

UNION BUSTING THUGS ATTACK LAGOS DOCKERS

Having won the right to return to their jobs, members of the ITF-affiliated Dockworkers' Union of Nigeria have again suffered beatings and intimidation at the hands of hired union busters (see ITF News, March 1992).

In August last year, 2,000 members of the union were chased out of their jobs by hired thugs in the two Lagos ports of Apapa and Tin Can Island, as part of a campaign by port employers to discredit the union and get it deregistered.

In response to employers' allegations that the violence had been due to clashes between groups of dockworkers a government trustee was appointed to organise new union elections.

Following intense lobbying by the union, dock leaders met port employers and the trustee, on February fourth.

At the meeting the union agreed to a compromise solution: a timetable for the 2,000 ousted dockworkers to return to work was settled, and new union elections would be held within 30 days.

General Secretary Jonas Abam was pleased with the agreement.

"We strongly felt that the crisis was going to end soon," he said.

"Little did we know that management, the police and the hired hoodlums had planned to attack the dockers when they reported for duty on February 24th".

On arrival at Apapa port, Lagos, the union members reported to the port police, where they were surprised by the uncooperative attitude of the officers, who claimed that they had no know-

ledge of the agreement.

In the ensuing delay, an aggressive crowd gathered around the men and began throwing stones. Fighting broke out.

The police, instead of protecting the dockers, actually provoked serious violence by forcing the two groups together, and then themselves attacked the men.

"The dockworkers had no alternative but to fight back in defence of their lives. But as soon as our men fought back they were overpowered by management's hired thugs, and the police started to tear gas our members," said Abam.

Five union members were arrested, and held for days in police cells — whilst the aggressors went free.

Many of the dockers were hospitalised.

The authorities have still made no move to enforce the February fourth agreement, and the 2,000 dockers' hope of regaining their jobs is now remote.

This means that they will be disenfranchised in the planned union election.

Union leaders have informed the public trustee that the men must be allowed

April 1992

ITF Executive Board (3)
Tempo Boys (5)
Asia/Pacific Regional
Committee (7)
EC Round-up (8)

Docks

British ports deregulation (9)

Seafarers

Asia/Pacific Seafarers'
Regional Committee (10)
Flag Round-up (11)
Message to Seafarers (11)
Swedish second register (12)
Anders Lindström
death threat (13)
Campaign News (14)

People (15)

Civil Aviation

Asia/Pacific Conference (16)
JAA flight and duty time rules
(18)
Airline Round-up (19)

Inland Transport

Greek rail strike (21)
Zimbabwe rail dispute (22)

Forthcoming Meetings (23)

Obituaries (24)

Continued on page 2

Spanish unions fight for right to strike

In the aftermath of a series of public transport stoppages by local unions in February, which brought Madrid to a grinding halt, Spanish unions are fighting a law which threatens the existing right to strike.

The events have stimulated a debate on amendments to the labour law.

Current legislation states that secondary strikes, strikes called or prolonged for political reasons and action taken to change existing collective agreements, are illegal.

Now the government has drafted proposals for a new "strike law", which makes harsh demands on trade unions.

Any strike which can be characterised as "abusive", or economically damaging to the national economy, may become illegal.

Essential services must be maintained at minimal levels, but the wide scope of those services, and the exact

levels at which they should be maintained, are in dispute.

ITF-affiliated union confederations Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO.) and Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) point to the International Labour Organisation's provision that industrial action should not threaten the life or safety, nor impede the necessary movement, of persons.

But the government's proposals suggest that a whole series of workers must provide minimum services in the event of a strike.

Whilst public health, safety and security are to be guaranteed, the transport, communications, and fuel and energy industries, as well as the production and distribution of food and other basics, must be maintained under the government's plan.

Although unions are agreed that the right to take industrial action should not conflict with the rights of

the individual, such measures could have broad implications for transport workers.

The draft measures propose set levels at which minimum services would have to be maintained.

Drawing on Italian legislation, Spanish unions say this should be regulated through prior agreement in the collective bargaining process, or negotiated in the absence of a collective agreement.

The government is proposing that labour courts will adjudicate on the legality of strike action, and strict punitive measures will be applicable.

The government plans to penalise individual workers over participation in any strike action thus deemed "illegal", and has suggested that immediate dismissal will be the maximum penalty.

CC.OO. and UGT have submitted an alternative proposal to the government, and are awaiting their response.

... ITF solidarity with Nigerian dock workers

Continued from page 1

to return to their jobs before the union will agree to the elections taking place.

But it is clear that the port employers have no intention of reinstating the dismissed men. They have hired cheap labour instead.

"The worst of it all is that the National Port Authority (NPA) has employed foreign labour to take over the jobs of the bona fide registered dockworkers," Abam continues in a letter to the ITF.

"The union has tried all it can to return the 2,000 registered dockworkers to their jobs, but the state machinery has been used by the NPA, the Minister of Transport and the Dock Labour Employers," he adds.

"The only hope we have now is the solidarity and support of ITF affiliates... we are confident that with support from ITF affiliates, we shall win the struggle for a free democratic union in the docks in Nigeria."

The ITF Executive Board meeting

on March 17th and 18th adopted a strong resolution in support of the dockers, demanding an immediate end to the crisis and the commencement of negotiations with the union.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis has written to the Nigerian President, General Babangida, asking that he personally intervene to discipline those responsible and to ensure that the dock workers are able to work free of intimidation.

Lewis also called upon the President to ensure that any future union elections were held with full participation for all the union members.

"In the absence of any action on your part to bring this crisis to an end we shall be forced to conclude that the employers and the police have the active support of your government for actions which are clear, blatant and outrageous violations of human, civil and trade union rights," said Lewis.

If no action is taken to remedy the situation, he added, the ITF will submit a formal complaint to the Interna-

tional Labour Organisation's Committee on Freedom of Association, and will have to consider asking affiliated unions to take solidarity action.

"This is not the sort of request which the ITF makes lightly. It does however reflect the absolute determination of our affiliates not to stand aside and see our affiliates crushed and their members thrown out of work," he concluded.

Letters of support from dock workers' affiliates have been pouring in to the ITF offices all month in response to a circular.

Affiliates wishing to send further protest messages should address them to Nigerian embassies and consulates in their countries, and to:

**General Ibrahim B. Babangida
President of Nigeria
Dodan Barracks, Ikoyi, Lagos.**

Please send copies of your messages to the Secretariat and to Jonas Abam, Dockworkers' Union of Nigeria, c/o 119 Osho Drive, Off Kirikiri Road, P.M.B. 1305, Olodi, Apapa, Lagos.

ITF General Secretary announces retirement

ITF Executive Board members meeting in London on 17-18 March were informed by ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis that it was his "firm intention to retire soon after my 60th birthday — that is after the Executive Board meeting in March 1993".

Other agenda items were pushed to one side while Board members attempted to persuade Lewis, who was elected to his current position at the ITF Dublin Congress in 1977, to change his mind. He quickly made it clear that this was not an option. Pointing out that he will have spent 37 years working for the ITF and 15 1/2 years in the post of General Secretary (making him the second longest serving General Secretary in the ITF's almost 100 year history), he told them:

"I have often said in the past that I intended to retire when I was 60 but it appears that no-one believed me." He had made the decision some time previously, he said, but had decided that he had an obligation to inform the Executive Board before telling anyone else.

In the absence of any set rules in the ITF Constitution, President Jim Hunter then asked the Board to consider how to fill the position of General Secretary during the period between March 1993 and the 37th ITF Congress in 1994. After an extensive debate it was agreed that at its October 1992 meeting the Board would appoint an Acting General Secretary from within the ITF Secretariat.

RACISM

Among other decisions during the two day meeting, the Executive Board agreed to give its support to a motion from European dockers' affiliates concerning racism and xenophobia. The motion drew attention to the rising tide of violence on racial minority groups, including refugees, in many European countries and called on the ITF to campaign for greater efforts to combat this evil.

REGIONS

While discussing developments in different regions of the world, the Board agreed to adopt a toughly worded

motion expressing full solidarity with the Dockworkers' Union of Nigeria (DUN) whose members have been thrown out of their jobs and whose leaders have been removed from their post by government decree (see separate story). It also heard a report from African representative Ben Udogwu that the dispute involving the Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railwaymen's Union, ZARU (see separate story) had now been resolved following mediation by other ITF affiliates. On Europe, it was agreed to hold the first meeting of the (reconstituted) ITF European Committee in London on 3-4 June 1992. At the request of the ITF's US affiliates, the Board endorsed a motion condemning the elusive tax-dodging millionaire Marc Rich whose Ravenswood Aluminum subsidiary is in a bitter struggle with the Steelworkers' Union and pledging the ITF's support for the international Marc Rich campaign.

AFFILIATION FEES

The Board reviewed guidelines which it established last year for granting of concessions on affiliation fees to unions unable to pay at the standard rate. It was made clear that this concession was intended to apply solely to developing countries and to countries, such as those in Eastern and Central Europe, where there are temporarily severe problems in obtaining hard currency. The Board agreed to establish a maximum upper limit for unions which are in receipt of a concession on affiliation fees of 100,000 members or 50% of their total membership whichever is the greater. A lower limit of 10% of the standard fee will continue to operate. Within these limits, the Board will decide each request for a concession on its merits. The guidelines will be reviewed at future meetings in the light of any practical problems experienced.

WOMEN

A considerable amount of the Board's time was taken up by a comprehensive discussion of the representation of women in ITF structures and activities on the basis of a survey conducted of ITF affiliates and other international

trade union organisations. A number of options for enhancing women's participation in the ITF were presented including measures to encourage unions to send more women delegates to conferences and committees, the convening of a special Women's Conference and the reservation of seats on ITF governing bodies for women. The very real need to attract more women into the trade union movement had to be balanced against the relatively small proportion (around 7%) of women in the current ITF-affiliated membership. There was no consensus on whether constitutional changes were desirable but it was agreed that more ITF activities should be organised dealing with the specific problems of women transport workers. It was therefore agreed to convene a second ITF Women's Conference to provide advice to the Board and to consult the different ITF Sections on the items to be placed on its agenda.

Requests for affiliation from ten new unions from Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cyprus, Hungary, India, Japan, Mauritania, and Vanuatu were accepted, in principle, by the Board. The three new African affiliates are all civil aviation unions from countries previously unrepresented within the ITF's family.

UNION SUSPENSIONS

As part of a decision taken at the previous meeting to clamp down on affiliates which persistently and without any explanation do not pay their affiliation fees, the General Secretary informed the meeting that 84 unions had been suspended from their ITF membership with effect from 1 January 1992. Several of them had since contacted him indicating a willingness to discuss their problems. Their suspensions would be lifted once an agreement on fees was reached and the appropriate payment received.

INTERLAKEN 1994

Following a report on discussions with the ITF's Swiss affiliates, the Board agreed that the 37th ITF Congress will take place in Interlaken, Switzerland from 4 to 11 August 1994.

Burmese campaign calls for Pepsi boycott

Trade unionists around the world are being asked not to drink Pepsi Cola in solidarity with the people of Burma, who are suffering fierce repression under one of the most cruel dictatorships in Asia.

The campaign against PepsiCo, which produces Pepsi Cola and a range of other well-known food and drink products, is being mounted by the Burmese opposition, with the support of human rights groups and other prominent organisations such as "Free Suu Kyi, Free Burma", of which the ITF is a member.

Strong backing for the campaign has come from the ITFs, led by the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), a number of whose affiliates organise workers at Pepsi Cola plants.

Over the past year, these organisations have been urging PepsiCo not to invest in Burma in the present circumstances. But the company pressed ahead with its plans, setting up Pepsi Cola Products Myanmar (the junta's new name for Burma, which only it uses).

Since November of last year, 70,200 Pepsi Cola bottles a day have been rolling off the production lines at the new factory, which is 40 per cent owned by PepsiCo in a joint venture with the military regime and there are plans to boost daily output to between 500,000 and 600,000 bottles.

The factory imports the secret Pepsi formula in concentrated form from the US, adding sugar and water, and the bubbles, locally.

Burmese-produced Pepsi is not a cheap drink — it costs Kyat 15 (US\$2.50) a bottle — about the same as the average daily wage. So most customers are officials and their families, who buy their Pepsi at the privileged price of Kyat 8 (US\$1.30) a bottle.

The PepsiCo campaign has one simple aim — to get PepsiCo to pull out of Burma.

You can help by refusing to drink Pepsi or to buy any of the products produced by PepsiCo that are on sale in your country. These include popular drinks such as Diet Pepsi, Seven-

up, Slice Soda and Mountain Dew. Companies owned by the giant multinational include the Pizza Hut pizza restaurant chain and the Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell fast food chains. PepsiCo also produces a number of snack products such as Frito-Lay, Doritos and Ruffles.

PepsiCo products are targeted at the young who represent a huge potential market for fast food, snack foods and soft drinks. So it is especially important for unions to win the support of young workers for the campaign.

A victory would send a clear message to other companies which might be considering investing in Burma that they should consider the country's appalling human rights record under its present rulers. They should ask themselves whether they should do

business with a regime that tramples on human rights and has deprived thousands of political prisoners of their freedom, among them last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner Suu Kyi.

*The trade unions in Burma have now regrouped and are organising workers in defiance of the ruling military junta, which is still stubbornly clinging to power.

Organised labour was prominent in the National League for Democracy but the unions were forced to suspend their activities when the Burmese army, seizing power in 1988, rounded up all their leaders and placed them in detention.

Workers are reported to be eager to join the new trade unions, despite the dangers of belonging to the forces of democratic opposition to continued military rule in Burma.

China: free union manifesto

"Free trade unions are emerging everywhere from the land of China like bamboo shoots after the spring rain. This is where the hope of Chinese labour lies!"

This is the optimistic message of the anti-government manifesto circulated by the China Free Trade Union Preparatory Committee throughout China earlier this year.

Moves by Chinese workers to organise in free trade unions are being actively supported by the independent union movement in Hong Kong.

It is the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU), the umbrella body of the autonomous unions, which has arranged for the text of the Chinese manifesto, in an English translation, to be made available to a wider audience among trade unionists worldwide.

In the manifesto, the Preparatory Committee predicts that free trade unions will soon be set up at workplaces throughout the country in defiance of the state-controlled All-China Federation of Trade Unions.

This provides independent confirmation from within China of recent reports reaching the west that the

autonomous workers' organisations, which were brutally repressed in the Tiananmen Square massacre and its aftermath, are now regrouping in cities across China.

While warning potential members of the dangers of secret police infiltration of their ranks and of government repression, the signatories of the new manifesto are confident that most workers will leave the fast diminishing ranks of the ACFTU and join their number.

They reject the ACFTU as being "only a tool of the Chinese Communist Party and the ruling regime", adding that China is currently caught in a trap, with the authorities refusing to recognise the free trade unions and the workers refusing to recognise the officially-approved ACFTU.

The manifesto offers the Chinese government a way out of this impasse, saying that it could go some way towards restoring its credibility within and outside China by fulfilling its obligations under the Chinese Constitution and ILO Convention No. 87 and recognising the right of Chinese workers to form free trade unions and take part in their activities.

Bangladesh's youngest transport workers

The hopes and fears of the small boys, some as young as seven or eight, who work on the Tempo buses in Bangladesh have been eloquently captured in a recently published book compiled by photojournalist Shah Ahmed Sadeque.

Entitled "Tempo Boy — Child Labour on the Buses of Bangladesh", the book is a collection of interviews with 17 young boys who tell in their own words their experience of working on the small three wheeled buses — known as Tempos — that are the commonest and cheapest form of public transport in Bangladesh.

They are just some of the 18,000 youngsters who earn a perilous living perched on the foot plate of the buses, which throng the streets of Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong.

These young transport workers are either orphans or come from the most destitute families among Bangladesh's urban poor. They are forced to go out and earn a living, often leaving school after just a couple of years when family circumstances alter and their meagre earnings become a major or even the only source of family income.

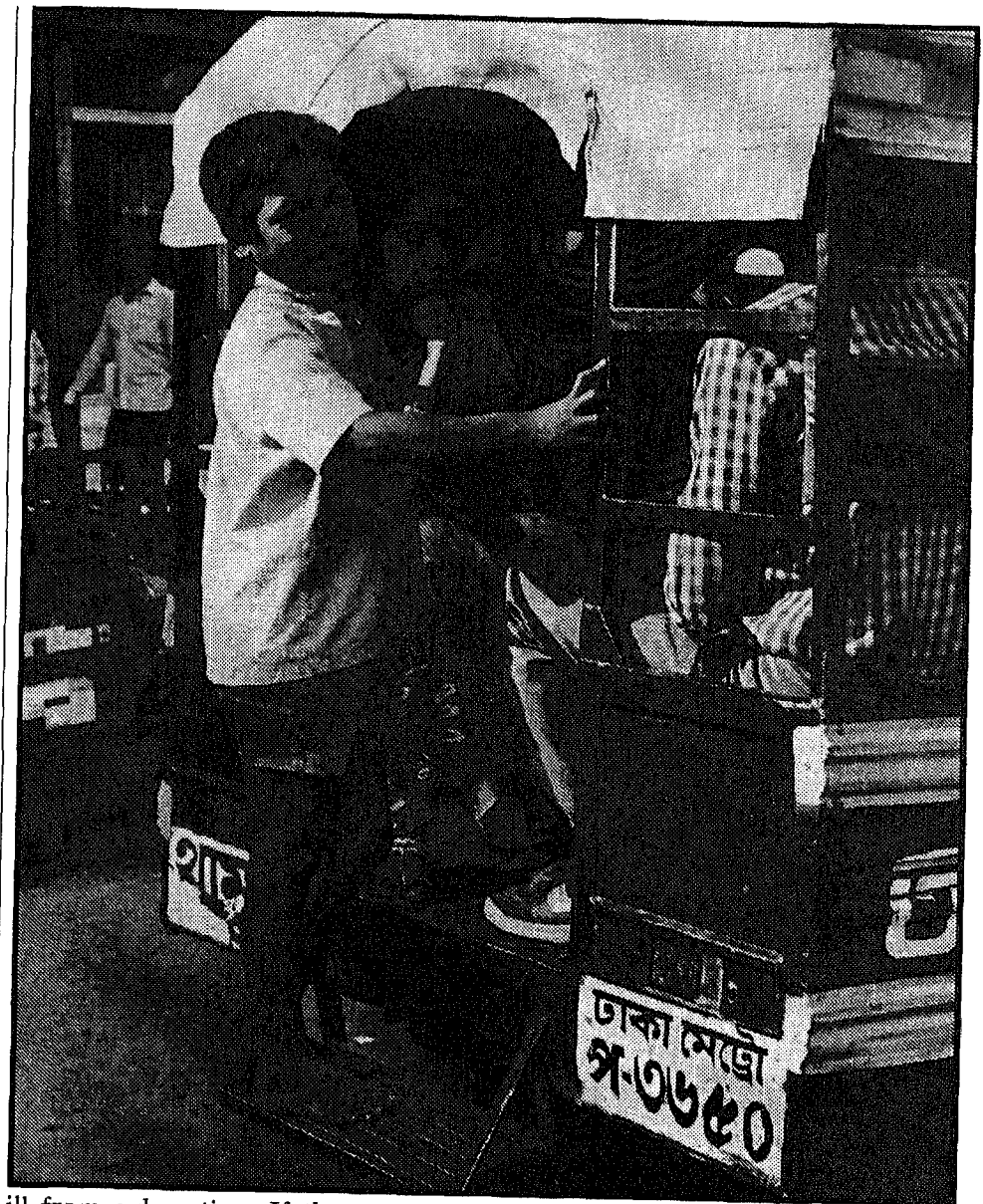
The boys work long hours — often as many as 15 or 16 a day — for very low pay. They do not complain, however bad the conditions, as the Tempo driver or *ustad* will simply sack them and take on a new Tempo Boy. There is no shortage of young boys seeking work on the buses.

Although their work is dangerous, the boys think of themselves as Kings of the Road and harbour ambitions to be a tempo driver themselves in a few years' time, owning their own Tempo or even a fleet of Tempos.

The Tempo Boy has many duties. He settles passengers, collects fares and warns the driver of traffic hazards. He is also the bus cleaner and bus mechanic.

Standing on the foot plate and clinging on to the back of the bus, being a Tempo Boy is a dangerous job. Many Tempo Boys are thrown off the bus when it brakes suddenly or hits a pothole and are injured or killed.

Because they need the money the boys rarely take time off, even when



ill from exhaustion. If they are too sick to go to work, even for a couple of days, they usually lose their job and have to find a new Tempo driver willing to take them on.

Many develop health problems as a result of the type of work they do. A common complaint among those interviewed was of sore throats and actual throat pain, the result of having to yell to persuade passengers to take their Tempo rather than a rival's. Few could afford to buy lozenges or linctus to soothe their aching throats.

Inevitably their general health suffers. Few of the boys get enough to eat and many are severely malnourished. Others are chronically sick from overwork.

At night they go back to their homes in the slums and shanty towns or sleep out on pavements and under bridges,

snatching a few hours' rest before the daily round begins again.

The Bangladesh International Action Group (BIAG), an umbrella organisation with branches in Bangladesh and a number of western countries, campaigns against child labour and supports efforts by the poor to help themselves. By publishing this book it is giving the Tempo Boys the right to be heard and we hope listened to.

With his camera and tape recorder Sadeque has drawn an unforgettable portrait in words and pictures of what it means to be a Tempo Boy.

Copies of the book are available at £3.50 plus postage from the Bangladesh International Action Group (BIAG), PO Box 94, London N5 1UN at £3.50 (plus packing and postage).

European unions mobilise against racism

Trade unionists marked the UN's International Day against Racism and declared their commitment to a peaceful multiracial society by taking part in the demonstrations held on 21 March in cities across Europe.

In Switzerland, many hundreds of trade unionists gathered in front of the parliament building in the capital Bern where they were addressed by distinguished speakers, including the General Secretary of the Swiss Society for Assistance to Refugees, who condemned the recent spate of violence against asylum seekers and attacks on refugee hostels and called for an end to xenophobia and discrimination against those from other countries who now live and work in Switzerland.

The leaflets and pamphlets on the information desk set up by the Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB) and the local unions in Bern were quickly snapped up and a long list of signatures was added to a petition calling for a referendum to give foreigners the vote in Bern canton.

The event, which had been organised by the "Forum against Racism", culminated in a lively discussion forum in which separate groups gathered in restaurants around Bern to discuss ways in which they could make a contribution to the fight against racism in Swiss society.

"NETHERLANDS SHOWS ITS COLOURS"

A similar event in Amsterdam under the slogan "Netherlands shows its colours" was an enormous success and attracted considerable media coverage, both at home and abroad. 80,000 people from many different countries turned out despite the weather, with the national costumes worn by many of those who joined the demonstration lending a welcome splash of colour to a dismal morning.

In a welcome display of unity, the Chairman of the Dutch Employers' Organisation and the Vice Chairman of the FNV Karin Abelmund spoke out clearly against racism.

Urging trade unionists to attend the rally, the mayor of Amsterdam Ed

van Thijn reminded them that they were one of the few organisations in Dutch society that was capable of reaching out to and winning over the hearts and minds of thousands of people. The FNV trade union federation, he said, was the very embodiment of solidarity and solidarity among people, regardless of nationality, was the only effective way to overcome xenophobia.

CHILDREN OF ALL THE NATIONS

The following day also saw a national demonstration in Belgium when trade unionists were prominent among the thousands who turned out on a march through the streets of Brussels led by children from many different nations, symbolising Belgium's future as a multicultural society.

Union leaders were among the



speakers at the mass rally that followed the march who appealed to all Belgians to stand firm in the fight against racism and discrimination and for a tolerant society that welcomed the participation of all, no matter what their racial origins, in the economic and social life of the community.

Death squads decapitate Salvadorean trade unionist

A trade unionist in El Salvador has been brutally murdered by what appear to have been right-wing death squads.

Nazario de Jesús Gracias was working at his regular job as a night security guard at the headquarters of the Federación de Sindicatos Independientes (FAESIES) in San Salvador on March third when he was attacked with what was probably a machete, and decapitated.

The evidence points strongly to a political motive for the killing.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) reports that the method used recalls the assassination of a prominent civil rights campaigner last year.

It is also known that Nazario de Jesús Gracias was detained last November by the military, on the grounds that he "was a member of a trade union".

"We are particularly concerned that this renewed attack on trade unionists' lives seems to confirm the existence of certain right-wing groups within the country's security forces, which are determined to destabilise the country in order to prevent the implementation of the Chapultepec Peace Agreement," said the ICFTU.

The ITF has written to the El Salvadorean government urging President Cristianini to take steps to bring those responsible to justice.

Trade union rights abuses in Asia/Pacific continue

The continuing violation of human and trade union rights in the region was the theme of this year's meeting of the ITF's Asia/Pacific Regional Committee held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 26 to 28 February.

Speaking to the opening session, Ken Douglas, President of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU) said that it was not only unions in the developing countries in the region that were suffering. The conservative government in New Zealand had introduced legislation undermining workers' rights and, as a later speaker pointed out, the return of a conservative government in Australia might well usher in similar legislative reforms in that country.

Other speakers at the opening ceremony included APRC chairman Shoshiro Nakanishi, ITF Executive Board member Tadashi Kubo, ITF Regional Secretary Mo Hoda and General Secretary Harold Lewis, who insisted that strong unions were necessary to keep governments and employers in check and that governments were mistaken if they thought that suppressing trade unions would solve their economic problems.

Following in-depth discussions of the Report on Activities prepared by the ITF Secretariat and country reports from the individual members of the Committee, the meeting adopted resolutions on three countries — Burma, Fiji and Sri Lanka — where serious human rights abuses have occurred in recent years.

The resolution on Burma condemned the recent wave of brutality and killings by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which has forced large numbers of Burmese citizens to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. It went on to demand that Aung San Su Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy which had won the May 1990 elections, should be allowed to form a civilian government. The ITF was asked to press the United Nations to impose sanctions on Burma with a view to bringing about the restoration of full democratic, civil and trade union rights.

Over the past few years Asia/Pacific transport workers have adopted several resolutions in support of workers' rights in Fiji which have been suppressed since the military coups of 1987. This new resolution followed these up by deploring the introduction last November of three decrees aimed at undermining and eventually destroying free trade unions. In the light of the deterioration in the labour situation, ITF affiliates were urged to take strong measures in solidarity with Fijian workers in their efforts to protect and safeguard basic union rights.

On Sri Lanka, the APRC deplored the government's continued use of the emergency regulations to declare large sectors of the economy as "essential services" — measures which interfered with industrial action and had resulted in the mass dismissal of strikers. Strong backing was given to the ITF's Sri Lankan affiliate, the CMU, which is seeking the repeal of this legislation and the restoration of the democratic rights of workers.

The APRC also formally endorsed the resolution adopted by delegates attending the 8th Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Conference in Manila and agreed to support action by the ITF-affiliated Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA) against a new privatisation law which threatens union rights (see separate story).

This year's APRC meeting also reviewed the membership of the region's inland transport committee. It was agreed that the committee as at present constituted — it includes representatives of road, rail, inland navigation and dock workers — was too wide-ranging as the workers in the various categories did not always share the same industrial problems. It was therefore agreed that membership of the Inland Transport Committee would in future be restricted to the road and rail sectors. A separate committee would be set up to represent the interests of dock workers in the region, while Asia/Pacific inland navigation workers — the smallest of the categories involved — would hold occasional ad hoc meetings to deal with their special concerns.

The meeting noted that the trade union movements in a number of countries in the Asia/Pacific region were already beginning to join forces, under the banner of the ICFTU, to meet the challenges posed by the various economic groupings that had been set up in the area such as ASEAN and SARC. While welcoming these moves, it felt that there was an urgent need for the transport workers in the member countries of these groupings to cooperate more closely. Agreement was reached in principle that this should take place and the ITF will now consider the practicalities involved and report back to the Committee in due course.

In the elections that concluded the meeting, Shoshiro Nakanishi (Japan) was re-elected as APRC chairman and Mike Fleming (Australia) and Mario Santos (Philippines) were both returned to their positions as Vice Chairmen.

Fiji: unions lobby EC to lift Lomé

Trade unions around the world are demanding that Fiji be removed from the list of states which are party to the Lomé Convention.

Under the Convention, former French and British colonial territories are granted privileged access to European markets for their largely agricultural and mineral exports and qualify for financial assistance from the European Investment Bank with development projects.

In a joint letter to EC Vice President Manuel Marin, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) say that recent moves by the interim government against the unions (see *ITF News*, January/February 1992) mean that Fiji is failing to live up to its obligations under the Convention and that its membership should cease.

Transport workers and the European Community

ITF News will now include a regular feature on developments in the European Community.

This section will be of most interest to those unions within the Community, but many of the social and labour issues debated in Europe will be of relevance to everyone.

MINISTERS AGREE RECENT PROPOSALS

Transport Ministers meeting in Brussels on March 26th and 27th have given their approval to a series of measures on the Liberalisation of air transport and on cabotage in inland and maritime transport.

After a debate on the Third Package for the liberalisation of Air Transport, the Council of Transport Ministers declared itself in favour of further reductions in tariff controls, endorsed the principle of free access to all routes for all European Community operators and recognised the technical need for Community aircraft to be recorded on and controlled through national registers.

Cooperation agreements with Norway and Sweden for the air transport sector were approved.

Following a lengthy discussion on the road transport sector, the Council approved proposals for the admission of non-resident road hauliers to carry out cabotage in a member state, and came to a broad agreement over the liberalisation of passenger transport by road: the Council agreed that frontier transport should be opened up immediately, whilst other sectors should catch up in stages with a target date of January 1st 1996.

The principle of maritime cabotage was endorsed, whilst on inland waterways, the Council approved the opening of negotiations with non-Community countries on passenger and goods transport.

Following the Council's endorsements, the proposals will now go to the European Parliament for approval.

TRANSPORT WORKERS CONFRONT FEDEX OVER JOB LOSSES

Unions met with managers of the US transport group Federal Express (Fedex) on March 25th to discuss the threatened loss of 6,000 jobs throughout Europe.

Italian Dutch and German representatives in the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community (Brussels Committee) met Managing Director Mr. Wim Noortman.

The unions presented a common European negotiating front in order to challenge Mr. Noortman over plans to close down its inter-European business.

Calling for further meetings with trade unions and Fedex Works Councils, the unions asked the company to clarify the situation.

Mr. Noortman gave a run-down of Fedex's European policy, blaming the US recession for the company's inability to bear losses in the European market.

He said that around 3,000 European jobs would be retained.

Mr. Noortman refuted press rumours that Fedex's European business was about to be bought out by the Australian group TNT, but gave an assurance that he would contact TNT with a view to obtaining the company's future cooperation.

EUROPEANS SUPPORT EAST TIMOR

A European Community statement calling upon the Indonesian government to improve human rights in East Timor and supporting the United Nations' involvement in the process of bringing those responsible for the massacre at Dili in November to justice has been published.

During their country's presidency of the European Community, Portuguese trade unions have been amongst the most active in Europe in condemning the slaughter and the continued denial of the repressed Mauber people's basic human rights (see *ITF News*, January/February 1992).

Along with other unions in the maritime and civil aviation sectors, the ITF-affiliated dock workers' union, Federação Nacional dos Sindicatos de Trabalhadores Portuarios, are still energetically campaigning for an international boycott of Indonesian interests.

The union was the first to react to the Dili massacre by blacking Indonesian cargoes, and was also active in contacting Australian trade unions to request their support for the mission of the "peace ship", *Lusitania Express* to Indonesia.

The Portuguese vessel returned in safety to Darwin, Australia on March 12th after being turned back by Indonesian gunboats en route to East Timor.

The 120 human rights campaigners on board had hoped to visit the graves of those killed at Dili.

GREEN TRANSPORT

Transport Commissioner Karel Van Miert has spoken strongly in favour of the European Commission's Green Paper on the environment (see *ITF News*, March 1992).

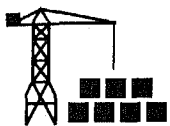
Van Miert said that road hauliers must bear the full costs of environmental damage, and promised that the Commission would press forward with proposals to increase vehicle and fuel taxation to corresponding levels across the European Community.

"If we don't change our policy, then by 2010 we will have to deal with a 42 per cent increase in road haulage. That is just not conceivable," he said.

Van Miert added that increased taxes would provide more incentive to use other forms of transport such as the railways, inland waterways and the sea.

Sea freight between Denmark and northern Italy had increased eight times over between 1986 and 1990, Van Miert added, and this was encouraging.

The paper has to be discussed by European Community governments and the industry before a White Paper is issued.



DOCKERS

Rotating strikes paralyse Japanese docks

Japanese dockers began a campaign of strike action over pay and conditions on March 29th.

The 50,000 members of the dock federation Zenkoku Kowan paralysed

96 ports throughout the day in the first of a planned wave of strikes.

Strikes are to take place every Sunday from March 29th, every Saturday from April fourth, and on night shift.

Questioning intensive working practices in the sector, the union is seeking a five-day working week, an eight-hour day and a monthly wage system, as well as improved wages.

New study clearly proves the failure of British port deregulation

Dock Strike: Conflict and Restructuring in Britain's Ports, recently published by the Avebury Business School Library, is a refreshing look at the deregulation of Britain's ports.

Authors Peter Turnbull, Charles Woolfson and John Kelly have undertaken a thorough study of the roots of dock conflict over the last century, analysing the Transport and General Workers' Union's (TGWU) role in the historical fight against the poverty and insecurity of dock work and pinpointing the emergence of a new form of casualisation since the abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme in August 1989.

The first four chapters of the book trace the changing pattern of the industry as dock workers first fought for job security, achieving a degree of control through the Scheme, then struggled to defend their gains in the face of shifting economic trends and technological development.

The second half of this book examines the events leading up to radical deregulation in 1989, and looks at the dramatic effects on the industry as a whole.

Three years later, after much self-congratulation on the part of the Conservative government and port employers over the discarding of the Scheme, this book's perspective is welcome and necessary.

The effects of deregulation have hardly been the boon to British industry that supporters claim, say the authors.

State redundancies paid to regis-

tered dock workers have far surpassed the government's calculations, becoming a financial burden. Nearly five times as many dockers lost their jobs as predicted, as opportunistic employers used the compensation scheme to discard their entire workforce. Many then re-hired new workers — effectively appropriating public funds to union-bust in areas where redundancies had never been necessary.

Sharp labour practices and the use of new forms of casual labour, such as temporary workers, have created a backlash against the formerly profitable non-scheme ports of Dover and Felixstowe, which are no longer able to compete.

Meanwhile deregulation has generated neither the investment boom forecast, nor the thousands of new jobs predicted by government economists in 1989, the book argues.

There are detailed analyses of aggressive management practices brought into play against the union, highlighted by an examination of the industrial tribunal's conclusions over the case of the 17 TGWU shop stewards dismissed from the port of Tilbury.

The authors emphasise the degree of government collaboration with port employers in what was a staged conflict against the TGWU's organisation in the ports.

There is a recognition of the role of international as well as domestic solidarity in the dispute — the authors underline the support given by German, Belgian, Dutch, Swedish and

US dockers through the ITF.

Most significantly, the book questions whether British ports will be able to compete with their European contemporaries in the future.

"Ruthless cost-cutting and labour intensification have clearly brought dramatic short-term gains," say the authors.

"But Continental ports, assisted by enormous public subsidies, are in the throes of major capital investment in the run-up to 1992 and beyond," they add.

The book concludes that if Britain's ports are to survive competition in the wake of the Single European Market and the changes in Eastern Europe, there must be a place for trade unions within a state mechanism that will plan for the future.

Currently, vital areas such as training are being neglected, and coercive management practices have left little room for constructive cooperation between workforce and employers.

"There is a danger that the whole economy will suffer because Britain's port employers are preoccupied with short-term profitability... it is this scenario which underlines the need for a strategic industry such as the docks to be regulated by the public authorities so that decisions about investment can be taken on a long term basis," the authors say.

"It is ironic that one body which has advocated such a policy since the early 1980s — the TGWU — is the very

Continued on page 10

...British ports are unable to compete with Europe

Continued from page 9

organisation criticised by employers."

It is to be hoped that such warnings will be heeded by the many other governments worldwide that are currently contemplating massive port deregulation.

The British experience is a valuable one, if only because it highlights the

pitfalls that must be avoided for successful and efficient port reform.

Social consensus and a role for the state in planning and investment in the sector are critical elements, and governments ignore them at their peril.

Dock Strike, Conflict and Restructuring in Britain's Ports, is available from **Avebury, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3HR, UK; and from Ashgate Publishing Company, Old Post Road, Brookfield, Vermont 05036, USA (ISBN 1 85628 176 0).**

SEAFARERS

Cook Islands added to ITF Foc list

ITF seafarers' unions in the Asia/Pacific region have called for the Cook Islands register to be formally declared a Flag of convenience (Foc). That decision has now been accepted, bringing the official ITF list to 17 registers.

The ITF Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee (APSRC) — meeting in Auckland, New Zealand from 3-5 March — also re-affirmed the ITF's strong opposition to the New Zealand government's savage new anti-trade union laws.

The APSRC gathered together 35 members, advisers and observers from 14 regional states. The meeting tackled many important policy issues, including second registers and non-domiciled seafarers, quotas, ITF agreements and campaign activities, regional welfare services and matters arising from the International Labour Organisation's 36th session of the Joint Maritime Commission (which met at the end of last year).

The APSRC was preceded by a meeting of the APSRC Working Party on Quotas which called for its own abolition and replacement by informal consultations between ITF affiliates in Asia and Europe. The Working Party called for the issue of quotas to be placed on the agenda of all future APSRC meetings as a permanent fixture.

Six resolutions were adopted by the meeting:

The ITF Secretariat was asked to

put the status of the **Cook Islands register** before the next meeting of the Fair Practices Committee Sub-Committee on the Collective Agreement with a recommendation that the register be declared an Foc. ITF Inspectors have been asked to pay special attention to any Cook Islands vessel visiting their ports. The FPC sub-committee, meeting on the 24 and 25 March, have accepted this recommendation (see separate story).

Motions on the **ITF Benchmark for TCC Agreements and Authorising Provisional Agreements** were also adopted.

The ITF Secretariat was also asked to pursue with the ILO the indemnification of seafarers abandoned by insolvent owners (**Protection of Abandoned Seafarers**).

Pacific nations set to adopt Port State Control

A group of Pacific maritime nations are moving towards the establishment of a regional Port State Control agreement, inspired by the European Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed by 12 states in 1982.

Led by Japan, meetings have already been held with South Korea, China, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, Canada and the USA. A proposed pact may be presented to the International Maritime Organization's Maritime Safety Committee meeting this month.

Under Port State Control, coastal states take responsibility for inspecting vessels of all flags calling in their ports, enforcing minimum agreed international norms and sharing data with each other.

The USA will not formally sign a memorandum — since the Coast Guard is already legally bound to check the safety of all vessels calling in their ports — but they do already co-operate with the European MOU.

The establishment of a Pacific-wide port state control regime — so long as it is genuine and effective — will be welcomed by the world's seafarers.

Are the Second Registers failing?

Are Second Registers doomed to fail? Perhaps, says Tony Gray in a recent column in *Lloyd's List* newspaper ("Shine wears off the shooting stars of the second register"). Looking at the experiences of the Norwegian NIS and German ISR, he points out that the reduction or withdrawal of financial supports is encouraging second register operators to move back to the Flags of convenience they came from. Ships are flagging out from ISR already — "most of the fleeing tonnage is expected to come from Germany's second register rather than the traditional register. Those owners on the ISR, it is argued, have already taken the first step away from the German flag, while those on the traditional register have resisted..." he writes. In the case of NIS, he predicts a similar fate based on "the change from sunny to stormy weather in the Norwegian investment climate". It is clear, says Gray, that the second register "concept" is not enough to beat flags of convenience — "...both registers are in danger of becoming lame ducks". Is it too early to say, we told you so?

The **Brazilian** government's commission on the creation of a second register has delayed its final report, due in March, by 45 days. It still seems almost certain that the Commission will recommend the establishment of a second register.

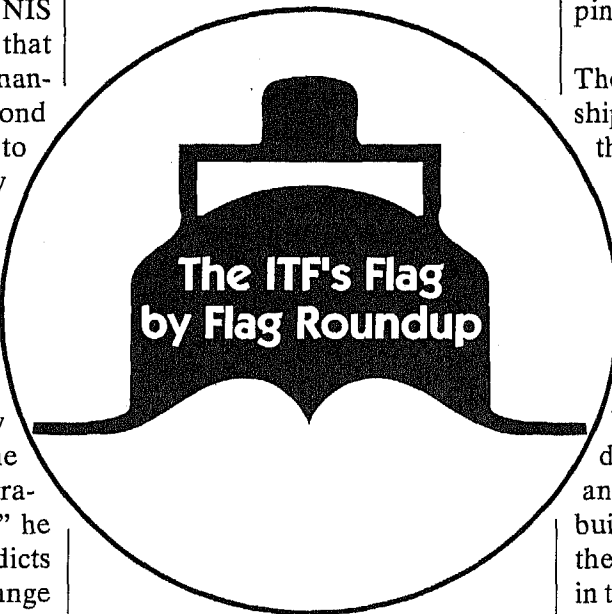
Attempts to rescue the **Caribbean** government-owned West Indian Shipping Company (WISCO), which collapsed at the end of last year, appear to have failed (see *ITF News*, March 1992). Monies promised by Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) governments have not materialised, Wisco's two owned ships (the *Caricom Venture* and the *Caricom Express*) remain docked in Antigua and Trinidad. Wisco's failure is a sad illustration of the difficulties facing the developing world in their just struggles to develop what should be their share of the international mari-

time and shipping industry.

Ever eager to deregulate, privatise and attack organised labour, **New Zealand's** government is considering

(Trans-Tasman) — and the safety-conscious Australian government have said they want it to stay that way — it would be ironic if the only trades reserved for New Zealand flag shipping were those.

The St. Petersburg based register of shipping is seeking permission from the **Russian** government to become a self-governing classification society. Formerly a wing of the USSR Ministry (Morflot), and now subservient to the Russian Ministry of Transport, the register wishes to be re-organised along the lines of Norwegian Det Norske Veritas — with half the board of directors drawn from the register and the other half from the shipbuilding industry. In recognition of the fact that the register classifies ships in the Baltic states as well as Russia, it will be renamed the "Maritime Register of Shipping". There are presently 17,300 ships under the register's class — only 9,500 fly the Russian flag however. Competing classification societies in the Ukraine and the Baltic states are reportedly already planned.



eliminating coastal national flag reservation (cabotage) and relaxing nationality rules and qualification requirements for New Zealand flag crews. Given that cabotage exists for Australian-New Zealand trades

Message to seafarers

A new edition of the ITF's most popular publication is now available.

The handy, pocket-sized *Message to Seafarers* is an international address book for seafarers serving on Flag of convenience (Foc) ships giving contact names, addresses and phone numbers of ITF Inspectors and maritime trade unions in over 80 countries and many more ports.

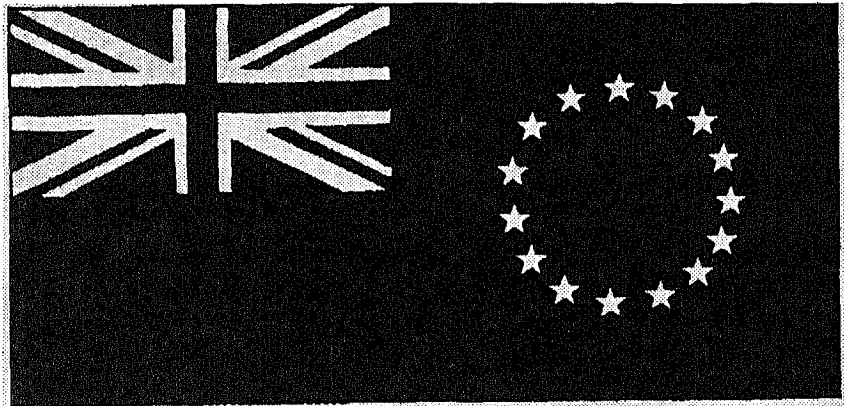
The introduction — published in English, French, German, Spanish, Swedish, Korean, Japanese, Greek, Tagalog (Filipino), Chinese, Polish, Russian and Arabic — tells seafarers how they can use the contacts in this book if they have a problem on their ship.

Since initially producing *Message to Seafarers*, the ITF has found that a growing number of seafarers who contact the ITF do so because of this booklet.



Message to Seafarers is already very widely distributed, through seafarers' centres, inspectors, unions and direct distribution. If you know of anyone or anywhere that needs this book and hasn't had it, write to us and tell us. Distribution to seafarers is free of charge.

The Cook Islands — latest flag on the ITF Foc list



The latest addition to the ITF list of Flag of convenience registers is the South Pacific island chain known as the Cook Islands.

With an estimated population of nearly 20,000, distributed over 15 islands (two are uninhabited), the region is a self-governing "associated territory" of New Zealand. Constitutionally the Islands have the right to unilaterally declare full independence whenever they want.

Captain James Cook led the first expedition of Europeans to the islands in 1773 — the locals liked him so much they called their home after him. The islands were a British colony from 1888 till 1901, when they were "given" to New Zealand.

In 1965 the Islands became a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand.

Sir Albert Henry, leader of the Cook Islands Party (CIP), was elected Premier in 1965 and re-elected in 1974 and 1978. Sadly — for him — a July 1978 enquiry into electoral malpractices disallowed various votes that had been cast by Cook Islands "expatriates" who had been flown in from New Zealand on a Chartered airplane with their fares paid from public funds. The amended ballot gave power to Sir Thomas Davis from the Democratic Party. A year later, Davis was convicted of conspiracy to defraud and was stripped of his knighthood.

Power then slipped back to the CIP, now led by Geoffrey Henry (brother of the disgraced former Premier). He then lost power when his nephew (Sir Albert's son) defected to the DP. Elections then returned (no longer Sir) Davis to power again.

Geoffrey Henry has now returned to power, winning 12 of 24 seats in the 1989 legislative elections.

The shipping register has an equally colourful history. Since 1987, a quarter of the register's 20 vessels have sunk — a record that outdoes Panama and Cyprus. Nationality requirements for registration in the Foc are almost non-existent.

The Fair Practices Committee Sub-Committee on the Collective Agreement, meeting in London on March 24 and 25, agreed with the ITF Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Committee recommendation that the Cook Islands should be added to the ITF list. The power to make immediate Foc declarations has been delegated to the Sub-Committee by the FPC.

The ITF Foc registers are now: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Honduras, Lebanon, Liberia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, St. Vincent, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu.

Swedish go

Thousands of Swedish seafarers' jobs are threatened by plans to introduce a low-cost "Special Section" on the shipping register.

Proposals published in March shocked the trade union movement by suggesting the virtual elimination of Swedish nationals and exempting crews from most of the coverage of Swedish social and labour regulations on all international trading, non-passenger ships.

The draft doesn't even stipulate that there should be any Swedes on board — the Master and Chief Engineer must hold Swedish certificates, but no other nationality requirement is made.

It also allows owners to summarily dismiss any seafarer at the time they enter the Special Section. Once a ship enters the new register, Swedish social and labour safeguards are no longer valid for the crew. Individual employment contracts or "collective agreements" with fake unions are given recognition in Swedish law as valid agreements — under Swedish law it would not be legal for the crew or the unions to take action for better agreements during the stipulated period of time stated in the contract.

According to Swedish Seafarers' Union (SSU) President Anders Lindström, these proposals represent an attack not only on Swedish Seafarers but on organised labour in the whole country. The Conservative Prime Minister — a devotee of Britain's ex-Prime Minister Thatcher — is believed to be preparing a thorough revision of Swedish labour law and industrial relations. This means that the seafarers' fight against the proposals will be closely followed by the entire labour movement.

"There will be a battle. We will not accept these proposals — we will fight them in every way we can," Lindström told **ITF News**.

The proposals — published by the Transport Ministry — are now subject to public consultation. The SSU has already launched a major publicity campaign against the proposals aimed at turning public opinion

Government declares war on seafarers

strongly against them.

If the union fails at this stage, a draft bill will be published in May. The Swedish Parliament would debate the bill after the summer recess in October or November:

"If we have failed to stop it at this point we will try and prevent the law from obtaining a Parliamentary majority," said Lindström.

Carl Bildt's government is a minority coalition of three parties (Conservatives, Liberals and Farmers) which relies on the votes of an irrationally extreme right-wing party for a Parliamentary majority. While the Conservatives and Liberals have strong links with shipowning interests, the union can hope that public opinion may sway the Farmers' party. The union would also seek a commitment from the Social Democratic opposition that they will reverse the law

if they come back to power.

Lindström is adamant that the union will not accept these proposals, nor will they agree "a settlement like Norway".

The union will fight for the 5-6,000 seafarers whose jobs are threatened — and all-out strike action is clearly on the cards if other efforts fail.

"If there is action we will ask for and receive the solidarity of the rest of the trade union movement in Sweden. But of course, we have to fight the hardest ourselves," said Lindström.

Fellow ITF maritime affiliates will also be asked to support the Swedish seafarers:

"We would say to ITF members keep your hands off these vessels, don't sign any agreements," said Lindström.

In many ways, there are analogies between Bildt's attack on the seafarers and the British Thatcher govern-

ment's assault on the trade unions in the 1980s — like Thatcher, Bildt may be targeting what he sees as one of the strongest unions as a preparation for further attacks on the movement. But Bildt doesn't have the unassailable Parliamentary majority Thatcher had, and he may well have chosen to take on more than he can handle:

"We won't make the same mistake as the British unions. I believe they made a strategic mistake in ignoring public opinion," said Lindström.

The SSU certainly won't do that. Within hours of the announcement of the government proposals, the Swedish media were contacted and presented with the union's response. Well attended press conferences and extensive media coverage of the SSU's position have already ensured that the Swedish public is well informed of the issues at stake.

Filipino 'contract' to kill SSU President

Shipowning interests in the Philippines have taken out a contract on the life of Swedish Seafarers' Union (SSU) President Anders Lindström.

Lindström has been warned by reliable sources in Manila that if he travels to the Philippines, his life will be at risk.

Lindström's name figures on a death list because of the actions of the SSU against Flag of convenience ships.

A representative of the SSU who was recently in the Philippines was approached by a well-known and reliable union movement contact with this disturbing story. Precise details of the assassination plans were given. According to this man:

"There are two possibilities when it comes to 'eliminating' Lindström. If they know the exact flight number a couple of 'sparrows' (sharpshooters) will take up their positions at Ninoy Aquino airport (Manila). It is relatively easy to get into the airport with a gun. Otherwise, there are plans to stage an accident. If Lindström has to

travel to Manila he should be very very cautious and come as anonymously as possible."

This story was corroborated later by another person active in the shipping industry in the Philippines.

Why should there be forces in the Philippines who are prepared to go to such lengths to murder a Swedish trade union leader?

In Anders Lindström's case, it is certain to be because of the actions that the Swedish Seafarers' Union has taken over many years against Foc ships and for more humane conditions on board for foreign crews.

The long tradition of ITF solidarity actions for Filipino crews in Sweden means that the SSU is well known and respected by many Filipino seafarers.

There are many financially successful manning agents in the Philippines and certain shipowners who are equally unappreciative when their economic activities are disturbed in any way. Swedish seafarers' union actions often attract a great deal of

attention in the mass media in the Philippines if a Filipino crew is involved.

Anders Lindström as President of the Swedish Seafarers' Union is regarded as the embodiment of ITF actions in Sweden. The most common way in the Philippines of getting rid of someone who is undesirable is to "eliminate" that person.

In 1991 alone over 30,000 people died a violent death in the Philippines. They were shot to death, knifed to death, or killed in shootouts between the NPA guerrilla movement and the army. Many peasant and trade union leaders were killed by death patrols, so called vigilantes, during the year.

The murderers are seldom caught. Even if there is clear proof as to who is responsible they are rarely brought to trial.

In January 1992, the price for "eliminating" a westerner, was 125 dollars. The sum for a Filipino was less (!).

Chilean crew strike in Vancouver

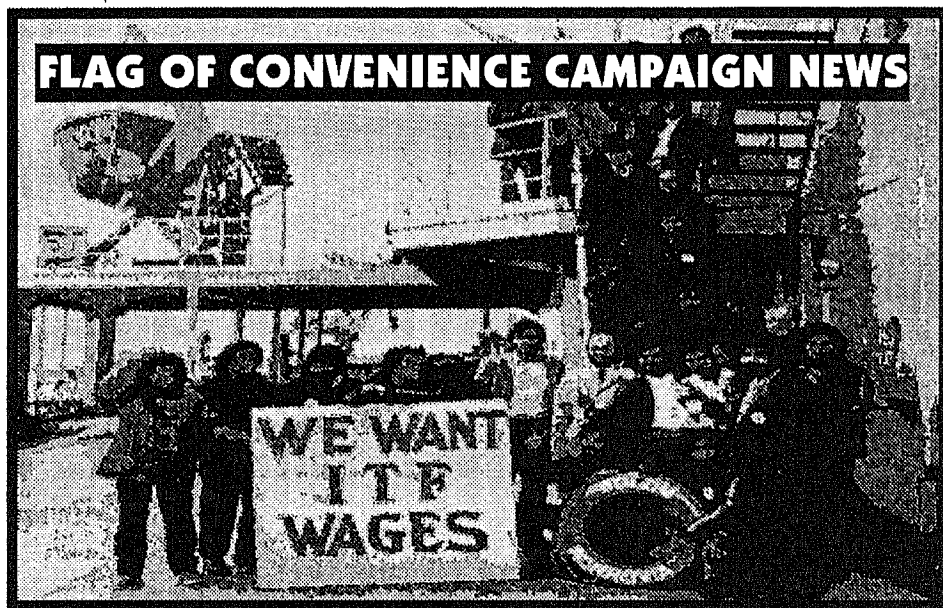
The Chilean crew of the Panamanian flag *Rio Mafil* hadn't received any pay for four months when their ship arrived in **Vancouver**, Canada in early March. The ship, which is in a very bad condition indeed, appears to have been abandoned by the owners. Then 16 crew complained to the ITF on March tenth, and ITF Inspector Gerry McCullough came to their aid. The crew are owed over US\$100,000. The crew have now begun an unlimited strike, and the ship will not move (Canadian port workers are respecting the picket lines). Because the crew have no supplies or food, the ITF has provided them with emergency provisions and will continue to back the crew's action for as long as it takes.

The Maltese flag *Josepha's* Filipino crew were covered by a Greek national collective agreement but were being underpaid. ITF Inspector Enrico Cevaro visited them in **Naples**, Italy and obtained payment of US\$89,020 in backwages plus repatriation at owner's expense for 11 crewmembers. The owner was also persuaded to sign an ITF Standard Agreement for the vessel, dated from February (a higher rate than the Greek Agreement).

The US based Stamford Tankers shipping company appears to be in a deep financial crisis, and is planning to sell its ships. The Liberian flagged *Charger* and *Empress*, crewed by a mix of Europeans and Filipinos, were effectively abandoned in **Rotterdam**. ITF Inspector Gert-jan Harmsen came to the aid of the unpaid crew and has now reached substantial cash settlements

for them. The 22 crew of the *Charger* have received US\$107,000, and the *Empress* seafarers \$225,000 — most of the men have been repatriated, leaving a skeleton caretaker crew to supervise the vessels pending public

— the hull is defective and letting in water and the ship's rail, the companion ways and the hatch covers are all rusted through and could give way at any moment. Both the fire-fighting and lifesaving equipment on board are inadequate — there are no fire extinguishers and the ship's lifeboats are partially corroded and one of them has a large hole in it (see picture). The ship's superstructure is in a sorry state, with the ropes and winches worn out and in urgent need of repair. There is a total disregard for the safety of



auction. Another Stamford ship — the Liberian flag *Challenger* — is strikebound in Croatia at the moment. Harmsen and the owners have agreed that the ship should come to Rotterdam for settlement of the claim and sale of the vessel — and the ITF affiliated Seafarers and Dockers Union of Croatia has arranged for Croatian crew who have been involved in similar settlements to visit the strikers and explain the procedures to them.

The Cypriot flag *Litsa N* lies tied up at the quayside in **Hamburg**, forbidden to leave port until a long list of defects has been put right. On 16 March, the 3,256 grt break bulk carrier limped into the north German port after what must have been a perilous Atlantic crossing from New Orleans for its seventeen man Russian and Polish crew. The river police, who went on board to conduct the usual formalities, ended up registering a number of serious breaches of both the SOLAS and MARPOL Conventions. The *Litsa N* is quite literally a rustbucket

the crew — when the ship docked they had to remove dozens of gas canisters that had been casually stowed on deck loosely fastened with ropes — and conditions on board are atrocious: the ship's fresh water supply is contaminated with oil, and the crew quarters are squalid, with mould growth in the cabins. If this were not bad enough, the *Litsa N* is an environmental disaster: it has been discharging large quantities of oil and bilge water mixed with oil while at sea and a 80,000 square metre oil slick in the water near where it is now lying at anchor probably comes from the ship. Local Social Democrat MP Dirk Reimers was shocked at what he found on board: "I would not set foot on this vessel," he said. "This ship is held together by rust. Penalties for such ships should be stepped up as current fines bear no relationship to the permanent damage that ships like these cause to the environment." ITF Inspector Ulf Christiansen, who has been investigating crew complaints,

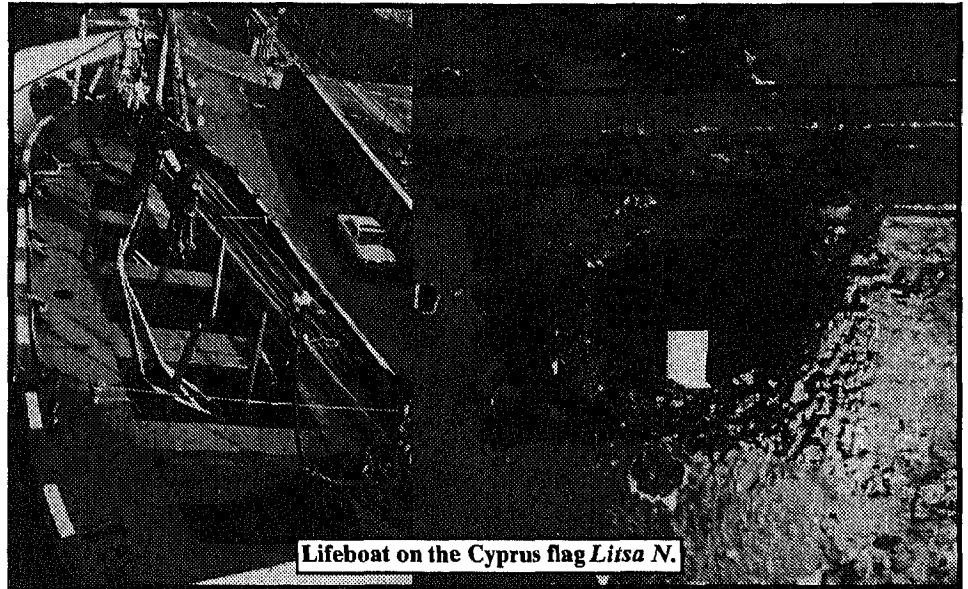
Continued on page 15

... "It's the Wild West on the world's oceans"

Continued from page 14

was appalled by the state of the ship: "It is doubtful whether the ship and its crew would have survived the next voyage — it is the Wild West on the world's oceans," he says, in an allusion to the total disregard for the rule of law shown by the owners of the *Litsa N*. Christiansen is now attempting to negotiate an ITF agreement for the ship, where ABs have been on a rate of only US\$700 a month, including 100 hours' overtime. Long hours are worked on the *Litsa N* which is short-handed by three men.

The Cyprus flag *Cosel* (featured last month when she called in Denmark) sailed on to **Bremen** where ITF Inspector Ali Memon successfully negotiated a settlement of US\$27,000 for 12 crewmembers. Another Cyprus flag ship, the *West Coast*, has just been detained by Port State Control in Bremen. Memon was shocked by the terrible state of the ship, which was crewed by Pakistanis and Sri Lankans — the ship was barely seaworthy and infested with cockroaches. Memon successfully obtained \$94,000 in backwages for the crew.



Lifeboat on the Cyprus flag *Litsa N*.

The Filipino crew of the Hong Kong flag *Nestor* hadn't been receiving their pay and, when the ship was in **Baton Rouge**, USA, contacted ITF Inspector/North American Campaign Coordinator John Sansone to say they wanted repatriation to Manila in late February. Sansone was tied up with another case and so arranged for maritime lawyer Richard "Jerry" Dodson to visit the crew. Dodson visited the ship immediately and successfully negotiated a legal settlement for the crew. In exchange for the crew dropping any further claims, they were offered repatriation at the owner's

expense from the next port of call, full payment of outstanding wages and legally binding guarantees of no adverse entries on their seamen's books, and no blacklisting. The crew themselves wrote to the ITF after their uneventful return to the Philippines to say that they were "very happy and proud". They also thanked Dodson for his help — "He gave his assistance without any charges to our favour and we would like to make special mention of the name of ITF Foc Coordinator John Sansone. For without his guidance we will not succeed in our struggle".

PEOPLE

Hans Jørgen Jensen, President since 1977 of the Danish Salaried Employees' Union (Dansk Funktionærforbund) retired at the end of March. He hands over to **Kaj Hansen**, his deputy for the past fourteen years, who takes up his new post on April first — fifteen years to the day since he first came to work for the union. Jensen was a member of the Committee of the ITF Civil Aviation Section and Tourism Services Sections and also served on the Ground Staff Committee.

In recent elections, four candidates were elected unopposed to leading

positions within the Australian Railways Union. They are **Jim Walshe** (National President), **Joe Sibberas** and **Les Crofton** (National Vice Presidents) and **Roger Jowett** (National Secretary). Walshe succeeds the outgoing ARU President **Pat Dunne** and Jowett former National Secretary **Ralph Taylor**, both of whom have now retired. Ralph Taylor is a former member of the Transport Policy Subcommittee of the ITF Railwaymen's Section.

Julián Jiménez Jiménez is the new General Secretary of the Spanish transport workers' federation

Fetcomar CC.OO. Elected at the union's Congress in February, he succeeds **Benito Barrera San Miguel**. **Ricardo Feijóo Guillán** was also elected as Secretary for International Affairs.

Ernesto Hilario Jaime and **Ramon Francisco Soria** have been re-elected President and Vice President respectively of the Argentinian Locomotivemen's Union "La Fraternidad" for the forthcoming year. The union's General Secretary, also re-elected, is **Juan Carlos Duhalde**.



ITF Manila civil aviation conference

The first ITF Asia /Pacific Region Civil Aviation Conference was held in Manila in 1981. On 20-22 February this year the 8th Regional Civil Aviation Conference returned to Manila attended by delegates from twenty one civil aviation unions in thirteen countries in the region.

Mo Hoda, ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary, opened this year's proceedings by looking back at that first conference, which he reminded delegates, "laid the foundation of a forum for aviation workers of the Asia/Pacific region to meet and discuss their common problems".

Hoda told the conference, "In that time there have been dramatic changes in the civil aviation industry. The process of liberalisation and deregulation in Europe along with worldwide trends of privatisation and globalisation have already had their impact in the region".

"During these past ten years we have built up a matured body with a

A growing industry with few safety inspectors

The Asia/Pacific region has the fastest growing aviation industry in the world, but government inspection of industrial health and safety is non-existent. According to the ILO, India in 1989 had 903 health and safety inspectors for over 25 million workers; Thailand had 129 labour standards inspectors plus 300 provincial inspectors for an estimated labour force of 29 million; the Republic of Korea had 453 labour inspectors for 61 million workers. By way of contrast Finland has 1,140 inspectors for a workforce of 2.2 million; Germany has 5,308 inspectors for 29.7 million workers.

Health and safety in the region — see story on next page

great sense of solidarity. This organisation has not only devoted its time to tackling the detailed problems vital to aviation workers, but has also promoted the kind of regional unity and solidarity which was not known before in the region. Based on our recent experience I can claim with a degree of confidence that today our affiliates in the region are ready to face any challenge in unity and solidarity."

The conference was also addressed by Mario Santos, President of the Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA), who reminded delegates that the focus of the confer-

ence was on health and safety, which relies on union strength. He told the conference that in the Philippines workers currently face a privatisation law which seriously threatens union rights. It was therefore particularly apt that the ITF, with its strong record of defending workers against threats to their conditions from deregulation and privatisation, was holding its conference in Manila only days after the sale of the Philippines' flag carrier airline. He was sure that the conference would give practical lessons which would be of use to delegates from all countries in strengthening aviation unionism in the region.

Progress in Biman dispute

A campaign of strikes and protests by unions in Bangladesh Biman (see **ITF News**, January/February 1992) has forced the government to sit down to negotiate a new pay mechanism for aviation workers in Bangladesh.

Mohd Solaiman, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Bangladesh Biman Sramik Union, believes that the intensity of the campaign and the level of unity among the different aviation unions has forced the government to drop its initial intransigence.

It is now expected to meet the most important union demand for a national civil aviation wages scale:

"I also want to express my thanks to the many ITF civil aviation affiliates whose show of international solidarity made a significant contribution to this campaign," he said.



The union is still in dispute with the Biman management over the contracting-out of Calcutta route station jobs to Air India, which has replaced permanent jobs with casual contract labour.

Health and safety in the Asia/Pacific region

Health and safety in civil aviation is under more threat than ever in the Asia/Pacific region, which has the fastest growing aviation industry in the world.

Delegates from thirteen Asia/Pacific countries presented detailed country reports on the state of health and safety in civil aviation. The region includes countries of very differing economic strengths, ranging through

ards in the aircraft cabin such as cosmic radiation and ozone contamination; and working practices, such as handling dangerous goods, lifting heavy loads or operating machinery involving particular health hazards such as visual display units.

The conference conclusions looked at three areas for practical action — international, national and workplace.

The conference agreed that unions

tion No. 155 which states that health and safety legislation must apply to all workplaces including airport aprons and aircraft. The conference demanded safer national regulations covering flight and duty times for airline crew.

The conference called for a number of workers' health and safety rights, including statutory rights to workplace health and safety committees; the right to full information about work hazards and hazardous materials; the right for workers to seek direct legal redress against employers using dangerous work practices and conditions; and the right to refuse dangerous work.

Employers, as well as having to provide a safe working environment, were urged to recognise the right of elected union representatives to participate

Crew scheduling is done with complete ignorance of the health and safety effects.

— Capt. Feroz Aftab Khan, Pakistan Airline Pilots' Association

heavily industrialised economies such as Japan and Australia; Asian "tigers" such as South Korea and Malaysia; and underdeveloped countries such as Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Japan, Australia and New Zealand were able to report relatively advanced union health and safety organisation, though in the case of New Zealand this is currently under threat from new laws seeking to undermine the role of unions, while countries such as Fiji and Indonesia stressed that their struggle was still primarily for basic trade union rights.

Yet it was areas of common experience that dominated the discussions. A growing climate of aggressive competition in the industry was reported by every delegate as threatening health and safety, through such measures as staff reductions, the introduction of new technology, the implementation of new flexible working patterns, and the reduction of protections against work hazards such as noise and fumes.

The conference looked at three main areas of health and safety at work: working patterns, in particular the health effects of night shift work for airport workers, and flight and duty times for cabin crew; the working environment, such as extreme levels of noise in maintenance and other work areas, the lack of visibility of workers on the airport apron, and health haz-

would be helped if the ILO would step up its role in the research and dissemination of more information on health and safety in civil aviation.

Workplace Safety Committees are dominated by the employer and only occasionally are unions invited to discuss a specific problem. As a result there has been little dissemination of information on occupational health and safety.

— Mohd Isa Jani, Malaysian Airlines System Executive Staff Association

ICAO was urged to follow ITF recommendations on flight and duty times and cabin crew licensing.

National governments were called upon to ratify and implement ILO Conventions relevant to health and safety, and in particular ILO Conven-

in decision-making about health and safety; to provide more information about hazards at the workplace, and better training on health and safety. The full conference conclusions will be published in a conference report.

New Zealand unions under attack

Civil aviation unions in New Zealand are being hit by new laws which aim to break down the collective bargaining role of trade unions.

A new employment contract for Air New Zealand cabin crew was rejected by the membership of the ITF-affiliated Flight Attendants and Related Services Association (FARN). However, using the new Employment Contracts law (see *ITF News*, November 1991) the company converted the document into an Individual Employment Contract for every cabin crew employee. When individuals began to sign this contract the union position became undermined to the point where it was forced to accept the signing of the contract.

The new contract particularly hits current agreements covering flight and duty times and rest periods. According to Fred Casey, General Secretary of FARN: "Air New Zealand are taking full advantage of the new legislation to rip away hard won conditions and at the same time alienate the union membership from the union."

Philippine Airlines workers fight privatisation law

Workers in Philippine Airlines are protesting against a privatisation law which enshrines the right of new owners to get rid of unions and nullify any existing employee benefits.

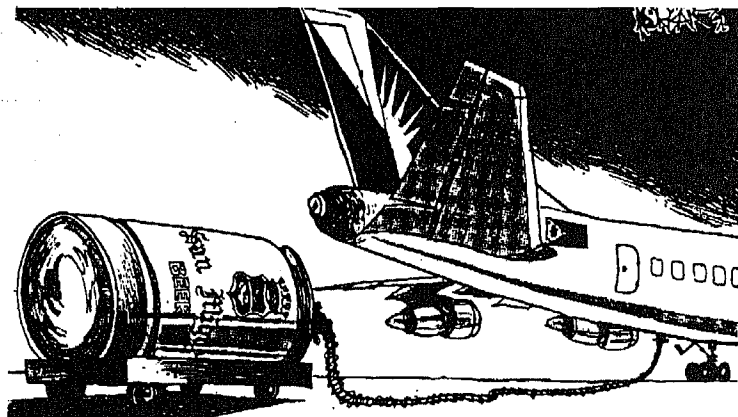
The sale of PAL this February to a consortium headed by the Sorianos, who own the San Miguel brewery empire, was the biggest privatisation of a state-controlled business in the country's history, and puts PAL workers in the front line against the privatisation law.

The Philippine government's Proclamation 50 allows the new owners of privatised companies to sweep aside all the union gains made over years of struggle and negotiation. It specifically attacks job security.

Section 27 of the law, under the head-

ing *Automatic termination of employer-employee relations*, states that no employee "shall retain any vested right to future employment in the privatised or disposed corporation".

The ITF-affiliated Philippine Airlines Employees' Association has been told that their existing union contract will be honoured, but wonders what the agreement is worth, since it is completely overridden by Proclamation 50.



A resolution was passed at the Regional Civil Aviation Conference in Manila condemning the anti-worker provisions contained in Proclamation 50, and urging ITF affiliates to send protest letters to the Philippine government.

European aviation unions prepare industrial action against JAA flight and duty time rules

ITF flight crew unions will join with other European pilot organisations in organising a co-ordinated campaign of protest action in June this year unless serious improvements are made to current proposals for European level flight and duty time limitations. Plans for the campaign, which will include mass demonstrations at airports as well as selected work stoppages, were agreed at a joint meeting held in Amsterdam on March 18 which was attended by representatives of *Europilote*, IFALPA (International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations) and the European Cockpit Association. Speaking for virtually every pilot, flight engineer and cabin attendant in Europe, the meeting agreed that the current draft proposals for harmonising European rules under discussion by the Operations Committee of the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) are so inadequate as to pose a real threat to aviation safety.

The campaign comes after repeated

attempts by the trade unions to secure reasonable improvements in the JAA draft (see *ITF News*, January/February 1992) met with a total rebuff at a meeting of the JAA Operations Committee. A meeting of the OPS Committee, which is responsible for developing a new European operations code (JAR-OPS) to replace national operational rules in Naples in early March not only refused to accept any of the unions' minimum acceptable improvements. Indeed, many of the national authorities, strongly supported by the airlines, actually suggested weakening an already unacceptable draft still further.

The JAA proposals are intended to replace all existing national FDT regulations throughout Europe, including EFTA countries. If they are adopted by consensus (as has been the case with virtually all other Joint Aviation requirements) they would then more or less be "rubber stamped" by the European Commu-

nity and come into force as binding EC law. If there is no consensus, however, the European Commission is still free to develop its own tougher rules which take account not only of safety questions but also of the need to harmonise the social conditions in the industry and provide limits on working hours for air crew which are broadly equivalent to those for workers in other industries. This is what the unions will be campaigning for if the JAA continues down its current path. The issue is rapidly becoming the most important social question in the period leading up to the threatened liberalisation of the EC air transport market and the entire force of the European trade union movement will, if necessary, be used to ensure that an acceptable level of harmonisation is achieved.

A further meeting to discuss co-ordinated action and an international press conference to publicise the campaign are planned to take place in Toulouse at the end of April.

Air France-Sabena link awaits government ruling

The Belgian government has still not come up with a decision on the controversial partnership between Sabena and Air France. If no decision comes by April 30 either side has the option to drop the deal. In February BA and KLM announced they were suing Sabena to recover US\$60m invested during their own bid for a joint venture with the Belgian carrier over a year ago.

BA-KLM AFTERMATH

During the (now aborted) merger talks between BA and KLM, British and Dutch unions and the ITF met to discuss cross-border union resistance to the deal which they believed would mean massive job losses. This has since been confirmed by the estimates by stockbrokers Hoare Govett who estimated that a possible 7-8,000 jobs could have been shed in the merger. The *Avmark Aviation Economist* notes that the union determination to resist job losses and "the complexity of cross-border labour legislation may have been an off-putting factor".

KLM has now announced plans to expand European operations by 25 per cent. BA has reactivated its German strategy with the acquisition, along with German partner banks, of the German commuter airline Delta Air, to form the operating base for its Deutsch BA joint airline company. Lufthansa is trying to consolidate its place in the German market by taking an option to acquire half the voting capital of Aero Lloyd, the German charter airline. It has also warned staff of cost cutting and job cuts in the coming year.

Cyprus Airways ground engineers held a nine-day strike which halted all the airline's flights to and from the island after the suspension of two ground engineers. The strike ended after the company agreed to reinstate the workers and negotiate over hiring policy and bargaining rights.

AERONICA JAILINGS

51 Nicaraguan aviation workers have been jailed in the strike against the privatisation of the national carrier **Aeronica**. Strikers had blocked the

airport runway with two small aircraft. Nine Aeronica workers are on hunger strike. The airline workers' union says the government has gone back on its agreement to sell 25 per cent of the shares to Aeronica workers. The union also wants job guarantees for at least 200 of the airline's 400 workers.



The US airline **Continental** hopes to come out of bankruptcy this year, though this may be at the expense of the underfunded pension deficit of its former subsidiary Eastern Airlines. The US Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation has filed a \$752m claim against Continental. According to the law firm Ernst and Young, however, this may not get priority claim status from the federal courts. They note: "The administration will work towards preserving jobs. Forty thousand (Continental) people out on the street is not politically acceptable in an election year."

American Airlines is at an advanced stage of negotiating a "comprehensive strategic alliance with Canadian Airlines International". Earlier speculation suggested that American was planning to take a 49 per cent stake in PWA, the Canadian airline's parent company. The deal may still hit up against Canadian laws restricting foreign investment in the Canadian airline industry, but would be a move from the option put forward by Air

Canada of a merger of the two main Canadian airlines. Such a merger would mean massive job losses. Air Canada itself shed 11 per cent of its workforce last year. Despite this the carrier still announced record losses of US\$183.1m for 1991. Air Canada is currently in merger talks with USAir.

AIR BOTSWANA TALKS

Air Botswana has concluded a collaborative arrangement with Uganda Airlines. This agreement marks a milestone as the first such deal to be concluded outside the Southern African region. Nigeria Airways is on course for privatisation. A restructuring is likely to precede the sell off. A price war is under way between South African Airways, KLM and Sabena. KLM triggered the war, reducing its fares between South Africa and Europe. SAA and Sabena quickly followed with special deals. British Airways is expected to enter the fray.

MONOPOLIES CASE DROPPED

The New Zealand Commerce Commission, the monopolies watchdog, has dropped its case against Brierley Investments (BIL), a New Zealand investment group, and **Qantas**. The commission had alleged that BIL and Qantas had an oral agreement in which BIL effectively acted as a holding company for Qantas in terms of guaranteeing them effective management control of the airline. The case was dropped after legal undertakings by BIL and Qantas preventing a Qantas take over of Air New Zealand.

Singapore Airlines, worried at being shut out by the North American and European aviation blocs, has called for a global "open skies" policy. The Canadian government has just scrapped the bi-lateral air service agreement between the two countries.

Vietnam has just passed laws opening up foreign investment in civil aviation. The law ends the government-owned **Vietnam Airline's** monopoly of domestic and international routes. The stated aims of the new law are "to ensure aviation safety and effectively

Continued on page 20

European Commission fines Aer Lingus

The European Commission fined the Irish national carrier, Aer Lingus 750,000 ECU (US\$ 890,000) on February 26th after a complaint by the UK carrier British Midland Airways.

Aer Lingus had refused to grant reciprocal ticketing rights in what was seen by the Commission as an abuse of its dominant position on the London-Dublin route.

The refusal meant that travel agents could not issue passengers with a single ticket permitting them to change airlines on different legs of their journey through what is known as "inter-lining".

Inter-lining agreements are common between European Community airlines — in fact Aer Lingus and British Midland had such an agreement until three years ago when the UK airline announced its intention to start a service on the route.

Aer Lingus promptly terminated the inter-lining agreement, thus making British Midland's flights less attractive to customers.

The Commission has ordered the Irish carrier to renew the agreement.

"This decision is evidence of the Commission's determination to act against airlines holding dominant positions, if they attempt to prevent the

development or maintenance of competition," said Leon Brittan, Commissioner for competition policy.

The Commission believes that inter-lining systems benefit airlines, travel agents and passengers, as they enable the issuing of a single document for a complex journey, and allow the flexible use of these documents.

"At a time when the European air transport industry is being liberalised, airlines making use of the new opportunities for competition should be given a fair chance to develop and sustain their challenge to established carriers," said Brittan.

ITF and aviation unions demand Libyan extradition of Lockerbie suspects

US Airline Pilots are supporting the efforts of the US government and the international community to bring the two Libyans accused of the Lockerbie bombing to trial on the world stage.

"The immoral act perpetrated against Pan Am Flight 103 must not be allowed to stand," said Captain Randy Babbit, of the ITF-affiliated Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA), in a statement released on March 11th.

"Libya has refused to comply with a UN resolution mandating that it turn over those indicated in the bombing

for prosecution, cooperate in the ongoing criminal investigation, pay compensation to the families of the victims of the bombing, and end the Libyan support of international terrorism," he added.

If Libya does not agree to the extradition of the men, Babbit intends to take the matter to the forthcoming annual conference of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), to be held in Rome.

He will seek support for a resolution proposing sanctions by the United

Nations Security Council against Libya, in line with those supported by the US, UK and French governments. The measures proposed include the suspension of air services by all carriers to Libya.

The French government is also concerned about Libya's possible involvement in the attack on UTA Flight 772 in September 1989.

Both IFALPA and the ITF have supported Babbit's call in a message to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

... World air traffic grew 14% in January says IATA

Continued from page 19

exploit airline potential in order to give an impetus to economic development and expand international cooperation".

CRS MERGERS

Two major Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs), US-based **Apollo** and the UK-based **Galileo**, have merged. The merged company will be jointly owned by a consortium of 11 US and European airlines. Recent moves towards a merger of the world's largest CRS, Sabre and Amadeus fell

through late last year. Apollo is the second biggest CRS and Amadeus is one of two rival major European CRSs. These various CRS merger moves have prompted the EC to look again at its code of conduct for CRSs. Despite the existing code of conduct, concerns remain about unfair host-based advantages. The US Department of Transport has delayed its own code of conduct until May 31.

WORLD AIR TRAFFIC

IATA says that passenger traffic grew by 14 per cent in January and freight

traffic by 11 per cent. It described these signs for the industry as encouraging.

Transport Ministers from 28 countries in the European Civil Aviation Conference met in London on March 17 to step up efforts to improve Europe's fragmented and inadequate air traffic control structure. Among other things ECAC wants to integrate the different European air traffic control systems and procedures in order to head off a growing air congestion crisis. Air traffic delays are estimated to cost European airlines \$2.2bn a year with 54,000 aircraft hours lost.



INLAND TRANSPORT

Greek railway workers in two day strike

Railway workers throughout Greece staged a two-day strike on tenth and eleventh March against government plans for a public sector pay freeze at a period when the annual inflation rate is running at 18.2 per cent — the highest of the twelve member countries of the European Community.

The railway workers, members of the ITF-affiliated Pan-Hellenic Federation of Railway Workers, were responding to a call from the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) for unions to protest against the government's interference in free collective bargaining.

In a four-day strike wave timed to coincide with the debate in parliament on emergency legislation banning pay increases in the public sector this year, workers in the public utilities, such as electricity and water, joined walkouts by telephone and post office workers. Other groups of transport workers also took part in the protest action.

The legislation is being introduced as part of a new austerity package aimed at reducing inflation and the budget deficit — measures which are necessary if Greece is to receive the second stage of an EC loan, payment of which is overdue, and if it is to participate in European monetary union.

On being informed that the government was pressing ahead with the legislation, despite an ultra-slim majority (of only one seat) and fierce resistance from the parliamentary opposition and the labour movement, the ITF contacted Prime Minister Mitsotakis confirming that the Greek railway workers had full ITF backing and urging him not to restrict the free collective bargaining rights laid down by law. The ITF also pointed out that the proposed measures were in conflict with Greece's obligations under ILO Conventions.

In its protest message, the ITF urged the government to encourage railway

employers to resume talks with the railwaymen's union on a new collective agreement for 1992.

Railwaymen's affiliates in Europe also declared their solidarity with their Greek colleagues and have sent protest messages to the Prime Minister and the Ministers of National

Economy and of Labour.

Support for the public service walk-outs has also come from the EC Social Affairs Commissioner Vasso Papandreou, who says that too much of the burden of austerity is being placed on the shoulders of Greek workers.

Filipino rail closure threatened

The government's answer to years of neglect of the railways in the Philippines is to close down the network for two years so that it can be modernised.

According to the ITF-affiliated Bagong Kapisanan Ng Mga Manggagawa SA PNR, which organises the workers of Philippine National Railways, conditions have never been so bad. Only ten trains are still running on the 800 km of track that the company operates on two lines running north and south from the capital, Manila.

The union points out that though this state of affairs is the result of a corrupt rail management and government inaction, it is the 5,000 PNR rail workers whose livelihoods are threatened by a prolonged closure.

Our affiliate has already made its views clear to the Philippine government, pointing out that the workers should not have to suffer for the failures of government and management to address the problems of the railways.

At the request of the union, ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers has written to President Aquino welcoming the government's commitment to the long overdue renewal of PNR track, rolling stock and other infrastructure but questioning the need to shut down the network to do so.

Brothers points out that railways in other developed and developing countries have updated their systems while continuing to operate railway services. He has urged the president to review

the rehabilitation programme in consultation with the rail union, in order to ensure that its members are not adversely affected.

ITF railway workers' affiliates have also been asked to write to President Aquino in support of the PNR workers.

Indian fares up... again

Workers who commute by rail into India's major cities have been shocked by the recent government announcement that passenger fares are to go up by 17 per cent.

The increase, which comes on top of a similar fares hike last July, has been condemned by the opposition as "not just harsh, but cruel".

Season ticket holders have been dealt a particularly savage blow as the price of period tickets will rise far more steeply — by between 40 and 48 per cent in some cases.

The government, faced with a serious budget deficit, has clearly singled out the railways, as the largest public sector enterprise, for stringent economies and cutbacks as it prepares for this year's austerity budget.

Railway owned land in major cities will be sold, and the railway minister has made much of the rapidly escalating costs of keeping open uneconomic rail lines (Rs22.2 billion last year) — probably indicating that some loss-making lines are earmarked for early closure.

Zimbabwean government lifts rail union suspension

After weeks of intensive negotiations between Zimbabwe government officials and transport union leaders, the crisis in Zimbabwe Railways finally ended on March fifth with the unconditional lifting of the suspension order imposed in January on the ITF-affiliated Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railwaymen's Union (ZARU).

This brought to a close a dispute which at one stage involved almost 6,000 Zimbabwe railway workers being thrown on to the streets for participating in strike action. The strikers were reinstated under the terms of a "Memorandum of Understanding" signed on January 29 (see *ITF News*, January/February 1992) but the written Memorandum contained a host of conditions which could have been used to victimise union activists. Happily, under the terms of a separate "gentlemen's agreement" with Labour Minister Nkomo, this did not in fact occur.

Faced with the point blank refusal of the government or management to talk to the elected leaders of ZARU following its suspension, it became a top priority to establish a chain of communication between the two warring parties. This was achieved through the good offices of Farayi

Makanda of the Transport & General Workers' Union and Ken Chipato of the National Airways Workers' Union through the Zimbabwe Transport Workers' Federation, a loose grouping of ITF affiliates.

Makanda and Chipato negotiated a return to work, secured the signature of a common front agreement between ZARU and two breakaway unions, and secured the Minister of Labour's agreement to end the suspension of the union unconditionally. In a letter dated March sixth, ZARU General Secretary T L Shana asked ITF African Regional Representative Ben "Roxy" Udogwu to convey his union's "heartfelt thanks to all ITF affiliates for the solidarity messages that were conducted during our suspension period".

During what was a very tense period in the history of Zimbabwe's industrial relations, there is no doubt that the massive expression of support from ITF unions had a major impact on the anti-union elements in the Zimbabwe government.

Evidence that these elements do exist was provided when, in the middle of the dispute, even as attempts at conciliation were under way, the ITF

received a hard line letter from Mr P Z Dzviti, Acting Secretary in the Zimbabwe Labour Ministry.

In it he argued that the ITF should not support the union since the action taken by it was illegal under the country's Labour Relations Act. More ominously, he claimed that workers "in designated essential services, such as railway workers, cannot take collective job action except in very special circumstances" adding that "we are concerned about criticism from people who would like to see the rule of law prevail in their own countries yet wish the law of the jungle to operate in Zimbabwe".

Mr Dzviti should be aware that the ITF is not concerned about whether an action taken by its affiliates is legal under national laws (many of which are specifically designed to curb union activity) but in whether it is justified. The excessive use by governments of the concept of "essential services" to restrict the right of transport workers to take legitimate strike action has, in any case, repeatedly been condemned by the International Labour Organisation's Committee on Freedom of Association as a violation of basic trade union rights.

Transport union denounces easing of eastern German Sunday truck ban

The Sunday truck ban is being eased in eastern Germany and Berlin in line with a decree from Transport Minister Günther Krause that could have implications for the continued existence of the ban itself.

Under the decree, which still needs the approval of the German Upper House of parliament, generous exemptions are permitted for Sunday truck journeys in the new states in the east of the country. Trucks will also now be allowed to make journeys from

western to eastern Germany on a Sunday.

This relaxation of regulations that were brought in to ease pressure on the roads has attracted strong criticism from the ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (ÖTV).

"It is vital that we make full use of the capacity of other transport modes such as the railways and inland navigation rather than step up traffic on Germany's permanently congested roads," says ÖTV board member and

transport spokesman Eike Eulen, who is also ITF European Vice President.

If we fail to do this, levels of congestion will become "intolerable", he added.

Eulen points out that the new rules will mean that truck drivers who already work long and unsocial hours will have to work even longer. According to recent statistics collected by the ÖTV, drivers put in an average of 400 hours a month — such long hours are not good for drivers' health or road safety.

South African motor ferry drivers prepare to strike

Drivers in South Africa's largest automobile ferrying company have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action, and are now awaiting a final response to their claims.

Members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) who work at Motrovia voted by more than 95 per cent at the end of February for action in pursuit of their unsettled claims.

Over 800 drivers work ferrying vehicles across Africa for the company.

Till the drivers got organised, the system of pay was "very exploitative" according to TGWU National Organiser Thulani Dlamini.

Workers' pay was tied to the number of cars delivered and the kilometres driven. These "piece rates" discriminated against long haul drivers who received no overtime and had no fixed working hours.

The union and company have agreed to introduce a 46 hour week with proper pay for overtime.

While agreement was reached on the principle of wages, the actual amounts have not been agreed. The union is also asking for an extension in certain allowances.

The company has argued that since long distance drivers work such long hours, they should receive a lower hourly rate than local drivers! They have proposed R2.93 per hour for local trips and R2.58 for long haul:

"This is totally unacceptable," said Dlamini, "These workers are doing exactly the same job, they should get the same rate".

The TGWU has demanded R2.95 basic for all workers.

The company rejected this, and so the union called a strike ballot at the end of February. The results were

overwhelmingly in favour of strike action.

Faced with such strong support for the union's position, the company sought a meeting with the union on March 16. They have asked the union for a moratorium on action while they put the union's demands to the Motrovia Board of Directors.

The union has agreed to withhold action, and is awaiting the company's reply.

* Over 1,200 TGWU members who work for Cargo Carriers trucking company are set to go on strike on April seventh. The long running dispute between the TGWU and the company centres on victimisation of union activists throughout the company. The workers have voted overwhelmingly for strike action to demand the reinstatement of 138 workers who were sacked for union activities.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

8-9 April	Urban Transport	Luxembourg
19-20 May	Cabin Crew Technical Committee	Washington
19-20 May	Railwaymen's Section Committee	London
21 May	European Railwaymen's Committee	London
3-4 June	European Committee	London
8-12 June	Fair Practices Committee/Seafarers/Dockers	London
16 June	Flight Deck Technical Committee	London
3 July	Tourist Guides' Working Group	London
9-10 July	Civil Aviation Steering Committee	London
2-4 September	Latin American Dockers' Conference	Vitoria, Brazil
7-11 September	Inspector's Seminar	Eastbourne
30 September-2 October	Road Transport Section Conference	Japan
20-21 October	Executive Board	Copenhagen
10 November	Ground Staff Technical Committee	London
11-13 November	Civil Aviation Section Conference	London

OBITUARIES

Derek Tauna, Assistant General Secretary of the Papua New Guinea National Airline Employees' Association, died on February 18. An active trade unionist, Tauna was closely involved with the setting up, in mid-1990, of an ITF Coordinating Committee for Papua New Guinea. He became its first chairman and a year later was instrumental in introducing a programme of educational activities for members of the ITF's four PNG affiliates. At the time of his death he was a member of the committee which oversees the overall conduct of ITF activities in the region — the Asia/Pacific Regional Committee.

Former ITF inspector **John Nelson**, who was Acting Assistant National Secretary of the British National Union of Seamen (NUS) when he retired in January 1985, died on March 13, aged 72. After twenty years at sea, John finally came ashore in 1960 to work as an NUS official out of offices in several ports around Britain. He quickly became known, and feared among shipowners, for his work on behalf of exploited seafarers sailing in flag of convenience ships following his appointment as a part-time Foc inspector in 1972. Towards the end of his career — John was one of the NUS's longest-serving officials — he moved to the union's head office at Maritime House in south London. Here, for seven years, he coordinated the activities of the team of UK Foc inspectors. He also had a desk in the Special Seafarers' Department at ITF headquarters, though he was never able to spend much time at it, being constantly called away to assist Foc crews. He was very much at home on board ship and he did not stop inspecting

on his retirement. You could always rely on John to be on the road out of Southampton if he knew there was a crew in trouble. ITF inspectors will remember him from the Inspectors' Seminar last September where he passed on many tips for dealing with recalcitrant owners gained over a lifetime of experience. There will be very many seafarers belonging to the ITF who have good reason to be grateful to John for his efforts on their behalf and who will remember him with much affection. In a tribute to an old and much loved friend and colleague, ITF Special Seafarers' Department Secretary Brian Laughton says: "John's enthusiasm and indomitable spirit were an inspiration to all of us in the SSD. He would never take 'no' for an answer and the greater the resistance the harder he fought to get what he considered a decent settlement for the lads. We will all miss him greatly."

Six leading members of the Eastern Cape branch of the South African Transport and General Workers'



ITF Inspector John Nelson, pictured here in Birkenhead, England in September 1974, assisting the Indian and British crew of an abandoned tanker. John will be remembered fondly by seafarers all over the world who received his help.

Union (TGWU) were killed in a tragic traffic accident on March 13 while on their way to a union meeting in the Transkei. The six who died were the Branch Administrator **Linda Simani**, Branch Secretary **Mawonga Willem** and Branch Organiser **Victor Lewis**, as well as **Sam Bashe**, **Theodora Mthabeni** and **Antony Leeuw**, who represented TGWU-organised workers at two local companies. Three other union activists, who were injured in the accident, are being treated in hospital.

GENERAL SECRETARY : **HAROLD LEWIS**

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER : **DAVID COCKROFT**

International Transport Workers' Federation

Federación Internacional de los Trabajadores del Transporte

Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation

Fédération Internationale des Ouvriers du Transport

Internationella Transportarbetarefederationen

133-135 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 1PD

Telephone: +44-71-403 2733

Telex: (051) 8811397 ITF LDN G

Fax: +44-71-357 7871

Cables: Intransfe, London SE1

E-mail: Geonet - GEO2:ITF