

GERMAN TRANSPORT WORKERS ON STRIKE

Bus, tram, metro and rail services and postal and telephone communications in western Germany were thrown into chaos on April 27 as the first full-scale public sector strike to hit the country for eighteen years began to bite.

The possibility of a strike had been brewing since February when negotiations began in this year's contract round.

From the outset Chancellor Kohl's government made it clear that the public sector unions would be asked to bear the brunt of pay restraint this year. Many Ministers even argued that workers in the west of Germany should deny themselves real wage increases for up to five years to allow their colleagues in the east to catch up.

In reply, the unions pointed out that, despite the government's gloomy predictions, the highly-respected Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was forecasting continued growth in the German economy this year and that there was no need to resort to panic measures to screw down public sector pay at a time when wages were declining as a proportion of total costs.

Negotiations involving six public sector unions, led by the over two million strong ITF-affiliated Transport and Public Service Workers' Union ÖTV and the more than 500 thousand-strong Railwaymen's Union GdED, went the full four rounds, exhausting all the possibilities short of arbitration — an indication of a marked reluctance on the part of the employers, who include fed-

eral, state and local government, to seek a peaceful pay settlement for 1992.

The arbitration process invoked by the employers was also inconclusive, with the offers recommended by the various arbitration committees being ignored or summarily rejected by the employers' side.

Further talks were held, but these failed as the employers sought to impose a settlement well below the level recommended by the arbitration panels, which amounted to a pay freeze.

With a take it or leave it offer of 4.8 per cent overall on the table, the unions decided that enough was enough and in the fourth week of April began balloting their members on strike action.

The vote in favour of a strike was overwhelming and last-ditch efforts to head off a confrontation inevitably came to nothing in the face of the obvious determination of close on two million workers to strike in support of their demands.

ÖTV and GdED-organised public transport workers spearheaded the first strike wave on Monday April 27 as buses, trams and trains ground to a halt in eleven major cities. In the western half of Berlin, where the transport strike

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Malawian trade unionists imprisoned

A Malawian trade union leader and six union employees were detained by government forces at the beginning of April. Their whereabouts are unknown and fears for their safety are growing.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) reports that Chakufwa Chihana, secretary-general of the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee (SATUCC), was arrested in the airport on arrival in the Malawian capital Lilongwe, on April sixth.

He had been attending a SATUCC meeting in Zambia.

Chihana's supposed crime was to advocate a rapid return to democracy in Malawi. It is not known where he is being held.

SATUCC's offices in Lilongwe have now been closed and sealed off.

The six union employees arrested shortly afterwards have also disappeared. They were SATUCC's ac-

counts clerks, executive assistant, the office driver, secretary and cleaner. Three other members of staff are in safety in Zambia.

The government has denied lawyers access to Chihana. His wife has been driven out of her home and is finding it extremely difficult to rent accommodation due to apparent blacklisting.

Giving the reasons for the arrests as "provocation", the country's self-appointed president for life, and former London family doctor, Dr. Hastings Banda, had earlier threatened that dissidents returning to the country would become "meat for crocodiles".

London-based human rights organisation, Africa Watch, condemned Banda's government in a report published in October 1991.

"The government uses torture and has assassinated opponents real or imagined inside and outside Malawi," said the report.

Amnesty International also claims that many people have died from ill treatment or medical neglect in Malawian jails, and that torture is routine.

There has been an outcry from trade unions internationally, and the international community has finally started to react to the political repression in Malawi. Until recently, little attention had been paid to the abuse of human rights.

The European Community has also called for his release, and spoken out in defence of eight bishops who criticised the government in pastoral letters and were subsequently arrested.

"It remains to be seen how long Banda's regime can use arbitrary arrest and repression to hold out against the trend towards democratic change in Africa," said the ICFTU.

As *ITF News* went to press, it was reported in the press that the office staff had been released. Chihana remains detained.

... German unions bring public services to a halt

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was virtually total, long taxi queues formed at rail and bus terminals in the east of the city along the line where the Berlin wall once stood.

The inland waterways were also affected as closed locks and bridges on key waterways, including the Kiel canal, delayed barge traffic. However, by the following day civil servants had been brought in to replace the striking lockkeepers on the Kiel canal, although locks on other major waterways remained closed.

The last high speed inter-city train left Hamburg station in mid-morning and other high speed services were due to be progressively withdrawn. Walkouts were also staged by shunters, signal box staff and other operators at main stations in several cities.

The administrative workers' union DAG also called on all its members to strike, hitting government offices including the defence and economic ministries in Bonn.

By Monday, the postal strike, which had begun on Friday April 24th, had spread to a total of 8,500 postal workers at key sorting centres. Telephone services were also hit, with workers at over 40 offices and exchanges out on strike.

Huge traffic jams built up in Germany's major cities and on the motorways on Tuesday — the second day of the strike — as the transport stoppage spread to other areas including the state of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany's industrial heartland.

Inter-city trains were running late everywhere and more municipal bus and rail services were cancelled, as the main focus of the strike remained centred on the public transport network.

Other groups of ÖTV-organised workers, including refuse workers in three states, were brought out for the first time in a further escalation of the industrial action, while the backlog of mail continued to mount and telephone inquiries remained unanswered

as more postal and telephone workers rallied to the strike call.

Just short of a hundred thousand workers joined the strike wave on the second day as the total number involved rose from 75,000 on Monday to 170,000 on Tuesday.

As *ITF News* goes to press the employers are still refusing to improve on their pay offer but have softened their attitude slightly to the extent of saying that they are now prepared to consider improvements in fringe benefits. However, as pay remains the key issue, significant concessions will be required before the escalating strike can be called off.

It is against this background that unions and employers enter into talks this weekend on the 1992 pay round for public sector workers in the east of the country.

The unions have already made considerable progress in improving living standards in the eastern half of Germany, where pay is currently pegged to western German rates.

Transport workers are major targets in Peruvian military crackdown

The ITF has protested to Peruvian President, Alberto Fujimori, following his military takeover of Peru on April fifth.

Fujimori also imprisoned without charge many members of Congress and prominent trade unionists, including Luis Negreiros, President of the ITF-affiliated Federación Nacional dos Trabajadores Marítimos y Portuarios, Fluviales y Lacustres del Perú (FEMAPOR).

Negreiros has been at the head of the fight against the casualisation of port labour in Peru over the last 18 months (see **ITF News**, October and December 1991).

FEMAPOR's campaign for parliamentary approval of legislation which would go some way towards restoring job stability for portworkers had been partly successful.

With the forced closure of parliament, it is now unlikely that the legislation will be brought into force.

Fujimori has tried to justify his actions by claiming that the military coup was necessary in the interests of "national reconstruction".

He claims to have closed the judiciary and legislature in order to stamp out corruption.

And in the wake of increasing attacks by the terrorist group Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path"), the President's action has not been entirely unpopular with the general public.

However, to sacrifice democracy for order is an extreme step to take, and despite the presidential arguments, the suspended constitution did contain adequate measures for the modernisation of the nation's economic, social and political structures, including the reform of the judiciary and other bodies in the public service.

Commentators note that Fujimori saw insurgency as the main stumbling block to foreign investment, and to achieve that end, he appears to have given in to the armed forces, who have long been agitating for a freer hand in dealing with terrorist groups and drug traffickers.

The army has an appalling human rights record, and it is hard not to question whether Fujimori will be able to reverse what is nominally a temporary measure; he has promised a referendum on July fifth 1992, subsequent to the introduction of a "new organic structure" for the legislature, and national elections in February 1993.

Fujimori has also announced constitutional amendments for the end of August, to be put to the vote in November.

The intention is not to install a dictatorship, but to build a more efficient democracy, he has said.

But as far as the bid for international investment is concerned, Fujimori's gamble has not paid off. United States aid has already been

cut, and Peru is currently highly dependent on newly-established financial flows from the international community.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis has written to the Peruvian president, expressing concern over the imprisonment of docks leader Negreiros, and urging a return to democracy.

"This unconstitutional action cannot in any way be justified by economic or political conditions. On behalf of all our affiliated unions, I request you to release immediately all those detained and to restore democratic rule to Peru.

"If this does not occur, the ITF will lend its full support to all and any economic sanctions which may be imposed on your country," he added.

Brazil releases Mendez killer

The man who organised the murder of a Brazilian trade union leader has been released following the quashing of his sentence in the appeal courts.

Dari Alves da Silva was freed at the beginning of March, although all the evidence shows he planned the murder of the prominent trade union leader Francisco "Chico" Alves Mendez, of the Brazilian rubbertappers' union.

His son, Darcy Alves, who shot Mendez in December 1988, remains in jail.

Mendez's predecessor, Wilson Pinheiro, was also murdered; and his attacker has not been properly punished either, say the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

From January 1964 to December 1990, 1,787 rural workers have been murdered. Out of only 18 cases brought to court, eight resulted in sentences, and nine others in acquittal. The first sentence was only imposed in 1988.

Wealthy Brazilians are likely to feel that they can act freely in their attacks on trade union leaders and workers.

The relatives of Chico Mendez, as well as his successors at the helm of the Acre Rubbertappers' Union, and numerous other trade union leaders still face threats, harassment, physical attacks and worse.

Chinese regime bans free union groups

In a bid to restore the largely-discredited All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) to its former dominance, the Chinese government has outlawed the new independent trade unions that have been springing up around the country in recent months (see **ITF News**, March and April 1992).

Under a bill submitted to the National People's Congress on March 27 all new unions must be approved and controlled by a higher level organisation, with pride of place at the apex of the pyramid of power being granted to the state-controlled ACFTU.

Opposition to the government's plans has come from Han Dongfang, the railwaymen's leader who helped found the country's first independent trade union, the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, which was crushed in the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989.

Dongfang submitted an application to the Beijing police for permission to stage a bike rally round the Great Hall of the People — the seat of government — in Tiananmen Square on March 23 in an appeal to the government to permit independent unions.

The police refused permission for the demonstration, resting their case on a technicality. They pointed out that demonstration applications needed two signatures and the current application had only one — Dongfang's. But when Dongfang said that he could get further signatures from other leading dissidents, he was told not to bother as the application would be turned down in any case.

The Chinese police clearly don't understand much about the purpose of demonstrations. Dongfang was told: "If you can guarantee that no one pays attention to you and no one follows you it's legal, otherwise it's illegal."

He was also warned: "If we feel it necessary, we will get you....we urge you not to do this." It was made quite clear to Dongfang that he would be stopped even if he demonstrated alone.

Not wishing to risk a further jail term (he was released last year on

health grounds after serving nearly two years in jail), Dongfang had no alternative but to abandon his plans.

Dongfang is anxious to avoid an unnecessary conflict with the government. But he points out that the economic reform policy now being adopted by China's ageing leaders makes independent unions a necessity.

"If the government allows capitalist organisations to spring up, how can it not allow free unions to arise to pro-

tect the workers' interests," he says.

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU), which has been actively supporting moves by Chinese workers to organise in free trade unions, has protested to the Chairman of the National People's Congress, Wan Li, against the denial of freedom of expression and assembly to Dongfang, and has urged the Chinese government to recognise the right of Chinese workers to organise under ILO Convention No. 87.

Swedish union official stands up against racism

Many individual trade unionists in Sweden are calling for increased efforts to defuse racial tensions.

One of these is Paki Holvander, who came to Sweden from Iran in the sixties and is now a full-time official working for the ITF-affiliated Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (HTF), representing salaried staff at the Scandinavian airline SAS.

In an interview with the union magazine *HTF Tidningen*, Holvander says that she is disturbed by the growing hatred of foreigners in her adopted country that stops her travelling on the Stockholm tube and leads her to lock the car doors when she is driving in the inner city.

Holvander was one of those who took part, along with other SAS workers, in the strike on February 21 when hundreds of thousands of foreign workers in workplaces across Sweden stopped work for an hour in a graphic demonstration of the contribution that they make to the Swedish economy.

SAS, as an international company and a major employer of immigrant labour, should come out strongly against racism, says Holvander. She estimates that about a third of SAS ground staff are of foreign origin and there are many immigrants who fly as cabin crew.

It is amazing how little Swedes know

about the foreigners in their midst, says Holvander, calling for the launch of a massive information campaign to promote increased understanding of the many problems that immigrants face in Sweden. SAS could play its part by funding publicity material about "the new Swedes", she suggests.

As a union activist, she believes that the labour movement must be central to efforts to combat racism in Sweden.

"It is important that the HTF and other trade union organisations should be actively involved in the fight against xenophobia," she stresses.

Holvander is also concerned by the growing tendency to emphasise the differences between native born Swedes and immigrants rather than the similarities. Women, she says, especially have so much in common. They have the same problems in the workplace — pay, working hours, child care etc — and should confront these issues together.

While it is not launching any activities of its own, the HTF swung its weight behind the strike on February 21 and union President Lars Hellman has promised his support for the anti-racism campaign being mounted by the TCO, the umbrella body for Swedish salaried employees.

Europeans and Moroccans argue over fish accord

The European Community has been trying to restore damaged relations with Morocco in the hope of saving a fisheries agreement which was to run out this month.

The agreement, which affects around 700 Portuguese and Spanish fishing vessels, has come under threat as a result of the Community's censuring of its human rights record and its failure to comply with the United Nations peace plan for the occupied Western Sahara.

The European parliament vetoed loans and grants worth Ecu463 million (US\$560 million) to Morocco in January. King Hassan's government responded by calling into question both the fisheries accord and the co-operation agreements under which the aid programme was agreed last summer.

At the instigation of Spain and Portugal, the Council of Ministers is now looking at the possibility of a free trade agreement. Apart from appearing to be popular with Moroccan powers that be, a free trade agreement has more chance of successful completion, as the parliament would have only an advisory role in its conclusion. Co-operation agreements require a strong parliamentary vote in their favour.

INSPECTORS ARE SNUBBED

The Commission has claimed that EC member states are not cooperating with the Community's fisheries inspectors.

A report by the Commission published in March recommends that EC inspectors be given more power, and that stricter punishments for infringement of EC fishing regulations be enforced.

Surveillance, the report says, should happen on a cooperative basis. Although the Commission does not want to interfere with surveillance carried out on a national level, national administrations should improve the "transparency" of their procedures.

The Commission comments that inspectors are seen as "intruders", and although no specific state is named, the problems are thought to be worst



in the North Sea where stocks are at their lowest.

The report also recommends an improvement in the monitoring of fishing fleets by computer and satellite.

EUROPE CAMPAIGNS FOR SAFETY

1992 has been pronounced the European Year of Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work (logo pictured above) and to implement its programme the Council of Ministers has set up National Liaison Committees in each member state.

The Committees are to bring together public authorities, employers and trade unions to implement programmes of action across Europe. Anyone interested in participating should contact their National Liaison Committee.

The Commission's Directorate-General V (DG V — Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs) has organised a Task Force to coordinate the campaign, which will focus on those most at risk in their work. The fishing industry, with its severe casualty record, has been singled out for special attention, as have offshore workers and those in the construction industries.

NEW EUROPEAN SAFETY BODY

The Dutch Transport Safety Council has submitted a report to the Com-

mission proposing the creation of a new European safety body.

At the request of Karel Van Miert, Commissioner with special responsibility for transport, the Dutch group drafted proposals in conjunction with counterparts in the UK and Germany.

The suggested European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) will advise on policy-making, submitting recommendations to the Commission, Ministers and the Parliament.

It will also fulfil the role of watchdog to ensure the independence and standard of enquiries conducted into the causes of serious traffic accidents, and be free to make objective criticisms.

The ETSC will set up committees for each of the transport sectors — road, rail, air transport and shipping. Its main priority will probably be road safety.

ECAC GOES EAST

The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) is to extend the integration of air traffic control to Eastern Europe. Bulgaria, The Czech and Slovak Federated Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania have all joined the 28-member ECAC over the last two years.

Meanwhile, a strike threatened by

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...European high speed train network grows

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Russian ATC controllers has been averted with the formation of a Russian Commission on airspace use and ATC management.

HIGH SPEED TRAINS

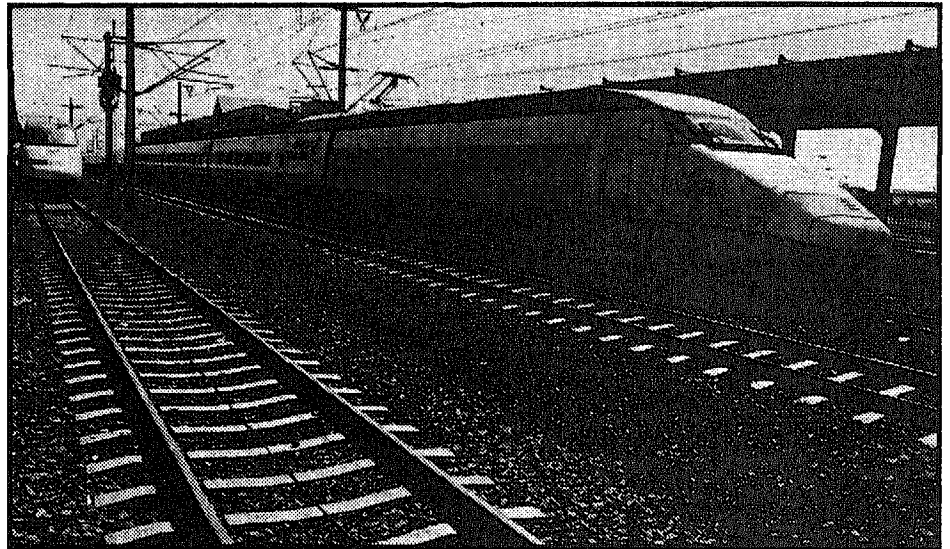
Speaking at the Eurailspeed Congress in Brussels on April 24th, Commissioner Van Miert underlined the importance of the role of high speed rail networks within an integrated European transport network.

The great environmental and economic advantages of high speed trains were of utmost importance, he said. Van Miert's speech came shortly after the opening of the Madrid-Seville high speed rail link on April 21st. Enthusiastically hailed in the press, the new train, called the AVE (Alta Velocidad Española), halves the journey time to under three hours. The result of Spanish, French and German cooperation, the route should become an important part of Europe's network.

COMMISSION FINES SHIPOWNERS

The European Commission has imposed fines on members of a maritime cartel over infringement of competition regulations.

Liner conferences are excepted from these regulations. Often providing a stable freight market for developing countries, traditional liner conferences divide trade to give the de-



The new Spanish high speed train.

veloping country a beneficial 40 per cent interest in the market.

But the Commission found that the shipowners' committees set up to control trade between France and eleven West and Central African countries infringed regulations as they effectively sealed off a large proportion of the bilateral trade between the Community and these countries. Lack of competition and abuse by the shipowners' committees, the Commission concluded, had led to inflated freight rates.

Members of the shipowners' committees had sought adoption by the African countries of measures intended to reserve all freight for the group, and then taken an active part in the implementation of these meas-

ures.

The Commission concluded that this was a "major, serious breach of the law", and decided to impose fines totalling Ecu15 million (around US\$ 18 million) on the Delmas Group, Société Navale de l'Ouest, Navale Caennaise and the Hoegh-SWAL group.

Lower fines were imposed on 13 cross-traders who are members of the shipowners' committees but played only an ancillary role in them.

The move has angered some shipowners. The chairman of Delmas' main rival Compagnie Générale Maritime (CGM) accused the Commission of hostility and of a lack of understanding of the realities with which shipowners are confronted.



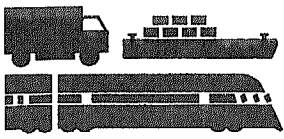
PEOPLE

Enzo Friso was elected as the new General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions at the 15th World Congress held in Caracas, Venezuela from March 17-24. Friso has been ICFTU Assistant General Secretary since March 1984 and has worked at ICFTU headquarters for well over twenty years. He succeeds **John Vanderverken**, the ICFTU's General Secretary since November

1982, who had decided not to seek re-election after a distinguished career with the ICFTU spanning over forty years. **LeRoy Trotman**, President-General of the Caribbean Congress of Labour and General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Barbados Workers' Union, is the ICFTU's new President. Only the second ICFTU President to come from a developing country, Trotman takes over from **Dr P P**

Narayanan of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress, who retired after having held office since 1975.

John Svenningsen (Denmark) has been appointed Director of the Workers' Activities Bureau (ACTRAV) of the International Labour Office in succession to **John Simonds** (Canada), who retired at the end of last year.



INLAND TRANSPORT

ITF urban transport unions debate establishing a separate section

Consensus on the need to intensify the ITF's work dealing with the field of urban passenger transport but disagreement on how best to do it marked the meeting of the ITF Urban Transport Committee held in Luxembourg on 8-9 April.

The meeting, which was chaired by Siegfried Weiss of the German Railwaymen's Union GdED, was attended by 29 representatives of road and rail unions from 15 countries. A representative from the Public Services International (PSI) also took part.

The Committee's main task was to discuss its own future. Created at the ITF's 1983 Madrid Congress, it is drawn from the ITF Railwaymen's and Road Transport Workers' Sections. It meets only occasionally (the last meeting was in 1987) to review work entrusted to a smaller Urban Transport Working Group.

A number of ITF affiliates, particularly those representing bus workers, have been arguing in recent years for a higher profile to be given to urban transport within the ITF's structures. This led during the 36th Congress in Florence to calls for the creation of a separate ITF Urban Transport Section. The ITF Executive Board, which is responsible constitutionally for the creation of new sections, then agreed formally to ask the opinions of the two existing ITF Sections involved and of the Urban Transport Committee itself.

The Committee's discussion revealed a significant difference of opinion between the representatives of road transport unions, many of whom felt a new Section was justified, and those from the railways who largely felt it was not. For the ITF Secretariat, Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft (substituting for Graham Brothers who was prevented from attending by urgent family reasons) pointed out some of the practical difficulties involved and stressed that creating a new Section was neither

necessary nor sufficient to ensure that greater attention was given to urban transport matters. Supporters of the proposal felt that the major political questions associated with urban transport policy were not being adequately addressed. A regular ITF Urban Transport publication had been promised but was not being produced. The road transport workers' section couldn't adequately cover the problems posed by goods and passenger transport at a single meeting. Urban transport had increased massively in importance since the foundation of the ITF. It now needed the status of being a full section alongside road and rail. Opponents suggested that structure and activities were two different things and shouldn't be confused. The Urban Transport Committee had been created as a bridge between road and rail, sections which were often in conflict with one another. ITF work should build on existing structures rather than create new ones. The discussion concluded without a firm recommendation but with a unanimous decision that more needs to be done to represent urban transport workers' interests in the ITF. The strongest supporters of the idea, the TGWU (Great Britain) and ÖTV (Germany) volunteered to prepare a paper on the subject for submission to the forthcoming meetings of the railwaymen's and road transport workers' sections.

FINANCING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Despite the importance of the debate on structure, the major part of the Committee's two day meeting was devoted to activities. An in-depth discussion took place on the financing of public transport which revealed the massive differences between different countries, even in Europe, in the subsidies which they give both to investment and operating costs. In developing countries like Argentina large scale privatisation of bus services and the total elimination of all

subsidies was taking place. The meeting agreed that the ITF should redouble its efforts to secure greater government support for public urban transport, stressing the energy saving, environmental and quality of life advantages which flowed from a shift away from private car use towards collective transport systems.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

In view of the increasing importance of the European Community in Europe's transport policy, a lively exchange of views took place between Committee members and two representatives of the European Commission. They underlined the Commission's commitment to more emphasis being placed on public transport, but added that its powers to intervene were limited by the principle of "subsidiarity". Concern was expressed by several committee members to Commission proposals to force competitive tendering for certain public sector contracts (those above Ecu 250,000) which it was felt could have a damaging effect on public transport enterprises in some cities.

Other topics discussed during the meeting included a report of the working party on bus construction, which is producing design recommendations based on both safety and ergonomic considerations, and the contribution of urban transport to environmental policies.

The meeting was hosted by the Luxembourg ITF affiliate the FNCTTFEL, whose President Josy Konz addressed the opening session. Luxembourg's size makes it one of the rare examples when short distance passenger transport has an international dimension, and the meeting concluded by adopting a resolution of support for improvements in the cross-border rail services between Luxembourg and the nearby Saarland region of Germany.

Austrian rail union celebrates 100 years

Austrian railwaymen celebrated one hundred years of trade union organisation at a ceremony held on April second in the chief workshop of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) in the Danube city of Linz.

It was in 1892 when 65 transport employees formed the first railwaymen's association to fight for the rights of exploited rail workers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

From those modest beginnings the association grew quickly in size and influence. It took the decision early in its history to affiliate to the ITF and over the years has played a major role in the international transport workers' movement. Leaders of the union have been members of the ITF Executive Board and Chairman of the Railwaymen's Section and have held the highest office — that of ITF President.

In recent years we should mention Fritz Prechtel, who served as ITF President from 1971 to 1986 and Hans Schmölz, who was elected Chairman of the ITF Railwaymen's Section at the 1986 Luxembourg Congress. But we should also remember Andreas Thaler, Richard Freund and Josef Matejcek from among the distinguished ranks of the union's earlier leaders, who helped keep the international links alive and held key positions in the ITF.

Many distinguished guests, both from Austria and around the world, had been invited to attend the centenary celebrations, which also marked the opening of the exhibition "100 years of the Railwaymen's Union".

Video recorded greetings to the ceremony were also conveyed from Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and ÖGB President Fritz Verzetnitsch.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis brought fraternal greetings and congratulations to an organisation older than the ITF itself, which had shared much of its past history, the good times and the bad, with the younger International.

He reminded his hearers of the occasion in the thirties when the growth



The very first issue of the union paper.

of fascism had forced the Austrian labour movement underground and the Railwaymen's Union had handed its union flag over to the ITF for safekeeping.

"It was a great and moving day in our joint histories," he said, "when those flags (the Transport Workers' Union had also entrusted theirs to

the ITF) could be handed back and could once again fly openly and proudly".

Lewis said anniversaries were inevitably a time for looking back and paying tribute to those who had gone before us.

But at such times we also needed to look forward to the future. He was sure that the collaboration at the international level which had been the hallmark of the Railway-

men's Union throughout its first one hundred years would continue and become even closer, as was necessary for a union operating in the modern world.

To mark the centenary a commemorative volume has been published, again with the title "100 years of the Railwaymen's Union".

Dutch railway workers strike

The Dutch railway network ground to a halt on the sixth and seventh of April 1992 as workers from three unions took strike action in protest over conditions and pay.

The ITF-affiliated Vervoersbond FNV, the largest of the three unions involved with around 7,400 members on the railways, called the strike after pay talks with the company, NS, broke down.

The unions are concerned about a

planned change in working conditions for 3,000 maintenance workers who are being asked to exchange six days' annual holiday for a reduction of 15 minutes in working time every day.

Railway workers are also demanding a 4.5 per cent pay increase, over the company's 3.9 per cent offer.

Only a handful of trains ran during the strike, and traffic was reported to be queuing for over 90 kilometres on some of the country's main roads.

South African strike victory

Strike action brought victory for the workers at South Africa's Motorvia automobile ferrying company.

Drivers at the company, members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), went on strike last month after voting overwhelmingly for action in a dispute centred around the introduction of a new payment system for drivers (see *ITF News*, April 1992).

The union and company had agreed to replace the previous piece work system with hourly wages, but discussions broke down on the actual amounts.

A new agreement was reached at a meeting between the union and management on April 29, which has been approved by the workers. Strike action has now been lifted.

Minimum rates for all drivers have been agreed, and on the crucial question of wage disparities between long haul and short haul drivers, the agreement signed is an interim arrangement with a promise by the company to discuss matters further. A full agreement will be reached by May 27.

The new agreement also provides for paternity leave and study leave for Motorvia drivers.

Europeans debate the social aspects of fishing

Over 100 trade unionists, employers and representatives of the European Commission attended the EC Seminar on the Social Aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in Hantsholm, Denmark from 9-11 April.

The Seminar was a joint meeting between fishing employers and employees, which highlighted the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two sides of the industry.

The employers' representatives, particularly those from Britain and Ireland, refused even to consider the idea of an agreement on guaranteed minimum earnings or minimum guaranteed rest periods on fishing vessels. Those employers were quite happy with the existing state of the fishing industry — which the unions clearly are not.

Peter Sand-Mortensen, Chair of the EC Joint Committee, from the ITF-affiliated Danish General Workers' Union (SiD), opened the Seminar.

He talked about the crisis in European fishing — unemployment, fleet over capacity and the shortage of fish resources. He called for a social aspect to the CFP to counter the damage done to those working in the industry — workers, after all, have been patient and have accepted the negative aspects of the CFP, now there should be an improvement in their social conditions, he said.

Danish Fisheries Minister Kent Kirk pointed out that the CFP is ten years old, and is now under review. He called for EC financial support for the creation of alternative employment, fleet modernisation and training.

EC Fisheries Commissioner Manuel Marin talked about the social dimension and promised that there would



Pictured at Hantsholm Peter Sand-Mortensen (SiD, Denmark — left) and ITF Fishermen's Section Chairman Oli Jacobsen.

be EC structural fund money for fisheries. He stressed the need for employers and workers to reach agreement on the future structure of the industry and the CFP, and also underlined the fact that a further decline in capacity was inevitable.

But this consensus was, and is, elusive. The Seminar broke down into four working groups.

The Dutch employers' representative, who acted as rapporteur for the Seminar and working groups, began his report from the groups by saying that the "meetings were not easy".

Both sides agreed that there was over capacity, but they disputed the Commission's figure of 40 per cent. The Seminar emphasised that the decrease in certain stocks is not only due to overfishing, but also to environmental factors such as pollution.

Both sides did manage to agree that share and part-time fishing did exist, and that this is one of the causes why unemployment figures for the indus-

try are unreliable (many of these fishermen are not registered).

The two sides, in an agreed statement after the Seminar, called for a vocational training programme to re-train former fisheries workers and early retirement packages for elderly workers.

The unions made a strong case for better working conditions on fishing vessels. As a matter of principle, the unions stressed that equality of treatment between EC nationals and others is essential. Many employers refused even to discuss these vital issues.

The Seminar did call for an EC employment register scheme, a training programme, the establishment of regional consultancies and research into alternative employment.

The ITF Secretariat was represented at the meeting by ITF Fishermen's Section Chairman Oli Jacobsen (Faroese Fishermen) and Senior Section Assistant Jon Whitlow.



COURT BACKS REINSTATE

Air Niugini has finally been forced to reinstate the nine cabin attendants who were sacked in December 1990 for protesting against grossly excessive duty hours.

The National Court, which had been the last resort of a company management bloody-minded in their determination not to re-instate the crew, has ruled that they must do just that.

The ruling vindicates the dogged fight for justice put up by the ITF-affiliated Papua New Guinea Flight Attendants' Association (PNGFAA), and also marks something of a triumph for international worker solidarity, particularly from the ITF's Australian affiliates (see *ITF News*, January, February and June/July 1991).

The PNGFAA is only a small union in a small airline, but when the nine cabin attendants were summarily sacked and evicted from their company-owned homes, and the company refused all the union's requests to hear the employees' case, the union

made an appeal to the ITF for international assistance.

This was the start of a long struggle to put pressure on a quite ruthless and aggressively anti-union airline employer.

On 14 January 1991, members of the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union at Sydney airport in Australia imposed a ban on Air Niugini's only long haul aircraft, an Airbus A310. Faced with this practical example of international solidarity the PNG Labour Ministry hastily set up a Reference Board to hear the union case against the dismissals.

At the ITF's request, Maurice Alexander of the ITF-affiliated Australian Flight Attendants' Association flew to Port Moresby to assist the PNGFAA in preparing their case to the Board. The union case at the board was so strong that, according to Alexander,

"Our submissions were often unchallenged or remained intact at the conclusion of proceedings". The

Board found in favour of the cabin attendants and instructed the company to re-instate the cabin crew.

The company, however, declared it was only prepared to implement the Board decision if it went in the com-

Cabin crew lic

The first exchange of views between unions and airlines on the question of European cabin crew licensing took place in Brussels on April 22. The meeting, one of a series convened by the European Commission's Joint Committee on Civil Aviation (JCCA), brought together cabin crew representatives from France, Germany, Great Britain, Denmark and Spain and employer cabin safety experts from British Airways, Air France and Lufthansa, as well as representatives of the charter and regional airlines. The ITF was represented by Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft.

The meeting was called to give advice on harmonised European standards in two separate but related fields — training standards and licensing. On training, a consensus was reached very quickly with the employers' representatives supporting a proposal by the trade union side to recommend that basic training standards already adopted by the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) be adopted as EC legislation. Where the two sides parted company, however, was in whether this is sufficient to guarantee to passengers of all carriers in all EC countries the same cabin safety standards after the liberalisation of the aviation market and effective free movement of labour within the EC countries comes into operation after the end of 1992.

The trade union side submitted a paper to the meeting, drawing on detailed work carried out by EC cabin crew unions over the past three years

Franco-Belgian union meeting

ITF unions in Air France and Sabena are linking together to co-ordinate their response to the alliance announced between the two airlines.

The accord finally received the go ahead in April from the new Belgian government. The merger involves Air France, along with Belgian financial institutions, taking a 35 per cent stake (worth US\$172m) in Sabena.

All ITF-affiliated unions in the two airlines met together in Paris on April seventh. The meeting involved FETSFO, the SNPNC and the FGTE-CFDT unions in Air France and CMB and CGSP in Sabena. The unions looked at shared concerns over conditions of work and job security in both France and Belgium. Air France has already cited economies of scale as one reason for its interest in Sabena.

A joint statement was issued at the end of the meeting calling for a new structure to be set up which would allow union representatives from both airlines to be involved in the decision-making process when it comes to the implementation of the alliance.

The deal beefs up even further Air France's place as the largest airline in Europe. As well as buying into the Czech Airline CSA, the French flag carrier also recently bought up its domestic rivals UTA and Air Inter.

Air France is currently undergoing restructuring, as a result of these mergers, with the announcement that 3,000 jobs will be lost. A joint union statement says, "We shall be on guard to make sure that this new accord does not threaten jobs or conditions of work".

MENT OF AIR NIUGINI CREW

pany's favour! As a result, on May 29 another Air Niugini flight found itself unable to leave Sydney airport with Australian TWU staff refusing to fuel or supply catering. The Australian Flight Attendants' Association re-

Licensing meeting

and parallel work going on within the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which argued that leaving the enforcement of standards to airlines is not enough. Cost cutting pressures and increased use of crews of mixed nationality will both pose risks for the quality of cabin crew training as new aircraft technologies reduce the number of licensed cockpit crew, it said. Four EC member states already require a state licence or equivalent document to be held by cabin crew, it added, so that the only way to meet the EC Commission's stated intention to harmonise safety standards to the highest possible level was through common licensing standards and mutual recognition of licences throughout the European Community.

The employers' group, while accepting the importance of safety training for cabin crew, were divided on whether a licence was needed to ensure high standards. Following a long debate on the principles of licensing and an in-depth examination of the different elements (age, knowledge, skill, experience, medical fitness) which a licence would entail, both sides agreed to hold a second meeting in July, prior to which they would produce papers outlining the various different options available. This would still leave the European Commission time to take account of the Joint Committee's opinion prior to the publication of its own proposals on training and licensing standards which are to be put to the Council by the end of this year.

fused to fly any additional Qantas flights to PNG.

Twenty five hours of this brought an assurance from Paul Aisa of Air Niugini that the company would uphold the Board of Reference decision.

The plane was released. But, despite being ordered to do so by the Prime Minister, the company announced it had "no intention" of implementing the ruling. Moreover it stepped up its attempts to break the union. Hilinai Igome and other PNGFAA union leaders received physical threats.

A union-busting law firm was brought in by the company which tried (unsuccessfully) to organise a meeting of union members to remove the current leaders from office. They also tried to intimidate union members

into signing a petition refusing to fly if the nine cabin attendants were reinstated (again without success).

When it became clear that the company had no intention of implementing the Board decision but instead had decided to appeal to the National Court, the ITF launched another international solidarity call, which resulted, on August 28, in an Air Niugini flight once more finding itself stranded on the tarmac of Sydney airport.

After a long and difficult dispute, with numerous solutions appearing and disappearing, it now looks as though the company will be forced to allow the cabin attendants to return to their jobs. The ITF will be keeping in close contact with the PNGFAA to make sure this really is the end of the matter.

Air Traffic Controllers' meeting

Employment problems of personnel working in air traffic control centres were the focus of considerable ITF activity during March and April. In conjunction with its sister organisation the Public Services International, the ITF sponsored a "fringe meeting" during the conference of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) which took place in Bournemouth, England from 23-27 March.

IFATCA, with which the ITF and PSI have long had friendly relations, is a professional association which groups together "associations" of ATCs worldwide. Some of these are trade unions but many are not, making the discussion of employment and industrial relations questions sometimes very difficult. The ITF/PSI meeting, which was attended by some 50 people, was designed to overcome such problems and to lay the groundwork for a larger meeting dealing with employment problems for all catego-

ries of ATC personnel (not just controllers). It was addressed by ITF Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft and PSI Consultant Cyril Cooper as well as by Barry Gibbs and Joe Magee of the UK controllers' union IPMS which is a member of both internationals.

On April sixth these four, together with Roger Barraut of the French union FGTE-CFDT, held a preparatory meeting at ITF headquarters in London to plan a programme of activities for air traffic control personnel. They agreed to focus attention in two areas — contacts with the European Commission on ATC licensing and the holding of an international forum on employment issues in air traffic services.

ITF and PSI affiliates covering workers in this field of activity are being consulted by the two internationals about the details of the Forum, which has been tentatively scheduled for January 1993.

European flight and duty discussions go on

No end is yet in sight to the agonisingly slow process of drawing up common European flight and duty time (FTL) limitations for aircraft crews, despite more than two years of work within the two bodies most directly concerned, the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) and the European Communities (EC).

Mounting pressure from the ITF together with the pilots' organisations IFALPA, Europilot and ECA (all of which basically represent the same national organisations) seems to have slightly dented the determination of the aviation authorities in the JAA who had indicated that they were determined to reach agreement on a final package at a meeting of the JAA's Operations Committee in Brussels at the beginning of April. Instead a number of points, including some

which the unions find particularly objectionable, have been sent back to the JAA's FTL study group for further work.

The ITF has protested at the fact that employee (and airline) representatives have been excluded from this latest phase of the study group's work.

Progress in the JAA and EC was reviewed at the 47th IFALPA Congress which took place in Rome at the beginning of April. Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft, representing the ITF, addressed the conference's industrial committee on the subject of flight time limitation and took part in drafting a resolution which supported the united position against the current draft taken by all the trade union organisations involved.

The IFALPA meeting was followed

a few days later on April 14 by a further meeting of the FTL working group of the Joint Committee on Civil Aviation. A detailed trade union paper criticising the current JAA draft (see **ITF News**, April 1992) and backed by recent aeromedical advice was presented to the meeting and for the first time a reasonably constructive discussion took place with airline representatives. A further meeting is fixed for late June when the results of the JAA exercise are expected to be available.

Following the meeting held in Amsterdam in March to discuss possible direct protest action, a further meeting and press conference hosted by Europilot took place in Toulouse, France on April 29. The ITF was represented by David Cockroft and Sebastian Roovers (VKC, Netherlands).

AeroPeru on sale at ridiculous bargain price

The dissolving of parliament and other democratic institutions in Peru will enable the government to get on with privatising the national flag carrier AeroPeru, without the inconvenience of the political opposition which this has been facing.

One controversy has been over the proposed selling price. Unions say that the airline is worth US\$400m. The

government set the price at US\$100m.

After the resignation of the airline's chairman Willie Van Oordt in mid-March, Dante Matellini, a former navy admiral, has been temporarily appointed to reorganise the airline ready for a sell off. Matellini oversaw "a period of reorganisation" of Peru's ports prior to privatisation. This involved the use of military force to

smash the dockers' unions (see **ITF News**, October 1991).

Matellini has dropped Aero Peru's selling price to US\$20m. He also plans drastically to reduce the workforce. 300 jobs have already been lost voluntarily. Negotiations currently aim to cut the workforce from 1,800 first to 1,000 and then to 800.

Litigation fever grips the airline industry

Ten former directors and executive officers of the recently collapsed **Compass Airlines** are being sued for damages by the Australian Securities Commission (ASC). The suit alleges that the airline was basically insolvent from the day it started operations on first December 1990. Penalties for offences in breach of Security Commission rules can include jail sentences.

Pan Am workers have filed a \$1.1 billion law suit against **Delta Airlines** charging that the company breached its contract to support a reorganisa-

tion of the defunct **Pan Am**.

The creditors' committee of **Continental Airlines** is suing the carrier's former chief executive Frank Lorenzo for US\$180m in damages. They allege that Lorenzo and another Continental director received nearly US\$42m from the sale of a private holding company with a large stake in Continental, just before they put the airline into bankruptcy.

The Bangladesh government is suing its former head of state Muhammed Ershad and two former

civil aviation ministers for allegedly pocketing \$5.31m from the purchase of three aircraft for **Bangladesh Biman** from British Aerospace in 1989.

Virgin Airlines is suing **British Airways** in the US courts over an alleged BA "dirty tricks" campaign against Virgin. Virgin is also suing British Airways in the British courts over comments in the BA company newsletter about Virgin suing them. British Airways is now suing Virgin over Virgin's original allegations about the BA dirty tricks campaign.

Chaos in the Philippines aviation industry

Civil aviation in the Philippines is going through a period of some turbulence.

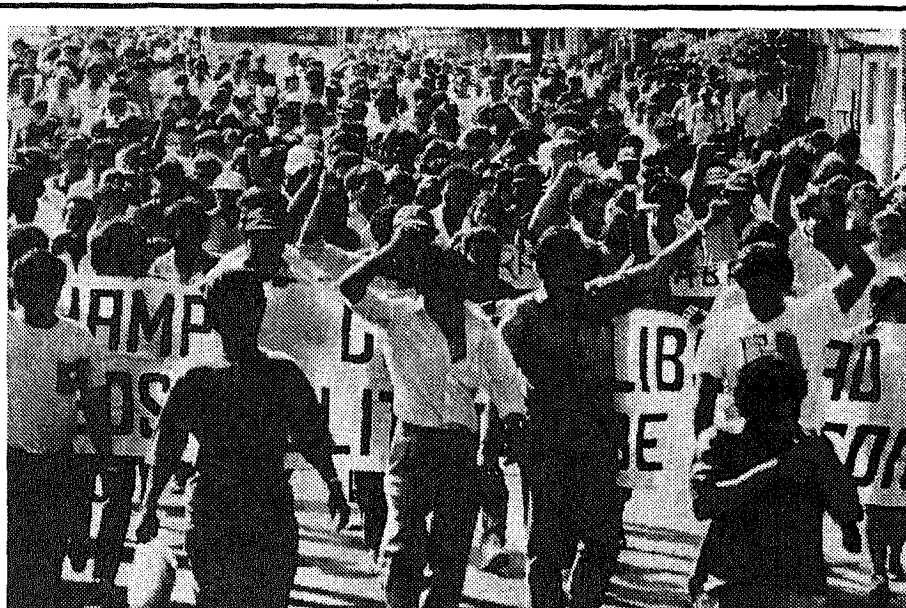
First came the privatisation of PAL with claims that the airline was sold off too cheaply, and with union protests that all existing agreements may be voided by the deal (see *ITF News*, April 1992).

Next came a strike by 320 air traffic controllers on April fourth, which grounded PAL's aircraft at most of the country's airports. The strike ended on April 21 after the company imported a force of international strike-breakers including 20 British air traffic controllers.

Now comes a warning that the airports are so unsafe anyway, that the government might have done better to keep the airports closed. According to the ITF-affiliated Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA), which organises ground service staff, and the Airline Pilots' Association (ALPA), perimeter security is so bad at the domestic airport in Manila that "you see cars crossing runways without clearance, ones that have nothing to do with aviation — just people avoiding traffic jams".

Other complaints are: non-working approach lights at the international airport; rubber build up in touch-down zones; inadequate fire fighting facilities; lack of recovery equipment for overshooting Boeing 747s; and the frequent breakdown of runway lighting systems and navigational aids.

These problems are regarded so seriously by the two unions that if nothing is done about them, PAL's planes may find themselves unable to fly once again.



Aeronica workers in Nicaragua have ended their strike after the government agreed that they will have the right to purchase 25 per cent of the carrier's shares after privatisation (see *ITF News*, April 1992). 49 per cent of the airline is to be sold to the Salvadorean carrier Taca, and only 100 out of 500 Aeronica workers will be rehired. During the strike over 60 workers were jailed. At the request of the FGTE-CFDT (France), the ITF sent letters of protest to the Nicaraguan government.

More deregulation in Australia

The Australian government has announced a second wave of deregulation which will "revolutionise" the industry by creating a common aviation market in Australia and New Zealand.

The Australian airline industry is still nursing the wounds of two years of recession and a bitter fares war, which forced into liquidation Compass, the only new airline to enter the market in the first package of deregulation. This March a proposed new start up airline AAA Airlines also folded.

The new policy will privatise Qantas and Australian Airlines. It will allow Qantas to pick up domestic passengers and the domestic airlines to compete on international routes. The single market would allow Air New Zealand to operate domestic routes in Australia, and allow Australian airlines to treat New Zealand as a domestic sector.

In March, Australian unions met with Senator Bob Collins, Minister for Aviation Support, to discuss some of the implications of the new aviation policy. He indicated that privatisation will almost certainly lead to a merger of Qantas and Australian Airlines, but he was non committal about the impact of such a merger on jobs.

He assured the unions, however, that a single aviation market with New Zealand would not mean that New Zealand's anti-union laws, such as the 1991 Employment Contracts Act, would be imported into Australia.

"Which airline chief executives lost their jobs directly because of their company's disastrous performance? Other than those whose airlines vanished — Eastern, Air Europe, Pan Am, Midway, TEA — it'd be hard to think of anyone who paid the price."

Editorial, The Skies in 1992, Airline Business, on airline performance during 1991, when over 19,000 jobs were lost in civil aviation in Europe alone.

Belgians approve Air France-Sabena link

The Belgian government finally cleared the way for the **Air France-Sabena** alliance this April. This gives Air France and a consortium of Belgian institutions a 35 per cent share of the Belgian carrier, and releases Belgian government aid. Unions are demanding consultation over implementation of the accord (see page 10).

Air France is also pleased at the French government's decision to protect it from US competition by limiting the rise in US transatlantic traffic to and from France to 15 per cent. The US is asking for 40 per cent. A recent British House of Commons report says that the British government significantly overestimated the benefits of the deal it made last year on limits for US airline transatlantic traffic to the UK. The government said the deal would bring £200m per year in benefits to UK airlines. The airlines say it was only worth £40m.

SAS has increased its stake in **British Midland** from 24.9 per cent to 40 per cent at a cost of £29m, and sold its 40 per cent stake in the loss making **Inter-Continental Hotels** to the major shareholder, Japan's **Saison Group**. Last year SAS's holding in **Continental Airlines** was written down to zero. SAS is currently heading for a greater deficit in 1992 than in 1991. SAS aims to reduce costs per production unit by 20 per cent during 1991-92, with another 20 per cent knocked off by 1996.

The (US) Airline Transport Association predicts a \$300m profit for the US airline industry in 1992. However, three of the strongest US airlines have warned of cutbacks. **American Airlines** says it is preparing a major cost cutting operation and is interested in contracting out to subsidiaries its passenger and cargo reservations. **United Airlines** is threatening to cut back its fleet orders and make large scale lay offs. **Delta Airlines**, where higher wages are used to stave off unionisation, is trying to trim its staff. These three airlines currently hold 55 per cent of the US market.

JAL is reportedly reducing the salaries of senior managers by 15 per cent,

managing directors by 10 per cent and directors by five per cent as part of its revised four year plan from April first, 1992.

Thai International expects a record net profit of US\$208.6m for the current financial year. The airline recently made a seven per cent share offering to the public. This will not in the least affect the airline's control by the military. Thai Airways chairman is Air Chief Marshall Kaset Rojanin. However, Thai has been losing re-



gional routes to **Bangkok Airways**. Chairman of Bangkok Airways is General Sunthorn Kong Sompong — currently head of Thailand's military junta.

The Indian government is now likely to up the public share offering in **Air India** and **Indian Airlines** from 20 per cent to 49 per cent. Madhavrao Scindia, Minister of Civil Aviation, is in favour of full privatisation but political and trade union opposition is too strong.

Another embarrassment has been caused to deregulation in Australia with the proposed start up Australian carrier, **AAA Airlines** following **Compass Airlines** into liquidation. The tiny, but rich Pacific island of Nauru is said to be interested in a take-over bid for **Compass**.

MEXICAN MERGERS

There are rumours that the two major Mexican carriers **Aeromexico** and **Mexicana** may merge. The last time that Aeromexico was involved in restructuring was in April 1988 when the airline was closed during a ground staff strike. It reopened in October 1988 but with only one third of the staff previously employed (3,400 compared to 12,500 previously).

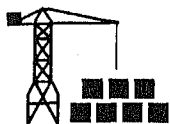
The way is now clear for a merger of **Yemenia** (of the former North Yemen) and **Alymeda** (of the former South Yemen) to form one national carrier for the now-unified Yemen. The main obstacle has been the Saudi government's 49 per cent stake in Yemenia which the Saudis have now agreed to sell.

Following Vietnam's recent liberalisation of its aviation law, allowing foreign investment in airlines and airports, the Vietnamese Transport Ministry is looking at foreign companies to provide ground handling services. Hong Kong-based **Jardine Matheson** and a Canadian firm **Airport Development Corp** are both said to be interested.

PREDICTIONS

Two major aircraft manufacturers have published separate reports which both predict sustained growth for civil aviation over the next twenty years. In its *Current Market Outlook* Boeing forecasts 5.2 per cent growth in air traffic per year through the year 2010. McDonnell Douglas is even more optimistic in its *Outlook for Commercial Aircraft*, predicting 6.5 per cent annual growth over the next two decades. The US Federal Aviation Administration, in its latest "state of the industry" report, has forecast a 4.9 per cent increase in air carrier revenue passenger miles in the US over the next ten years.

The FAA also predicts a growing number of mergers into mega-carriers which will mainly benefit three US majors: **United**, **American** and **Delta**.



DOCKERS

Chilean dockers strike for restoration of pre-dictatorship rights

Chilean dockworkers paralysed 13 ports for ten hours on April eighth in protest at the government's refusal to recognise the right to collective negotiations.

Members of the ITF-affiliated confederation COMACH were also demanding the creation of a dock workers' registration scheme.

The union was pleased with the success of the "warning strike" — in most of the ports the stoppage was total.

However, the government refused to recognise the action, and made no move to negotiate with the unions. Instead, companies were authorised to contract casual workers for two or three shifts that day, working between 15 and 22-hour turns.

Police were also sent in to break picket lines.

In view of the lack of response from the government to their demands for basic trade union rights, Chilean dock workers are now planning further action, and have asked the ITF for international solidarity.

This "could produce the miracle of restoring the rights that dockworkers lost during the Pinochet dictatorship, policies which are being upheld by the current government," said Eduardo Rios, President of COMACH, in a letter to the ITF.

"Chilean workers, and especially the portworkers, were in the vanguard of the fight to restore Chilean democracy", he added.

"Attitudes like these seriously endanger democracy, as in the handling of our problems, we fail to see any difference in these attitudes from those of the military regime."

The ITF has sent a circular to all dock workers' affiliates asking them to write to the Aylwin government expressing concern over these developments.

Argentina set to adopt port deregulation law

It appears that the Argentinian Congress is now ready to pass its port reform bill (see *ITF News*, December 1991).

Senator Eduardo Vaca, the bill's author, has announced that agreement has been reached on the final draft, and it is expected that the legislation will be passed by late May.

The new law will deregulate the ports; presently administered by the national ports authority.

The original plan was that the four main ports of Buenos Aires, Rosario, Bahia Blanca and Necochea-Quequen would remain under federal control, but be divided into terminals to be run by private companies.

The remaining ports would be ceded to the various provinces, each to be administered by its own provincial port authority.

It has now been agreed that the bill will include a 15 year limit on the private port concessions included in the first draft.

The law will also confirm the position of the eleven private Paraná ports, owned by the grain exporters.

In late April, President Menem put his signature to a decree that will authorise all federal ports located in the province of Buenos Aires (including Argentina's biggest grain handling terminal, Bahia Blanca) to be handed over to the province this month.

Buenos Aires is not included as it is on federal, not provincial territory.

Japanese port workers continue strike campaign

Members of the 50,000-strong Japanese dock federation Zenkoku Kowan have continued their strike campaign for better conditions this month (see *ITF News*, April 1992).

Following the union's threat to call for action within shipping companies, maritime agencies and related sectors, a wage increase was agreed from April ninth and the dockers returned to work on that evening, lifting their ban on all work between 18h00 and 08h00.

But there is still disagreement between the authorities and the union over hours and after failure to reach agreement with port managers on a settlement the union are keeping their action up in 96 ports, refusing to work Sundays.

Zenkoku Kowan also wants the institution of a five day week and eight hour day, the introduction of a monthly wage system and the abolition of Sunday work.

French dockers launch all-out strike

French dockers launched an all-out strike on April 22 in an attempt to block the government's introduction of measures that would abolish their national dock labour agreement.

Doubts had been raised earlier in the month about the government's willingness to pursue its reform, which would turn dock workers into salaried employees, following a cabinet shake-up in which maritime minister Jean-Yves Le Drian was replaced by Charles Josselin, former secretary of state for transport.

Although Josselin appeared to take a more moderate approach, promising talks with the dock unions' leaders, the government has decided to go ahead with the plan. Ministers gave the draft bill their approval on April 15.

The 8,300-strong union has been in dispute with the government since late October 1991. The controversial package removes special provisions for payment to registered dockworkers during slow periods.

It abolishes the dockworkers' national agreement, stating that negotiations must be carried out on a local port-by-port basis.

French unions say that around 4,000 jobs are likely to be lost, and that those left with employment after the introduction of the reform will have no job security. The dockers' union has even produced an alternative plan to give a boost to French ports without losing so many jobs.

Despite a chequered history of seemingly productive talks followed by deadlocks and repeated waves of 48-hour strikes, which have already caused losses of FrF1,000 million (US\$180 million) according to the government, the dispute now looks set to escalate.

Ships trying to enter the ports of Marseilles, Nice, Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Bayonne since April 22nd have been blocked, and the ports of Nantes, Brest, Concarneau and Rouen have also been paralysed. Lorient is totally blocked and Le Havre, Calais, Dunkirk and Boulogne have followed suit.

However, cross-channel ferry traffic has reportedly not been affected, whilst shipowners have apparently been diverting vessels to foreign ports.

Australian government to study port profits

The Australian government is to start monitoring port and other government authorities as part of its "One Nation" transport reform plan, announced last month (see *ITF News*, April 1992).

Shipping minister Senator Bob Collins has made it clear that the government suspects shipping lines, port authorities and others of not passing on the reduced costs achieved by waterfront reform.

The inquiry "will make completely public the situation in terms of charging the users of the ports in order to determine where the money is going," he said.

According to the government, neither the "port service" fees charged by shipping lines, nor standard port fees charged by state authorities have significantly fallen in the wake of reform.

By contrast, charges by stevedores for container exchanges have been reduced, and container terminals work to productivity contracts.

Forty per cent of the waterfront workforce has been laid off since 1989, and the figure is likely to rise to fifty.

If the government's arguments prove accurate, then many workers who lost their jobs in these cuts will be very angry.

Meanwhile, there is a debate in the country over whether the port authorities are properly distanced from the control of government and politicians. Port authorities are largely exempt from trade practices as a protected government body.

But the Trade Practices Commission has stated that an independent authority should possibly be brought in to carry out the planned investigations.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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
29 September	Asia/Pacific Road Transport Workers	Tokyo
30 September-2 October	Road Transport Section Conference	Yokohama, Japan
20-21 October	Executive Board	Copenhagen
10 November	Ground Staff Technical Committee	London
11-13 November	Civil Aviation Section Conference	London



SEAFARERS

ITF protest at Japanese shore leave denials

The ITF has protested to the Japanese government about the denial of shore leave to seafarers.

Following the adoption of a motion at the ITF Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee meeting in New Zealand in March (see *ITF News*, April 1992), ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander has written to Japanese Justice Minister Takashi Tawara.

The letter underlines the ITF's central opposition to any discrimination based on colour, nationality, sex, race or creed:

"...this organisation takes serious objection to groundless denials of shore leave for seafarers as has happened in several instances in Japanese ports, more recently involving crew members of the Dutch flag *Morelos* and the Iranian flag *Iran Shojaat*," said Selander.

"The ITF feels that Japan with its great shipping traditions should not resort to such harsh measures directed at innocent seafarers but should rather set an example to the rest of the world. Unless we receive confirmation that no further wholesale denials of shore passes to seafarers will be instituted by Japan we are duty bound to pursue the matter further in international fora such as IMO and ILO."

Burmese seafarers form underground union

Burmese workers — who have a long and honourable tradition of fighting injustice and tyranny — are organising against the military dictatorship.

The underground "Federation of Trade Unions" was formed at the end of last year. There are 18 constituent unions, including Seafarers, Railway Workers, Deep Sea Fishing, and Stevedores.

The Federation and unions have an underground structure inside Burma — which must, for obvious reasons, remain secret — and are working closely with the forces of the Democratic Alliance of Burma and the ethnic insurgents.

The ITF has had lengthy discussions with the Federation which has asked for action by transport workers against Burmese shipping, and has expressed strong support for the underground unions in their struggle.

The Federation's Seafarers' Union (SUB) is in regular contact with the ITF. In letters to ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, the union's Central Executive Committee have given a bleak profile of the status of Burmese seafarers:

"When the military regime took power in Burma, they banned all the democratically established labour unions and installed labour organisations

run by their lackeys," say the SUB.

Many Burmese are forced by poverty to take jobs at sea — the SUB reckons that 30,000 are registered with the state run "Seamen Employment Control Division, SECD".

The government — through the SECD — has total control over the placement of all Burmese seafarers. The SECD exists "with only the self-centred aim of reaping the foreign exchange earned by the seafarers and does not abide by nor emphasise ITF regulations. The Burmese seafarers have to work with whatever pay and conditions the flag of convenience ships offer," says the union.

Before boarding a ship, Burmese seafarers are forced to sign a contract saying that they will not contact the ITF. Even if the Burmese crew receive an ITF settlement because of the intervention of other crew, they are required to pay the cash back to the SECD. If they refuse, their registration is revoked and they may face imprisonment.

In at least one case of ITF intervention, the Burmese crew of a flag of convenience ship were told that their families would be hurt if the action was not called off. The savagery and brutality of the Burmese regime, which

has made virtual prisoners of the entire population, is well known to Burmese seafarers.

The local "lackeys" who call themselves a seafarers' union are nothing but government puppets, say the SUB:

"To defend our rights, we have formed the Seafarers' Union of Burma. As the first step we are writing to you [the ITF] so that through you all brother seafarers and their respective unions will know of our plight."

The union believes that the only way to establish equality, human rights and democracy is to overthrow the so-called "State Law and Order Restoration Council" (SLORC) and they have joined forces with the democratic opposition to further this aim.

The Federation describes the present situation in Burma as "very bad". The SLORC is cracking down on all internal opposition and has launched "intensive genocidal campaigns" against the ethnic minorities.

The Federation is building the underground trade union movement with the aim of launching a non-cooperation campaign against the dictatorship that can aid in the toppling of the regime.

Transport workers' unions in the ITF will give whatever assistance they can to their Burmese counterparts.

Faroese second register launched

The Faroese second register has now come into existence. The Føroyaska Altjoda Skipaskraa (FAS), established by vote of the Lagting (Faroese Parliament), came into being on April first. Seafarers' taxes will be returned to the shipowner, and owners will be able to hire foreign crew — the master must be a Faroese resident or a Danish citizen (the islands are a self-governing part of Denmark). Crews must be a member of either the Faroese or a foreign trade union (but, as ITF unions well know, that can mean many things).

The Indian government has decided to relax coastal cabotage laws for container vessels for a five year period. Surface Transport Minister Jagdish Tytler has announced that container vessels will be allowed to visit Indian ports and collect containers for transshipment to another Indian port — only one such transshipment will be allowed per voyage, however.

Liberia's "interim" President Amos Sawyer (who controls the city of Monrovia, the shipping register and not much else — the rest of the country being held by Charles Taylor) has exercised his limited authority to sack Maritime Commissioner Joseph Keller. Keller was accused of writing "irresponsible newspaper articles" in the local government-controlled press and of committing acts of indiscretion "detrimental to the maritime programme". He has been replaced by Liberia's former IMO representative George Cooper. There still remain a number of "minor differences" between the "Liberian government" and the US company which actually operates the flag of convenience register (Liberian Services Inc.).

The storm clouds of radical deregulation and privatisation are gathering over the New Zealand maritime industry. The right-wing government, who have already implemented a drastic "reform" of industrial relations

through the 1991 Employment Contracts Act (which bans the closed shop and gives employers a free hand to smash trade unions and eliminate col-

They have already stated their desire to open up coastal trades to any flag ship, but they have now decided to scrap the Shipping and Seamen Act of 1952 completely rather than rewrite it. It's clear that New Zealand seafarers and their trade unions will be targeted in any such "reforms".

The Spanish government will soon be proposing a law to establish a Second Register based in the Canary Islands. The proposal, bitterly opposed by the ITF affiliated UGT and CC.OO seafarers' unions, has been pushed by the shipowners for many years. A final bill will have to be adopted by the Madrid parliament and the Canary Islands Assembly, and is likely to face stiff opposition. The proposal, while not yet in a final form, would allow Spanish shipowners to hire at least 50 per cent foreign crews (at "local" rates), cut crewing levels and enjoy reduced corporate taxation.

lective bargaining), are now turning their attention to the maritime sector.



Scandinavian Star victims start suit against Lloyd's

Survivors and families of the passengers killed in the *Scandinavian Star* disaster two years ago have filed suit against Lloyd's Register Classification Society in the USA.

The Bahamian flag of convenience caught fire while en route from Oslo to Fredrikshavn on April 7, 1990 (see ITF News, April 1990). 159 passengers and crew died and 324 survived. Many of the survivors suffered physical and emotional injuries.

The legal complaint — the first time passengers have attempted to hold ship safety inspectors and a classification society responsible for negligence — alleges that Lloyd's Register failed to fulfil its safety inspection duties as the vessel's classification society.

Demanding compensatory and punitive damages, nearly 280 victims and relatives allege that the rapid spread of the fire and the resulting deaths and injuries were directly the fault of Lloyd's Register's negligence.

The suit has been filed in Miami — location of the Lloyd's Register office which surveyed the vessel — and also names LR Chairman Sir Roderick MacLeod, LR Secretary John Hickman and retired Miami-office surveyor Christopher Admas (who surveyed the ship).

LR, in a statement issued after the filing, has stated that they will refute the allegations "in every respect" but will not make further comments while legal proceedings are active.

Swedish register plans condemned

The Swedish Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has strongly criticised the government's proposals for a Special Section on the shipping register on the grounds that, if adopted, the plans would violate international law and the Swedish Constitution.

In a statement issued by Chairman Lennart Groll in Stockholm last month, the Commission points out that the proposal (see *ITF News*, April 1992) "has the express purpose that foreign labour employed on Swedish vessels listed in the special ships' register are to be employed on worse working conditions than is the case for Swedish seafarers".

Working on a Swedish flag vessel, seafarers are working in Swedish territory, and are thus subject to "Swedish law in its entirety, irrespective of their geographical location".

The ICJ section points out that Sweden accepts and has ratified United Nations Conventions on economic and social rights and racial discrimination as well as ILO Convention 111 — committing Sweden to combating all forms of discrimination against foreign labour. The government has also stated that it supports the European Social Charter (including Article 19 on migrant workers).

Sweden has also, according to the ICJ statement, guaranteed that migrant workers legally resident in Sweden will be treated no less favourably than its own citizens with regard to wages and working conditions.

Chapter 2, Clause 20 of the Swedish Constitution states that a foreign national is regarded equal to a Swedish citizen and is protected against all forms of unfair treatment due to race, colour or ethnic origin.

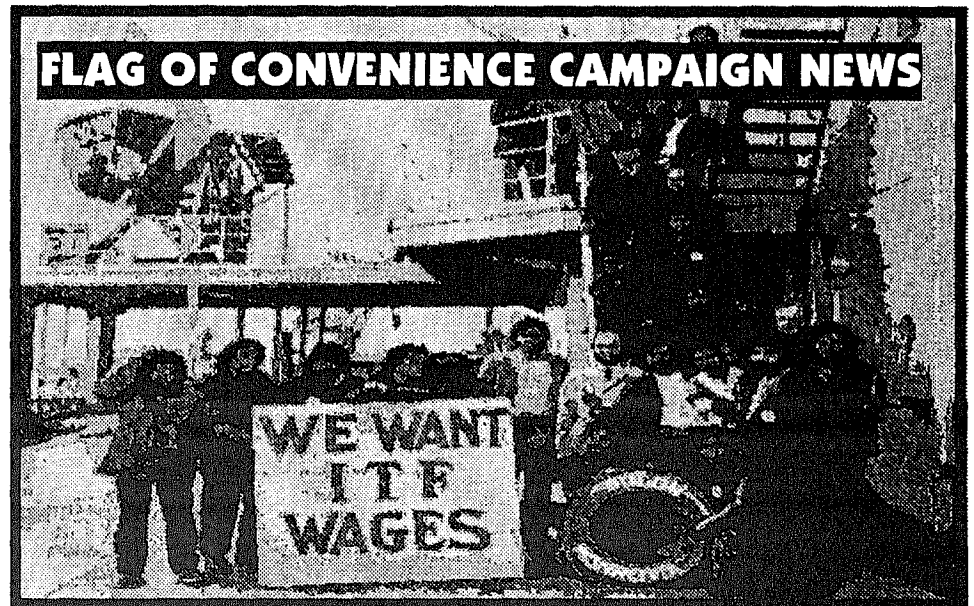
"The Section therefore considers the proposed bill is intended to introduce legislation which is contrary to the obligations that Sweden has adopted through acceptance of the forementioned international conventions on human, social and economic rights," say the ICJ.

The ICJ section also ask whether or

not the register proposals might need a special Constitutional Amendment to be adopted.

"The Section considers it would be

extremely unfortunate if discrimination of this kind were to receive public sanction in Sweden," the statement concludes.



A ship that should have been scrapped on the spot

The Cypriot flag *Litsa N*, detained last month in **Hamburg** (see *ITF News*, April 1992) for a litany of structural defects, was allowed to leave Germany by the authorities. After sitting in port for ten days, few repairs had been made. Conditional release was allowed on the understanding that the ship would enter dry dock in Gdynia, Poland for major repairs and renovation. The ship is now in dry dock, as agreed. ITF Inspector Ulf Christiansen regrets the fact that the vessel was allowed to leave port — "instead it should have been scrapped on the spot!" he says.

The Panamanian flag *CGM Utrillo* arrived in **Hamburg** in the beginning of April. ITF Inspector Ulf Christiansen received a call from a Polish crewmember whose contract had been terminated. He visited the ship and found that three Polish crew members, who had been on board for

two months, had all been fired five days before arrival in Germany. They hadn't received their March wages. After negotiation, a total of US\$5,661 in backpay and compensation was obtained for the three crew. There were no other complaints, and the ship continued its liner trading to the Far East.

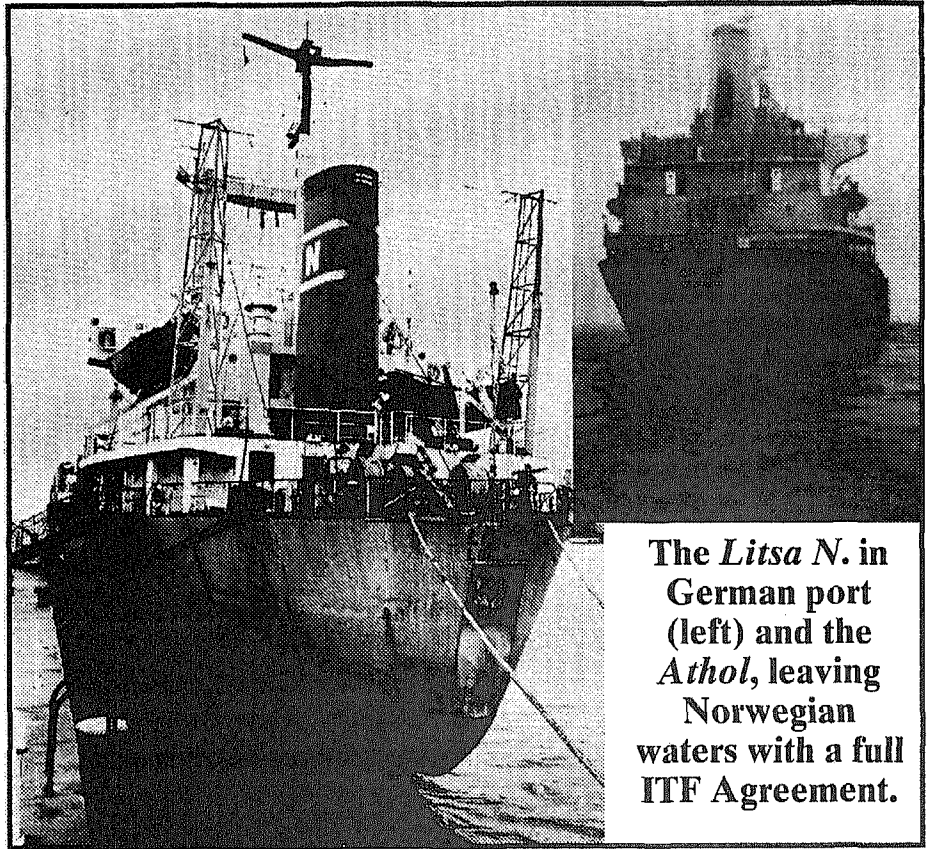
The Panamanian flag *Rio Mafil*, whose Chilean crew were on strike (see *ITF News*, April 1992) in **Vancouver**, has now been placed under arrest. The Bank of Chile claims a debt of US\$1.5 million. The crew, who had no food, have been given CAN\$7,000 by the local ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) who organised a collection amongst the dockers. The case has received a large amount of publicity in the local media.

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...PSU ship boycotted in Norway

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Eight Pakistani and Sri Lankan crewmembers on the Cyprus flag *West Coast* (recently renamed and reflagged, ex-*Trust*, Maltese-flag) had not been paid for four months when their ship arrived in the German port of **Bremerhaven**. Other crew who had not been paid had already left the ship. The vessel was covered by an ITF Acceptable PNO Agreement, but the crew had never received their correct wages. When ITF Inspector Ali Memon went to investigate he found the ship in the Bremerhaven dock where it was undergoing repairs. Not only had the crew been underpaid (and then not even paid at all!), conditions on the vessel were terrible — crew had to share their cabins with cockroaches and rats. Lengthy negotiations between Memon and the Greek owners (the shipowner owns six ships and his brother owns a Piraeus Bank, but they tried to argue they were bankrupt!) that lasted for two weeks finally resulted in an agreement to pay a total of US\$94,977.07 to the crew



The *Litsa N.* in German port (left) and the *Athol*, leaving Norwegian waters with a full ITF Agreement.

and repatriate them free. The money was paid in three instalments, and the crew have now received all their money and gone home. In another

recent settlement, Memon assisted in obtaining US\$93,439.37 for a Polish crew who had been dismissed for complaining about non-payment of wages from the Liberian flag *Mito*. The crew had joined the ship while it was still covered by an agreement, but the company had tried to argue they did not need to honour the ITF rates.

The Singaporean owned, Liberian flag *Athol*, crewed by Filipinos and covered by an "agreement" with the Philippines Seafarers' Union (ALU-PSU), visited the Norwegian port of **Farsund** in the beginning of April. ITF Inspector Steinar Garberg visited the ship and called upon the owners to sign an ITF Agreement. Dockworkers boycotted the ship, and the owners relented and signed a standard agreement on April tenth for the entire crew.

Luxembourg adopts open door policy for its non-existent ports

The US government have decided to allow Luxembourg flag ships to transport certain cargoes between domestic ports because the Luxembourg authorities have agreed to allow the same exemptions for US-flag ships calling in their own ports!

Luxembourg, in fact, has neither ports nor coastline — it is a small, landlocked Duchy in western Europe.

And yet, in return for a promise of reciprocity, the US Customs have agreed to an exemption from the Jones Act (which reserves domestic trades and certain cargoes to US flag ships) that will allow Luxembourg flag ships to transport empty cargo vans, lift vans, shipping tanks and equipment, empty barges and certain other instruments.

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