 382 Boeing 767s have electronically controlled thrust reversers and are therefore affected by the measure which has been endorsed by the British Civil Aviation Authority.

Reversers are used to slow the aircraft on the ground particularly in wet or slippery conditions. One effect of the decision will be that pilots will have to decide whether to continue or abort take-offs earlier since they will not have the benefit of the reversers.

## ***Bankruptcies continue to hit US industry***

The chaos in the US aviation industry continues, with another airline resorting to Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, while America West Airlines, has announced cost cutting plans. The dismemberment of Pan Am continues, while Carl Icahn has agreed to loosen his hold on Trans World Airways (TWA). British Airways has signed a deal with Aeroflot to create Air Russia and the European Commission has given the go-ahead to the Belgian government's plans to inject massive subsidies into Sabena.

America West Airlines, a Phoenix-based regional carrier which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in June, has announced a

\$100 million cost-saving programme which could involve job losses, as well as cuts in its fleet and route network cutbacks.

Pan Am, which is also operating under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, has announced a temporary lay off of 5,000 employees for the summer after a second quarter operating loss of \$129.28 million.

Pan Am's creditors have objected to Delta Airlines' \$310 million bid for a package of its assets including its US East coast shuttle service and several US-Europe routes along with its Frankfurt hub. (see *ITF News*, August 1991). The creditors believe that the assets could command a higher price. The final decision on

the disposal of Pan Am assets lies with the bankruptcy court.

Meanwhile, United Airlines has withdrawn an offer for Pan Am's Latin American routes. It initially bid \$190 million for the operations, plus some other assets, but subsequently raised its price to \$235 million.

Another offer remains on the table from TWA which wants to buy Pan Am's assets for \$240 million and then sell part of them to American Airlines.

Carl Icahn, the chairman of TWA has agreed to give up control of the airline following a complex arrange-

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# ...BA links up with Aeroflot in new venture

Continued from page 14

ment with bondholders. Icahn who currently owns 90 per cent of the carrier, is likely to end up as a 20-45 per cent shareholder.

The arrangement, which TWA hopes to implement early next year, would eliminate about \$1bn of debt from the company's balance sheet, sharply cutting its interest bill, and would leave it with about \$400 million in cash.

There are signs that the Canadian government may approve a merger of Air Canada and Canadian Airlines International if this was likely to solve their financial problems. Both airlines continue to suffer heavy losses, but neither is actively seeking a merger deal at the moment.

British Airways has finalised a £20 million deal with Aeroflot the Soviet airline to form an international carrier called Air Russia (see **ITF**

**News**, August 1991). The new carrier will start services in 1994 with a fleet of seven long haul aircraft, serving international routes from a special terminal to be built at Domodedovo, the main domestic airport in Moscow.

BA will have a 31 per cent stake in the venture, with the remaining shares owned by Aeroflot, the USSR ministry of civil aviation and the Innovation Fund of the Russian republic.



## PEOPLE

**Remi van Kant** has retired as President of the Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB) and as member of the ITF Executive Board. Remi was born in Antwerp in May 1926 and studied commercial science and bookkeeping at the Royal Atheneum in Antwerp. From 1945 to 1948, he worked with the allied authorities in Belgium. Then, in 1948, he joined the BTB, working under Omar Becu (who later became General Secretary of the ITF). He soon took over the administration of the Seafarers' Section. His activities in this section continued to expand, and he became involved in the Seafarers' Section of the ITF and the ITF Fair Practices Committee. He was also involved in the ILO Joint Maritime Committee. In October 1969, he was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Seafarers' Section. In 1977 he became full National Secretary of the section. In 1983 Remi also became National Secretary of the BTB Fishermen's Section. At the ITF's Madrid Congress in 1983, Remi was elected to the Executive Board. On November first 1987, Remi succeeded Egide Baudet as President of the BTB. Remi retired from the Executive Board at its March 1991 meeting, and he retired from the BTB on

June first. He has been succeeded as President by **Martin Devolder**.

Captain **Celso Domínguez** has been elected President of the ITF affiliated Mexican Pilot's Association (ASPA) on August fourth for a three year term. Elected along with Domínguez were Foreign Affairs Secretary Captain **Eugenio Guadarrama** and Social Welfare Secretary Captain **Eugenio Alarcón**.

In August's **ITF News** we reported that **Yoshitsugu Katsumata** had retired as Director of International Affairs at the All-Japan Seamen's Union (JSU). In fact, as pointed out by Brother Nakamura — who is, in fact, the JSU's International Affairs Director — "he is a good friend of

mine at the Japan Railway Workers' Union (JR Soren)" We apologise for the slip and wish Yoshitsugu Katsumata a pleasant and worthwhile retirement.

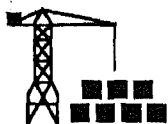
**Tetsuya Akita**, Chairman the All Japan Federation of Transport Workers' Unions (Unyu Roren) has retired from his company and position in the Federation. He has been replaced by **Tadahiko Kohama**.

**Michel Dumont**, General Secretary of the French rail workers' union FMC retired at the end of June. The executive committee has elected **Paul Roche** — previously Federal Secretary in charge of communications and information — as his replacement.

## OBITUARIES

**Mark Young**, General Secretary of the British Airline Pilots' Association, died at the age of 62 on August 15. Young, who began his career as an official with the Electrician's union, became General Secretary of BALPA in 1974, a year after joining

them. He played a major role in fostering closer co-operation between the pilots' union and the other British civil aviation unions, and for many years served as trade union side chairman of the airline industry's joint negotiating body.



# DOCKERS

## Turkish dockers achieve decasualisation

Turkish dockworkers have scored a significant victory against casualisation through the threat of strike action and well publicised international backing from the ITF.

President Melih Yilmaz and General Secretary Ekber Firat of the ITF affiliated National Port and Land Stevedores Union of Turkey (Likat-Is) say that the ITF's messages of support in their recent dispute "certainly have contributed to our success."

National negotiations were held this year between the Turkish government and the Presidents of the unions organising 500,000 public sector workers. These negotiations were successfully concluded earlier in the year, but sectorial discussions still had to be held on industry specific issues.

For Likat-Is the priority has been the elimination of casual labour in public ports owned by Turkish Maritime Enterprises (TDI) and the Turkish State Railways (TCDD). The union wanted casual workers included in the permanent payroll, believing, in the present financial climate, that job security is more important than the level of wages: 2,800 workers out of 7,000 are casual.

The union determined to take strike action if the employers refused to decasualise the port workers. The strike notice formalities were complied with, and July 29 and 31 were set for the beginning of the strike.

At the union's request, ITF Dockers Section Secretary David Cock-

roft sent messages to the Turkish Minister of Labour and Social Security, the Minister of Transport, and the public sector employers' association (TÜHIS) supporting the union's demands and affirming that the ITF would ask affiliates not to handle cargos coming from strike bound Turkish ports.

## TGWU stewards tribunal victory

Union activist victimised and sacked by the British Port of Tilbury have won their industrial tribunal case.

The British Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) has been campaigning for the 19 sacked dockers for nearly two years.

The shop stewards were fired by the Port of London Authority (PLA) after the 1989 dock's strike. The employers withdrew union recognition (despite a 99 per cent vote by the workers in favour of the union) and singled out union shop stewards for dismissal.

ITF affiliates strongly backed the TGWU by sending hundreds of protest messages to the PLA (see **ITF News** January 1990).

The unanimous decision of the Industrial Tribunal ruled that the 19 men had been unfairly dismissed.

TGWU General Secretary Ron Todd applauded the decision as "a victory for decency and common sense and a condemnation of employment law in Tory Britain".

But the PLA has already indicated to the TGWU that they will oppose reinstatement. Under British Indus-

The union also ensured that the ITF support was publicised in the national press.

"We reached an agreement with both enterprises before the dates we were to go on strike. We were able to solve the problem concerning casual workers to a great extent", said Yilmaz and Firat.

trial Tribunal rules, an employer cannot be forced to actually reinstate an unfairly dismissed worker. The Tribunal can only punish a recalcitrant employer financially.

A further meeting in September will consider the "remedies" to the ruling. A further 102 Tilbury dockers made redundant in 1989 are now expected to win their cases.

## Uruguay ports

Following a trend which has become clear throughout Latin America, plans have been announced for the privatisation of the ports industry in Uruguay.

Portworkers at a union meeting in Montevideo on 24th July declared a red alert in view of proposals for privatisation being discussed by the Uruguayan Senate.

In a telex to the ITF the Association of Tallymen in the port of Montevideo asked for support and stressed that given the unemployment currently suffered in the industry, unions should be allowed to participate in all plans for reform.

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